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Poetry.

A GUY FROM THE SEAS.

Come down, ye graybeard mariners,
Unto the waking shore!
The morning winds are up—the gulls
Bid me to dream no more.
Come, tell me whither I must sail,
What peril there may be,
Before I take my life in hand
And venture out to sea!

We may not tell thee where to sail,
Nor what the dangers are;
Each sailor soundeth for himself,
Each hath a separate star;
Each sailor soundeth for himself,
And on the awful sea
What we have learned is ours alone;
We may not tell thee these.

Come back, O ghostly mariners,
Ye who have gone before!
I dread the dark, impetuous sides;
I dread the further shore.
Tell me the secret of the waves;
Say what my fate shall be—
Quick! for the mighty winds are up,
And will not wait for me.

Hail and farewell, O voyager!
Thyself must read the waves;
What we have learned of sun and storm
Lies with us in our graves;
What we have learned of sun and storm
Lies with us in our graves;
The winds are blowing out to sea,
Take up thy life and go!

—[Harper's Magazine.]

HOW FATE SETTLED IT.

CHAPTER I.

She wasn't pretty! Alas, that I should have to confess it in the very beginning of our story. You, who don't like any but pretty heroines with flowing golden hair and azure eyes, will have to lay this aside, for I can't help it. She wasn't pretty in the general acceptance of the term. She didn't have flowing golden hair. Her hair was brown, and to save trouble, cut short to her head, about which it had a fashion of creeping and curling in a very unorthodox style. Her eyes were brown, too, very wide awake brown eyes, with now and then a sparkle of mischief in their depths, but otherwise full of a sadness that very rarely found expression otherwise. Her complexion was very good, though nothing extraordinary—not the faintest resemblance to alabaster! Just now there were a few freckles scattered over it, caused by picking blackberries the afternoon before, and letting her bonnet swing from her neck by its strings, instead of reposing in its rightful place. Her nose—alas! her nose was undeveloped "pug"! Not French "retousse," but American pug! Teeth good, of course, in a firm, sensible mouth, neither too large nor too small. No romantic white clothed her "petite" form either, but the trim little figure was dressed in a neat calico. Her white apron was laid aside—ditto cuffs, as she sat at her writing-table, scattered over with pens, ink and foot-cap paper.

She wasn't writing, but she had been, for her forefinger bore traces of warfare with ink. You will like her still less when I confess to you that she was literary! Wrote poems for the county newspaper, for which she was paid vast sums of flattery, and notoriety, and stories for a periodical, whose publishers were very kind to the new beginner, and gave her enough to keep her in muslin dresses, white aprons, and pink ribbons during the summer—one nice dress and two pairs of number two shoes during the winter. She had aspirations, of course, for something higher and in her day dreams very often saw herself lionized in flaming type as the "distinguished authoress, Miss Edith Carden." But she was a sensible little girl, and knew she must take things slowly. I mean she had been sensible, but this morning such a prospect had opened before her wondering eyes of wealth and ease, travel and every earthly pleasure, it seemed to her, that no wonder she sat there with the letter in her hand, dazed and speechless.

There she sat, ever since the mail boy had thrown her letter in at the window. The beds were not made up stairs, and she heard her stepmother rattling the dishes in a warning manner in the kitchen. The baby was crying, too, in a most piteous manner, and Andrew Jackson was thumping on the stairs for "Edith" to bring him some string for his kite; but what cared Edith? Let us look over her shoulder, and see for ourselves the words that have opened this vista of glory to these young eyes.

"Dear Miss Edith," the letter began, "You will no doubt be surprised when you see the signature of this letter, and still more when you read its contents, for if you ever knew my name, no doubt it has faded from your memory. But, dear child, the memory of your brown

eyes, so like your mother's, as they looked up into mine from your place upon my knees, is still very dear to me. You called yourself my 'little wife' then Edith, and during all these I have watched and waited for you, my darling. You thought your father sent you north to school, did you not? I begged him not to let you know differently, because I was afraid you would learn to dislike me if you knew that I had sent you there. I did not come at once and take you out of your poverty and struggling, because I wanted you to grow up just the steady, earnest, self-reliant little woman that you are. O child, I have watched you, and my heart has ached for you often, but I knew it was all just the discipline your impetuous spirit needed. You did not know that I was a silent member of the firm for whom you have been writing, and have read eagerly everything you have written; longing all the time to take my pen out of its rough surroundings and give it a setting of gold. And now my darling, I want you—I need you more than I can tell you, and I love you dearly. I know you—every phase of your character, every feature of your face, and I want you for my wife. I have more money than we shall ever spend, and I want to take you to Europe, where your spirit can revel in all that it has longed for, and that has seemed unattainable. Will you come to me, Edith? I do not ask you to love me just at first, but will you try?

