

MADRIGAL.

ELIZABETH M. GRISWOLD.

Sweet, when the daffodils
Smile to the brightening sky,
A quickening throb the soft air thrills,
And in its path between the hills
The brook goes dancing by,
My thoughts to melody awake
For thy sweet sake.

The robin builds her nest
Close to the cottage eaves,
And silent broods, her patient breast
Close to the tender nestlings prest,
The while 'mid bursting leaves
Her lover sings his happy song
The whole day long.

The fancies manifold
That slumber in my breast,
Like flower seeds under the frozen mold,
Through night of winter bleak and cold
Are stirred with a glad unrest,
And my soul, in the joy that new life brings,
Awakes and sings.

THE LOST JEWELS.

"Quicker, madame! It commences to fall."
"Well, what then?" said madame.
"Why, madame has no umbrella."
"Bah!" she exclaimed.
"It arrives, then, that madame will get wet."
"Let it 'arrive' then, as you call it, Toinette: it won't kill me."

The speakers were mistress and maid, and were both comely women, of between forty and fifty. The large basket, which the latter carried on her arm, showed that the purport of their walk had been to buy provisions, and they were now—at about six in the evening—proceeding homewards to their place of residence, which was situated in a street in Clerkenwell.

Madame Michaud was an Englishwoman by birth, but had married a Frenchman, a working jeweler, who, like others of his countrymen, had sought a refuge in England. He was a skilled workman, and earned excellent wages. Jules Michaud was a hale, red-faced, white-haired man, some dozen or fifteen years his wife's senior, but that had not prevented their union from being a happy one. As for Toinette, she had been the Frenchman's servant in his bachelor days, and was a poor countrywoman of his own, whom he had first taken from motives of charity, she being without any friends or relations, either in her own country or in England. She had lived twenty years in Jules Michaud's service, and was much attached to both her master and his wife. She was a faithful, honest creature, regarded more in the light of a friend than a servant, a little addicted to grumbling, but leaving the atole of the Michauds in Snipe street to be the best ordered domicile in Europe. And truly it was a pleasant little household, that which consisted only of these three worthy persons, and one which it would scarcely be possible to praise too highly for its neatness, its cheerfulness, and its comfort. The three rose at seven, summer and winter, took their meals throughout the day comfortably together at precisely the same hour, and all retired to rest punctually as the old-fashioned clock struck ten, unless it might be that Monsieur Michaud had some work in hand that necessitated more than ordinary labor; in which case he sat up after the two women had gone to rest.

Arrived at home, Madame Michaud, followed by Toinette, entered her neatly kept kitchen, sat down in a large chair, untied her bonnet strings, fanned herself with her handkerchief, and declared that the heat was insufferable; whilst Toinette placed the huge wicker basket on the table, and commenced emptying it of its contents.

"Pheugh!" she said. "Madame, how fine is that piece of veal! Madame will stew it *à la croustade*, as usual, for monsieur's supper!"
"Well, I suppose so, Toinette; but I wish you and Jules could take to our English ways. Now I like veal roasted, with some green peas. It seems to me that to stew such a fine neck as that with carrots is to spoil it."

Toinette lifted her hands and upraised her eyes.

"Spoil it!" said she. "Oh madame, it comes to be superb!"

"Well, get the stew-pan," said madame; "there is no time to lose. We shall have supper at eight."

So Toinette got the pan, and commenced cutting up the veal in chops, whilst Madame Michaud followed the English tastes, and made herself a cup of tea.

"Oh, dear," she said, "how tea does revive one!"

Toinette peeled a carrot, and hummed "*Partant pour la Syrie*."

"Don't you think so, Toinette?" asked her mistress, rather sharply.

"What, madame?"

"Why, that tea revives one?"

"I prefer coffee, madame, or even *vin ordinaire*."

"Nasty, thin stuff, like vinegar," said madame. "I like English beer."

Toinette knew that Madame Michaud's habit, when she was cross and tired (as she always was when she had taken a long walk in hot weather), was to find fault with everything French, so she held her tongue.

There would certainly have been a skirmish between the two women had not Michaud at this moment, his face beaming with satisfaction, entered the kitchen.

"Well, Jules," said his wife, rather crossly,

"what a time you have been! You left home directly after your four-o'clock coffee, and now it is nearly seven."

