

POETRY.

A LITTLE WHILE.

'Tis such a little while we walk together
Along life's way.
Some weary feet that march beside us
Falter.

Each passing day.
Dear friends that greet us in the morning
Vanish.
Ere it is noon,
And tender voices melt away in silence
A broken tune.

SELECT STORY.

MISS MIDDLETON'S LOVER.

PARSED ON THEIR BRIDAL TOUR.

By the author of "A Fatal Marriage"
and "That Pretty Young Girl," etc.

CHAPTER I.

A CITY IN THE SOUTH.
He was young, handsome, clever, gay,
polished,—the last man in the world
who would ever have suspected of being
the hero of a mystery.

When he suddenly shut himself up
alone in his beautiful home, dismissing
all his servants save two old and faithful
ones who swore solemn allegiance to him
in life or in death,—refusing his best
friends admittance under any condition,
no wonder his unaccountable conduct
gave rise to strange rumors,—but, if they
reached his ears he heeded them not.

What mattered it to him, whose soul
was torn with the cruellest emotions, what
the censorious world thought or did.
If he paced the floor in the wildest
despair for days and nights at a time, until
at last exhausted nature forced him into
a few brief hours of forgetfulness,—it was
his own affair, he told himself, he cared
nothing for the world's opinion.

There was one room in the isolated
gloomy mansion into which no one was
ever allowed to enter—not even the ser-
vants. The silken curtains were kept
carefully drawn night and day; the door
had been securely fastened and the key
thrown away. When it was forced open
in after years, dust lay thick on the
book-cases, the velvet chairs and moulding
green carpet.

Several costly paintings hung here
and there about the apartment, and those
who entered, noticed that one of them was
turned with its face toward the wall,—
righting it, they found it was the portrait
of a young and marvellously beautiful
woman.

looked so badly in all my life, and before
such a demurely charming girl too."
Then he recalled his scattered senses, re-
membering she had not as yet stated the
object of her visit.

"Is there anything I can do for you
Miss?" he repeated.
The great dark eyes glanced around at
the man from safe behind the walls
and stood about the room, and a peculiar
expression flitted over her face.

"I must get the safe open for my uncle
at once," she faltered, in a voice so musical
and so sweetly pathetic, that the young man
said, "I will do it for you, Miss."
Emmond looked at the young girl
aghost.

"My dear young lady," he responded,
as soon as he was sufficiently recovered
from the astonishment to reply, "I will
take great pleasure in attending to the
matter, the first thing in the morning if
you will leave your address, as for attend-
ing to it to-night—it is practically impos-
sible; the men we have here for such
work have gone home. It is by the
merest chance I am here to-night and you
find the place open."

"The safe must be opened at once,"
she exclaimed, "I have a letter in it, and
I must have it."
That settled the matter; Emmond would
have gone through fire and water for just
such another glance from those dark
starry eyes.

"It is really an unheard-of procedure at
this hour," he stammered, blushing deeply,
"but if it is such a matter of great
importance, and it will be of any benefit
to you, I place myself at your service,
Miss." Nothing was the rare beauty of
that face could have influenced him
against his better judgment to comply
with so strange a request. He could not
distinguish the young man's reply.

In a moment he had gathered the
necessary implements together, smiling
amusedly the while, as he wondered what
his friends would think if they knew that
he, Frederick Emmond, the wealthy owner
of the widely known safe and lock fac-
tory—with an income of £50,000 per
annum—was thanking fate for the oppor-
tunity that would permit him to step
into the place of one of his workmen, to
toll for long hours at the opening of a
safe, meant to gratify a young and ex-
ceedingly lovely girl.

white, shapely blistered hands that had
wielded the steel drill and file for two
long hours, "and all to please an un-
reasonable whim of a beautiful young girl,
too coldly proud to look into my face or
answer my questions, but looked instead
into vacancy over my head?"

All that night the lovely face with its
dark, bright eyes floated before Emmond's
mental vision.
"Was it late when he reached his office
the next morning; the secretary, foreman,
and a group of men were discussing an
item in the morning paper as he entered.
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the next morning; the secretary, foreman,
and a group of men were discussing an
item in the morning paper as he entered."

"The banker was found dead, lying in
a pool of blood close by the safe, and as
near as I can make it out he must have
surprised the robber in opening the safe,
and got shot down. I haven't finished the
article, yet, sir."
Emmond sunk down with a gasp of hor-
ror on the nearest seat, his face flushing
and paling, the veins standing out like
whip-cords on his face and neck.
It seemed to him he was stifling, choking.
He rose abruptly and left the office with
unsteady steps.

