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Poetry.

ROWING AGAINST THE TIDE.

It is easy to glide with its ripples,
Adown the stream of Time,
To flow with the course of the river,
Like music to some old rhyme;
But ah! it takes courage and patience,
Against its course to ride;
And we must have strength from heaven
When rowing against the tide.

We may float on the river's surface
While our oars scarce touch the stream,
And visions of earthly glory
On our dazzling sight may gleam;
We forget that on before us
The dashing torrents roil;
And, while we are idly dreaming,
Its waters will carry us o'er.

But few—ah, would there were many!—
Row up the "Stream of Life";
They struggle against its surges,
And mind neither toil nor strife;
Though weary and faint with labour,
Singing triumphant they ride;
For Christ is the hero's captain
When rowing against the tide.

Far on through the hazy distance,
Like a mist on the distant shore,
They see the walls of a city
With its banner floating o'er,
Seen through a glass so darkly,
They almost mistake their way;
But faith throws light on their labor
When darkness shuts out their day.

And shall we be one of that number,
Who mind no toil nor pain?
Shall we maintain the loss of earthly joys
When we have a crown to gain?
Or shall we glide on with the river,
With death at the end of our tide,
While our brother with heaven before him,
Is rowing against the tide?

A certain degree of labor and exertion seems to have been allotted us by Providence, as the condition of humanity. "In the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread" is a curse which has proved a blessing in disguise. And those favored few, who, by their rank, or their riches, are exempted from all exertion, have no reason to be thankful for the privilege. It was the observation of this necessity, that led the ancients to say, that the industrious sold them everything, but gave them nothing. Water, however, which is one of the great necessities of life, may in general, be gratuitously procured; but it has been well observed, that if bread, the other great necessity of human life, could be procured on terms equally cheap and easy, there would be much more reason to fear that men would become lazier for the want of something to do, rather than philosophers, from the profession of leisure. And the facts seem to bear out the theory. In all countries, where nature does the most, man does the least; and where she does but little, there we find the utmost exertion of human energy. It is the energy of man that comprises the soul of the intellect; wherever it is, there is life; where it is not, all is dullness and dependency and degradation. People who have no experience of it, imagine that it is destructive to the nerves, exhaustive to the animal spirits; that it aggravates the wear and tear of life excessively. But this is an idle notion, as idle as the habits and humors of those who entertain it. I will leave it to my man who knows its real effect to strike the balance—to compare the exhaustion of an indolent day with that of an active one; to say in which of the two cases the subject is in better heart for work, and fitter to undergo it. Whatever we may be about, one thing I believe, is certain, that if the spirits are spent by energy they are utterly wasted by idleness at worst, energy can only end in relaxation—it is superior to it for a while, and possibly at last may fall into it; whereas, idleness is actual relaxation from first to last, and can be nothing else; but even this view, favourable as it is, is yet not favourable enough to be just.

The fact is, that violence is not necessary to energy any more than tyranny is to justice; on the contrary, it is the gentlest energy that does the most work. Energy, if I remember right, is inward-workingness, the blossoming of the flower in energy, the increase of fruit in energy, the growth of the body in energy; yet in all these there is no violence; the efficacy is not destructive, but vital; without it the whole frame must fall at once into corruption, with it, instead of corruption we have life. But this it may be said, is a refinement, it may be so, but it is true in fact nevertheless. The gainsayer will find it difficult to produce anything from the subject of surer or more essential truth.

Interesting Tale.

AVENGED.

The old clock in the tower rang out five melodious chimes, as Cora Smith softly closed the kitchen door, and ran to the little bedroom for her blue scarf.

"Five o'clock," she said, as the last stroke died away; he is wondering why I don't come, and I must make haste. Blanche, little Blanche, are you going with me to night? I am all ready.

Auntie says you have forgotten to get the potatoes for breakfast, and we must prepare them before you go. Never mind if he does have to wait a little for you; you've waited for him many a time. Come quickly, and I will help you.

So sweet-tempered Cora Smith untied the blue scarf, and tripped away to the forgotten task as merrily as her little sister, albeit her heart beat like an imprisoned bird's at the delay.

The west was all aflame with the autumn sunset ere the sisters closed the cottage door behind them, and ran down the garden path toward the stile, where he was waiting—in other words, where hazel-eyed, sweet-faced Cora Smith's city lover was waiting for his lady-love, as she had many a night waited for him.

Almost every evening they met there at the stile—their "trysting-place," he said, just half way between her home and his boarding house. He had proposed it, and she was nothing loth to accede—it was so pretty and romantic.

Then Auntie Smith was not at all pleased with this dark-eyed young stranger, and, though she had not forbidden him the house, both lovers knew she daily tripped down the path through the leafy woods to the half-way trysting place where she met her handsome, dark-eyed lover, Neil Rowan. How her heart fluttered to night as she thought of him! And the warm love-light deepened and darkened the soft brown eyes!

