

NEAR TO NATURE'S HEART.

Out of the depths of nature
Sweet thoughts at times will start
That rise, like a fragrant incense,
Cheering the downcast heart.

The chirp of the bird or the cricket,
The fluttering leaves of the trees,
The odor of woodland flowers,
Wooded by a southern breeze.

The warmth of the summer sunshine,
The loving of kine on the hill,
The silvery sky-hung crescent,
Or the cry of the whip-poor-will.

Brings back to the heart that is brooding
Some happy dream that is past
To gladden and cheer, for the moment,
Though the joy is too sweet to last.

As a child to its mother turning
Finds ever a quick relief,
So our common mother, Nature,
Gives solace for every grief.

JAMES CLARENCE HARVEY.

A BROKEN CHORD.

"My dear."—Two words on the otherwise blank sheet of paper the man by the desk looked down upon. Involuntarily he smiled; not that he suspected Richard Haines of tender intents, only it were not unreasonable it might be so.

Three words would have changed life materially that moment to the man beside the desk. But he could not dream of this; he only turned away forgetful to wonder where was Richard Haines. His business was of stocks, but he quite forgot when Richard Haines appeared; something betwixt a laugh and a whistle moved his lips as he noted the quick ejaculations, the energy with which the suggestive paper was shut within the desk.

This was more than business of stock, then, after all. Amid his surprise there flashed a sudden unexplainable curiosity as to that other word; he wished Richard Haines had written it. But a voice a bit impatient broke in upon his thoughts.

"I do not know as I shall ever rid myself of the bad habit of leaving things about; even unfinished letters lie loose for every one to see."

"In love for the first time, and in the first stages; that was evident," thought Hobart Cliff.

"A calamity in this case, Haines," he answered, gravely: "I think you are very much the man with the guilty conscience who needeth no accuser. And, now I look at you, you do not seem at all a man of stocks this morning; you look rather like a man in love."

"Do I?" A foolish little laugh broke on the other's lips. "Well, Cliff, I must confess I am—with the dearest, sweetest little girl in all the world. We are not yet quite engaged, but I am sure of her—that is everything, Cliff, you know."

"Yes." It was the one word he could utter, so precipitately Richard Haines went on:

"She has so many lovers, this little lady, and, oddly, I am the last of all. For I have only known her a few weeks; she chanced to me one day, and I fell in love with her at once. I would not have believed a man could be so foolish, but I guess it often happens so. By-the-way, how is the little girls up in Medway, Cliff?"

Hobart Cliff started at the question; the bantering smile left his face. He had, this brief moment, quite forgotten the girl in Medway; for the first time in weeks she, with attendant matters, had been clearly off his mind. To have her recalled in this sudden fashion, and all the rest brought back so plainly, was almost more than he could endure.

"Miss Burnaby is well, Haines."

Any other time Richard Haines would have stared at the testy answer; he was quite too absorbed now in his own ecstatic business; his lips moved for further confidences, but the other man grew suddenly impatient of his time. He hurried through his errands as best he could, and went back to his office to—drum idly on his desk and think of Hester Burnaby. He had thought of her to the detriment of all business, these few weeks past—alas! never once as should a lover, though always she was the girl he was engaged to marry—the woman who must be his wife. Suggestion had loomed but to be battled bravely, to be cast, even with unstained honor, down. Always the inevitable had been Hester Burnaby.

Honor had served Hobart Cliff a lifetime, but honor strangely misbehaved to-day. Some impetus from that office-scene, he knew not what opened his soul unto suggestion; for the first time he suffered it, for the first time he suffered it, for the first time permitted the sweet face of Hester Burnaby to fade beneath the light of one no fairer, yet, these latter days, a very heaven to him.

He thought it out that day. Honor barred, he could reason calmly; he did not love Hester Burnaby, he could never feel for her again what he had fancied once he did. Under these circumstances it would be—yes, it would be wrong to marry her; better an avowal even of faithlessness now, than the mockery of fulfillment unto her lifelong misery. This last was a false view of honor; she would be the last to crave such act of him. On this line he thought it out. It was strange how the illusion grew. What would have seemed to him in the morning most a crime unpardonable, grew at evening a

very duty—to break his engagement with Hester Burnaby. With ready pen he did this—yes, with eloquence of words—but, for all, he hesitated as he signed his name; he had the strange feeling, that moment, a man might have who was signing his own death warrant.

