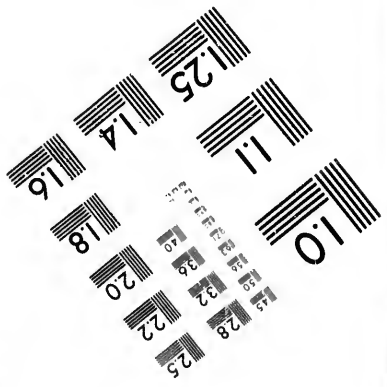
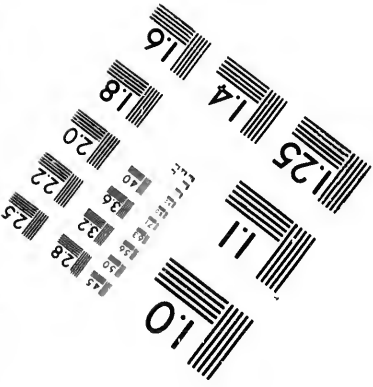
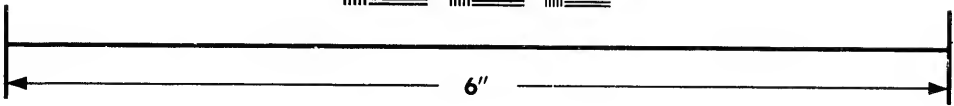
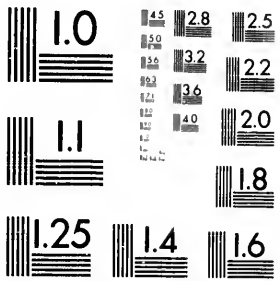


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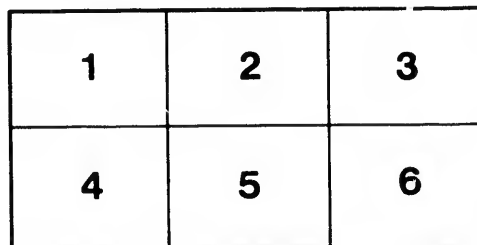
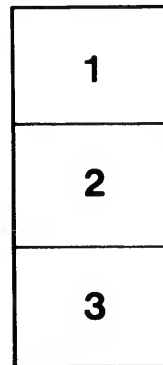
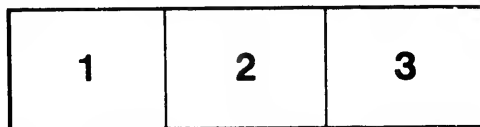
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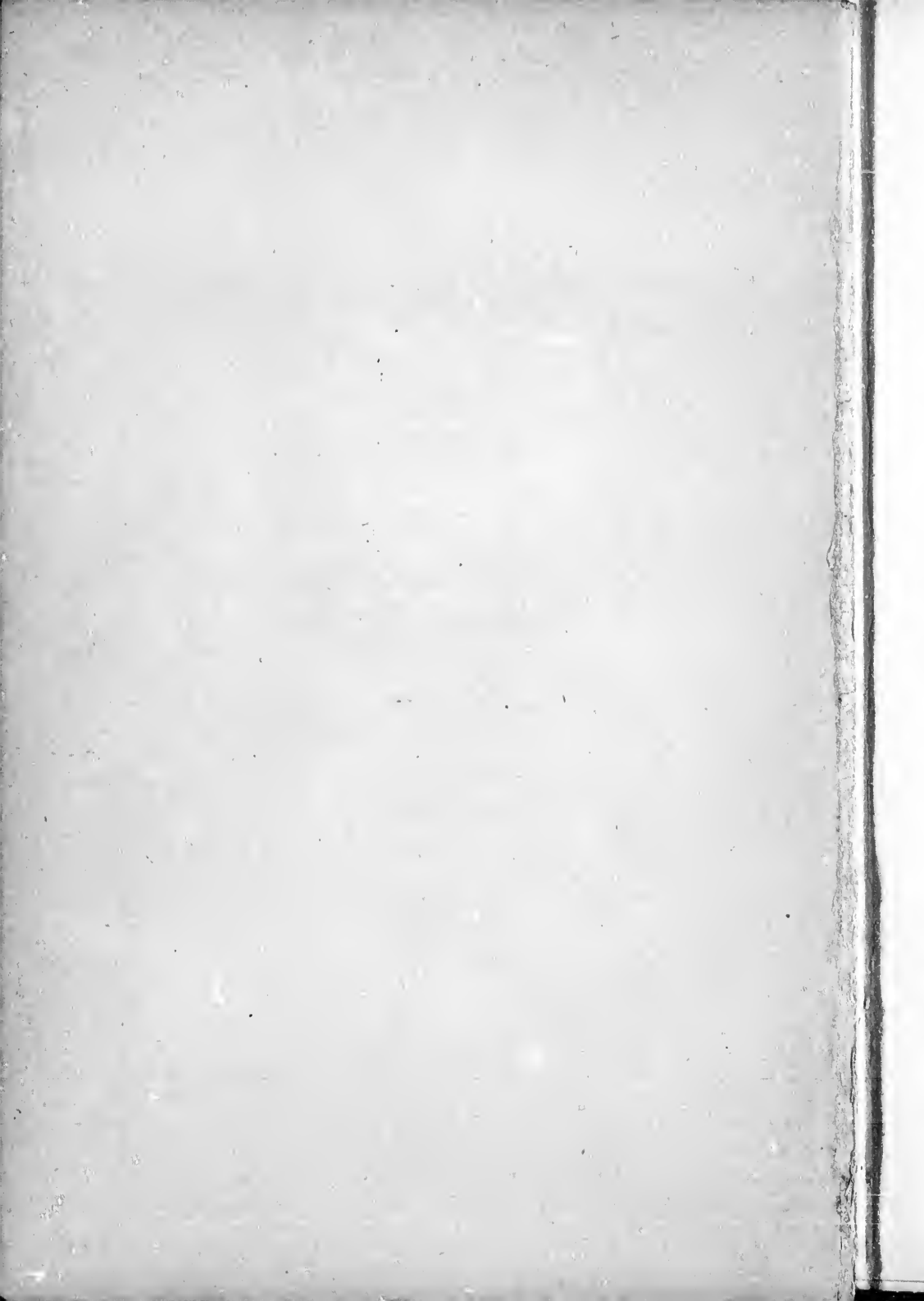
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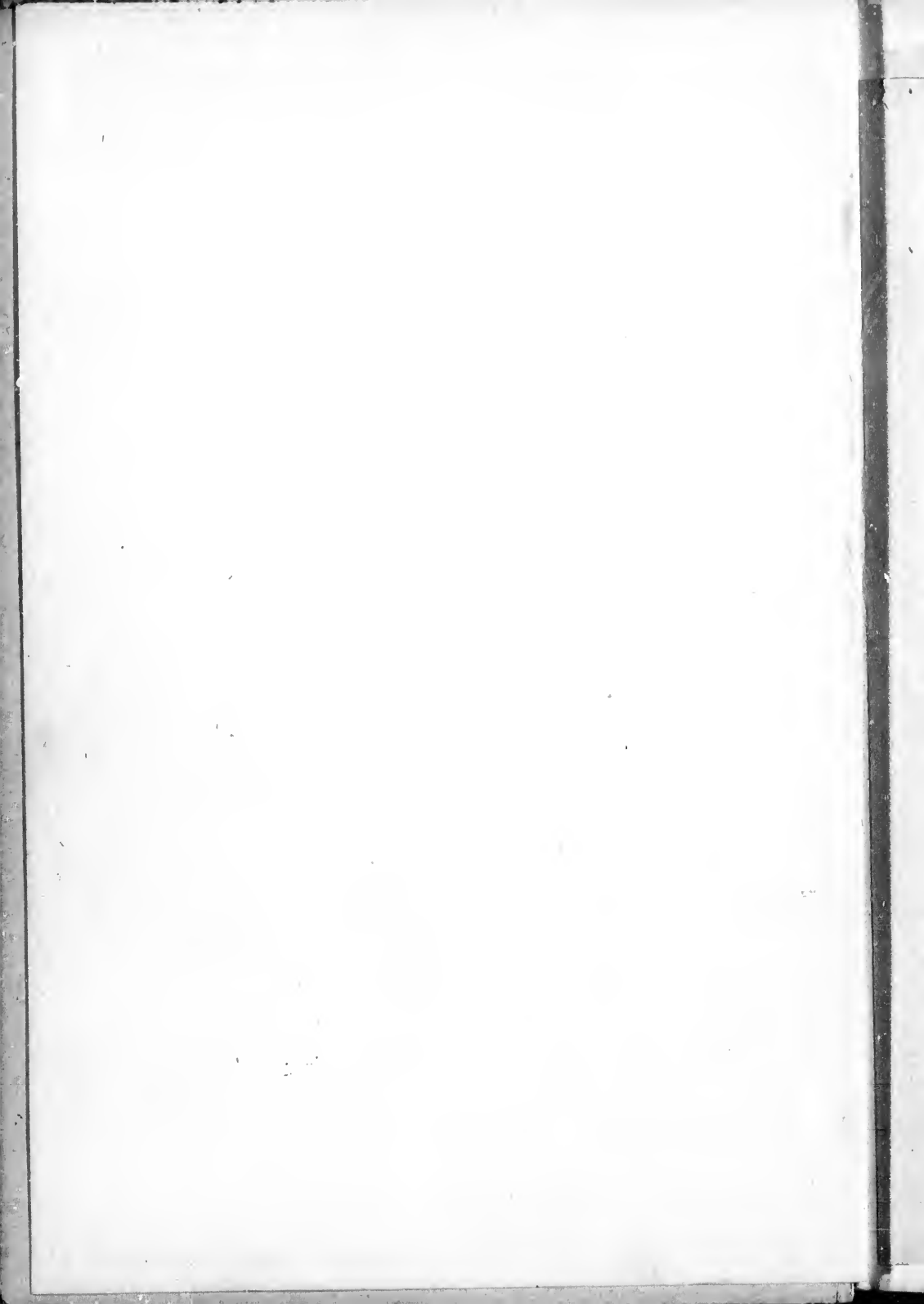
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5-

*The True and Romantic Love-Story of
Colonel and Mrs. Hutchinson.*



With the author's very kind regards

THE TRUE AND ROMANTIC LOVE-STORY OF COLONEL AND MRS. HUTCHINSON.

BY J. ANTISELL ALLEN.

. . . . We shall not forestall the gratification of intending readers of the book by divulging the plot of the tale, but shall confine ourselves to the remark that, even if it were not a "true and romantic love-story," the drama is so superb as a work of literary and poetic art that it could hardly fail to command wide-spread favor.—[Newcastle (Eng.) Weekly Chronicle.]

. . . . Mr. Allen seems to have been so much attracted by this touching narrative, to have read and re-read it so often, that each thought, and, in some instances, even the very mould in which the sentences are cast have become a part of himself. His "love-story" is certainly "romantic" enough to suit the most ardent. All who have not had their tastes corrupted by foul literature must treasure the sweet picture of pure love which his pages give. We are not troubled in Mr. Allen's book with "the condition of England question," neither do the janglings of theologians mar our peace; all is calm, pure, and restful, so that but for a stray modern word here and there—and they are but few—we might dream ourselves into the belief that some saintly woman among Lucy Hutchinson's friends had turned what she had seen and known into verse.—[The Academy, (London, England.)]

