

AT THE LAST.

The stream is calmest where it nears the tide,
The flowers the sweetest at the eventide,
And birds most musical at the close of day,
And saluts divinest when they pass away.

Morning is lovely, but a holier charm,
Lies folded close in evening's robes of balm;
And weary man must even love the best,
For morning calls to toil, but night to rest.

She comes from Heaven, and her wings do bear
A holy fragrance, like the breath of prayer;
Footsteps of angels follow in her trace,
To shut the weary eye of day in peace.

All things are hushed before her as she throws
O'er earth and sky her mantle of repose;
There is a calm, a beauty and a power,
That morning knows not, in the evening hour.

"Until the evening" we must weep and toil,
Plough life's stern furrow, dig the weedy soil,
Tread with sad feet our rough and thorny way,
And bear the heat and burden of the day.

Oh! when our sun is setting, may we glide,
Like summer evening, down the golden tide,
And leave behind us, as we pass away,
Sweet, starry twilight round our sleeping clay.

FOR HIS SAKE.

Among the passengers of a vessel from India, there landed a gentleman who had been absent from England many years.

For the first time he was going to see his son, the little boy born after he left home, and whose birth had been his mother's death.

Captain Penran had only been married a year when he was ordered abroad with his regiment.

Six months from that day a letter had reached him, telling him his wife was dead, and that her old nurse had taken charge of the infant.

He had loved his wife passionately, and when the baby was old enough to travel, she would have come to him in India.

Every quarter he had sent money to Ann Golden for the child's keep.

A receipt was always returned with "her duty, and the young gentleman was doing well," and this was all he knew of his Ellen's boy.

Now that his foot was upon England's shores again, Captain Penran felt new thrills of father-love, and longed for his boy's presence.

"He would take him to himself," he said. They would live together, share in each other's joys and sorrows.

He should be proud of him, and he hoped—ah, how he hoped!—that Ellen's child would have Ellen's face.

He had the address that Mrs. Golden had given him in his pocket.

He glanced at it now to refresh his memory as to the number.

A plain, respectable street in one of the suburbs; he remembered it well.

"But my boy shall see better things, now that I am here," he said to himself.

"Will he love me, I wonder?"

Then he thought how his own heart had been won by toys, and paused before a gay window, when suddenly he felt a tug at his coat-tail, and turning suddenly, found a grimy little hand half in, half out of his pocket.

He caught it at once with his handkerchief in it.

To give the little thief to a policeman, and appear against him next day, was his first thought; but as the creature stood there shivering and whining, the fact of his diminutive size struck the captain forcibly.

He realized his youth, which was extreme, and he saw that, besides being young, small, dirty, and ragged, he was deformed.

"What did you mean by that, sir?" he growled slowly, stooping to look into the boy's eyes.

"Oh, please, sir, let me go! Oh, please, sir, I won't do it no more—never, oh, please!"

"I've a mind to have you sent to goal," said the captain.

"No, please, sir; please, sir."

"Who taught you to steal?" asked the captain.

The boy made no answer.

"Answer me," said the captain.

"If I don't, I don't get no victuals," said the boy. "She's been a-beggin' to-day, and we'll have stew. I won't have none if I don't fetch nothin'. Oh—"

"Who is she?" asked the captain.

"My mother," said the boy.

He thought of his own child.

"God knows I ought to be tender to the little

ones, for the sake of Nellie's child," he said softly. Then aloud—

"I'll not send you to prison."

"Thankee, sir," said the urchin.

"And I'll give you a breakfast," said the captain.

The dirty urchin executed a sort of joyous dance.

"Do you know why I forgive you?" said the captain.

The child shook his head.

"I have a little boy," said the captain. "He's very different from you, poor child! He would not steal anything."

"He washes himself. But I couldn't bear to think of his being hungry, and for his sake I can't bear to see other little fellows hungry."

"It's for his sake that I don't call an officer and tell him all about it."

"Remember that, and try to be like—like my little fellow, clean and good. Don't steal. Will you promise?"

"Yes, sir."

Then the captain led him into an eating-house, and watched him eat.

"If I could see my boy and him together now, what a contrast!"

