

## Tales and Sketches.

## THE CROSS-EYED ANGEL.

AFTER THE GERMAN OF ADELINKE VOLCK-HAUSER.

OUR old nurse was the first to call me "Cross-eyed Angel;" her example was followed by my brothers; theirs by the children in the neighborhood; and, later, the example of them all was followed, I am quite sure, by the gentlemen whom I met at parties, went with to picnics, and danced with at the casino.

In the nursery I was indifferent to the nickname—so indifferent, indeed, that I myself sometimes used it; and, although my older brothers occasionally used it as a means to tease me, it never really wounded my feelings to be called by it, until I heard it cried out behind me for the first time on the street.

I came home crying, and declared I would never go out again; but I allowed myself to be consoled by my mother, who explained to me that the word "angel" far outweighed the offensive qualifying term, adding, as she passed her hand lovingly over my head, that there was not a little girl in the whole city who had such beautiful golden hair as I had.

That was, perhaps true, but the golden richness of my hair did not lessen the terrible squint of my left eye. I must try to conceal it, I thought; and, as I had read in some old books that the Baroness of—I don't remember what—a prim and venerable spinster, admonished her nieces and other young damsels to clasp their hands before them, to look down, and never at the bachelors, I resolved to range myself among her disciples.

But I found this very embarrassing! and, when I met acquaintances, it was quite impracticable. I therefore was compelled to give it up, and to look at everybody as I always had done, except the boys in the street. I considered them as my greatest enemies, and avoided them in every way possible. On the whole, I think I endured the irremediable, with a fair share of resignation. I say irremediable, because it seemed as though there was no remedy for the defect. My parents consulted several surgeons, but they all shook their learned heads, and refused to undertake the operation. My case, it seemed, was not an ordinary one; the operation required was more severe than the one usually performed in such cases, and the result was very doubtful.

My father and mother were, nevertheless, both in favor of having the operation performed, but I had not the courage. I shuddered at the mere thought of having my eye cut, and then I feared I might lose it entirely. Being cross-eyed I thought far better than being one-eyed.

In one respect, at least, my misfortune did not operate to my disadvantage. In society I never had the mortification of being neglected; and at balls and dancing-parties my card was filled sooner than, perhaps, that of any young girl of my acquaintance. But, then, I was always careful to be cheerful and sunny, and not to reply in monosyllables; or, the contrary, to always do my share of the talking, and to talk my best, without appearing to be in love with the sound of my own voice, or seeming to think that I was Sir or Madame Oracle, and should be listened to more than another.

"One never tires of talking to the Cross-eyed Angel," I once overheard a gentleman of my acquaintance say to another. Ah! but the compliment the remark conveyed was not sufficient to assuage the pain the nickname caused me, far as the speaker was from any intention to be unkind.

A certain timidity and bashfulness, which was altogether foreign to my nature, usually came over me, and lasted for a time, after being unpleasantly reminded of my bodily defect. At such times I would retire to some obscure corner—shed, perhaps, a few tears—and remain, until, getting out of patience with myself, I would cry: "Ah, fie! If they don't like my looks, they need not look at me!" and I would sally forth again.

It was, perhaps, on account of her beautiful eyes that I was so partial to my friend Charlotte. I, at all events, sometimes thought so, and often expressed my admiration for them to her, when she would reply that I, too, *would* have handsome eyes if—Ah! that unfortunate "if!" As they stood in their sockets, the one looking one way and the other another they were little short of repulsive.

Charlotte and I had grown up together; our families were neighbors. She had played in our nursery and I in theirs; she in our garden, and I on their lawn. This habit had united us more closely than choice would have done; but, although when I grew up, this was sometimes unpleasantly apparent, still, from force of habit, our relations remained unchanged.

The atmosphere in our house was very different from that in Charlotte's. Her parents were rich, and belonged to the so-called fashionables. They kept a little army of servants, who, we always thought did much to pamper and spoil the children. Charlotte was, perhaps, the most

spoiled of any of them, which was in some measure due, doubtless, to her being the only daughter. She was not only not required to do any thing, but she was not allowed to do any thing, that pertained to household duties. She was surrounded by a certain do-nothing would-be poetic nimbus, which falls to the lot of women in exclusive circles only.

I, on the contrary, was brought up in a very plain, old-fashioned way; at a very early age I had my share to perform in the domestic duties of our modest establishment, and I learned betimes to use my needle. At school I overtook Charlotte, although she was two years my senior, and entered the first class the same time she did. But, as I had always intended to be a teacher when I got old enough, it seemed to me very natural that I should study harder and know every thing better than Lottie, who would be rich, and never have to do any thing for a livelihood.

