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POETRY.

THE SLEEPING WIFE.

My wife! how calmly sleep'st thou!
A perfect peace is on thy brow;
Thine eyes beneath their fringed lid,
Like stars behind a cloud, are hid;
Thy voice is mute, and not a sound
Disturbs the tranquil air around;
I'll watch, and mark each line of grace
That God has drawn upon thy face.

My wife! thy breath is low and soft;
To catch its sound I listen oft:
The lightest leaf of Persian rose
Upon thy lip might find repose;
So deep thy slumber, that I press'd
My trembling heart upon thy breast,
In sudden fear that envious death
Had robb'd thee, sleeping, of thy breath.

My wife! my wife! thy face now seems
To show the tenor of thy dreams:
Methinks thy gentle spirit plays
Amid the scenes of earlier days;
Thy thoughts, perchance, now dwell on him
Whom most thou lov'st; or in the dim
And shadowy future strive to pry,
With woman's curious, earnest eye.

Sleep on! sleep on! my dreaming wife!
Thou livest now another life;
With beings fill'd of fancy's birth:
I will not call thee back to earth:
Sleep on! until the car of morn
Above the eastern hill is borne;
Then thou wilt wake again, and bless
My sight with living loveliness.

A DREAM.

BY W. D. HOWELLS.

It was broad daylight when Geoffrey awoke from a dream that often haunted his sleep. There was neither order nor sequence in the dream. It was merely the presentation of an event related to no immediate cause, and it was in its result dispelling sleep. It had also this strange quality that it referred to no time to any actual occurrence of his life, and that as often as he dreamed it, he had the consciousness that it was the reproduction of a former illusion, yet he always awoke with the sense of its actual fulfillment as near at hand.

His perfect slumber was invaded by a vague presence which assumed the form and aspect of his cousin, whose warm, deep eyes bent looks of unutterable sadness and passion upon him. He made a movement as to embrace her, but with a quick gesture she held him away. It was a gesture which he had seen young girls use with each other—a lightning swift action that repels but for a moment. As often as Geoffrey dreamed of this action, he commented in his dream upon its naturalness. Thus holding him away, his cousin seemed to peruse his soul with those great eyes, into which he made him wild and dizzy to look; and then as if smitten with a sudden weakness, her resisting aspect melted away, and she fell with a sob upon his heart. That was the end of his dream.

The robins were singing in the door yard elms, and the martens were gossiping noisily about their little house on the crest of the gable. The sun came in through the window-shaken creeper at the window, and dappled the white floor with tremulous light and shadow. The farmer was mowing the grass in the orchard, and the horse wash of the scythe smote pleasantly upon the ear.

It was with a sweet pain that Geoffrey glanced over the room, and saw that it was almost unchanged since the time when he slept in it a child; and he puzzled himself again in a childish way, trying to give significance to the vague shapes traced by the lines in the cracked ceiling.

Breakfast awaited him when he went down and he chatted and gossiped with the farmer's wife as he ate. She told him who were gone west, and who were married, and who were dead. She had been an old playmate of his, and the one whom he most delighted to draw to school upon his sled. They laughed about that now, but it made Geoffrey's heart sad to think of it.

The farmer's wife glanced from Geoffrey's handsome, gentle face to the low front and scoldish visage of her husband, and sighed. "Poor woman! it made her something discontented; and when the baby put its hand in the butter, she boxed its ears with energy. After that there was not any more talk."

It is hard to tell just what thoughts a young man goes back to the home of his childhood. With that tender sentiment and yearning for old things which he feels, is mixed a half contempt for them. He sees nothing there but a skeleton of the past, which his own life had once animated. He comes to despise the past, and his own former self. The events of that time like the houses and distances of the place, are all shrunken and dwarfed.

Geoffrey walked from the old farm into the village, and passed on the long street, under the dark maples. These shade trees were the only things that had grown in the last seven years. Dullale was scarcely larger; the buildings that he once thought great, looked mean, and the people whom he recognized had an indefinable air of having fallen away from some former grandeur. No one knew him, and he was at no pains to make himself known.

