

IN THE MORNING.

"In the morning," she said, looking away from the face which sought hers with a glance persistent, questioning. "I cannot decide to-night. In the morning I will give my answer."

"Why not to-night?" he asked in reply. "I have heard, Miss North, that your ideas are peculiar, romantic. Your acts are original and decided; you do not believe in walking in the same old path in which your mother and grandmother trod before you."

"True; but I usually please myself, Mr. Thorne. Therefore, my only answer now is—in the morning."

The moon shone brightly upon her, and she was very white to-night. Miss North seldom betrayed any nervous emotion before people. She was cool and self-reliant, rarely losing her self-possession. But now the slender ringed fingers of her fair shapely hand trembled a trifle as they closed tightly over her daintily-carved ivory fan; and she fluttered it a little unsteadily, though the breeze came strong and sweet from the garden below.

A hush seemed to come over them for the space of a moment.

She waited, thinking he might answer, and drew back a trifle, leaning her head against the fringed cypress sprays that clung to the pillars of the portico.

He earnestly scanned her proud contour and figure, for he had met them for the first time that day; and he had not yet become familiar with the shade of the light-brown hair, nor the changing lights and shadows of her orbs.

They had been defiant, then frightened; now they were cold, and now tender, and at last they grew tired and wistful. Yet, with all these changes, they never lost their honest expression, but looked like great child-eyes set in a woman's thoughtful countenance.

And, as he watched her, his heart yearned towards her, as it had never before done for woman's love.

"Miss North!" he said; and then he paused a moment, seeming to study her thoughts.

For answer, she looked up questioningly, and her weary look was more decided.

"Ada!" he said, again, more softly; and as he spoke her name, a flush crept over her cheeks and she drooped her head.

"If you would only say 'yes' to-night!" he pleaded; and there was a soft light in his eyes.

"I love you just as dearly as though I had known you for years. You are my sister's dearest friend, and you are almost as familiar with my character and ways as though you were acquainted with me a lifetime. Mary would be delighted, and my parents pleased, also. You have no near friends to consult. Say 'yes' now, and if my love and devotion can repay you, you shall never regret giving your assent. And it will be so fond a recollection for me to remember hereafter, that I asked you to be my wife the first evening I ever met you, and you had faith enough to trust me and promise."

He was very manly and tender in his glance, and his smile loving and persuasive; and Ada could not meet them unmoved. She turned away suddenly, and looked steadily out towards the sky.

A slight shiver passed over her frame, and she moved, as if to leave him.

"The dew is falling," she said, seeming unable to frame any other excuse, in her confusion, for going into the house.

"Yes," he answered, taking her hand, and smiling. "It is falling in our eyes, my darling."

"Don't!" she said, with a half-sob that touched him, and looking bravely up, though her tears flowed. "In the morning I will tell you—and tell you, too, why could I not answer you to-night?"

"In the morning, then," he answered, touching his lips lightly but tenderly to the hand he held within his own.

She turned quickly; and he heard her light swift footsteps ascending the staircase and along the passage, the slight rustle of a train in their wake.

The door of her room opened and closed; the key, with a decided click, shot the bolt in its place, and he heard no more.

Then he walked down into the garden, rather restlessly, wondering within himself if he had not been a shade too rash, and feeling a slight sense of relief, if the truth were told, that she had reserved her answer.

He was wonderfully interested in her, certainly. For more than a year, her praises had sounded in his ears, rung with constant changes, by the voice of his sister Mary. He had not thought to like her; and when he had troubled himself to think of the subject at all, it was another woman he pictured: stately, strong-minded, self-satisfied, and disagreeable in the extreme.

Without wealth, she had maintained a prominent place in fashionable circles, he had been told. And, without brains, he argued, she had palmed herself off for a woman who was both lovable and wise. Not the best logic in the world; but, to be candid, it was only his first impression in the matter, and he had not taken the trouble to think upon the subject at all.

So, when he met her the next day, at the house of a friend, where she was spending the summer with his sister, his first sensations were of surprise—then pleasure.

A self-possessed, graceful girl bowed politely to a tall, handsome man, and then as though it were an after-thought, quietly put out her hand to him.

He forgot to view her critically, as he intended to do. Afterwards, when his sister came to consult her about some trifle in the way of dress, he remembered his intention; but, somehow, it did not seem an easy thing to do.

A well-fitting white dress set off a round but not too tapering waist; there was a heavy braid of yellow-brown hair; a drooping curl; a knot of ribbon here, a fall of lace there; a flower pulled carelessly through a soft-coloured tie at the white throat. A combination he scarcely understood, yet harmonious in the extreme.