My father occupied himself a great deal with us children; his leisure hours were always given us. From him we learned more than in school, and in a much more agreeable manner. His was one of those natures that are not content unless they are continually communicating to those around them whatever they may know that is worth acquiring, and consequently always act as an incentive to others to make daily additions to their stock of knowledge. To this peculiarity of my father was doubtless due the fact that my mother, despite her manifold household duties, retained a certain mental youthfulness and freshness to the day of her death. He always exercised a sort of supervision over our reading, talked with us about what we read, and, indeed, often read aloud to us himself.

No wonder that our house was called a "learned house;" and when any one, for a change, called me any thing but Cross-eyed Angel, it was sure to be "Learned Lizzie;" which, to me, was scarcely an improvement, as I could not abide the abbreviation, and especially the "ie" termination. I very much preferred my full name—Elizabeth—to any thing else.

Go where I would, I found no house that was better kept, in which there was more real comfort, or where the inmates enjoyed themselves better than we did; even Charlotte confessed that, although it would have been hard to find a house in which there was a greater absence of what is called "style."

My father was a lawyer. He stood high in his profession, and was consequently always fully employed. It was, therefore, very natural that the young jurists who located in G—, or came to fill government positions, should not only call on us, but should be invited to our little entertainments whenever my father saw no reasons why their visits should not be encouraged. In criticizing these young people, he showed them no mercy. He condemned their weaknesses and failings, when we were alone, with a severity that sometimes surprised me; but later it was clear to me that he did it solely on my account, in order that I should not indulge in romantic illusions with regard to persons of questionable worth. This was undoubtedly the reason I never had any little love-affairs to recount, like all the young girls of my acquaintance, especially Charlotte, although I certainly received as much attention as the others.

"The son of one of my oldest and best friends is to be sent here as assessor," said my father one day, at the dinner-table, as he took a letter out of his pocket.

"Who is it?" asked my mother.

"Young Eberhard?"

"Yes," was the reply. "Paul Eberhard writes me: 'Let me recommend my son Carl to your kind offices. He is steady and capable. If one of your sons should come to Berlin, he will find the door of my house always open to him, and I am sure Carl will always be a welcome visitor at yours.' etc."

"Certainly—certainly he will!" cried my mother; "and don't you think you had better write to say that we shall be glad to have the young gentleman stop with us until he finds rooms to suit him?"

"That is just what I was about to suggest to you, my dear," replied my father. "Very well, I will write this evening. He will doubtless find suitable lodgings in two or three days, at farthest. There are plenty vacant, go where you will."

Thus it was Carl Eberhard came to be our guest: i. e., to occupy the cozy little square room that looked out on the garden, and which, with the large acquaintance of my hospital parents, was never long without an occupant. It was, therefore, nothing new for us to have a guest in the house; we were, however, especially father—somewhat more curious than usual, for our expected guest was an entire stranger to us all.

Carl Eberhard came, and, in personal appearance, was very like his father, who had been at our house often. He was tall and slim, with a handsome face, the most attractive feature of which was—not in my opinion alone—his large, expressive eyes, which immediately reminded me of Charlotte's.

"What a pity," I thought to myself, "that Charlotte is not at home! I should be glad to see what this effect would be of these two pairs of eyes looking at each other."

I, at that time, had passed me eighteenth birthday, and still it seemed to me that our guest was inclined to treat me as a child, although I could not complain that his manner toward me was not perfectly well-bred and respectful. Short and slight as I was, he literally looked down on me; and, still accustomed to romp occasionally in the garden with my younger brother Albert, I thought little of supporting the dignity of a young lady.

Albert, who was at college, was of course learning Latin, which he found very difficult. I, too, had learned something of Latin, partly *en passant* with my older brothers, by hearing them say over their task and by devoting a little time to it, and later by applying myself more closely under the tutelage of my father. "It not only adds to our general knowledge of language, but it accustoms us to think logically," he used to say; "and, to a woman, especially, the latter is of more importance than the former."

Albert sat in the garden near the house, learning the prepositions with the accusative. The more difficult he found it to get them into his head, the louder he repeated them. *Ad apud, ante*, he began any number of times, always sticking fast at the seventh or eighth word.

"*Circa, circiter, erga*," I helped him forward, as I continued to weed my favourite flower-bed.

"*Ob, pene, per*," and he stuck again.

"*Post, prater*," I cried out to him; and as he still stumbled over them, I began the list, and went through them with a celerity that would have done credit to an old-time pedagogue.

"I have them in my memory so fast that I shall never forget them," I added; "but they are terribly hard to learn at first."

"Heaven knows, they are!" sighed poor Albert.

"Miss Elizabeth, can you repeat the prepositions with the ablative also?" asked a familiar voice from above us.

