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### Poetry.

#### BY-GONE DAYS.

BY MISS LONDON.

Dream no more of that sweet time  
When the heart and cheek were young  
Dream no more of that sweet time  
Ere the veil from life was flung—  
Yet the cheek retains the rose  
Which its beauty had of yore,  
But the bloom upon the heart  
Is no more.

We have mingled with the false,  
Till belief has lost the charm,  
Which it had when hope was new,  
And the pulse of feeling warm.  
We have had the bosom wrung  
By the mask which friendship wore  
Affection's trusting happiness  
Is no more.

We have seen the young and gay  
Dying as the aged die;  
Miss we not the laughing voice—  
Miss we not the laughing eye?  
Wishes take the place of hopes,  
We have dreamed till faith is o'er'd  
Its freshness made life fair, and that  
Is no more.

Take away you sparkling bowl—  
What is left to grieve us now?  
Looking lip that turns away,  
Downcast eye and weary brow,  
Hopes and joys that used to smile,  
Mirth that lit its purple store;  
Friends that want to join the pledge,  
Are no more.

#### THE INSURANCE COMPANY.

A rich capitalist of Paris, whom I shall name M. Lebrun, was famed for his enterprising and successful speculations. Not a year had he been in the city, and he had already secured for his patronage and protection, and in general whatever he engaged in was crowned with success. Not long since he was one morning seated in his study at his country-house, when a cabriolet drove up to the door; from it descended a young man of fashionable appearance and fine open countenance, not unknown to the frequenters of Tortoni's. He demanded to speak with the master of the house; and was introduced at once to M. Lebrun. His host was in slippers and robe-de-chambre, for he loved to live as indolently as he could when not immersed in the whirlpool of business at Paris.

"You will excuse me, Monsieur," said the young man, taking possession of an arm-chair; "you will excuse me for troubling your retirement by speaking to you of matters of speculation; but the affair in question is of grave importance and pressing nature; it may have consequences so morally useful to society, and so exorbitantly lucrative for its promoters, that I feel convinced of your forgiveness for speaking to you respecting it."

"Speak on, Monsieur; I am all attention," said the capitalist, crossing his legs and drawing his dressing-gown closely about him.

"Who could ever have supposed," said the stranger, with great solemnity, "that in quitting an age of doubt and incertitude like the last, we should enter a period so remarkable for its desire to make all fixed and certain as the present. In the eighteenth century everything was overturned, because the world doubted of everything; in the nineteenth no doubt exists, because nothing is left to chance. It is by means of insurance that society is now reorganizing itself. What is there that is not now insured? Nay, it has been lately whispered that Messrs. Rothschild think seriously of forming a company for insuring kings on their thrones, and for fixing ministers of state in possession of their portfolios; in fact, insurance is the great instrument by which will be brought about that advanced state of humanity, so fruitfully sought for by Fourier, St. Simon, and—"

"But what is the meaning of this long preamble?" interrupted the master of the mansion, in a dry tick voice. "You are aware, I presume, that I require something positive—actual—palpable," laying a stress on each expression.

"My project unites all these qualities," said the stranger.

"Well, then, let us have it without further preliminaries," said the other.

"The facts," said the projector, "that the matter is of so delicate a nature, that I am obliged to prepare you for my proposal."

"I think I can guess that it relates to an insurance company. What is it you propose to insure, Monsieur?"

"Since I must speak positively my plan is to insure marriageable girls, against the great evil of their existence—against being old maids."

"Hum—m—m," ruminated the man of wealth, again fixing round him his robe-de-chambre, which the slight irritation of the moment had displaced, "the idea is ingenious."

"You perceive that the natural desire, which must arise in every lady's bosom to avoid celibacy, will incline her to insure, and the profits must be enormous."

"Yes, that is clear enough; but how will you manage the rate of insurance?"

"That must be graduated, according to the beauty, fortune, and talents of each. The chances of old-maid-hood cannot be the same for all, nor do I propose to insure all for the same rate; one may be fixed at twenty, another at twenty-five, and a third even so late as thirty-five. If after the expiration of the term agreed on, the lady remains without a husband, the indemnity must be paid, and this will constitute a fortune, which in many cases will obtain for her the partner she desires."

