

"And if we succeed"—he began, unabashed by this alarming picture.  
She gave him one blinding look.  
"Come," said Yorke, passing his hand over his eyes. "You have had your way long enough. My turn has come. Hasn't it? Tell me!"  
"What do you want?" she said humbly.  
"I don't want to feel as if I were taking a sort of—advantage. If you put me off one minute longer, I—shall. I shall take all I can get. I shall like to remember, all my life, that you came to me first, of your own accord; that you loved me so much, you would grant me this—little proof."  
He held out his arms.  
"Is that all?" she whispered. With a swift and splendid motion she glided across the little distance that lay between them.

THE END.

# MORPHIA M'TWAT.

(AN ACQUAINTANCE.)

If I cannot sympathize, I can at least stand in awe of a woman, a mother of six children, with a struggling, consumptive husband, who, after sewing on buttons, spreading bread and jam, and doing household finance, can yet find time to get up enthusiasm enough to write a sonnet to a young bachelor. Such a woman is Morphia McTwat. She is also a personified yearn.

Ever since the second year of her marriage she has been writing melancholy poetry.

At first it was of a mysterious tone, then it merged into a skeleton-in-the-house twang; then it sounded as if—If-I-only-dared-tell-the-world-gasp; then it got into a—moan-in-secret-over-what-might-have-been-sigh, followed with a Far-from-the-madding-crowd shiver, until last week it culminated in wild despair. She wrote a sonnet to Oscar Wilde. I remonstrated, for this reason. You see, in a round about sort of way, I hold myself responsible for her marriage; she met her husband (to be in our garden—my second cousin's mother-in-law introduced them—and, it worst came to worst, and she were to take an overdose of her own name, I might be held accessory before the fact at the coroner's inquest.

I should not have meddled—or remonstrated, if it had not so happened that a mutual friend called on me bursting with news.

"See here; do you know—"

"Yes, of course; what is it?"

"Why, McTwat beats her."

"O, rubbish!"

"Well—your own common-sense—read her last poem in *MacKenzie's Magazine*. If that poem was not written by a woman whose husband had not thrashed her until she was black and blue, then—I'm a donkey."

"I read it. '*Poeta pariter non fit*—for publication—with a vengeance,' I commented. 'Well, it's not bad verse, but it's awful stuff. Now, I do not know about poets, but I do know about women, and I know if a woman has a trouble that amounts to the real dignity of a grief she does not go and tell everyone about it. I don't believe McTwat beats her; I think the shower took the starch out of the collars—or the iron stuck to the bosom—or the bread turned sour, and she burst into song with *MacKenzie's Magazine* as a valve. McTwat isn't a bad sort; I wonder he does as well as he does; I am sure he doesn't beat her—"

"But, listen to this:

"'Tis ten years since I met thee,

Claude—"

"Ah, when did she meet McTwat?"

"It's seven years and six months ago."

"Clearly—don't you see? Claude was the man she first loved and she mated with the wrong man."

"Fiddlestick; I don't believe she ever knew a man named Claude in her life—she's been reading Bulwer."

"But then, how do you explain:

"I lift my eyes to wintry skies and sigh—

Ah, Well-a-day!"

"I'd like to shake the nonsense out of her; the idea of a woman, with six stout children and only one servant, writing such pain-in-the-side poetry!"

"You're unjust to her. I tell you—and everybody says the same thing—that she's a wronged woman. Her husband is a smiling villain, and if he does not walk pretty straight he'll get tarred and feathered. We know what we know in the village, and we have our opinion about a man whose wife bears such burdens as she evidently does. Listen to this:

"He clutched me fiercely by the throat,

In his black jealousy.

And said:—"

"Now I don't want to hear it—I know the ding-dong by heart. It is the fashion to write colicky poetry and she follows bell-wether."

"But, really, if you're a friend of her's, you ought to give her a hint that the village is roused over McTwat's abuse of her, and the community's game to give him a ducking."

"Are you in downright earnest?"

"Truth I'm telling you. Why, she has been screaming murder in her poems for six years. I don't take your view. I'll wager you a new hat—no I won't, that's wicked—but wait—you see—if the community don't interfere, he'll kill

her by brute force or persuade her out of the world with a dose of arsenic."

"O I'll call and talk reason to her—but it is not a pleasant thing to find fault with a woman's poetry under her own roof—now is it?"