"It was a long way to go, *ma mie*," he said, wiping his forehead, with his handkerchief, and kissing his wife; "all the way to Kensington."

"If Toinette and I had loitered like that you would have had no supper," said madame. "We have been back this hour."

"Oh, madame!" exclaimed Toinette.

The jeweler smiled. He was used to his wife's "little tempers," so he said, laughingly, "How long, Toinette?"

"About twenty minutes, monsieur."

"Then you tell me I tell fibs!" cried Madame Michaud, highly incensed. "You side with Toinette against your own wife! Perhaps you would like to kiss her, also?"

"Oh, certainly!" cried Michaud, gallantly saluting the cheek which Toinette offered him.

This was the way these two generally took madame's temper.

"Well, really," said madame, "I do believe I'm very ill-tempered to-night; but I am so tired, Jules."

"Poor thing!" said he.

"I'm getting so fat," complained Madame Michaud.

"How distressing!" said Jules.

"Yes, and my face gets so red after any exertion."

"You must walk less," said the jeweler.

"I feel such an inclination to sleep," she continued.

"Ah, ah! you must eat less," said her husband.

"I could close my eyes at once," said madame.

"I have something that will make you open them," said the jeweler.

Madame Michaud pricked up her ears, and Toinette left her stew-pan and came close to her master.

Michaud took from his pocket a round case of green shagreen, and opened it.

"There, Madame Michaud," said he, "what do you think of those?"

"Good heavens!" she cried.

"*Ma foi!* what diamonds!" exclaimed Toinette.

"I said you would open your eyes," returned the jeweler. "Yes, they are magnificent."

"I should think so, indeed," said madame.

"The dead might look at them."

"So that even you don't feel inclined to go to sleep whilst doing so?"

"Oh, dear, no!" she replied.

"Good!" said the jeweler.

"But Jules, whom do they belong to?" asked his wife.

"Lady Sartorsine," he replied. "I have been to Kensington to fetch them. You know her ladyship prefers employing us working jewelers dearest, without applying to any large firm."

"Well?" said madame.

"Well," continued Michaud, "she wants these reset for the birthday drawing-room next week."

"Can you manage it?" she asked.

"Yes, by hard work," he replied.

"Oh, Jules, what a trust!" she exclaimed.

"I flatter myself I am an honest man," cried Jules, drawing himself up proudly.

"Certainly," said Toinette.

"Who doubts it?" asked Madame Michaud.

"But it is a tremendous responsibility."

"Naturally," said Jules.

"You must not let them be out of your sight, Jules."

"Oh, as to that," said he, "I cannot be expected to see them when I am asleep."

"Then you must not go to sleep," said madame.

"Not go to sleep!" he repeated.

"Decidedly not," said his wife.

"What, not for ten days?" he cried.

"Oh, that is different," returned Madame Michaud.

"It wants ten days to the birthday," said Jules.

"Can't you trust any one to help you?" she asked.

"Impossible," said the jeweler; "I dare not. Besides, I passed my word to her ladyship. These jewels are worth fifteen thousand pounds."

Madame Michaud turned as pale as her rubicund complexion would admit. "What a sum!" she cried.

"Why, it would buy half a dozen French farms!" said Toinette.

"Don't be uneasy, *ma mie*," said Michaud, turning to his wife. "I'll put them in my patent safe in our bedroom; they will be all right there."

"One of us must keep watch whilst the other sleeps," cried Madame Michaud.

"Oh, now, my dear, you are alarming yourself uselessly," said Jules.

All this while Toinette had not neglected her cookery. She had now spread a clean cloth on the table, drawn a jug of sparkling ale, and turned out the contents of her stew-pan.

"Supper is ready, monsieur and madame," she cried. Then the three sat down together, and enjoyed their savory meal.

After the old Frenchman had smoked his evening pipe, and the two women had cleared away and retired to rest, he set to work upon the important task confided to his care. The diamonds were really splendid, and it showed no small confidence on the part of Lady Sartorsine to intrust them to a comparatively obscure man, such as Jules Michaud. As for poor Madame Michaud, she could not sleep whilst her husband

was at work. Every tick of the great clock made the heart beat; she fancied she saw the forms of thieves by the black oak press which stood in a corner of the room; and at every creak of the stairs (which creaked occasionally in that mysterious fashion peculiar to old stairs) she thought she heard footsteps, and felt inclined to call aloud for help. As for Toinette, she never bothered her head about the matter.

