

"A STRAW TELLS HOW THE RIVER FLOWS."

BY L. W. THIRLWALL.

Some read the stars that gild the sky,
Foretell the coming storms and wind,
Their charms are broken when they try
To read angelic woman's mind.

A straw tells how the river flows,
A feather how the light wind blows,
But none so subtle as to find
A test so sure for woman's mind.

And now the enchanting prize seems won,
She charms and chains one with a smile,
Its light divine outshines the sun,
What craven heart could dream of gulle?

A straw tells how the river flows,
A feather how the light wind blows,
But none so subtle as to find,
A test so sure for woman's mind.

The sunset streaming o'er the sea
Both turn each wave to living gold,
So radiant is her smile to me,
Her heart like the deep waters, cold.
A straw tells how the river flows,
A feather how the light wind blows,
But none so subtle as to find,
A test so sure for woman's mind.

For the Favorite.

A GREAT MISTAKE.

BY MRS. C. CHANDLER,
OF MONTREAL.

"I must take charge of the baby for you, Matilda," I said to my wife; not that I had ever any experience in the way of nursing, or that I particularly appreciated infants, albeit they might be my own; but the reasons for my making such an offer as I have mentioned, were these: My wife had just received a note saying that her mother was seriously ill; and begged her to come to her, without delay. Here was a dilemma. Master Tommy, our baby, had a severe cold, and could not be taken out; and we had no girl at present.

We had always kept one since this said baby's advent, which was some eight months before; but my wife had been rather unfortunate in her selections; for, after innumerable changes, the last girl thought proper to help herself to a few teaspoons and some other little valuables, (by way of keepsakes, perhaps,) and left one night without bidding us adieu, and has never been heard of since.

My wife then determined to nurse baby herself; but that arrangement was not the most comfortable one, as it proved (at least to me) this day.

Unfortunately, I was at home. I did not feel well, so had not gone to business as usual. My wife's perplexity was very great when she got the note.

"What shall I do, what shall I do?" she cried, wringing her hands. "I must go to mamma, yet I cannot take baby;" she did not like to ask me to take care of him, knowing that from his birth I had scarcely ever taken him in my arms, and then tears came stealing down her cheeks.

At the sight of her distress, I began to think how I could help her; there seemed but one course, and in a moment of sympathetic excitement I said,

"I must take charge of the baby for you, Matilda."

The little woman jumped up, in an ecstasy of relief, and throwing her arms around me, actually kissed me in the exuberance of her gratitude.

"He will not give you much trouble, Harry; he is such a good baby, and seldom cries."

I thought my wife made a little mistake in the last assertion, but I did not like to contradict her.

"You will find the milk in the cupboard," she continued. "When he awakens pour some into a saucer, and warm it; his feeding-boat you will find in the cupboard also."

These directions were given hurriedly, while my wife was arranging her bonnet and cloak; then bidding me good-bye, and smothering baby with kisses, which it was wonderful did not disturb him, she tripped away to catch the cars which were then passing.

As soon as I was alone, I sat down in my easy-chair near the fire, for it was a chilly day, hoping to enjoy a good spell of quiet reading, forgetting the great responsibility I had undertaken. Vain were my hopes: in about half an hour I heard a wail proceed from the cradle in the adjoining room. I took no heed of it at first, when a shrill cry made me leap from my chair as if I had been shot.

I rushed to the cradle. I found all right, so I supposed the scream only meant a call for his nurse. Obeying directions I poured out the milk and put it to warm, then returned to the cradle, whose occupant was now roaring lustily. I dragged up the cushion, by an arm and a leg, for I could not contrive to get him out otherwise; I arranged the little scamp flat on his back in my arms and tucked a towel around his throat, as I had seen his mother do. As it would not stay, I pinned it behind his

neck, for I was wishful of carrying out my nurseship correctly; as I poured the milk which I had put into the boat, into its mouth, it gave a terrific cry, and nearly plunged itself head foremost on the floor.

