

“LEFT UNSAID.”

“A happier hour I never spent
Than that with you when last we met.
Alas, we're never quite content!
There's always something to regret;
And, when we see our love no more,
Sadly we count those errors o'er.

There's always something left unsaid
At lovers' meetings brief and rare;
The dear one's presence seems to shed
Some strange enchantment in the air.
And we, to catch those accents low,
Forget our own hearts' overflow—

Forget too soon the anxious thought,
The tear to which our trust gave way;
Such glowing beauty Life hath caught
From those dear lips that speak to-day
That we must leave still unconquered
The doubt, the hope that fills our breast.

Though Death and change are ever near,
We quite forget them for a while,
And all Love's mistrust and its fear
Are chased away by one sweet smile,
Too soon the golden hours are sped,
And still is something left unsaid.

We part and sigh: “The day is past;
Unspoken still the words remain.”
Ah, what if we have looked our last,
Nor see that face on earth again?
Love's last propitious hour hath flown,
Such hapless parting some have known;

And all their life through after years
Is saddened by this keen regret—
“Had she but known what for my fears
I would have said when last we met—
Had she but known, had I foreseen—
O heart, how bliss we might have been!”

THE PIECE THAT WAS LOST.

There was a promise of a capital hay day; so Silas Rogers decided as he stood in the back porch after milking, polishing his face with a coarse towel and noting the weather signs between the rubs.

A capital hay-day; but a “bad spell of weather” might be expected soon; for did not the almanac say, “About this time look out for storms?”

So all hands were warned to be in readiness to mow the lower intervals in the morning, and lose no time getting at it, for the lower intervals was swampy after a rain.

The chores were done, the supper eaten; Silas, with his chair tipped against the wall, sleeping the sleep of the just, while his good wife pattered about the kitchen setting her sponge, beating up some “riz” griddle cakes for breakfast, grinding the coffee, and, in a dozen provident ways, squeezing out of the tired day a little help for the morrow.

Reuben went to the store for a new scythe-sheath; Abner, the hired man, hung over the barnyard gate with the beloved pipe that tried the housewife's soul, and pretty Mistress Hetty wrinkled her forehead and pricked her fingers over the new dress she was trying to make in the few leisure moments snatched from housework. She made a charming picture in the frame of the vine-wreathed window, her sleeves still rolled above her plump elbows, the bright hair drawn back from the rosy face which was turned full to the lamp as she threaded her needle, or paused to brush some deluded moth away from the dangerous flame that fascinated him.

A charming picture, but no one to look at it; for the great Norway pine held a screen of solid blackness between the window and the road, even if any belated traveller had chanced to walk that way, and only Hetty's white cat crept stealthily along the top of the garden fence with murderous designs upon an untimely brood of chirping birds in the currant bushes. Only this—ah, beware Mistress Hetty! Evil eyes are looking at you; eyes from which a heathen mother would cover your face with her hands, and breathe a prayer to break the unholy spell they might cast upon you—a woman's eyes peering from a thick jungle of lilacs and syringas so near that it seems as if Hetty must feel them. But Hetty feels nothing, sees nothing but the troublesome dress; and, as the perplexing ruffles are conquered one by one, her heart grows light, the little frown smooths away and Hetty begins to sing. What a sweet voice she has! It reaches the tired mother and lightens her heart, too. It wakes her father, and then lulls him pleasantly to sleep again. Now Abner hears it and draws his hickory shirt-sleeves across his eyes; and that watcher in the green tangle—who can guess what she thinks or feels as she sinks down with her chin upon her hands, and her face quite in the dark, and listens to the pathetic story of “The Ninety”? Hetty herself is not half-conscious of the pathos with which she bewails the lost one,

“Away on the mountains bleak and bare
Away from the tender Shepherd's care,”

and goes through the tender story to the final rejoicing when the shepherd brings back his own. She is still humming it fitfully over and over when her mother opens the door of the keeping room and bids her go to bed and not ruin her eyes with sewing by lamp light.

“Just a minute,” says Hetty; “as soon as I finish this sleeve.”