"Couldn't you tell her a roundabout story—say that some other village was going to thrash some other man for abusing some other wife, who wrote some other just such poetry?"

"Ye—yes."

I did not get time that day nor the next—but on the seventeenth, the day my magazine comes, when I saw her poem, her sonnet to Oscar Wilde—I said to myself, now this is "too much," as the little darkey said, when he fell into the molasses barrel—and I put on my things and called.

She was up, well, and cutting out knickerbockers for her son Tommy. After fidgeting awhile, I told her the prepared parable. Bless you, she didn't make the application one bit—but remarked casually that it must be a fool of a village and that some people had no poetry in their soul."

"You people who are not poets have no breadth."

"O have we not? I don't see the mighty breadth in taking the whole world into one's confidence about one's private affairs. It strikes me its about as proper to tell all one knows about one's self to an indiscriminate unlovely public, even in a poem, as it is to receive your company in your night-gown—precisely."

She curled her lip, proud in the consciousness that she was the superior idiot.

"Now don't turn your nose so high, Morphia—I can see a church by daylight as well as you can—but to me, poetry must mean something. It must have some truth in it—now your colicky poems are perfect humbugs; you write as if you had one foot in the grave and a house full of skeletons, when, in point of fact, there's nothing the matter with you; you're horribly well—and Oscar Wilde—take my word for it, he is not in immediate need of sonnets nor of sympathy. If you have an aching void, and the unfeeling world is cold, and Fate frowns, and that sort of business, you know, why don't you burst in poetry over some real wrong—write a 'sonnet to a man in jail,' or 'an ode to a child whose shoes are in pawn,' or 'a right merry ballad of a striker, who has three meals a day,' something of that sort. I don't believe you have any real trouble—no I don't—I know you haven't, and if you have, either tell it to me woman, or hold your tongue for all time."

"My husband is the best of men; but,—"

"Of course," I said heartily. "Then why waste God's good time writing sonnets to Oscar? No husband is perfect, and I told you before you were married, they were all frauds—you had warning enough! I told you they all say they would die for you, and before you're a month married they'd put their cigar ends on the piano. I told you that they all take the biggest piece of chicken and leave you the scraps—That little shoes cost every month, and that the oatmeal would stick to the pot if you did not oil it. You were warned and you would marry, now, why not make the best of it? And really, I don't think your poetry is exactly complimentary to Mr. McTwat, and—"

The maid brought in a big letter, interrupting me.

With an "excuse me," Morphia McTwat opened it and then burst into tears.

It seems that her MSS. poem, "The Drama of the Groping Soul," has been returned. Some complications had arisen at the office in consequence of the overworked editor having been sent to the lunatic asylum.

"Never mind," she said, wiping her eyes, "I can cook it over for *MacKenzie's Magazine*."

I left my regards for her husband, and her to her destruction and the solace of cooking over "The Groping Soul" for the monthly guardian angel of colicky poetry—Missionary work is not my forte—*Quit*.

## MARK TWAIN'S LIFE.

Mr. Howells contributes to the September *Century* a notably clever and sympathetic sketch of Mark Twain, which contains the following authentic account of his family and his adventures. The frontispiece of the same number is an engraving by Cole, after Thayer's portrait of the humorist:

In one form or other, Mr. Samuel L. Clemens has told the story of his life in his books, and in sketching his career I shall have to recur to the leading facts rather than to offer fresh information. He was remotely of Virginian origin and more remotely of good English stock; the name was well-known before his time in the South, where a senator, a congressman and other dignitaries had worn it; but his branch of the family fled from the destitution of those vast landed possessions in Tennessee, celebrated in "The Gilded Age," and went very poor to Missouri. Mr. Clemens was born on the 30th of November, 1835, at Florida in the latter State, but his father removed shortly afterward to Hannibal, a small town on the Mississippi, where most of the humorist's boyhood was spent. Hannibal as a name is hopelessly confused and ineffective; but if we can know nothing of Mr. Clemens from Hannibal, we can know much of Hannibal from Mr. Clemens, who, in fact, has studied a loafing, out-at-elbows, down-at-the-heels, slave-holding, Mississippi river town of thirty years ago, with such strong reality in his boy's romance of "Tom Sawyer," that we need inquire nothing further concerning the type. The original perhaps no