At last the jeweler thought he had done enough for one night, and the diamonds were securely locked up in the safe, the key of which he placed beneath his pillow. Then poor Madame Michaud fell into a troubled sleep.

Matters went on thus until the day before the jewels were to be taken home. The resetting had been completed and the diamonds were locked up in the safe. Feeling that all was done at last, Madame Michaud, worn out by eight or nine restless nights, had fallen into a deep and quiet sleep. The jeweler, on his part, whilst listening to his wife's heavy breathing, resolved that for himself he would not sleep a wink till the jewels were out of his custody. But when we will go to sleep, sleep lies from us; and when we determine we will keep awake, the inclination to sleep becomes irresistible. The tired man was soon as fast asleep as his wife.

In the morning, after breakfast, Monsieur Michaud dressed himself in his best suit, and happy to think that at last his responsibility would cease, went whistling to his safe, which he opened with his little patent key. Alas, the diamonds were not there!

"Oh, *mon Dieu, mon Dieu!*" screamed the unfortunate man; "I am ruined, robbed, disgraced! I shall be called a thief; I shall be hanged."

At these doleful cries Madame Michaud and Toinette came, as may be supposed, rushing into the room.

"What is the matter, monsieur?" asked Toinette.

"Matter! *Mon Dieu*, I am undone! The diamonds are stolen!" he cried, bursting into tears.

"Stolen!" cried Toinette.

"Stolen!" echoed Madame Michaud, sinking into a chair, and looking ready to faint.

"Stolen!" said the jeweler. "Yes, yes, it is too true; I am a lost man."

Madame Michaud put her hand to her head, as if dimly trying to recall something. "It is impossible," she said.

"Look for yourself," moaned the miserable man, pointing to the empty safe.

"Can monsieur have forgotten to lock the jewels up?" said Toinette, after examining it.

A ray of hope shot momentarily through Michaud's brain.

"Ah, no!" he said. "I remember but too well doing so."

"*Ciel!*" cried Toinette, wringing her hands, "what is to be done?"

The jeweler groaned. "You must go to the police at once," said Toinette, firmly.

"The police!" he repeated.

"Of course, monsieur. Or stay; you must go to Madame Sartorsine, and I will fetch the police."

"Oh, I dare not face her!" groaned Michaud.

"You must," said Toinette again. "For the honor of all, this must be cleared up."

The affair, of course, created what in these days is called a "sensation." Jules Michaud, his wife, and servant were at first all arrested, in spite of the earnest entreaties of Lady Sartorsine, who declared she would sooner lose the diamonds ten times over than prosecute, as she firmly believed in the innocence of the Frenchman. The poor man thanked her with tears in his eyes, but for all that the police persisted in doing as they pleased. Accordingly, Michaud was brought before a magistrate, and remanded for "further examination." There was no evidence at all as yet, beyond the bare fact that the jewels were missing, and that only the three suspected persons had known where the key of the safe was in which they had been locked up. After Michaud had been further examined, he was committed to take his trial, and Madame Michaud and Toinette were liberated on bail.

Hand-bills were printed, a large reward was offered, and the detectives visited every known receiver of stolen goods in London, but all in vain. The diamonds were not to be found.

Meanwhile, and whilst Michaud was awaiting his trial, poor Madame Michaud, who was nearly broken-hearted at all this misfortune, became dangerously ill. "Their good name gone, their business interrupted, their happiness destroyed," she said, "what had she and her husband to live for?"

The faithful Toinette did her best to console the poor woman, and Lady Sartorsine, who behaved admirably in the matter, requested her own doctor to take the case in hand, which he did.

It so happened that Dr. Klepson was an exceedingly good and humane man, and took a very great interest in the case. He questioned Toinette as to all the circumstances of the jewel robbery, and paid the greatest attention to the smallest minutiae. He asked to see the key of the patent safe, which Toinette accordingly showed him.

The physician saw at once that it was rather a complicated affair, and scarcely likely to be available in the hands of a thief (unless of course he had previously been made acquainted with the secret of it). Toinette herself was unable to explain to him the working of it.

