

PRIERE.

(Song. Translated from the French.)

Ah, if you knew how I deplore
My solitude continually,
Sometimes before my cottage door
You would pass by.

If you but knew the joy I took
In meeting but your fleeting glance,
Up to my window you would look
As 'twere by chance.

If you but knew what comfort sweet
My heart has known when near you stood,
You could not hesitate to meet—
No sister would.

If you but knew what I could tell—
My love, and if you knew the how,
I almost think perhaps—that well—
You'd enter now.

GOWAN LKA.

THE OLD MAID.

She lived in a small cottage near the outskirts of the village of Lowden. She had taken up her residence here a year before, "for quiet, and to suit her slender income," she said in reply to the curious, who wondered much at such a lady-like person's taking up her abode in the Pond Cottage, so called, because the original owner bore that name in some of the past ages of that rural village. Its unromantic situation, its shabby appearance, and the muddy stream that flowed at the foot of the garden, had caused the cottage to remain tenanted for some years past, until this mysterious family, consisting of Miss Eastman, one servant, a large Newfoundland dog, a canary bird, and a sleek Maltese cat, all characteristics of an "old maid," made their appearance in Lowden.

This household lived smoothly, for Miss Eastman was a very severe person, and the village gossips that intruded on her quiet life could discover little or nothing of her past history. That she had formerly lived in the city Miss Eastman made no secret, for she spoke of the bustle of the life in the metropolis. But beyond this naught could be gained, for the "old maid" remained impenetrable. Judging from her appearance and calm exterior, one would have supposed her life to have been one of peace, which the world's storms had not ruffled or even reached. Only a few wrinkles could be traced on her brow. On her cheek there remained a faint tint of youth's rosy bloom. But the brown hair, threaded with silver, told that old age was not very far distant in her future. "A quiet, serene woman," you would say. But ah! one glance into the large, gray eyes, shaded by soft, brown eyelashes, would thrill the observer by their passionate sadness and the depth of soul. Those beautiful eyes told a story of a life full of many cares and many disappointments. The humble inhabitants of Lowden were convinced from the first that she had a history, but beyond this fact they arrived no farther.

A bright, cheery spring morning threw a reviving influence over the village, and nature in her sunlit splendour invited all to enjoy the balmy breeze of this particular morning. Miss Eastman was not long in responding to the call. Taking her garden hat, she went forth to enjoy the sunshine. The garden presented a neat picture, with its well-arranged beds and trim walks, different from the way it appeared when Miss Eastman found it, it being then but a mass of overgrown weeds, with but a few flowers struggling to bloom in such a wilderness.

Miss Eastman walked about the garden in a very brisk manner, pulling out a weed here and there, examining the rose bushes with a critical eye. While busily raking the soil around a shrub, she was startled by the sound of carriage wheels rolling rapidly towards her. Listening a few moments, she perceived that it had halted at her gate, and a loud rap at the cottage door announced that a visitor of some sort had arrived. A wonder as to who it could be filled her mind; but she was not kept long in suspense, for Jennie, the maid of all work, soon appeared, and said in a hurried tone, "A gentleman to see you, Miss Eastman."

"But who is he, Jennie? Did he not send his name?" And Miss Eastman looked somewhat surprised.

"Oh, yes!" replied Jennie. "He said, 'Tell your mistress that Mr. Mitford wishes to see her.' And Jennie took her departure in the direction of the culinary department, where the odour of burnt gingerbread was beginning to perfume the air.

"Mitford!" repeated Miss Eastman, a little startled out of her habitual composure. "Why is he here? Where did he come from?"

These questions glided through her brain as she hurried up the garden path. At the parlour door she halted a few seconds to regain her self-control before entering. Then, with a firm step and quiet countenance, she opened the door and entered the room where Mr. Mitford was impatiently pacing the narrow limits of the parlour. His figure was tall and commanding, and he had a slight touch of haughtiness in his demeanour. The raven hair which shaded the broad forehead was sprinkled here and there with silver. He was just in the prime of manhood; age had not, as yet, laid its withering stroke upon this noble form.

He stopped abruptly in his walk as Miss Eastman came in, and, turning towards her, he exclaimed, "Marian! Have you come at last? I thought perhaps you would not see me."

"You are mistaken, George," said Miss Eastman, quietly. "I am very glad to see you. How is your wife?"

"Oh, Marian," he replied, sadly, "I have come to take you to her. Lillian is ill—dying, I fear. She wishes to see you, but would not allow you to be sent for; she said I must bring you, if you will come." And George Mitford waited anxiously for her reply.

Miss Eastman stood near the window, her eyes fixed longingly on the distant hills. A conflict was raging in the heart of "the old maid," a struggle between wounded pride and her better nature. But the forgiving spirit conquered in the end, and, turning to Mr. Mitford, she said, in her usual quiet tone, "I will go with you to Lillian. When do you start?"