longer exists anywhere; certainly not in Hannibal, which has grown into a flourishing little city since Mr. Clemens sketched it. In his time, the two embattled forces of civilization and barbarism were encamped at Hannibal, as they are at all times and everywhere; the morality of the place was the morality of a slave-holding community: fierce, arrogant, one-sided—this virtue for white, and that for black folks; and the religion was Calvinism in various phases, with its predestinate aristocracy of saints and its rabble of hopeless sinners. Doubtless, young Clemens escaped neither of the opposing influences wholly. His people like the rest were slave-holders; but his father, like so many other slave-holders, abhorred slavery—silently, as he must in such a time and place. If the boy's sense of justice suffered anything of that perversion which so curiously and pitifully maimed the reason of the whole South, it does not appear in his books, where there is not an ungenerous line, but always, on the contrary, a burning resentment of all manner of cruelty and wrong.

The father, an austere and singularly upright man, died bankrupt when Clemens was twelve years old, and the boy had thereafter to make what scramble he could for an education. He got very little learning in school, and like so many other Americans in whom the literary impulse is native, he turned to the local printing-office for some of the advantages from which he was otherwise out off. Certain records of the three years spent in the Hannibal "Courier" office are to be found in Mark Twain's book of sketches; but I believe there is yet no history anywhere of the *wanderjahre*, in which he followed the life of a jour-printer, from town to town, and from city to city, penetrating even so far into the vague and fabled East as Philadelphia and New York.

He returned to his own country—his *patria*—sated, if not satisfied, with travel, and at seventeen he resolved to "learn the river" from St. Louis to New Orleans as a steam-boat pilot. Of this period of his life he has given a full account in the delightful series of papers, "Piloting on the Mississippi," which he printed seven years ago in the "Atlantic Monthly."

The growth of the railroads and the outbreak of the Civil War put an end to profitable piloting, and at twenty-four he was again open to a vocation. He listened for a moment to the loudly calling drum of that time, and he was actually in camp for three weeks on the rebel side; but the unorganized force to which he belonged was disbanded, and he finally did not "go with his section" either in sentiment or in fact. His brother having been appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Nevada Territory, Mr. Clemens went out with him as his private secretary; but he soon resigned his office and withdrew to the mines. He failed as a miner, in the ordinary sense; but the life of the mining-camp yielded him the wealth that the pockets of the mountain denied: he had the Midas-touch, without knowing it, and all these grotesque experiences have since turned into gold under his hand. After his failure as a miner had become evident even to himself, he was glad to take the place of local editor on the Virginia City "Enterprise," a newspaper for which he had amused himself in writing from time to time. He had written for the newspapers before this; few Americans escape that fate; and as an apprentice in the Hannibal "Courier" office his humor had embroiled some of the leading citizens, and impaired the fortunes of that journal by the alienation of several delinquent subscribers.

But it was in the "Enterprise" that he first used his pseudonym of "Mark Twain," which he borrowed from the vernacular of the river, where the man heaving the lead calls out "Mark twain!" instead of "Mark two!" In 1864, he accepted, on the San Francisco "Morning Call," the same sort of place which he had held on the "Enterprise," and he soon made his *nom de guerre* familiar "on that coast"; he not only wrote "local items" in the "Call," but he printed humorous sketches in various periodicals, and, two years later, he was sent to the Sandwich Islands as correspondent of a Sacramento paper.

In 1867, Mr. Clemens made in the *Quaker City* the excursion to Europe and the East which he has commemorated in "The Innocents Abroad." Shortly after his return he married, and placed himself at Buffalo, where he bought an interest in one of the city newspapers; later he came to Hartford, where he has since remained, except for the two years spent in a second visit to Europe.

"Father, you are an awful brave man," said a youth, as he smoothed down the old man's gray locks the other evening. "How do you know that, Willie?" "Oh, I heard some men at the store say that you killed thousands of soldiers during the war." "Me? Why, I was a beef contractor for the army!" "Yes, that's what they said!" exclaimed young innocence, as he slid from the kitchen.

ONCE upon a time, while Field Marshal Murat Halstead was discussing the ethics of journalism with a few friends, he felt moved to remark: "Well, you may talk about the idiots you have known in the profession, but we have the blue-ribbon ass of the Ohio press up at Dayton." At that moment the door opened and a visitor entered. "And, dear me!" here he is," continued the imperturbable Field Marshal: "Gentlemen, this is W. D. Bickham, of the Dayton Journal, Bickham, we were just speaking of you."