"But will the company reserve to itself the power of acting in any way it may deem advisable, to procure husbands for the insured before the term fixed on?"

"Most assuredly; the company cannot renounce any means of bringing a suit on its object, but must employ all which may seem scarcely ever to be required to be paid, and that is the reason why the speculation is so splendid."

"Yes, I see that there must arise some gains."

"Immense profits, and not a single loss," interrupted the advocate of the new insurance company, seeing that his host was balancing towards the project, "if an insurance is effected against death, nothing can hinder persons from dying; if it is made against fire, how can you prevent houses from burning; if you insure against perils of water, how can shipwrecks be put a stop to? But insuring against remaining single, all you have to do is to marry off as quickly as possible your customers."

"I suppose that the company will take care to have always at its disposal a number of gentlemanly bachelors, of good character and education, physicians, surgeons, literary men, barbers, merchants, and scientific men, whom it may employ to gain the hearts of those who are to be married."

"That is an indispenable condition of success, and I intend taking on myself the care of that particular duty."

"Well, then, I am your man. Let the matter rest between us two—no noise, no puffing—nothing but secrecy, activity and cleverness. Get the bond of partnership prepared, and let the act, constituting the society, duly passed through the proper forms. I am willing to advance eight hundred thousand francs, which will be amply sufficient for the capital. You, on the other hand, will throw into the stock your zeal and activity, and the profits shall be divided. I act generously, as you may perceive."

The young man took his leave, exceedingly satisfied with his visit, and, springing into his cabriolet, returned to Paris. In a few days he brought the necessary papers, and the matter was speedily concluded. After M. Lebrun had signed and returned them to the young speculator, he addressed him thus:

"Monsieur, you are now director of the new company, and I need scarcely say that I wish you success. To prove to you, however, that I really have deeply at heart the success of our speculation, I intend commencing the business myself insuring my daughter. She shall be the first to figure in the list of young ladies insured to obtain a husband. Fill up the blanks of the p. into form."

"Age?" demanded the director.

"Name and surname?"

"Euphémie Lebrun."

"Face?"

"Decidedly pretty."

"Talents?"

"Music, drawing, dancing, horticulture."

"Fortun?"

"All that I possess when I die, and eight hundred thousand francs on the day of her marriage."

"That will do, monsieur."

"You may fix the rate yourself, and the age at which the indemnity shall be paid," said the father proudly, as he thought of the charms of his only daughter.

"There is every reason to hope that Made-moiselle Euphémie will have no claims on you for indemnity," said the young partner, as he collected his papers and departed.

As he passed through the pleasure-grounds which surrounded the villa, in order to reach his cabriolet, which he directed to wait for him at the gate of the park, he perceived a young and lovely girl in the midst of the flowers on which she was lavishing her cares. Unaware that any one was near, she was singing a little air which Cinti Damourcau had made fashionable, as she tied up the flowers or watered them, where the heat had parched them up. The young director paused a moment to admire the slight but rounded figure, the glowing complexion, and beautiful hair of the young person. "This, undoubtedly," thought he, "is the daughter of M. Lebrun. I have commenced most fortunately. No danger of so fair a creature being obliged to demand her indemnity." He cast another glance at the lady, and proceeded towards the gate.

"It was his daughter who teased him into quitting the country. He was astonished that his dear Euphémie should so suddenly abandon in the midst of the summer season, her flowers which she loved so well. He naturally sought for some reason for such a change, and more than once said to himself, 'Is it possible that she can by some chance or other have formed an attachment for some person at Paris?' At last he could no longer doubt that he had conjectured rightly: for her gaiety was fled, her music, drawing, flowers, were all neglected, and a tear sometimes betrayed her secret. But who could have inspired this passion? What opportunity was there for a galathea to press his suit? He was determined to discover the mystery. 'My dear Euphémie,' said he, 'you have become wonderfully serious. On what can your thoughts be so often occupied? What new sentiment has taken possession of your mind? Speak to me frankly; you know how dearly I love you; can you have seen some person who has captivated your affections? If it is a proper match, you cannot doubt that I shall be only too glad to unite you to him who will render you happy.'