She was stately; yet there was a certain prettiness about her all her own. She seemed both gentle and strong; and, before he was aware of it, she had entered a door in his heart, and shot the bolt as securely as she had fastened the door of her room that night. A recess, too, it was, that he had never known before.

He was not very young, this man of whom I am writing. He had not been without his flirtations—his loves, perhaps. But this girl's soft voice and manner touched a chord in his heart which had never vibrated before. He did not pause to ask why. He had been a generous man, because he dispensed his charities with lavish hand. He was very tender and kind to those he loved, but always best of all to himself.

If he fancied a house, a yacht, a horse, he purchased it at once. He never sold his present moment for the future; never longed for a time to come when he should be happier, but always grasped the present pleasure, preferring it to promises of future joy.

So, when he met Miss North, he said, at first, "She's very lovely;" and by-and-by, when he had watched her more closely, he told himself that in all his travels he had never before met a woman that in his heart of hearts he longed to call his own. That night, when the stars were out, and the moon was shining, they were all sitting upon the lawn. First one and then another, under various excuses, passed into the house. Miss Thorne went in to play, and Mr. Thorne and Ada still stood upon the lawn, listening.

The words of a song floated softly out, and they seemed to stir his mind with a sudden purpose.

Many a girl I have loved for a minute.
Many a beautiful face have I seen;
Ever and aye there was something in it.
Something which could not be hers, my queen."

He scanned her critically. There was not a feature or expression in her face he would change had he the power. There was more restlessness in her eyes to-night, and she looked paler than she had done in the day. Perhaps her heart was touched also, but no matter. He was sure she did not dislike him, and he could win her love in time. And then, without waiting further, he asked her to be his wife.

When Miss Ada North had closed the door to the outside world, she went to the window, and, throwing open the shutters, she knelt down in the moonlight. Tearing a crumpled letter from her pocket, she smoothed it almost fiercely, and read its meaning again, by the light of the moon. There was a wild restlessness about her, her hands trembled, and her red lips were firmly set. It was written by a man's hand, this letter; her heart had often throbbled for joy at sight of this same writing; but now it only brought a feeling of cold distrust and dislike.

She rose, closed the shutters, lighted the lamp, and, taking a package of letters from her trunk, she sat down and read them slowly, one by one.

They were all in the same handwriting, and all breathing of love and devotion to herself. Her task was not half accomplished when she heard quick footsteps in the space of a breath.

She rose hastily and unlocked the door. Mary Thorne entered, uttering an exclamation as she saw the letters scattered about the table.

"What is it, Ada dear?" she said.

"There was one secret which I always guarded from you, Mary," Ada replied, quietly. "Sit down. I will tell you all to-night, for to-morrow I shall put it all aside."

"Don't tell me unless you feel inclined, Ada," her friend said, gently.

"But I must tell you!" she exclaimed, impatiently. "You knew I received letters from John Easton; but, as he was the son of my guardian, you were never sure whether they were upon business, friendship, or love. For two years I was engaged to be his wife. We kept it secret, for it was his wish. Three days ago this last letter came, saying he was mistaken in thinking he loved me, and asking me to release him from his promise. I have not yet answered him. Not that I hesitated for a moment, but I could not bring myself to write to him yet."

"Why should you allow this to trouble you?" asked Mary. "I, for one, am heartily glad; for, though my acquaintance with Mr. Easton is very slight, I have always disliked him; and then—"

"And then," interrupted Ada, with a smile, "I know what you would say, dear. And the tale is not half told. Your brother asked me this evening to be his wife."

The words were uttered quietly, but the effect upon her listener was electric.

She sprang up, overturned her chair, and caught Ada in her arms.

"I'm so glad!" she said. "You told him yes, didn't you? Of course, you couldn't well do otherwise."

"No," Ada answered, gravely.

"What!" And Mary held her out at arm's length, and gazed upon her for a moment in speechless astonishment.

"Did you refuse him?"

"No," Ada again replied. "I am to give him my answer in the morning."

"Oh, I see! Don't you dare to say no to him, you darling! I have always coveted you for my sister ever since I knew you first. I'll hasten to bed, and then you put these old letters in the fire, make up your mind to say 'yes,' and go to sleep yourself."

"The letters I must return," she said. "I wish to read some of them first. I must sit up very late, but don't let me disturb you."

She sat down to her task, and looked over the love-missives one by one. Selecting four as correct types of the others, she laid them aside together with the last one received. Then, writing a reply, she gathered the others together, and put them away.

In the morning she rose early. Braiding her hair slowly before the mirror, she glanced down into the garden below.

