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Poetry.

THE COTTAGE.

BY JEFFERY GIFFORD.

Where the cosy cottage stands,
By the silver streamlet bright—
Graceful hills and meadow lands,
Mark a region of delight;
On the warm slopes light does stay
Frost footed all the day.

Rural paths lead here and there,
Fringed with leafy colonnades,
While children, free from strife or care,
Frolic on the velvet glades;
Further down the village spire
Is all ablaze with crimson fire.

Still further on, the stream winds round
At the foot of yonder wood,
And the bordering edge of ground
Serenely glows for many a rood.
Where the placid brook flows deep,
Rich pastures feed large flocks of sheep.

Milk-white lambs here sport and play
Till in gambols weary grown,
As slowly fades the waning day,
And fields look drear and lone;
Yet, the glens are floored with foam,
Where the dancing waters roam.

Forever, day and night the same,
The babbling spring is bright and clear,
And prattling child and aged dame
Here watch its ripples, year by year;
Near by, great oaks in stately pride,
Stand close together side by side.

A SILVER-LINED CLOUD.

BY GRACE THORNTON.

Egbert Walton sat alone in his counting house. He had locked the door, to prevent intrusion, and the busy movements of his clerks outside came to his ear faintly, as he sat with his head buried in his hands, and an expression of abject misery marking his handsome face.

He had learned, within that hour, that his wife was a ruined man, and the consciousness had burst upon him with a stunning sorrow, for he was not alone to suffer.

But three months before he had led to the altar the most beautiful and capricious belle of the season. He had been congratulated and envied by all his acquaintances, and after a fashionable wedding tour, wherein his marvelous fortune was displayed to its best advantage, they had returned to the showy and splendid home he had fitted up for their reception, and a round of guests had followed, in which she had shone the queen, and he had been considered the luckiest of bridegrooms.

Their life had been so filled with display and excitement heretofore that they really had not had much time to grow acquainted with each other. They had scarcely ever spent an evening alone together. The hours he could spare from his business had been occupied in dressing for various entertainments, the chief enjoyment of which had been, to him, to hear his wife called the handsomest woman present; and even that delight had begun to pale, and vague longing for something better than dazzle and show had begun to assert itself within his mind.

Dora had been an orphan, brought up by a fashionable aunt, with expensive tastes and a passion for gay society.

She had brought Egbert no fortune beyond the trifle saved from her showy education, which her aunt said would serve as pin money for the first year or two; but that was no consideration to the rich and generous young husband, whose prosperous business speculations promised soon to make him a millionaire.

Now all was lost. A cloud, at first no larger than a man's hand, had spread into a hurricane of desolation and despair.

A whisper of suspension, on the part of a great banking-house with which he was deeply concerned, had swelled into positive assurance within the hour. His investments were widely spread, and boldly ventured; there was no possibility of a recall. The crash could not be resisted—the blow must and did fall.

"Only for Dora," he muttered to himself, as he raised his ghastly white face from his drooping position, and flung back his damp hair, "I could meet it like a man only for her!"

He recalled her butterfly-life of gaiety and splendor—her passion for excitement and admiration; and then shuddered, to face the dreary reality before them.

She was a widow, she would marry

again. There are other fortunes that may be hers, if you will make her free," whispered the tempter, and Egbert's despairing eyes glanced toward the pistol-case hidden in his desk.

He sprang up and looked it quickly. He would not entertain so base and cowardly a thought.

"It must be done, sooner or later," he said, decidedly. "She must know it, and it is cruel to let it reach her through any means but mine."

He composed his face, and passed out among his employees, looking but little shaken, except in his loss of color; and they whispered among each other how well he bore it.

He walked toward home and as he entered its elegant hall, his wife passed him, with a rich lace shawl, draped over her shoulders.

"You are just in time to see a perfect gem," she cried, gaily. "Come back into the parlor, where I can display it to better advantage. See—is it not rarely beautiful? The Blanks imported it expressly to my order."

"Vain and frivolous," was his inward comment, as he turned aside with a look of wretchedness, and thought: "What shall I do? How can I break such tidings to so unthinking a being—such a spoiled darling of fortune?"

"You are out of humor, it seems," she said, with a gaze of cold surprise, for his manner had piqued her, and she was too accustomed to adulation to brook neglect tamely.

He did not answer at first, but flung himself into a seat, and cast down his eyes upon the rich carpet.

"Is this a whim, or is it meant to pain and annoy me?" she asked, proudly.

Her tone stung her harassed husband; he had meant to spare her to the utmost, but her lofty indifference overcame his resolution.

She swept past him with an offended air, but paused at the door, she turned, and looking full upon him, asked, once more:

"Will you explain what caprice has seized you, and why you play off severity and gloom upon me?"

"Yes, I will explain!" he exclaimed, springing to his feet, with white lips and shaking form. "Since you demand to know, let me tell you that it means ruin—utter, entire, complete ruin! I was a rich man when I married you, Dora, and to-day I am a beggar. Not a cent that I called my own can be claimed by me any longer. The roof over our head now belongs to strangers, and we must go forth homeless and penniless, to begin the world again."