And the minutes glide on and on, and the sleeve is finished, held up and admired, and Mistress Hetty takes off her shoes and slips softly up stairs to bed. She does not even close the window. What should come into the house unbidden, save the cat and the cool night air? Everything is silent. The mother bird broods her little one securely, unconscious of the cruel

eyes near by, until Reuben comes whistling along the road and, boy like, stops to shy a stone at the tempting white mark on the garden fence. The prowler leaps away with long bounds over the wet grass, and a tragedy is averted with nothing to show for it but dirty tracks upon the piece of “factory” spread out to bleach. By and by there is a little stir in the lilac jungle; a woman comes cautiously out of her hiding place and steals away to the barn.

The cows are lying here and there under the long shed sleeping, perhaps, in a cow's uneasy fashion, but with certain air of motherliness and content about them. They do not even wonder at the late comer as she treads her way among them, enters the barn, mounts the scaffold already well filled with the sweet new hay, and is soon asleep, hearing now and then a broken twitter from the restless swallows under the eaves, or perchance a faint sweet voice singing, with lingering pity in its tone,

“Sick, wounded and ready to die.”

Who can tell when the summer day begins? One instant a dusky silence, cool, moist and fragrant, hanging over the hill, the next a burst of song from some tree-top, caught up from a hundred green coverts, swelled, repeated and prolonged in mad chorus that presently settles again into silence. The slow stir of life awakening, the bustle among the poultry, and the lowing of some impatient cow, or the sound of her companion nipping the short, juicy grass, the unwilling creak of a rheumatic pump handle, and here and there the dull thud of an improvident axe preparing the kindlings for the kitchen fire.

The day was well under way in Silas Rogers' household before the majority of his neighbours had reached this point. The cows were milked and turned into the green lane to make their own way to the pasture, the steady whirl of the grindstone and the sharp ring of steel told that the moments before breakfast were being made the most of, and even at the table there were few words spoken, and no useless lingering. But after breakfast Silas Rogers took down the leather covered Bible that had been his old mother's daily companion for eighty years, and all the family sat reverently down to worship.

The golden moments might speed as they would, but no day in that household began without its portion from the Bible. It might have been a lingering recollection of Hetty's song, it might have been one of those celestial providences which we call chance, which led him to read from the gospel the story of the wandering sheep and the lost piece of silver. It is doubtful if any of them were very deeply touched by it. It was a familiar story to the good wife, and she could not keep her thoughts from straying anxiously to the loaves rising perilously in the pans, while Hetty glanced at the clock and secretly hoped that her father had not chanced upon a long chapter. The reading came abruptly to an end, an earnest though hoarsely prayer and the service was ended.

Abner and Reuben almost stumbled over a woman sitting absorbed in the door-way. Silas looked at her but did not stay to question, and when they were gone she rose and said abruptly, “Will you give me some breakfast?”

Mrs. Rogers looked at her. She was a tall and not uncomely woman of about thirty, but with something indefinably evil about her face. The hard mouth, the bold, defiant eyes repelled her, yet seemed as if at any instant they might break into scornful tears.

“Who are you?” asked the good wife, coming nearer with the pan of bread in her hand. Again the face lightened, grew hard and then yielded with the sudden declaration:

“I am the piece that was lost.”

Martha Rogers had not a particle of poetry in her nature, but she had the most profound reverence for the scriptures, therefore the words both puzzled and shocked her. But she was not a woman to refuse bread to the hungry, so she placed food upon the table, and motioned the woman to a chair, with a brief “Sit up and eat.”

All the time that the woman was eating, and she did not hasten, her eyes followed the mistress and Hetty, until Martha Rogers grew nervous and sent Hetty to “right up the chambers.”

As soon as she was gone the woman turned abruptly from her breakfast.

“Will you give me work to do?” she demanded, rather than asked.

“Who are you?” asked Mrs. Rogers again, simply to gain time.

“I thought you knew. I am Moll Prichett; and they have turned me out of my house; burned it over my head,” and the eyes grew lurid with evil.

“What can you do?” asked Mrs. Rogers. “Anything that a woman can do, or a man. I can work in the field with the best of them; I have done it many a time; but I should like to do what—to be like other women.”