He was full of a vain and selfish melancholy, and he chose to "guard his strangeness." There is something flattering to the vanity of youth in the consciousness of one that he is greatly changed, however much the show of it in others may pain him.

Geoffrey would hardly acknowledge to himself the reason which had brought him to Dullale. That event which he had believed to desolate his life had more than once been a theme of laughter with him. Once he had delighted to think with the droll earnestness of youth, that the autumn of his soul was at hand, that he was a barren tree from which the blasts of fate had stripped the leaves. Men who are not fools think such preposterous things with less cause than he. Afterward he found that this was only mock autumn; that no winter, but a summer followed it. He was a tree, from the tender blossoms of which a chill spring breeze had merely shaken the petals.

It had not been without emotion that he received the announcement of his marriage. Though he recalled with a smile the time when he thought it must break his heart if she married that man, it was with a sigh of relief that he laid away the interesting paragraph in a package of her letters. He believed that a painful passage in his life was thus closed forever. Had she remained unmarried, he felt that his heart must ever have had its secret yearnings toward her. As it was, these were now impossible. The self-deception was natural.

When, afterward, her husband died, he reasoned with himself, and persuaded himself that he was really indifferent. And indeed it was true that he thought less of her than of himself in regard to the old passion; he occupied himself with affairs, and strove to forget it wholly, with tolerable success, but in his hour of solitude, some incident of those dear days would haunt him. Sometimes he awoke in the middle of the night and thought of her. A feeling of curiosity usurped desire. The wish to see her again and judge her by his manhood's standard, took possession of him by degrees, and by degrees he yielded to it.

He was therefore in Dullale. It was a day of June, the winds came across the meadows with fragrant whispers; their voices, in gossip with the leaves of the maples, and the sweet smell of the roses and honeysuckles in the door yards, charmed and deepened his melancholy.

He did not perceive that he had walked so far till he stood with his hand upon the well-known gate. Here, too, was little change. There had been a new lattice made for the honeysuckle to clamber upon, and the house had been repainted. That was all. The flower beds on each side of the walk to the door, were gay with pinks and tulips and flags, and of yore, and the old house dog, asleep on the stone step, seemed not to have moved for seven years. His aunt sat at the window sewing, for in small places the ladies are economical of passers, and prefer to work in rooms commanding views of the street. The old lady glanced at him through her glasses, but failed to recognize him.

At the sound of his foot upon the walk, the dog sprang up with a fierce challenge, and the old lady came to the door to silence him. Scanning Geoffrey more closely, she knew him, and greeted him as kindly as she could. She was a cold woman, of few words; and after brief inquiries, she told him that she had taken him for a pedlar at first.

Geoffrey smiled, remembering his aunt's virtuous loathing of peddlers in the past. "But you don't look like a peddler, near by," she added. "It is my eyes were at fault. Sit here, and I will call your cousin. She will be glad to see you."

The old place—the tables with their books—the Bible, Mrs. Hemans' poems, and "The Course of Time"—the bureau with its glass knobs—the picture of General Washington over the chimney piece, with vases of impossible tomatoes in plaster on each side.

There are those who, without having mingled with the world, have that ease and self-possession which familiarity with it bestows. In certain foolish moments Geoffrey thought to surprise and confound his cousin when he should meet her, by his superior manner and courtly reticence. He revealed in the anticipated enjoyment of her abasement and regret, when she should come to see what sort of man she had trifled with—a man not only of excellent mind and conversation, but of elegant presence. He invented scenes and dialogues, in which he played the forgiving, but dignified and inaccessible patron, and

she the frightened, flitting, embarrassed recipient of his polite attentions.

At well! are we to be judged by our foolish thoughts? Thank heaven, no! but by how much or how little restraint we put upon them.

