

# THE ACADIAN AND BERWICK TIMES.

DEVOTED TO LOCAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE

Vol. VII.

WOLFVILLE, KING'S CO., N. S., FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 1898.

No. 29

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and all the ills which  
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PRICE, 25c. PER BOTTLE.

## Secret Poetry.

Written for the Acadian.

### BEST FOR THEE.

Have you forgotten, Oh my love,  
That hour so long gone by  
When you and I together stood  
Beneath the sunset sky?  
We said good-bye and parted there  
Beside the moonlit sea;  
But then you could not understand  
How it was best for thee;  
That we should part to meet no more.  
How it was best for thee.

O, cruel were the words you said,  
Their memory haunts me yet,  
That false and sickle was my heart,  
But you would never forget.  
But you were angry then, my love,  
And most unjust to me,  
For all these years have surely proved  
That parting best for thee;  
But can you tell me now to-night  
That it was best for me?

Was ever love so fond as mine:  
Was ever love so vain?  
I would have wept that you might smile,  
Have died to save you pain;  
But I was poor and lowly born,  
And you no mate for me;  
So though the parting broke my heart,  
I knew 'twas best for thee,  
And so I freely gave you up,  
Because 'twas best for thee.

And so the weary years went by  
Without one ray of light,  
For I had never heard your name  
Since that sad parting night.  
At last I wandered back again,  
If I might see you,  
Which of us two was right that night  
Beside the summer sea,  
If that sad parting hour of pain  
Had brought content to thee.

I see that you are happy now,  
And rich, and grand, and gay;  
That you've forgot your boyhood's love,  
Which pleased you for a day,  
And she who fills your heart and home  
In good and fair to see;  
So tell me now, was I not right,  
Was it not best for thee  
That we should walk through life apart?  
But was it best for me?

**Interesting Story.**

### An Incident of My Childhood.

Continued.

"My dear Mr. Ellison," said my aunt, looking with surprise at my guardian, who had certainly warmed into unusual energy—"I think we are wandering from the point. Such a discussion as this will not do Mabel any good, but rather harm, if I understand you to mean that we are not materially affected by our transgressions. It is a strange doctrine, sir, and a very dangerous one."

"My dear friend," returned my guardian gently, "far be it from me to say that our transgressions do not materially affect us! I do not want to gain any view of the life-long family which a human being should feel for a criminal act; but I would introduce hope, and not despair, into his mind. I don't think the plan on which society goes of judging the character of a man from individual acts or single aberrations is just; very often such actions are not fair representations of the life or even the nature of the man. They show, indeed, what he was at that moment; but it may be that never before or since in his existence did he or will he experience such a trial. Or perhaps he is condemned by the world, and shunned as a lost character. How bitterly hard for that man to do his duty in life!"

"No doubt," said my aunt, "it does bear hard in particular cases; but it is the arrangement of Providence that the way of transgressors is hard."

"I am not speaking," returned my guardian, "of the habitual transgressor, but of one who, like Mabel here, thinks life spoiled by a single act of moral evil, and is treated as if it were so. You speak of Providence," he continued with a smile; "an instance rises to my mind where an aggravated sin was committed, and yet the sinner, far from being doomed to obscurity and life-long remorse, was spared all reproach save that of his agonized conscience, was distinguished above others, called to God's most sacred service, elected to the glory of martyrdom. If remorse were in any case justifiable, if any sin should unfit man for rising above it or for doing good in his generation, surely it would have been in Peter's case. But we know that story. My dear madam"—and Mr. Ellison, laying his hand on my head, looked appealingly towards my aunt—"I desire to speak reverently; but think you, after Christ's charge, even John, Abdiel-like disciple as he was, ever presumed to say or feel that he could

never esteem or look upon Peter as he once did? This is what is forbidden us—to look upon men as fallen below their chance of recovery."—My aunt was silent, but I could see she was impressed. As for me, I felt as if a load were being slowly lifted off my heart, and it swelled with a passionate aspiration to recover, with God's help, my former standing, and press on in the upward way. And would I not, through life be tender and merciful to the penitent wrong-doer?—"If I speak warmly on this subject, continued my guardian, "it is because my own experience furnishes me with a proof of how low an honorable man may fall, and how far the magnanimity, or rather justice, I have been advocating may enable him to rise again, and try and work out towards his fellow-men—I know he cannot do so towards God—reparation for his offence. May I tell you a story?"