. . . . The romantic story of their perfect love, its hopes and fears and disappointments, its triumph at last, and their joy and gratitude when every hindrance to their union was removed, is told in this charming little drama in poetry full of high thought and impassioned feeling. In these days of voracious and indiscriminate novel-reading, when so much that is base and vicious, frivolous and contemptible, is presented in the guise of romance, such a book as this, in which new life is given to the beautiful old story, and the pure and noble thoughts and emotions of pure and noble natures are clothed with the music of verse, ought to have some good effect on young readers, by showing them what true and blameless romance really is, and thus helping them to distinguish the false Duessa from the true. . . . —[The Mail, (Toronto.)]

. . . . We would gladly quote some passages to illustrate the author's poetic and dramatic skill, only that if we began, it would not be easy to end. . . . —[The Gazette, (Montreal.)]

It was quite worth a man's while to attempt not only to picture THE TRUE AND ROMANTIC LOVE-STORY OF COLONEL AND MRS. HUTCHINSON, but to put it into form as a "drama in verse." The story is a noble one, for it harmonises with a true conception of two noble lives made one. . . . —[Leeds (England) Mercury.]

Th

. . . . A key to the romantic but true story told in this exquisite little drama is given in a brief introduction, in itself so charming that it may be compared to a lovely porch leading into a beautiful garden. The story of Colonel and Mrs. Hutchinson is one of the noblest and sweetest to be found in history or romance. . . . The romantic beginnings of their pure and perfect love, their doubts and fears when obstacles seemed to rise up between them, their exalted bliss when the course of their true love at last ran smooth, and their hearts, which were thenceforth to beat as one, were opened to each other, form a beautiful idyl, told in the drama before us in rich and impassioned, but pure and elevated poetry, filled with high thoughts and generous emotions, all in harmony with the sweet old story it enshrines. We would gladly quote many fine passages, but our space is so limited.—[The Globe, (Toronto.)

. . . . Mr. Allen has taken the romantic aspects of this instance of love, specially true and passionate, and thrown them into graceful and harmonious verse. The poem is dramatic in form, and the dialogue is arranged so as to bring out, with great distinctness, the successive stages of the story. Although in poetic form, the actual history has been carefully followed, so that the plot has the merit of bringing us face to face with passages from the real biography of the hero and heroine. . . . The whole portrait shows us the softer and more genial side of the life of the Puritan party. . . . It is one of the many good results of Mr. Allen's poem that he draws attention again to this aspect of a great historical party. . . . As a study of the inner personal life of the times in question, the poem has a value peculiarly its own. . . . The plot is simple enough, so simple that, apart from the graceful and sometimes powerful verse in which it is developed, it would convey no idea of the attractiveness of the poem. . . . —[Montreal Daily Star.

. . . . The story is simply and gracefully told, and though strange and romantic, has the additional charm of being perfectly true. The perusal of such a work cannot fail to interest the reader, and will claim his attention until the last page is finished. The effect of the story upon the mind will be to elevate it, by showing that there has been, and can be, love, for its own sake, in this world of ours. . . . —[The Evangelical Churchman, (Toronto).

Such are the titbits of commendation accorded my small attempt. The dispraise—I prudently omit.

If, however, through my effort, any be brought to recognise the stuff out of which the much-abused Puritan was made—the Puritan who, with all his shortcomings, was ever the ardent and devoted lover of liberty in Church and Realm, and, in almost everything, the most advanced thinker of his age,—I shall feel that my labor has not been in vain. In hundreds of households in England the Puritan gentleman and gentlewoman were the very flower of English refined and cultured humanity; and to their discussions and musings and efforts we of to-day are deeply indebted for the largeness of the liberty we enjoy.

J. A. A.

“While
the Tower
Sir Thoma

ELLI

With the author's very kind regards,

*The True and Romantic Love-
Story of Colonel and Mrs.
Hutchinson.*

A DRAMA IN VERSE.

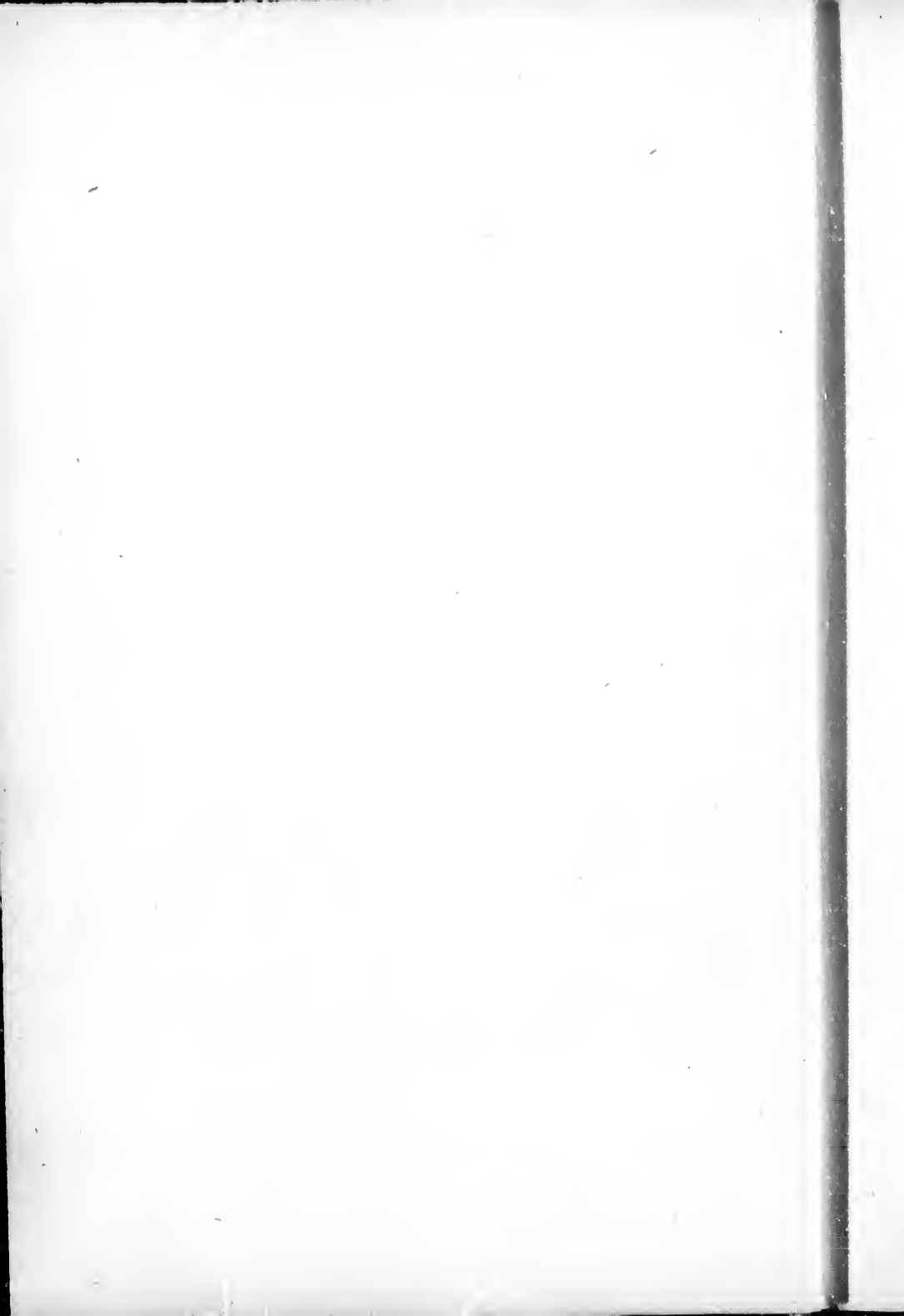
BY

J. ANTISELL ALLEN.

"While this flower of grace was growing up against the dark background of the Tower, a grave but gallant youth, full of every admirable quality, the son of Sir Thomas Hutchinson of Owthorp, had come of age."

Blackwood, July, 1882.

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW,
LONDON, E.C.





INTRODUCTION.

COLONEL and Mrs. Hutchinson, the hero and heroine of our story, belong by birth to the class of English gentry; he being the son of Sir Thomas Hutchinson, a county magnate of ancient lineage, and a Member of Parliament, and she the daughter of Sir Allen Apsley, governor of the Tower of London—the Apsleys of Apsley being one of the oldest Saxon families of England, and some of their descendants to-day heads of the noblest and most considerable English houses.

In the wars between Charles the First and his Parliament, (or, as Mrs. Hutchinson, in her own nervous and incisive language, puts it, “when the just cause of God’s and England’s rights came to be disputed with swords against encroaching princes,”) Colonel Hutchinson bore a distinguished part, showing himself, under the most trying circumstances, a man of indomitable courage, prudence, energy, and honour, while in every effort, difficulty, and trial, he was fully seconded by his equally

noble and courageous wife. Indeed, throughout, they were both of them too remarkable personages even in this, the heroic age of English history, to be suffered to pass into oblivion, so long as noble example and high and generous qualities touch the affections and warm and quicken the pulses of our life; for a nobler, gentler, and more loving, yet, withal, stronger, more resolute, and energetic, nature than his it would be difficult to imagine; and she was the equal consort of his virtue and native force; and as such "he loved her," as she tells us, "better than his life, with inexpressible tenderness and kindness" from the beginning to the end; and, speaking of her own love to him, she adds, that "as his shadow she waited on him everywhere, till he was taken into that region of light which admits of none, and then she vanished into nothing." Not so, however, not as she thought; for she lives, his equal, embalmed for ever in her own noble work.

The courtship of our hero commenced not long after his taking his degree at Cambridge, and was attended, as narrated in my verse, by many difficulties; but (as Mrs. Hutchinson tells us) "he prosecuted his love with so much discretion, duty, and honour, that at length, through many difficulties, he accomplished his design." Then she adds, "I shall pass by all the little amorous relations, which if I would take pains to relate, would make a true history of a more handsome management of love than the best romances describe." But, says

the Editor of these beautiful and instructive *Memoirs*, "will not many regret that she passes so transiently these scenes of tenderness and sentiment?" In which regret, I dare think, many a reader will join him.

Now, to bridge over this very gap in their history, and to put in rhythmic form the whole tale of their early mutual love, it is that I, let into the secret, have resolved to take the reader into my confidence by narrating the strange, romantic, and beautiful story of his love and of their courtship, attended, as they were, by great hazard and many obstacles.

But why not write it in plain prose? I answer, that the thoughts and sentiments of lovers of a high mental order, however natural under the stimulus of glowing affection, might, if uttered in the nudity of plain prose, seem exaggerated or even ridiculous; but expressed in rhythmical language—the natural tongue of the highly exalted emotions—they seem, to persons of even ordinary refinement and feeling, the natural language of the poetry of love. And hence it is that lovers so often adopt verse as the fittest medium through which to reach the loved one's ear and heart.

How closely (or not) I have kept to my text even in the *strangest and most romantic* parts of my story, the reader of these *Memoirs* must judge for himself. And here let me say that, in this my little drama, I have looked at the whole matter chiefly as an outsider, not regarding it so much from a standpoint of my own, as

from the standpoint of the actors and the age of whom and of which I have been writing. I hope I have not been over-tedious, but I am unwilling to close this introduction without quoting a few passages from an able writer (July, 1882) in *Blackwood*. Of Colonel Hutchinson, he says, "No finer gentleman than John Hutchinson ever added ornament to an age." Again, he speaks of him, when Governor of Nottingham, and "still only twenty-eight," as "standing out from the troubled background of petty plot and squabble, as a great Titian portrait full of colour and life;" and of her as "this flower of grace growing up against the dark background of the Tower;" but destined yet to raise to her beloved "such a monument as few of the greatest of earthly heroes and sages have attained." And then, "effacing herself altogether, as if she had died with him, she is seen no more."



