PRIMROSES.

Come, put away that dreary book,
Lift up those tired eyes, and look
At what my hands spread
I have you, could you but smile,
Although your eyes are grave the while,
At my bright bit of green
Twin primrose pale
Twin primrose pale, and your grave, half-smiles from the cambric leaves,
Half-smiles from the cambric leaves,
Half-smiles, half-tears, half-memories spread
Its faded beauty over the bed
Where these bright treasures lay.

But I was searching all around
For early blossoms, so I found
What others might have passed,
Dear heart! it seems most sweet to me
That our first flowers this year should be
Primroses, like the last.

Do you remember how we went,
Our hearts brimful with deep content,
Last year along the road?
My hand was blue on your arm,
Your eyes held mine as with a charm,
And I felt heaven God.

Because of your great love that day!
And, when you gathered by the way
A little flower for me,
My beating heart, before so meek,
Grew great with pride—I could not speak,
But thanked God silently.

My little modest flower, you said,
And smiled my happy thoughts to read,
Pin it looked up again!
My little primrose, forever, that bringest
The fragrance of forgotten springs
To hold heart and brain!

I know I was not fit to mate
With one like you, so good and great,
But love brings all things round!
For I could learn and you could teach,
So my life's low and narrow reach
Took wider view and higher.

Our hearts are wider too, we know,
And stronger than a year ago
Love's primer teaches—love!
We feel by many a quiet hour,
By many a tender word, the power
Of calm affection, a sway.

My darling! have I truly brought
The sunshine and the rest you sought,
When our two lives met as one?
Have I been to your springs of old?
Ah! can my heart be half so good
As I know you are content.

All the Year Round.

AN ITALIAN COUNT.

Miss Lowrin, aged twenty-seven, pretty and not at all jenny, sat in her cozy boudoir one morning busily engaged in writing one she had brought in a card.

"Show him into the drawing room Antonio," said the mistress, "of course I'm at home to him—one of my oldest friends. The letter can wait."

Brown disappeared. Miss Lowrin moved quickly to the mirror and smoothed her bright locks daintily back, then went down stairs. A tall, handsome young man came forward to greet the young lady.

"So delighted," exclaimed the lady, her face a mirror of genuine welcome, as she met him with outstretched hands. "What an age since I have seen you; and what experiences we have both gone through! You have been among the Indians, I hear."

"And you among the brigands of Italy," he responded, as he shook hands heartily. "Upon my word," he added, "you are growing younger. When we last met—

"The little lady held up a finger warningly. "No flattery," she said laughing. "I don't you know that I have silver threads among the golden? Come sit down and tell me the news. I will ring for luncheon, which we can have just here. Hark! the rolling two easy chairs near the bay window; "you let us be easy. In the first place, what brought you to Toronto? I have

"By three months," he quietly repeated, laying aside his cane. "I came home on the sick list."

"Yes, yes; I've heard all about that, honourably wounded! Which was it, the right arm or the left?" she asked anxiously.

"The left—shot near the shoulder; any but for Dean—you know Dean, our major, if should have escaped, for the ball, after the wound made an exit. But he dragged me to the fort under steady fire, and, so here I am."

"O Jack, what a mercy!" said the little lady, an unwonted moisture making her brown eyes brighter. "I suppose you saw Miss Fanny's hero then?"

"Miss Fanny was visiting at Chicago at the time," said Jack, a sudden and resentful shade change visible in handsome features, his lips working and a frown disfiguring the smoothness of his forehead.

"But she came right on, of course?"

"She came on about two months ago," he said in constrained tones. "Miss Lowrin, we won't talk about her, please."

"But indeed we will," was the astonished reply. "Resist upon the privilege of an old friend and I want to know what is amiss. Fanny Regis and you were certainly engaged to be married before I went away."

"Oh yes; that was ages ago."

"Ages? Jack two years—do you call that ages? Why, Jack, what is the meaning of all this?"

This young man turned his head away so that only the outlines of the fine profile could be seen, but the quick eyes of the lady opposite took note that the lips quivered again under the golden brown moustache, and she said to herself:

"What can poor boy have happened to part two such devoted lovers?"

"The meaning, Miss Lowrin, is this," said Jack after a brief silence, "Fanny and I are no longer friends, and she is at present engaged to be married."

"Genuine Heaven!" exclaimed the lady lifting up both hands and then letting them fall upon the gray, silken folds of her dress.

"Whom to, pray?"

"An Italian count."

Miss Lowrin shuddered. Her cheeks felt that soft bright coloring.

"I have almost learned to hate the very name of an Italian," she said, her voice full of pity; "of course my adventures have not escaped your hearing. A pretty figure I have cut in the provincial and sensational newspapers! Just imagine, if you can, how literally crucified I have been in my feelings by all the distorted narrations. Oh, the misery of printer's ink!"