And he fancied his boy round and white and pink, and fair of hair, like his poor lost Ellen. The meal was over.

The captain paid for it, and then drew the boy to him and lectured him.

Then he gave him a half crown, and bade him go and be good and clean.

And the boy was off like a flash.

Then the captain went in search of Mrs. Ann Golden and his own fair darling.

But Mrs. Golden was not so easily found as he had hoped.

There was a little shop in the house he had been directed to, and the keeper thereof said that she had bought it of Ann Golden.

"But I haven't seen her since," he said; "only there's a bit of card with her number on it—that is, if I can find it."

After a search, she did find it.

And the captain, thanking her, hurried away; but another disappointment awaited him.

Mrs. Golden had not lived in this second place for several years.

And now every clue was lost.

The captain, nearly beside himself with anxiety, applied to the authorities for help, and after many days of great unhappiness, heard of Ann Golden, who lived in a quarter of London so low and dangerous that all decent people shunned it.

"No wonder," the captain thought, "if she lived there, that she should have had his remittance sent to the post-office, and left him to believe that his child was still in the decent home to which she had at first taken him."

Almost ill with excitement, the poor captain drove, with a policeman as protector, into the mazes of hideous lanes and courts that led to Ann Golden's dwelling; and following his conductor, dropped into a filthy cellar, where almost in total darkness, sat an old woman with a bottle beside her, who started up when the captain and his guard entered, and cried—

"What now? What's the perlice here for? Is it one of the boys again?"

And altered as she was with years and drink, the captain knew his wife's old nurse, Ann Golden.

He darted towards her.

"My boy!" he cried.

And she screamed.

"It's the captain!"

"Is my boy living?" he asked.

"Yes," said the woman, shaking; "he's alive and well."

"How dare you keep him here?" cried the captain.

"How can I help being poor?" whined the woman. "I could not give up the bit you pay for him. Don't be hard on me."

"My God!" cried the captain. "My Ellen's baby in a place like this!"

He dropped his head on his hands; then he lifted it and clasped them.

"I'll have him away from here now," he gasped. "It's over, and he's young, and will forget it. Where is he? Have you lied? Is he dead?"

"No, no," said the old woman. "He'll be here soon. I hear him now. That's him. He'll be here in a minute. Don't kill a poor old body, captain don't!"

"I could do it!" cried the captain. "There is someone coming. My child, my child!"

The door opened softly.

A head peeped in low down, then drew back.

"Come in," piped the old woman. "The police arn't arter you—leas' ways for harm."

Captain, that's him—your boy Ned."

There crept in at the door—who? what? The wan, deformed, and dirty creature who had picked his pocket—whom he had fed for the sake of his beautiful dream-child the wretched walf, forgotten utterly in the last few days of anxiety.

"Belter I had never found him," moaned the captain, "or found him dead!"

The thrill of hair was against his hand, and two beautiful blue eyes looked wistfully up into the captain's.

All of a sudden a flood of pitiful tenderness swept over Captain Penran's heart.

All the grief and shame and wounded pride left it to come back no more.

"Ellen's eyes!" he sobbed, "Ellen's boy!"

and took his son to his heart.

"For his sake," he said, softly, as though he stood by the grave of the beautiful dream-child he had just buried, for his sake and Ellen's!

And then he led the child away with him.

MABEL'S LOVER.

"Never marry a poor man, my dear," said Mrs. Chesley, leaning back in her velvet-covered chair, and brushing an imaginary speck from her elegant purple silk with the tip of her fan. "I never should have to give Eleanor such advice as this were she to live a hundred years, but you are so sentimental. Look around you and note the magnificence of our home—it is in keeping with our refined tastes! Ah, me! the air of poverty is stifling!—it poisons the nature that breathes it! Imagine yourself attired in a calico dress! It is positively horrifying, my dear. I hope the contrast I have suggested to you will cure you of your foolish penchant for Louis Marston."

Mrs. Chesley sighed wearily, and pushed a straggling curl from her powdered brow.

"I must love the man that I marry!" said Mabel, quietly.

