

POOR DOCUMENT

POETRY.

CAREY OF CARSON.

BY CHAS. G. LELAND.

The night mist dim and darkling,
As o'er the roads we pass,
Lies in the morning sparkling
As dew drops on the grass.
Even so the deeds of darkness,
Which come like midnight dews,
Appear as sparkling items
Next morning in the news.

Away in Carson City,
Far in the Silver Land,
There lives one Justice Carey.
A man of head and hand;
And as upon this table
The Judge's smoking sat,
There roved in a rougher
Who wore a gallow's hat.

He looked upon the Justice,
But the Justice did not budge
Until the youngster warbled,
"Say—don't you know me, Judge?"
"I think," said Carey, meekly,
"Your face full well I know—
I sent you up for stealing
A horse a year ago."

"Aye, that is just the hairpin
I am, and that's my line;
And here is twenty dollars
I've brought to pay the fine."
"You owe no fine," said Carey;
"Your punishment is o'er."
"Not yet," replied the rover,
"I've come to have some more."

"Fast rate assault and batt'ry
I'm going to commit,
And you're the mournful victim
That I intend to hit.
And give you such a message
As never was, no how;
And so, to save the lawin',
I guess I'll settle now."

Up rose the Court in splendor;
"Young man, your start is fair;
Go in upon your chance—
Perhaps you may not miss;
I like to see young heroes
Ambitious like this."

The young one at the older
Went in with all his left,
And, like a flyin' boaster,
At once let out his left.
The court, in haste, ducked under
Its head uncomely spry,
Then lifted the intruder
With a puncher in the eye—
A regular right-hander:
And like a cannon ball
The young man, when percussioned,
Went over table wall.

In just about a second
The court, with all its vim,
Like squab vices over the meadow,
Went climbing over him.
Yes, as the pumpkin clammers
Above an Indian grave,
Or as the Mississippi
Lauders with its wave,
And whirly slope over
A town in happy spot,
Even so that man was clambered
All over by the Court.

And in about a minute
That party was so raw,
He would have seemed a stranger
Into his dearest squaw;
Till he was soft and tender,
This mangel once so tough,
And then, in sad surrender,
He moaned aloud, "Enough!"

He roared, and Justice Carey
Said to him ere he went,
"I do not think the fightin'
You did was worth a cent;
I charge for time two dollars,
As lawyers should, 'tis plain:
The balance of the twenty
I give you back again."

"I like to be obligin'
To folks with all my powers,
So when you next want fightin'
Don't come in office hours;
I only make my charges
For what's in legal time—
Drop in, my son, this evenin',
And I'll not charge a dime."

The young man took the merrion,
As he had ta'en the scars;
Then took himself awayward
To the 'Olma City cars,
"Tis glorious when heroes
Go in to right their wrongs,
But if you're only halpin',
Oh, then beware of tongue!"

SELECT STORY.

Miss Peverill's Pride.

"I never heard of such impertinence," said Agnes Peverill, throwing down the letter which she held, and half crying in her vexation. "How dare he write such things to me? What business has he to love me? He never would have dared write like this if—papa were alive and we had not lost our money."

"You may thank yourself for this," said Grandma Peverill, looking over her spectacles with an air of concern. "You have anguished yourself considerably with Harold Helper, to my certain knowledge. When one dances, one must pay the piper."

"I don't understand you, grandma. I certainly never gave him a shadow of encouragement. I have guessed for some time that he—that he didn't dislike me, you know; but I never dreamed that he would dare say as much. Papa's clerk! Why, I've seen him sweeping out the office, and his fingers as inky as Caddy Jellyby's."

"Men are audacious creatures," observed grandma; "but if you knew that he didn't exactly hate you, you oughtn't to have accepted him as an escort when you were learning to ride. When your papa brought him home to dine, you needn't have made yourself so attractive, need you? You might have had a headache in your own room, or an invitation out. You needn't have talked pretty nonsense with him by the hour, while your father and I took our after-dinner nap, need you?"

"One can't help flirting a little, you know, grandma."

"What, with one's father's clerk? And no doubt one can't help working him slippers and braiding watch chains either."

"Why, of course, one gives birthday

and Christmas gifts to all one's acquaintances, even to old Biddy, the pauper. One doesn't expect them to presume on that, however."

"And so you think that Mr. Helper is presuming when he offers you his heart's love and all his worldly prospects? Why so?"

"I think he is presuming, because the Peverills are not of his order, grandma. They came over in the *Mayflower*; they are descended from Lord Peverill; they have graduated at colleges, have enjoyed elegant accomplishments ever since the flood, and have never soiled their hands with the grime of labor; while Mr. Helper's ancestors were illiterate mechanics, who murdered the king's English. Why, his own father was a stone-cutter. I've heard papa say so."