E R R A T A .

- Page 18 line 5, *for* "due" *read* "clue or."
 " 19 " 3, " "honour" *read* "harrow."
 " 21 " 2, " "convincing" *read* "evincing."
 " 21 " 17, " "her" *read* "our."
 " 27 " 4, " "lured" *read* "hued."
 " 28 " 2, *insert* "the" *after* "all."
 " 41 " 10, *for* "points" *read* "prints."
 " 43 " 7, " "transmitted" *read* "transmuted."
 " 44 " 23, " "like" *read* "liker."
 " 45 " 5, " "which" *read* "while."
 " 46 " 23, " "love" *read* "lore."
 " 49 " 20, " "continuous" *read* "conterminous."
 " 51 " 21, " "Yet" *read* "Get."
 " 64 " 25, *after* "like" *insert* ":" (colon).
 " 65 " 16, *omit* "so."
 " 73 " 7, *for* "psychologies" *read* "psychologics."
 " 74 " 1, " "trembles" *read* "trembled."
 " 80 " 3, " "vein" *read* "rein."
 " 82 " 4, *after* "saw them" *insert* "," (comma).

from the standpoint of the actors and the age of whom
and of which I have been writing. I hope I have not
been over-tedious, but I



*The True and Romantic Love-Story of
Colonel and Mrs. Hutchinson.*



SCENE, NEAR HAMPTON COURT.

Enter MR. HUTCHINSON, son of SIR THOMAS HUTCHINSON, and the younger MISS APSLEY, daughter of SIR ALLEN APSLEY. She is seen playing on the lute.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

My little muse, I often hear you play,
And hear with pleasure ; but why thus alone ?

Younger MISS APSLEY.

My mother, gone to Wiltshire, left me here
To practise on the lute till her return.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Your house is in the neighbourhood, I learn.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

It is ; some half-mile off : I often walk
Across the meadows to the dear old home ;
It is so beautiful the whole way there,
With primrose banks and hedges crowned with may,
And perfumes sweet, while, high above, the lark
Cleaves the deep azure with his notes of joy.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Go you alone ?

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Sometimes : sometimes a friend
Goes thither with me.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Pray, may I assume
This place of honour, and be ranked a friend ?

Younger MISS APSLEY.

With pleasure, Sir ; I think you'll like the way.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter FIRST and SECOND GENTLEMAN.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

'Tis said Miss Apsley's gone to be espoused
To somebody in Wiltshire.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Yes, I've heard.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

But if *she* wed, the heart will first consent,
And there are few to whom that little fort,
Strong and well-fenced, will yield.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Unless, indeed,
Her love and duty to her mother weigh
The balance down, and she surrender thus.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Yet so much spirit hath she, and a way
Of viewing things so different from those
One ever meets, that I doubt e'en if these,
In such a case as *marriage*, would prevail.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I doubt so too.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Adieu : we sup at eight.

Enter MR. HUTCHINSON and *younger* MISS APSLEY.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Pray, doth my little maiden feel disposed
For a walk homeward, through the flowery meads ?

Younger MISS APSLEY.

With pleasure, Sir ; I'll fetch at once my hat.

[*Having now got it, they walk on.*]

I feel so lonely here ; how much I long
For the return of my dear sister home,
If 'tis to be. Oh, she is fair and good !

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Why fear you, then, she may not soon return ?

Younger MISS APSLEY.

It is my Lady's earnest wish that she
Would wed a gentleman of her own shire,
And measures have been taken to that end.

[*They here enter the Apsley house.*]

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Then we may look upon the thing as settled ?

Younger MISS APSLEY.

I cannot say yet.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Pray, whose books are these ?

[*He sees some Latin books on the table.*]

Younger MISS APSLEY.

My sister's, her of whom I spake to you.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

And is she fond of such ?

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Fond, do you ask ?
"Fond" hardly is the word ; when o'er each page
Of the rich volumes of the mighty dead,
Their great achievements and their wealth of thought,
With thirsty soul she leans, as if she must
Drink in and make the author's soul her own.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

'Tis truly wonderful what you relate.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

But she is different from every one,
And only like herself ; I thought, like you ;
As once I saw you in exalted mood,
I deemed you like her then ; when some grand thought,
Flushing the cheek, had brightened in your eye,
And lighted every line with earnestness,
Lifting you high above your common self,
Then you looked like her in her grander moods.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

You pique my curiosity to seek
Some further knowledge on so fond a theme.
She's "good and fair," you say : pray tell me more,—
Her daily habits and her inner life,

Wherein it is she differs from the crowd
Of common mortals ?

Younger MISS APSLEY.

How you puzzle me !

Do you feel never what you can't define ?
A thought so oft is imaged to my mind,
Whilst lacking power to limn it to the sense ;
I know what I believe, and though, perhaps,
E'en to myself its shape may not stand forth
In sharp, bold outline, if defined at all,
Yet feel I a persuasion strong as proof ;
That she is of a finer clay and mould,
And from a higher pedestal of thought
Looks more profoundly, earnestly on life,—
A purer, nobler woman than her kind.
For though she pours not in the world's dull ear
The deep, rich thoughts that form her inner life,
Yet noble character cannot lie hid ;
And though, alarmed, she shrinks from laying bare
Her deepest feelings even to her friends,
Yet ways and looks, a shrinking of the soul,
When on the delicate, well-cultured ear
Jars some false note : an earnestness that strikes
Straight to the heart : the deepening of the tone,
The frame dilating, the flushed cheek, bright eye,
When the great deeds of high-souled men are talked of ;
The nicer shades of character, which show
To those familiar whose own hearts beat true,—
These thousand-fold repeated, like the threads

That make the cable which holds mighty ships,—
These, by the unconscious logic of the heart,
Impression many-plied twists into faith,
Which, though scarce capable of proof, yea, e'en
Of definition clear to those outside,
Yet to the esoteric sense is sure
As to the infant is its mother's love.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Thou hast a sprightly fancy, lady fair,
And sympathy with goodness.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

As the moon
Reflects the native splendour of the sun,
The mantle of her glory falls on me.
I simply gather fragments from her feast.
She, a vast river flecked with golden sands ;
I, a scant streamlet, nourished by her wealth.
Yet is she modest as a little child,
Her healthy nature changing into food
The lightest prattle of my lightest mood.
She sometimes says, I teach her,—she's so kind,—
And make her look more lovingly on life.

[*Exeunt.*





SCENE IN WILTSHIRE.

Elder MISS APSLEY.

What dreams or does my bright-eyed sister now?
How glad I would be to be at her side,
Not moping here in Wiltshire. Hark! who calls?

[*Exit.*





SCENE CHANGES TO NEAR HAMPTON
COURT.

*A party of ladies and gentlemen are seen at Mr. COL-
MAN'S. A song is being sung, composed by one of the
gentlemen.*

FOURTH GENTLEMAN (*sings*).

“Our life is a jumble of pleasures and pains,
O'er which, first and last, blind Fortuity reigns.
To-day, as they chance to her hand, she deals all
The heart covets most, while to-morrow we fall,
Through the lot she deals next with the same smiling air,
From the summits of bliss to the depths of despair.
'Tis a tangle of things, which however we try
With our skilfullest efforts, we fail to untie :
For whatever we do, or do not, to evoke
The pity of nature, the great final stroke
We cannot ward off ; or the sorrows that pave
The highway of mortals from birth to the grave ;
For however its death-pangs the crushed heart may feel,
We are ground none the less under destiny's wheel :

And when, in distraction, we lose child and wife,
And the ties are all severed that linked us to life ;
When those we deemed friends once, prove false and
 unkind,
And depression and madness take hold of the mind,
In our frenzied despair who ~~the~~ light brings *clue*
By which to unriddle this riddle of things ?”

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

’Tis a most painful and depressing song.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

’Twas written in an hour of blank despair,
When all Lucretius rushed upon the soul,
And swept away into blank, vacuous night
The everlasting pillars of this world.
But there’s an answer to it in the house.

ALL.

Pray, let us hear it. Read it to us, please.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Since you desire it so, I’ll read it to you.

[*He reads.*

“ Oh, yes, there are ties that God never would sever,
If life were intended to last us for ever,
And we were meant only for happiness here.
But HE checkers life with full many a tear,
And distilling from evil an essence of good,

Converts e'en the poison of pain into food :
 For ~~He~~^{the} best guardian of man, knows the need
 To ~~honour~~^{honour} the nature while sowing the seed,
 To deepen the feelings, which else were too light,
 To strengthen the root in the damp and dark night
 Of fear, pain, or sorrow ; enhancing the joy
 Of those, from whose natures the slag of alloy
 Has been purged in the furnace which He who knows
 best
 Hath kindled for each ere he enters his rest."—
 A woman in this neighbourhood's believed
 To've written it.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Who ?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

There are only two
 Who "could be guilty of it," whereof one's
 A lady now amongst us, or Miss Apsley.

*[Exeunt all, talking excitedly on the subject of
 the song and the answer to it—except MR.
 HUTCHINSON and FIRST and SECOND
 GENTLEMAN.]*

MR. HUTCHINSON.

I scarcely can believe that song a woman's.*

* These, be it remembered, were "the dark ages" of woman's intellect. Observe, too, the change of meaning of the word "guilty."

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Yet is it, and Miss Apsley's: for though I,
 Out of politeness to the rest, had named
 Another, too, as possibly its author,
 Yet am I confident 'twas writ by her:
 She's such a gifted creature, who for sense
 And intellect towers high above the plane
 Of ordinary women, fenced apart
 By native strength of character and will,
 Yet of such rare simplicity and truth,
 And sweetness and benignity, that all
 With hearts to feel must love her for her worth.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

She's all, and more: [with children their fellow,
 Chief romp and ring-leader in every sport,
 Wild as the wildest when her spirit's up,
 Facile, full-joyed, and entering with zest
 Each crank and cranny of the childish heart].*
 With maidens the most maidenly, discreet,
 Bright, genial, gentle, modest, and devoid
 Of every air and pedantry of wit:

* I beg Miss Apsley's pardon here. In this particular (*i.e.* in the account given of her in the four and half lines enclosed within brackets), I have not, I find on a reperusal of the *Memoirs*, been portraying her as, *historically*, she was, but rather as, from her general character, I had conceived of her ideally. And this warns us how unlike the historic reality may be the ideally-conceived picture of any man with whose writings and doings and character

While in the high discourings of book-learned
 And deep-souled men, *wining by her looks,*
 So eloquent of meaning, that her soul,
 Aglow with feeling, shows in every line
 Of every feature ; and her words, though few,
 Hit straight and home, and listening seniors turn
 On the young maiden their approving looks.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

What you relate is wonderful indeed,
 Nor can I be at rest until I've made
 Acquaintance with her.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Strangle, then, the hope
 Forthwith, for ever ; for such is her mood,
 That she avoids all intercourse with men
 As if plague-struck, and, in herself retired.
 Lives self-contained, with one and all ~~our sex~~
 Refusing to participate her bliss.
 And though I know not by what means this song
 Hath stolen forth from her most jealous care,

we are not intimately acquainted. Let any man read the latest life of (say) the Earl of Strafford, and when he has done so, let him read the Earl's own letters and despatches, and ask himself if the ideal statesman and the man of history be the same man.

