

FAIRY CORRESPONDENCE.

"I must write to my love," a fairy said,
As she sat in her morning bower,
Hidden away from the scorching sun,
In the midst of a myrtle flower.
"I'll write to my love, who is over the sea,
Seeking the rarest of gems for me;
I'll do it now ere the wild bee come
To disturb my thoughts with his busy hum.
First, I must gather some paper and ink
From the beds of flowers or the streamlet's brink."
And out of the myrtle flower she flew
To a shady spot where some violets grew.
"The violet's paper's too thick," said the fay,
I don't think I'll gather of that to-day."
And she winged away to a briar rose,
Whose face with perpetual blushing glows,
As if some lips had left a debt,
Which the simple flower could ne'er forget.
But the rose was not to the fairy's whim,
It was much too large and the tint too dim;
So she left it in scorn and flew away where
The jasmine sweet perfumed the air:
Where lilies, and harebells, and white hawthorn,
And flowers of all hues did the earth adorn;
But none of them pleased the particular sprite;
This was too sombre, and that too bright:
One was too coarse, and another too fine,
On that one she "couldn't have written a line."
"I know where to find some," at length she cried,
And down to the streamlet straight she hied.
There by the banks, in a mossy spot,
Grew the bright-eyed little forget-me-not.
The fairy seized on the flower in glee,
"The very one I need," said she;
"For when he sees my paper blue,
My love will know I'm ever true."
So she plucked one delicate petal, and then
Cried, "Now I must wander in search of a pen."
Just then a silver butterfly
In passing caught the fairy's eye,
With a cry of delight and an agile spring,
She softly alights on the insect's wing,
And scarcely waiting to ascertain whether
He liked it or not—she plucked thence a feather,
And, seated on the insect still,
She made for herself a tiny quill.
(The fairies think steel pens so slow,
They always write with quills, you know)
Then back to the myrtle flower she flew,
And gathered in passing a drop of dew,
For fairy dew is invisible ink,
And in fairy-land lovers never would think
To write with aught else. So the fairy wrote
On the pale blue petal a tiny note,
Breathing of tenderness, love and bliss,
And she sealed it up with a fairy kiss.

GOURLAY BROTHERS.

A STORY OF TWO LOYAL HEARTS.

In a quiet street off one of the quiet squares there is a tall, gloomy house, with narrow, dusty windows and a massive double door, that still bears a brass plate with the words "Gourlay Brothers" engraved thereon.

The lower part of the house was used as an office, but the blinds were rarely drawn up, the door seldom swung back to the energetic push of customers, the long passage echoed no hurried footsteps, and Eli Haggart, the clerk, was to all appearance the idlest man in London, till one came to know his masters.

The Gourlay Brothers were never any busier than their faithful old servant—never hurried, flurried or worried; never late and never early. Every morning at 10 o'clock they entered their office together, read their letters, glanced at the paper, left instructions for possible callers, and then went to the city. They always took the same route; at 11 they might be seen passing along the sunny side of Cannon street, at 1.30 they entered the same restaurant, and sat at the same table for luncheon. Wet or dry, shade or shine, summer or winter, every working day for thirty years they had gone through the same routine, always excepting the month of September, when they took their annual holiday.

They were elderly men—John, tall, thin, melancholy-looking, with light gray eyes, scanty gray hair and whiskers, and a general expression of drabness pervading his whole face and faultlessly neat attire. Roger was shorter, rounder, more cheerful and generally warmer in colour. His prevailing hue was brown; keen, reddish eyes that must have been merry once; crisp, auburn hair that time had not yet quite transmuted to silver; a clean-shaven ruddy face, and brown hands full of dents and dimples. John was the elder; still he looked up to Roger with grave respect, consulted him on every subject, and never either in or out of business took any step without his advice or approval. And Roger was no less deferential; without any profession of affection or display of feeling, the Gourlay Brothers dwelt together in the closest friendship and love; their life was a long harmony, and during all the years of their partnership no shadow had fallen between them, and their public life was as harmonious as their private intercourse.

In business they were successful; every speculation they made prospered, everything they touched turned to gold; and as their whole lives were spent in getting, not spending, they were believed, and with reason, to be immensely wealthy. "Cold, hard, stern, enterprising," men called them; with an acuteness of vision and a steadiness of purpose only to be acquired by a long and close application to business. Reserved in manner, simple in their tastes, economical in their habits, the Gourlay Brothers were the last men in the world to be suspected of sentiment, their lives the least likely to contain even the germ of a romance. And yet they had not always been mere business machines; the sole end and aim of their existence had not always been money. In early years they had brighter dreams, nobler ambitions.

