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Little Things.
BY EMMA F. SEABURY.

A good-bye kiss is a little thing.
With your hand on the door to go;
But it takes the venom out of the sting
Of a thoughtless word or a cruel ring
That you made an hour ago.

A kiss of greeting is sweet and rare
After the toll of the day.
But it smooths the furrows out of the care,
And lines on the forehead, you once called fair,
In the years that have flown away.

'Tis a little thing to say, "You are kind,"
'Tis a little thing to say, "I love you,"
But it sends a thrill through the heart, I find,
For love is tender, as love is blind.
As we climb life's rugged height.

We starve each other for love's caress,
We take, but we do not give;
It seems so easy some souls to bless,
But we dole love grudgingly, less and less,
'Till 'tis bitter, and hard to live.

GRAPES AND THORNS.
BY M. A. T. AUTHOR OF "THE HOUSE OF YORK," "A WINGED WORD," ETC.

CHAPTER III.—CONTINUED.

She stood a moment fixed in thought, her face brightening. "I declare," she muttered, "I've a good mind to—"

A wavering smile played over her lips; and as she sat on the edge of the sofa, with a stout arm propping her on either side, and her heavily jewelled hands buried in the cushions, Mrs. Ferrier sank into a reverie which had every appearance of being rose-colored.

When she was moderately pleased, this woman was not ill-looking, though her insignificant features were somewhat swamped in flesh. Her eyes were pleasant, her complexion fresh, her teeth sound, and the abundant dark-brown hair was unmistakably her own.

She started, and blushed with apprehension, as the door was briskly opened, and her daughter's head thrust in. "What if Annette should know what she had been thinking of?"

"Ma," said that young woman, "you had better wear a black grenadine, and the amethyst brooch and earrings."

Having given this brief order, the girl banged the door in her energetic way; but, before it was well shut, opened it again.

"And pray, don't thank the servants at table."

Again the Mentor disappeared, and a second time came back for a last word. "O ma! I've given orders about the lemons and claret, and you'd better begin to day, and see how you can get along with such diet. I wouldn't eat much, if I were you. You've no idea how little food you can live upon till you try. I shouldn't be at all surprised if you were to thin away beautifully."

At last she departed in earnest. Mrs. Ferrier lifted both hands, and raised her eyes to the ceiling. "Who ever heard," she cried, "of anybody with an empty stomach sitting down to a full table, and not eating what they wanted?"

This poor creature had probably never heard of Sancho Panza, and perhaps it would not much have comforted her could she have read his history.

We pass over the toilet scene, where Naomi, Miss Annette's maid, nearly drove the simple lady distracted with her fastidious ideas regarding colors and shapes; and the dinner, where Mrs. Ferrier sat in bitterness of soul with a slice of what she called raw beef on her plate, and a tumbler of very much adulterated claret and water, in place of the foaming ale that had been wont to lull her to her afternoon slumber. These things did not, however, sweeten her temper, nor soften her resolutions. It may be that they rendered her a little more inexorable.

It is certain that Mr. Gerald did not find her remarkably amiable during the repast, and was not sorry when she left the dining-room, where he and Louis Ferrier stopped to smoke a cigar.

She did not leave him in peace though, but planted a thorn at parting.

"I want to see you in the library about something in particular, as soon as you have got through here," she said, with an air that was a little more commanding than necessary.

He smiled and bowed, but a slight frown settled on his handsome face as he looked after her. What track was she on now? "Do you know what the indictment is, Louis?" he asked presently, having lighted a cigar, turned his side to the table, on which he leaned, and placed his feet in the chair Annette had occupied. "Milady looked as though the jury had found a bill."

Louis Ferrier, whom we need not occupy our time in describing, didn't know what the row was, really; couldn't tell; never troubled himself about ma's affairs.

Lawrence smoked away vigorously, two or three lines coming between his smoothly-curved eyebrows; and, as the cigar diminished, his irritation increased. Presently he threw the cigar-end impatiently through an open window near, and brought his feet to the floor with an emphasis that made his companion stare.

"If there is anything I hate," he cried out, "it is being called away into a corner to hear something particular. I always know it means something disagreeable. If you want to set me wild, just step up to me mysteriously, and say that you wish to speak to me about something particular. Women are always doing such things. Men never do, unless they are policemen."

