

[For the Canadian Illustrated News.]

CONVENT MAID.

Sweet convent maid I go from thee,
Across the dark and swelling sea!
I go to tread another land,
But will I meet a smile more bland,
A heart so pure, so kind, so free,
As that which lives and beats in thee?
O no I cannot!

The matin song, the tinkling bell,
The prayer that did thy bosom swell,
The chanting lyre, the melting voice,
All bade my sinking heart rejoice,
And now when parting with regret,
Can I such cherished scenes forget?
O no I cannot!

When far from thee the rolling tear
Will flow at thought of time so dear,
The past will sometimes o'er me steal,
And bring me back all now I feel,
But will a love so great as thine
Around my heart again entwine?
O no I cannot!

Then convent maid remember him
Whose soul with sorrow's cloud is dim;
This heart to thee shall still be true
Though now I breathe a long adieu;
No other love can fill my breast,
Can soothe my woe, can give me rest,
O no I cannot!

Charlotte Town, P. E. Island.

J. B.

THE LITTLE ICICLE.

"What a splendid-looking fellow!" exclaimed a brilliant, sparkling brunette, as the door closed after Bertram Roland. "Positively the handsomest man I've seen in P——, I've a mind to try and cut you out, little Ruth. If it would not be rather uncousinly, I'd be tempted to set my cap."

"I'm sure you would succeed, Jemima, for, in the first place, Mr. Roland is not an admirer of mine that I am aware of; and if he was, after meeting you, I'm sure I should soon be forgotten."

"No, no, you demure little bird. You are just one of those that nestle around and steal into a man's heart so quietly that he knows nothing about it until you have such a hold there that no one, not even the most beautiful girl in the world, could cut you out."

"I declare you would be a most formidable rival."

"I'm not a bit afraid of these acknowledged belles and beauties, but preserve me from a sweet, gentle, lovely, womanly little girl as a rival," Jemima answered, glancing with a well-satisfied expression into the mirror opposite.

Seldom ever mirror reflected a more beautiful face.

Jemima Forrester was truly a girl to charm, enchant, bewilder, and render very miserable the man who might win her.

Vain, spoiled, capricious, and wilful she was, but so wonderfully beautiful that those who knew her could almost forgive her faults because she was so fair to look upon.

"Ruthy, would it hurt you if I won him?" she asked, with an arch look in her dark eye.

Ruth's fair face flushed deeply as she answered—

"It would mortify me to see a relative of mine trying to attract the admiration of any gentleman."

There was a flash from the dark eyes, and a look that spoke as plain as words—

"I'll pay you for this, my lady."

Little Ruth had told the truth when she said she was not aware that Bertram Roland was an admirer of hers.

But not the whole truth, dear little girl?

She would have been the happiest maid in the world if she could have believed that this handsome, noble man, as she always thought him, cared for her.

For she had loved him since the first day they met.

A few weeks previous, when out walking, she had slipped on the ice and been so severely hurt she could not stand up.

In agony she raised her eyes to meet those of Bertram Roland.

"Let me help you," he said, in a tone full of sympathy, at the same time, with that gentle, earnest, determined manner that one cannot resist.

Ruth Morely's hand was placed confidently in his.

And when he had raised, and was still supporting her, he said—

"I shall place you as comfortably as possible in the shop opposite while I obtain a cab. Give me your address, please."

He was a stranger, and she in a strange town, but she could—she must trust him.

A glance up into his beautiful, earnest, honest eyes was enough, and Ruth said—

"Mr. Easton's, No. —, S—— Street. He is my uncle; I am visiting there."

An expression of agreeable surprise passed over the young man's face.

"I know your uncle, Miss Easton."

"My name is Morely," Ruth said.

And taking from her pocket-book her card, handed it to him.

And so began their acquaintance.

After Mr. Roland had taken Ruth home, it was only polite to call and inquire after her health.

This he had done half a dozen times, and I think was getting to fancy little Ruth Morely the sweetest and most lovable girl he knew, when the beautiful, sparkling Jemima came to visit her uncle, too.

Poor Ruth, her heart was sorely troubled. And she did wish—how could she help it?—that Jemima had remained at home.

Still, the gentle, placid face gave no sign of her anxiety.

Jemima had "set her cap," it was plain to see.

Few men could resist such beauty and grace.