At school John had distinguished himself, and his brief university career gave promise of a brilliant future. Roger had been a bright, ardent boy, with a taste for music that was almost

a passion, and a talent little short of genius. With his deep earnestness, intense steadiness of purpose, and clear, vigorous intellect, John could scarcely have failed to make a distinguished lawyer.

Roger was born an artist, with a restless, lofty ambition. Life seemed very bright for the brothers; there was nothing to prevent and everything to assist each in following his inclination. But in the very dawn of their career their father died, and they were suddenly reduced from affluence to actual poverty. Nothing remained from the wreck of a magnificent fortune but the bitter experience that always accompanies such reverses. Fine friends failed them; flatterers looked coldly on their distress; those who had most frequently partaken of their lavish hospitality passed by on the other side. Not a friend remained in their adversity but one, and she had indeed the will, but not the power to help them.

The boys left college and turned their thoughts to business. It was hopeless to attempt to follow up their professions with an invalid mother and idolized only sister depending on them for support. John secured a situation as clerk in a city warehouse. Roger accepted a desk in the office of Bernard Russell, an old friend of his father's. They moved to cheap lodgings, and for several years plodded on wearily, the only gleam of sunshine in their altered home being the occasional visits of Alice Russell to their sister.

Maude Gourlay and Alice had been school-mates and friends; they usually spent their vacations together, and Alice felt the misfortune that had fallen on the family as if it had overtaken her own. But she could do nothing but pay them flying visits, send trifling gifts of fruit and flowers, and write pretty sympathetic notes to Maude.

A few years of hardship and poverty told on Mrs. Gourlay's always feeble frame; still for her daughter's sake she clung to life with a strange tenacity; but when Maude's lover, who had gone to Australia to make his fortune, returned, not wealthy, but sufficiently so to claim his bride in her altered circumstances, Mrs. Gourlay seemed to have no other object to live for. Maude's marriage was hastened, and the very day after the ceremony, the poor, weary, broken-hearted mother died. George Leslie took his wife back with him to Sydney, and John and Roger Gourlay were literally alone in the world.

As if in bitter mockery of their loss and loneliness, immediately after their mother's death the brothers inherited a small fortune. But it was too late for John to go back to his studies; too late for Roger to return to his piano; they had fallen into the groove of business, and John at least was seized with a feverish eagerness to turn his small fortune into a large one and become wealthy. So they went into business on their own account as Gourlay Brothers, with the firm resolution of retrieving the position their father had lost, and a very few years saw them established in Whittier street, and fairly on the high road to fortune. Then one quiet summer evening as they sat over their dessert John opened his heart to his brother and told him of his hopes, dreams and ambitions for the future.

"You will be surprised, and I trust pleased, to hear, Roger, that I love Alice Russell," he said, laying his hand on his brother's arm; "I can hardly remember the time when she was not dearer to me than all the world beside. The bitterest part of our misfortune to me was that it separated me from her; nothing else can ever compensate me for the ruin of all my hopes and glorious ambitions. I once dreamed of being famous, Roger; for her sake I put that behind me, and, have grubbed for gold like a miser. We, Gourlay Brothers, are on the high road to fortune; I may aspire to the hand of Alice now!"

"Surely, John," and the younger brother's voice was husky, and his hand shook as he took up his glass; "I drink to your success."

"Thanks, brother. I should have confided in you, but I feared troubling you on my account; you would have seen a thousand shadows across my path; you would have been more unhappy than I was myself. And now I want you to promise that it shall make no difference between us. We shall be Gourlay Brothers still."

Roger stretched his hand across the table, and John grasped it heartily.

"Gourlay Brothers to the end of the chapter, old fellow, and may you be as happy as you deserve. God bless you, John."

John's face became a shade or two paler with emotion, and he walked up and down the room a few times; then he stood behind his brother's chair.

"Roger, you will think me very weak, very nervous, but I dare not speak to Alice myself. I could not endure a refusal from her. I have never even given her the most distant hint of my feelings. I have not the slightest reason to suppose that she regards me as other than a mere acquaintance, almost as Maude's brother. Roger, stand by me in this; you are less shy and more accustomed to women; see Alice for me, Roger, and ask her to be my wife."