When his cousin entered the room, it was without the least awkwardness or hesitation. Perhaps she had an intuitive perception of his feeling, and cared to defeat him a second time. Women know so many things by instinct.

Geoffrey arose with a burning face and a tumultuous heart. She gave her hand with promptness and kindness, and made him feel very boyish again, as she used to do. The victory was with her only for a moment. Geoffrey recovered himself, and while she talked, he regarded her face and her words closely.

She was very beautiful. Her ripe womanhood was lovelier than her girlish grace which was, indeed not lost, but was grown into that as the tenderness and grace of the bud is glorified in the perfect flower.

She was very beautiful, and yet to her cousin's eye the old light was no longer in the comely face. Fair and blooming as ever, it was yet indescribably faded. It was as if the soul within was faded. Geoffrey could not consider then that there had never been any light such as he looked for there, but only the reflection of the glow in his own heart. Afterward he remembered this.

Clara wore her widow's weeds, and played at times with her child. She bade it go to him, and when it would not, she said daintily that the gentleman was an old flame of mamma's. "Do you know what flame is, darling?" "No," she said, and took the child in her arms, and went and sat beside Geoffrey: "Isn't she pretty? Do you think she has my eyes?" and she turned those eyes upon him full.

All this and more, displeased the old lover; why, he could not tell. He had expected to be bored by tender reminiscence and last dying speeches of the dear departed one, but his cousin said nothing of her husband, and he did not like it. "She would have forgotten me as soon," he thought.

When she turned her great eyes upon him, he met their glances unabashed. His cheek was wont to flush if she looked at him. It was pale and cool now.

They talked together of their old love affair in a laughing way—he with that ease which the world had given him; she with the nonchalance natural to her. She was very good natured and witty, and she made him laugh. He admired her beauty and her sprightliness, and he loved her less than ever. The whole interview was of a different nature from what he had intended that it should be. He was quite bewildered. His cousin had evoked a false and mocking spirit from him, and he answered her talk with bitter badinage, till he grew to doubt the reality of the scene. At last, baffled, disappointed, and vexed, he arose to go.

"How long was he going to stay in the village?" she asked.

He went away to-morrow.

Would he come and spend the evening with her?

No, he had business.

She had glided toward him and stood looking in his face without a doubt that he would accept her invitation. Her manner till then was that of cousinly familiarity. At his harsh, curt refusal, it changed instantly. It was as if his coldness had frozen her.

"Good bye, then," she said briefly, while she watched him narrowly, but did not offer her hand.

Geoffrey exulted, but the whole scene seemed more like an illusion than ever.

"What cousin!" he cried, "you won't give me your hand at parting? You were kinder once." He took her hand, that hung listless by her side, and drew her toward him. As in his dream she raised her arm, and held him away, regarding him with sad passionate eyes for an instant. Then the tears came, and she permitted and returned his embrace, clasping his neck with her arms, while her heart beat wildly against his breast. He kissed her lips but even then a sense of the unreal filled his thoughts. "Good bye," he said, and went.

That was the end of his dream.

Like one who reasons in his sleep, and struggles to be awake, never again in any sleep to dream that dream. The golden charm was broken forever; the beautiful illusion was dispelled.

His lonely life was lonelier for the loss.

It made the past hateful, and the future full of doubt. —[Knickerbocker.]

"ASSISTED BY —" The London Punch satirizes the custom which is becoming somewhat common, of having several clergymen to "assist" at marriage ceremonies:—

"Men and women now-a-days appear to entertain a great unwillingness to marry—at least, if one may judge so from the way in

which the nuptial knot is generally tied. Happy couples now appear so loth to be united that officiating clergymen are forced to be "assisted" when they perform the ceremony. Two parson power at least is needful for the purpose, and indeed an extra clergyman is frequently called in to help his reverend brethren in their laborious work. From reading the advertisements, one might imagine that nine weddings out of ten were solemnized by force; and that to prevent the bride and bridegroom from bolting from the altar, they had each a clergyman appointed to look after them. We can picture the poor bridegroom held fast by one assistant, while another standing opposite keeps firm hold of the bride, thus preventing all escape until the service has been read, which is done by a third parson the clergyman-in-chief."