"Certainly," said my aunt; but she looked uneasily towards me.

"Let Mabel stay and hear me," said Mr. Ellison; the lesson is for her to learn, and my story will do her no harm."

He took a few turns through the room, as if collecting his thoughts, and then began. If any reader wonders that, at fourteen, my memory retained the details of such a conversation, let me explain, that many times since then has this subject been renewed and discussed by my guardian and me.

"Many years back," said Mr. Ellison, "I knew two friends. They were young men of very different character, but, for ought I know, that might have been the secret of their attachment. The elder, whom, for distinction's sake, I will call Paul, was of a thoughtful, reserved turn of mind. He was given a good deal to speculations about the moral capacities and infirmities of his own nature and that of his race, and had a deep inward enthusiasm for what he conceived to be goodness and virtue; and I will do him the justice to say, he strove so far as in him lay to act up to his convictions. The younger—we will call him Clement—was of a lighter temper. Generous, frank, and vivacious, he was a far more general favorite than his friend; but yet, when men of experience spoke on the subject, they said, the one was, so doubt, the most lovable, but the other most trustworthy. Well—for I do not wish to make a long story of it—Clement, who had no securities from his friend, had made him long ago the confidant of a strong but unfortunate attachment of his. Unfortunately, I say; not that the lady was eminently worthy, but, alas! she was rich, and he but a brief-chancing barrister. Clement had a chivalrous signet ring of honor, and had never shown any other word of love, though he confessed he had a vague, secret hope that the girl returned his feeling. He blushed, however, like a woman when he made this admission, and would fain have gained it as a presumption the moment after. He rather unwisely, but most naturally, still visited at the house, where the parents, suspecting nothing, received him cordially; and at length he ventured to introduce Paul there too, in order that his friend might judge for himself of the perfection of his mistress."

"It is not necessary to describe the daughter; suffice it to say, Paul found in her person and character not only enough to justify Clement's choice, but to excite in his own mind a passion of a strength corresponding with the silent energy of his character. He kept his secret and heard Clement talk of his love with the patience of a friend, while secretly he had to contend with the jealousy of a lover. But he did content against it, and strove to master himself; for apart from what honor and friendship enjoyed, he saw plainly that Eleanor favored the unexpressed, but with a woman's keenness, half-guessed love of Clement. He forbore to visit at the house, in spite of the double welcome his relation to Clement and his own social position. Paul was rich—had obtained for him there. Time passed, and Paul was still at war with an unrequited weakness, when I came on an appointment in India. Before you go, said Paul to him, 'you will speak to Eleanor?'

"No," said Clement, after painful

deliberation; 'the chances of my success are still doubtful; when I have proved them, and can satisfy her parents I will write.'

"You may lose her through your over-scrupulousness."

"I may," said Clement, 'but if she loves me, she has read my heart, and I can trust her.'

"Clement, therefore, took his secret to India with him, and Paul was left at home to fight with a gigantic temptation. I need not go into the subtleties it assumed; but for a long time he was proof against them. He would not sacrifice honor and friendship, the strength of a good conscience, and the principles he revered, to selfish passion and inclination. One evening, however, he yielded to a weakness he had several times overcome, and went to the house. He said to himself he could see how she bore Clement's absence. Eleanor received him with a kindness she had never shown before. Her parents politely hoped, when he rose to leave, that they were not to lose his society as well as Clement's. That night cast the die. 'I love her,' said Paul to himself; 'Clement does no more. I have the same right as he goes to be happy.' Ma'am," added Mr. Ellison abruptly, "you guess what followed. Paul, with his keen sense of rectitude, his ambitious aspirations, yielded, and fell."

