POETRY.

MY MENDING BASKET.

It is made of the stoutest of willow;
It is deep and capacious and wide,
Yet the gulf stream that flows through its borders,
Seems always to stand at flood-tide!

And the garments lie heaped on each other;
I look at them often and sigh,
Shall I ever be able to grapple
With a pile that has grown two feet high?

There's a top layer, always of stockings;
These arrive and depart every day,
And the things that are playing "button button,"
Also leave without any delay.

But ah, underneath there are strata,
Buried deep as the earth's escene;
Things put there the first of the autumn,
Still there when the trees have grown green.

There are things to be ripped and made over;
There are things that gave out in their prime;
There are intricate tasks all awaiting
One magical hour of "spare time."

Will it come? Shall I ever possess it?
I start with fresh hope every day.
Like a will-o'-the-wisp it allures me;
Like a will-o'-the-wisp, fades away.

For the basket has never been empty,
During all of its burdened career,
But once, for a few fleeting moments,
When the baby upset it last year.

—Bessie Chandler, in Harper's Bazaar.

SELECT STORY.

SEVILLE TOWERS TRAGEDY.

By the author of 'The Gypsy's Revenge,' 'A Woman Scorned,' etc.

CHAPTER III.

CONTINUED.

"You know dear,"—rightly interpreting her silence; "you yourself were saying scarcely a week ago, that Nora and Gwenny must have a governess."

"But not a stranger, Lennox; nor one so young as you describe this Miss Curtis to be. Besides," hesitatingly, "I so much desired a thorough lady."

"So this Miss Curtis seems, both in appearance and speech. If you could only see her Tottie, and hear her mournful description of the family's altered circumstances since her father's death, I think you would not hesitate to help her at any rate."

"I don't doubt Miss Curtis' need, nor our desire to repay the sacrifice which proved your salvation, Lennox; I only demur over the form the payment has to take—money. An offer of the lodge which Peckham's death has vacated, seems to me a much more satisfactory arrangement, inasmuch as it includes the whole of the family. Besides, my orphaned niece, pretty Muriel Coates, can teach Gwen and Nora for awhile. She is an independent little body, and may prove awkward about accepting a yearly allowance for dress, to which she has rightly no claim; whilst if we constitute her their governess—we only want mild teaching at present, she will fancy she has earned it; and she is just the sort of soft, lovable girl, firm, yet gentle and amiable, that I should like for an example to the children. She comes next week, you know. Suppose, Lennox,"—laying her hand coaxingly on her husband's sleeve, and looking with love-lit eyes into his, "that I write to Mrs. Curtis and offer them the lodge. Baynham and wife will be disappointed, but our debt to them is not as great as to the Curtises."

Mr. Seville could not tell why he failed to join in his wife's enthusiasm over this scheme. Perhaps he had hoped to do more for a family, the head of which had, in a sense, died in his stead; but whatever he felt, he betrayed no objection to the suggestion.

So the letter was written; just the one that gladdened the heart of Mrs. Curtis to receive. Edna was furious, and unluckily, in the postscript Mrs. Seville, by some unfortunate afterthought, put—"or if you much prefer it, your youngest daughter could perhaps come and teach my children." That sentence settled the whole affair. It offered the very chance Edna had been working and longing for. She had successfully poured the idea into Mr. Seville's brain; she had descanted on it favorably from every point of view; so was it likely that, when it had all worked round as she desired, she was merely going to let it be negatived by a mother and sister whom she could work round her fingers? Not at all.

But she had harder work to gain her way than she had ever supposed likely. Mrs. Curtis really was desirous of changing the London suburbs for the quiet of a country life, the dust of town for the green fields and arching trees of her childhood; and had not Patty's entreaties been united to Edna's—Patty, who still clung to the hope that Jim Hare might return to the shelter of his first fancy, and who dared not leave his neighborhood lest she lost her every chance, the probability is that Edna would never have gone to Seville Towers, and this over-true history need never have been chronicled. But with her two children, and their inclinations pulling against her, Mrs. Curtis had at last to give way, and the letter was penned, thanking Mrs. Seville for her kindness and saying that of the two offers, the family preferred to accept the second, namely, the one that gave Edna the chance of becoming governess. Salary was delicately alluded to, but through a fear of giving a loophole of escape, the younger Miss Curtis dictated that the settlement of money could be left to the discretion of the Sevilles.

Not that she had any notion of accepting a small salary. She was about as fit to be a queen of society as she was to be a governess; but that mattered but little to her. If she could but force an entrance into Seville Towers, her poor services should be liberally paid. What was lacking, she was fully resolved, if there was any difficulty in obtaining, to help herself to—self-depreciation was not one of Edna's failings.