"Love again!" exclaimed Mrs. Chesley, fretfully. "Can you eat love or drink it? How absurd!"

"Then love is nonsense, mother?"

"The rankest nonsense, my dear."

"Didn't you love my father?"

"You are impertinent, miss!" retorted Mrs. Chesley, swinging her fan vigorously.

Mabel laughed merrily.

"It is a fair question, mother."

"It is none of your business—none of your business, miss, at all!" replied the fashionable matron, looking very much offended. "Things have come to a fine pass when daughters catechise their mothers in this style! I should think you would hide your head with shame!"

And drawing a bit of lace from her pocket about two inches square, Mrs. Chesley assumed a woe-begone look and prepared to cry. As this manoeuvre was always in order when every other argument failed, it made no impression upon Mabel, so rising, she left the room. For a moment or two Mrs. Chesley held the handkerchief to her eyes, and then finding she was to have no audience she restored the article to her pocket and eased her mind by uttering a few complaints and emitting a series of moans. The echoes of her querulous voice had hardly died away ere a servant entered and announced a visitor.

"Who is it?" said the lady sharply.

"He wouldn't give a card or name, madam. He appears to be an extremely singular personage, begging your pardon," replied the garrulous servant. "He said he wished see you on very important business."

"Business!" repeated Mrs. Chesley, throwing up her hands. "As if I knew anything about business! Well, let him come in! I wonder what'll happen next."

The attendant vanished, and a moment later a snobbishly attired individual appeared in the doorway, and bowing obsequiously, advanced into the room. Presenting a card to Mrs. Chesley, he executed another flourish, and then removed his eyeglasses from his nose and proceeded to wipe them with great deliberation.

"I trust I have the honor of seeing you well, madam," he observed, while his lips parted in an urbane smile, and his snakish black eyes seemed to retreat into his head.

"Philemon Peck," mused the lady, glancing at the card, and added coldly, "You are a stranger to me, sir. Be kind enough to state your business."

"Excuse me if I take a chair," he replied, with insolent complaisance, and continued, with another grin as he tipped back at his ease: "It is more than likely, madam, that you have heard your lamented husband speak of me."

"No, sir, I never did!" interposed Mrs. Chesley, with chilling dignity. "You will oblige me by stating your errand at once and briefly."

"It is in connection with your estate."

"Then go to the executor!" interrupted the lady, rising.

Mr. Philemon Peck arose too, and began rubbing his hand, and bobbing his head, while a subtle light shone from his bead-like eyes.

"Bear with me a moment, my dear madam, and I will show you that it is both for your interest and mine to keep this matter to ourselves."

Indignation flashed in Mrs. Chesley's eyes, and burned in her cheeks.

"As if your—your interest and mine could be coupled!" she exclaimed, in a tone of withering contempt. "I will not endure such insolence! Leave my house, sir."

"The elegant Mrs. Chesley forgets herself, I am sure!" replied Philemon, placing his hand over his heart and bowing low. "Much as I regret having offended you, I cannot pass this matter over lightly."

"I'll ring for the servants if you do not go at once."

"First, my dear madam, let me ask if you know that Archibald Chesley was married before he ever saw you?"

The lady paused involuntarily. Amazement held her speechless.

"And that the first wife is still alive?" continued Mr. Philemon Peck, with an exulting grin.

Mrs. Chesley sank into her chair, and tried to lull the fears that chased each other through her brain. Could it be true? In a moment her reason arose above her imagination, and with a scornful smile she answered:

"You are either a lunatic or a villain, to come to me with such foolish stories. I will have charity and believe you the former. Now go!" and she pointed toward the door.

"Shall I tell the world that the fashionable

Mrs. Chesley has no right to the name, that she is using money which does not belong to her, that—pardon the words—but they are the words of the law—her two lovely daughters are illegitimate? Madam, this would be a most humiliating disclosure. I would save you from it, believe me."

Mrs. Chesley turned deathly pale, and gasped for breath. The very intensity of her rage forbade speech for at least three minutes, and during that time Philemon stood before her in a humble attitude, his eyes fixed upon her in pity. Tears came to her relief at last, and her overstrained nerves relaxed.