Hobart Cliff had been a faithful lover in honor's stiff requirements. He was Hester Burnaby's betrothed in the maddest striving of his fresher passion; he had never once, of his own planning, sought the girl who had entranced him; he had even staid from places where he knew that he would meet her; he had, at times, been honestly sorry that they met so much by chance.

He meant to be circumspect now; he would wait at least till he received back his ring and letters ere he went with his tender story to Elsie Cray. But the old loosened, the new passion arose in might; it was only the following evening that he took his way to the pretty up-town cottage, with his whole soul upon his lips. So fond, so eager, with not even a thought now for Hester Burnaby.

"I am sure of her—that is everything, Cliff, you know."

He smiled as he recalled the words; he wondered if Richard Haines was really as sure of his little girl as he was of Elsie Cray. For he was sure of her! Jubilantly he remembered the many favors she had shown him, the shy but tender looks with which she had answered the at times uncontrollable passion of his look and act. His own—his own little Elsie! Ah, how his soul laughed as he drew near the house!

A pretty picture made Elsie Cray on the piazza that bright evening, looking up at the young moon with a light song on her lips. Was she thinking of him? He approached with step so hushed, so softly, she did note his presence till he was most beside her.

"Elsie!"

She had turned, ere the little word, in quick surprise towards him. Most women would have lost self-possession before the soul within his face, but Elsie Cray was quite used to souls; she was a lady with many lovers, and with only a quiet smile she extended her hand to him.

"You find me dreaming like a schoolgirl, Mr. Cliff, but—I am pleased to see you."

He was not in the mood, one brief moment, for such words as these.

"Elsie!" The name had been a song; it broke now, a cry of mingled yearning and demand. "Elsie, you know why I have come. You do not know why I have staid away; there were reasons, and I will explain, I can explain, but—oh! not this precious moment; just this little moment open your dear lips and tell me that you love me. If only one little word, my darling? That were more to me even than tenderer things now, Elsie."

So quiet the ending, so assured. So eagerly, yet so patiently, he waited for her; he would not so much as touch her little hand, he thought, till she should bid him. He had been a mystery to Elsie Cray these weeks; he would have been a mystery to her now had she had space for thought, but she was quite too absorbed in the answer she should make him.

"I am very sorry to hear you talk this way," she said, after a little, quietly looking up at him. "You fancied that I liked you, and I did; had you spoken sooner"—she had a fashion of being complimentary at such times—"had you spoken sooner I do not say how things might have turned. But it is useless retrospecting now, for the simple reason that I am engaged to be married, Mr. Cliff."

"Engaged, Elsie?"

"Yes; to Mr. Richard Haines."

It was a hard night for two of them. For the man walking away that first moment, from Elsie Cray, gradually to awake to the crushing realization that what had been life to him was but simple play to her. A heartless coquette, meaning to give herself to no man save such an one as Richard Haines—the rich stockbroker, whose wealth held rank in millions. This was Elsie Cray, the woman he had worshiped—the woman, despite himself, he worshiped still.

He had been wont, in little troubles, to turn to Hester Burnaby; her advice, her comfort in any perplexity had been eagerly sought by him. With strange forgetfulness his heart called out for her this hour; a wild cry rang out upon the night as suddenly he realized the gentle words that he had murdered, the faithful, fond caresses his own mad hand had made dead things for ever.

Strange, strange for all, that moment passion rested; life grew naught to him simply that Hester Burnaby had died. For she was dead—dead! This was the one thought of his weary brain as he walked along.

Hard for two of them. For the girl, sitting with the letter he had sent her, with pallid face and nervous fingers clutching it. She had loved him so; it seemed so hard, so very hard he should be false to her—his love, she had believed for eternity, to live only four little months. This was the simple ache of her heart that hour; all the pain her poor heart could grasp.

Over and over she had read the letter; she seemed strangely to cling to the cold, cruel missive his hand had written him.

