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Little Miss Snowflake.

BY JOSEPHINE POLLARD.

Little Miss Snowflake came to town
All dressed up in her brand-new gown,
And nobody looked as fresh and fair
As little Miss Snowflake, I declare!

Out of a fleecy cloud she stepped,
Where all the rest of her family kept
As close together as bees can swarm,
In readiness for a big snowstorm.

But little Miss Snowflake couldn't wait,
And she wanted to come in greater state,
For she thought that her beauty would ne'er be known
If she came in a crowd—so she came alone.

All alone from the great blue sky
Where cloudy vessels went scudding by,
With sails all set, on their way to meet
The larger ships of the snowy fleet.

She was very tired, but couldn't stop
On tall church spire or chimney top;
All the way from her bright abode
Down to the dust of a country road!

There she rested all out of breath,
And there she speedily met her death,
And nobody could exactly tell
The spot where little Miss Snowflake fell.

TWO COBWEBS.

AN OLD MAN'S STORY.

"There, I've found the place, Cobweb."

"You have, papa?"

"I have."

"Not a dreadful detached village, or *cottage orneé*, papa?"

"No, no, no, no, my child. It's just what you asked me to get—old and rugged, and picturesque, and inconvenient, and damp, littered with leaves, and four miles from any railway station; and now I hope you're happy."

"Oh, I am, dear, dear, dear father!" she cried, seating herself on my knee, and nestling her head on my shoulder.

"I am so, so glad. You've made me so happy, for I was very tired of London."

I did not answer but sat looking down on the smooth peachy cheek that one of my hands would keep stroking, and at the long yellow hair that hung down over the shoulders in waves, and in spite of myself a sigh escaped my lips.

Ruth—Cobweb as I always called her because she was so soft and downy—started up, gazed earnestly in my face, and then kissed me very, very fondly.

"Don't think about the past, dear father," she said softly—she always called me father when she was serious.

"Can't help it child," I said mournfully; and then seeing the tears gather in her eyes, I tried to be cheerful, and smiled as I added: "I have the future as well as the past to make me sad, my dear."

She looked at me wonderingly, but did not speak, and I sat there holding her little hand to my heart as I thought of the past, and how ten years before, just as business was beginning to prosper with me, I was left alone with the little fair-haired girl of eight, who found it so hard to believe that her mother had been taken away never to return, only to live in our memories.

And then I thought of my other sorrow—the future—and pictured with an agony I cannot describe the day when I should have to resign my claim to another, and be left alone a desolate, broken old man.

I am naturally a very common, hard, and business-like old man, and terribly selfish. Cobweb had woven herself so round my heart, that in my peevish, irritable way, I was never happy when home from the city without she was waiting on me.

A fortnight later and we were settled down; and really, with all my London notions, I began to find the calm and repose of the country delicious. Cobweb was delighted, and constantly dragging me somewhere or another into the grounds of the pretty old place, where she arranged garden seats in the snuggest, shadiest spots for my especial behoof.

There was a wilderness of wood adjoining the garden, which the former possessor had left in a state of nature, saving that he had the footpaths and tracks widened in their old winding ways, carefully turfed, and dotted with chair here and there.

One day I found Cobweb leaning on a dead bough which crossed an opening in the wood, where all seemed of a delicate twilight green. She was listening intently to the song of a bird overhead, and as I stopped short gazing at the picture before me, I said to myself with a sigh—

"All that's bright must fade! My darling I wish I had your likeness as you stand. Time flies," I muttered, "and the winter comes at last, with bare trees to the woods—gray hairs and wrinkles to the old."

A day or two later I was in the city, where I always went twice a week—for I could not give up business, it was part of my life—when an old friend dropped in, and in the course of conversation he said—

"By the way, Burrows, why don't you have your portrait painted?"

"Bah! stuff! What for?" I said.

"Well," said my old friend, laughing, "I don't know, only that it would give a poor artist I know a job; and, poor fellow, he wants it badly enough."

"Bah! I'm handsome enough without being painted," I said gruffly. Then as a thought flashed through my mind—for I saw again the picture in the wood with Cobweb leaning on the branch—"Stop a minute. Can he paint well?"

"Gloriously."

"And is terribly hard up?"

"Horribly, poor fellow."

"How's that?"

"Don't know. He's poor and proud, and the world has dealt very hardly with him. It isn't so smooth with every one, Jack, as it is with us."

"True, Tom, old fellow," I said, "true. Well, look here; I'll give him a job. Would he come down and stay at my place?"