"John, you're mad! You do not mean it!" "I do; it is my only chance. Plead for my happiness, brother, as I would plead for yours. I am a man of few words, but I feel deeply. A refusal from her lips would kill me; I could hear it from you!"

"As you will, John; I'll do my best," and Roger leaned his head on his hand and shaded his face from the light. "I'll call on Alice to-morrow."

The next day was the longest of John Gourlay's life—a bright, warm, happy day, that made people in the city look glad and cheerful. He went about his business as usual, ate his luncheon, and walked home leisurely. Roger was standing at the window watching for him, and he kept his back to him when he entered the room.

"Well," John said gently, "well, Roger, have you seen her?"

"Yes, I've seen her," said Roger, facing round suddenly. "John, old fellow, it's no use."

"Brother!" and he lifted his hand as if to ward off a blow.

"It's no use," Roger went on in a hard voice. "She does not love you; she loves some one else. Be a man, John, and bear it, for there's no hope."

One low, stifled groan, and then John Gourlay wrung his brother's hand and walked steadily out of the room. What he suffered in the hours that followed no one ever knew, and when he appeared at the dinner-table he was calm and self-possessed, but something had either come into his face or gone out of it that altered him. But of the two Roger looked the most unhappy. The blow had really fallen most heavily on him.

"Jack, old fellow, we're Gourlay Brothers now to the end of the chapter," he said, huskily. "I know you'll never marry, and neither will I," and somehow John felt that Roger meant what he said.

Twenty-five years passed by, a quarter of a century of changes and chances, and still the Gourlay Brothers held the even tenor of their way. They were rich beyond their wishes or desires, and not altogether unhappy in their solitary friendship.

Alice Russell seemed to have drifted completely out of their lives; her name was never mentioned, and whether she was married or dead they did not know.

One morning about the middle of September they were walking along the king's road at Brighton, whither they had gone for their annual holiday. Roger entered a shop to purchase something and John stood outside looking dreamily at the passers-by. Suddenly he stared and advanced a step as a lady in an invalid chair was wheeled by. Chancing to look up, she met his glance with a smile of recognition. "Mr. Gourlay, it must be you. I am so glad to see you."

"And I to meet you," John said with a courteous bow. "I have not the pleasure of knowing—"

"My name—I am Alice Russell still," she said, frankly. At that moment Roger appeared. For an instant the blood forsook his ruddy face, while a hot, crimson flush rose to Alice's pale cheek as she tried to stammer out some words of greeting. Roger was no less confused, and the expression of both faces was a revelation to John Gourlay. He felt as if the world had suddenly drifted away from him and he was left solitary in some unknown infinite shade. But there was nothing of that in his voice when he asked Alice for her address and permission to call upon her in the afternoon; then taking his brother by the arm he led him away, and they continued their walk without exchanging a single word about the strange encounter.

In the afternoon John called at Miss Russell's hotel, and in a few moments he found himself seated beside her in a pleasant sitting-room overlooking the sea.

"Alice," he said, plunging into the subject at once, "do you remember a conversation you had with my brother a long time ago?"

"Yes, I remember, Mr. Gourlay," she replied, sadly. "He made a request for me then which it was not in your power to grant; I am come to make a similar one for him now. Roger loves you, Alice. He has loved you all these long, weary years, though you will at least believe I did not know it then."

"Poor Roger!" Alice said softly. "You care about him? you will make him happy even at this late hour? Tell me, Alice, that you love my brother!"

"Yes, Mr. Gourlay, I do. Why should I deny it? I have loved him always, though I did not know that he cared about me, and if the little life that is left me can make him happier, I will devote it to him gladly, proudly—poor Roger! You see I am too old for pretences, Mr. Gourlay, and I fear I am dying; therefore, I tell you all."

"Dying, Alice? No, no! you will live many years yet, I hope, to make my dear brother happy—brave, loyal, great-hearted Roger. Let me send you to him now, and, Alice, for my old and long affection's sake, make him happy. He deserves it, and that is the only way I can ever help to repay the devotion of his life."

"I love him," Alice replied simply, "I cannot do any more."

In their lodgings John Gourlay found his brother pacing restlessly up and down.

"Roger, I've found out your secret and hers," he said, laying both his hands on his shoulders; "loyal, faithful friend, go to her; she loves you, she is waiting for you."