Now, however, I have to do with the life and love-making of this noble high-strung Puritan woman, an ornament alike of her age and sex, and with those of her brave and high-souled husband.

Yet, like the violet that loves the shade,
Most femininely feminine she's one
Who shuns all notice of the vulgar world,
Contented, though unseen, to be and do.

[*Exeunt* FIRST and SECOND GENTLEMAN.]

MR. HUTCHINSON, *alone*.

Is it not wonderful, if but half true !
Strange that in her I almost seem to see
A being ever imaged by my heart,
Though hardly realized to consciousness ;
As if a dream of some one in a state
Of former being, lost to memory now,
But linked to sympathy's unsevered ties.

I must contrive some means of seeing her,
Or live unhappy. Oh that I could tear
From out my breast the image of her worth !
And yet I would not. What a quenchless thirst
Of her perfections goads me on to quench
This burning fever that consumes my soul
In the refreshing fountain of her love !

Yet why dream thus ? Why feed the flame that
preys
Upon my vitals ? Why by dwelling on
Her pure, sweet nature in its heights and depths,
And rich-proportioned beauty, nurture that
Which yet may shroud my life in deepest gloom,
And leave me hopeless, objectless in life ?

The elder MISS APSLEY, still in Wiltshire, is seen standing alone in her room, in a musing posture, and with a troubled expression.

Elder MISS APSLEY.

I prize the kindness of the motive which
Prompts friends and mother. But am I to blame
If they feel pained when I refuse to accept
Whom they deem worthy of my hand and heart,—
Some suitor rich in office or in lands,
At whose approach, or memory, or name,
No pulse of mine beats quicker than its wont.

Among the crowd of courtiers none I found
Of noble bearing, manly sense and worth,
And yearning sympathy with all that's good,
And wise, and great, and true, and beautiful ;
And, therefore, no one who could bend this heart
From its sweet maiden loneliness to love.

And now, to please my mother, not myself,
I've hither come, to try if I could bring
My heart to think of love.—But 'tis in vain.
To *him*, as to all others, it is dead.

Oh, that I might be suffered to enjoy
This lovely springtime of my life 'mid books,
And flowers, and verdure, and the songs of birds,
And the wild beauties of all natural things,
The trees, the stars, the ocean, and the sky,
And my poor musings on them ! Why not leave

Me to my gentle sister and her songs,
 And lively talk, and music, and sweet ways,—
 And mother's converse ; far from routs and balls,
 And farther still from lovers' pesterings,
 So painful, dreary, empty, commonplace ;
 Leaving such things to those who can enjoy them ?

Are riches or position such a spring
 Of ripe content, that they would have me wed
 Where the soul's echo hath not waked to love ?
 Shall I my nature fairly disallow,
 The God-voice in the finer thoughts and tones,
 Which, like sweet music, tremble through the heart ?

I know what's due to duty and the love
 I owe my mother, and have, therefore, sought,
 By every sacrifice of self, to meet
 Her slightest wish, up to the very line
 At which obedience melts into weak want
 Of self-assertion and true dignity.

Shall I degrade myself ; do violence
 To every feeling ; nay, more, wrong to him
 To whom, with heart estranged, I pledge my
 troth?—

'Twere terrible to think on't ! I *descend*
 From the ethereal atmosphere of love,
 The sweet romance and poetry of love,
 The blossom of our being, the pure fount
 Where self, unselfed, reflects another's soul,
 Lives in his life, and through his senses feels
 Lapped in a dream of purified content ;—
 Descend from this ideal of the heart,

Limned by its Maker with so fine a touch,
To the profanity of lower aims?—
'Twere prostitution of the soul to think on't!

[*Exit.*





SCENE NEAR HAMPTON COURT.

The younger MISS APSLEY and MR. HUTCHINSON are seen conversing together, when she suddenly stopping in her walk, and looking up at him.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

How is it that, begin what theme we will,
'Tis always sure somehow to end in her?
The books, the flowers, the hills seem voiced with her,
And from all hedgerows she looks out on us.

*MR. HUTCHINSON stooping to pick a flower,
but really to hide his embarrassment.*

MR. HUTCHINSON.

I'm fond of eloquence, and on this theme
My little orator exceeds herself.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

The eloquence is ofttimes in the ear,
And the poor speaker credit gains for what

The fervid fancy of the hearer warms
 In his own glowing heart, and beautifies.
 You have not seen my sister, else I should
 Have deemed that mighty love had ~~kind~~ ^{kind} my thoughts—
 As broken on that fatal prism—into
 All forms of beauty that enchant the soul.
 But love comes through the eye, and not the ear.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Where learned you, sweet lady, this love's lore ?

Younger MISS APSLEY.

From books and sister : for though wise and good,
 And full of high and earnest thoughts, her heart,
 All woman still, hath a rich, noble fount
 Of simple, sweet, and beautiful romance,—
 A goodly treasure, hid from vulgar gaze,
 To be expended without stint on him
 Who reigns sole monarch of her queenly heart.

But I must practise now, and say, Adieu.

[*Exit Younger* MISS APSLEY.]

MR. HUTCHINSON, *now alone, walking on in much agitation.*

MR. HUTCHINSON.

How strange, how silly is this restlessness !
 These fevered thoughts, these fancies of the brain !
 Love at first sight is rational to this,

Love of the unseen—save as the spirit's ken
 Pierces through all ^{the} barriers of sense,
 And brings soul near to soul, in the divine,
 Mysterious sympathy that wraps the world.

But is not this a figment of the brain
 Fevered with thoughts, and driven to hard straits?
 What! Reason, can'st thou not deliver me
 From what seems plain unreason? Fancy sick,
 I wander lonely 'mid the crowds and din
 Of men and women, thinking but of her,
 Whom yet I have seen only in my dreams;—
 But there she's ever; noble, maidenly,
 A true, pure woman, full of her sweet thoughts,
 And caring not to share them with the throng
 Of uncongenial triflers. How unlike
 The restless, gaudy butterflies that flit
 Their little day, sipping each passing sweet,
 With scarce one earnest thought of this great life.

[*Exit.*

The footboy of LADY APSLEY is seen coming towards the house which MR. HUTCHINSON has just entered, and in which the younger MISS APSLEY and several ladies and gentlemen are at dinner.

FOOTBOY.

'Twill be rare fun if I perform with skill
 The part assigned me. 'Twas so fortunate
 There should have chanced a wedding at the house

My lady stayed at ; since it colour gives,
Through these bride-tokens,

[He lifts up the bridal laces, etc., to look at them.]

To our cunning scheme

To have it thought Miss Apsley was the one
Who had been married,—'twill be such a joke !

[Here the FOOTBOY knocks, and the door opens, showing all the company at dinner. The younger MISS APSLEY seeing that it is her mother's boy.]

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Where is my lady ? Is Miss Apsley married ?

FOOTBOY.

She only bade me, madam, give you these.

[Smiling knowingly, he gives her the bridal tokens.]

Many voices.

Oh, then, she's married ! Married beyond doubt.

[At this MR. HUTCHINSON turns "pale as ashes, and feeling a faintness to seize on his spirits in that extraordinary manner that finding himself ready to sink at table," and seeing all eyes turned on him.]

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Something there is amiss with me ; I must

Withdraw into the garden. The fresh air
Will speedily revive me.

[The gentlemen help him in his endeavour to get away.]

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Oh, pray lean
Upon my shoulder. You seem deadly faint.
What can I do for you? A cold sweat breaks
From every pore! Your lips are pale as death!

[Exit FOOTBOY.]

It is so passing strange what could have vexed
Your stomach, Sir, and passed the others by.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

I'll to my chamber now.

*[Helped along, he gains his room, and throwing
himself on a couch.]*

I thank you much :

Pray leave me now : I would lie down awhile.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

We'll leave you, then, and hope you'll soon recover.

[Exeunt all.]

MR. HUTCHINSON (*alone*).

There's some enchantment surely in this place.
Now I recall that story of my friend,
How here, not long ago, a gentleman
Died out of love of one deceased, on whom,

Though never seen, his soul with fondness hung,
 From hearing her described, deplored, and praised ;
 Until at last he could hear but of her ;
 And, where her footprint on the turf was cut,
 Would go and kiss it, biding there all day,
 Pining until he died of very love.*

[*Here in a reverie he pauses a little.*]

But this is madness ! Lord, deliver me !
 My soul, be quiet ! Yet she seemed *the one*
 Fitted to realize my wildest dream,
 To feast the fondest yearnings of my heart,
 And flood my being with a tide of joy.

But 'tis pure folly ! Yet I feed the flame,
 And feed it ever, that consumes my life.
 O God of mercy, pity my despair !
 I am bewitched, distracted, stunned, undone,—
 I, who was ever deemed, and deemed myself,
 A strong, calm child of reason, drifted thus
 By winds and waves of passion where they will ;
 As when in dreamland we the danger see,
 But lack the power of motion to escape.

Awake, my reason ! seize with force the helm,
 And pilot into port this shattered bark.
 'Tis weakness, folly, madness thus to love
 One never fashioned to the eye of sense,
 But only on the mirror of the mind.
 I must shake off this nightmare of the soul,
 And act with reason, as becomes a man.

* For the genuineness of this story, see the "Life of Colonel Hutchinson."

Brave words, weak flesh ! Thy grace, O Lord, Thy grace,
In this breakdown of will, in blank despair,
I turn to now, as what alone can save me.

[*Exit.*

Enter FIRST and SECOND GENTLEMAN.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

You have not heard, you say, if he's recovered.
'Twas a most sudden and severe attack.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Had we not better step upstairs to see him ?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I think, not yet ; meanwhile, we'll take a walk.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter FOOTBOY *in great glee, and not seeing* MR. HUTCHINSON *in the distance.*

FOOTBOY.

In the confusion of the gent's attack
Escaped I further questioning last night.
It was great fun,—it took so well with all.

[MR. HUTCHINSON *half hearing but not understanding him.*

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Come here, my lad.

FOOTBOY.

Glad, Sir, to see you well.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Now, tell me all about Miss Apsley's wedding.

FOOTBOY.

Was't not enough to show the bridal tokens?
The rest's a secret.

(Laughing and mysterious, he adds)

I was bid not tell.

[MR. HUTCHINSON *handing him a crown piece.*

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Here now, my lad, pray let me know the whole.

FOOTBOY *(smiling archly).*

I did not *say* Miss Apsley 'twas was married.
The bride-tokens were of another lady,
Who chanced to have been married at the house,
And I was bid to tell no news, but give 'em,—
'Twas only meant to flutter all their hearts.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

You tell me truly, then,—she is not married?

FOOTBOY.

Truly, Sir, no : it was the merest joke.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

A joke! May I believe you? Was't it indeed a joke?

FOOTBOY.

True as the gospel, Sir, I do assure you.
That I speak truth you will yourself soon learn,
She will be here in a few days herself.

[Exit FOOTBOY.]

MR. HUTCHINSON (*alone*).

My God, I thank Thee for this spring of joy,
Which in the wilderness of my despair
Wells up to bless me with refreshing hope!
How bounds my heart with joy to think that yet
There is a chance of seeing, knowing, and—
O God!—of winning her! Mayn't she be won?
Her sister says, though earnest, studious, learned,
And shrinkingly retiring from the world,
She hath a heart charged with a wealth of love,—
Mute music yet, until the hand that knows
Sweeps o'er the chords and wakes it into life.

