

THE HEARTS SONG.

In the silent midnight watches,
List—thy bosom door!
How it knocketh, knocketh, knocketh,
Knocketh evermore!
Say not 'tis thy pulse's beating;
'Tis thy heart of sin:
'Tis thy Saviour knocks, and crieth,
Rise, and let Me in.

Death comes down with reckless footstep
To the hall or hut;
Think you death shall stand a knocking
Where the door is shut?
Jesus waiteth—waiteth—waiteth;
But thy door is fast!
Grieved, away thy Saviour goeth—
Death breaks in at last.

Then 'tis time to stand entreating
Christ to let thee in;
At the gate of heaven beating,
Waiting for thy sin.
Nay, alas! thou foolish virgin,
Hast thou then forgot,
Jesus waited long to know thee,
But He knows thee not.

A STORY OF THE ENGLISH DERBY DAY.

(Continued.)

'I hope you're not ill, ma'am,' Julia ventured at last to say, as the lady still remained, growing paler and paler, at least so she fancied.

'I'm not well, Mrs. Meadows,' was the answer, 'I never am now; but is Mr. Meadows gone to the races?'

'Oh yes, ma'am, he's gone, and it's a fine day for him to enjoy himself. I want him at home very much; but he must have a holiday sometimes, though it's happened unfortunate to-day.' She was thinking of the lost customers.

'Yes,' said Mrs. Roberts, in a pre-occupied way, tapping her parasol absently on the shop floor and looking down.

Julia thought she might be displeased that George had not accepted her husband's invitation, so she hastened to make apology. 'I was sorry that he shouldn't have taken the seat in the carriage that Mr. Roberts so kindly offered him. It would have saved him expense, and have been so much pleasanter.'

'Did my husband offer him a seat in the carriage?' asked Mrs. Roberts, looking up.

'Yes ma'am. Mr. Roberts told me so this morning, when he came to buy some gloves.'

'And he didn't go with him, you say?'

'No, ma'am. He went in the omnibus.'

'You may be thankful,' was the answer, to Julia's great surprise, 'and tell him from me, that when Mr. Roberts invites him to anything, the best word he can say is "No!"' She said this in a sharp tremulous voice, yet with more energy than could be supposed was possible to her. Julia did not know what to reply. This was so strange a thing to say: she doubted for a moment whether the poor lady was in her right mind this morning. Sickness and neglect brought on queer fancies, and perhaps this was the case now. Why should George refuse the society of a man so much above him in wealth? It might be a great advantage to him in his business to have a friend with plenty of money like Mr. Roberts. She changed the subject.

'The air's so pleasant, it would have done you good to have gone out yourself to-day, ma'am.'

'So it would,' said Mrs. Roberts, 'but my husband has other use for the carriage, as you saw—as everybody saw. When I married, I didn't think I should come to this—to be left without a penny to spend in my own house, and to find my carriage used to take swindlers and gamblers to Epsom! He's going the way to ruin, is my hus-

band. I've long suspected it, and this morning I've discovered it. I've found his betting-book, Mrs. Meadows, and, though I don't know much about betting books, I've seen enough to convince me he's a thorough gambler, and his friends are the same. But what remedy have I? Thank God on your knees that your husband didn't go to the downs with him! For he'll not only ruin himself and me, but he'll ruin everybody that comes near him. What should he seek Mr. Meadows's company for, but to ruin him? I know him pretty well by this time, to my cost, and I tell you it is so. He would have fleeced him of every penny; he's a blackleg and a scoundrel! And having said all this in an excited voice, Mrs. Roberts concluded by falling into a strong fit of hysterics.