Young Mr. Ferrier sat opposite the speaker, lolling on the table with his elbows widespread, and a glass of wine between them, from which he could drink without raising it, merely tip-

ping the brim to his pale little mustache. He took a sip before answering, and, still retaining his graceful position, rolled up a pair of very light-blue eyes as he said, in a lisping voice: "Ma never does, unless it's something about money. You may be pretty sure it's something about money."

The clear, pale profile opposite him suddenly turned a deep pink, and Lawrence looked round at him with a sharp glance, before which his fall. The little drawing speech had been delivered with more of a draw than that habitual to Mr. Ferrier, perhaps, and it seemed that there was a slight emphasis which might be regarded as significant. Gerald had not taken any great pains to conciliate his prospective brother-in-law, and Louis liked to remind him occasionally that the advantages were not all on one side.

Lawrence rose carelessly from the table, an inflated crumb of bread off his vest. "I say, Louis," he remarked, "do you know you have rather peculiarly your head down to your food, instead of raising your food to your mouth? Reminds me of—well, now, it's a little like the quadrupeds, isn't it? Excuse me, that may be taken as a compliment. I'm not sure but quadrupeds have, on the whole, rather better manners than bipeds. Grace isn't everything. Money is the chief thing, after all. You can gild such wooden things with it. I'm going to talk about it with your mother. Good-bye! Don't take too much wine."

He sauntered out of the room, and shut the door behind him. "Valgar place!" he muttered, going through the entries. "Worstest rainbows everywhere. I wonder Annette did not know better." A contrasting picture floated up before his mind of a cool, darkened chamber, all pure white and celestial blue, with two little golden flames burning in a shady nook before a marble saint, and one slender sun-ray stretched athwart, as though the place had been let down from heaven, and the golden rope still held it moored to that peaceful shore. The contrast gave him a stifled feeling.

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As he passed the drawing-room door, he saw Annette seated near it, evidently on the watch for him. She started up and ran to the door the moment he appeared. Her face had been very pale, but now the color fluttered in it. She looked at him with anxious entreaty.

"Don't mind if mamma is rather odd," she whispered hurriedly. "You know she has a rough way of speaking, but she means well."

He looked down, and only just suffered her slender fingers to rest on his arm.

"I would help it if I could, Lawrence," she went on tremulously. "I do the best I can, but there are times when mamma won't listen to me. Try not to mind what she may say . . . for my sake!"

Poor Annette! She had not yet learned not to make that tender plea with her promised husband. He tried to hide that it irritated him.

"Upon my word, I begin to think that something terrible is coming," he said, forcing a laugh. "The sooner I go and get it over, the better. Don't be alarmed. I promise not to resent anything except personal violence. When it comes to blows, I must protect myself. But you can't expect a man to promise not to mind when he doesn't know what is going to happen."

A door at the end of the hall was opened, and Mrs. Ferrier looked out impatiently.

"Anon, anon, sir!" the young man cried. "Now for it, Annette. One, two, three! Let us be brave, and stand by each other. I am gone!"

Let us stand by each other! Oh! yes; for ever and ever! The light came back to the girl's face at that. She no longer feared anything if she and Lawrence were to stand together.

Mr. Gerald walked slowly down the hall. If his languid step and careless air meant fearlessness, who can tell? He entered the library, where Mrs. Ferrier sat like a highly colored statue carved in a green chair, her hands in her lap (her paws in her lap, the young man thought savagely). She looked stolid and determined.

The calm superiority which he could assume with Annette would have no effect here. Not only was Mrs. Ferrier not in love with him, which made a vast difference, but she was incapable of appreciating his real advantages over her, though, perhaps, a mistaken perception of them inspired her at times with a sort of dislike. There is nothing which a low and rude mind more surely resents and distrusts than gentle manners.

The self-possessed and supercilious man of society quailed before the *ci-devant* washwoman. What would she care for a science? What shrinking would she have from the insulting word, the coarse taunt? What fine sense had she to stop her at the point where she had been said, and prevent the gratuitous pouring out of all that anger that showed in her sullen face? Lawrence Gerald took a strong hold on his self-control, and settled instantly upon the only course of action possible to him. He could not defy the woman, for he was in some way in her power. He could marry Annette in spite of her, but that would be to make Annette worse than worthless to him. Not one dollar could he ever hope to receive if he made an enemy of Mrs. Ferrier; and money he must have.

He felt now with a new keenness, when he perceived himself to be in danger of loss, how terrible it would be to find those expectations of prosperity which he had been entertaining snatched away from him.