"Would it be right for me to marry you with my heart bound up in another woman? Is it not better to be even what the world calls dishonorable, than to deceive unto certain misery? I know you would not have it so, Hester; when

you should—" Her eyes were wandering down the words again, but suddenly she paused; a point of argument rose up before her she was bound to reason out. A point of argument was much to her, that hour; she began eagerly to question this thing he had done to her.

What? Simply told the truth—the truth which he could not help, however hard it was for her to bear. This was all that he had done: he was right, he was noble; all that was honorable in man honored Hobart Cliff. For had he not done nobly by her? What mattered the hardness of the little present to the loveless marriage he had spared her, the years of misery? What—

"Bound up in another woman." The words flashed suddenly; she clasped her hands above the letter, and a smile played about her lips. She was recalling that day she told him that if only he were happy, she must be happy, too; even should he come to love another, as long as he was satisfied, she must be happy.

She had meant it truly; it had been always her idea of love. And now the time had come; this very moment she saw him bending down to the girl he worshiped; she listed his tender kisses, the murmured rapture of his words. Her soul clasped its rest; she looked, she listened, with the smile still on her lips.

But—so quickly the burden passed; ere the morrow she had drunk unto the dregs of bitterness. Each day harder, each the emptiness of her life more insupportable. And, because emotion must have some exercise in her, she hardened towards the man she had loved so fondly, each day came nearer hating him. Hobart Cliff had grasped it; all that was sweet, womanly in Hester Burnaby his own mad hand had murdered.

Still, strive as she did, she could not forget those four little months. One evening there dawned on her the strange fancy that if she could fully realize his happiness she might be reconciled to this all. The fancy grew a fascinating desire to see him bending towards this Elsie Cray, to watch his dark eyes light and his strong, sure hand caress her; to see—how much fonder, tenderer it would be than it had been with her.

Why not? The letter had particularized; it was but a little distance to the city, and, once there, she might find a way. An hour later Hester Burnaby stood in the city's streets.

She had no plan, she only walked hurriedly on towards the pretty cottage, trusting to chance to help her. They might be on the porch this pleasant evening; it was growing dark, and they would not notice that a girl walked slowly—he would not, at least; he had been her lover, and she knew, she thought, with a bitter laugh.

Slowly she drew near the house. The porch was empty; she was passing disappointedly when, just within a window, she saw two sitting—a fair face turned toward her, one herding to toy with a little hand. It was harder than Hester Burnaby had thought; her heart beat loudly; with a little despairing cry she turned, when suddenly one looked up.

Ah! a cry still but a cry of bewilderment and joy. Bewildering admitting but the one fact: that it was all a lie; strange as it was, a lie—for ever. Giddy with excitement, she hurried back again up the street; she did not note the tall figure turning the corner till it passed beside her; she looked up bewildered still. It was not strange looking that the sweet face grew, that she gazed into that face with a tenderer passion than even her tender heart had known—not strange that maiden coyness banished.

"Hobart—dear Hobart, is it you?"

He stood staring at her; his brain was weary yet, and, at odd times, that strange fancy came back to him. But when she spoke a light crept into his face, revealing how his heart had turned back to her since that hard night.

"Hester you speak to me that way! You are not angry with me for all that I have done? Ah, you pity me; some way you have heard the story of her coquetry, how she led me on to worship her—you know it all, and—you are not angry? You understand that there is such a thing as enchantment, and that the man so fortunate as to break the spell may find his own true soul again? Hester, little one, I know I do not deserve it, but—you spoke those sweet words to me; you are going to forgive me—to be to me as in the old days."

He paused abruptly, for the first time he realized her changing face. A moment she regarded him.

"That would be impossible," she answered, coldly; "it is a broken chord that may never resound again."

So she walked away from him. His eyes did not follow her; he only looked over where she had stood, with a faint smile on his lips. It had been but a vision—it was as he had fancied—Hester Burnaby was dead.

PROCESSION AT NEVADA.

At Austin, Nevada, on July 4, the public procession contained a locomotive and two flat cars which moved in a stately way through the main street, the cars being decorated and fitted for the display of emblematic devices and carrying young women representing the States, and symbolizing virtues, sciences, arts, and trades. The grade of the railway which passes up through the main street of the town from the station of the Nevada Central is 12½ feet to the 100, and being on the natural route of the pro-

cession, the locomotive and cars were utilized to most excellent and peculiarly effective advantage.

