

## SELECTED POETRY.

## THE WIFE TO HER HUSBAND.

[The following admirable lines by an American lady, a member of the Society of Friends, lately appeared in the *Times*. We are told that the poem was found in the cottage of a tippling gardener of the United States, and that it not only won him from the noisy taproom to his own domestic hearth, but that the judicious distribution of it was the means of much good.—*English paper*.]

You took me, William, when a girl, unto your home and hearth,  
To bear in all your after life a fond and faithful part;  
And tell me have I ever tried that duty to forego,  
Or pined there was not joy for me, when you were sunk in woe?  
No, I would rather share your tear than any other's glee—  
For though you're nothing to the world, you're all the world to me;  
You make a palace of my shed, this rough hewn bench a throne;  
There's sunlight for me in your smiles, and music in your tone.  
I look upon you when you sleep—my eyes with tears grow dim,  
I cry, O Parent of the poor, look down from Heaven on him:  
Behold him toil from day to day exhausting strength and soul;  
O! look with mercy on him, Lord, for thou canst make him whole.  
And when at last relieving sleep has on my eyelids smiled,  
How oft are they forbade to close in slumber by our child?  
I take the little murmurer that spoils my span of rest,  
And feel it is a part of thee I lull upon my breast.  
There's only one return I crave, I may not need it long,  
And it may soothe thee when I'm here the wretched feel no wrong;  
I ask not for less frugal fare, my fare I do not mind;  
I ask not for attire more gay, if such as I have got  
Suffice to make me fair to thee, for more I murmur not;  
But I would ask some share of hours which you on clubs bestow,  
Of knowledge which you prize so much, might I not something know?  
Subtract from meetings amongst men, each eve, an hour for me,  
Make me companion of your soul, as I may safely be;  
If you will read, I'll sit and work; then think when you're away;  
Less tedious I shall find the time, dear William, when you stay.  
A meet companion soon I'll be, o'en of your studious hours,  
And teachers of those little ones you call our cottage flowers;  
And if we be not rich and great, we may be wise and good.

## THE STORY OF ELIZABETH.

BY MISS THACKERAY,

[Daughter of the Great English Novelist.]

CONTINUED.

FLAG HOTEL, Boatstown, November 16th.

'MY DEAR JACK,—I had great doubts about communicating your letter to Elizabeth. It seemed to me that the path you had determined upon was one full of thorns and difficulties, for her; for you, and for my niece Letitia. But Elly is of far too affectionate a nature ever to give up caring for any of her friends. Let me assure you that her feelings are now only those of friendly regard and deep interest in your welfare. When I mentioned to her the contents of your letter (I think it best to speak plainly,) she said, with her eyes full of tears, that she did not want to marry you—that she felt you were bound to return to Letitia. She had been much affected by discovering the enclosed little note from your cousin. I must say that the part which concerns you interested me much, more so than her letter to her old friend. But she was evidently preoccupied at the time, and Elly, far from feeling neglected, actually cried, actually began to cry, she was so touched by this somewhat singular discovery. Girl's tears are easily dried. If it lies in my power she shall yet be made happy.

There is nothing now, as you see, that need prevent you fulfilling your engagements. You are all very good children, on the whole, and I trust that your troubles are but fleeting clouds that will soon pass away. That you and Letitia may enjoy all prosperity, is the sincere hope and desire of your affectionate old aunt,

J. M. DAMPIER.'

Miss Dampier having determined that she had written a perfectly impartial letter, put it up in an envelope, rang the bell, and desired a waiter to post it.

Number twenty-three's bell rang at the same moment; so did number fifteen; immediately after a number of people poured in by the eleven o'clock train; the waiter flung the letter down on his pantry table, and rushed off to attend to half-a-dozen things at once, of which posting the note was not one.

About three o'clock that afternoon Miss Dampier, in her close bonnet, was standing in the passage talking to a tall young man with a black waistcoat and wide-awake.

'What are you going to do?' he said. 'Couldn't we go for a drive somewhere?'

'I have ordered a carriage at three, said Miss Dampier, smiling. 'We are going up on the hills.' You might come too, if you liked it.' And when the carriage drove up to the door, there he was, waiting to hand her in.

He had always, until he saw her, imagined Elly a flirting person, quite different from the tall young lady in the broad hat, with the long cloak falling from her shoulders, who was prepared to accompany them. She had gone away a little, and his aunt sent him to fetch her. She was standing against the railing, looking out at the sea, with her sad eyes. There was the lawn, there was the sea, there was Elly. A pretty young lady always makes a pretty picture; but out of doors in the sunshine, she looks a prettier young lady than anywhere else, thought Mr. Will, as Elizabeth walked across the grass. He was not alone in his opinion; more than one person looked up as she passed. He began to think that far from doing a foolish thing, his aunt had shown her usual good sense in taking such good care of this sad, charming, beautiful young woman. It was no use trying to think ill of her. With such a face as hers she has a right to fall in love with anybody she pleases, he thought; and so, as they were walking towards the carriage, Will Dampier, thinking that this was a good opportunity for a little confidential communication, said, somewhat in his professional manner, 'You seem out of spirits, Miss Gilmour. I hope that you do not regret your decision of this morning.'