Mrs. Ferrier looked at him glumly, not lady enough to print him a seat, or to smooth in any way the approaches to a disagreeable interview. There was no softness nor delicacy in her nature, and now her heart was full of jealous suspicion and a sense of outraged justice, as she understood justice.

The young man seated himself in a chair directly in front of her—he would not act as though afraid to meet her gaze—leaned forward with his arms on his knees, looked down at the eye-glasses he held, and waited for her to begin. A more polite attitude would have been thrown away on her, and he needed some little shield. Besides, her threatening looks had been so undisguised that an assumption of smiling ease would only have increased her anger.

The woman's hard, critical eyes looked him over as he waited there, and marked the finish of his toilet, and reckoned the cost of it, and snapped at sight of the deep purple amethysts in his cuff buttons, not knowing that they were heir-looms, and the gift of his mother. He was dressed quite like a fine gentleman, she thought; and yet, what was he? Nothing but a pauper who was trying to get her money. She longed to tell him so, and would have expressed herself quite plainly to that effect upon a very small provocation.

"I want to know if you've broken that promise you made me six months ago," she said roughly, having grown more angry with this survey. "I hear that you have."

"What promise?" he asked calmly, glancing up.

"You know well enough what I mean," she retorted. "You promised never to gamble again, and I told you what you might depend on if you did, and I mean to keep my word. Now, I should like to know the truth. I've been hearing things about you."

A deep red stained his face, and his lips were pressed tightly together. It was hard to be spoken to in that way, and not resent it. "When I make a promise, I usually keep it," he replied, in a constrained voice.

"That's no answer to my question," Mrs. Ferrier exclaimed, her hands clenching themselves in her lap. "I'll have the truth without any round-about. Somebody—no matter who—has told me you owe fifteen hundred dollars that you lost by gambling. Is it true or not? That is what I want to know."

Lawrence Gerald raised his bright eyes, and looked steadily at her. "It is false!" he said.

This calm and deliberate denial disconcerted Mrs. Ferrier. She had not expected him to confess fully to such a charge; neither, much as she distrusted him, had she thought him capable of a deliberate lie if the charge were true—some sense of his better qualities had penetrated her thus far—but he had looked for shuffling and evasion.

He was not slow to see that the battle was at an end, and in the same moment his perfect self-restraint vanished. "May I ask where you heard this interesting story?" he demanded, drawing himself up.

Her confusion increased. The truth was that she had heard it from her son; but Louis had begged her not to betray him as the informant, and his story had been founded on hints merely.

"It's no use telling where I heard it," she said. "I'll take your word. But since you've given that, of course you won't have any objection to giving your oath. If you will swear that you don't owe any gambling debts, I'll say no more, unless I hear more."

He reddened violently. "I will not do it!" he exclaimed. "If my word is not good, my oath would not be. You ought to be satisfied. And if you will allow me, I will go to Annette now, unless you have some other subject to propose."

He has risen, his manner full of haughtiness, when she stopped him. "Don't be in such a hurry," she said. "He did not seat himself again, but leaning on the back of a chair, looked at her fully."

"I wish you would sit down," she said. "It isn't pleasant to have you standing up when I want to talk to you."

He smiled, not very pleasantly, and seated himself, looking at her with a steady gaze that was inexplicably bitter and secretive. She returned it with a more piercing regard than one would have thought those insignificant eyes capable of. She had not been able to understand his proud scruple, and her suspicions were alive again.

"If all goes right," she began, watching him closely, "I'm willing that you and Annette should be married the first of September. I've made up my mind what I will do for you. You shall have five hundred dollars to go on a journey with, and then you will come back and live with me here two years. I'll give you your board, and make Annette an allowance of five hundred a year, and see about some business for you. But I won't pay any debts; and, if any such debts come up as we have been talking about, off you will go. If this story I've heard turns out to be true, not one dollar of mine do you ever get, no matter when I find it out."

"I will speak to Annette about it," he said quietly. "Is that all?"

She answered with a short nod. Annette was anxiously waiting for him. "What is it?" she asked, when she saw his face.

He snatched his hat from the table. "Come out into the air," he said; "I am stifling here."

She followed him into the gardens, where an arbor screened them from view. "Did you know what your

mother was going to say to me?" he asked.

"No!" It was all had strength to utter.

"Nothing of it?"