"At once, if I can leave. We have an hour to drive to Barston and catch the train for the city. Lillian expects me to return to-day, and she knows how generous, how kind—"

Miss Eastman raised her hand beseechingly, and before he could continue she had left the room.

Neat and precise as Miss Eastman was, it did not take her many minutes to prepare for the journey. After a hurried explanation and a few directions to Jennie, she returned to the parlour and they proceeded immediately to the carriage.

Many an eye could have been observed peeping through the blinds at the carriage as it rolled swiftly through the village, and curious, indeed, were the gossips when they discovered that it contained the "old maid" and a gentleman—a stranger to the inhabitants of Lowden. Of course poor Jennie was attacked at once, but naught could be gained there; for she, like her mistress, was not loquacious. But, regardless of all the curiosity astir, the occupants of the carriage moved on in almost silence. Each one was too busy with thoughts of the past to keep up conversation. Thus they reached the station at Cutzow, just in time for the train. And just as the shadows of evening were gathering over the busy city, our travellers, weary and worn, ascended the steps of Mr. Mitford's residence.

They were met in the hall by Mrs. Seaton, Lillian's aunt, who immediately conducted them up the long stairs.

At Lillian's room all paused; then Miss Eastman turned to Mr. Mitford and said, "I think it would be better for me to see Lillian alone—for a few minutes, at least."

"Oh, certainly," replied Mr. Mitford; and turning down the passage he disappeared.

Mrs. Seaton opened the door noiselessly, and Miss Eastman passed in. The door closed upon her; all was as silent as if death had already obtained supreme rule.

Marian moved towards the bed and pushed the curtains aside. Lillian turned her face at the movement, and their eyes met.

Oh, when estrangement has parted friends who have loved each other well, what memories of the past crowd round them when brought to meet at the very brink of eternity!

How every kind act is recalled, every word of love remembered, while all former harshness or ingratitude is forgotten! Alone with Lillian at such a moment, Marian Eastman forgave as only the good and noble can forgive. And alone with their dead past we leave them.

Marian Eastman had been reared in luxury and wealth, and her young life was spent amid scenes of splendour. At eighteen society claimed her, and would probably have made an idol of her had it not been for one circumstance which changed many things.

Her father died suddenly, leaving his business deeply involved, and, after all debts were discharged, only a small income was left to support Marian and her mother. So fashionable society quietly dropped Mrs. Eastman and her daughter.

But Marian was not the one to mourn over the desertion of such friends, for wealth and pomp had not spoiled the noble nature in the least. Poverty thus coming upon them tested Marian's courage, but it did not find her wanting.

George Mitford was then but a clerk in her father's establishment. He had long loved his employer's daughter, but, not having the wherewithal to purchase the prize, he was compelled to worship from afar.

But circumstances often alter cases, and, to make a long story short, this enterprising young man, finding himself upon an equal footing, laid his heart at the feet of Marian, who accepted him; for she had long felt an interest in her father's clerk.

They had agreed to wait a few years until George had obtained a profitable position. A few weeks after their engagement he received an appointment from a firm in India, whither he was to go and remain some years, with the prospect of being promoted.

Of course the hearts of the lovers were nearly broken at the thought of separation, but Marian, like a sensible girl, knew what was best for their future. So, after many promises and an abundance of tears, they parted.

The year flew swiftly by, bringing many changes. A short time after George's departure Marian's mother died, leaving her to wait and struggle through the long and wearisome years. Letters from George, filled with brilliant hopes, and accounts of increasing wealth, brought small glisterings of sunshine into her lonely life. But the daily struggle with poverty and ill health overpowered the strong woman, and she began to look haggard and old.

Twelve years rolled by, and Marian had reached the age of thirty. George was coming home at last, and in the possession of untold wealth. She had many a time pictured their meeting to herself; but oh, the bitter disappointment when he only took her hand and ex-

claimed, "Why, Marian, how old you look!" And he, in the very flower of manhood, could not understand the change in this once beautiful girl. Ah, he knew not of the silent struggles of the heart within!

The days passed on, and George Mitford became the lion of society. The world of fashion smiled complacently on the young millionaire. He had met Lillian Seaton at Marian's home, and although there was a vast difference in the ages and social position of the two girls, yet they were fast friends. Lillian was a belle in society, but she always came to Marian with her vexations and petty trials, often brought on by her coquetry. So, when the handsome lover of her friend made his appearance, she at once began to weave her enchantments round the unconscious George. But it was not long before he was awakened to the fact that Miss Seaton was a very charming young lady. He compared her with Marian, and found, to his dismay that she outshone his betrothed in many respects. Then, too, he reasoned, Marian had grown cold and indifferent, and did not care any longer for him. And as time passed along he gradually drifted into an engagement with Lillian, and left Marian alone with her disappointment.