He spoke as he felt, in a high excited key; his frame shook with the force of his words.

His wife stood gazing full in his eyes, for a moment, like one rooted to the spot by a powerful spell.

Her face lost all its color, and her eyes dilated widely, as if to take in a scene impossible for belief.

"Is this true?" she uttered, and her voice sounded low and husky.

"Too true—too true!" he muttered, burying his face in his hands.

She sank into a chair, and taking off the splendid shawl mechanically, carefully returned it to its original folds. Then she sat still, still, looking steadily before her with a blank stare.

Once or twice Egbert looked up expectantly and uneasily, but there was no change in her expression, and his eyes dropped again.

At length he rose, and going toward her, put his arm around her neck, and bent over her in an affection to which she offered no response.

"I would to heaven the blow could have fallen on me alone!" he murmured. "I feel that I have wronged you bitterly in subjecting you to so fearful a reverse; but I am young yet, Dora, and if your aunt will recede you in Paris, I will work hard that you may live there with her in comparative comfort, until I have acquired sufficient fortune, and risen above this dreadful crash."

She shuddered, and hid her face when he spoke thus, but still made no response.

He left her side, and paced the room excitedly for a time, until her voice arrested his frenzied steps.

"Would it not be best to give up everything at once?" she asked, quietly.

There was a strange and almost automatic-like composure about her, and her voice was very calm.

She looked at him in such an earnest, business-like manner that it astonished him beyond the power of replying.

"You said we would give up everything to pay your creditors," she continued in the same tone. "Would it not be best to do so at once?"

"We must have time," he answered, hastily. "I cannot see you now, without preparation from the luxury that has always been yours—I cannot permit you to suffer anything that I

can shield you from. Your aunt—"

Dora made an indignant gesture that her husband could not comprehend.

Before they could say more, a servant appeared, with a message from the office for Mr. Walton.

It was long after midnight when he returned from his counting-room. His wife was asleep, and he would not disturb her; but threw himself on a lounge in his dressing room to wait for daylight, for in his then state of mind he looked on sleep as impossible.

He was mistaken, however, for just before morning he fell into a slumber that lasted for hours.

When he awoke, Dora had breakfasted and gone out, and again the pressure of business detained him away from her until after bedtime.

In the day, he had dispatched her a note, in which he tried to be as cheerful as he could, and again he alluded to her aunt and a year in Paris as a place of refuge from the present cares and annoyances of their position.

She had sent no answer, and again seemed in a deep slumber when he entered their chamber.

A hot tear fell on her smooth white brow, and she seemed to stir a moment, but presently she was still again, and he moved silently away.

In the hurry and distraction of his forced settlements, he had but little time for other thought; and yet it pained him bitterly to know that his wife avoided him—for nearly three days had now passed since they had spoken together.

Wearily he turned toward on the afternoon of the third day.

By giving up everything he possessed, he would stand free from debt in the world, and bear an honest name.

He had at once resolved on this course, and immediately afterward received an offer of a position in the house of an old merchant—a friend of his father's—who warmly applauded his resolution.

"This would be a terrible change to Dora, and he would make any sacrifice rather than have her meet it, Paris would be an escape, and painful as the separation must prove, he would urge it with all the strength of his usefulness nature.

He was weary and despondent, as he entered the house, but he tried to clear his brow to meet her cheerfully.

She was not there. A little note lay on his writing table, directed to him, in his wife's dressing, and filled with a vague alarm, he rang the bell for her maid before opening it.

An elderly and trusty woman responded. She was a sort of housekeeper and general factotum of Dora's and before Mr. Walton could ask a question.

"Mrs. Walton explained to the servants that business troubles would render it necessary to give up the establishment at once, sir," she said; "so she paid and dismissed them all, except little Minnie, the errand-girl, whom she took with her. I saw her in charge till after the sale, sir."

Egbert looked bewildered. He could not understand his wife's possessing such business abilities, and after turning her nose over and over again in his hand, he opened it.

"There was but one line.

"Come to cottage No 9 Sherwood Road, Dora," "Sherwood Road!" he repeated, as the woman retired. "That is the road we drive out to the river. What can Dora be doing in cottage No. 9?"

He lost no time in endeavoring to discover, and soon reached the designated locality. It was a row of pretty though humble cottages, white in color, and surrounded by neatly cultivated gardens.

No. 9 was the centre one, and he had scarcely stepped on the porch, when the door flew open, and there in a tiny box of entry, very unlike their grand, tiled hall, stood Dora, smiling as he had never seen her smile before.

She was dressed very plainly, and wore a white linen apron; but with all the aid of silks and jewels, she had never seemed so beautiful to him.

"Come in, dear," she cried, joyously. "Come in, and see our new home, and don't say a word, or try to kiss me till I tell you all about it."

They were in a neat parlor opening by folding doors into a small dining-room, both apartments being embellished by large windows and plenty of spring flowers. Everything was fresh, pretty and simple, but very meagre, poor place, compared with the palace they had just left, and yet a home, a true, dear home, in the very best sense of the word—for there stood its mistress, with open arms, seeking her husband's love, in womanly fondness, as a devoted wife.