A correspondent says that all went smooth and easy enough going down the steep grade, the brakes being very competent and responsible hands, but many mechanically appreciative individuals were curious to see how it would be in coming up—whether the speed could be regulated to the pace of the procession marching before and behind. But that gallant little motor, weighing 33,000 pounds, just worked its way up the steepest plain road in the country, slowly, carefully, with the precision of clock-work, and regulated exactly to the gait of the procession. There was no difficulty whatever about it.

SEWER GAS AND TYPHOID FEVER.

Dr. George Hamilton, in the *Medical Record*, takes issue with those who assume the conveyance of germs of typhoid and scarlet fevers, diphtheria, and dysentery by contaminated drinking water, and who do not believe that sewer gas can spread the infection or originate the diseases. Referring to the epidemics that sometimes occur suddenly in cities fed with drinking water from some common source, he says that their sudden appearance and as sudden disappearance cannot be attributed to the character of the water, except on the supposition that the water changes suddenly from purity to impurity, and *vice versa*, a supposition incompatible with the delivery supply of water from reservoirs. Walled-up cesspools, he says, are common in the city and not usually found in the country, and the exhalations from unventilated and uncared for vaults have much to do with the prevalence of typhoid diseases.

MISCELLANY.

It will be some time yet before the museum of casts now being formed at South Kensington will be open to the public, but a considerable number of casts for the illustration of the history of ancient art have already been collected. Among the latest acquisitions are four slabs from a frieze recently brought from Lycia by Professor Benndorf, and which now adorn the Museum at Vienna. The material of this frieze is not marble, but calcareous stone, and the surface of the relief has suffered a good deal from weather; but notwithstanding this the sculpture itself shows that the design and execution belong to the fine period of ancient art. One of the slabs represents a four-horse chariot, the horses grouped in the same manner as on the metallsions of Syracuse. On another slab is a female figure, probably that of a queen.

A MISSIVE is now being circulated among the followers of Mahomet, intimating that the sun will this month, reversing his usual order of procedure, rise in the West. The purpose of this strange phenomenon is to announce the day of wrath which is to follow the day of mercy. The excitement created in the East by the circulation of this prediction is of course extraordinary. Repeatedly in the middle ages kindred predictions exercised a sadly disturbing influence upon Christendom. But it is among the imaginative people of the Orient that the effect of such deliverances is most marked. A short time ago Mahomet Sahi stated that the founder of Islam had appeared to him and warned him that the end was near. Moreover, it is notorious that the False Prophet of the Soudan claims to be the Mahdi, whose advent is to precede the final agonies of the world. It is difficult to account for the myths that have arisen on the subject.

TRUTH says:—People are vastly mistaken if they suppose that a visit to Windsor signifies confidential intercourse with the royal hostess. The guests, and such of the household as are included in the dinner-party, assemble in the grand corridor, and the Queen enters from her private apartments, just as the repast is announced, and accords a formal greeting to each person. The company then goes into the dining-room (the Oak Room), and during dinner conversation is, of course, of a very rapid sort, "Shakespeare and the musical glasses." After dinner the party meet again in the corridor, and her Majesty goes round the circle, speaking perhaps for two minutes to each person, after which she retires, and the guests adjourn to one of the drawing-rooms, to finish the evening with music or cards. Next morning they leave without having again seen the Queen, so that very little political capital can be made out of a visit.

A CONTRIBUTOR to a Paris contemporary says the season of London is about to finish with a marriage "of first rate." It refers to the fiancée, an American lady, who, we are told, has no necessity to offer herself in a shower of pearls and dollars, the gold of her hair and the royalty of her twenty years being enough. This is charming as far as it goes, but the announcement that the proposed bridegroom is Lord Wolsley is rather a staggerer.

THERE is a dispute between two great fencing masters as to their relative prowess, and it is proposed, therefore, to have a grand assault; but the difficulty in arranging the terms is that one of the two celebrities wished to have, while the other will not accept, "white waistcoats and blackened foil buttons." He says it is lowering the dignity of the profession. Dear, dear! this is particular and grand.