"Oh, yes, if you treat him well; but, as I tell you, he's a gentleman, and a man of honor."

"Oh, I'm not afraid he'll steal the spoons," I said, laughing.

"No," he said drily, "no fear of that. But you'll make a good picture."

"Stuff," I said. "Do you think I'm going to be painted?"

"Why, what are you going to do, then?" he said in an astonished way.

"Let him paint little Cobweb," I said, chuckling, and rubbing my hands.

My friend gave a long whistle, and after a few more words he left.

It did not strike me then, but I remarked afterwards that he seemed disposed to draw back from his proposal; but I was now so wrapped up in my plans that I could think of nothing but the picture in the wood, and I went home full of it, meaning it for a surprise.

Two days later one of the servants announced a Mr. Grantley on business, and, on his being shown in, I found myself face to face with a handsome, grave-looking man of about thirty. He was rather shabbily dressed, and looked pale and ill as he bowed to Cobweb and myself, ending by staring at my child, as I thought, in rather a peculiar way.

This annoyed me—a stout, choleric, elderly man—for no one had a right to look at my Cobweb but me; and I spoke rather testily. I said;

"Now, sir, when you please, I am at your service."

"I beg your pardon," he said, in a low, musical voice. "Miss Burrows, I presume. One moment, please—don't move."

Cobweb was sitting in the bay window, and to my utter astonishment he quickly drew one of the curtains, and then half closed the other, so that the light fell strongly upon her hair.

I could not speak for the passion bubbling up in my throat, and as I stood gasping, he came and took my arm, led me aside, and then, pointing to where Cobweb sat, as astounded as myself, he said:

"That would be admirable, sir. We could not improve that natural pose."

"What the dickens——Are you mad, sir? What do you mean?"

"I beg your pardon," he said, flushing hastily. "I thought you understood. Mr. Elden said you wished me to paint this young lady's portrait. Am I mistaken?"

"Chut!" I ejaculated, cooling on the instant. "I beg your pardon. Sit down, sir. You're hungry, of course. How stupid of me!—Cobweb, my dear, order some lunch into the dining room."

He smiled, returned the pressure of my hand in a frank, honest way that I liked, and then looked after my darling in a way that I did not like; for this was not what I meant, and my jealousy was aroused. I expected some snuffy-looking old painter, not a grave, handsome young fellow. But I remembered Tom Elden's words—"He is a gentleman and a man of honor"—and, casting away my suspicious thoughts, I entered into the subject at once.

"I'd half forgotten it," I said. "She'll make a good picture, eh?"

"Admirable, sir. That position struck me at once as I entered."

"I'll show you a better one than that, my boy," I chuckled. "But I'm a business man; what's your figure—the price, eh?"

He hesitated, and his hand trembled as he said:

"Would—fifteen guineas be too much?"

"Fifteen!" I said.

"I should take great pains with it—it will be a long task," he said, eagerly; and there was trouble in the wrinkles of his forehead. "But if you think it too much—"

"I think it is an absurd price, sir," I said, testily, for Elden had said he was very poor. "Why, Mr. Elden gave four hundred for a bit of a scrap of canvas—"

"By a very clever artist, sir," he said, with a grave smile.

"Look here," I said, "Mr.—Mr.—Grantley. You make a good picture of it and I'll give you fifty guineas."

He flushed, and looked pained.

"Less than half would pay me well, sir," he said.

"Tut, tut! stuff, man! Elden told me you were very poor and hard up. You always will be if you are not more of a man of business."

"Sir!" he exclaimed, rising and looking at me angrily, "I came here expecting the treatment—"

He stopped short, sank into a chair, covered his face with his hands and sobbed like a child.

"My dear sir—I—really—I—I didn't mean—" I stammered, perspiring at every pore, for the position was most painful.

"No, no," he said, hastily, "I beg your pardon. But—but," he continued, striving manfully to master his emotion, "I have been very ill, sir, and I am weak. I have been unfortunate—almost starving at times. I have not broken bread since yesterday morning—I could not without selling my colors. I—I am much obliged—forgive me—let me go back to town. Oh, my God! has it come to this?"

He sank back, half fainting, but started as I roared out: "Go away!" for Cobweb was coming into the room.

"Thank you," he said, taking my hand as he saw what I had done. "It was kind of you."

"My dear fellow," I said, "this is terrible;" and I mopped my face. "There, sit still—back directly.

I ran out to find Cobweb in the hall.

"Oh, you dear, good father!" she cried, with tears in her eyes. "What a kind surprise! But is anything wrong?"