"Such insults! such outrageous insult!" she cried, her very fingers trembling. "How dare you speak so of my beloved husband? How dare you hurl your vile insinuations at me and my daughters? And all this in my own house? Must I bear it? Oh, you hideous wretch! I will not—indeed, I will not! It is all false—a foul conspiracy!" articulated Mrs. Chesley, dropping into the vacant chair.

"Madam does injustice to her good breeding—but her feelings control her—it is pardonable," said Mr. Peck, with a grand flourish. "Let me recapitulate the points, just to show where she stands. In 1835, Archibald Chesley, then twenty-three years of age, married Sarah Upton, of Epping. We can prove this by Sarah herself, by the son of the clergyman, who saw his father marry them, and by the parish records. Near y two years later, in 1837, Mr. Chesley left his wife, and went to London. In 1839 he made your acquaintance; a few months later he heard of his wife's death, and in 1840 he married you. The story of Sarah Chesley having died was false, and now, after twenty-five years of hardship and battle with the world, she comes to claim her legal rights. This is the outline of the case. Will ma'am tell me what she will do to save her own name and her daughters'?"

"What can I do?" ejaculated the unhappy woman, bursting into tears.

"The claimant sympathizes with you; she does not wish to distress you," rejoined Mr. Philemon Peck, patronizingly. "In fact, she will bind herself to hold the affair a dead secret and give you a release of all claims, if you will give her eight thousand pounds—just half of what she can legally recover."

Mrs. Chesley looked up quickly. A proposition for settlement, coming from parties who held so much proof, made it seem as if they doubted their own case. In spite of the convincing array of facts to which the lawyer had called her attention, the lady grew suspicious again.

"I will see my solicitors, and obtain their opinion," she said, meditatively.

"In that event, I am instructed to begin a suit at once," replied Mr. Peck. "In three days the affair will be common talk; your daughters will be pointed at with scorn, and you will be shunned."

"Spare me! spare me!" moaned Mrs. Chesley, as the horrible picture again arose before her mental vision. "I cannot bear that—I cannot! Oh, why have I lived to see this day?"

Suddenly realizing that she was humbling herself before a stranger, she made a strenuous effort to conceal her emotion, and said, with some spirit:

"Where has this woman been these twenty-five years? Why has she not come forward until this late hour?"

"In answering your first question, my dear madam, you cause me to pain you unnecessarily. For a period of years your husband paid her an annuity to keep away, she having revealed her existence to him a short time after he married you: after this she went abroad, and he heard nothing from her afterward. She lately returned, and hearing of Mr. Chesley's death, came to me to take her case."

"It grows deeper—it is a terrible blow to me. Tell me your terms again," said Mrs. Chesley, leaning her throbbing head upon her hand.

"Eight thousand pounds to be paid within two weeks, and the hand of your daughter Eleanor in marriage to the man whom the first Mrs. Chesley shall select. That he shall be an honorable gentleman, she will guarantee."

"This is fiendish! You may destroy my name, rife me of all my goods, but never—never will I sell my own flesh and blood! Go—tell this to your vile employer, and leave me alone in my misery!"

She rose up grandly, her face aglow with a noble resolution, her eyes gleaming like fire. An instant she stood motionless, and then gathering her robes about her, she swept majestically from the room.

"One move too many—I trespassed too far on my success," mused Mr. Peck, screwing up one eye and pulling at his whiskers. "But I hold the winning card, and I'll play it yet."

With this he quitted the room and house. As he walked down the broad path, on each side of which beautiful flowers bloomed, he heard a chorus of sweet, girlish laughter, and abruptly turned aside into the path that led to the river. Passing by two or three servants who were spending a leisure hour in the grounds, Mr. Peck approached the stone steps that led to the silvery flowing stream. Mabel, looking surpassingly beautiful in her jaunty river costume, was standing on the second step, resting gracefully on an oar, while her twin sister Eleanor sat in the stern of the boat waiting for Mabel to embark. Mr. Philemon Peck gazed upon the two beauties with admiration, and said, very urbanely:

"Miss Mabel, please tell your mother that Mr. Peck will call again on Thursday."