"Nothing, Lawrence. I saw that she did not mean to tell me, so I would not ask. Don't keep me in suspense."

He hesitated a moment. Since she did not know, there was no need to tell her all. He told her only her mother's plans regarding their marriage.

"You see it's a sort of ticket-of-leave," he said, smiling faintly. "We are to be under surveillance. Hadn't you better give me up, Annette? She will like any one else better."

The sky and garden swam round before her eyes. She said nothing, but waited.

"I only propose it for your sake," he added more gently, started at her pallor. "In marrying me, you run the risk of being poor. If that doesn't frighten you, then it's all right."

Her color came back again; but no smile came with it. These shocks had been repeated too many times to find her with the same elasticity.

"This cannot go on a great while," she said, folding her hands in her lap, and looking down. "Mamma cannot always be so unreasonable. The best way now is to make no opposition to her, whatever she proposes. I may be able to influence her as we wish after a while. You may be sure that I shall try. Meantime, let us be quiet. I have learned, Lawrence, never to contend unless I can be pretty sure of victory. It is a hard lesson, but we have to learn it, and many harder ones, too. The best way for you is to laugh and seem careless, whether you feel so or not. The one who laughs succeeds. It is strange, but the moment a person sees as if he felt humiliated, people seem to be possessed of a desire to humiliate him still more. It doesn't do in the world to confess to any weakness or failure. I have always noticed that people stand in awe of those who appear to be perfectly self-confident and contented."

Lawrence Gerald looked at her in surprise as she said this in a calm and steady way quite new to him. Some thought of her being strong and helpful in other ways besides money-bringing glanced through his mind.

"You know the world at least, Annette," he said, with a half-smile.

No smile nor word replied. She was looking back, and remembering how she had learned the world. She, a poor, low-born girl, ignorant but enthusiastic and daring, had been suddenly endowed with wealth, and thrown upon that world with no one to teach her how to act properly. She had learned by the sneers and bitterness, the ridicule and jibes, her blunders had excited. Mortification, anger, tears and disappointments had taught her. Instead of having been spurred along the way of life, she had seen her best intentions and most generous feelings held as nothing, because of some fault in their manifestation; had found the friendships she grasped at, believing them real, change to an evasive coldness with only a surface froth of sweet pretence. Strife lay behind her, and, looking forward, she saw strife in the future. As she made this swift review, it happened to her as it has happened to others when some crisis or some strong emotion has forced them to lift their eyes from their immediate daily cares; and as the curtain veiling the future wavered in that breeze, they have caught a glimpse of life as a whole, and found it terrible. Perhaps in that moment Annette Ferrier saw nothing, but dust and ashes in all her hopes of earthly happiness, and felt a brief longing to hide her face from them for ever.

"Your company are coming," Lawrence said. He had been watching her with curiosity and surprise. It was the first time she had ever disregarded his presence, and the first time he had found her really worthy of respect.

She roused herself, not with a start, as if coming back to a real present from some trivial abstraction, but slowly and almost reluctantly, as though turning from weighty matters to attend to trifles.

"Can you be bright and cheerful now?" she asked, smiling on him with some unconscious superiority in her air. "These little things are not worth fretting for. All will come right, if we keep up our courage."

As she held out her hand to him, he took it in his and carried it to his lips. "You're a good creature!" he said most sincerely.

And in this amicable frame of mind they went to join the company.

Crichton was eminently a musical child. In the other arts, they were perhaps superficial and pretentious; but this of music was ardently and assiduously cultivated by every one. Wealthy ladies studied it with all the devotion of professional people, and there were not a few who might have made it a successful profession. Among those was Annette Ferrier, whose clear, high soprano had a brilliant effect in *bravuras* or compositions requiring strong passion in the rendering. All this talent and cultivation the Crichton ladies did not by any means allow to be wasted in private life. Clubs and associations kept up their emulation and skill, and charitable objects and public festivals afforded them the opportunity for that public display without which their zeal might have languished. The present rehearsal was for one of these concerts.

They were to sing in the new conservatory, which was admirable for that purpose. It was only just completed—an immense parallelogram joined to the southwestern corner of the house, with a high roof, and tall pillars making a sort of porch at the

end. No plants had yet been arranged, but azaleas and rhododendrons in full bloom had been brought in and set in a thicket along the bases of the pillars, looking, in all their airy rosette flush of graduated tints, as if a sunset cloud had dropped there.