"Artist little faint," I said. "Here, the biscuits. Stop away a bit."

I ran back, and made him take some refreshments; and, thus revived, he rose and thanked me.

"What are you going to do?" I said, starting.

"I'm going back to town, sir," he said quietly, but with his lower lip trembling. "I am not fit to undertake the task. I thank you, but it is too late. I am not well."

I looked at him as a business man, and in that brief glance, as in a revelation, I saw the struggles of a poor, proud man of genius, who could not battle with the world. I saw the man who had sold, bit by bit, everything he owned in his struggle for daily bread; and as I looked at him I felt ashamed that I should be so rich, and fat, and well.

"Mr. Grantley," I said, taking his hand, "I am a rough man, and spoiled by bullying people, and having my own way. I beg you pardon for what I have said and am going to say. You came down here, sir, to paint my little girl's portrait, and you are going to paint it before you go back to town; and when you do go you are to have fifty guineas in your pocket. Hush! not a word, sir. My old friend Eden told me that you were a gentleman and a man of honor. Tom Elden is never deceived. Now, sir, please come into the dining-room and have some lunch. Not a word, please. If good food won't bring you round, you shall have the doctor; for, as the police say," I continued, laughing, "'you're my prisoner'—but on parole."

He tried to speak, but could not, and turned away.

"All right," I said, "all right;" and I patted him on the shoulder, and walked away to the window for a few minutes, before I turned back to find him more composed.

That afternoon we all three went out into the wood, and I made Cobweb stand as I had seen her on that day.

Grantley was delighted, and insisted upon making a sketch at once; and then the days were on, with the painting progressing slowly, but in a way that was a wonder to me, so exquisite was every touch, for the artist's whole soul was in his work.

Those were delightful days, but there was a storm coming. I quite took to the young fellow, though, and by degrees heard from him his whole story—how, young and eager, he had, five years before, come to town to improve in his art, and how bitter had been his struggle, till, just before he had encountered my friend Elden, he had been really, literally dying of sickness and want.

It was a happy time, that, for when the painting was over for the morning we gardened, or strolled in the country—our new friend being an accomplished botanist, and a lover of every object he saw. I used to wonder how he learned so much, and found time to paint as well.

I say it was a happy time for the first three weeks, and then there were clouds.

Cobweb was changed. I knew it but too well. I could see it day by day. Grantly was growing distant, too, and strange, and my suspicions grew hour by hour, till I was only kept from breaking out by the recollection of Tom Elden's words—"He is a gentleman and a man of honor,"

"Tom Elden never was wrong," I said one morning, as I sat alone, "and for a man like that, after my kindness, to take advantage of his position to win that girl's love from me, would be the act of the greatest scoun—"

"May I come in Mr. Burrows?" said the voice of the man of whom I was thinking.

"Yes, come in," I said; and there we stood looking in one another's eyes.

"He's come to speak to me," I said, and my heart grew very cold, but I concealed my feelings till he spoke, and then I was astounded.

"Mr. Burrows," he said, "I've come to say good-bye."

"Good-bye," I said.

"Yes, sir, good-bye. I have wakened from a dream of happiness to a sense of misery of which I cannot speak. Let me be brief, sir, and tell you that I shall never forget your kindness."

"But you haven't finished the picture."

"No, sir, and never shall, he said, bitterly. "Mr. Burrows, I cannot stay. I—that is—I need not be ashamed to own it, I love your child with all my heart."

"I knew it," I said, bitterly.

"And you think I have imposed on your kindness. No, sir, I have not, for I have never shown by word or look——"

"No, you scoundrel," I said to myself, "but she knows it all the same."

"And, sir, such a dream as mine could never be fulfilled—it is impossible."

"Yes," I said, in a cold, hard voice, "it is impossible."

"God bless you, sir! good-bye."

"You will not say good-bye to her?" I said, harshly.

He shook his head, and as I stood there, hard, selfish and jealous of him, I saw him go down the path, and I breathed more freely, for he was gone.

Gone, but there was a shadow on my home. Cobweb said not a word, and expressed no surprise, never even referring to the picture, but wept about the house slowly, drooping day after day, month after month, till the summer came round again, and I knew that in my jealous selfishness I was breaking her young heart.

She never complained, and was as loving as ever; but my little Cobweb was broken, and the tears spangled it like the dew whenever it was alone.

It was as nearly as could be a year after, that I, feeling ten years older, went to seek her one afternoon, and found her as I expected in the little wood, standing dreamy and in her old position leaning upon a tree, listening to no bird-song now, but with a far-off longing look in her eyes, that swept away the last selfish thought from my heart.