Story of an Indian Princess.

"Died on the 1st Aug., at Abingdon House, Kensington, Her Highness, Maharajah Joudan Kour, widow of the late Maharajah Runjeet Singh of the Sikhs, and mother of the present Maharajah Duleep Singh." In these few and formal words, only noted by a reader here and there, and then by reason simply of the curious nature and unfamiliar names of the announcement, the death of a Princess has been chronicled whose word shook kingdoms and made war or peace. Nay, not even the corner of the obituary column is humble enough for the widow and the mother of a King, for the notice of her demise is mis-spelled or misprinted, as might be that of a common peasant. Chunda Kour, as her name should have been written—that is to say, the S. I. ver or Moonlight Queen—was the wife of the Lion of the Punjab, and the mother of the little Prince whom we deposed from the throne of the Five Waters. Had any of the astrologers of her husband's Court at Lahore told her that she should die an exile in the land of the Feringhees; that the name and line of her Sikh lord should become extinct; that her son, for whom she schemed, and sinned, and murdered, should abjure the creed of the Ghorroo and the precepts of the "Grunth," and become a Christian in the country of his conquerors; and, finally, that she herself, at her decease, should have no other notice or mourning than a paragraph in the Kafir's daily papers—his vocation would not have saved his ears or head. For a quarter of a century, this faded Sikh woman who has just passed away among us so silently, was the most powerful Sultana in Asia. She was the favorite wife of Runjeet Singh's zennah, and ruling him, she ruled all Northern India, from the Kyber Pass to the Sutlej. To have pronounced her name, for more to have misspelled it, would have cost the life of the audacious offender; and in her quarrel all the the Punjab chivalry would have drawn their swords as for an Oriental Maria Theresa. When she decked her person to worship at Umritsar, or for the reveals in the palace gardens at Lahore, the "Mountain of Light" glittered upon her forehead. Twice, of her own imperious will, intriguing with restless ambition for her family, she declared war upon the English in India. In the great game which she has played in her time, the lives of men were regarded by her as mere pawns; she swept them from the board at a whim—cruel as a Locust, lustful as Messalina, proud and pitiless as Catherine. Now she dies unregarded in a London suburb—her king a memory; her son de throne, and in her eyes an infidel; her dominions a province of the English; her splendid jewel, the Koh-i-noor, an ornament in the English Queen's treasury—as wonderful an example altogether of human vicissitude as history often exhibits. Our sensation writers need not travel out of the realms of reality to find material for their public; any one of them, catching a glimpse of the shawled and veiled figure which lately lay down to die, weary and remorseful, in the strange chamber and among the alien people at Kensington—any one of them merely hearing the querulous voice of the Queen-Mother of the Punjab, Chunda Kour, before death came upon her—has seen and heard enough to suggest to him a more wonderful story of life than he can conjure out of his imagination.

A mere sketch of it will range through all the romance of poverty and splendor, crime, success, and misfortune. Chunda Kour, although the wife of the Maharajah of the Punjab, was not, if report speaks true, very nobly born. One version of her birth makes her father a dog-keeper in the service of Runjeet; but at any rate she was selected as one of his harem, and came to be his mistress. From that time, if she could have written the history of her marvellous life, blood, and not ink, would have been the fitting medium to have used. Kurruck Singh succeeded Runjeet, and he was despatched with acetate of lead and corrosive sublimate mingled in curry. No Nabal Singh follow-