Julia took her as soon as possible from the publicity of the shop to the little parlor at the back. It had never been dusted or arranged that morning, for she had been too busy to attend to it; but this was no time to think of such things. The poor excited lady demanded all her care for a full half hour, and when she came to, sufficiently to be quiet, and to let the tears flow more calmly, she began to talk to her young neighbor and impromptu friend of her married griefs and cares, and Julia had to listen to many things that it would have been better never to have named. But Mrs. Roberts's heart was very full, and she had had no friend near her for many a day in whom she could confide. The fountain of bitterness overflowed, and Julia, with sympathising heart and sorrowful face, listened to her story and gave ejaculatory consolation and replies, scarcely knowing what she said, only feeling that it was necessary to soothe and comfort her neighbor as she best could. Bitter and long were Mrs. Roberts's complaints. Her husband was miserly, refusing to let her have what money she needed to support her position in the world, refusing even needful things for the house, and carefully doling out the pence to her, who had so unwisely given him unlimited possession of her thousands of pounds. Her little niece was just now staying with her—an orphan—and poor—and she would fain have had her in the house as her home; but Mr. Roberts grudged the extra food, and clothes, and medicine the child had required in the three months of her stay, and to-morrow she was to return to her father's relatives in Wales—poor people who could ill afford to keep her. He was jealous of her friends, and had purposely offended them all, that she might be more completely in his power. He even grudged her the commiseration of her servants, and had given one woman warning for showing her deference. He humiliated her before his guests by treating her as a child, and he abused and ill-treated her in private. A long, strange catalogue of privations and indignities the young wife listened to in the intervals between snatches of attention to shop and house and baby and servant, for Mrs. Roberts seemed in no hurry to depart. What miseries are so miserable and hopeless as home miseries? The miseries that arise between two unhappy contradictory hearts tied together perforce by the chain of matrimony, and grinding each other like the wheel and the axle when the oil is gone. Mrs. Roberts's chief complaint, however, was that there was but one heart in the case here. And as a climax to these miseries was this morning's discovery, that her money had been withdrawn from the funds to pay her husband's 'debts of honor'—more truly of 'dishonor'—and that he was now staking a large sum, perhaps their all, upon the running of a horse at Epsom. 'Why do they talk of gambling not being permitted?' asked the

agitated wife, who, as she proceeded in the capitulation of her troubles, became again excited. 'What better is it than the gambling tables of Hamburg and Baden, this insane betting upon horses? What is the race-course at Epsom but a great gambling table, open not only to the rich, but the poor—the poorest? Encouraged by the aristocracy, by the highest in the land—the Prince of Wales will be there, they say—the Prime Minister, members of Parliament, the noble and rich—all will be there, to gamble and to smile at the gambling! Oh, if they could but know the misery that comes from it! the wrong, the degradation! Even my husband wasn't so bad till those rogues of the race-course inoculated him and gave him the betting fever. And now I suppose he'll never stop till we're both in the workhouse. It wanted but this to fill up the measure of his crimes against me. To bet away my money, to gamble it away on the gallop of a horse's hoof—for it was all my money, Mrs. Meadows! But why do I talk? Wasn't I the first gambler when I staked myself and all I possessed on the lottery of a man's face and a marriage license? I needn't blame him so much, I was the first fool. But who was the rogue? Mr. Roberts, and such men as he is, that made the law robbing the wife of all she has in that moment of trusting love and extreme faith when she takes a husband at the altar. I was told but didn't believe it, how it would be. I loved him too much, and the law takes advantage of a woman's love in that way, and the Church sanctions the robbery! I can't bring myself to believe that Mr. Roberts contemplated being such a rogue as he has proved. And yet —' Alas! there were many more 'and yet's' to be heard against Mr. Roberts.

The unhappy wife went away at last, and Julia bore about her for the rest of the day an unusual look of care. The little woman began to wonder how it might be with her in nine years time—just the time Mrs. Roberts had been married. She had brought no money to her husband on the wedding-day, so there could be no unjust plunder on his part as a commencement to a life of love and union: but if George were ever to prove a tyrant? If he were to turn idle and dissipated, and demand to live upon her earnings, as a master lives upon the earnings of a slave, what help would she have? None, for she was a wife, a word of wide meaning, embracing sometimes amongst others that of bondwoman in England, if compulsory life-service to a hard master means bondage; if life passed in indignity and hardship, and semi-starvation without help from the law, means bondage; if all work and no pay from youth to old age, with the bare reward of having performed your slave-duties, means bondage. But no, it was not possible! Her George was true and good. He would never forget to protect and care for her and her baby. He would never cease to love her. He would eschew gamblers and blacklegs. Had he not already turned shy with Mr. Roberts? Perhaps he had had an idea of what Mr. Roberts was!