I did not let her see me, but went straight up to Elden's, learned what I wanted, and a short time after I was in a handsome studio in St. John's Wood, staring at the finished picture of my child—painted, of course, from memory—framed, against the wall.

As I stood there I heard the door open, and turning stood face to face with Grantley.

We looked into each other's eyes for a few moments without speaking, and then in a trembling, broken voice I said:

"Grantley, I've come as a beggar now. My poor darling—God forgive me! I've broken her heart!"

It was my turn to sit down and cry like a child, while my dear boy tried to comfort me—telling me, too, with pride how he had worked and become famous, and in a few more months had meant to come down and ask my consent.

But there, I'm mixing it up. Of course he told me that as we were rushing along, having just had time to catch the express; and on reaching the station there was no conveyance, and we had to walk.

The scoundrel would not wait, but ran on without me, and when I got there, panting and hot, I found my darling's heart was mended with all of that belonging to the good man from whose arms she ran to hide her rosy blushes on my breast.

I'm not the selfish old fellow that I was about Cobweb, for here in the old place, where they've let me stay with them, I pass my time with those two flossy-haired little tyrants, Cobweb the Second and the Spider, as we call little Frank. As for Cobweb the Second, aged two, she said to me this morning, with her tiny arms round my neck, and her soft cherub-cheek against mine: "Oh, gan'pa, dear, I do yove oo!" as I love her with all my selfish heart.

The Squire's Umbrella.

"Len' me yer umbrella a minit!"

Such was the exclamation of Jones as he rushed into the office of Squire Lickshingle yesterday.

"Certainly, certainly!" said the squire, laying down his newspaper and taking a fresh chew of fine-cut, "glad to accommodate you," and he opened a drawer in his desk and began rummaging through his legal forms and blanks.

Jones darted into the corner, seized the green gingham relic, and was preparing to fly with it.

"Stop, stop, stop!" said the squire, raising his hand majestically; "not too fast, young man. Wait till I have made out the necessary papers."

Jones dropped the umbrella. On his corn, of course. After pumping his lame foot up and down, and tying a hard knot in his countenance, and undoing it again, he echoed:

"The necessary papers!"

"Yes," said the squire sternly, "the necessary papers," and he continued his search among the blanks.

As Jones read the paper, his knees knocked together. It was a mortgage on his house and lot as security that he would return the umbrella in good order within fifteen minutes. He faltered:

"Wh-why, squire, I only want to borrow your umbrella to run across the street with. I'll fetch it back in two seconds."

The squire shoved his spectacles up over his bald spot until they formed two sky-lights in his intellectual roof, and looking Jones full in the face, said:

"You only want to run across the street. You'll return it in two seconds. Young man, that's what they all say. I have lived a long time. I have accumulated a fortune. Why? For the simple reason that I have not spent my substance in buying umbrellas. That umbrella which you hold in your hand is certainly not of uncommon beauty, nor is it of great value. It is simply a gingham umbrella. A green one, at that. But it answers the purpose for which, etc. I have had it since I was a boy. Because no man, neither the son of man, has ever taken it beyond the range of my vision without signing over his estate that he would return it in good condition. It may not seem neighborly, but it's business. Here is the mortgage; there is the umbrella; without beats the rain of heaven. You have your choice," and the old man resumed his newspaper.

Jones thought of his wife and babies and the pleasant home that was all his own. Then he looked at the rain that was pounding at the doors and windows, as if to get in out of the wet. A glance at his new overcoat, and Jones was decided.

"I'll risk it," he said, and, stepping to the desk with measured tread and slow, he clapped his name to the mortgage, and was off with the umbrella.—*Oil City Derrick.*

Ploughing the Bed of the Ocean.

During the past summer we witnessed deep-sea ploughing in the harbor of Belfast, Maine. The bottom of the bay is covered with a tenacious, clayey deposit, into which the steam shovel penetrates with difficulty; and to loosen it a huge Michigan plough was set at work under the water, drawn by steam power on the shore, using a wire rope to form connections. The water at high tide was about twenty feet deep when the plough was working. The man that held it was encased in the diver's armor, and supplied with air by a flexible tube connecting with an air-pump on board of a vessel floating above. He came up at our request, and after removing his air-tight helmet and conversing a few moments, was again put in connection with the pump, and disappearing under water, went on with the ploughing. This to us was a novel proceeding, and so far as we can learn, it was the first experiment of the kind ever made.—*Boston Journal of Chemistry.*

Wifely Obedience.