Mr. Thorne was there, chatting with the gardener, who was cutting some flowers. She scanned his tall and handsome figure critically for a moment, and when she turned back to the mirror, she met wide-opened, half-frightened eyes, and a very wan face.

"Where I done?" she asked herself, with feeling of doubt and foreboding. "Or, rather, what am I about to do? I wonder if Fortune favours the rash as well as the brave?"

There was a tap at the door, a bouquet with Mr. Thorne's compliments, and a little note among the flowers.

He was waiting for her answer. Would she meet him in the garden in half an hour? It was a whole hour yet to breakfast time. He was impatient—would she come?

The messenger was waiting. "Yes," she said, in answer. "Tell Mr. Thorne I will see him."

Then she closed the door; and turning to her desk, she took out the four letters she had laid aside the night before. She sat down, shuffling them absently, as one would a pack of cards.

"It's all a game," she said; "and I am playing in the dark."

And she shivered, though the morning was warm.

The half-hour had nearly passed when she rose, and taking the flowers Mr. Thorne had sent her, she pulled some of them through her braids, and, her letters in her hand, she went down.

He was waiting at the door with an expectant look it was hard to face in the full morning light; so that by the time they had walked down the path to a quiet nook in a shaded corner of the garden, her eyes were flashing, her cheeks were glowing, and the hands that clasped the letters trembling a trifle; and as for Mr. Thorne—he was, to be candid, slightly nervous, too.

Ada, giving him a shy fluttering glance, saw it, and was inwardly thankful; for she had learned to be suspicious of these men who are always self-possessed and cool.

"Well, my darling?" he said, questioningly and with a smile.

"Well?" she answered him, hesitating, and not knowing what to say.

"Have you the answer I am waiting for ready?" he asked.

"You have not repented?" she said. "You are still willing to take me for better or worse, in your morning conclusions?"

"Still willing," he answered, "and very anxious too. Do you doubt it?"

"No," she replied, staidly. "I don't think I fully understand you, but I do not doubt. Now I will tell you what I could not explain last night. For a long time I was engaged to John Easton. I knew him from my childhood, a quiet boy, studious and steady to a fault. As a man, he seemed the soul of honour, cautious, reliable and cool. When he asked me to marry him, I said, 'If there be a man in this world I can fully respect and trust, it is John Easton.' I never questioned him, never doubted anything he did or said. He wrote me often, fond almost foolish letters. Here are four I selected to show you. Would you like to see them?"

"No," he answered, taking the hand that held them in both his. "You don't want me to read them, darling, and I will not; I can fully believe what you say, without proof."

Her looks expressed her thanks. Her lips were growing unsteady, and she waited a moment, trying to find her voice.

"Don't tell me this if it distresses you," he said, touching his lips to her tenderly. "Tell me that you are not bound to this man now; that is enough for me. By-and-by, when you feel more composed, I will listen to the story, if you wish me to hear it."

She gazed at him trustingly, and she looked more childish than ever in her surprise.

"You are not generous enough for this?" she asked.

"I am not generous when I do not love," he answered; "but I love you fully—I trust you utterly; I know you would not stoop to deceive me in anything."

"How we may wrong one man by judging him by another!" she cried, impatiently. "No, I am not bound to this man. He, the honourable, noble-hearted gentleman, who all his friends believe has never made a mistake in his life, broke the bond after a two years' engagement, saying he was mistaken in believing he loved me; and you, though you have seen me for scarcely twenty-four hours, are willing to take me altogether upon trust!"

"Very willing, and very eager, too. There! you shall tell me no more now. Only promise you will be my wife, and I am satisfied. Afterwards, I will, gladly listen to any confidences you wish to bestow upon me; and will make it

my earnest care to keep troubles, as far as my power extends, away from you."

"But I hope you don't think me a saint?" she said, still afraid.

"A saint!" he repeated, with a smile. "No, little one, I know you are only a woman. I wouldn't care to wed a saint, but I want you very much, for I love you, and believe you are a true, noble woman. Of course, I know you have faults; but I love you well enough to bear with them. Do you still hesitate? What more, darling, can I say?"

"Nothing," she answered. "I have many faults, I know; but I never yet deceived any one who was generous enough to trust me. I will be your wife whenever you desire. And more—though you have not asked me, though you have as yet been satisfied with avowing your love for me alone, without urging me, before I scarcely knew, to say I loved you—you are far dearer to me this moment than ever John Easton was in the full tide of my first devotion to him."

He clasped her still more closely.

"My darling," he said, "you are one after my own heart. There may be a life of trial before us—we cannot tell. But of this I am sure—you shall never regret that I offered myself to you the first evening I ever knew you, and you had faith enough in me to take me in the morning."