My guardian paused. My whole girl's heart was in his story; I forgot my humbled position, and exclaimed eagerly: "But did Eleanor love him?"

Mr. Ellison looked at me quickly, and then half smiled. The smile was a relief to me, for it brought back the usual expression which he had lost during the telling of this story. "You shall hear," he resumed presently. Paul having decided to act a fraudulent and unworthy part, used all his powers to gain his object. "Honor and self-respect I have lost," he said; "love and gratification I must have." It was a terrible period that followed. The suit he argued with such uniring zeal seemed to gain slow favor with Eleanor. Her parents were already his supporters; and with the irritating hopes and fears of an ardent but baffled lover, were mixed the stinging agonies of remorse and shame. Clement's periodical letters, long since unanswered, were now unread; to him, such as he now was, they were not addressed— that sweet friendship was buried along with his youth's integrity. I will not linger," said my guardian hurriedly, "Paul won the prize which he had sought at such a cost; Eleanor's consent was gained, and the marriage-day was appointed. I don't think even then he so deceived himself as to think he was happy. Moments of tumultuous emotion, of feverish excitement that he mis-named joy, he had, but his blessedness had escaped him. Not only his conscience told him was Clement defrauded, but Eleanor was deceived. To hear her express at any time indignant scorn of what was base or mean, was a moral torture so exquisitely acute that only those who conceive it who have stooped to a like degradation. A night or two before the day fixed for the wedding, Paul went as usual to her house. Just before he took his leave, Eleanor left the room and returned with a letter. There was a glow on her cheek as she gave it. 'I have long momentous said, 'to have no momentous secrets from him who is to be my husband; it will be better for you to know this.'

"He took the letter. I see you guess the sequel; it was from Clement. It told the story of his long-silent love, for he was now in a position to satisfy his own scruples and tell it. With the fear upon his mind that even now his treasure might escape him, Paul clung to it more tenaciously than ever; passion smothered remorse. 'Well, he asked, looking at her almost fiercely, 'does the secret go no further?'

"Very little further, Paul," said Eleanor gravely. "I loved Clement once, but I thought he trifled with me; he is not now honorably to be loved by you now."

"Paul felt a sudden impulse to confess the whole truth, but it was transient. He had felt many such an impulse before, but had conquered it; should he on the eve of possession,

with that assurance in his ears, yield now?"

"But, Mr. Ellison," I cried, interrupting him with the matter-of-fact sagacity of a child, "didn't it seem strange to Eleanor that Paul had told Clement nothing about his engagement?"

"Ah, Mabel," sighed my guardian, "no great sin but has its lesser ones. Long since, Paul had found it necessary to tell Eleanor a false story concerning his present suspension of intercourse with Clement."

I think this absolute lie of Paul's touched my aunt as sensibly as any point in the history, for she broke silence. "And what," she said, "was the end of this wretched young man's history? Are you going to tell us we must not despise him?"

"One moment longer," urged my guardian, "and you shall pass your judgment. Paul married Eleanor; you are surprised? Alas! poetical justice is not the rule of his life. Yet why do I say alas? has it not a higher rule? He married her then, each loved the other, but Paul was a miserable man. His friends noticed it; naturally then his wife; but he kept his secret: no wonder months wrought upon him the effect of years. Nevertheless, he neglected his duties—had no heart for them; self-contempt, a bitter remorse, cankered every aspiration, enfeebled effort, sapped and destroyed his capabilities. Life slipped, wasted through his fingers. I could not," said Mr. Ellison, "give you an idea what he suffered, but I believe he was at this time deeply mistaken, increasingly criminal. If a man's sin be black as hell—and his was black—remorse cannot mend it; so long as he lives, life requires duties and effort from him; let him not think he is free to spend it in this selfish absorption."