The late Chief Justice Chase's mother once bore her part in a little comedy which was almost Shakespearian. With her husband she was visiting two of his brothers who were also married. The three gentlemen, sitting and talking together, made some playful wagers on the subject of the temper of their wives, and agreed to test them. So, walking into the room where the three ladies were sitting by the fireside making caps, which at that time were very fashionable, the trial began. The first brother, after some slighting remarks concerning caps in general and his wife's handiwork in particular, commanded her to throw it into the fire. Naturally the indignant lady paid small attention to the order. The next brother's attempt met with similar success. But no sooner did the chief justice's father command his wife to toss her cap into the fire than the cap went into the flames, and that in the most prompt, sweet and serene manner.

Items of Interest.

"Trefoldigahkirken" is the name of a church in Sioux City.

The temperance folk of Yarmouth, N. S., a few days ago, attended a sale at the custom-house, bought up all the liquor and emptied it into the sewers.

"A polite man," said the Duc de Morny, "is one who listens with interest to things he knows all about when they are told him by a person who knows nothing about them."

Gale, the English long-distance pedestrian, has obtained such complete mastery over his physical powers that he sleeps occasionally while walking. Medical evidence has been taken on this point, and the fact is beyond a doubt.

The Anti-Horse-Thief Association has 361 lodges and 8,000 members in Missouri, Iowa and Illinois. It does not encourage lynching, although that course is permitted in places where the officers of the law cannot be relied on to prosecute thieves.

ON A RECENT SAD EVENT.

"I am dying, Darwin, dying!"
Said old Pongo at the last.
"You are ill, eh, my gorrilla?"
Uttered Darwin, half aghast.
"Yes, I'm ill, eh, your gorilla,
I am dying—yes—I think,"
Groaned old Pongo, then departed
Like a good old missing link.

Sweden does an enormous business in lucifer matches. The largest establishment is at Jonkoping. It was founded in 1845, and in 1872 employed 250 men, 849 women, 105 boys and 141 girls. About four-fifths of the production, which steadily increases, are exported. The chemicals used mostly come from England.

Official reports state that there are 84,000 buildings in New York city. There are 198 houses arranged as "French flats," 172 hotels, sixty-six hospitals and asylums, twenty-nine theatres and eleven markets. The number of dwelling-houses is 67,156. The annual average number of new buildings for the last twelve years is 1,585.

A little five-year old could not quite understand why the stars did not shine one night when the rain was pouring down in torrents. She stood at the window pondering on the subject with as much gravity as Galileo when he looked at the swinging lamp in the cathedral of Pisa, and with equal success, for all at once her countenance lighted up, and she said: "Mother, I know why the stars don't shine. God has pulled them all up so as to let the water come through the holes."

According to the correspondence of the Washington *Capital* the wife of a New York banker appeared the other evening at a party as Capital. The dress was covered on the skirt, so as to make it appear one piece, with one hundred and five-hundred dollar bills. The waist and sleeves were $1,000 bonds sewed in, and her fingers and ears blazed with diamonds. The tiara was said to have been worth $80,000, and the total value of the notes and diamonds on her person was $260,000. Two pages carried her train, and watched lest the jewels and greenbacks should fall to the floor.

At a fire in the convent at Limoges, France, on Nov. 19, 1838, it was suddenly discovered that one of the children of the girls' school there had not been rescued. She was in a distant room, and doubts were expressed of the ability to save her. A young lady said: "I will try," and rushed between the flames on each side of the entrance. She was regarded as lost, but finally appeared with the child in her arms. King Louis Philippe sent her a gold medal, and a young captain in the army, who witnessed her act, married her. The captain is now president of the French republic, and the lady is Mme. MacMahon.

The First Ulster.

Donizetti, the composer, was really the first inventor of the ulster. One day, at Paris, he sent for his tailor to measure him for an overcoat. The tailor found him at the piano, surrendering himself to the rapture of composition. Nevertheless, he was persuaded to quit the beloved instrument, and deliver himself up to the man of tape and chalk. The tailor made the first measurements, then, stooping, began to take the length of the garment.

"To the knee, sir?" he said, timidly.

"Lower, lower," said the composer, in a dreamy voice.

The tailor brought the measure halfway down the leg, and paused inquiringly.

"Lower, lower."

The tailor reached the composer's ankles.

"Lower, lower."

"But, sir, you won't be able to walk."

"Walk? Walk? Who wants to walk? Why, sir (with an ecstatic lifting of the arms), I never walk—I soar."

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