

MAIDS AND MATRONS.

I.

Love's little beings,
Blythe, and pure, and gay;
Happy in their innocence
All the livelong day.

II.

Weary, suffering creatures,
Labor never done;
From their careworn features
Banished mirth and fun.

III.

Little fairy feet
Twinkling o'er the sod;
Dainty little feet
Beautifully shod.

IV.

Languid feet and weary
Slipshod feet—who cares?
Tired of journeys dreary
Up and down the stairs.

V.

Tiny dimpled hands
Glancing o'er the keys;
Working little mischiefs
Naughty men to tease.

VI.

Hands coarse and red with working,
Flour-white, or black with dust;
When lazy maids are shirking,
Work the house-wife must.

VII.

Brilliant liquid eyes
That each thought reveal;
That upon the soul
Like a sunbeam steal.

VIII.

Eyes red and dull with weeping
Many a bitter tear,
That nasty, old, house-keeping,
Red acct. books bear.

IX.

Curling silken lashes,
Merciful are you,
Velling dazzling orbs
Too gloriously blue.

X.

Heavy lid's long lashes,
A tattered fringe appears;
Nor hides the angry flashes
Glimmering through tears.

XI.

Finely pencilled brows
Like bows in rainy skies;
Accents circumflectant
O'er the speaking eyes.

XII.

Brows as black as thunder
With a threatening frown;
Or raised in cynic wonder
That Betty isn't down.

XIII.

Charming little noses,
Greek or aquiline;
Tiny curving nostrils
Roseate and fine.

XIV.

Perky noses, sniffing
Onions for the pie;
Curled in scornful "tiffing,"
Ending in "a cry."

XV.

Gem bedecked, transparent,
Watchful little ears,
Which the postman's ring
Fills with hopes and fears.

XVI.

Ears by knocks appalling,
Of cruel duns made wild;
Defensed by the squalling
Of a fretful child.

XVII.

Tempting ruby lips
Like a budding rose,
Parted by a fragrance
Such as flowers disclose.

XVIII.

Pate word portals, folding
Underneath the nose,
Only cease their scolding
When in deep repose.

XIX.

Little dears who think
Marriage must be bliss;
Little fools, who hover
On a precipice.

XX.

Poor martyrs, whose alluring
Young charms no more are found,
Still patently enduring
Life's weary, dreary round.

THE "SUPER'S" STORY.

Before I begins, I wishes to say a few words—a sort of prologue-like to my little drama. I aint a-writing this myself: I couldn't, I was never taught. I went to a school once, certainly; but that was only a Sunday one, so o' course writing and all them games is foreign languages to me. A swell gent is a-taking everything as I says down, in the bar parlor of a public next the theatre. He says he's on the press, and he's stood threepenn'orth of Irish hot; and there you have us, he—the swell gent—a-writing as I speaks, and me a-talking and drinking. (Here's your very good health!) Now the overture is over, and up goes the curtain.

I'm a super. I suppose you knows what that is? If you don't, and aint theatrically inclined, I'll tell you. A super's one of them as takes the small parts in a play, where the "business" is important and the "cackle" aint particular. That's a super.

When Shakspeare wrote "A man in his time plays many parts," he must have had a super in his eye, if supers was invented in those days, which I suppose they was, or Shakspeare aint the man I took him for. Bless you! our rôle is unlimited—we does everything. Why, in one piece sometimes I takes a matter of half a dozen parts, if not more. Say "Hamlet" is put up: first I'm a guard a walking on the ramparts of the castle; then I'm a courtier attending on the king; then I'm a recorder (which aint got nothing to do with the law, as I thought at one time, but performs on a sort of flute); then I'm a sailor; after that a mute at Ophelia's funeral; then I'm a soldier again, or a courtier, as the case may be. And there I am. A super's more important than anybody may think. Send a king on without his court, and where would he be? Let Richard the Third enter without his army at his back, and he'd be hissed off for certain. A play is like that bundle of sticks business—taken all of a lump it's firm; part 'em and it's all up. Just you take away the supers from a play, and an audience of babbies wouldn't put up with it.