Seven o'clock came, and the people were returning from the great race of the year. Mrs. Meadows's shop faced the high road from Epsom, and with the rest of her neighbors she gazed out at the long stream of carriages and vehicles of all kinds that never ceased flowing for three long hours. The horses looked tired and melancholy as they prepared to mount the coming hill with their unconscionable burdens; but who cared for the horses? Not, certainly, the people whom they carried along at as rapid a rate as the weary legs of over-driven animals could manage, the people who were crowded and crammed in carts and omnibuses and hack carriages of all descriptions, and were smiling, joking,

laughing, shouting, bowing, and posturing to the crowds gathered on the pavement. It was an amusing sight if the meaning of it could be forgotten. The people had been out for a holiday, where wild, rollicking, careless fun was rampant and fashionable; where absurdity crowned itself with paper wreaths and brightly colored hats, and amused itself openly with dolls and toys, with jeers and practical jokes, uproar and nonsense; where the highest and lowest flaunted in elbow by elbow, with the very highest, and where poverty parodied fashion and gloried in extravagance of dress and demeanour, and was not ashamed to show that it was poverty, holding up its colored rags and paper, and smoking its vile tobacco with an air of jollity that was infectious, and that fairly outrivalled the merriment of the well-to-do and wealthy. He who had not a gallant steed to himself had at least an eighth part of a bare-boned pony to carry him back to London. He who had not a new coat, had a ragged one or a patched one; and he who rode not on cushions, rode on deal. What did it matter? The steed and the new coat and the cushions had had no better sight of the races than the bare-boned pony and the patched coat, mayhap, and if they had, what matter? A gay heart did not ask for new broadcloth and fine linen to cover it, and a man could laugh and joke as well from a sweep's coat as a lord's. The only thing, or the chief thing was to laugh and joke, for that seemed the work of the evening or these sight-seers and pleasure-mongers of the great day of the English carnival.

(To be continued.)

A SLEIGH-RIDE FOR LIFE.

The month of February was drawing to a close. There had been a thaw, with a warm, drizzling rain, all day; but just before dark the wind changed, and great masses of inky clouds rolled up from the northwest. It grew cold very rapidly, and before 9 o'clock the soft "sposhy" snow had become a frozen mass of ice. The morning dawned clear and bright, with the mercury only four degrees above zero. Frosty particles glittered in the air, and the cleared fields at the base of the distant blue Oquago mountain seemed cased in fetters of ice.

"Boys," said father, rising from the table and going where the warm fire was glowing like molten gold in the open grate, "can't you take Mr. Fenton's sleigh home this morning as you go to school? It's down hill most of the way, and you can draw it easily by hand. You will have plenty of time before school commences, and then you'll not be bothered to come home with the horses."

Of course, we could take it, just as well as not. John was 17, and I was 19, hale and hearty; and with strength of muscle and ambitious spirits, we undoubtedly felt, as most young men of that age do, that we were a "full team" for almost anything. The long, yellow sleigh, with three seats and heavy swan-necks in front, was soon at the door. The dinner basket and books were placed therein, and each took his place at the pole, for a brisk run along the icy road.

"Let me say one word to you, boys, before you go," said father, coming out upon the stone steps. "Don't undertake to ride down hill. It's icy and it's dangerous. Remember what I tell you."

"All right," we replied in concert as we started on a run. The half mile that intervened between our place and the school house was soon passed. A number of girls and boys were running about the yard as we came up.

"Hurrah for a sleigh-ride—a genuine old-fashioned good one!" I shouted, as we halted before the door.