Mrs. Seville was greatly taken back when she received Mrs. Curtis' epistle, but it arrived at a favorable time, just after pretty Muriel Coates had gone to reside at Seville Towers. Muriel was so ready to jump up for anyone, so adaptable to circumstances, and always so cheery and bright, that instead of detracting from the home happiness, she seemed rather to add to it. If Muriel did not prove a nuisance, why should the forlorn Miss Curtis, whom Mr. Seville felt so bound to aid, and who was both young and pretty? Still, Mrs. Seville marvelled at the advantage that had been taken of her suggestion.

"I am sure Lennox," she observed, in perplexed dismay, "I did not ask for the daughter to come and teach. I said 'perhaps' we might have her. They ought not to assume so much."

"Dear Tottie" (he called her both Lottie and Tottie) "a drowning man does not hesitate to catch at a straw, and I suspect things are almost at this desperate pass with the Curtises."

"Then why not have come to the lodge, dearest Lennox? All the family would have been helped then."

"Ah! just so. I cannot reply, unless Miss Edna is much superior to the rest of the family; I fancy she must be. The other two never came near, so perhaps they can scrape on as long as she is provided for."

"But Muriel' Othello's occupation is gone."

"Most seemly that it should be. Your niece could hardly be expected to take a post that, make the best of it, is but menial. Muriel can drive out with you when the children are at lessons, help to entertain callers, write letters, and be a help in a hundred varied ways."

Mrs. Seville gave in at last, but she only gave in unwillingly; her word, not her conviction, was changed. Who can account for prevision, presentiment, or whatever we call the superstitious feeling that pervades our very being at certain epochs of our lives? We feel that such and such a step will be disastrous, we know not why; we are weighed down, as if with a burden, at the very thought.

Sometimes the after consequences prove that the warning ought to have been heeded. If we had only acted as our inward monitor advised, how far different would circumstances have coalesced for our good. It was such a prevision as this that weighed down Mrs. Seville. Why it should be so, she could scarcely tell. She supposed it to be caused by a natural disinclination to receive a stranger to be as one of the family, yet she had always known that such an event was sooner or later imminent, unless she parted with her daughters for school or taught them herself—two very improbable alternatives.

She actually once got out her writing desk, and even began a letter to Miss Edna Curtis, withdrawing her request for that young person's services in her house. Several notes were torn up. It was not easy to draw back after offering a maintenance, but she thought it ought to be done.

"Lennox must offer these Curtises money, sufficient to start them in business; it is all that can be expected," she said, aloud. "However desirous one may be to repay them, no sensible person can expect me to take a governess, without reference or position, into my family."

"Dear Aunt Tottie, what are you looking so grave about?" asked a short fairy-like girl, in soft, clinging robes of Puritan grey, as she went and threw her arms round Mrs. Seville's neck. "You might really be making your will, your face has such a stern expression on it; I am quite frightened."

"You look so Muriel," laughed Mrs. Seville, as her niece pretended to shiver. "Seriously though, I am in a perplexity, far worse than any will-making could be to me, because I have no money to bequeath. All that my grandmother left me, is settled on my children after me, without assent or dissent of mine, indissolubly, as you know."

"What is your dreadful perplexity, Aunt Tottie?"

Mrs. Seville pondered, and her brow grew very grave again.

"Suppose you owed a very great debt, Muriel—one of the greatest that it is possible to imagine, though only to strangers, and they obligated, but in the second degree, that is, through their husband and father, who unwittingly, saved your dearest and best, by happening to be going by a house at the instant that an awful death was overtaking them—do you follow me dear? I see by your face you do, and, as compensation (a way out of the obligation very objectionable to you) was considered the best means of discharging the debt, would you discharge it in that way?"

Muriel was on her knees, looking up into her aunt's face sympathetically.

"I know what you are alluding to, auntie dear; it is all about that Miss Curtis coming. I would not have her if you don't want her—not for a minute. You always judge rightly, dear Aunt Tottie, so I shall not bother. I do not see that you are indebted really to those people so much; it was quite accidental that Mr. Curtis was killed. He would not have passed by just then if he could have forseen what was going to happen, any more than Uncle Lennox would have called there. Of course you are sorry for them, as we are sorry for ourselves, but don't have anyone you don't like."

"Will you teach the children Muriel?"

"I, auntie dear? Why they would not mind me; I'm so small. Besides, I'm fearfully ignorant. Oh no; get somebody more competent than I, or you would regret it."

There was a pause; Mrs. Seville was meditating.