I think my feelings are akin to hers,
And that I understand her spirit's thirst;
But how I long with certainty to learn
If our souls mate, and nature marks her mine!—

But how upon the thinnest edge of hope
I build up a whole pyramid of bliss.

[Exit.]

Enter MISS APSLEY the younger, and MISS COLMAN.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Yes, Mr. Hutchinson has been invited:
'Twill be a grand affair.

MISS COLMAN.

I'm glad of it,
He's such a courtly handsome gentleman.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

What pains the ladies take to win his love !

MISS COLMAN.

Perhaps, his heart is elsewhere ; he appears
At times so absent, so absorbed in thought,
So unassailable by any shaft
Shot from the eye or lip of womankind,
That either he is different from all,
Or bears love's fatal arrow in his breast.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

How this may be I know not ; when with me
He walks, he's never absent ; yet, in truth,
To no one is he more indifferent.

MISS COLMAN.

'Tis very odd ; I can't unriddle him.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Therefore, beware ; you tread on slippery ground.
The men who puzzle us always interest,
And interest hath much that's kin to love.

[Exeunt laughing.]

Enter MISS APSLEY *the elder, just come home.*

MISS APSLEY.

Returned ! Oh, joyful ! I must quick dispatch
A messenger to let my sweet one know
Her truant sister hath come back to her.

[Exit.]

The younger MISS APSLEY ; *next her* MR. HUTCHINSON,
and on the other side MISS COLMAN *and ladies and*
gentlemen at dinner.

FOOTBOY.

Madam, I come at once to let you know
My Lady and Miss Apsley have arrived.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Oh, joyful message ! I must go forthwith.

MR. HUTCHINSON (*aside*).

'Twould look so very strange if I should leave
Just at this moment : yet, without me, she
On no account must go hence. Oh, my heart,

What a great leap it gave when first my ear
Caught the glad sound. What, what may happen now?
The next few days, what hold they in reserve?
Death of all hope, or happiness and her?

(Then to younger Miss Apsley in a whisper.)

Pray stay till dinner's ended: then will I
See you safe home with pleasure. Pray, then, wait
Just one brief moment: 'twill be over soon.

Younger Miss Apsley.

Then, be it so, you are so ever kind.

(To Miss Colman.)

I long to see them so, and hear the news.

(To Mr. Hutchinson.)

You're eating *nothing*: what's the matter, pray?

MR. HUTCHINSON.

If you are ready, now I'll go with you.

[Exeunt.]

Enter First and Second Gentleman.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Miss Apsley's come back, and still unmarried.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I'm glad she's come

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

He did not reach, she found,
Her lofty standard. Men, Sir, are not made
To any women's order. She must pick
From vulgar clay her man, or e'en be picked :
For nature, prodigal of the common sort,
Is niggard ever of ideal men.
The heaven-born come but once in a long while,
Nor always, when they do, get angel mates.
One in one house should surely be enough.
Must all gifts drop into the lap of one,
To leave the rest of us a beggared rabble ?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

You're cynical to-day !

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I always am
When blows an east wind, or a twinge of gout
Preaches whole homilies on temperance.
But somehow I am glad that she's returned.

[*Exeunt.*

MR. HUTCHINSON *is seen leaving* LADY APSLEY'S house.
LADY APSLEY and her younger daughter, too, are
retiring, leaving the elder MISS APSLEY *alone in the*
drawing-room.

MISS APSLEY (*alone*).

What a fine, handsome, well-bred gentleman !

What eyes and hair and shape and countenance ;
And graceful, noble mien ; a king of men ;
A captain to lead armies, or to sit
Among grave counsellors on State affairs !
Upon that brow what lofty thought and power,
And in his eye what calmness and command !
What dignity of bearing ! yet withal,
What simple, winning unaffectedness.
By matter, manner, voice, and countenance,
A true man, certainly ; or all signs fail,
And nature hath writ liar on herself.

On what a lofty eminence he stands
Above the young men one sees everywhere.
Sir Thomas must be proud of such a son.
But this is nonsense, I must quick to bed.

*Enter MR. HUTCHINSON, with his head bent in profound
and earnest thought ; then, suddenly.*

At last these eyes have seen her, and she's all
My brightest dreams had ever dimly shaped,—
A sweet, pure woman, modest, winning, fair,
And with a queenly negligence to please,
Yet pleasing ever—the fine native soul
Showing distinctly through the thin disguise.
Her sense direct and true ; her tastes refined ;
Her mind so polished, cultured, richly stored,
And taking lead from the sheer force of thought,
And yet no vanity and no pretence.

What witchery of manner, and a smile
Of heaven's own sunlight, rippling o'er her face,
Kindling each feature, laughing in her eyes.
And what an affluence of noble thought !

Oh, if she's fancy-free ! My God, how much
On the solution of that word may hang !
But, oh, how slowly drag the creeping hours ;
And how, with love-stricken, impatient soul,
Long I again to feast these eyes on her.

[*He pauses a moment.*]

And she may now be roaming in the woods,
Or, book in hand, upon the grassy turf
Be poring over the great works of men
Who wrote their names upon the centuries,
And, like the mighty pyramids, stand out
In grandeur 'mid the ruins of the past.

I must this instant go in quest of her.

[*Exit.*]

*The elder MISS APSLEY is seen walking at an early hour
on the dewy lawn.*

MISS APSLEY.

How beautiful the skies, the fields, the trees !
The air, balm-freighted at this young spring hour,
Blows ruddy health into the pallid cheek.
How silent is all nature ; only waked
By yonder solitary thrush, love crowned,

And pouring from the fulness of his heart
Sweet strains of song to cheer his listening mate.

[She continues walking on, swinging her hat carelessly by the ribbons in her hand; when, suddenly stopping, she picks the bud of a moss-rose just opening to the morning.]

How beautiful is nature in her scale
Of vastness and minuteness equally!—
From the blue heavens, with their hosts of stars,
To this sweet rosebud, starred with dew, just burst
It's mossy envelope, with flush of joy
And wild amaze. How fair as she unfolds
Her beauty and her fragrance to the sun!
Who prints a thousand kisses in return,
To swell her bosom with a riper joy.

Oh, England, thou art beautiful! my heart
Thrills with affection when I think of thee,
Loved isle of flowers and verdure, sea-begirt.
Thou land of maidens fair, and stalwart sons,
Whose task it is to tame and teach the waves
Of the great angry separating sea
To be the very highway of the world,
And make them minister to human needs.
And yours, fair maidens, by the witchery
Of gentle manners, and the charms of love,
To tame and teach the rougher sons of toil,
And, so, refine and beautify their lives.

Thou land of song and Shakespeare, whose rich soul
Ran o'er the gamut of all human things,
Great thinker and sweet singer of the world!

Land, too, of those the martyred saintly dead,
 Who, when grim death 'twixt them and duty stood,
 With flames and terrors armed, to bar the way,
 In loyalty to truth the tyrant braved,
 And hallowed, so, by constancy to death,
 The soil of England, and bequeathed to us
 The priceless heritage of their example,
 To warm our souls to emulate their deeds.

— And *he* has all those qualities that smell
 Of English soil, which made our fathers feel
 The very name of Englishman a sound
 To stir their blood, and which they've handed down,
 To stir ours too, and make us true and brave.
 And such is *he*, a true-born Englishman,
 With all *their* potence latent, till the spark
 Of the occasion wakes it into life.

[*She now moves on. The younger MISS APSLEY is seen as she advances, in a bower formed by wild rose and eglantine, with her head appearing through an opening in the thick foliage. MISS APSLEY with the rosebud still in her hand.*

MISS APSLEY.

Sweet sister, let me braid this in your hair.

[*Still holding the rosebud, and looking down admiringly at it.*

How rich and delicate each folded leaf

In texture, hue, and fragrance ! What a bend
 And graceful sweep of beauty's seen throughout.
 How rich the living tracery that climbs
 The fretted columns of its outer court.

[MISS APSLEY *looking admiringly at her sister
 peeping through the foliage, and struck with
 the similitude.*

A blushing fair one in a rose-wreathed bower,
 Smiling, half mantled by a mass of green,
 'Transmitted by some fairy's wand to *this*.

[*Pointing to the rosebud.*

My gentle rosebud, what if 'twere thy fate !

[*While still weaving the rosebud in her sister's
 hair, a rustling sound is heard, and, turn-
 ing, a gentleman is seen approaching.*

Younger MISS APSLEY.

I do believe 'tis Mr. Hutchinson.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Good morning, ladies ; what a charming day.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Good morning, Sir ; I am so glad you're here.

MISS APSLEY.

Good morning, Sir ; it is indeed most lovely.
 The hedgerows crowned with blossoms, and the air
 Vocal with song, and laden with rich scents.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

The hedges have put on their richest robes,
And birds are welcoming Miss Apsley home.

MISS APSLEY (*smiling*).

I rather think they sang as sweetly when
I listened to their fellows far away.

[MR. HUTCHINSON *and* MISS APSLEY *move on,*
while the younger sister, picking some flowers,
remains somewhat to the rear.

MISS APSLEY.

Most things have their own interest, round which
Their feelings sweetly cluster, and, save there,
No gap is made, or soon it closes up.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

This hath its bright, if still its painful side.
How *sweet* to feel that all, or almost all,
Have some or one to take an interest
In their well-being, or that, more, entwines
The finest tendrils of the heart round theirs.
Yet *sad* to think that men are so absorbed
By their own narrow interest, that they lose
That large magnificence of thought and heart
Which brings them nearer, makes them like Him
Whose grasp of love takes in the universe.

MISS APSLEY.

And so are we the losers ; for what is't
That makes the bliss of earth or heaven, but love ?
'Tis e'en less blessed to receive than give :
And though who gives love gives a priceless gift,
He is himself the richer, which the soul,
Rich in all else, is poor that's poor in this ;
And he the wealthiest in soul-wealth, whose love
Is deepest, largest, likest love of God.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

There is a danger yet, that, since we are
Slight-natured at the best, our love a ray
Shot from the central and sole source of love,
It should by large diffusion fade and merge
Into thin general sentiment, and lose
Its rich, intense, distinctive character.
We need some special objects upon whom
To prove the verity of love by deeds,
And quicken, so, the passive sentiment.
Such is our nature, too, that we require
Some object of affection, upon whom
To pour the richest treasures of our love ;
Yet so that it may warmer radiate
Towards those outside in *action*, and expand
In circling waves until it gird the world.

MISS APSLEY.

You teach a doctrine which, I fear, the world
Hath little heart to entertain ; and yet,

Oh, what a paradise, could man but feel
 For man, his brother, e'en the ties that bind
 The members of one family in one,
 Proving his love by deeds, lest it exhale
 In useless, vague, and vapid sentiment !
 Would love not grow thus, God bestowing more
 On "him that hath," until it sank to rest
 Beyond the sky verge of the world of sense,
 To shine in heaven with an intenser glow.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

And love is its own rich reward, as hate
 Its own fell scourge, the vulture that strikes deep
 Its beak into the vitals of mankind.

MISS APSLEY.

True, and in other ways how much we lose.
 What glorious thoughts are writ upon the world,
 Had we the eyes to see, the souls to learn
 The cryptograms of nature, and to read
 The record of her doings, and her will !

The younger MISS APSLEY coming up now.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Fearing you might have lost yourselves in depths
 Of abstract love, I come to bring you back,
 A thankless meddler, to poor common-place.
 But, (*addressing her sister*) having eaten nothing, you
 should now

Wend homeward and get somewhat to support
 This clothes-horse of the body, else it may
 Refuse to bear the lordly intellect
 To heights unsoared to, and unsounded depths.