"In the article I saw," said Jack with a roguish smile, "you were the brave and beautiful Miss Lowrin, whose presence of diplomacy had outwitted the great chief of the bandits. Oh, I assure you I have been very proud of you, and felt sorry that very much patronizing attention has been showered on me entirely on your account—how many times I have been asked to give a description of your appearance—the colour of your hair and your eyes?"

"No! Am I then so ridiculously colourless?" and she laughed heartily; "if I was fond of fashion, I should be little grieved, I suppose; and perhaps I should not for such exaggerated descriptions as have been given of the affair would be false."

"I suppose you relate the adventure as it actually did occur?" Jack queried turning, toward her with a more spirited countenance. "Yes" "I like to hear of hair-breadth escapes."

"But about Fanny?" asked his friend anxiously, not to be put off.

"They are to be married, I believe, very shortly, perhaps, perhaps, I and your friend Fanny, and he waved his hand contemptuously, as if dismissing the subject.

"But an Italian!" she murmured with lips depressed at the corners; "not that I would be unjust to a native land so glowing a past, and whose children have been patriots, not wanting in either nobility or generosity, but both Italians are not by the phrase citizens. As to the aristocracy proper, they are nothing remarkable no better than the brigands indeed."

"Ah, now you are coming to something I want to hear about," said Jack.

"I suppose there will be no peace for me till it is told," Miss Lowrin responded, rising for the luncheon-tray to be taken away. "Very well, then, we were travelling three of the small towns on Sicilian ground after leaving Naples. Night came on and with it a storm. I can never forget that glorious, which, when the lightning revealed its awful chasms that seemed to lie running fire or molten lightning, filled me with sensations of sublime terrible to describe. You know I am constitutionally hardy; it takes a good deal to frighten me, but Horace was quite ill, and I felt almost on his account than on my own, as his nerves were completely unstrung. The thunder roared and lightning flashed incessant. Indeed, sometimes it seemed as if the solid rock some leagues out of the mountain-side and crashing across our path. Every moment I expected the carriage to be blocked. At last one long livid flash of lightning disclosed a sight we were utterly unprepared for. It seemed as that one white moment as if the whole world were one blaze, and opened to my distraught fancies of cities and palaces, of towers and domes, towering upon mountain-peaks. It was, of course, illusion, but the sight appeared our carriage shaking with terror, the wild, swarthy faces of the brigands, half savages, and half-civilized, showing very distinctly, though the rest were very-looking enough in open day. I suppose that like the wildness of the cities, it was phantasmal; but there were no illusions of the imagination. Suddenly the driver stopped his horses, gave a shriek of terror and then shots were heard. O the terrible, swallowing, engulfing darkness and we in the power of the mountain-brigands, the most dangerous and least scrupulous criminals in the world! What followed seems to me now like a confused drama. There was clashing of arms, outcries, oaths—I felt myself drawn from the carriage without the power of resistance, but holding on to Horace, who scrambled out with me. Fortunately, I could speak Italian with the best of them, and that may have made the chief of the band more gentle to us. I begged him to forbear violence, for my brother was ill, and, indeed, when the lightning blazed again, showed me Horace's white face, this same leader, in the most finished Italian, and the language of a scholar, indeed, and the phrases of a courtier of Pope Leo, asks that we should none of us be harmed.

"Another vivid flash of the stormy, picturesque was lighted, by a dozen of more lanterns, that threw their lurid light through red glare on the massive and gaping rocks, the chasms, the cataracts, the arrival jagged, hoarse; but by their friendly light we were walked up a rugged, steep, stony road, and taken at last into a terrible cavern, along whose rocky walls the thunders roared, sounding like a thousand parks of artillery.

"Fortunately for both Horace and myself, my companion did not know a word of English of all that was frightful, uncourtain, and terrible in the manner of the speaking, and I, of course, translated the story. You know how fond I always was of the sensational and romantic, and I ventured to take a seat on the dark rock divan, the extreme end of which I could see a great fire blazing, before which some figures dressed both odd and fantastic gave me a singular thrill, a shivering sensation, a wild, fierce delight—don't laugh at me, Jack.

"Besides, we could smell the savour of roasting meat, and, to one who had been fasting for nearly ten hours, this of itself was sufficient to inspire some good-humored trombonnes fancies. I had no idea that they intended to starve us. We were treated with some courtesy and given to understand that the attacking party did not wish to be considered thieves, assassins, or murderers.