"True," said my aunt; "but let him not expect, even though he strive to rise and partially succeed, that he is to be respected as worthier man."

"A year passed," resumed my guardian, without heeding the remark, and Clement returned to England. Originally, he had a noble soul; sanctifying sorrow had made him great. He inquired after his former friend, wrote to him, assuring him he could meet Eleanor now with the calmest of friendship; and forced himself upon him. I say forced, for, naturally, Clement was to Paul an actual angel. An agonized retribution was at hand for the latter; Eleanor died in her first confinement, after but a few hours' illness; her infant even died before her. In this extremity, well was it for Paul that Clement was at hand; in his overwhelming grief, the past seemed cancelled; he could claim and endure his friend's magnanimous tenderness. When he recovered from this stroke, he roused himself to a new existence. Clement had succeeded in convincing him of his forgiveness, of his continued friendship even. 'After the first shock of feeling,' he said, 'the thought of what a nature like yours must suffer, which had been tempted to such an act, changed, slowly, I grant, but still changed, resentment into sympathy. For my own consolation, I studied the New Testament; it has taught me lessons which I think, Paul, you as well as I have missed. I won't insult you by dwelling on my free pardon; if it is worthy of acknowledgment, put your hand once more to the plough, labor for the welfare of others, and work out your own.' He argued against remorse, and urged the considerations which I have brought more feebly forward, with such effect, that Paul laid them to heart, and strove to test their truth. With God's forgiveness sought and obtained, and that of the man he had injured—with principles drawn from a deeper and diviner source than he had known before—he proved that life still lay before him as a field for honorable and remunerative labor. I believe his friend respected him more in this second stage of his experience than before; I know he did not respect him less. Will any other presume to do so?" asked Mr. Ellison, approaching my aunt. "My dear friend, wonder not at my tenderness to Mabel; that is the salutary result of so severe an experience; it is my own story I have told."

I think my aunt must have guessed the truth ere this, for she made no immediate answer. I was silent

with astonishment. My guardian turned and looked at me. "Mabel," he said earnestly, "let me not have humbled myself before you in vain. God preserve you from sinning against your own nature and him; but where you fall, God give you grace and strength to rise and strive again. And grant me this too, my child; in after-life you may have much influence; for my sake, for your own experience of suffering and shame, be merciful to the wrong-doer. Make it one of your duties to help the fallen, even though she be a woman, and convince her that all is not lost in one false step. God provides against his creatures' remorse—shall man be less merciful to his brother?"

"Mr. Ellison," said my aunt, "the life of effort and self-denial you have led condemns my severity. I have been too harsh; but I must seriously review this argument. Mabel, come here!" I approached her timidly; she drew me nearer.—"One must still repeat before he can be pardoned," she said; "but I think you do repent, Mabel?"

My tears flowed. "Aunt, forgive me," I whined; "I am sorry indeed, I don't like to say it, but I think I shall never tell a lie again!"

She kissed me, and rose up; there were tears in her eyes. "Let it be, then, as though it had never been, except to teach you Mr. Ellison's lesson," she said. She then approached my guardian. "I know not," she added, with a softened tone, and holding out her hand with an air of respect, "how much you lost some years ago by Clement's death. If no other, you and I will be better friends."

Mr. Ellison pressed her hand in silence; I saw he could not speak; I had an instinct that he would wish to be alone, so I followed my aunt quickly out of the room.

She turned kindly around, and despatched me on some message as of old; I felt I was forgiven! Before fulfilling it, I ran into my room, and shut the door; then kneeling down by the bedside, I prayed as I had not before done, with softened heart and contrite tears, for God's forgiveness.

Those few hours have influenced a lifetime.

## The First Sign

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Those few hours have influenced a lifetime.

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