'Yes, I do regret it,' said poor Elly, and two great tears came dribbling down her cheeks. 'Do you think that when a girl gives up what she likes best in the world, she is not sorry? I am horribly sorry.'

Will was very much puzzled how to answer this unexpected confidence. He said, looking rather foolish, 'One is so apt to ask unnecessary questions. But, take my word for it, you have done quite right, and some day you will be more glad than you are now.'

I must confess that my heroine here got exceedingly cross.

'Ah, that is what people say who do not know of what they are talking. What business of yours is my poor, unlucky, bruised and broken fancy?' she said. 'Ah! why were you ever told? What is it to you?'

All the way she sat silent and dull, staring at the landscape as they went along; suffering, in truth, poor child, more than either of her companions could tell: saying good-bye to the dearest hope of her youth, tearing herself away from the familiar and well-loved dreams. Dreams, do I say? They had been the Realities to her, poor child, for many a day. And the realities had seemed to be the dreams. They drove along a straight road, and came at last to some delightful fresh downs, with the sea sparkling in the distance, and a sort of autumnal glow on the hills all about. The breeze came in fresh gusts, the carriage jogged on, still up hill, and Will Dampier walked alongside, well pleased with the entertainment, and making endless jokes at his aunt. She rather liked being laughed at; but Elly never looked up once, or heeded what they said. They were going towards a brown church that was standing on the top of a hill. It must have been built by the Danes a thousand years ago. There it stood, looking out at the sea, brown, grim, solitary, with its graveyard on the hillside. Trees were clustering down in a valley below; but here, up above, it was all bleak, bare, and solitary, only tinted and painted by the brown and purple sunshine.

They stopped the carriage a little way off, and got out and passed through a gate, and walked up the hill-top. Elly went first, Will followed, and Miss Dampier came slowly after. As Elly reached the top of the hill she turned round, and stood against the landscape, like a picture with a background, and looked back and said—

'Do you hear?'

The organ inside the church was playing a chant, and presently some voices began chanting to the playing of the organ. Elly went across the graveyard, and leaned against the porch, listening. Five minutes went by; her anger was melting away. It was exquisitely clear, peaceful and tranquil here, up on this hill where the dead people were lying among the grass and daisies. All the bitterness went away out of her heart, somehow, in the golden glow. She said to herself that she felt now, suddenly, for the first time, as if she could bury her fancy and leave it behind her in this quiet place. As the chant went on, her whole heart uttered in harmony with it, though her lips were silent. She did not say to herself, what a small thing it was that had troubled her: what vast combinations were here to make her happy; hills, vales, light, with its wondrous refractions, harmony, color; the great ocean, the great world, rolling on amid the greater worlds beyond.

But she felt it somehow. The voices ceased, and all was very silent.

'Oh, give thanks,' the Psalm began again; and Elly felt that she could indeed give thanks for mercies that were more than she had ever deserved. When she was at home with her mother she thought—just now the thought of returning there scarce gave her a pang—she should remember to-day all the good hopes, good prayers and aspirations which had come to her in this peaceful graveyard up among the hills. She had been selfish, discontented, ungrateful, all her life, angry and chafed but an hour ago, and here was peace, hers for the moment, here was tranquil happiness.—The mad, rash delight she had felt when she had been with John Dampier was nothing compared to this great natural peace and calm. A sort of veil seemed lifted from her eyes, and she felt, for the first time, that she could be happy though what she had wished for most was never to be hers—that there was other happiness than that which she had once fancied part of life itself. Did she ever regret the decision she had made? Did she ever see occasion to think differently from this? If, in after times, she may have felt a little sad, a little lonely now and then, if she may have thought with a moment's regret of those days that are now already past and over forever, still she knew she had done rightly when she determined to bury the past, with all kindness, with reverent hands. Somehow, in some strange and mysterious manner, the bitterness of her silly troubles had left her—left her a better girl than she had been ever before. She was more good, more happy, more old, more wise, now, and in truth, there was kindness in store for her; there were suns yet to shine, friendly words to be spoken, troubles yet to be endured, other than those sentimental griefs which had racked her youth so fiercely.

While they were all on the hill-top, the steamer came into the port earlier than on the day when Will Dampier arrived. One of the passengers walked up to the hotel and desired the waiter to show him Miss Dampier's room. It was empty, of course; chairs pushed about, windows open, work and books on the table. The paper was lying on the floor,—the passengers noticed that a corner had been torn off; a little box was open on the table, a ruby ring glittering in the tray. 'How careless,' he thought, and then went an flung himself into a great arm-chair.