"Your best friend, PHILIP MAY."

When she had read the letter for the fiftieth time, Edith bent her head upon the table and wept passionately. Why had this temptation come to her just now? Only to show her her own weakness? For you see, Edith, like all girls of twenty, had her love dreams, and it was only last week she had listened to the "old, old story," as Will Ellis had whispered it in the moonlight, and with pulses throbbing with joy had placed her little hand in his with the promise to be his wife, whenever he could "take care of her." And she loved him—O, she loved him—better than she ever could love any one, she thought, even as she read the letter. But ah, the temptation! No wonder the poor little girl had nothing to do but cry.

She was not quite so ignorant as Mr. May thought, for just before her father died he had told her of her benefactor and friend Mr. May, but only the bare facts, being a man always chary of his words. He had not even told her where he was—but, on the slender foundation given her, she had built a romance to suit herself. An old lover of her mother's, so she dreamed, who had cared for the daughter for the mother's sake. An old gentleman by this time. Some day perhaps she would meet him and thank him for all his kindness. But she had never in all her dreamings, imagined anything like this. His wife! To be taken out of this dull uninteresting life of monotonous drudgery. Out of this town, that seemed to be sleeping the sleep of R' Van Winkle, never dreaming of anything beyond its own ken. Out into the broad world! To Europe—the thought took her very breath away. And then, the love and sympathy that would be hers, such as she had never known! For, though she loved Will Ellis, and knew that he loved her, she was dimly conscious that there were heights in her nature to which he could not reach, and depths to which he could not descend. Then it would be years before Will could take her out of the place she called home into a real home. But with this thought her heart smote her, and she paused. What! Could she give up Will because he was poor and she must wait for him, just for the sake of the wealth of the other man, whom she did not love, could lavish upon her? Was Edith Carden but a mercenary little wretch, after all?

Just at this point of her musings, her stepmother's plaintive voice reached her: "Edith, are you never coming down? My head aches, and baby is so cross, and—" The voice died away in very faintness.

With a weary sigh, and quite an unheroic-like shrug of the shoulders, Edith took up the burden of her daily life again. But all through the busy day—either cooking, washing dishes, or walking the floor with the baby; tying strings for Andrew Jackson, or cutting paper dolls for the twin girls—the thought was still omnipresent. What should she do? Which road should she take?

She had no one to go to for counsel or aid. Her stepmother, whose large form and red cheeks were so ludicrously disproportionate to her faint voice and delicate constitution, who lay on the lounge all day and read yellow-backed novels, had nothing in common with her. She would at once think of appealing to the baby for advice. At last, when the twins and the baby were asleep, Andrew Jackson peacefully playing marbles with neighbor Jackson's boy, and Mrs. Carden dozing over a new book, Edith stood at the gate in the twilight,

still doubting and hesitating. She had changed her calico for a pretty light muslin, and placed a pink rose in the ribbon, that held back her hair; and, though she wasn't beautiful, was a pleasant sight to most a lover's eyes. Will Ellis thought so, anyway, and he quickened his step as he came up the street. How handsome he looked! and how dear he was to the little fluttering heart of our Edith! Could she give him up? Will didn't know it, but the momentous question was solved as he stooped over the gate, whispered "My precious little comfort!" and kissed the crimson cheek.

An hour later, Edith ran swiftly up to her room, and with rapid fingers, not giving herself time to think, wrote Mr. May the decisive letter. She was very grateful to him for all his kindness, and especially for the offer he had made her; but she could not be his wife, simply because he could make her a wealthy woman, and gratify her tastes for travel and books, because she promised already to be the wife of the man she loved and who loved her. She was very sorry, because he did not know her. Did not know how silly and childish she was, and how unworthy his love. Would he forgive her and still be her friend?

She was not content until the letter was in the office. Then she went about her work with a glow at her heart, and thanked God that she had been able to choose aright—that she had not yielded to ambition, and made three hearts miserable for the sake of the golden god.

Still there was a queer little pang of pain in the midst of her satisfaction, as she thought of the sorrow her answer must give the man who had been so faithful a friend through all her childish years.

CHAPTER II.

One day two weeks later, Edith was ironing out in the roomy old kitchen, giving the finishing touches to the ruffles of her pink muslin, which she was to wear at a picnic with Will Ellis the next day. She had heard not a word from Mr. May, and there was a touch of sadness in the brown eyes as she thought of it, and wondered if he would give up being her friend because he could not be her husband.

"Edith," said her mother, flung open the door, "there is a gentleman in here to see about getting board. Will you see him?"

