

## ADONAI.

"Thammuz came next behind,  
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured  
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate  
In amorous ditties all a summer's day."—MILTON.

Shall we meet no more, my love, at the binding of the sheaves,  
In the happy harvest fields as the sun sinks low,  
When the orchard paths are dim with the drift of fallen leaves,  
As the reapers sing together in the mellow misty eve—  
Oh, happy are the apples when the south winds blow!

Love met us in the orchard ere the corn had gathered plume—  
Oh, happy are the apples when the south winds blow!  
Sweet as summer days that die when the months are in their bloom,  
When the peaks are ripe with sunset, like the tassels of the broom  
In the happy harvest fields as the sun sinks low.

Sweet as summer days that die, leading sweeter each to each—  
Oh, happy are the apples when the south winds blow!  
All the heart was full of feeling; Love had ripened into speech,  
Like the sap that turns to nectar in the velvet of the peach,  
In the happy harvest fields as the sun sinks low.

Sweet as summer days that die at the ripening of the corn—  
Oh, happy are the apples when the south winds blow!  
Sweet as lovers' fickle oaths sworn to faithless maids forsown,  
When the musty orchard breathes like a mellow drinking horn  
Over happy harvest fields as the sun sinks low.

Love left us at the dying of the mellow autumn eve—  
Oh, happy are the apples when the south winds blow!  
When the skies are ripe and fading, like the colours of the leaves,  
And the reapers kiss and part at the binding of the sheaves  
In the happy harvest fields as the sun sinks low.

Then the reapers gather home from the gray and misty morn—  
Oh, happy are the apples when the south winds blow!  
Then the reapers gather home, and they bear upon their spears  
Love whose face is like the moon's fallen pale among the spheres,  
With the daylight's blight upon it as the sun sinks low.

Faint as far-off bugles blowing soft and low the reapers sung—  
Oh, happy are the apples when the south winds blow!  
Sweet as summer in the blood when the heart is ripe and young,  
Love is sweetest in the dying, like the sheaves he lies among  
In the happy harvest fields as the sun sinks low.

## PERFECT LOVE IS SIMPLE FAITH.

The three magistrates had sat uninterruptedly far into the autumn afternoon, and had now retired to consider their decision. It was a distressing case and occurring in Singlebridge, which is a mere handful of a town, provoked intense interest among the inhabitants. Everybody knew the parties concerned. Silas Westbrook, the reluctant prosecutor, was senior partner in an impressively solid firm which had flourished in the borough for generations. He enjoyed a reputation for strict probity and broad benevolence which was singularly merited. His son Augustus (also of the firm), a witness for the prosecution, was held in much esteem by certain of the younger sort in Singlebridge, who sympathized with his amiable wildness; and if certain of the older sort looked askance at these, why, that was only natural. About Mr. Blanchard, another witness for the prosecution, little was known to the inquiring gossips. He had been resident with the Westbrooks for about eight months, during which period he had sat alongside Gus in the office in business hours, and had been a good deal with him at other times. They got on amazingly well together, people observed, but despite all his efforts—and some of these were marked enough—suave Mr. Blanchard failed to similarly captivate Gus's pretty sister Fanny. As became her father's daughter, she treated the West Indian connection of her father's firm with unerring graciousness. But her sweetest moods, her tenderest looks and gentlest tones were not for him. The magician at whose bidding they so gladly came was Blanchard's instinctive foe. From the moment Harold White, confidential clerk to the firm, and a potential partner therein, met and simply shook hands with the West Indian, they hated each other with a hatred that owed its sustenance on the one side to contempt; and on the other to malice and all uncharitableness. To-day will behold the triumph or discomfiture of Blanchard. In the police-court of Singlebridge, in the presence of a crowd of people, the majority of whom are personally known to him, Harold White stands accused, on the united testimony of the Westbrooks, father and son, of embezzlement.

To the profound chagrin of the magistrates' clerk, who, cordially disliking Blanchard, wishes well to the accused, the latter conducts his own defence.

"Silence in the court."