I looked up. Eberhard was leaning out of his window, he had heard and seen all that had passed.

I felt my face redden, and for a moment I was silent; then I burst into a hearty laugh and began, "*a, ab, abaque*," and so on, with lightning rapidity to the end of the list.

"Is it possible, Miss Lizzie, that you know Latin? and so well!"

Albert and I laughed heartily at the question, which, more in the tone than in the words, expressed the greatest astonishment. Eberhard disappeared from the window, and a few moments after joined us in the garden.

"I thought at first," he began, "you had only picked up a little—from your older brothers, perhaps."

"Oho!" cried Albert, at the top of his voice, "our little learned Lizzie knows her Virgil and Caesar with the best of them, I can tell you. I wish I only knew them half as well!"

There was an expression of such utter amazement in Eberhard's face that we could not help laughing again.

"You are the first lady I have ever seen who knew Latin," said he. "Had I known this before I came, I should have imagined the daughter of my father's old friend very different from what I found her."

And when I asked, "How so?" the reply was in accordance with the notions that have prevailed since the time of Moses and the bulrushes, I imagine—that a learned woman must be old, ugly, and pedantic: "Instead of this, I find you," added Eberhard, "a veritable Amaryliss, even to the rake." I had picked up one a few minutes before he came down.

"I never could understand," said I, "why people think it so strange that a girl should learn Latin, when they think it very natural and proper that she should learn French and English, Spanish and Italian."

This was the starting-point of quite a lengthy conversation, the first really that had ever taken place between us, and I can, therefore, truly say that our acquaintance began with the accusative.

"There is nothing I admire more in a woman," said Eberhard, "than real culture—solid attainments; but we meet with it so rarely, especially in women of your age! How do you, pray, chance to form such a notable and praiseworthy exception? how did you acquire so much knowledge?"

So much knowledge! I knew well that I, in reality, possessed very little—that I had learned nothing thoroughly.

"How did I acquire what little I know?" I asked.

"Yes; that is what I should like to know," returned Eberhard.

"Well, I left school at fifteen, the age when men—those, at least, who are considered liberally educated—really begin their studies," I replied. "Since then, my only opportunities have been those afforded me by my home associations, and my

only teacher has been my father; but I have necessarily been very irregular in my studies, and what you are pleased to call my learning, in a man, you would, I am sure, call only a superficial smattering. So little is demanded of a woman in the higher branches of human knowledge that a little goes a great way."

From this theme we went to others of a kindred nature. I talked a good deal, and talked, I thought afterward, unusually well, for, although Eberhard spoke with a certain air of superiority, he nevertheless listened to me very respectfully, and I felt a healthful inspiration in exchanging ideas with him that was as agreeable as it was new.

I have long since forgotten what I had said, but I looked up at Eberhard for a reply. He was silent, and the expression of his face was entirely changed. He seemed occupied with some thought foreign to the subject we were discussing; but he looked me full in the face, and it seemed as though his large, dark eyes would penetrate my inmost soul.

I felt strangely embarrassed and confused. Suddenly it occurred to me that he was looking at my turned eye. My face became crimson at the thought; I turned away, and my unconstrained manner was gone. He tried to reestablish the former familiar tone, but his endeavors proved fruitless.

Eberhard experienced great difficulty in finding rooms that suited him. Now he objected to their northern exposure, now to their being on the third floor, and now to their being too far from the side of the town on which we lived.

He was with us over two weeks before he found quarters that suited him. They were in our immediate neighborhood, and indeed, were so situated that he could overlook a portion of our garden from his windows. True, he had a northern exposure, but that little objection was more than counterbalanced by other considerations.

During these two weeks we became right well acquainted. The weather being remarkably pleasant, we spent a good deal of time in the open air, and, when Eberhard's time admitted of it, he joined us on the veranda, or he sought me out in a favorite and retired spot in the garden under one of the two stately linden-trees between which my father had placed my father had placed a plaster statue of Justice. During the hours when the sun shone on the porch so as to make it uncomfortably warm, it was shady and cool under the lindens, and consequently we often drank our coffee in the afternoon gathered around "Madame Justice," as we were in the habit of saying.

The preparing of the coffee, while my father and mother took a *siesta*, was my office. Albert usually put in an appearance at the coffee-hour, but not always. Eberhard however, never failed. He was a great lover of good coffee, and at first I suspected his prompts was due solely to his desire to get the decoction as soon after it was made as possible.

Eberhard was, in fact, something of an epicure, and he did not pretend to deny it. He had not been with us more than two or three days when he took occasion to say: "The man who is not himself rich is in duty bound to look out for a rich wife. I, for my part, can't conceive of a domestic establishment, in which there is any real comfort, that is not supplied with ample means." This little speech, which, under the circumstances, was in doubtful taste, led to a discussion between him and my father, in the course of which he remarked further: "And my wife must not only be rich, but she must also be beautiful and cultured, for I would be proud of her always and everywhere."