I gets a shilling a night, and finds my own color, which, being a saving man, I usually manages to scrape enough up of the waste in the painting room—for in the matter of lime and ochre artists is prodigals; and if I'm hard up for black—for a eyebrow or a moustache, for instance—I gets the needful from the chimney pipe of the stove in the property-room.

I made my first appearance at the Adelphi Garden, at the age of six, as a frog in the pantomime, which was an immense success, and I've been a-going on with great eclat (as I once heard our leading man say) ever since. I've worked my way up to the top of my profession in my line, which is heavy lead of supers; and I've occasion to know that at particular times—say the first night of a new piece—I'm looked up to by the management to carry the play through; and I generally contrives to satisfy the most sanguinary expectations.

I'm proud of my profession. I aint only a actor for the sake of the filthy lucre (which I suppose means coin), but for the literature and art—specially the art. I've studied it—really studied it; you mayn't think so, but it's a fact. Many's the night I've stood at the "wings," when the stage manager weren't nowhere near, a-listening to the play. And in most stock pieces I know where the points ought to be; and if a novice fails to make 'em—which he invariably do—I'm disgusted in proportion. I've served under Edmund Kean, William Macready, and all the stars since. I once fell out with Mr. Macready, because I couldn't remember where to stand at a certain cue. He was very particular about his situations; and one day, at rehearsal, I couldn't think where I ought to be, and I made the same mistake so often that I got flustered. I was young at the time and rather sudden; so when Mr. Macready, almost out of patience, says—"Stand there, you dolt!" pointing to a place on the stage, I takes a piece of chalk out of my pocket and makes a + just where he wanted me to be; and there I stood looking as cool as a railway clerk, all the while I was as frightened as a amateur. If Mr. M.'s eyes at that identical moment had been daggers I shouldn't have been telling you this here. I never went on with Mr. Macready after that.

Edmund Kean was different. His way of doing things was just the same "off" and "on." If you didn't please him, you know'd it. I had to take a goblet of wine on to him one time, and I forgot my cue, and kept him waiting. When I did go on, he was regular boiling over with rage. He catches me by the collar of my coat and the roomy part of my breeches and pitches me slap off the stage. But he wasn't a bad sort; for after he was done he comes up to me and says he's very sorry for hurting me, and asked me what I'd have to drink.

I've been married, and had one child—a girl—and I'm a widower. I was married young, like most professionals. She was in the third row of the ballet, and inclined to be stout; but she didn't last long, poor soul! she had a apoplectic fit one night, and died in my arms in the green-room. I was very cut up at the time, because she was as good a wife as ever wore a ring.

My darter was as good-looking a girl as you'd meet anywhere; quite different from her mother—not in the beauty line, because she was nice-looking too, but in size. Rose was very thin. She followed in the same steps as my old woman, and I got her an engagement

at our theatre. Of course she fell in love—girls always do at that age, seventeen—with as rising a young fellow as I wished to see. I was proud of Rose, and I was glad it turned out so; and what's more, he wasn't ashamed of me, although I was only a super, which made me proud of him too. He was very jealous of Rose, and wanted to take her off the stage and marry her at once; but I objected on the score of age. I asked him to wait a year, till she was a little older, and he took my advice—rather unwillingly, I suspects, if his face was to be believed; but he didn't say so, for he always gave way to me, because I knew what was what better than he did.

One night Rose gets a letter sent round to her from a gent in the boxes, a-asking her to meet him outside, after the performance. She was very much hurt about it, for it was the first insult she'd received—they gets used to these things in time—and brought the letter to me. Just as I was a-reading it, up comes Charley—that's her young man—and Rose snatches the letter out of my hand, and puts it in her pocket; but not before Charley had seen it. He looks surprised, and he says—

"What's that?" says he.

"Oh, nothing," she says, playful like, and runs away; and he turned away too, but not in the same direction.