MISS APSLEY.

You sunny-natured sister ! ever full
 Of fun and raillery, how glad am I
 To get back to your fun and wicked mirth.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

And from all nuptial menacings ! But that,
Of course, hath naught to do with our content.

*[On their return homeward MISS APSLEY, seeing
 some beautiful wild flowers on a bank, steps
 aside to pluck them. Whereupon MR.
 HUTCHINSON and the younger MISS APSLEY
 proceed together alone, when asks*

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Your sister is not married ; is she engaged ?

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Hush ! no ; she is not. But some courtiers here
 Were so importunate, and she wished so
 To gratify her mother and her friends,
 That she submitted to their every wish.
 But feeling that, when so much was at stake,
 She was not duty bound to yield her will

To friends, or even mother, she returned,
Heart whole and free, albeit much perplexed.
But (*looking at him earnestly*) is it not strange? I talk to
you as to
A friend of years : but you have been so long
A true friend to me, and we've talked so much
About my sister, that I feel as if
I could confide all thoughts about her to you.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

And you may do so, if I know myself.
You say that she's perplexed ; pray tell me all.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Where she loves not, she feels she cannot wed ;
Yet mother is not pleased, and she is such
A tender, gentle, pious, noble mother.

[*Here* MISS APSLEY *returns, holding up a beautiful
bouquet of flowers.*

Oh, what a splendid bouquet ! Beautiful !

MR. HUTCHINSON.

A noble bunch. 'Tis beautiful, indeed.

MISS APSLEY.

What pity 'tis that they should ever fade,
That so much beauty's doomed to swift decay.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Nature, great mother of the living world,
Is only true to one love—ceaseless change,
And death reblooms in life, the affluent months
With prodigal new loveliness unfold
Their rich variety of hue and form
To grace almost the circuit of the year.

MISS APSLEY.

Our life hath too its ceaseless round of change,
Childhood, youth, manhood, and senility,
And then we drop into the silent grave,
And generations rise upon our dust,
And pass away in turn.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Yet our life hath
A mightier significance, because
A discipline to fit us for the next,
And death the morning of our real life.
How blessed 'tis to know all ends not here,
But that the soul continuous with God
Lives through the boundless future, ever young.
'Tis wonderful how little we think on't.

MISS APSLEY.

The present, with its cravings and its cares
Its interests, pleasures, passions, shuts out heaven,

And the poor chrysalis forgets his wings.
 Habit determines most things in the world ;
 We are its creatures, think and act by habit.

[*Having by this time arrived at LADY APSLEY'S,
 MR. HUTCHINSON and MISS APSLEY enter ;
 while the younger MISS APSLEY remains
 outside.*

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Have I said too much ? Will he think I meant
 More than I did mean ? Many, I fear, would.
 But noble souls judge motives as they feel
 The pulse of honour beating in themselves.

Yet are they not twin minds, and by the law
 Of moral fitness mated, soul to soul,
 And needing but propinquity to force
 Attractive sympathy to consummate
 The holy work of making twin souls one ?
 But I shall leave it in the hands of Him
 Who knows all, plans all, works all for our good.

[*Exit.*

SIR THOMAS HUTCHINSON (*alone*).

My son : high time, indeed, that he was married.
 What a surprise 'twill be, when he receives
 My letter bidding him come back for this !
 And she's a maiden such as any man
 Might well be proud of ; and the dowry, too,
 Such as a prudent parent can approve.

He is, indeed, a fortune's favourite,
To have the whole thing cut and dry to hand,
Without a moment's trouble on his part,
But all provided by our loving care,
And he to enter in but, and enjoy.
And now that all is settled on both sides,
By them, and me, upon my son's account,
And but awaits the tying of the knot,
I look impatiently for his return.

Enter FIRST and SECOND GENTLEMAN.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

He's at her mother's constantly I know,
And in their daily walks they're somehow sure
To come together ; and her talk, all but
Dammed up to others, overflows to him.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

It speaks her interest, and interest oft
Is love at birth, that in young hearts is fanned
Into a passion that absorbs the life ;
As straws that rotate first upon the edge,
Yet sucked at length into the maelstrom's heart.
Have you discovered any signs of love ?—
The eye is a strange tell-tale.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I doubt if
She thinks of him save as a friend she trusts;

Or dreams of love : but *he* may think of it,
 And, ever near, hath opportunity
 To pour all eager thoughts into her ear.
 Recall the interest he took in her
 From our description ; how her image rose
 Before his fancy, kindling the resolve
 Of her acquaintance ; and though word or look
 Is not on record, that could argue much,
 Yet is their friendship of a kind that might
 At any moment ripen into love.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

When man and maiden with like souls are thrown
 Together much, love, stealing in, is apt
 To tie their young hearts with a true love's knot.
 Their love, if love, will be of a high kind.
 The love that's captive to each comely face,
 That lightly kindles at each graceful form,
 Is not the love that nature hath hived up
 Within *their* breasts, and which they need scarce guard :
 For nature, ever careful of the work
 On which her hand hath wrought with special care,
 Hath herself taken that task upon herself,
 Fencing their hearts with qualities so high,
 That they are stirred scarce by the things that move
 The lighter feelings of the common world.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

They are not demi-gods that you thus speak.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I am not jealous, and I speak my mind.
 He is a high-souled man,—I have observed him ;
 And she a model of her sex, a rare
 Accomplished, deep-souled, earnest noblewoman.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Deep-souled and rare, no doubt ; but of the clay
 Of which we common mortals are composed :
 Rather self-conscious, stilted, stand-aloof,
 Lofty, ungenial, wise beyond her years.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Pooh, pooh ! rehash the spite of envious dames
 And jealous gentlemen. I deem you are
 In love with her yourself, and thus allow
 Unworthy feelings to becloud your mind.
 All have their frailties, some alloy of earth ;
 But, with these drawbacks, both are sterling gold.
 Pray take a glass of wine.

[*He presents him with one, which he drains off.*

Shake off this chill,

Which threatens ague in so strong a mind.
 If she love, or should love another, what !
 The world is wide enough : each had his chance.
 Without foul play—I know it all—the game
 Has gone against my friend. Another time,
 When the true quarry shows, your hawk will fly
 With stroke unerring, and bring down your bird.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I do confess I did affect her much.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Then bravely let your soul be just to her,
And, though a rival, also just to him.

Between them yet, so far as I can see,
There is no tie, save friendship and esteem ;
Yet do I think 'tis like to be a match,
And matches, it is said, are made in heaven.—
What a bright morning ; let us take a stroll.

[*Exeunt.*]

MR. HUTCHINSON *and* MISS APSLEY *walking in the garden. A servant brings him a letter, which on reading he turns deadly pale. MISS APSLEY looks much troubled, too.*

MR. HUTCHINSON.

No one is dead or ill ; but there is that
Within this letter which disturbs me much.
I must without delay my father see,
And hence must quit *this pleasant* place until——

[*Breaks off suddenly.*]

Yet who but God knows what the future holds ?
But since I must immediately depart,
And dread farewells, please to excuse me to

My Lady and your sister. Now adieu.
 A Dieu, à Dieu, then : to whom else but Him ?

*[He now hastens from the garden ; MISS APSLEY
 moves slowly in the opposite direction towards
 the house.]*

MR. HUTCHINSON.

My heart, give way not ! Oh, ye trembling knees,
 Uphold me yet one moment ! And, you eyes,
 Turn back not now, or you will all undo,
 And I shall throw me at her feet. But, oh,
 Why should I show her what is in my heart
 Until I know if I may ask her love ?

Brave heart, good knees, firm eyes, one moment
 more !

But, heart, how weak thou art ! One little look !
 Just but one little look ! One look to see
 If she is looking. Oh, thou traitor heart,
 Think of Lot's wife ! One little look spoiled all.
 Stop the sharp ears, hear not the prompting voice,
 Of the weak heart. Do as Odusseus did ;
 Or rather borrow, like the trembling Paul,
 For weakness, strength ! Then courage take, my soul :
 Be, be a Christian hero in God's name.

*[Here seen to enter the inn yard in much per-
 turbation : he addresses the ostler.]*

A coach and horses, Thomas, with all speed.

[Exeunt.]

MISS APSLEY *in her room, very pale and trembling.*

MISS APSLEY.

What meant that letter with its dread contents,
Which o'er his features spread the hue of death ;
As if the blood, the outworks left, had rushed
To man the central fortress of the heart ?

[*She appears lost in deep thought.*

Could it be *that* ? But, if 'twere it, he loves,
And, if such bliss within the limit lie
Of possibility, perhaps loves *me*.

He said in answer to my troubled looks,
"No one is dead or ill, but I must see
Without delay my father ;" adding this,
"And hence must quit *this pleasant place until——*"

He called it "pleasant," dwelling on the word
With lingering fondness seemingly, as if
He would convey, yet not convey, the thought,
That made it pleasant, leaving that to me,
An unsolved riddle. Oh that I could pluck
The heart out of it, and the future know !

"Must quit," he said, "this pleasant place *until——*"
And then broke off abruptly. Why break off ?
Why not complete the sentence ? "Until" when ?
"Until" to-morrow, or the knell of doom ?
"Until" is meaningless, till informed by that
Which after comes. 'Tis a great hungry void,
In which conjecture myriad-fold finds room,
And false and true on equal footing stand.

His last words were a prayer almost,—"*à Dieu ;*"

And without looking back—ah, that was hard—
Once, only once ; with long and rapid strides
He disappeared, and I was left alone,
Shivering and stunned with the great sudden blow,
And scarcely knew I how to reach my room.
My limbs had lost their power, and things appeared
To spin around me ; and the world, so bright
Ten minutes erst, to my poor burning brain
Grew into one long night of deepest gloom.
And here I'm now. O God, have pity on me !
My heart feels breaking. Oh, my God, my God,
Shorten those fearful moments of suspense,
And bring him back to me, my own, my own,
Since Thou hast locked in love my heart in his !

But why, in presence of his mighty grief,
Think of myself, of anything but *him*,
My darling with those wistful eyes so sad !
My heart bleeds for thee, and my eyes are full
Of unshed tears, and my compassion's soft
As that of the young mother for her babe
Whose suffering is great, and in whose eyes
Pale death stands pitiless, prepared to strike,
While she in helpless agony looks on,
And memory recalls the smiles and ways
And artless sweet caressings of her child,
Whom she no more can warm in her great love,
Or take her sufferings upon herself.

And oh, my loved one, gladly would I take
Thy sorrows on myself. If I could ward
With more than mother's care thy precious life

From suffering, I'd do it ; and rejoice
That I could shield thee from one passing pang.

[*Exit.*

SIR THOMAS HUTCHINSON *and his son are seen con-
versing earnestly together.*

SIR THOMAS HUTCHINSON.

With beauty, means, position, and, withal,
The contract finished !

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Father, I *cannot*.

I love another, worthy of my love,—
How more than worthy ; and my heart is fixed,
Fixed beyond hope of change. I could not love
Another, having loved the angel whom
God hath, I trust, meant for my very own ;
And when you see her, you will think with me
She is a woman of a make of soul
Above the common ; living in a sphere
Of higher thought and feeling, nourished by
A richer aliment than of the earth.

It grieves me much to grieve you—oh, how much !
But I *cannot* love and unlove at will.

SIR THOMAS HUTCHINSON.