Lillian hastened to inform her friend of her conquest, little thinking how she stabbed the true heart. But when she saw the look of deep agony written on every feature, she expressed her surprise. Then Marian told Lillian of her lover's faithlessness, blaming her for winning him. She soon after left the city to attend the sick bed of a relative, while Lillian and George enjoyed life as much as ever. And this was the simple history of "the old maid." This was the tale the gray eyes told in their passionate sadness.

Five years had passed away since Marian Eastman had taken that hasty journey from the village; five years since Lillian Mitford had rested in "Greenwood." When Marian returned, it was in her quiet way. Calmly she took up the thread of her life.

Five years! 'Twas spring again. The sun again shed its glory on the green earth. The violets and forget-me-nots bloomed in the garden. At the window of the cottage sat Marian Eastman, but how changed! Faded and worn was the pale face, and the rich brown hair had changed to gray. The sunlight beamed softly on the weary woman whose life is slowly ebbing away. Summer came and faded into autumn stillness, and then passed into winter's snows. Spring again, and the sun shone with a softer light on a newly-made grave 'neath a weeping willow. The cottage was lone and deserted; the garden had resumed its former desolation and rank growth. All was silent; no eyes full of longing and sorrow looked from the cottage window. "The old maid" was at rest; her time of waiting was over. The eyes would never tell another history—they were closed for ever.

A traveller, dusty and tired, stopped at the village graveyard and wended his way to the grave under the willow. Kneeling at the marble slab, he bowed his head in an agony of grief.

Suddenly the face grew still, and the convulsive sobs ceased. A great calm fell on the stranger, and death claimed another victim. The humble villagers buried him beside the "old maid," for they had a faint suspicion that he was not a stranger to the woman that rested under the sod.

Thus George Mitford slept the long sleep beside his early and true love.

Fair young reader, when you are tempted to join in hurling sarcasm at the "old maid," remember you have to live yet, and do not forget that every one of these lonely beings has had her own story of early love—her own tale of disappointed affection or buried hope.

Simple is the story of Marian Eastman, but it is only one among a thousand. Truly a life of waiting for that which never came until the thread of life was sundered!

HISTORY OF THE WEEK.

MONDAY, Dec. 6.—The Porte has ceded Crete to Germany on terms similar to those with England in the case of Cyprus. The Marquis of Ripon, Governor-General of India, has been suffering from an illness brought on by sunstroke. A Capetown despatch says the Pondomise have been entirely routed, and the Orange river is now clear of rebels. A balliff named Mulholland, while serving an execution on a farmer at Cookstown, Ireland, yesterday, was shot by the latter. The electric light is to be tried in the streets of New York during Christmas week, when a square mile is to be lighted by electrical burners. It is rumoured that Earl Cowper, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, threatens to resign, unless coercive measures are adopted in that country.

TUESDAY, Dec. 7.—Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, Secretary to the Admiralty, in a speech at Reading yesterday, advocated the gradual creation of peasant proprietors in Ireland. Mr. Forster, Chief Secretary for Ireland, has issued a circular to the Magistrates urging the enforcement of the law against unlawful assemblies. The dissatisfied members of the Imperial Cabinet on the Irish policy are said to be Lord Salisbury, the Duke of Argyll, the Marquis of Hartington and Mr. Forster. The press of Madrid are making bitter comments on the clause in President Hayes' message, which refers to aggressions of Spanish cruisers on American vessels in Cuban waters. Mr. William Wallace, M.P., was yesterday elected President of the National Currency League. Only seventeen persons attended the public meeting of the League in Toronto in the evening. It is reported that General Garfield has offered the State Department in the new Government to Senator Blaine; this would indicate the gratitude of the President-elect for assistance rendered him in the campaign by the Maine Senator.

WEDNESDAY, Dec. 8.—Rumours of dissensions in the British Cabinet are revived. The Russian journals have adopted a professedly friendly tone towards England. The Bank of England yesterday advanced the rate of discount from 2½ to 3 per cent.

A despatch from Teheran states that the Kurdish rebellion in Persia has been quelled. Greece and Turkey have agreed to submit their differences to the arbitration of a European Congress. Hon. Jno. Bright is undergoing treatment for the disease from which he has been suffering for the past four years. The President of the Orange Free State believes that the South African rebellion will be completely subjugated in six months. An outline of the Land Reform bill to be introduced by the British Government is given. It is said to be of a character to gain general acceptance.