Neil, Neil, she said, almost unconsciously, aloud, and little Blanche clasped her sister's hand closer, and looked up in her face.

Do you love him so very much, sister Cora?

A swift, hot color came into the girl's face, and then she paused, suddenly, holding the hands of little Blanche in a fervent grasp.

"Love him, Blanche! better than all the world—better than my youth, my life—ay, sometimes I fear better than my hope of heaven! And I am to be his wife, little Blanche, the good man's wife, when the beautiful spring comes. I shall leave you, and auntie, and uncle, to be all his. But this is our secret, little sister, and only you can share it.

And then her hands relaxed their hold, and drawing the light scarf over her shoulders, she tripped silently on. They were almost there—nearing the edge of the wood, and the stile was but a step away. Another step forward, and then Blanche held her sister back.

Wait! she whispered; I can see two men sitting on the seat, Cora. We do not want to meet strangers there.

No, she said, drawing back in the shadow of the wood; it is Neil's friend, Willis Dean. We will wait until he goes, for I do not like to meet him.

Even as she spoke the figure arose, and the sound of his voice came on the twilight air, distinct and clear:

And what of this love affair, friend Neil? When is it to end, and how? Are you really in earnest, and do you mean to marry the girl?

"Marry her?" he repeated. She is just the subject for a grand flirtation, and I assure you I have done the thing well. But for anything further—bah! I am going back to town to-morrow, and this is our last meeting; so be off, old fellow, for I expect her every moment.

Just for one moment Blanche Smith's heart stood still in awful fear, for she thought Cora was dying. That white, ghastly face there in the twilight, that motionless figure, those tightly-locked hands, it surely was not the fair, sweet maiden of a moment before. But the sunset passed, and without a word, she arose, and glided noiselessly away, and Blanche followed her in silence.

Neil Rowan waited until the light had all died out of the west, and the dew lay like summer rain on the grass at his feet. His cigar was smoked down to ashes, and his lazy reverie was broken by the cry of the whip-poor-will.

She isn't coming to-night, he said, mortally; that is certain. The scheming auntie up yonder managed to prevent it this time. Oh, well, it saved a scene. I will drop her a loving farewell note, and so it ends—a summer's amusement. Ha, ha! and Neil Rowan strolled homeward, singing half-consciously, "I won't have her, I know—I won't have her, I know—I don't care a straw who has her, I know."

The farewell note came to Cora Smith the following night; but the fever bright eyes never rested on the creamy page, for, ere the issuance

light gave place to reason again, death sealed the white eyelids. To such a nature as this girl's, love is life; and the rude blow that woke her from the one bright dream of her youth, snapped the slender chord that bound her frail spirit to earth, and out of the depths of her awful grief, the kindly hand of death led her to the mountain-top, where is builded the city of the New Jerusalem.

Day by day, week by week, month by month, so sped the time until eight years were counted. Eight times the grass had grown over the little grave in the lonely graveyard, and again the October winds rustled the scarlet leaves over the narrow mound.

Wonderful changes had the eight years brought. Side by side with this grave were two others, and the headstones bore the names of good aunt and uncle Smith. They had rested there six years; and every summer beautiful Blanche Smith came down from her city mansion, and lingered in the old home a week, trimming the grasses and planting bright flowers on the mounds. Bright, beautiful Blanche Smith, the heiress of all uncle Smith's hidden wealth, the wealth he guarded so well during that toilsome, weary life!

Three years before, Blanche Smith left school, to reign queen of society. Beautiful, strangely beautiful, with that cold, white, high-bred face, those wide, lath-like, glittering amber eyes, a figure matchless in symmetry and grace, becoming, polished, and all the heiress of great wealth, no wonder that lovers, old and young, knelt at Blanche Smith's shrine. Strangers wonder, the world said, that all were so true—not gently and with words of pity and apology, but spurred from her very feet with scornful lips and blazing eyes.

Ay, Blanche Smith was an enigma and mystery to all who knew her. No warmer friend, no brighter companion did those of her own sex seek for. But never were those lips seen to smile, or those wonderful eyes to soften, in response to any lover's no glances was more timid than she to all men. "All, did I say? Nay, Dame Nature had plenty of gossip just now. Only a few weeks since a new rival appeared on the scene of action. Neil Rowan, merchant and millionaire, entered the list of Blanche Smith's adorers—not for her wealth, surely, Madame Grandy acknowledged, graciously. He had enough of his own. It was genuine love that this "blase" man of society felt for beautiful Blanche. And a wonderful change had come over the fair lady since his appearance. Bright before, she was brilliant now—sparkling, witty, bewildering; and the world looked on in amazement to see the flash stain her white cheek, and the bright smile that flitted her eyes at his approach.