Against this background the benches for the singers were ranged, and Annette's grand piano brought out for Mr. Schöninger, their leader, Sofas and arm chairs were placed near the long windows opening into the house for a small company of listeners.

"I wish Mother Chevreuse could have come," Mrs. Ferrier said, surveying the preparations with complacent satisfaction.

Mother Chevreuse was employed much more to her own liking than she would have been in listening to the most excellent music in the world; she was waiting for her son to come from his collecting, and take tea with her in her cosy little parlor. If the day should prove to have been successful to him, then he could rest a whole month; and, in expectation of his success, she had made a little gala of it, and adorned her room and table with flowers. The curtains next the church were looped back, to show a group of sunlit tree-tops and an edge of a bright cloud, since the high walls hid the sunset from this room. The priest's slippers and dressing-gown were ready for him, and an arm-chair set in his favorite place. He must rest after his hard day's work. The evening paper lay folded within reach.

Mother Chevreuse looked sulkily about, and saw that all was ready. The green china tea-set and beautiful old-fashioned silver that had been preserved from her wedding presents made the little table look gay, and the flowers and a plate of honey-comb added a touch of poetry. Everything was as she would have wished it—the picture beautifully peaceful and homelike.

"What would he do without me?" she murmured involuntarily.

The thought called up a train of sad fancies, and, as she stood looking toward the last sunny cloud of evening, long quivering rays seemed to stretch toward her from it. She clasped her hands and raised her eyes to pray that she might long be spared to him; but the words were stopped on her lips. There was momentary struggle, then "Thy will be done!" dropped faintly.

At this moment, she heard a familiar step on the sidewalk, the street door opened and banged to again, and in a moment more F. Chevreuse stood on the threshold, his face bright with exercise and pleasure.

"Well!" his mother said, seeing success in the air.

He drew himself up with an expression of immense consequence, and began to declaim:

"What, said he,
Fetch me my hat, says he,
For I will go, says he,
To Throloe, says he,
To the fair, says he,
To buy all that's there, said he."

"You've made out the whole sum!" was her joyful interpretation. "Yes; and more," he answered. "I am rich, Mother Chevreuse. All the way home, my mind has been running on golden altar-services and old masters."

Mother Chevreuse seated herself behind the tea-tray, set a green and gold cup into its appropriate saucer, and selected a particular spoon which she always gave her son—one with a wheat-ear curling about the quaint half-effaced initials; he, insensible man that he was, unconscious whether it was silver or tin.

"While you have a resting-place for the Master of masters, you need not give much thought to any other," she said. "But I own that my thoughts often run on a golden altar-service. Only to-day I was reckoning that what I possess of my own would buy one."

"O vanity!" laughed the priest. "You want to make a show, mother. Instead of being content to help with the brick and mortar, or the iron pillars, you must approach the very Holy of Holies, and shine in the tabernacle itself. Fie, Mother Chevreuse!"

"I mentioned it to F. White," she said.

"What does that mean?" she asked, looking at her with a puzzled expression.

"I mentioned it to F. White," she said.

said, "and he almost feeding the hungry golden altar-vessels, gold endures, but bread he answered that of bread saved from the and put hope into a it was making finer he brought into a deal of grace may be of bread, said F. White. "That's true," answered cheerfully. "F. White though he grudges me I'll remember that when begging for his organs when there are in the world." A tobacco in an organ-pipe, with oath in the mouth of a who has no other grace a clay pipe. F. White Merry, foolish talk and restful.

"And, by the way, priest, that same F. away, and I must sick call for him. I as I came along."

"Not to-night!" claimed.

"Yes, to-night! I would come. The Besides, I could no morrow forenoon. five miles before ten rest of the night there in the morning in at six o'clock. That I don't care to be out

"It is the better way looked disappointed. to have you out late, you such headaches."

"Headache is ea heartache, mother," brightly, and went give Andrew his ord

"Have it ready in fr said. "And, Andri in the sacristy."

Mother Chevreuse her son, urged him lest the night air sh poured a second cu and, when he was re pride of his stalwa in tender, motherly accident should befa lonely drive.

"Hadin' you be with you?" she sug; "And why shoul with me?" the prie stole in his pocket

"Why, I'm ashamed of her won "An excellent re "No, madame; I with me but my buggy holds but Sleep soundly, and

She stood with parted, watching fearful of losing a glance, but his che smile in her face.

He would not ap thing unusual in h going out, when sh