Edith was accustomed to such demands as this, for Mrs. Carden was unable to deal with anything more matter-of-fact than the romantic adventures of Clarissa Howard or Edward Fitzgibbon. So she put her iron again on the stove, set the baby a little further back on his blanket, calmly took the twins out of the apple-barrel, in which they were apparently standing on their heads, and then followed her mother into the sitting-room.

The gentleman was standing with his back toward her, gazing out of the window as she entered, but turned quickly when she spoke. If there was one thing especially sweet about Edith Carden, it was her voice—that low, clear voice, full of depth and richness, which so few American women possess. Her words were few and commonplace, but the music of her voice gave them a charm.

"You wished to see about board?" she said, simply.

The stranger was a young man, certainly not more than thirty years of age, with black, silky hair thrown carelessly back from his forehead, and keen gray eyes, that just now were wonderfully pleasant as he bowed to the young girl.

"Yes," he said, "I am an artist, and wish to pass the summer in your town, to sketch the scenery about it. Can you give me a summer home?"

It took but a few moments to make the arrangements. They had always taken a summer board, and the gentleman's room was soon ready. Andrew Jackson was sent with the new comer, who gave his name as Walter Edwards, to the depot, to help with his luggage, and Edith went back to her ironing. But some way she was haunted by the kindly gray eyes and pleasant smile. She had noticed, too, the book he had in his hand, a blue and gold "Oven Moredith," and longed for a glimpse at its pages. She would ask him to loan it to her some day, she thought, and then her mind went back to Mr. May, from whence she came, and the picnic, and so she looked at her watch, and found that the baby was pulling the washpan over, and placed up the water with perfect impunity.

The summer passed by slowly and pleasantly. Mr. Edwards proved a very pleasant companion, and Edith grew to like him very much. He was very quiet, but helped the girl in a great many ways, loaned her his books and magazines, and sometimes read aloud to her his favorite poems, while the nimble fingers sewed; for the mending-basket was never empty. Very often their reading was broken in upon by

handsome Will Ellis, who made no secret of his appropriation of sweet Edith Carden. Whose face glowed so at his coming. Then Mr. Edwards would take himself and his book away, and leave the lovers alone.

But, as the days wore on, there came a shadow over Edith's face. The brown eyes less often sparkled with mischievous happiness, and the red lips had a sorrowful droop, that would have made one who loved her long to clasp her in his arms and kiss them back to smiles. The gray eyes noticed it all, and were not long in finding out the cause.

One evening Mr. Edwards had taken his sketch-book, and walked out toward one of the green hills that gave the town of J—its only beauty. He was not sketching though, and the gray eyes looked dreamy as a girl's. He went to his favorite seat under the overhanging rock, and sat there idly watching the sunset, when suddenly he was startled by a voice on the opposite side of the rock.

"I tell you, Edith Carden, I will not stand it! There is a limit to every man's patience. Everybody in town is twitting me with being thrown over for that artist fellow, and you know yourself that you are always with him."

"For shame, Will Ellis!" said the low sweet voice, that had made Walter Edwards heart throb quicker since the first day he had heard it. "If you cannot trust me more than that—if your love can be turned to suspicion by the idle taunts of a few gossip mongers, it were well that we came to an understanding. Mr. Edwards is my friend, has helped me in a great many ways that you could not, but you wrong both me and him when you hint of love between us. I have known there was something wrong for weeks, Will, and it has almost broken my heart, but I am glad the explanation has taken place. I cannot love one who doubts my honor."

"But, Edith," said Will, "all I ask of you is to give up your friendship for this Edwards of whom you know so little. You know he loves you, everybody knows it, and you are out in his company as much as mine."

"Stop, Will, a moment!" said the calm voice, and think. When was I in his company except on the two occasions when you could not take me to the lectures, but could take your cousin Laura to the party at Mrs. Moore's, and the ball at the Lee House? Ah, Will, I meant to spare you this—I did not mean to tell you that I had discovered the double game you were playing, but have forced me to it. You gave Harry Jackson a note to carry, and to give it to my little brother, who supposed of course it was for me. Not looking at the direction, I read it, and then sent it to Miss Laura. Take your ring, Will. You and I are friends."

"Edith! Edith! Surely you are not in earnest! I love you in spite of my folly!"

"No, Will, you do not love me, and my idol has fallen to the dust."

And Mr. Edwards knew by the light step on the grass that she had gone away alone. He had listened to the conversation with changing emotion, but now there was an unmitigated gleam of triumph in the gray eyes mingled with the pity he felt for the girl in her lonely sorrow. He was not long in following her to the house.

As Edith entered, Andrew Jackson met her at the door. "There is a man in the house," said he, "and a kiss from him."

The youth was given to such wild statements that Edith paid no heed to this, and was passing on, when her mother's voice arrested her.