Of the four actors in the little drama, old Mr. Westbrook betrays the most agitation at the opening of a door at the back of the court heralds the return of the magistrates to their seats on the bench. The silence is oppressive when,

in a voice full of feeling, the chairman turns to the accused and says:

"Harold White, I, who have known you for so many years, need not say that the long examination which my brother magistrates and myself have this day conducted to the very best of our ability has been to all of us fraught with considerable pain. And we are bound to admit, in your behalf, that nothing had transpired in the course of this hearing which reflects in the least on your conduct during the period to which I refer. We have given due consideration to this fact in your favour, and have come to the conclusion, actuated by motives which we earnestly hope you will live to appreciate in a proper spirit, to dismiss this case. You may go."

"But my character," exclaimed White, in voice husky with emotion, "who is to clear that of taint?"

"Yourself," solemnly answered the chairman. "Call the next case."

Dazed, trembling under the influence of warring passions, he left the dock and passed out of the court into the sunlit street. Whither should he direct his feet? As he slowly and mechanically, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, with bowed head and leaden gait, stole along in the direction of the river side, he felt a touch on his arm. He paused.

It was one of Westbrook's clerks. The lad's mouth was tremulous with sympathy.

"Mr. Westbrook has sent me with this note, Mr. White. Is there any answer?"

"Yes," he replied, tearing the paper into atoms, "there is. Mr. Westbrook wishes to see me. Tell him we shall not meet again until he is prepared to stand up in that court-house and pray to be allowed to proclaim my innocence in tones as loud as those which he used to-day in declaring my guilt."

The lad left him. The September sun was setting redly behind a familiar belt of wood which fringed the further banks of the river as he continued his moody walk. He had held on four miles, heedless of the direction he took, and now he awoke from his fit of passionate bitterness to find himself on a spot that had often been hallowed by the presence of the girl he loved. What did she think of him?

"Harry!"

"Fanny!"

In those two words all was expressed. In that fierce embrace doubt was slain.

"O, Harold, I have followed you for hours, fearing to speak, you looked so pale and changed!"

"I am changed. They have not sent me to prison, Fanny, but the prison taint is on me. Why don't you shrink from the moral leper, as the rest of them have done?"

"Because"—and it seemed to him as though her voice had never thrilled with such sweetness before—"I know you."

"And you believe—"

"That all will be righted yet. I can wait, dear—if you will let me. You were never more precious to me than you are at this moment."

"Miss Westbrook—Come, Fanny, this is no place for you."

Harold and she had not heard the footsteps. It was Blanchard and her brother who had approached unnoticed.

"And no place for you either," said White to Blanchard.

"Faugh," replied that worthy. "I have no words to waste on such as you, sir. I am here to perform a duty."

"Scoundrel!" Harold began, at the same time raising his hand. She touched him, and he was still.

"Sir," she said, "I am mistress of my own actions. If I choose to accompany my brother, it is—because I choose! Harold, good-bye! Come what may, my faith will not falter, my love never change."

The last four words were murmured. As she shaped them she reached forward and kissed him before her brother, whose surprise at her defiant attitude was unspeakable.

They parted and went their several ways.

The charge against Harold White of embezzlement, and the result of it, produced a wonder that lasted much longer than the proverbial nine days. His departure, the day after the hearing, no one knew whither, had had the effect of increasing the number and sympathy of his friends. It was generally admitted that his defence had been weak—incomprehensibly weak. But who knew? he might have had his own invincible reasons for not making it stronger. Why had the brother of his affianced (for she was his affianced in all but an open and formal declaration of the fact) broken with him so suddenly? Until Blanchard appeared upon the scene they were inseparable. Depend upon it, the West Indian was at the bottom of it. In this fashion the gossips of Singlebridge discussed the events which had led to Harold White's downfall and departure.

Three months had elapsed, and not a word had been heard of or from Harold White; unless, the female gossips suggested, he had written to Miss Westbrook, which, considering his departure, he was hardly likely to have done. For once, however, they were out in their calculations. He had written her a letter, in which these words occurred:

"If I thought, darling, that you would be happier to be rid of me for good and all, our bond should be dissolved. It is your love for and simple faith in me that sweetens my life, and keeps me steadfast in my determination to undo the miserable wrong from which I suffer. They shall right me yet."

"I have borrowed for the present another name—my mother's before her marriage; but the people with whom I am known that I am Harold White, and are acquainted with my history. I must try, dear, to rub on without the consolation which your letters would bestow. It is better that we should seem to have parted forever. In the good time we shall meet—and then!"