So! she had been here a minute ago. There was a glove lying on a chair; there were writing materials on a side-table—a blotting-book open, pens with the ink scarcely dry; and in this room, in this place he was going to decide his fate—rightly or wrongly he could not tell. Letitia is a cold-blooded little creature, he kept saying to himself: this girl, with all her faults, with all her impulses, has a heart to break or to mend. My mother will learn too late, that I cannot submit to such dictation. By Jove, what a letter it is. He pulled it out of his pocket, read it once more, and

crumpled it up and threw it into the fire-place. It was certainly not a very wise composition—long, vicious, wry tails and flourishes. 'John, words cannot,' &c. 'What Lady Tomsey,' &c. 'How horror-struck Major Potterton,' &c.; and finally concluded with a command that he should instantly return to Schlangenbad; or, failing this, an announcement that she should immediately join him, wherever he might be.

So Sir John, in a rage, packed up and came off to Boatstown—his mother can follow him or not, as she chooses; and here is walking up and down the room, while Elly, driving over the hills, is saying farewell, farewell, good-by, to her old love forever.

As Miss Dampier said, he could not have really cared for anybody; for, by some strange contradiction, now that the die is cast, now that after all these long doubts and mistrusts he had made up his mind, somehow new doubts arise. He wonders whether he and Elly will be happy together? He pictures stormy scenes; he intuitively shrinks from the idea of her unconventionalities, her eagerness, her enthusiasm. He is a man who likes a quiet life, who would appreciate a sober, happy home—a gentle, equitable companion, to greet him quietly, to care for his tastes and his ways, to sympathize, to befriend him. Whereas now it is he who will have to study his companion all the rest of his life; if he thwarts her she will fall ill of sorrow, if he satisfies her she will ask more and more, if he neglect her—being busy, or weary, or what not—she will die of grief, if he wants sympathy and common sense she will adore him. Poor Elly! it is hard upon her that he should make such a bugbear of her poor little love. His courage is oozing out of his finger-ends. He is in a rage with her, and with himself, and with his mother, and with his aunt. He and everybody else are in a league to behave as badly as possible. He will try and do his duty, he thinks, for all that, for my hero is an honest-hearted man, though a weak one. It is not Lady Dampier's letter that shall influence him one way or another; if Elly is breaking her heart to have him, and if Letty doesn't care one way or the other, as is likely enough, well then he will marry Elizabeth, he cries, with a stout desperation, and he dashes up and down the room in a fury.

And just at this minute the waiter comes in, and says Miss Dampier has gone out for a drive, and will not be back for some time. Mr. Dampier is staying in the house, but he has gone out with her, and who shall he say? And Sir John, looking up, gives his name and says he will wait.

Upon which the waiter suddenly remembers the letter he left in his pantry, and feeling rather guilty, proposes to fetch it. And by this time Elly, and Will, and Miss Dampier have got into the carriage again and are driving home-wards.

There was a certain humility about Elly, with all her ill-humors and varieties, which seemed to sweeten her whole nature. Will Dampier, who was rather angry with her for her peevishness, could not help forgiving her, when, as he helped her out of the carriage in the courtyard, she said,—

'I don't quite know how to say it—but I was very rude just now. I was very unhappy, and I hope you will forgive me,' and she looked up. The light from the hills was still in her face.

'It was I who was rude,' says Will, good-naturedly holding out his hand; and of course he forgave her.

The band was playing, the garden was full of people; but Aunt Jenny was cold, and glad to get home. The ladies went up stairs; Will remained down below, strolling up and down in the garden with the rest of the people; but at five o'clock the indefatigable bell began to ring once more; the afternoon boat was getting up its steam, and making its preparations to cross over to the other side.

Will met a friend of his, who was going over in it, and he walked down with him to see him off. He went on board with him, shook hands, and turned to come away. At that minute some one happened to look round, and Will, to his immense surprise, recognized his cousin. That was John; those were his mutton-chop whiskers; there was no doubt about it.

He sprang forward and called him by name, 'John,' he said, 'you here?'

'Well!' said John, smiling a little, 'why not me, as well as you? are you coming across?'

'Are you going across?' said Will, doubtfully.

'Yes,' the other answered; 'I came over on business; don't say any thing of my having been here. Pray remember this. I have a particular reason.'

'I shall say nothing,' said Will. 'I am glad you are going, John,' he added, stupidly. 'I think I know your reason—a very nice, pretty reason too.'

'So those women have been telling you all about my private affairs,' said Sir John, speaking quick, and looking very black.

'Your mother told me first,' Will said. 'I saw her the other day. For all sakes I am glad you are giving up all thoughts of Elly Gilmour.'

'Are you?' said John, dryly. They waited for a minute in awkward silence, but as they were shaking hands and saying 'Good-by,' suddenly John melted, and said, 'Look here, Will, I should like to see her once more. Could you manage this for me? I don't want her to know, you know; but could you bring her to the end of the pier? I am going back to Letty, as you see, so I don't think she need object.'

Will nodded, and went up the ladder and turned towards the house without a word, walking quickly and hurrying along. The band in the garden burst out into a pretty melancholy dance tune. The sun went down peg by peg into the sea; the steamer still whistled and puffed as it got up its steam.

Elly was sitting alone. She had lighted a candle, and was writing home. Her hat was lying on a chair beside her. The music had set her dreaming; her thoughts were far away, in the dismal old home again, with Françoise, and Anthony, and the rest of them. She was beginning to live the new life she had been picturing to herself; trying to