"And supposing that yours had been a mechanic, what objection would you have urged?"

"Why, it's not a supposable case, grandma—Peverill a stone-cutter!"

"But supposing you were not a Peverill?"

"My imagination is not bold enough for such a flight. You see, I have all the prejudices of my class. I would choose unhappiness sooner than marry beneath me."

"Then I am to understand that you consider yourself superior to Harold Helper. It is some years since he figured as your father's ink-fingered clerk, member. Since then he has written a book, he has invented a machine, he has lectured to scientists. Wherein does your superiority consist? What have you been doing in the mean time?"

"I have been rubbing papa's gouty toe, and accepting the attention of Miles Bond."

"You don't mean—"

"I mean that I shall probably marry Miles Bond some fine day, if nothing happens."

"Marry Miles Bond!" repeated grandma, as if she had said that she was going to marry the Khan of Tartary.

"You seem to be astonished, grandma."

"Yes—a little. He's a born aristocrat."

"Exactly—there's a pair of us. I shall be entitled to consideration in the *beau monde* as his wife, don't you see?" For it must be confessed that since Mr. Peverill's death and insolvency the *beau monde* had looked coldly upon his pretty daughter, in spite of the Peverill coat of arms and the luxuriance of the family.

"Then you do not care a fig for Mr. Helper?" asked grandma.

"It is necessary for me to deny the soft impeachment, which I have almost made up my mind to accept another?"

"When I was a girl—" began the old lady.

"You loved brocades and brocatelles as well as your granddaughter."

"But I did not sell myself for them. And so you are really engaged to Miles Bond, and there's no help for it?"

"Well, not really engaged; I won't give my word—at least not quite yet. You see, grandma, one hesitates to rivet the chain, as they say in novels. And then Miles says he will wait; he won't hurry me; he'll rather wait a century in sweet suspense, as he calls it, than to be refused at once. But I suppose it will all end one way."

"And what will you answer to Harold Helper?"

"Heaven only knows. It will not do to tell a man who offers one his heart that he ought to have known better."

"Nor that you will not marry him because his father was a stone-cutter?"

Mr. Helper accepted his refusal, however, with a good grace. He made no fuss about it; he merely assured her that her happiness would always be dearer to him than his own.

"That's the letter of a gentleman," said grandma, "if his father was forty times a stone-cutter."

"Pshaw!" said Miss Agnes, tearing it into fragments; but, curiously enough, gathered them together as soon as Mrs. Peverill's back was turned, as if they were sweet to her as scattered rose leaves. Perhaps she was thinking of the days when Mr. Helper was her father's clerk, and had taught her chess of winter evenings—days when she was not so worldly-minded, and more romantic, and didn't guess the worth of position and long descent. Perhaps she regretfully remembered the spring mornings when they pushed through the woods for wild flowers and ferns, when he made a quaint album for her of pressed sea-weeds—she had it hidden away somewhere now.

"It would never do," she said, half aloud, answering some unspoken thought. "I should always be hankering for family and money. One must give up something; it may as well be love as anything. Oh, if my father had only been a stone-cutter, too!"

Grandma Peverill met Mr. Helper in the street later. "I hope you don't mean to desert us," said she, "because that foolish chit of an Agnes doesn't know when her bread is well buttered. Remember, it's a woman's privilege to change her mind. If you neglect us, 'You shut your life from happier chance,' as the poet says. Nobody knows what may happen."

"But I hear that Miss Peverill has encouraged Mr. Bond," said Harold, helplessly.

"And you're going to stand aloof and

let that little Miles Bond walk over you? Now let me tell you that I mean to make you and Miles executors of my will; so I'd like to keep on friendly terms with you—don't you see?"

"Thank you; but ain't we friends, near or apart?"

"This said that absence conquers love," she laughed; "and haven't you heard of the virtues that reside in propinquity? If Agnes sees Miles every day, and you once in six weeks, which do you think she will be most likely to love best?"

"It is not likely that she will ever love me, whatever happens."

"Who said she would never love you? Aren't you worth forty Miles Bonds?"

"Certainly not in Miss Peverill's regard."

"Prithes, what do you know of her regard, Sir Faintheart?"

"Very little, to be sure."

"He either fears his fate too much, Or his deserts are small, That dares not put it to the touch, To gain or lose it all!"

"Haven't I put my fate to the touch, Mrs. Peverill, and haven't I found that my deserts are miserably small?"

"Dear me! I see that you don't know that women blow twenty ways of a morning. Who knows but what she is crying her pretty eyes out this minute, and wishing with all her silly heart that she had it to do over again?"

"Miles knows," laughed Harold.

"Come and see who knows best. An old woman's advice isn't to be sneezed at. I refused my first lover myself, because I thought he'd come back and tease me into it, but he never did. Served me right, too."