It disappoints me sadly ; but if she
Be all you say, and your heart's fixed on't

Beyond recall ; if other things combine
To make it all a parent can approve,
I must submit, and urge the true excuse.
Yet wish I much I had known this before.
But you've not told me who the lady is.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Miss Apsley, daughter of the late Sir Allen,
Lieutenant of the Tower. Before I tell
My love to her, I tell it, Sir, to you.

SIR THOMAS HUTCHINSON.

Of gentle blood, indeed ! Of this I'm glad,
And that you've been discreet and dutiful.
But how know you the lady will accept ?

MR. HUTCHINSON.

I hope, I hope she will ; but till I made
My love known to my father, I would not
Make known my love to her and ask for hers ;
And for my duty I've a rich reward.

SIR THOMAS HUTCHINSON.

Before I give to it my full consent,
Prudence enjoins the need of knowing more
Of matters which young ardent hearts o'erlook,
When love, the painter, paints life all spring-time,
'Mid primrose banks in sunshine evermore.
But I shall not be overhard, if she
Be like what you, in your love's dream, believe.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

With my whole soul, I thank you, nor shall soon
Forget the kindness you have shown in this.
I know how hard it is to have our plans,
Prepared with care, and waiting but the crown
Of consummation, blasted in an hour
By him for whom, in love, they were designed.

SIR THOMAS HUTCHINSON.

'Tis past, my son ; let's not recur to it.

Enter younger MISS APSLEY in excitement.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

"Why tarry so his chariot wheels?" Oh, what
Can mean this long delay? 'Tis now five days
Since his departure, and not e'en a line,
To say if he returns, or when ; or what
The cause of his departing. Better aught
Than this most wearing, torturing suspense.
I could just hate him ! Why not speak at once,
And let her know the worst. 'Twere better, yea,
To break the heart with a great sudden shock,
Than wear it slowly out with gnawing pain,
To kill at length as surely. Yet, when by
My better sense I'm ruled, I think not so,
But only when I look into those eyes,
And read the suffering imprinted there ;

For hope, that feeds on scanty nourishment,
Dies not till starved outright, and blank despair
Closes all avenues, and walls in the soul
In utter hopeless darkness.

Enter FOOTBOY.

FOOTBOY.

Madam, please,
My lady wishes much to speak with you.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Please tell her ladyship I go at once.

[Exit FOOTBOY, *soon followed by* MISS APSLEY.

MR. HUTCHINSON *alone in the drawing-room at* LADY
APSLEY'S, *red and pale by turns, awaiting* MISS
APSLEY.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

In what a state of tremor wait I here !
Where now is all the burning eloquence
With which the heart ran over as last night
I lay awake entranced, and longed for morn,
That I might pour my soul into her ear,
And show her how I loved her. But, alas,
Like a dry leaf upon a blasted oak,
That fluttering hangs, I tremble now to hear

[Her step is here heard upon the stairs.

Her step descending ; and this coward heart
Beats like a frightened bird's ; and now I feel

[*Her hand is on the door handle.*

A deadly faintness creeping through my frame.

Would, oh, that I had seen her when last night
I came to tell her all, and from her lips
My sentence learn ; but was, alas, debarred,
By her dear sister's dread to awake her then.
She had been suffering so the last few days
From sleeplessness, she said, and other ills,
And that she durst not awake her till refreshed
By the night's rest ; but that with early morn
She would be up, she knew, and glad to see me.

But now that she is coming, and her hand
Upon the very handle, all my strength
Is ebbing fast, and I feel faint and sink.

[*As MISS APSLEY enters, he sinks, deadly pale, into a chair. She, seeing him in such a state, darts towards him, seizing both his hands ; then rushes to pull the bell-rope, when his alarm, lest she should ring it and bring in the servants and family, calling him in some measure to himself, he cries—*

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Ring not the bell, Miss Apsley ; let no eyes
Save those, I trust, can pardon it, behold
This agony of weakness.

MISS APSLEY.

O my God !

Oh, let me go, I must this instant ring it—
You look so death-like—or my heart will break.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

No : ring it not, my angel.

[He starts in fright at the word he has dared to utter.

It is said ;

And I cannot recall it, and I would not.
The lips, however disciplined, sometimes
Will blurt the thought out which the heart is used to.

[He sees that she resents it not.

Now I feel better, now that it is spoke,
And that those eyes, so eloquent of truth,
Wear only pity ! Oh that it were love !—
Such love, sweet angel, as I feel for thee,
Loved first, loved last, loved only, loved for aye.

MISS APSLEY.

Oh, Mr. Hutchinson, in love with *me* !

MR. HUTCHINSON.

“ In love with ” you ! “ In love ” is not the word,
When love’s the very essence of the soul,
And it dreams, thinks, yea, only lives in love.
“ In love with ” you. The very air is charged
With your sole presence : yea, the turf your feet
Hath pressed, to me is hallowed evermore.

The birds sing sweeter, and a healthier life
Pervades all being ; yea, the sun himself
Lights up the heavens with a rosier hue,
And sets more joyous, when my love is near.

MISS APSLEY.

And I love *you* : love you with my whole heart.
[*He clasps her in his arms and kisses her passionately.*]

MR. HUTCHINSON.

And now we're one ; now and for ever one,
Folded and locked in one life-long embrace,
Soul to soul wedded, heart to heart, and all,
Web and woof, knit into one seamless life.

[*He draws back, holding her at arm's length to look into her eyes.*]

The blue empyrean with its crown of stars,
All nature in her holiday attire
Of perfumed beauty in her sweetest mood,
What are they to the beauty and the grace
Of heart and soul and person of my love ?

To heighten by comparison, all else
May be compared to her ; but the wide world,
With all the fairest, brightest things it holds,
Could shed no lustre on my peerless queen.
Thou to thyself art like the richest gem,
The sweetest flower, the noblest prize on earth.

MISS APSLEY.

O dearer far than self and all the world,
 With thirsty ear and soul I drink thy words,
 Half-pained, half-ravished ; *ravished* to be loved
 With such o'erflowing, boundless wealth of love ;
 But *pained* to think that love is in the eye
 Of the beholder, in his own rich heart,
 In that fond idol of his own ideal,
 Which like the halo round a saint-head, folds
 The loved one in a robe all rainbow-hued.

Oh that the colours which your love lays on
 May not rub out, by friction of the life,
 And you behold the idol that you loved
 An idol only, set up in a shrine
 By the credulity that worshipped there.

[He smiles at the bare idea.

You smile incredulous !—my loved one, smile.
 It makes my heart so glad, I could not endure,
 Whatever I may think or say, to lose
 My darling's love. O God, my heart stands still
 At the bare mention ; and my senses reel ;
 And a cold, sickly faintness seizes me.

*[She grows very pale. He clasps her in his arms,
 and fondly kisses her.*

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Have no doubts, my beloved, on that point ;
 I've thought it all out, questioned myself on it ;
 Put out my feelers, like a sceptic snail,

On every side, nor ever found a flaw
 Which to my critic sense gave slightest pain.
 I've marked the ways of women, and compared
 Their ways and works and principles with yours,
 And never changed a hair-breadth from the first.
 I'm but *too* conscious of the littleness
 Of the light souls of common womankind,
 Not to be sure that she, my love, who deigns
 To complement and crown my halting life,
 Is of a finer, richer clay, and cast
 In a far different and nobler mould.
 You're too unconscious of your worth and power.
 Perhaps, 'tis best. The grandest, richest minds
 Are sometimes, too, the simplest, and know not
 How great they are, but work and are content.
 The mighty Shakespeare, in whose roomy brain
 The whole world moved ; who knew us to the core ;
 And painted life with such a free, bold hand,
 Yet with a touch as delicate as bold,—
 Think you he ever thought he stood alone,
 The broadest, richest, clearest, calmest soul
 The world had ever looked upon ? Far from't :
 He was a workman in a work-day world,
 Who did his work, and thought no more of it.

MISS APSLEY.

How kind of you to proffer such excuse.
 I see how 'twas : my mind was overwrought.
 My happiness seemed too great to be true,

Too great for this weak framework to support,
And changed almost to pain : but it is past.
'Twas but the cold turn of an ague-fit,
And shivering inly I grew pale with fear,
That you might wake and find my worth a dream.
But now I feel you love me for myself,
My very self—love me as I love you.
And nevermore, I hope, shall doubt intrude
To rob me of my joy. We are twin souls,
Struck at one mint, and fitted each to each.
Our love was, as our life, predestinate,
Sure, from the first, writ in the book of God,
That you be drawn with cords invisible,
And that in the long time we meet and love,
To bless, I trust, each other and the world.
We are the wards of Providence, and He
Who shaped our lives will shape them to the end.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

And now, my loved one, I am thine ; thou mine,
With all thy loveliness and wealth of soul.
My brain is all intoxicate : my heart
Wrapped in a wild delirium of delight,
And all the love of all the world condensed
Within the compass of this human heart.
Full, full to overflowing, is my cup.

MISS APSLEY.

And mine is full, too ; it can hold no more.
My heart and all my pulses throb with joy.

And, oh, to think such love was in reserve,
 When I stood trembling on the very verge
 Of that deep, yawning chasm, where buried lie
 Such myriad bankrupt hopes ; and shuddering looked
 Into its hungry depths, nor could withdraw
 My fascinated gaze : and all things looked
 Wintry and ghastr and horrible : but now
 The sun is on the hill-tops of my soul,
 And perfumed Spring, vocal with song, flower-crowned,
 Enfolds the radiant world for evermore.
 I walk on tiptoe. The whole round of earth
 Holds not another happier than I.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

My love, my life, my beautiful, my all,
 Say not, not so, my angel. There is one,
 Oh, happier still, whom thy rich love hath dowered
 With wealth of love that beggars all the world.

[MISS APSLEY *is here startled by hearing some one calling.*

MISS APSLEY.

Oh, what can that be ? Yes ! I hear a voice
 Of some one coming near, and must depart.

[MISS APSLEY *leaves with haste by the opposite door; and MR. HUTCHINSON by the open French-window, on to the verandah, and thence to the lawn.*

Enter MISS APSLEY the younger, and FOOTBOY.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Miss Colman? Then, you take to her this book,
And tell her I'll be with her very soon,
And take with me the nosegay as desired.

[Exit FOOTBOY.]

[She now proceeds, hat and shawl on, to enter the room MR. HUTCHINSON and MISS APSLEY had so abruptly quitted an instant before.]

My mother and the footboy both affirm
That Mr. Hutchinson, although last night
He came to see my sister with such haste,
Yet has not come this morning 'Tis most strange.
My mother in her chamber overhead
Would certainly have heard the tramp of feet,
And voices, too, if he had come to her.
The footboy, too, scarce absent half-an-hour,
Tells me he has not seen him; nor have I,
Though I left this but forty minutes since,
To get the book I promised to my friend;
So that 'tis certain they have not yet met;
For, if they had, they would not part so soon,
After so long an absence. This I'm sure of.

[Passing now out of the room and on to the lawn, she, somewhat surpris'd, beholds MR. HUTCHINSON alone, at a distance, sitting in a garden-chair.]

Younger MISS APSLEY.

What, here alone ! when, too, I cannot stay,
 Having a call to make : but I will bring
 My sister to you. Meanwhile pick a bunch
 Of mossed-wreathed rosebuds and sweet eglantine,
 And as in duty bound, present it to me,
 When with her I return, that you may soar,
 Untroubled by this madcap (*pointing to herself*), who
 spoils all,

Alone to all empyrean heights of thought.
 But what's the matter ? Whence this spring of joy,
 This air of triumph, this exalted mien,
 As if you stood great Cæsar that flushed hour
 In which on red Pharsalia's plains, the sun
 Descending left him master of the world ?