ed Kurruck on the throne; but as he passed upon his elephant under an arch, after his coronation, it was contrived that the masonry should fall and crush him. The widow of Kurruck still stood in the way, and her chamber-women were bribed to beat her brains out with a stone as they stood behind her braiding and perfuming her hair. Sher Singh, a son of the murdered Princess, yet blocked the path to the throne against Chunda Kour's child and he too was despatched by adroit treachery. An English rifle was shown to him as he sat upon the "gadi," and when its muzzle was turned to his breast in the course of examining it, the trigger was pressed, and four slugs were discharged in his heart. Thus at last the crown of the Punjab was won and placed upon the infant head of Dhuleep Singh; his mother, the Princess now dead, employed the influence thus obtained to revel in license. Sometimes however, she was obliged to be the spectress of murder, and not its accomplice, as when the troop at Lahore bayoneted her brother, the Prince Jawahir, as he reviewed them, sprinkled her robe and that of her son with his blood. But she replaced her brother with a lover, Lal Singh, and in junction with him, declared war upon the British by marching her Sikhs across the Sutlej. Moodkee, Alwal, and Ferozshah ended the first Sikh war, and reduced her to the mere guardianship of a protected Prince. Then she commenced the net-work of intrigue with Moolraj of Mooltan, Golab Singh of Cashmere, and Dost Mahomed of Afghanistan, which led to the murder of the English officers at the first-named place, and to the second Sikh war. Her emissaries, under pretence of fetching drugs from her with all the discontent in India. Confined to fortress, she bribed the guards with costly necklaces of pearl and gold; her money and messages circulated in every Sikh barrack and village. So well was she served, too, that when one of her messengers was executed at Lahore, his wife begged his armlet as a relic of love at the scaffold, and instantly took out of it one of the Maharajah's letters, tore it into a hundred pieces, and swallowed them to save destruction. She was removed to Benares too late to avert the great war which she had fomented. Far away from the Punjab, pacing her prison in the "holy city" like a caged tigress, she heard the echoes of the cannon of Goojerat, which deposed Runjeet's Singh's dynasty for ever, and made the Five Waters a province of the victorious English.

Thenceforward she passed from the eyes of men, a pensioner of the British power—her hundred lovers dead or degraded—her influence gone with her beauty and her youth—the son for whom she had schemed and plotted, dethroned, and exiled, and a renegade from the grand and conquering creed of the Khalsa. Before her swimming eyes, as she lately sank in death, in the country whither she had followed her son, the scenes, by the thousand full of Eastern splendour and crime, must have passed. Whatever the intoxications of power—whatever the delights of luxury—whatever the charm of unbridled self-indulgence, wealth and influence—that wretched silent woman had experienced them all. From the heaven to the hell of an Asiatic reverie of life she had fallen, in the years which she must have reviewed; at one time the favored wife of Runjeet Singh, carried behind him in a palanquin of silver to his huntings and his wars; at this other time the dying tenant of the back room of the back street in London. There is pathos enough in such a change to make us forgiving to her crimes; a dignity enough in such a sorrow to encourage the prayer that the Indian Sultans found in her death-hour peace which her life did not bring. —[Exchange.]

SCIENTIFIC PARADOXES.—The water that drowns us—a flume—can be walked upon as ice. The bullet, which fired from a musket carries death, will be harmless if ground to dust before fired. The crystallized part of the oil of roses—so grateful in its fragrance—a solid at ordinary temperatures, though readily volatile—is a compound substance, containing exactly the same elements and in exactly the same proportions as the gas with which we light our streets. The tea which we daily drink with benefit and pleasure, produces palpitations, nervous tremblings, and even paralysis, if taken in excess; yet the peculiar organic agent called theine, to which tea owes its qualities, may be taken by itself (as theine, not as tea) without any appreciable effect. The water which will ally our burning thirst, augments it, when commingled into snow; so that Capt. Ross declares the natives of the Arctic regions prefer enduring the utmost extremity of thirst, rather than attempt to remove it by eating snow. Yet if the snow be melted, it becomes drinkable water. Nevertheless, although, it melted before entering the mouth it assuages thirst like other water.