And Harold did as he was told. He made himself intimate at the Peverills' as of old. He was there in season and out of season. He bore with the caprices of Agnes and the condescensions of his rival. He was often left to the tender mercies of Grandma Peverill while Agnes and Miles made the garden or the river echo with their songs. He came and went like a shadow. When Agnes chose to listen, he let loose his enthusiasm; when she gave him the cold shoulder, he accepted it without a murmur—as if one should be grateful for any gift of hers—and fell back upon the old lady's unflinching kindness. One day, however, even Grandma Peverill failed him. She waked suddenly from a dose, and asked, "Is it really love?" glancing after the two, pelting each other with roses in the garden.

"It looks like it," gasped Harold.

"Time will prove—time, that unlocks all secrets and discloses all impostures. Miles is of the earth, earthy. He loves fine society and grandfathers and coats of arms. It is a crime in his eyes to be born without a silver spoon in one's mouth."

"But what is love made for, if it is not the same Through joy and through sorrow, Through glory and shame?"

Then she fell into a doze again. The shadows draped themselves about her; a star came out and leaned to look into the window; a late bird tilted on a spray near by, and made a sudden gust of music through the place; the murmur of laughing voices came faintly toward them on the breeze. But Harold listened alone, for Grandma Peverill was already far away.

A few weeks later Miles Bond and Mr. Helper were engaged looking over the private papers of the late Mrs. Peverill, as her executors. That modest portion of her fortune which her son's speculations had left intact she had bequeathed to Agnes. Presently Miles had raised his eyes from the paper he had been inspecting. "A rascally piece of business," he groaned, between his teeth. Should he quietly light his cigar with the paper, bury its contents in oblivion, and marry Agnes, and go on his way rejoicing? No; perish the thought! A Bond, of the Bonds of Bondholder, who could trace their lineage to the Conqueror! A thousand times no! He made a desperate resolve, and passed the sheet to Harold.

It was merely a letter from the late Mrs. Peverill, setting forth a certain family matter, which she had deemed it wise that they should know, not as executors, but as lovers.

"Of course, this will not affect your interests," said Harold, filing the paper away, quite at his ease.

"It might not," sneered Miles, "if I were not a Bond, with family credit to sustain."

"And yet," said the other, "Shakespeare tells us that 'Love is not love, which alters When it alteration finds.'"

"Shakespeare be hanged!" quoth the quondam lover.

The following week, when Mr. Helper dropped in to pay his respects to Agnes, he found her watering her bed of mignottes and pansies.

"Oh," she said, presently, and half shyly, "the oddest thing has happened! I must tell somebody! How dear grandma would laugh if she were here, and say it served me right! I received a *billet-doux* yesterday (you could hardly call it a *billet-doux* , though it was from Miles), and what do you think? He says in it—there, turn your eyes away, don't look at me so while I tell you—he begs me to release him from an engagement which, upon close examination of his heart—under the microscope, I suppose, he finds himself unable to fulfil! Now you must know that there never was an engagement

at all between us; he just teased my soul out of me to marry him, and I promised. Only think of it! A Peverill, a descendant of one Rupert Peverill, who figured in the Crusades, jilted by Miles Bond! It must be that grandma's jointure disappointed the poor youth. Motto: Never appoint as your executor the man whom you wish to marry your heir."

"You don't seem to take the affair much to heart," said Harold.

"Because my heart wasn't much concerned in it."

"What under heaven were you thinking of, then?"

"I was thinking whether or no you—you had changed your mind, sir; whether you would ever again dare—"

"I dare do all that doth become a lover," asserted Harold, inclining to the level of her lips. "Will you reconsider the question I asked you a year ago, darling?" And Agnes reconsidered.

Mrs. Helper had been married a year and better, when it occurred to her, in an idle moment, to overhaul Grandma Peverill's papers, now that they were her own possessions; and when she heard Harold calling her she went slowly out to meet him, with one of them crushed in her soft hands.

"What have you there, darling," he asked.

"And you knew it all the while!" she answered, irascibly. "You knew I was not a Peverill, descended from the Crusader; you knew I had been adopted from a foreign foundling asylum! And yet you loved me! and yet you married me, Agnes Nobody!" and Mrs. Helper began to cry, and allowed herself to be caught in the arms of a stone-cutter's son, and found comfort in.

"Love is not love, which alters When it alteration finds," said Harold.

"And I may be the daughter of a collier, of a pauper, or worse," she sobbed. "You are my wife, and I love you."

"Then I would rather be your wife than the daughter of a king," she said, smiling through her tears.

Mr. Helper had forgotten to burn the letter which Grandma Peverill had written to her executors, and so pride had a fall.

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