It puzzled the well-informed Singlebridge people to hear Fanny Westbrook's cheerful words, to note her placid brow and bright manner. She never could have thought much of that Harold White, you know, or she would have manifested some regret at his misfortunes.

Blanchard, too, was mystified by her. What did it portend? Had she resigned all hopes of being restored to the lover whom he had so effectually helped to disgrace and banish? Was the course clear at last? He would see. His impetuous love for the sunny-haired, Saxon-eyed girl, a love which sprang into existence the moment they met, had grown mighty since the going of White. He would put an end to this uncertainty. He could face his fate.

"An interview with me?" replied Fanny to his blandly proffered request; "certainly, Mr. Blanchard." Her tone was provokingly even.

"And, if you please, let it take place now. Pray be seated."

If she only had been embarrassed.

"Miss Westbrook, I—I—fear that the impression which I have made upon you the day of that unfortunate *rencontre* by the riverside was not favourable. I—"

"Pray proceed, sir," she remarked in icy tones.

"Well, then—allow me—you cannot surely have remained firm in the resolution you then expressed—to cleave to—"

"Mr. Blanchard, I will assist you. You apparently wish to say that I must have ceased to love Harold White. Is that so?"

"Miss Westbrook—Fanny—pardon me; I do. He is all unworthy of you. Oh, if you did but know the depth of my love for you—"

"Stop, Mr. Blanchard," said she, rising from her chair, and moving slowly towards the door. "Let us understand each other. Whether or not Harold White holds the place in my heart which he once did concerns me and me only. The honour you have done me, Mr. Blanchard—call it by what tender name you please—I despise. Mr. Blanchard, I know you!"

"Stop, Miss Westbrook!" he exclaimed, making one step forward and barring her way to the door, "and hearken to me. You have thrown down the gage. Very well, I accept it. It was I who drove Harold White from Singlebridge. Ah, you can be impressed, I see. It is I who can compel your consent to my demands. Now, Miss Westbrook, know me!"

Her face was very white as she swept proudly past the West Indian, but it was not the whiteness of fear. They measured swords with their eyes—how clear and searching hers were!—and parted.

Next day Fanny Westbrook was missing from Singlebridge.

For twelve months Silas Westbrook has been daughterless. Fanny was sought for far and near, but without avail. Augustus had, to quote the idiomatic expression of that congenial companion already referred to, "gone clear to the bad." Of all his former chums, Blanchard was the sole possessor of a knowledge of the young scapegrace's whereabouts. As for the West Indian, he seemed to have entirely relinquished all intention of returning to Jamaica. However, we must for the present leave Singlebridge, and make our way to the Theatre Royal, Easthampton. The house is crowded by the admirers of the leading lady, whose benefit night it is.

Old Fussytan, the stage-doorkeeper, is at this moment in a state of mind bordering on despair. He dare not for the life of him leave his post, and he has just learned that a stranger has succeeded in reaching the stage under the cover of an audacious super. If that should come to the knowledge of Mr. Somerset Beauchamp, the manager, he (Fussytan) will to a certainty be dismissed on the spot.

"Take a note to Miss Harebell, sir? Could not do it. It's against orders, sir."

The speaker is a call-boy. His tempter is Mr. Blanchard.

"Very well, sir, I'll risk. If you are an old friend, I suppose it will be all right."

Induced to commit a breach of discipline by the bestowal of a rather potent bribe, the call-boy disappears behind a pile of scenery, and is presently heard in altercation with Miss Harebell's dresser.

"What do you want? Miss Harebell is not 'a beginner.' She is not on until the second scene."

"I know that, Mrs. Cummins. I want to speak to you. Open the door."

Blanchard heard no more. A whispered conversation between the leading lady's dresser and the call-boy was immediately succeeded by the re-appearance of that precocious youth, who said: "Miss Harebell will meet you after the performance, at her hotel, the George. She has private apartments there. All you have to do is to send in your name. And now, sir, do clear out of this. How you got in, I don't know. If Mr. Bowshang was to stag you, wouldn't there be a shine neither?"

Meanwhile his note had produced a startling effect upon Miss Harebell. It ran thus:

"At last I find you. In Miss Harebell, I have recognized Fanny Westbrook. At the

peril of those nearest and dearest to you see me to-night. I am desperate."