## TRYING A NOVEL CURE FOR DRUNKENNESS.

He came in with an interrogation point in one eye and a stick in one hand. One eye was covered with a handkerchief, and one arm in a sling. His bearing was that of a man with a settled purpose in view.

"I want to see," said he, "the man that puts things into this paper."

We intimated that several of us earned a frugal livelihood in that way.

"Well, I want to see the man which cribs things out of the other papers. The fellow who writes mostly with the shears, you understand."

We explained to him that there were seasons when the most gifted among us, driven to frenzy by the scarcity of ideas and events, and by the clamorous demands of an insatiable public, in moments of emotional insanity, plunged the glittering shears into our exchanges. He went on calmly, but in a voice tremulous with suppressed feeling, and indistinct through the recent loss of half a dozen or so of his front teeth:

"Just so. I presume so. I don't know much about this business, but I want to see a man, the man that printed that little piece about pouring cold water down a drunken man's spine of his back, and making him instantly sober. If you please, I want to see that man. I would like to talk with him."

Then he leaned his stick against our desk, spit on his serviceable hand, and resumed his hold on his stick as though he were weighing it. After studying the stick a minute, he added in a somewhat lower tone:—

"Mister, I came here to see that ere man; I want to see him bad."

We told him that particular man was not in.

"Just so, I presume. They told me before I come, that the man I wanted to see wouldn't be anywhere. I'll wait for him. I live up north, and I've walked seven miles to converse with that man. I guess I'll sit down and wait."

He then sat down by the door, and reflectively pounded the floor with his stick; but his feelings would not allow him to keep still.

"I suppose none of you didn't ever pour much cold water down any drunken man's back to make him instantly sober, perhaps?"

None of us in the office had ever tried the experiment.

"Just so. I thought as like as not you had not. Well, mister, I have. I tried it yesterday, and I have come seven miles on foot to see the man that printed that piece. It wasn't much of a piece, I don't think, but I want to see the man that printed it, just a few minutes. You see, John Smith, he lives next door to my house, when I'm at home, and he gets how-come-you-so every little period. Now, when he's sober, he's all right if you keep out of his way; but when he's drunk he goes home and breaks dishes, and tips over the stove, and throws hardware around, and makes it inconvenient for his wife, and sometimes gets his gun, and goes out calling on his neighbors, and it ain't pleasant. Not that I want to say anything about Smith; but me and my wife don't think he ought to do so. He came home drunk lately, and broke all the kitchen windows in of his house, and followed his wife around with the carving knife, talking about her, and after a while he lay down by my fence and went to sleep. I had been reading that little piece—it wasn't much of a piece—and I thought if I could pour some water down the spine of his back, and make him sober, it would be more comfortable for his wife, and a square thing to do all around. So I poured a bucket of spring water down John Smith's spine of his back."

"Well," said we, as our visitor paused, "did it make him sober?"

Our visitor took a firmer hold of his stick, and replied, with increased emotion:—

"Just so. I suppose it did make him as sober as a judge in less time than you could say Jack Robinson; but, mister, it made him mad. It made him the maddest man I ever saw, and mister, John Smith's a bigger man than me, and stouter. He is a good deal stouter. I never knew he was half so stout till yesterday; and he's handy with his fists, too. I should suppose he's the handiest man with his fists I ever saw."

"Then he went for you, did he?" we asked innocently.

"Just so. Exactly. I suppose he went for me about all he knew; but I don't hold no grudge against John Smith—I suppose he ain't a good man to hold a grudge against; only I want to see the man what printed that piece. I want to see him bad. I feel as though it would soothe me to see that man. I want to show him how a drunken man acts when you pour water down the spine of his back. That's what I came for."

Our visitor, who had poured water down the spine of a drunken man's back, remained until six o'clock in the evening, and then went up street to find the man that printed that little piece. The man he is looking for started for Alaska, last evening, for a summer vacation, and will not be back before September, 1888.

A TERRIBLE epidemic, of the nature of red thrush, is prevailing at Malmo, Sweden.

VESSELS arriving at Spanish ports from Manila are quarantined on account of cholera at the latter place.

THE Egyptians have abandoned all positions they held between Suez and Ismailia previously to their defeat at Shaluf, and are retreating in disorder on Zagazig.