"When I saw Rose again, I says—

"Why didn't you show it him?" I says.

"Oh, father," she says, "he's so jealous; and if he'd seen it he'd have thrashed the fellow," she says, "and perhaps have got into a row, and I didn't want him to do that."

She gave me the letter, for fear he should ask for it; and I put it in my pocket, never a-thinking no more about it.

When work was done for the night, me and two or three others used to take our pipe and pot—which was half-a-pint of fourpenny—at a little pub round the corner, close to the theatre, where we was known and respected. There we used to talk over the events of the evening; and sometimes, when things was slow, we'd even condescend to talk politics, but not often—we left them frivolous subjects to people as hadn't the sense to appreciate art. While we was there that night, in comes a gent rather mopsy; he swaggered up to the counter, and calls for a bottle o' champagne, and then asks us to drink, which we did—we never refuses that. Well, he was a-going on about one thing and another, and at last he says—

"That Rose is a nice girl."

I picks up my ears at this, and I puts down the glass of champagne as I was just a-rising to my mouth—the glass as he paid for—but I never says nothing. Then he goes on a-boasting, and says as he was a-going to see her home. I jumps up, and I says—

"I'm that lady's father, and if I wasn't a old man I'd knock you down."

Then I turns to my mates and tells 'em of the letter business; and takes it out of my pocket, and hands it to him, and gives him a bit of advice as he wanted. He was in that rage, that he was just a-putting up his fist to hit me, when Joe Pulter, one of us, floors him. Then we handed him over to a policeman. We was rather excited afterwards, what with having an extra half-pint, and the champagne we drunk afore we knew who we got it from.

Charley used always to see Rose home after the performance, and stay with her till I come; but he wasn't there that night, and Rose said he hadn't come with her as he always did, and laid the blame to the letter. She was naturally cut up about it, and I said—

"I'll tell him how it was in the morning."

But she says—

"No!" she says, "if he can't think me true to him without proofs, he sha'n't at all."

I seed it was no use a-arguing with her, so I gives in. My little beauty was very proud, and I liked to see it; but I never thought as how pride would turn love over as it did; although I ought to have known better, a-seeing so often how Pauline had a narrow escape of it.

She was very pale next morning, and her eyes looked like mine do sometimes when I aint got enough water to wash with comfortable, and leaves the color round under 'em; but it wasn't from that, I knowed, because Rose was a very tidy girl. I never says nothing, but I goes on a-eating and not pretending to notice anything different; and by and by off we goes to the theatre. I was very curious to see what Charley would do; but he only just takes off his hat—Charley always was a gentleman—and turns away again. This here made me feel very queerish, and I didn't know what to make on it.

Things went on in this here unfortunate style for a week. Rose was too proud to explain, although I wanted her to; but no, not her! and there we was. One morning she didn't come down to breakfast as usual, so I goes up to her bed-room and says—

"What's the matter, my beauty?"

"Oh, father!" says she, "I don't feel very well just now. I dare say I shall be all right to-night."

But her hand was a-trembling like a leaf, and her eyes was sunk; and when I come to look at her close, I was staggered to see how she'd altered in them few days.

It flustered me more than I should a-thought; so I gives her a kiss, and tells her to lie down quiet, and off I goes to a doctor. He comes and feels her pulse, and such-like; then he calls me out on the landing, and says she's in a high state of fever, and must be kept very quiet, or he wouldn't be answerable for it. Then he began a-asking me about myself, and my profession and cetera.

"Not very rich, I suppose?" says he. "Ah, well," he says, "we sha'n't quarrel about the money."

And s'welp me goodness, as I'm standing here, he never charged me a blessed ha'penny for physic or nothing—not a ha'penny—and found the bottles besides.

When Charley sees me by myself, he didn't know what to make on it. He fidgets about me for ever so long, and at last he comes up and asks me where Rose was. I was very short with him, a-treating her as he was, though he didn't know the damage he'd done; so I says, stiff—

"My daughter's at home, sir—not so well as she might be."