And did he not recognize her, you are wondering? Nay, how should he? Sweet Cora Smith and the name in the country, were forgotten things with this man. He had broken half a dozen silly hearts since then, and left them all with time, the great healer. He had flirted with society's queens, and village maidens innumerable, and had left the past all behind him. And now he came and laid the first pure, real love of his lifetime at this woman's feet. So he told her, one autumn night in the grand parlor of her stately home.

How her hands trembled and her eyes shone as she listened!

"Wait," she said; "I will give you my answer to-morrow night; it is my birth night, and I shall give you an entertainment. You will come? I will answer you then. Be in the library at ten; and you shall hear my answer."

And the night came, and he was there waiting. He paced the room impatiently. "What'll she ever come, this girl that was dearer than life? Ay, she was life to him. The world had seemed old, stale, flavorless, until he met her; the woman who, alone of all her sex, had ever stirred the slumbering passions of his heart. How bright the future seemed! He was so sure of her answer; had she not given it all but in words?

"My beautiful, my queen!" he said, softly. And just then he heard the light ripple of a woman's laugh in the adjoining room. Her laugh; he knew it among a thousand; and her voice; she was speaking loud and clear.

There, Guards! you must let me go now. Mr. Rowan is waiting for me in the library. You know I am to give him his answer to-night.

And the guardian's voice, speaking tenderly, said:

"And that answer, I can guess it, little Blanche. You are going to marry this man, and leave us all."

She laughed gaily.

"Marry him? No, indeed, sir! He is just the subject for a grand flirtation, and I assure you I have acted my part well; but for anything further—bah! But he is expecting me, so by all I come again," and she tripped lightly through the half open door, ere the amazed guardian could utter a syllable.

A white, ghastly, shivering figure stood by the library window.

"For God's sake, Blanche Smith, tell me you were jesting!" he cried, as brilliantly,

glowingly beautiful, she glided into the room. Not so, my friend, she answered, lightly; I spoke the truth. If you overheard my words, I need not repeat them. It is my answer.

But you gave me hope; you led me on; you have given me every reason to think you loved me, he cried passionately. It is the one love of my life! I have centered every hope and thought in you, Blanche Smith, and, for my sake, for God's sake, do not wreck my life!

She was very pale now, and her eyes were black and glistening.

"Neil Rowan," she said, slowly, "I have prayed for this hour for eight years—but never in my wildest dreams did I think my prayer would be so fully answered. When I saw the hue of death, the white agony on my only sister's cheek—when I saw her writhe in speechless agony at the words she heard eight years ago to-night, I vowed to avenge her, God being my helper. Again, when I heard the thud of the earth upon her coffin, I vowed that vow. God has brought it about even sooner, more complete, than I had thought. If I have given you one hour of such agony as she suffered, I am content. If you could live and suffer it for countless ages, I should be better content. My work is ended. Good night!"

Two hours afterwards, the sharp ring of a pit-til rang with startling distinctness through the crowded drawing-room. All sprang to their feet, save Blanche Smith. Perhaps her cheek paler a little—I cannot tell; but the light of her eye never changed, her smiling lips never relaxed, as she gazed upon the black stainer corpse in the library. Neil Rowan had taken his own life, and Cora Smith was avenged.

THE MYSTERY OF JANE VERE.

A dazzle of golden hair, the gleam of eyes heavenly blue, sweeping links of pale lustrous silk, and a smile that was the very radiance of all beauty; this is what I imagined, for an instant, the dark hall of the hotel at Westwood. I hurriedly touched Slowick's arm, and the vision passed.

It is Miss Vere, he said.

And is she stopping here?

"Yes, she came by the train this morning—Miss Vere and her father."

I took a turn upon the terrace, and came back again.

Why does a woman like that come here, Slowick?

It's quite healthy, and out of the way of all excitement. The old gentleman has been ill, and Miss Vere, though the belle of her native place, is devoted to her father.

You know them, then?

Not much now-a-days. We used to go to the same dancing-school when we were children.

Slowick, I exclaimed, you don't say you are a dancing man!

Not eminently, he replied, with a smile and a frown.

He didn't look like it, certainly, with his gloomy black eyes, his neglected black hair, and his rusty dress. I had been told, at the confinement of my acquaintance with Slowick, that he had used to be a great beau, but since his association with him he had been so taciturn, melancholous, and negligent of his toilet that I had quite forgotten the rumor.

Do you think, he exclaimed, with only a frown this time, as I came back to him in my restless promenade of the hotel terrace, that any sensible man dances?

Why—I began.

No man who views aright the responsibility of his existence wastes time and money in such frivolity! he interrupted, with quite uncalculated violence. Dance or not, as you like, George Lester, but I will never yield to such folly!

But you used to dance, Slowick, I said.