"My God!" he cried, hoarsely, when
he had gained the street. Robbery!
murder! And I have been the dupe, the
tool to further this most infamous scheme.
The last one course to pursue, "he re-
minded, his face pale as death, "and that
is to go before the Police Inspector at
once and make a clean breast of the
whole affair. Surely no man ever yet had
such a strange story to relate."

Then his mind reverted to the young
girl who had led him into this unenviable
predicament. It was clearly his duty to
bring her to justice, point her out to the
minions of the law.
It was a great shock to him that she,
with the face of an angel, was base at
heart. Of course she was some outsider
who, knowing in some way of the money
placed that night in the banker's safe,
had devised this daring and most ingenu-
ous manner of obtaining it.

A few moments' silent walking
brought him to the Inspector's office. He
paused a moment, with his foot on the
stone steps.
Then commenced a strange war of con-
tending emotions in his heart between
duty, and an unconquerable, morbid de-
sire to screen this girl even in the face of
this atrocious crime.
It would be absurd to say that he had
fallen in love with this girl whom he had
seen only a few moments, he told him-
self, and yet he could not account for the
fascination she had for him. He wished
he could doubt the evidence of his own
knowledge. Should he solve the great
mystery that had started all London, or
remain silent and let her go free, a
wicked, freedom-loving girl, who must
expect that he would do this, or did
she believe for his own sake he dare not
reveal his knowledge of the affair.

For himself, Frederick Emmond had
no fears, his own excellent reputation would
sustain him, and an unconquerable, morbid
desire, thinking of her, knowing that he
held the fate of this beautiful girl in his
hands to decide.

the expression of the eyes was different.
He could not probe the mystery of the
sudden change.
Her eyes almost soon turned upon him-
self, of course, the recognition would be
instantaneous; what would happen then?
Even as the thought flashed through
his mind, Rutherford turned to him say-
ing, "Miss Middleton—Mr. Emmond, pro-
prietary of the safe and lock works, Oxford
Street."

The lovely dark eyes turned full upon
him.
It was a critical moment to Emmond.
He did not start as his name was men-
tioned, or his head expected; not even the
slightest tremor was visible in the face
turned toward him so calmly.
With an easy grace and innocence of
demeanor, that fairly staggered Emmond,
the young lady acknowledged the intro-
duction, bestowing upon him scarcely
more than a passing glance, then turned
to Rutherford again.

"Does she imagine, can she imagine
that I do not remember her," he thought,
"her impatience; yet even in that
moment the girl's wonderful beauty seem-
ed to fascinate him afresh in spite of all."
"Would to Heaven I had never enter-
ed this house," he thought; yet, with a
revelation of feeling he was thankful that
he and not another, held this startling
and not another, held this startling and
girls future with one word from his lips.
With a start he recalled his wandering
thoughts sufficiently to listen to the con-
versation that was taking place between
his companion and the young lady.

"No, sir," she answered, looking
frankly up into her interlocutor's face.
"Mr. Middleton is my uncle, and you
were conversant with your uncle's
affairs I imagine. Can you tell me at
what time Mr. Middleton retired last
night, when he did upon finding the safe
open and the money gone? One of the
servants informed me you both entered
the room together."

"May I tell you in my own way?" she
asked, timidly.
"Certainly," responded Rutherford,
placing a seat for Emmond and taking one
himself.
"Mr. Middleton was my uncle, and al-
though he had lived at bitter enmity with
my father for long years, when my par-
ents died, his heart softened toward the
young man whom they had left. He sent
for me; I have lived here ever since."

"One question please, Miss Middleton,"
said Rutherford, "did the banker all
these years lead you to suppose you were
to be his heiress?"
"No, sir," she answered, looking
frankly up into her interlocutor's face.
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what time Mr. Middleton retired last
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open and the money gone? One of the
servants informed me you both entered
the room together."

"But about the money, Miss Middle-
ton," said Rutherford, intent upon lead-
ing the subject to the all-important topic
uppermost in his mind, "can you give
me any idea as to how much money the
ward of a hundred thousand
pounds in Bank of England notes," she
replied slowly. "My uncle had turned
everything save his house into cash, in-
tending to make some great investment
on the morrow."

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