When bright eyes grow brighter at their approach, and rosy cheeks deepen their hue, does it not please them?

It did Bertram Roland.

He liked to have folks show their feelings.

At times he had been piqued that Ruth received him just in the same way she met Mr. Brownson, her cousin, Kate Easton's lover.

And when, on two or three occasions, he had carried her the sweetest little bouquets of rare flowers, her "Thank you" was so quiet.

Why could she not have said more, raised her eyes to his, and let him see that she was pleased?

He had a mind to see if he could not win better treatment from Jemima.

Yes, he would see how Ruth would like it, for a while, anyhow.

He had no doubt but Jemima's heart was given to some lucky fellow long ago.

Little Ruth was not in one evening when Mr. Roland came, or I think he might have found it not so easy to pass her by, and give to Jemima the beautiful flowers.

But, when once done he was in for it.

After that, the bouquets went where they were appreciated, as he thought.

"For me!" Jemima exclaimed, her eyes brightening as she caught the flowers, and pressed them close to her lovely face.

"How beautiful. Thanks! I love flowers so dearly, and—and," her rosy cheeks grew rosier, "I love you ever so much for giving them to me."

She held them long, finding new beauties continually.

"I ought not to keep them in my hands. They will fade. Yet I cannot bear to put them away," she said.

And then, after raising her eyes timidly, pleadingly to his, she said, in a low voice—

"Take them from me. I can resign them to you."

The flowers were taken, the pretty little hand retained and clasped warmly, and Bertram Roland's thoughts never returned to Ruth again that evening.

"Ah! here is the girl for me," said Bertram.

"And, upon my word, I believe I might win her. I'm sure she is not wholly indifferent towards me now. Thank Heaven, I have in no way committed myself to that little icicle."

Either she has no heart to win, or I am not the man to find it."

Triumphantly Jemima help up the flowers the next morning, and Katie Easton said—

"You would not have gotten them had Ruth been at home."

"Perhaps not. The future will and must prove that," Jemima said, with a saucy toss of her beautiful head.

Poor Ruth!

Her vision of happiness was over.

She wanted to get away from P——

She was almost sure the sun did not shine so brightly there, nor was the sky so blue as over her own home. Everything was gloomy.

She would have run away had her uncle not been so loving and kind.

She did not want to seem ungrateful.

Oh! what a trial it was for her when Mr. Roland came to sit and see his unmistakable admiration of Jemima.

At length, everyone grew to look upon him as her lover.

And Ruth would steal away soon after entrance to her own room, to shed a few bitter tears, to try and forget her love for a while, listening to uncle's merry jokes.

And Jemima—did she really love the man she had won from her cousin?

Yes, as well as she was competent of loving anybody.

Bertram Roland was a man of whose love she might be proud.

Bertram thought himself a very lucky and very happy man.

He was almost sure Jemima loved him, and he had fully determined to propose, and have their engagement proclaimed.

He dreaded lest some one might discover his beautiful Jemima, and contest the prize with him.

Just at this point, perhaps, Bertram's good angel took charge of him; at any rate, his love-making was interrupted.

A telegram, informing him of his mother's extreme illness, sent him flying from P—— as fast as steam could carry him.

During his absence of two weeks, the gay season began.

He saw the announcement of Miss Forrester's debut.

He thought she might have waited his return, and wondered that she could enjoy gay scenes during his absence.

Contrary to the expectation of physicians and friends, his mother's disease took a favourable turn.

Soon after, she was declared out of danger and convalescent.

Then Bertram hastened back to his love.

The evening of his arrival, he went immediately to Mrs. Easton's, impatient to see his Jemima.

From the servant, he learned the young ladies were all at a brilliant reception.

He changed his travelling suit, and proceeded

to the gay scene, the hostess being an old and valued friend.

In the dressing-room, Bertram met the brother of this lady, a college chum, who, after their toilets were completed, said—

"Now, come, Roland; I want to introduce you to the most beautiful girl in the house, although I scarcely think you'll be able to have the honour of a dance. I'm sure her card is made up. I'd venture a good deal that Delavan is down for every dance."

"Ah, who may the lady be?" asked Bertram a slight feeling of uneasiness in his heart.

"Miss Forrester, the most beautiful, sparkling gem you ever saw. Come; shall I introduce you?"

"Bye and bye, perhaps. But how is it with you? If I remember rightly, you were wont to worship at the shrine of beauty?"

