

Choice Miscellany.

A Wish.

I turned as I saw them passing, The child and the bent old man; The grand old tottered and tumbled, But the grandson sported and ran.

Jean.

Sweet and dainty as the wise-eyed daisies rimmed against her breast; slender and graceful as the tall nodding grasses that brush against her skirts; sweet and fair and lovely as the June itself—that is Jean.

Big, solemn, blue eyes like a bit of the summer sky above her sunny head; a curved tender mouth where dimples lurk and lovely little smiles creep in and out; soft muslin draperies and a gypsy hat set above the blushes and the dimples—that is Jean.

The country road is grass-grown and deserted. It is a "short cut" to the village beyond the hill, to which a broad, white tumpack sweeps and leaves the shorter road to quiet rest; and the grass is soft across it and the ground sparrow has her nest in the wagon tracks.

The grass is studded with daisies, white and yellow, and sweet williams blossom gaily among the purple thistles. Beyond, in the fields, the corn waves, a dark, green, shimmering sea, over the slope, and out of sight. A clear green sea, broken only now and then by a stately mullain stalk which rears its yellow head above the shining corn and seems to look with an air of possession over the broad fields.

In the shadow of the fence the dew is not yet dried, and glistens bravely as stray sunbeams find their way to it. The birds sing their merriest, and the sun shines its brightest and through it all walks Jean with downcast, happy eyes.

"While you are away, you will not forget—you know what?" her companion says holding closer her warm right hand. "You will not forget, Jean?" "As if I could, you foolish boy!" she says with a happy laugh. "But you may forget."

"Yes when I forget to live," he says. "Oh, Jean! what would the world be to me without you?" "A very lovely world still," she says, but he shakes his head and they walk on in silence.

They walk on, down the hill and through the village streets and up the rickety platform where, once a day, a roaring express train stops and brings, for a moment, some of the city's smoke and dim to the quiet country.

The station master, in flapping straw hat and patched corduroy trousers, lounges on a truck in the morning sunshine. A good-natured old couple sit close together in startled anticipation of departure, and a blue young fellow, whose satchel hangs by a strap from his shoulder, yawns and opens his dull eyes further to take in more of Jean's fresh loveliness, as she comes forward.

"It is the last time, Jean," her lover whispers. "You will never go away from me again. Think of me, my sweetheart! The very last 'good-bye' that we need ever say."

The sweet, red blushes chase each other over rose-leaf face and soft white neck, which the linen collar guards so jealously.

"The very last," she repeats softly. "Let me pin this daisy on your coat, Don. Now I you will think of me when it withered and you throw it away. And I will keep this in my hand until they fade and think of you every minute and know that you are thinking of me."

And she talks and laughs and his fond eyes watched her flower-like face that smiles and blushes under his tender gaze.

come means and subs; thrusts aside the official who would bar his way and who shrinks back from his drawn, desperate face.

A soiled white dress, a crushed gypsy hat and a white upturned face. He takes her in his arms and, with no word, bears her out from the noise and crowd. People make way for him and turn their faces away, and eyes are dim and lips quiver.

Out of the crowd he goes and lays her gently down on the soft grass. "There is blood on her white forehead; he wipes it tenderly away and smoothes back the fair tangled hair. Her tiny hands still hold the flowers that have hardly withered.

He kisses her small, cold hands, her still, white lips and feels her by the old, fond, tender names—and there is no reply.

Holding fast her forehead, with the happy smile that still lingers on her lips Jean has gone swiftly—terribly—out of all possible harm and misery. Her head is heavy on his arm and to his passionate cries there is no answer, and he carries his gray, haggard face in the cool grass and holds her head close to his.

"The last good-bye that we need ever say," he means. "Oh, Jean, my darling, it was! But take me with you—come for me!" But her lips do not answer or move, though he watches them and warms them with his breath. Then he folds her hands upon her breast and clasps her fingers about the faded daisies, and bows his head, while the shadow that never will be lifted, comes down and takes him in its embrace.

Waiting.

At the cross-roads. Which way? How the sunlight flickers down through the interlacing of leaves and branches, and falls a slant of an up-turned face.

What a world of vicissitudes in the dark eyes. With what an almost clinching firmness he the kindly hands, one within another.

A slight shifting of position. A restless movement of weary feet. A smooth eel's eye.

How gently the breezes fan the broad brow and toy with the silken hair. What a mingling of expressions; hope, fear, joy, despair and wonder, all in one. The way hath been toilsome. Ah, so well may the thorn-pierced feet testify.

Repress hath given the earnest while laughing lips a look akin to pain. Lines lie deeply here, and upon the brow—lines of thought and kindly care.

Ever an immolation of self, upon the altar of another's needs, yet no realization of the depth and extent of the sacrifice. It is, as if it never were, without a shadow of bitterness to mar the exquisite-ness of the halo of beauty. Oh, heart of gold; but the scars remain and the star-gemmed pathway.

Some heart made glad, some head made to rest easier upon its pillow, because of those same clinched hands. A bearer of many burdens, taking no thought of self, but through it all, while in "patience possessing the soul." A great hope lies buried, that some time, somewhere and somehow it shall be.

So long, such a weary waiting, and only at the cross-roads, and now a doubt. Which way? Do not linger; press on. There is a faint gleam of a full fruit coming—coming that way, and there the echo of the "Might have been" floats away in whispers of the wind, away down in the valleys.

How sick lies the heart with "Hope deferred." Take courage, it hath not been in vain, oh, tried and true. See! the sun in one conglomerate mass of beauty has risen above the tree tops, and rests so lovingly upon thee. Take heart of this, as bathed in its effulgent glow, drifts down from Heaven, a psalm of praise.

Waiting an effort, a hope fulfilled. Stop My Paper. An exchange says: "After you get angry, and make up your mind to stop your paper, to make the editor feel humiliated, just poke your finger in water and then pull it out and look for the hole. Then you know how sadly you have missed. The man who thinks a paper cannot survive without his support, ought to go off and stay awhile. When he comes back he will find out that half his friends didn't know he was gone. The other half didn't care a cent, and the world at large haven't kept any account of his movements whatever. You will find things you cannot endorse in every paper. Even the Bible is rather plain and hits some hard links. If you were to get mad and burn your Bible, the hundreds of presses would still go on printing them; and if you were to stop your paper and call the editor all sorts of ugly names, the paper will still be published. And what is more, you'll sneak around and borrow a copy of it every week from your neighbor. It would be much better to keep your vest pulled down, and your subscription paid a year in advance."

When She Spoke. She was a sweet-faced, blue-eyed young girl with great waves of golden hair brushed carefully back from a noble-looking in snow white brow. Her ruby lips were full and sweet. Innocence itself was in her great blue eyes. Fair and sweet was she in all the purity and guilelessness of her fresh young womanhood.

Two young men have long been watching her with eager interest. Her glorious beauty has enthralled them. "What a superb girl!" said one, "Never was Lily fairer! How I would love to hear her speak. No sweet bells jangled could be like words she must utter with lips like those and a face like that."

She spoke. A friend came down the aisle, and said carelessly: "A cold day, Miss B—"

The full red lips parted slowly, the beautiful head turned with superb grace, a smile of serene sweetness illuminated the noble features, soft and sweet and low was her artless answer: "Well, I should wish to twitter! 'Cold ain't no name for it.'"

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