DOMESTIC.

TOOTH POWDER.—Two ounces prepared chalk, half an ounce pulverized borax, the same of pulverized orris root, and quarter of an ounce of cassia powder.

DOUGHNUTS WITHOUT EGGS.—One half tea-cup of buttermilk or sour milk, the same of cream and of sugar, one teaspoonful of saleratus, spice and salt to taste; add a little yeast, flour enough to mold, and let it rise before frying; or if an egg can be put in, the yeast can be left out and the dough fried at once.

TO KEEP THE HAIR FROM FALLING OUT.—Wash the head every week in salt water and rub the skin of the head with a dry coarse towel. Then apply a dressing composed of bay rum and sweet oil, with which a few drops of tincture of cantharides have been mingled. This will stimulate the skin and keep the hair from falling out and turning gray. The dressing for the hair may be scented with cinnamon oil or some such warming essence.

ROAST PHEASANT.—Pick, draw, singe, and truss, placing a couple of shallots and loz. of butter inside the bird. Lard the breast very finely, tie a thin slice of bacon over the larding, and roast the bird at a moderate fire, basting frequently with butter. A few minutes before it is done remove the slice of bacon so as to let the larding take colour. Serve with plain gravy, fried crumbs, and bread sauce. Time, about thirty minutes.

CHILDREN'S PUDDING.—Cut up a loaf of stale bread the day before it is required, put to soak in a pan of cold water; when going to mix, squeeze the water out through a colander; put the bread in a pan, with two ounces of suet chopped fine, two tablespoonfuls of flour, some grated ginger, a little mixed spice; beat well up with a fork; mix half a pound of treacle (not golden syrup) with a little warm milk, then stir all together, and boil three hours in cloth, basin, or mould. This will make a large pudding, much liked by children; it is cheap and wholesome.

SNOW BLINDNESS.—The injury to the sight caused by a long exposure to the glare snow has led to various devices for remedying the difficulty. Such as, among others, the use of spectacles of green-tinted glass, surrounded by gauze. These, however, fail in practice, as the glass part of the spectacles is liable to become dim and cloudy, while the gauze and wire, by means of which the spectacles are fastened behind the ears, will in an arctic climate, get so cold that to the human skin they will have the sensation of being made of red hot wire. To obviate these objections, a London oculist has introduced a peculiar kind of spectacles, which have neither glass nor iron in their composition, being made of ebonite, and tied on to the head by a velvet cord. They resemble somewhat two half walnut shells fastened over the eyes; but their special peculiarity is that the eye; and sides of each eye box are perforated with minute holes, in order that the wearer may get a side view of objects.

HUMOROUS.

A noble Omaha mastiff has saved the lives of three children within a month past, and bitten fourteen men who called to sell a patent clothes-bar.

THE wits of the press are ridiculing obituary poetry a great deal now, and finding fault with its measure and rhythm, and all that, but down in the bowels of every newspaper office there is an old baldheaded book-keeper who blinks and blinks, and knows that obituary poetry rhymes better with a dollar a line than anything Tennyson ever wrote.

SEET thou much snow left on the flagging; verily it is in front of the house of the slothful man. He sitteth by the fire to keep himself warm, neither will he depart for a scuttle of coal. When the housewife crieth aloud for a pail of water, he hath his boots on. In the day when the storm falleth he secludeth himself; he saith to the snow shovel, "Ha, ha. Let us rest in peace." So his sidewalk is an abomination in the eyes of the people and his name is in every man's mouth.

ON a Kentucky rapid transit line, recently, a passenger stopped the brakeman as he was going through and asked: "How fast does this train go?" A mile an hour!" "It goes fast enough to suit us. If you don't like the rate of speed, get out and walk," was the rejoinder. "I would," replied the disgruntled passenger, settling back in the corner of his seat, "but my friends won't come for me until the train gets in, and I don't want to be waiting around the depot for two or three hours." The brakeman passed on.

COUNTRY bookseller to Fourth street woman—"Yes; but the work is both instructive and humorous." Fourth street woman—"That ain't the point. You see my husband has crippled so many agents, and you're a nice-looking young man, and I have to see you hurt! That's him comin' in the back way!" The young man said there was nothing compulsory about it and was gone.

A DEJECTED looking South Hill hen stepped into a down-town grocery one day last week and asked the price of eggs. "Thirty-five cents a dozen," replied the storekeeper. The hen cast her eyes to heaven as she went back to her nest, remarking in a doleful tone: "At last a hen has some incentive to doing a full day's work," and with this consoling thought she cackled over her diurnal egg, grateful for the fact that it was worth nearly three times as much as a postal card.