"Well, then, father, I acknowledge I do love," said Euphémie, with that timidity and hesitation which a young girl cannot free herself from, even when confessing the state of her affections to her own father.

"And who is he?" said M. Lebrun.

"That is his secret as much as mine," replied the daughter with great tranquillity. "I cannot speak of it without his consent; but I will ask him, when I see him, to allow me to declare his name."

This reserve only excited the curiosity of M. Lebrun. He pressed his daughter more and more to name her lover. At last she said, "Give me only three days, and I will then conceal nothing from you."

The next day the young director of the new insurance company to promote marriage, came to pay a visit to his partner. "Oh I my dear fellow," said M. Lebrun, when he saw him, "you would never guess—?"

"Guess what?"

"That my daughter is already inspired by the tender passion."

"Oh," said the director, "that must be the effect of the insurance."

"A wonderful effect it is, at all events. Why a month has not elapsed since the insu-

rance took place. By Jove! you are fortunate. If we have only another such piece of good fortune, the fame of the company will be in every person's mouth."

"They were conversing in this manner when Euphémie entered the room. She blushed on seeing the stranger.

"My daughter," said M. Lebrun to the young man. "What do you think of her?"

"She is admirable! I can venture to predict she will not pass another year without—"

"Father," said the young girl, regarding by turns the two speakers, "I promised to inform you of the person whom I love. This is he!"

"Good heavens! is it possible," cried the astonished capitalist.

"According to our regulations," said the director very gravely, "I was bound to seek every means not to allow the specified time to pass without—"

"True, true. But Euphémie how did you get acquainted with monsieur?"

"I saw him in the country one day, in going out. He used to come afterwards every day. He led me to cultivate my flowers. We walked out in the park, and at last, as I found his visits too short, I thought that by coming to Paris I should see him more frequently, and for a longer time."

"In showing my zeal for the interests of the society," continued the speculator, "I considered—"

"Come, my young friend," said the still surprised father, "you are a clever fellow. Stunned as I have been, I must acknowledge that the matter has something amusing in it."

"I protest to you, I considered that I faithfully gave the eight hundred thousand francs for—"

"Quite correct," said the young man, taking Euphémie by the hand with the air of a martyr to his duty. "This is a glorious beginning. We shall have such custom from this affair! We must absolutely gain millions!"

ADVICES FROM ENGLAND TO THE 16TH DECEMBER.

RECEIVED PER STEAM-SHIP ROYAL WILLIAM.

Her Majesty held a Privy Council at one o'clock yesterday afternoon, Dec. 12, at Windsor Castle. It was attended by the Lord Chancellor, the First Lord of the Treasury, the Secretary of State for the Colonial Department, the First Lord of the Admiralty, the President of the Board of Trade, the Secretary of War, and the Master of the Horse.

At the Council, the appointment of Lieutenant General Sir John Colborne, G. C. B., in the room of the Earl of Durham, was confirmed.

Devonport, Dec. 4.—The people of this place having determined at a public meeting, held on Monday last, to present an address of congratulation to Lord Durham, on his return from Canada, a deputation waited on His Lordship yesterday to enquire in what manner His Lordship would be pleased to receive the address. The noble Earl appointed this day, at two o'clock, and in compliance with the wishes of the deputation, named the Town Hall as the place of meeting.

At two o'clock this afternoon, the hall was crowded. A large number of ladies were present. On the platform were the Countess of Durham and her sisters, Mrs. Gen. Elicce and Lady E. Bulteel, Lady Mary Lambton, and Lady Alice Lambton, daughters of the noble Earl; J. Rundle, Esq., M. P. for Tavistock, and his lady; Sir W. Molesworth, M. P.; T. S. Duncombe, Esq. M. P.

Lord Durham, on mounting the platform, was received with cheers, which he acknowledged by bowing repeatedly, and laying his hand on his breast. His Lordship spoke as follows:—

"I beg you to accept my warmest thanks for the expression of the good will and esteem with which you have greeted my return to England. You will never have reason to repent the confidence that you have placed in me, or the declaration which you have this day

received from me, and I am sure that you will be proud to have me as your partner in the great work which we have undertaken together. I am, my dear friends, very truly yours, Wm. Molesworth."

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