"What is the matter with the little creature," I thought. I tasted the milk; Heaven! it was almost at boiling heat; I had scalded the poor baby. I snatched it up, and ran to the water-pug, poured out some water, and forced it into its mouth to cool it; but it spluttered and roared, and finally nearly strangled. I blew in its face frantically and it soon recovered. After a few moments I tried to persuade it to take some milk which was now cool, but that was out of the question; it closed its tiny lips most determinedly, and threw itself back in my arms—the old proverb, of a burnt child, &c., was now verified.

As I saw that I could not have any effect in quieting it, I carried it back and tossed it in the cradle.

"Not a bit of it," said my youngster, for he commenced to yell and kick as before.

"I'll leave you to yourself my young scamp," I murmured; so, gathering up my books I went to a room a little further removed from the noise, as my head ached sadly. But it was useless, for the cries of my tormentor became louder and louder, until at last they became like Indian war whoops, for to nothing else could I liken them.

I again rushed to the cradle, the beads of cold perspiration gathering on my forehead from excessive terror. I feared it would go into convulsions, and I pictured to myself the grief of his mother when she returned and found her darling stiff and cold. I took it up again and tried further persuasions about its drinking some milk, for I knew it must be hungry. Nothing I could do would induce the little monster to taste a drop. I tried force, but it only aggravated the little demon to shriek a little louder. I felt almost losing my senses. I was sure that instead of being better, and going to business next day, I should have a brain fever. I now tried to amuse it, and I ran about singing, capering and performing other antics; for a few seconds, it hushed, then came again the ear-torturing peals. Oh, the horror of those hours! In sheer despair I threw the wretch, as I termed it in my heart, into its cot again. I then took a seat near it and looked at it.

Realities seemed to fade away and I felt in a light-mare, and thought I was in one of those enchanted castles that I used to read of when a boy, mocked by a demon as a punishment. On—on, went the unearthly shrieks. I feared every moment to see it expire. If I had known my neighbors I should have asked their assistance; but I did not like to expose my troubles to be laughed at by strangers; so, I tried to be resigned, hoping that an end would soon come in some way.

I rocked the cradle; more terrific the cries. I tore my hair with vexation. "Henry Tharnton," I said to myself, "what evil genius ever induced you to say those words to your wife, 'I take charge of a baby!'"

Yes! one might do that, but my baby had town and a demon possessed its place. Once more was the milk tried and failed. I made up my mind to interfere no more with the little imp, until his mother came back.

I took up a book and tried to read, but found it an impossibility. I have gone through many scenes since then, but never have my nerves been so tried as on that unlucky day. I would sooner have been left in charge of a tiger for I would have defended myself; but what could I do with a baby. I could not possibly say how long my sufferings lasted, for the screams at last became quite narcotic in their effects, and I went off into a kind of stupor.

I was aroused by the voice of my wife. She called, for she had taken a latch-key and did not knock.

"I have come back sooner than I expected, Harry, for mamma was not as ill as she thought. I hope baby has behaved well, my little angel, darling."

"Angel indeed," I thought, "rather demon." "Why, what is the matter, Harry, he is sobbing in his sleep, and his face is red and swollen?"

"Oh, he missed you, my love, and would not take his milk, and cried a little." I was sorry at the white lie, but I did not wish to grieve my wife by telling her the truth.

The baby soon awoke, the demon was exorcised at its mother's presence, and it was a pretty, smiling baby again. My wife took it up. "Why, Harry, what did you leave this great owl around it for, with such a big pin sticking in it; it is a wonder it did not prick it. I hope it was not crutched much?"

My wife did not look at me when she asked me a question, or she would surely have seen guilt in my countenance; it now gleamed on my mind for the first time that, perhaps, the poor little mortal had been indeed pricked by that pin; but still I could not entirely pardon it; for babies are considered to be angelic, and his baby might have been less violent under any circumstances. I never gathered courage sufficient to tell my wife what occurred that day; but I resolved never again to take charge of a baby.

DEAR GIRL.—We met Miss Kitty—at a ball recently. After talking about the balloon ascension, the weather and other things, we asked rather abruptly: "Where is your mother?" "Oh," said the sweet damsel, "I have left her at home. I generally do when I come to a ball. What is home without a mother?"