She entered the room and was introduced to Mr. Jones. "Who is to be my husband," said Mrs. Carden, tranquilly. Edith could only stare at her in blank amazement. "It has been settled, and we have been corresponding a good while," said the widow, "but I thought I would say nothing about it until it was too late to make a scene—my nerves!"

"I have nothing to say," slowly said Edith. "I hope you will be happy."

She walked unsteadily out of the room and up stairs, and sank upon the floor in her own room too dizzy to think. What was to happen next in her life? O God! if it might be death! But she stilled that prayer with another for strength, and there all alone in the dusk of the evening, fought her life-true hand to hand.

"Say, Edith!" said a voice at the door; "I want to come in. Here's a letter Mr. Edwards brought from town for you, and Mr. Jones says, won't you come down? Mr. Jones said he had no supper, and say—is he my father?"

She took the letter, and fighting her startled painfully as she recognized the handwriting. The temptation again! Just as she was weak and faint from her struggle, she must have the little over again, for it was Mr. May's handwriting.

"Edith darling," the letter said, "I can't give you up! I have given you time

now to reconsider my question. Again I lay my heart and fortune at your feet. Darling be merciful! My life will be a blank without the one for whom I have lived so many years."

Here now was a way of escape from all her trouble. Her lover had proven false, and she knew her love had been but a fancy. Why not, then, accept this man's offer and take what pleasure life had in store for her? But ah! would it be right? Would it not be wronging her mother's friend and her own benefactor, to give him in exchange for his own noble and generous heart and wealth, only her poor hand? She had no heart to offer. Alas, for our poor weak Edith! There, in the sacred privacy of her own room, she was forced to own it—that unmarked, unsought, she had given her love to the owner of the dark gray eyes, who had been so much help to her in his quiet many way, but of whom she knew so little. This was why the blow of her lover's treachery had fallen so lightly. Unheeding her stepmother's call, she seized her pen and wrote again rapidly, begging Mr. May to forget that she had ever lived—that so unhappy a girl had ever marred the brightness of his life. Then she called her little brother in feverish haste, and had him take the letter to Mr. Edwards and ask him to mail it for her. Eager to get it out of her hands, out of the house, before she should be tempted beyond her strength.

The night was one feverish unrest. She lay pondering her life problem. What must she do? She could rejoice over one thing—her stepmother's marriage—for it gave her freedom to go where she chose and labor as she pleased. She would go far away, to some city where her identity would be lost and she could struggle on alone with no one to aid or hinder. Nature is very merciful, and in spite of the novel writers, there are very few people who pass entirely sleepless nights from pain or trouble. So Edith forgot her sorrow in sleep, and awoke the next morning feeling stronger and better than before in weeks. But when her work was over, and she went up to the old rock on the hillside, where she had passed so many quiet, happy hours, she broke down again, and threw herself on the grass in utter grief.

"What ails you little Edith?" said Mr. Edwards, kneeling beside her. Will you not tell me?"

She could not speak for awhile, but looked up very gratefully into her friend's face. Very tenderly he lifted the little blue veiled hand that lay on the grass beside him, and raised it to his lips.

"I am going away tomorrow, Edith, and if this little hand were not already pledged I would ask its owner to go with me as my wife."

The trees, the flowers, and even the grass about them, seemed whirling in a mad whirl before Edith's tearful eyes. This was a little more than she could bear, and for one moment she lost her consciousness, which was only restored by a rain upon her lips, cheek and brow, and she found herself in Mr. Edwards's arms.

"I was cruel, little girl," he murmured. "I knew your hand was free, but I waited your heart too. Is it mine, my darling?"

Do you suppose I am going to tell you what she answered? I only know it was highly satisfactory to her lover, who did at all look like the same quiet Mr. Edwards as he sat on the bank, his gray eyes fairly ablaze with triumphant joy.

"And are you willing to be a poor man's wife, Edith?" he asked, presently.

"If you are the man," she said, demurely, her face almost radiant as his.

"But now am I to reconcile this with the answer you gave me last night?" he asked gravely.

The brown eyes opened widely in amazement. "Last night?"

"Yes," he said, taking a letter from his pocket.

In astonishment unspeakable she recognized the letter she had sent Mr. May the night before.

"Why, Walter, she stammered.

"Yes, darling," he said, "I must confess it. I knew your hand was free, but I waited your heart too. Is it mine, my darling?"

"I was only a boy of fifteen when you used to climb on my knee and call yourself my little wife. I was mistaking in J—two summers. Are you very angry with me for deceiving you, little one?"

"Everybody's a knave!" broke in Andrew Jackson's discontented voice, followed by that youthful head and shoulders, as he climbed over the rock. "I reckon you're