THURSDAY, Dec. 9.—The Times says the Irish Magistrates do not feel justified in regarding the threat to "Boycott" as an infraction of the law, as it does no open violence. It is stated that the law officers are considering Mr. Parnell's recent violent speech at Waterford, and it is not improbable that he will be indicted separately on it. A land meeting was held at Scotstown, Monaghan, yesterday, and passed off quietly, the Orangemen yielding to the solicitations of the authorities, and abandoning a counter demonstration. Mr. Valin, Conservative, was yesterday elected to the House of Commons for Montmorency by 500 majority; Mr. McConville, Conservative, for Joliette by 250 majority, and Mr. Sutherland, moderate Liberal, for North Oxford by 330 majority, the latter defeating the Globe candidate.

FRIDAY, Dec. 10.—Germany will have to float a loan to cover the large increase in this year's military budget. The first number of Prince Jerome Napoleon's paper *Le Napoleon* was issued yesterday. The Land Leaguers are preparing petitions to prevent Chief Justice May from trying the Traversers. Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern has renounced his right of succession to the Rumanian throne in favour of his eldest son. Dervish Pasha is taking steps to disarm the Albanians, and has made the Notables sign a declaration of allegiance to the Sultan. Existing legislation on the subject of slavery and emancipation in the West Indies is to be brought before the Spanish Cortes at an early date. A disastrous explosion took place in one of the Rhodda Valley collieries, in South Wales, yesterday morning, by which upwards of ninety persons lost their lives. The man charged with shooting a balliff at New Pallas, was acquitted at Cork Assizes yesterday. The presiding Judge was threatened with assassination in open court if the prisoner was convicted.

SATURDAY, Dec. 11.—It is feared that Lord Ripon, the Viceroy of India, is suffering from typhoid fever. Lord Beaconsfield was a guest of the Queen at Windsor from Wednesday until Saturday. The Royal Geographical Society of London have decided to send out a new Arctic expedition. The British Cabinet has been suddenly summoned to meet on Monday instead of Wednesday. "Boycotting" in Ireland is now so common that only a small percentage of the cases are reported. It is stated that the British Government has placed two more regiments at the disposal of the Irish Executive. The latest estimate of the loss of life by the Penyrail colliery explosion, places the number of dead at one hundred. Public opinion in England is strongly in favour of a settlement with the United States on the disputed fisheries question. A despatch from Cape Town, South Africa, says the colonial troops in the Leribe district have been compelled to retreat with serious loss. Jay Gould's Conservatory, the most magnificent of the kind in the United States and valued at \$100,000, was destroyed by fire on Saturday. The caucus of supporters of the Government at Ottawa on Saturday lasted four hours. A very full explanation of the Pacific Railway contract was made and general satisfaction with its terms expressed. Great preparations are being made at Windsor Castle for the commemoration of the nineteenth anniversary of the death of the Prince Consort on Tuesday. The Queen afterwards proceeds to the Isle of Wight. It is reported that the English Cabinet has resolved to anticipate Parliamentary obstruction by the Irish members by introducing a series of resolutions for the guidance of the Speaker of the House of Commons in cases where obstruction is attempted.

ANCIENT ROMAN BREAKWATERS.—The method adopted by the Romans in the construction of some of their breakwaters was as follows:—In situations where the depth or calmness of the sea would permit it, two ranges of piles, secured firmly together with chains, were driven in the line of the proposed breakwater. The earth was then taken out from between the two ranges, and the bed levelled. Mortar, consisting of two parts of a peculiar earth, found near Cumæ, and one of lime—a compound which possesses the property of hardening under water—was then thrown into the space between the piles, together with a proportional quantity of stones, until it was entirely filled. This course was not, however, always practicable, because if the sea were violent the mortar run the risk of being washed away before it became hardened. In this case they adopted a most ingenious contrivance for building blocks of concrete close to the position that would occupy when submerged, and allowing the action of the water to carry them, when hardened, into the position intended. The method adopted was to build a strong platform of hewn stone blocks immediately adjoining the sea. A portion of this platform was horizontal, whilst that part facing the sea inclined towards it. On the flanks of the inclined plane walls were built projecting eighteen inches above its face, and upon this enclosed space sand was laid. On this sand they commenced building a concrete block, and as soon as it was hardened by exposure to the air, the enclosing walls were removed, when, the sea gaining access to the sand, washed it away, and, leaving the block unsupported on a horizontal plane, it slid down the slope into the water. This process—slow, though sure—was repeated until the work was advanced as far as desired.

NEVER RETURN.

It is said that one out of every four real invalids who go to Denver, Col., to recover health never return to the East or South except as a corpse. The undertakers, next to the hotel-keepers, have the most profitable business. This excessive mortality may be prevented and patients served and cured under the care of friends and loved ones at home, if they will but use Hop Bitters in time. This we know. See another column.