"Yes, you are right; but with growing years and experience my ideas have changed somewhat."

"I worship now rather the jewel itself than the casket that contains it."

"I don't mine telling you, old fellow. There is a little woodland violet here—a little snowflake, more truly speaking, whose smile I'd sooner win."

"A cousin of the belles's. I tell you, Bert, I'm afraid of these charming bewitching, bewildering women."

"They are just the thing we want for the ball-room, and just very apt to get a brother, lover, or husband, maybe, into a quiet little game of pistols for two."

"No, no; give me a little girl whose dear form is only clasped by one—whose hand never lingered in that of any man but the one to whom her love and her heart are pledged. Win the love of such a woman as little Ruth Morely, and you will have it all to yourself."

"To the man who wins her love, this little icicle, as some call her, will melt, I know, and will make the truest, most loving wife. Ah, yes, she is the girl to take to a man's heart and home."

"But I fear there is no hope for me. Perhaps her heart is won already."

"I've thought so myself," Roland answered, quietly.

"Why, you know her?"

"I've met her several times."

Before entering the ballroom, Roland stood hid behind the draperies of a window, and watched Jemima.

She was in young Delavan's arms, borne through a waltz.

She stood near enough for him to hear her quick breathing as she rested, with her hand still clasped in her partner's, to see her look at this acquaintance of a few days as she had looked at him!

Worse than all, to see her pick from her bouquet a flower which was pressed to young Delavan's lips, and then pinned near his heart.

"Thank Heaven!" he said, "my eyes are opened. This very night, if I had found her at home, I should have offered her my heart and hand."

He would have left the scene immediately, had not Kate Easton discovered him and said—

"Do come and help me find Ruth; I've been hunting a half hour for her."

Just then their hostess came up.

"You will find your cousin in my boudoir, Miss Easton. She was faint, and I carried her there. She is much better now."

Kate hurried off with Bertram Roland, to find Ruth looking pale and very weary.

After considerable persuasion, she permitted Bertram to take her home.

The little manoeuvring Kate declared she knew she was dreadfully selfish, but she did want to stay a little longer.

And so a second time, Ruth was supported by Bertram Roland's strong arm.

He felt her trembling, and after the carriage had started, said gently—

"You must allow me to take care of you as I should my sister. You are still very weak and I shall wrap you up better. There now, rest against me, little sister."

She would say it.

No matter what suffering it cost her, it would be so.

She might as well get used to it.

"Cousin," she murmured, scarce above a whisper.

"Never!" he answered, decidedly, repeating it, "never! That is impossible."

"Never!" came from Ruth's lips, in a tone of mingled surprise and joy.

For the first time the thought entered Bertram Roland's mind that he had been mistaken.

That, perhaps, this gentle, timid little girl did care for him.

He was perfectly over his blind infatuation.

His heart was already anxious to return to its true love.

After a moment's hesitation, he said—

"I've not spoken to Miss Forrester this evening."

"You are hurt. You have heard about Mr. —"

"No, I'm not a bit hurt, Ruth. I was rejoiced that Miss Forrester was nothing more to me than a pleasant acquaintance. I had been hurt before I met her—that I failed to win from another some little show of regard. Why did you not keep me to yourself, Ruth? Had you no heart to give me?"

"I keep you: How could I?" Ruth answered low.

"Oh, you little prude! I know you now. It is only word for word from you. Now tell me, have you any love to give one that loved you the very first hour you leaned upon him? Where is your heart, Ruth? I must find it, and keep it too."

Then the little icicle melted, and dropping her head on his breast, she sobbed in joy, and whispered—

"Oh, you have had it all the time! And—and—you almost broke it when you were loving Jemima."

"No, no; you must not use that word in connection with her. I long to see your eyes, my little Ruth, to find what I've looked for so often."

When they were at home, and Ruth seated on the sofa, the shy eyes looked up, and Bertram found all he wanted there—love, deep, pure and true.

The next morning Jemima, having heard of Mr. Roland's arrival, made a very careful toilet, and awaited his coming.

She expected a stormy scene with a jealous lover, ending with their engagement.

A servant brought up his card to Ruth.

To Jemima's immense surprise, this happy little girl received it as a matter of course, and went to the drawing-room to see him.