“Are you a good woman?”

The question came straight and strong, without any faltering. She had heard of this Moll Prichett, a woman who lived alone in an old tumble down hut below the saw-mill and won a meagre living by weaving rag-carpets, picking berries for sale, and it was suspected in less reputable ways, but Martha Rogers took no stock in idle rumors. If she had not divine compassion she had something very like divine justice, which is altogether a sweeter thing in its remembering of our frame than the tender mercies of the wicked.

The woman looked at her curiously. At first with a mocking smile, then with a sullen, and at last with a defiant expression.

“Is it likely?” she said fiercely. “A good woman? How should I be a good woman? I tell you ‘I'm the piece that was lost,’ and nobody ever looked for me. If I was a good woman do you suppose I should be where I be—only twenty-eight years old, well and hearty, and every door in the world shut in my face? I tell ye the man that wrote that story did not know women; they don't hunt for the piece that is lost; they just let it go. There's enough on ‘em that don't get lost.”

Poor Martha Rogers was sorely perplexed all the more that her way had lain so smooth and plain before her that she might have walked in it blindfolded. If this was a lost piece of silver it was not she who lost it; but what if it were the master's, precious to his heart, and a careless hand had dropped it, and left it to lie in the dust? And what if he bade her seek it, and find it for him? On this very day, when she needed so sorely the help she had looked for in vain, had not this woman been sent to her very door, and was it not a plain leading of Providence? It is a blessed thing for us that we are usually driven to act first and theorize afterwards, even though the after-thought sometimes brings repentance. The bread was ready for the oven and the wood-box was empty.

“You may fetch in some wood,” said Martha Rogers, and the woman promptly obeyed, filling the box with one load of her sinewy arms, and then stood humbly waiting. Hetty came into the room and began to clear the table, but her mother took the dishes from her hands.

“Go up stairs and fetch a big apron and one of your sweeping caps, and then you may get at your sewing and see if you can finish up your dress.”

Away went Hetty, her light heart bounding with unexpected release, and her mother turned again to the woman, furnished her with a coarse towel and sent her to the wash-house for a thorough purification. Half an hour afterward, with her hair hidden in the muslin cap, her whole figure enveloped in the clean calico apron, a comely woman was silently engaged in the household tasks, doing her work with such rapid skill that the critical housewife drew a sigh of relief.

“There's a han'ful of towels, and coarse clothes left from the ironing you might put the iron on, Mary, and smooth ‘em out.”

The woman turned a startled face upon her, and then went quickly for the clothes, but something—was it a tear—rolled down the swarthy cheek and mingled with the bright drops she sprinkled over them. When had she ever been called Mary? When had she heard any name but Moll? Not since away among the hills of New Hampshire a pale woman had laid her hands upon the tangled curls of her little daughter and prayed that from the strange world to which she was speeding she might be allowed to watch over these wayward feet lest they should go astray. Had she watched? did she know? Moll hoped not; it made her shudder to think of it. What would heaven be worth if she could see and know? and yet, what did she hear about joy in heaven over one sinner that repented? If there was joy it must be that they knew; or perhaps only good news was carried there.

That night Hetty sang again at her sewing by the lamp, and from the attic window far above her head the wanderer leaned out into the dark to listen. The little chamber was bare of ornament; there was not a picture on the cleanly whitewashed walls and the straight curtain was for decency, not drapery; but it seemed to this one a very chamber of peace. The great Norway pine almost brushed her cheek with its resinous plumes, balmy with moist night air, and a bird hidden somewhere among its branches sent out a startled, half-awake cry, and then dropped off to sleep again. There was a pale young moon low in the western sky, with black clouds scudding across it, and the dull, steady sound of the river, pouring over the great dam in the valley, seemed to come nearer, like the tramp of feet. Martha Rogers went out to the milk-room and stood for a moment in the door, shading the flickering candle in her hand. She was only taking a housewife's observation upon the gathering storm but it seemed to the wanderer that she might well be the woman who had lighted a candle to search for the lost piece of silver, and with a dim comprehension of love on earth and joy in heaven she tried to pray and fell asleep.