"As soon as I had thrown off my hat and cloak, and had smoothed my hair for Horace sake, I took off—for people—a small silver crucifix which a very devoted Catholic had presented to me, and looked at it as if in silent devotion. I trust it was not entirely as a ruse, for I felt what the Christian must feel whenever he looks upon that sacred emblem. From that moment the leader of the band treated me with additional respect. There were two other ladies but they shared dowed Horace's attentions to despair and contained sits and cry and wring their hands, but all that was lost upon our brave bandits, for did they care for sobs and tears? I did try to infuse a little courage into the poor souls, but they seemed to take a sort of comfort in their misery, and no doubt consider me to be this day a heathen monster.

"The leader was a tall, and, under other circumstances, I might have called him a particularly handsome man. From the first moment I was struck with much consideration. Besides having the advantage of speaking the language, his pulse beating, his heart bound at the outrage as it deserved, and I do believe the fellow liked me the better for my sarcasm. I think some of the men wished to make chief of a hero of romance. There was a peculiar scar over his right eye, which gave it the appearance of being double-lidded, but did not at all detract from his good looks; it another sort divided his chin, and if I were clefs by a deep dimple, only the finished, white flesh was plainly visible. He was really a very grand-looking man, with a countenance changing with every phase of feeling, that I did not think as an ordinary acquaintance, or a high dignitary, I might have been very favourably impressed. Don't laugh, Jack, when I tell you that he was brought into siege to my heart up there in the mountains, and put me in such terror that I told him I was a married lady. And further, that I was one of your old comrade-in-arms, and that he in this deception for I knew you would forgive when I had my birthday party, Miss Regis, that dreadful great-aunt of mine, made a long journey over a mountain, and declared that we were man and wife. I was only thirteen and you were fifteen, and don't you remember how I cried about it?"

"Complimentary to me," said Jack with a grimace.

"Oh, but Jack, we were much too good friends ever to get married," she responded with such an inimitable voice and honest manner that he burst into a laugh, in which she joined.

"Never mind," she added, still laughing, "my noble robber caused his gallantries in a degree, and after a short, dignified speech, grave, elegance and dignity, covered a heartless, selfish, utterly cruel, and murderous character. However, we were given a good supper of roast-venison and fruits. There were no potatoes, but plenty of hard bread and good butter—cakes and honey came afterward. My chief did the honors of the table, which was a flat projecting rock covered with a rich crimson cloth, which I suspect had once covered the graceful shoulders of some rich capitalist.

"The smooth tongue of our treacherous captor did not blind me to the danger of our situation. I knew that we were in the depot of murder and plunder for the more distant of the subjects of our conversation. They don't stop travelling carriage on stormy nights among the mountains for pretense of friendship or of gallantry. I may suppose I did not sleep at all thinking. An old-fashioned clock, such as are seen in the corners of the time in that country, struck the hours upon my waiting ears all morning. My landlord had disappeared in the dark cavern. I could hear the rain dripping from the rocks. Here and there a torch flared in the wind, and I could see the gleam of thick darkness above, and the strange picturesque perspective below, more gaudy than picturesque. Many of the men wore jackets of beautiful leopard skins, and formed a picture worth visiting place, but I was so much occupied in watching the shadow-like spectres that flitted along the granite walls and vanish, that I think I lost sight of little else.

"Of course that every precaution had been taken to guard the cave, and did not, therefore, make any effort for our escape.

"The next day passed gloomily. Early in the morning I was left in the cave, and we were cared for by four or five dark Italian women, so thoroughly deaf to pity and so thoroughly of the character of the band, that I ventured to make my case known to them dressed in female garments. Several of them bore marks of great brutality of treatment. I asked if they had any hope of escape. She answered me no. She answered me no. She answered me no. I was so sick and sorrowful, I felt very precaution had been taken to guard the cave, and did not, therefore, make any effort for our escape.

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"Jack bit his lip.

"We won't talk of Fanny," he said, dubiously, his pulse beating, his heart bounding with a new, strange sensation, as violent as it was for the moment entrancing. "But tell me about your Italian."

"Count" she said with sarcastic emphasis, "I know he is one of the most terrible of the Italian banditti. Rich, is he? Yes; I should's wonder if he had divided his share, as if he were clefs by a deep dimple, only the finished, white flesh was plainly visible. He was really a very grand-looking man, with a countenance changing with every phase of feeling, that I did not think as an ordinary acquaintance, or a high dignitary, I might have been very favourably impressed. Don't laugh, Jack, when I tell you that he was brought into siege to my heart up there in the mountains, and put me in such terror that I told him I was a married lady. And further, that I was one of your old comrade-in-arms, and that in this deception for I knew you would forgive when I had my birthday party, Miss Regis, that dreadful great-aunt of mine, made a long journey over a mountain, and declared that we were man and wife. I was only thirteen and you were fifteen, and don't you remember how I cried about it?"

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