"I do think, though Aunt Tottie," said Muriel, slowly and diplomatically, "that it is half a pity that you don't take to the idea of this Miss Curtis. From what Uncle Lennox says, she must be very forlorn and sad, and you know you must have somebody. How would it be if you were to try her? It does not follow because she comes, that you could never get rid of her; she need not be a fixture for life. The Moseleys were for ever changing their governess. I know you don't like changes, but perhaps, for once, it might be better than seeming unkind to the daughter of uncle's deliverer. It would please Uncle Lennox too, to know that you will give this girl a trial. I suppose she must be clever, or she would not accept the situation; I know, at least, I never would."

"There is some truth in what you say Muriel. I think I will try her."

Thus the flat went forth that doomed Seville Towers; and through innocent, little Muriel's speech, who would have died sooner than brought the smallest trouble to any living creature. How much more disaster her unconscious inconscious influence was destined to bring about, and its never blotted out woe, it is the mission of this story to show.

A letter from Mrs. Seville to Miss Edna Curtis went by post that evening, and its contents were to tell her to go to Seville Towers for a month on trial. If the result was unsatisfactory, Mrs. Seville promised to find something more suitable to Miss Edna's capabilities.

Edna laughed to herself over that letter. Her future was secured. She had no intention of giving up a luxurious home for any whim of such a horridly plain, stupid woman as Mrs. Seville's portrait had portrayed her. No coercion should remove her untill she willed it. Certainly, many months would fade away before was the least probabability of her tiring. Then she might see. But one month!

"I have sent for the young lady, Lennox, as you suggested," said Mrs. Seville, as she sat by his side after late dinner. He was nearly convalescent now.

"That's right Lottie," he replied. But he spoke indifferently. With returning health, his thoughts were flying to his office. He had nearly forgotten his sympathy for that poor Miss Curtis, and even his gratitude to her family was not as deep as he had at first felt it to be.

"It is the strangest way to pay compensation for a heavy debt," she said musingly, "to make a girl governess; if——"

"She preferred that way," interrupted Mr. Seville, impatiently, as if he wished the matter to drop. "Of course it won't be sufficient. I shall send her mother a substantial cheque."

CHAPTER IV.

The station at Waycombe was always in a bustle when the trains due were expected. Not that there was the least reason, for it was the exception rather than the rule when it dropped any passengers. Mr. Seville, when in health, always availed himself of the train. His offices were at Surlby, four miles off, the nearest market town. He went at nine, and he slipped out of it by the 6.10 in the evening, but as he hurried always to his trap, rarely if ever speaking to a porter, it could scarcely be for his arrival the bustle was assumed.

One evening, when lilacs and laburnums were were in early flower, the train stopped as usual. Mr. Seville, now in much better health, got out of a first-class carriage, and the door of the compartment was opening to admit a lady. If it had not been his custom to hurry, the sight of meeting a probable neighbor would have hurried him. Mr. Seville did not care for ladies' society, save and except his wife's, and he hastened by without looking up. His peculiarity this way was known in the district, and his lack of geniality did not tell in his favor.

"Halloa, Seville, old boy! You out again," exclaimed a gentleman, emerging from a third-class carriage almost at the extreme end of the train. "Glad to see you. Wait till I get my luggage out of this confounded cramp box, and I'll introduce Rayner."

A much smaller gentleman, but equally dark as himself, followed.

"Your wife's niece and I are acquaintances," Mr. Rayner said.

"Oh, of course," said Mr. Seville hurriedly. "Muriel is partly engaged, I believe. Come along Thompson, bring Muriel's friend——"

As he spoke, a voice broke in: "Mr. Seville, please stop; I am out of breath through running after you. How am I to get to Seville Towers? Is the carriage for me——"

"Miss Cur—tis, you here!" exclaimed Mr. Seville in unfeigned and not overpleased surprise. "Does my wife expect you? She never told me, if so."

They had walked out of the station, and a man in livery, with dog-cart, was holding a restless horse.

"Mrs. Seville has not written for two days," declared Edna, bursting into artificial tears; "and my mother quarrel—rel—ed so—ab—bout kee—ping me; said I was such an expense. At last worn out, I resolved to come and se—ee if——"

"Here porter," called Mr. Seville, "a cab' That," turning to Edna, "will convey you and your luggage to Seville Towers."

"I—I have scarcely any; only a small trunk," said Edna with a becoming blush.

"There's no keb here sir," said the porter; "none nearer'n Mobb's 'Wandering Jew.'"

"What the deuce am I to do?" asked Mr. Seville perplexedly.