"So, then," asked Dr. Klepson, "it was only your master who could open this cabinet?"

"And madame, also," said Toinette.

"You are sure Madame Michaud could open it?"

"Oh, yes, monsieur, because when her husband was ill she used to put away the things there."

"In what state was Madame Michaud during the nine days these jewels were in hand?"

"In what state, monsieur?" repeated Toinette.

"Yes; was she as usual, I mean; was she quiet or excited?"

"Oh, very restless and anxious, monsieur."

"Does she (them!) drink?"

"Drink, monsieur!" said Toinette, indignantly; "certainly not, except, of course, when she is thirsty. Madame likes eating best."

"Ah, she likes eating best, does she?"

"Yes, she does, monsieur. I have heard the master tell her she eats too much; it makes her red in the face."

"H—m! She is a full-bodied person. That must give her nightmare."

"Sometimes she has had dreams, monsieur."

"Yes," said he; "I have heard that she calls out in her sleep."

"She does, monsieur; and I have known her to get up whilst fast asleep and go into the kitchen."

The doctor listened eagerly. "A—h!" said he, "you have known that?"

"Yes, sir," said Toinette.

"Tell me, now, what you have known her to do when in this state?"

"Well, monsieur, last Michaelmas day was a year, madame was to have some friends to dinner—"

"Well?" said the doctor.

"She was anxious, of course, to have things go off well, you may imagine—"

"Of course," said he.

"So that, monsieur, on the evening before, madame was restless; she gave me directions for the next day which I could not carry out until the morning; and then, when I came down in the morning, why, *ma foi!* madame had saved me the trouble."

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Monsieur, you will hardly believe me."

"Yes, I shall," he replied.

"Well, then, madame had come down in the night, drawn the goose, lighted the fire, and put the bird on the spit."

"She had!" said the doctor.

"Yes, so that I found the poor thing burnt as black as a coal, the madame declared she knew nothing about it."

"She is a somnambulist!" cried the doctor, triumphantly.

"Oh, dear, no," said Toinette indignantly; "she is nothing of the sort. Madame is a most virtuous woman."

"I mean she walks in her sleep," explained the doctor.

"Oh, that's quite a different thing, if you only meant that."

"Of course I did," said he.

Dr. Klepson began to see light, or fancied he did.

"Now," said he, "tell me what time Madame Michaud went to bed the night before the jewels were missed."

"Oh, that is easy, sir; madame was very tired, and she and I went to bed earlier than usual; it was half past nine, only."

"And your master?" he asked.

"I cannot tell you. All I know is, that he told my mistress he was glad to be alone, as he wanted to study the design for the new settings, to see if he had carried out his orders correctly."

"Madame Michaud did not roast a goose during that night, I suppose?"

"No, sir," replied Toinette.

"What did she do, then?" he asked.

"Slept, I suppose," said Toinette.

"Yes," said the doctor. "But what did she do in her sleep?"

"Nothing that I know of, sir," replied Toinette.

"Well, I suppose—but you must keep it to yourself—"

"Yes, yes, monsieur!" cried Toinette, with all her sex's curiosity.

"I suppose that she did something with those diamonds."

"Great heavens!" cried Toinette.

"Yes; I can see no other explanation of this strange affair," said the doctor. "People who walk in their sleep do remarkable things."

"What is to be done, then?" asked Toinette.

"Wait a bit," said the doctor. "Tell me, first, if you noticed any disarrangement in your kitchen or parlor in the morning this loss was discovered."

"No, monsieur."

"You did not miss anything?"

"No, monsieur; stay; yes, I could not find my nutmeg grater. I wanted it to give madame some hot wine and water, she took on so at the robbery."

"You did not find it, then?"

"Oh, monsieur," cried Toinette, clapping her hands, "it is strange; but after hunting everywhere, I found it on madame's bedroom mantel-piece."

"You did?" said the doctor.

"Yes, monsieur; and though I had put it on the kitchen dresser myself, before going to bed, I imagined, after all, I was mistaken, and it had been in madame's room."

"Well, Toinette, if you do as I tell you, I think we may find the diamonds."

"Do you indeed, monsieur? Then poor M. Michaud will be saved!"

"I hope so," he replied.