I used to be a fool, he answered. Yes, he muttered, bitterly, I have spent pounds and pounds for the cursed nonsense!

You've had your day, I suppose, like other young dogs, I said. Charley Thorn told me that you used to be a gay fellow in town, and spent heaps of money.

He seemed actually to write at these reminiscences.

Well, I have to pay for it now, he said, in a stifled tone. But I am willing, he added.

I looked at him thoughtfully. Always supposing Slowick to be in the receipt of a good income, I had looked upon his shabby buff nents as mere carelessness, and his choice of a summer resort the result of a whim. Westwood was thoroughly unfashionable, and his hot-air not in the least luxurious. But the place was clean, and the situation peculiarly salubrious. After studying late in town for nine months, it freshens was paradiisical to me. But, after all, it was not a place that a man of Slowick's supposed income would be likely to be embarrassed, with the new idea upon me that he might, at late have been visited by some pecuniary misfortune. Why did he so constantly regret the expenditure of money?

And, now that I thought of it, why was he so close with his purse-strings?

And, half blushing in tone, yet with a desire to test him, I said, "Why, Slowick, you talk like a miser that fears poverty in his old age, and lives to hoard up money."

He grew absolutely white.

Who told you that? he asked, looking at me with a ferocity that I stared at.

That I hoarded up money.

No one, man alive! I didn't say any one did. Only you spend so little, and you have got so much, one may be allowed to be suspicious, eh?

He looked at me with such anger and hatred, that I recoiled.

For heaven's sake, what is the matter, Slowick? You look as if you were going mad.

He gazed at me less excitedly for an instant, then dropped his head.

Lester, do you not know, he asked, in the stifled tone I had before noticed, that that is a very serious accusation to make—a very dangerous report to circulate regarding a man? That he hoards money?

Yes.

Why I beg to enquire, not being aware? He is liable to be assassinated, robbed, I shrugged my shoulders.

This doesn't seem a highly brigandish sort of place, my dear fellow. It wouldn't matter to me if it were. "Little wealth, little care," as the Spaniards say. By the way, Slowick, will you introduce me to Miss Vere?

If I have an opportunity, he answered, briefly; and so ended with a sudden turn a conversation more serious than I knew.

At sunset that evening, Miss Vere sat on the terrace with her father. Slowick gave me an introduction, and went away. I wondered at his declining the seat she kindly offered him; yet he looked very shabby and uninviting in aspect, going away through the trees.

Poor fellow, I thought, something has happened to mar his fortunes. Miss Vere looks after him with a glance of perplexity. I presume she used to find him agreeable. Well, let him keep his secret. He has trouble enough, I dare say. It must be mortification that gives him such savage moods.

And so I dismissed the subject, and turned to Miss Vere's supper-table.

She liked Westwood, she said. It was different from anything she had ever known. (This I thought very likely.) The green stretched under the grazing cattle, the cottages under the hills, the river running like a band of silver ribbon through the landscape, the bending of the tall trees—the very primitiveness of the old "Three Elms" hotel pleased her.

We shall stay all the summer, if papa's health improves, she said.

Ah, all the summer! Was she ready, bright, beautiful thing, for that journey into a far-off land whither she went that summer?

Her father was very fond of her. She seemed the light of his life. She read to him, walked with him, dined with him. She arranged his diet, superintended his toilet, tyrannized over him with a fairy willfulness that was yet beautiful and tender.

Like all other men, I breed her. Like all womanly women, she was kind to me. She did not play the despotic with me. She neither scorned or encouraged me. She thought that by-and-by I should understand that it was impossible. And by-and-by I knew, alas! that it was.

We were walking in the fields one evening, Mr. Vere, his daughter, and I. The sun was going down, and cast red shadows on the river, the little boats rocking on its bosom, the children playing on its banks, and among the trees.

We will walk to the bridge, and return said Jane. We won't go further, I do not want papa to be out in the night air.

So we paced slowly along the green sods—the birds soared over our heads, twittering westward; the rills slipped with a gurgle through the blue bladders of the rushes, the sun tipped the hilllocks with a brief radiance, and the shrill cries of the children added to the pastoral character of the scene.

Upon the bridge we stopped a few moments to observe a motherly duck with a brood of young dipping in the water below.

Now, papa, said Jane, isn't this a thousand times nicer than Brighton?

Her father smiled, and nodded—satisfied with anything that pleased her.

It is so pleasant, papa, she continued, that I think Helen had better come here for her vacation.

Very well, my dear.

Helen, said beautiful Jane, turning to me, is my little adopted sister. She is sixteen now, but a little thing—a mere child—and is still at school. She will like Westwood, I know.

I hope she will come, then, I said; but I wondered, a little anxiously, how her appearance would affect my relations with Jane. Would she devote herself to the usual, leaving Jane more open to my attentions? or would she appropriate her, to my exclusion?

[To be Continued.]