An hour after, when she came back, her cheeks were a little flushed, and in her eyes was a light that almost rivalled a brilliant gem that sparkled in a ring on her forefinger.

Then the truth was plain, and Miss Forrester knew she had failed to win Ruth's lover.

Don't blame her for saying a little spitefully—

"It was lucky for you, Ruth, that Mr. Delavan was in every way a man more to my mind than Mr. Roland."

Ruth was too happy to care for that, and only hoped that it might be so.

HUMOUROUS.

It is said that bleeding a partially blind horse at the nose will restore him to sight; so much for the horse. To open a man's eyes you must bleed him in the pocket.

"WHEN I put my foot down, I'll have you to understand," said Mrs. Nojoker, "that there's something there." On investigation, it was found to be a No. 11 shoe.

THE fog was so thick in Troy early the other morning that the Times solemnly avers one could not distinguish a policeman from a hitching-post across the street, if he didn't know that hitching posts never snore.

It now turns out that oatmeal doesn't make brain after all, and the Philadelphia editors who laid in a dozen barrels apiece for winter use will be almost mad enough to give it to the poor.

AN ingenious baker sought to justify the high price of his loaves by saying that he had it on the authority of an eminent naturalist, that the doe belongs to the deer tribe.

A MAN was strolling along the jetty at Margate when his eye lighted on the name of *Psyche* on a pleasure boat; after spelling it out slowly, he exclaimed, "Well, if that ain't the oddest way to spell 'fish' I ever saw!"

THE extraordinary contortions of a man who attempts to cross a New York street on a rainy day are only equalled by the sickly misery depicted upon his face when he flops down in the gutter and finds he has made a mistake.

RECENT experiments with cats have proved that a full developed tabby can successfully evade the rapid approach of two bootblacks, a bar of castile soap, a pair of No. 10 boots, a gold watch, a blacking brush, and a horse pistol.

"TAKE a wing?" said a presumptuous fop to a sensible young lady, at the close of a meeting, at the same time extending his bent arm towards her. "Not of a gander," she quietly replied, and walked home with her mother.

THE attachment of some New York ladies to their lap-dogs amounts, in some instances, to infatuation. An ill-tempered lap-dog biting a piece out of a male visitor's leg, his mistress thus expressed her compassion: "Poor little dear creature, I hope it won't make him sick!"

MARK TWAIN, a few months after his first baby was born, was holding it on his knee. His wife said: "Now confess, Samuel, that you love the child." "I can't do that," replied the humorist, "but am willing to admit that I respect the little thing for its father's sake."

A REVEREND DEAN, economical of his wine, decanting on the extraordinary performance of a blind man, remarked that the poor fellow "could see no more than that bottle." "No wonder, sir," remarked a minor Canon, "for we have seen no more than that bottle all the afternoon."

WHILE T. D. Jones was in Columbia, modelling his bust of Chase, a young man of the Sparkler order of architects approached him one night at a social gathering with the following inquiry: "Er—er—say! er—er—so you're the man—er—that makes mud heads, ain't you?" "Yes," said old Tom, blandly, "do you want a new one?"

A COUPLE of members of the darkey conference were passing down the avenue, when one of them trod on the indigestible portion of a pear, and as his number eleven went up the rest of his body was correspondingly lowered. "Ki-yah, brudder Jones, is you fallen from grace?" chuckled his companion. "Not precisely, deacon, I've sittin' on de ragged edge of dis pear."

"I HAVE come for my umbrella," said a lender of it on a rainy day to a friend. "Can't help that," said the borrower, "don't you see that I am going out with it?" "Well, yes," replied the lender, astonished at such outrageous impudence; "yes, but—but—what am I to do?" "Do!" said the other, as he opened the umbrella and walked off, "do as I did—borrow one."

THE saddest man in the city, lately, was the one who had been told that the first snow of the season was the proper thing in which to break in his new boots. He says if he can find the walking encyclopedia who dispensed such gratuitous information, he will show him a wrinkle in the boot-breaking business which, though having no claim to novelty, has always been attended by a great amount of satisfaction to the wearer.

A LADY and her eight-year old daughter were among the passengers on a Detroit street car, the other day, and presently the little miss observed a man take out his handkerchief, flourish it round, and then wipe his nose. The child leaned over to her mother and whispered: "Mamma, that gentleman is trying to flirt with me, but I shall give him the handkerchief signal that I distrust his motives."