"Poor Alice! how she must have suffered!"

"How we all have suffered! but it's nearly over now, Roger—the grief, pain, regret. It's all clear and bright. Roger, dear friend, can you forgive me?"

"Forgive you, John? say rather can you forgive me?"

"True to the last," John murmured as he wrung his brother's hand. "Now, Roger, go to her; she is waiting for you. She loves you—loves you, Roger! Good-bye, and may you both be happy!"

Late that evening, when Roger Gourlay returned home full of a deep, quiet gladness, he found his brother sitting in an easy chair near the window, apparently asleep. The full moon shone down on his pale face and showed a smile on his lips; his hands were clasped on an open book that rested on his knee. The attitude was lifelike, but at the very first glance Roger felt that his brother was dead. The doctors said he had died of disease of the heart. Perhaps they were right. More people die of that malady than the world knows of.

HEARTH AND HOME.

GOODNESS.—A good mother, when her son was leaving the home of his childhood and going out into the great world, knowing that he was ambitious, gave him this parting injunction: "My son, remember that, though it is a good thing to be a great man, it is a great thing to be a good man." No sounder, no truer words were ever spoken. A great many may dazzle, but a good man is a beacon shining afar, by whose beneficent light a multitude are enabled to walk in safety. The best success is often achieved by the humblest; and an obscure life well spent is better than a wicked renown.

HOW GOOD RESULTS ARE TO BE ATTAINED.—The education that is to wear well can only be gained by self-denial, hard work, self-control, concentration. The friendship that is worth having demands unwearied kindness, self-sacrifice, thoughtfulness, loyalty. The work of hand or head that is to last must be performed with patience, industry, energy, and zeal. The wealth that is to be a permanent blessing must have been gained by honourable exertion, and expended with beneficent wisdom. The idea that we can extract value from anything, when nothing valuable has ever entered into it, is a delusion which the sooner we get rid of the better.

PRaise.—As a general thing we are too chary in praising and encouraging the efforts of the young, too free in criticising and depreciating them. Many a child's powers in various directions are thrust back into inactivity by the cold inappreciative reception they meet with. Children quickly adopt the sentiments of their elders, and soon learn to put the same value on their own powers that others do. The parent, the teacher, and the employer can easily teach lessons of self-depreciation which may cling through life, and forever prevent the development of powers that under more favourable auspices might have proved a blessing to the community; or, on the other hand, by cheerful encouragement and wholesome commendation, they may nourish many a tiny germ of ability and talent that may one day come to be a mighty influence, a perceptible power, in the world.

INTELLECTUAL TRUTHS AND MORAL TRUTHS.—The only difference between what are called intellectual truths and moral truths is that the latter bear a special and intimate relation to our conduct, and thus appeal to the sense of duty and awaken the moral susceptibilities within us, while the former are supposed to be held by the intellect alone. The laws of chemistry, for instance, or those of the heavenly bodies, are truths which may quicken thought or stir up investigation, but which are not supposed to have any bearing upon our moral life. On the other hand, the laws of society, the truths and principles which underlie human welfare, are not only food for thought, but for action. They not only enlighten the understanding, but excite the sympathies and create an obligation.

WORDS OF CHEER.—Few persons realize how much happiness may be promoted by a few words of cheer spoken in moments of despondency, by words of encouragement in seasons of difficulty, by words of commendation when obstacles have been overcome by effort and perseverance. Words fitly spoken often sink so deep into the mind and the heart of the person to whom they are addressed that they remain a fixed, precious, and often-recurring memory—a continuous sunshine lighting up years, perhaps, after the lips that have uttered them are sealed in death. A whole life has been changed, exalted, expanded, and illumined by a single expression of approval falling timely upon a sensitive and ambitious nature. Words of cheer cost nothing to the speaker. On the contrary, they are to him as well as to the hearer a source of great happiness to be had for the mere effort of uttering them. The habit of speaking such words at appropriate times is easily acquired, while at the same time it is of so much importance that it should be sedulously cultivated by all.

Doctors Gave Him Up.

"Is it possible that Mr. Godfrey is up and at work, and cured by so simple a remedy?"

"I assure you it is true that he is entirely cured, and with nothing but Hop Bitters, and only ten days ago his doctors gave him up and said he must die!"

"Well-a-day! If that is so, I will go this minute and get some for my poor George. I know hops are good."