THE CAPTAIN OF THE "NORTHFLEET."

BY GERALD MASSEY.

So often is the proud deed done
By men like this at Duty's call;
So many are the honors won
By them, we cannot wear them all!

They make the heroic commonplace,
And dying thus the natural way;
It is our world-wide English race
Ennobled by that death, To-day!

It brings the thoughts that fathom things
To anchor fast where billows roll;
It stirs us with a sense of wings
That strive to lift the earthiest soul.

Love was so new, and life so sweet,
But at the call he left the wine
And sprang full-statured to his feet.
Responsive to the touch divine.

Nay, dear, I cannot see you die.
For me, I have my work to do
(Up here. Down to the boat. Good-bye,
God bless you. I shall see it through.)

We read, until the vision dims
And drowns; but, ere the pang he past,
A tide of triumph overbrims
And breaks with light from heaven at last.

Thro' all the blackness of that night
A glory streams from out the gloom;
His steadfast spirit holds the light
That shines till Night is overcome.

The sea will do its worst, and life
Be sobbed out in a bubbling breath;
But firmly in the coward strife
There stands a man who hath vanquish'd
Death!

A soul that conquers wind and wave,
And towers above a sinking deck;
A bridge across the gaping grave;
A rainbow rising o'er the wreck.

He saved others; saved the name
Unscull'd that he gave his wife;
And dying with so pure an aim,
He had no need to save his life.

Lord! how they smote the life we live,
These sailors of our sea-girt isle,
Who cheerily take what Thou mayst give,
And go down with a heavenward smile!

The men who sow their lives to yield
A glorious crop in lives to be;
Who turn to England's harvest-field
The unfruitful furrows of the sea.

With such a breed of men so brave,
The Old Land has not had her day;
But long, her strength, with crested waves,
Shall ride the seas, the proud old way.

COLORADO BILL.

BY HARRY WARING.

"HURRAH! Come here, Bill, if you want to to your eyes good!"

The speaker, handsome and manly-looking, in spite of the yellow clay-streaks adhering to his bronzed face and long flaxen beard, clambered up from the trench in which he had been digging, and leaning on his pick, awaited an answer to his call.

It seemed as if his words were uttered to the winds, and that no one but himself was the tenant of that lonely valley, which stretched from a northern fork of the Sacramento far into the fastnesses of the giant Sierra Nevadas.

On repeating his call, a swarthy but cheerful countenance, surmounted by a rusty felt hat, emerged from the edge of another trench some little distance off, and a pair of light brown eyes peered cautiously over the mound of dirt.

"Haug it, George, what on earth do you mean bringing a fellow up to the top of his hole in this style? When I heard you call, I thought it was nothing less than Injuns or claim-jumpers. It's not so easy shinning up wet clay with nothing to hold on by except your nails; so say what's troubling you, old fellow, and I'll save ix feet of climbing by staying where I am."

He glanced at George, who still rested on his sick, and saw that his comrade's usually calm countenance was working with a strong nervous excitement he vainly endeavored to control. Struck by the change, the tall miner fairly leaped over the dirt-hill surrounding his trench, and in another moment was by his friend's side. The latter silently pointed to his own excavation, down which Bill eagerly gazed, and there saw a hollow recently filled by an up-turned boulder, but now disclosing numerous nuggets of a dull yellow metal.

"A gold pocket, by Jove!" he shouted, frantically embracing his partner. "There's the end of our toil at last. Why, George, that's fortune, fame, everything!"

"It may be to you, Bill; to me it has but one meaning, and that's—Nellie."

George Hanson, the last speaker, had left New York nearly a year before with his young wife, hoping to find in San Francisco the employment that dull times and filled positions denied him in the former city. Some time previous to his departure he had secretly married Nellie White, a beautiful and spoiled daughter of a wealthy family. When the young couple

presented themselves before him announcing their union coldly shut the door in their faces, with the declaration, "That as it had seemed proper for them to take such a step without any consultation with him, he would leave them to act with similar independence for the rest of their lives." All their entreaties could not shake the old man's stern resolution. George was at once dismissed from his situation; and after vainly endeavoring to obtain another, he sold a small farm he had lately fallen heir to, and with the proceeds started with his wife for California.