"Rayner and I will walk," proffered Mr. Thompson, as he looked admiringly at Edna's pretty, tear-stained face. "Its only a matter of a couple of miles or so."

"Not to be thought of. Here Brown, hand up the lady and her box, and I'll drive."

Thompson and Rayner, as they took their places at the back, nudged each other, as much as to say, 'Seville's friend, whoever she was, was uncommonly pretty, and he knew it,' but if they had seen Seville's sullen face, they would not have thought that he was at all pleased at his position. He scarcely opened his mouth during the homeward drive. Edna had the whole of the conversation, which she kept up perpetually, despite his monosyllabic replies.

"Tired, Lennox darling," exclaimed his fond wife, rushing out to meet him. But she drew back in slight embarrassment when she saw the the dog cart full.

"Miss Curtis has come," whispered her husband, before he introduced Mr. Rayner.

"But I was not expecting you, at present, Miss Curtis," said Mrs. Seville in dignified surprise. "In fact, I told you that, owing to a proposed visit to the seaside—"

"Oh please don't scold me," burst in Edna, in childish impulsiveness, "I can return again if you wish it. Only I was miserable at home, and so anxious to become acquainted with you, that I risked it."

"And now my son is gone to a school near London, Alec is in bed, and the two girls are out to tea."

"Miss Curtis will dine with us, Tottie. Come see after us all. I am as tired as I can well be, and as hungry as a hunter."

Knowing that her husband hated fuss, Mrs. Seville soon had everyone in their respective rooms. Then after embracing her husband and kissing him, undoing his boots and putting on his warmed slippers, she went herself to see after Edna's comfort.

"I scarcely think, Lennox dear, that Miss Curtis will care for dining with us," she remarked as she was leaving the room.

"Then send her meal upstairs," he said.

"I suppose we shall have to keep her in her proper position. A girl of her——"

"Fiddle position! I should say, if we have a girl here in gratitude, that we ought to make her one of ourselves. I don't like her coming as she has done; but there, she's almost obliged to I expect. We must be kind to her."

Which addendum was scarcely requisite to Mrs. Seville. Whatever she felt as to the policy of having a governess—especially under the circumstances that had brought Miss Curtis—Mrs. Seville was bound to be kind to her. But that her previous objections to engaging any lady for the office of instructress to her children on the plea of repaying a debt, in utter ignorance to her capabilities, were deepened and intensified a hundred-fold by Edna's bold course of arrival, was a fact. Yet in her consideration for sparing her husband's feelings, she would not dwell on it. She saw he was sufficiently ruffled by it himself. There was no man living, who liked things to be done right, more than did Mr. Seville.

"May I come in, Miss Curtis?" Mrs. Seville asked, at that young lady's door. After a perceptible pause, the answer came—"Yes."

Edna was standing before the glass, engaged in inserting a pretty chemisette into her dress, the sides of which she had dexteriously fastened back; and even at that moment Mrs. Seville was struck by the vivid beauty of the rose-leaf tinted cheeks and the very blue eyes.

"I am afraid you will find it very dull here," she exclaimed, impulseively—it being the one thought that entered her head as she realized the girl's prettiness. "It was a mistake to come. We should have found some other and much more suitable way of helping you."

"Mr. Seville and I decided that this plan was the best," replied Edna, pursuing her occupation and treating the lady of the house cavalierly.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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HOT.

The eye of a little Washington Miss was attracted by the sparkle of the dew at early morning.

Mamma, she exclaimed, it's hotter'n I thought it was.

What do you mean?

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WHAT EMBOLDENED HIM.

She (tenderly)—Tell me, dearest, what emboldened you to propose? How did you guess that I loved you, darling?

He—To be frank with you, love, your papa intimated that if I didn't mean business after coming to see you for two years, I had better clear out and give some other fellow a chance.

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OVERHEARD.

Elsie's afraid of growin' fat, said dear little Tommy, who was being exhibited before company.

How do you know that? asked one of the guests.

Because, replied Tommy, confidently, last night when she and Mr. Makeluv were on the piazza I heard her say: I'm afraid I'm heavy, ain't I?

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Why don't you try to paddle your own canoe, growled Brown as Jones struck him for ten. I can't, said Jones, but I am trying to float a loan.

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Quite Necessary.—Wny, Dottie, I thought you were going to be married? So I was, and the banns were put up and everything, but as we didn't get any presents we've put it off till times are better.

Mutual Friend—It really is shocking, dear, the way in which you and your husband quarrel and carry on. I wonder you don't separate from him. Injured Wife—What! go away and leave him alone to do just as he likes? Not me!

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