"Cummins," gasped she, "lock that door. You did it for the best to get rid of him. It is always convenient to decline receiving a visitor at one's hotel; but I will see him. Finish my hair and then find Mr. Beauchamp. I would speak with him before I go on."

Blanchard had again curiously undervalued the strength of his lovely companion.

She saw the manager, and exchanged with him a few whispered words. He grasped her hand warmly by way of emphasizing his chivalric intentions in her cause.

Since that day, more than twelve months previously, Miss Westbrook had merged her identity in that of the now talented actress, Miss Harebell. Fanny had played many parts both on and off the stage. On this particular night she excelled herself. The applause of her crowd of admirers was what would have been termed in stage parlance "terrific." Such was the electric force of her acting that it carried all before it. Was she playing up defiantly to Blanchard? Perhaps.

On the conclusion of the play she, laden with bouquets, retired to her dressing-room and in a few minutes had resumed, with the aid of attentive Mrs. Cummins, the attire of ordinary life.

In the space of a few minutes Miss Harebell was proceeding unnoticed, save by a group of her youthful idolators who surrounded the pit-door, under the convoy of Mr. Beauchamp, to her apartments at the George.

Before ascending the staircase which led to her rooms, she informed the maid-servant that probably a gentleman would call upon her. If he did she was to show him up, after having privately informed Mr. Beauchamp, who would wait for the news, in the bar-parlour, of her visitor's arrival.

Mr. Beauchamp, whose face beamed with complacent delight, nodded his approval of this arrangement. Observed Fanny to him:

"Now, Mr. Beauchamp, I shall leave you to your devices [here she indulged in the tiniest, ripple of laughter]—your devices, mind."

"Very well, my dear, they shall be ready, if wanted."

"And he—"

"Everything is ready, Miss Harebell, and everybody. Let that suffice ye."

Seated in her snug little room, Fanny dreamily awaited the coming of her ancient persecutor. She had not to wait long.

"Mr. Blanchard, 'm," announced the maid-servant, and thereupon ushered that gentleman in.

Miss Westbrook rose and acknowledged his elaborate bow with a silence that was full of scornful eloquence. She then resumed her seat.

"Miss Westbrook, can you divine why I am here?"

"Yes."

"Oh, you can? You are frank. After all, why should you not be? We can spare each other the recital of a long preface of dull retrospection. After a long and painful search I have found you—no matter how."

"I know how," she calmly interposed.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "perhaps you would not mind enlightening me." His tones were sneering. Her perfect equanimity put him about.

"Not at all. You got the information from my brother."

"Even so. And your brother? Has he informed you also that he is just as completely in my power as was another person of our acquaintance more than a year since? Did he tell you that there is in this bundle of papers that which would give him penal servitude if I chose to put the law in operation? Did he—"

"No, Mr. Blanchard, he did not." A tear had stolen down her cheek at the mention of Harold's name; but now that she confronted the West Indian her eyes blazed defiance upon him. "He did not. Remove your mask. I can read the rascal underneath it. So, then, my hand bestowed on you is to be the price of your silence concerning my brother's crime, if crime it be. But you have shown your claws too soon, sir; see that they are not clipped."

"And who is to clip them?"

"I!" exclaimed a voice that came from behind the chair near which Blanchard stood, while at the same time his arms were seized in a grip of iron and wrenched violently back. "I—Harold White! Fan, take possession of those papers."

"So you think to trap me, do you?" growled Blanchard, actually foaming with rage; "but you are mistaken."

"Not a bit of it," observed obliging Mr. Beauchamp, at that moment entering by the door on the landing. Coolly turning the key and placing it in his pocket, the manager of the Easthampton theatre continued: "Now, look here, Mr. Blanchard, I have stage-managed too many little things of this kind not to know what's required to strengthen the situation. I have too of my fellows handy on the stairs. My property man is on the other side of those folding doors. My friend here and myself reckon for something, to say nothing of Mrs. Harold White—"

"Mrs. Harold White?" gasped Blanchard.

"Yes, Mr. Blanchard," releasing him and approaching her, "my wife. She always believed in my perfect innocence of the charge you helped to fasten on me, and when poor miserable Gus confessed the part which he had played in the conspiracy, we got married."