On his arrival he found to his dismay that all the avenues to remunerative employment were more completely filled than in New York; and after recognizing a preacher who once enjoyed some celebrity in that city in the act of wheeling a barrow full of bricks along the walls of a new building, followed by a well-known Philadelphia lawyer staggering under a hod of mortar, he concluded that his own capital, a somewhat superficial knowledge of book-keeping, was decidedly at a discount, and that he would have no harder work, with a prospect of more success, in the rôle of an honest miner.

Nellie, too, seemed so discontented of a selfish and luxurious nature, accustomed to every enjoyment in her father's house, where her lightest whim had been a law, she was tired of this hand-to-mouth mode of living, and despised the rigid economy which George was fully forced to exercise. She longed again for the gay dresses, the round of pleasure and excitement, that she now began to think she had foolishly given up. George's sad countenance and despondent forebodings were wearisome to her; and when at last he rented two small but cosy rooms in a pretty little house overlooking the bay, and, giving her nearly all the remainder of his small means, told her to be a good girl for the next six months, the selfish woman, though secretly delighted, was for a brief space moved to tenderness, and actually shed a few tears, which he devoutly kissed away, and departed with the resolve that he would win fortune for the dear girl who thus mourned his absence.

To him she was the same loving woman who had given up all to share his lot. Trusting her thoroughly, he had seen no change, nor did he know how day by day she grew disgusted with the plain matter-of-fact poverty she had wedded, forgetting the strong affection that would dare danger and death for her sake.

Not many of the few females then in San Francisco were suitable intimates for a young and friendly woman, and even the two or three which George countenanced as friends were frivolous, unprincipled women, concealing their real character under a lady-like appearance and some little refinement of manner—dangerous companions for a young girl, and more dangerous for a wife who had begun to weary of her husband.

Yet George Hanson recked little of this on that bright morning when he left his house for the Sacramento steamboat wharf. Although he had bidden her good-bye, he could not resist turning for a last look at the beautiful picture she was leaving. Nellie sat at the window, her abundant flaxen hair waving in natural ringlets over her shapely shoulders. Her lovely eyes, blue as the ethereal expanse above, glanced lovingly and lovingly toward her husband, who left a momentary pang in leaving so much beauty alone and unprotected in a city which even then was a by-word among men for lawlessness and vice.

"Still, she loves me," he thought, "and that will keep her from every temptation."

He looked again before turning the corner. Again the same picture of girlish innocence and beauty. She kissed her finger-tips. He waved an answering signal. How often afterward, when nearly exhausted with travel or worn out under a hot sun while toiling in the reeking pit, did he remember that last look and gain renewed strength for his labor!

For George fondly loved his wife, imagining that her foibles were the mere whimsicalities of a child deprived for the time of its accustomed plaything, and he hoped that the acquisition of wealth would cure her fretfulness, and make her once more the affectionate girl he had wooed and won. He forgot that the love which requires to be thus bought is never worth the price.

He pushed up the river, with no definite purpose as to the manner in which his dreams of riches were to be realized. When he reached Sacramento City, he did what he saw the other miners around him doing. Having purchased his mule and equipments—a small canvas tent and mining utensils—he followed the daily procession trailing across the plains in search of the El Dorado which was to renew his youthful dreams.

From the far-off hills of the Nevada every wind that blew toward the Pacific was laden with rumors of new gold discoveries, until men began to believe that the upper canyons of the Sacramento and American Rivers were the source of the golden fountains whose sands had been so thoroughly sifted on the alluvial plains below. It was whispered around that men whom none would hitherto trust for the bare necessities of life were scattering gold with a lavish hand. As it to confirm all these reports, from time to time some stalwart borderer would lead his horse, jaded with long journeying and staggering under a heavy pack-saddle, through the embryo city's streets, revolver in hand, and two or three of the same guardian weapons protruding from his rude belt. It mattered little if the swarthy stranger's gold disappeared like dew before the sun beneath the melting