"I hope she isn't ill," says he, quick.

"It don't much matter to you," I says, "whether she's ill or not," and I turns away, choking like, a-thinking of my little deserted beauty a-laying so quiet at home.

I hurried back as soon as I could, and goes up to her room; and, God help me! she was in that state she didn't know me, and wanted to know if I'd brought a message from heaven from Charley, as she was certain he was dead, because he hadn't been to see her. I tried to soothe her, but it was no good; there she kept rambling on about one thing and another, a-pretending to be talking to him, and a-telling him not to be sorry, as she'd soon join him. It made me feel queer-like, and moist about the eyes, and I remembered I was a old man, and began to think how I should feel when I was alone.

She lay in this state for a week, a-living chiefly on sop victuals, as I was obliged to force down her throat. It was a hard time—not because the money was short, I didn't mind that; but I couldn't abide to see my darling in pain. I never went near the public then, but hurried home every night as soon as the performance was over, a-hoping always as she'd be better, and would know me again; but she never did till about an hour before it come. It was a Sunday night, at church time. I used to like to think afterwards that my little darling was carried up to Heaven on the sound of the bells, as it died away on the breeze. I was a-sitting quiet at the window, melancholy-like, a-keeping my eye on Rose to see as she didn't want nothing, and somehow, the night my poor wife died came into my mind, and I couldn't get rid of the thought nohow. The more I tried, the more it would come. I remembered, as well as if it was yesterday, when I had her in my arms in the green-room, her a-looking up into my face as though she wanted to say something. So I says—

"Is it Rose, Mary?" I says, and she nods and smiles, and I promised as I'd be a kind father to her.

She smiles again at that, and lays her head on my shoulder. Then I see her eyelids a-closing, and that told me that the Great Prompter had rung down her curtain.

I was a-looking out of the window, and I sees somebody turn the corner, and stop in front of the house; but it was a-getting dark, and I couldn't make out who it was—I thought I knew the figure, too. Just as I was a-puzzling myself a-thinking who it could be, I heard my little darling call "Father." I runs to her quick, for it was the first time she'd knowed me since the fever took her. I had such a glad feeling at my heart as I can't tell here—it come so fresh to me after waiting so long, although it seemed to choke me, too, and I couldn't speak at the moment. I sits down by her head, and takes her hand in mine, and there we was, for the matter of a minute or two before either of us said a word, a-looking into each other's faces, joyfuller than we'd been for some time. Then, says she—"Father," she says, "I want to see Charley."

I says—

"You shall to-morrow, my darling."

"Let me see him to-night, father," she says, beseechingly—"let me see him to-night, because—"

And there she stopped.

I gets up—not having it in me to see her want for anything as I could give her, though I couldn't make out why she was in such a hurry—leastways, I couldn't then: I do now. I puts on my hat, and just outside who should I see a-coming across the road from the other side but Charley himself.

When he knew he was wanted, he runs up faster than I could, and by the time I got into the room, there she was, with her arms round his neck, a-smiling up into his face, and he a-kissing of her, as happy as birds. So I says nothing; but goes and sits on the stairs outside, a-waiting till they had made it up.

I felt almost jealous of Charley; and I thought—God help me!—as how he would take her away from me as soon as she was well. She was took away from me; but not by him—not by him.

I sat there for a matter of half an hour in the dark, when, all of a sudden, Charley gives a cry. I rushes in, and there was my darling, with her head a-laid quiet on his bosom, and her eyes shut; and I could see, by the sacred look on his face that my little beauty would never cheer my poor old heart again.

A NEW WAY OF BURNING STUMPS.—A writer in the *American Agriculturist* gets rid of stumps by boring a hole with a two-inch auger from the top of the stump to the bottom. Another hole is bored near the bottom at right angles to the first and connecting with it. Fire is kindled over the horizontal hole, and the natural draft draws the fire through the two holes, consuming the centre of the stump first and ultimately burning the whole.