Silas Rogers listened to the day's story as he sat mending a bit of harness with clumsy fingers. He may be forgiven if his thoughts sometimes wandered to the hay so fortunately secured from the storm, or ran over the grist to be sent to the mill in the morning if it proved a wet day, or speculated curiously on the superhuman knowledge of almanac men; but on the whole he was tolerably attentive, and certainly grasped the idea that his wife had secured a valuable and much-needed helper.

“It seems a risk to run,” said Martha, anxiously; “and I don't know but it's presumptuous; there's Hetty, and there's Reuben—”

“And there's the Lord,” said Silas, stopping to open his knife.

“Yes,” said Martha, with a little start, “and I can't quite get rid of what she said about the piece that was lost; though to be sure, the woman that lost it ought to hunt it.”

“She never does; folks are always losing things for somebody else to find; 'taint many

of 'em can say, ‘those that thou hast given me have I kept, right straight along.’”

“But if you lose your own piece looking after other folks—”

Silas cut off his waxed end and gave the harness an experimental pull before he answered.

“Well, there's risks, as you say, but I'd rather take a risk for the Lord than agin him.”

Martha Rogers took the risk for the Lord, and he abundantly justified and rewarded her faith. For the piece that was lost becomes peace to the heart that finds it and lays it again in the Master's hands; and locking the story of the wanderer in her own breast it was only to the angels that she said, “rejoice with me.”

And when, years afterward, the woman herself said, before the committee of the church, “I am a woman over whom there is great joy in heaven,” there were not wanting those who thought she was presumptuously claiming to be a saint.

FOOT NOTES.

GREAT minds can unbend, as was seen the other night when a black beetle appeared on the floor of the House of Commons and carried immense excitement, hilarity, and even cheers, as it turned to various political sections for a refuge. Finally a general “Oh! oh!” arose (which stopped the bewildered Attorney-General for Ireland in his speech) as a member entered the House, and, not seeing the cause of the amusement, put his foot on the beetle and terminated its Parliamentary career.

THE Turkish woman is marriageable at the age of nine years, and by Turkish law at that age, if married, she is competent to manage her property and dispose of one-third of her fortune. The law allows her to abandon her husband's house for just cause, and will protect her in so doing. She cannot be compelled to labour for the support of her husband. On the contrary, he is compelled to support her; and it is a penal offense to insult or ill-treat her. Should he not furnish her with funds she is authorized to borrow in his name and even sell his property. After marriage she has the absolute control of her own property, which he cannot touch.

A BEAUTIFUL young Rajput of twenty, by name Padmasing, is attracting much attention at Madras. I was present at one of his performances, which are like the spirit ualistic scenes in America. He began the performance by playing on the fiddle, the exquisiteness of which I am at a loss to describe. It was the grandest performance I ever heard. These was a small tent about a yard and a half in height in the centre of the house where the performance was given. This was made up of four iron bars; the base formed a square, and the top of it was a dome made up of sticks. The tent had a red satin cover. The construction of this tent, or whatever you may call it, was such that it could be taken to pieces and adjusted in a minute. Then came the “Dusavathamum.” This was done by playing ten kinds of musical instruments. We had the tent examined and found nothing inside. The young man entered it and took out the instruments that were outside. All these instruments were played upon at the same time, accompanied by singing by the young man alone. Then all the instruments were taken out, he remaining inside the tent. Scarcely a few minutes after there was a noise of brass vessels. Immediately followed the noise of water being poured from one vessel to another. Shortly after he threw out two clothes—one he wore at the time he entered the tent and another. Then he rang a bell, which was a token I think of his performing “Pooja.” At last the tent was taken to pieces, when we found the young man dressed like a beautiful damsel, and decorated with flowers and jewels after the fashion of trousseau Hindu dancing girls, and wearing white muslin with lace borders, and a violet bolice, the contents of which a constable tried to examine. Before he entered the tent he had three tufts; when he came out his head was like a female's. The general belief of the Hindus is that it is all done by the help of spirits.

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