Egbert instantly disobeyed her command by catching her up in his arms, and pressing her fondly to his heart.

"You must let me tell you!" she exclaimed, struggling and pouting. "I do not want to be here until you feel that I deserve it a little for clinging to myself in the past—my living my idle, self-indulgent life, without a thought save for the gratification of my own folly and caprices, and merely regarding you as the minister to all my selfish vanity. When three days ago, the story of your losses burst upon me, they well nigh stunned me in their sudden force. The awakening was sudden and painful. The awakening was to be a true wife, and an unalterable helpmeet and self-reproach mingled with the knowledge, I was bowed to the earth yet powerless to confess my error."

Egbert, eager in his new-found joy, strove to interrupt her self-reproaches, but in vain.

"You must know how bad I've been—how stupidly selfish and exacting—so as to appreciate my new and better self," she protested.

"You were always good—always lovely—darling!" he cried, rapturously; "but somehow, you seem nearer to me now than ever before."

"That is because you are at home and I'm going to be your housekeeper," said Dora, laughing. "See our pretty cottage, and just think it is all bought and paid for by that plan—Minnie, I never could get an opportunity to spend, and that besides it, we have enough to keep the house economically for a year to come, you and I and Minnie."

"This is delightful—is this rest after a storm, my darling wife," cried Egbert, fondly. "It is worth all that is gone. I would not receive a fortune in exchange for this."

RELIGIOUS MISCELLANY.

Religious Conventions have been held on the Continent and in England during the present year, at the call of Mr. R. P. Smith, the Evangelist, which have been productive of good. In addition to 8,000 people who attended them at Brighton, 200 Ministers from the Continent were present. We copy the following extract from an interesting account of the services:

A BREAKFAST SCENE.
The London Christian gives this account of one service: "One of the most delightful seasons was an occasion of a breakfast for Continental pastors and women, were invited by the Earl of Kintore, the representative Christian men and women, were invited by the Earl of Kintore, the Earl of Cavan, Samuel Morley, M. P., Geo. Moore, Daniel Matheson, J. Butterworth, and T. B. Smith, to meet Mr. Pearsall Smith and the pastors of various nationalities who were at the Convention. After the breakfast at which Lord Kintore presided, thanks were returned in a few words, each in his language, by brethren representing England, France, Germany, Switzerland, Sweden, Norway, Italy, America, India, Holland, Belgium, Spain, and last of all, by Bishop Golat, of Jerusalem, in the Hebrew tongue. Mr. T. Pearsall Smith, very appropriately read passages from Leviticus and Acts, asking the foreign brethren to repeat together, each in his own language, the words from Rev. vi. 10, 'Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.' The effect of this was most touching, and all hearts were melted and subdued. There are ascribed to God, by repeating verse 12: 'Amen: Blessing and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever, Amen.'"

"Mr. R. P. Smith, referring to Rev. vi. 14, said it was not unlikely that some, there would be called to seal their testimony with their blood, but drew encouragement and strength from the subsequent verses, 'They shall hunger no more, etc. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.'"

"After prayer by Mr. Parley and a few more words from Mr. Smith, the following hymn was sung, the chorus in a different language after each verse, and accompanied by the organ:

LET US SING TO THE LORD.
"I trust everything—under God," said Lord Brougham, "to habit upon which, in all ages, the lawyers, as well as the schoolmaster, has mainly placed his reliance; but habit, which makes everything easy, and habit, which creates all the difficulties upon the deviation from it, won at a cost. Make sobriety a habit, and intemperance will be hated; make prudence a habit, and reckless profligacy will be as contrary to the nature of the child, grown or adult, as the most atrocious crimes are to any of your lordships. Give a child the habit, sacredly regarding the truth; of carefully respecting the property of others; of scrupulously abstaining from all acts of improvidence which cause involve him in distress, and he will just as leave think of rushing into an element, in which he cannot breathe, as of lying, or cheating, or swearing."

DANGER OF PROTRACTED SLEEP.—But here, as in so many other cases, the evil of deficiency has its counterpart in the evil of excess. Sleep protracted beyond the need of repair, and encroaching habitually upon the hours of waking action, impairs more or less functions of the brain, and with them all the vital powers. This observation is as old as the days of Hippocrates and Aristotle, who severely and strongly comment upon it. The sleep of infancy, however, and that of old age, do not come under this category of excess. These are natural somnolences, appertaining to the respective periods of life, and to be dealt with as such. In illness, however, all ordinary rule and measure of sleep must be put aside. Distinguishing it from coma, there are very few cases in which it is not an unequivocal good; and even in comatose state the brain, we believe, gains more from repose than from any artificial attempts to rouse it into action.—Edinburgh Review.

A schoolboy being asked by the teacher how he should flow him, replied: "If you please, sir, I should like to have it on the tiffin system—the heavy strokes upwards, and the down ones light." That boy was a genius.

A Frenchman leaving the English in a long complaint of the irregularity of the verb "to go," the present tense of which some say had written out for him, follows: "I go; thou sleepest; the deserts; we make tracks; you eat sticks."



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