Why had this conversation left such a painful something in my remembrance? What was it to me if he would marry no woman who was not rich and beautiful! It ought to be a matter of perfect indifference to me, and I was frightened when, a few days afterward, I caught myself soliloquising, "But, you are not rich nor beautiful!"

Did I, then, want to be his wife? I had really never asked myself this direct question, but, for the first time in my young life, I found myself at all hours occupied with a man who, to my imagination, was the perfection of manly beauty and a model of manly dignity, and that man was Carl Eberhard.

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Two young fellows from the Emerald Isle, were sitting by the road-side one day last summer, and presented a very forlorn appearance. One of them was looking very attentively at his boots, which were rather the worse for wear. His companion noticing his fixed look, spoke to him thus:

"Say, Pat, what are you thinking about, are you thinking about the old spot?"

"No, shall I tell what I was thinking about?"

"Yes."

"Well, I was wondering why these boots are like a criminal after he is hung?"

"Why are they?"

"Because, the sole (soul) is lost, and they are past healing (heeling)."

## Family Circle.

## LIFE.

I.  
Life, 'tis a vapor, lasteth but a day,  
Appears a little while, and wings its way  
To realms where Time's unmeasured  
cycles run,  
And present, past, and future, all in one.

II.  
Life, oh how short, immeasurably small!  
Six thousand years on this terraqueous  
ball.

III.  
But as a vapor, in God's sight appears,  
And less than nothing midst the rolling  
spheres.

IV.  
Pierce the blue vault, the outskirts of  
God's throne,

Where suns, and systems roll, to us, un-  
known,

Even light itself, the distance cannot span,  
Through countless ages as it sweeps  
along.

V.  
A moment, in a scraph's mind appears,  
Of same duration as ten million years:  
What then six thousand? or, three-score  
and ten?—

The flickering vapor of men's lives.

VI.  
Time soon must end, when with uplifted  
hand,

"One foot on sea, and other on the land."  
The angel loud proclaims, "Time is no  
more."

No time exists beyond earth's deer  
shore.

VII.  
There, one eternal day forever reigns,  
All sickness, sighing, sin, and all its pains,  
Alike unknown, eternal glories rise,  
Vast in extent, boundless as the skies.

—SMITH.

## WHY I DON'T MARRY.

WHY are there so few marriages now-a-days?" a young lady asked me, the other evening, the half-puzzled expression upon her fair face seeming to indicate that she was rather surprised at a state of matters that could give rise to such a question. We had found ourselves, at the conclusion of a promenade on the veranda, after a fast and furious gallop, seated side by side in a cosy nook in the supper-room, and from the crouching nature of the question, propounded after she had finished an ice, and I some claret-cup, you can perceive how confidential we had become. Had the query come out accidentally or unconnectedly in the course of a conversation about the weather and things in general, I might, nine times out of ten, with some degree of certainty have ascribed it to the praiseworthy endeavors of a good-looking girl, untroubled with a superabundance of conversational power, to keep the ball of small talk rolling smoothly along. But I had found that my partner was not only pretty, but clever and sensible besides, and from the skillful manner in which she had led up the conversation to this posing query, she had not only made me think that she herself was curious to know my views upon the subject, but had also to some extent prepared me for a remark that might otherwise have shocked my delicate feelings. But with her fine eyes looking interrogatively into mine, her flushed face lighted up with the enthusiasm of nineteen, and the melodious music of the interminable Lancers, from which we both had fled, floating into the room in delicious interludes, I must be pardoned my having refused to fall into a semi-philosophic vein, and for having answered my fair examiner with a *bon-bon*, to the effect that she, at least, had no reason to ask the question. But that night, or morning rather, when I had returned to the calmer atmosphere of my lodgings, had subsided in a shooting-coat, and thrown myself into a sung arm-chair before a cheerful fire, duly appreciated by my old friend Patch, who, dog though he be, was winking at me approvingly on the hearth-rug, the question which I had so successfully evaded in the supper-room would persist in coming into my thoughts—possibly not unconnected with the fair form of its author—whether I would or not, though the answer I had given her had passed into the shadows.

"What," I asked myself, "is the reason I am not married ere now? I am old enough—thirty next birthday. I am domestic enough, as Patch and my landlady can testify. And by the gentler and fairer sex I am considered—not repulsive; for would my pretty supper-room philosopher otherwise have honored me with her confidence in an interesting *te-te-te*?" I confess that I had never thought seriously on the subject before, but since then I have been investigating and reasoning, and thinking, and bringing the whole