[Then in a pained and injured tone she adds.

The cause of this grand air I wholly fail
 To apprehend.

[Then aside she adds.

Nor do I love him for it.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

You mocking, laughing, wilful little sprite !
 Pray tell Miss Apsley, then, I wait her here.

[Then aside.

'Tis clear she is mistaken, and believes
 I have not seen her sister, but I know—
 Know it in every throb of heart and brain.
 How she will laugh when we unriddle it.

[Exit younger MISS APSLEY.

MR. HUTCHINSON (*alone*).

O God, she loves me! oh the ecstasy
Of this blest hour, this morning of a life,
To be arched over with a heaven of love!
Fly, fly, ye moments, till again I drink
Into my soul of souls these words of bliss,
Queen of my life, and hold thee to my heart,
And call thee *mine*.—Oh, thought of rapture, mine!
Sweet hallowed word, invented to distil
Into one drop the essence of all joys.

[*Exit.*

Younger MISS APSLEY is seen passing through the drawing-room in quest of her sister. Stopping suddenly with head bent, and in sad, agitated tones, she says.

YOUNGER MISS APSLEY.

Is't right to cozen the poor tongue to speak
In cheery accents, when the heart is sore:
To look the lie, as when the frozen peak
Of some tall mountain counterfeits the fire
Of the great glowing orb that warms the world?

[*Not finding her sister in the drawing-room, she proceeds to her chamber, the door of which she finds locked, and thinking that her sister was too deeply wounded at the conduct and absence of MR. HUTCHINSON to allow herself to be seen, and so betray her emotion, she speaks in a low voice from outside.*

My sister dear, I have a message for you.

[No answer returned.]

My sister, do you hear me? yes or no?

MISS APSLEY (*in a tremulous voice*).

Yes, dearest, but I wish to be alone.

There are some matters which engage my thoughts,

And which I fain would think out quite alone.

After a little I will see you, dear.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Mr. Hutchinson . . . *[She tries to stifle her emotion.]*

He wishes me to say

He's in the garden. He would fain enjoy

A walk with you this morn, should you so please;

He's picking flowers there for me for Miss Colman.

[MISS APSLEY from within, with plain efforts to calm down her agitation, replies.]

MISS APSLEY.

Tell him, my dear, I'll see him presently,

But that I wish to be awhile alone,

As there are things to me of high concern,

On which I wish to gather up my thoughts.

[Exit younger MISS APSLEY.

MR. HUTCHINSON *is seen in a strange, pleased reverie among the flower-beds on the lawn, but without a single flower yet plucked.*

MR. HUTCHINSON.

I hardly can believe my happiness,
It is so great, so sudden. But the flowers!
I wholly have forgotten them; and here
She comes to claim them. Oh, what will she say?

Enter younger MISS APSLEY.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

My flowers! Ah, you've forgotten them, ingrate!
What! in a dream! Why, what's the matter, pray?
But I've no time for psychologies now,
Having immediately to see my friend,
And will not therefore plague you. But, Sir Knight,
Descend from your grand Pegasus, I pray,
To help a humble maiden in her task;
But I must not forget—albeit some sprite,
From Lethe risen, seems to haunt this place—
How that my sister said she would be here
“After a little,” but I saw her not.
Her door was locked, and she herself absorbed
By some near question, or some moving thought,
That filled her bosom; for when first I called,
She answered not; and when at length she spake,
Her voice, the echo of the soul intense,

And quivering with feeling, trembles so,
 That one less used to it than I could see
 No common feeling stirred it to its depths.
 Thus you may see that she is in a frame
 To sound the depths of things that move the soul,
 But not—so far as I can reach to read
 The thoughts that rise exultant in *your* breast—
 To mate your spirit in its royal mood
 Of grand, exuberant, overflowing life.

*[He has meanwhile been picking the flowers, which
 he now presents to her.]*

MR. HUTCHINSON.

Thou fair, bright creature, sporting in the light,
 And making all things brighter where thou art.

[Then aside.]

How wilt thou yet be sobered by great love,
 Leaving thee tongue-tied, thought-tied to all else.

[Exit MR. HUTCHINSON.]

Younger MISS APSLEY.

Or where I am not ; and so, not shut out
 The radiant glory of the full-orbed sun.

But oh, I can't divine what it all means !
 Something not common stirs within his breast.
 This flush of countenance, this absent mood,
 The eye bent inward on his own rapt thoughts,
 And grand exultant air, as if he trod

The common world beneath his lordly heel,
Betoken some deep movement of the soul.

Oh that it were as I have often hoped !
For though it may not to herself have shaped
Itself into the form of conscious love,
Yet love—as morn so noiselessly steals in
Upon the world—hath stolen upon her heart,
Till her whole being's flooded with its waves.
Oh what will come of it, and what of *her* ?
For since he left, what feverish unrest !
A discontent of all which pleased her once :
A love of solitude, and of those haunts
Which they were wont together to frequent ;
A brooding eye on vacancy, as if
The soul reflected not external things,
But only the dear image of the past,
And held it there to feast the ravished sense,
Or to fill full her cup of misery.

Nor has his name escaped her since he left,
As if she feared to break down in the word,
Or that some tremble in the voice might draw
Attention to her, or a blush suffuse
Her pallid cheek, and so, betray her heart.

And once I saw her crumple up that note,
And thrust it in her bosom, which he once
Had sent to her upon some classic theme,
With a few lines of interest towards the close,
And ending with the words, “ your faithful friend,”
And then his signature ; but which stepped not
Beyond the line of friendship and concern.

And now I know she wears it near her heart.

And when, these last three days, the door-bell rings,
 She starts and flushes, and then locks her teeth
 To hide her quivering interest, and hangs
 With eyes unmoved upon her book or work,
 Until 'tis known at last that 'tis not he.
 She hopes we see it not, but 'tis too plain,
 Poor restless love-bird, how you miss your mate.

And oft, when fain she'd stifle it, the sigh
 Bursts from the heart ; and I have marked at night
 The lamp relighted, and have seen the page
 They last had read together, folded down,
 Where he had ceased the reading ; and the glove
 Placed on it, which but yesterday she wore :
 And Maro, taken from the dusty shelf,
 Where long time it had lain, and the sad tale
 Of love-lorn Dido read and read again ;
 For though I turned back thrice the folded leaf,
 So oft was it refolded ; and this morn
 I marked the traces there of new-shed tears.

Yes, *she* loves him ; and, though he never spake
 One word direct of love, he *seemed* to love her :
 For love was in his manner ; in his voice,
 Which melted into music when with her ;
 And his grand soul grew grander ; and his words
 Broke high and full upon the shores of life ;
 And their hearts seemed to tremble on the verge
 Of a confession of their mutual love ;
 Yet the thin line was never passed by them.
 What, if it were, because she feared to meet

His eyes this morning, lest she break down quite,
That her voice trembled so, or that she prayed
For strength to meet whatever might betide.

But men, *they* are so different ! and hence
His self-sufficiency ; his grand content
Which, while she pines uncertain, buoys him up.
Do we let more escape us ? Or have they
A sense of god-ship which we can't resist ?

Yet she is such a being of the skies,
In soul and form and feeling so divine,
A creature wove of sunbeams ; therefore one,
Lest such rare worth escape him, to be wooed
With trembling apprehension. Yet he moves
On tip-toe confident, as if he felt—
If that, indeed, be what his mood implies—
That destiny had marked her for his own,
When he be pleased to intimate the wish.
But what, if he dreams not at all of it ?
Oh, I could hate him, and not hate him, when
I think on this ; hate him and love him both.
But 'tis not like him, this triumphant air !
Yet, oh, how much I'd give this hour to *know*,
That the sweet thought that gives his eyes their light
Was that my beautiful would be his bride.

But granting that he wished to win her love,
Why all this confidence, not knowing if
Capricious love would shuffle so the cards
As to deal out the highest trump to him.

Oh where is now the careless joy with which
We sisters rambled over hill and dale,

And watched the swallows skimming o'er the meads,
Or stole upon the butterfly alight,
Or listened to the nightingale at eve,
Or gathered wild-flowers in the sunny brake,
Or viewed the glorious sunsets, while the lambs
Frisked round their mothers on the velvet sward,
Or watched the shadows chasing o'er the fields
Of golden autumn, or together sat
At eve in spring, beneath the pale green beech,
While she read to me, in her silvery tones,
Long glorious extracts from the mighty dead,
Of Greece and Rome ; and works of native growth,
Chaucer and Spencer, and the immortal bard
Whom nature for herself had made, to see
How looked her face reflected in his soul,
And to transmit the likeness to all times.
Above all, those of the great Hebrew stock,
Prophet and hero, statesman, thinker, bard,
Which like a broad-based pyramid still stands,
Unbroken and defiant of all time.

Oh, these were halcyon days, when, like the lark,
That warbled out his happiness to heaven,
Our spirits rose on wing of careless joy,
While at our feet in tufts the primrose bloomed,
Or violets peeped shyly from the shade.

Ah, what a contrast, the elastic step,
The beaming eye, the rippling, sunlit smile,
The flowing talk, the glory of these days,
Compared with her, whose introverted gaze,
Converged on one loved object, sees but him,

Or listless moves, or silent sits and broods,
Or, when she talks, talks only from the lips,
Or stumbles in her words, and, ere she ends,
Forgets the very point she started from,
Nor can bring back her wandering thoughts to it,
And when she laughs she almost makes me weep,—
Like laughter in a sepulchre it seems,
It sounds so hollow, among dead men's bones ;
For when he left, he spoke no word of love,—
I read it in her eye, when she came in
From their last interview : and deeming him
A grand Apollo, who, from his proud heights
Might condescend to feel an interest
And form a friendship with an earth-born maid,
Nor dream of more than kindly sympathy ;
While her poor heart got netted o'er with love.
She weeps in secret, and scarce eats or sleeps,
And starts up in her dreams, and weeps again ;
The handkerchiefs she hid away this morn
Were soaked with tears, and the poor eyes all red.

And when he came last night, and looked so
calm,—

But calmness, too, may be assumed,—and she,
Poor wounded bird, had just dropped off asleep,
I could not bring myself to tell her of it,
And so awake her from her one sweet sleep.
And when to-day I broke to her the news,
I durst not look into her eyes, but feigned
To pick up in her chamber this or that :
But casting in the glass a sidelong look,

I caught the high excitement of her mood.
 Yet when I whispered, through the fastened door,
 He wished to see her, tightening in the vein
 Of the wild feelings, she, with a forced calm,
 Replied that she would see him presently.
 And now, in fancy, I can see her face—
 The book was open at the page this morn—
 All woeful, hanging o'er the blasted loves
 Of Romeo and Juliet, resolved
 To take the soundings of all depths of ill,
 To drink her draught in spirit, dregs and all,
 Before 'twas lifted to her lips to drain ;
 To steel her heart for every shape of woe.

But though 'tis long since,—for I've been away
 An hour at least,—she still sits in her room.
 Oh why is it that she will stay *so long* ?
 Is't that she dreads the question to resolve,
 If yes or no. Great little words ! how much
 Despair or joy do your brief sounds shut in !
 Yea, dreads it so that she had rather bear
 The torture of suspense than dare the shock.

For now that he's returned, she well may feel
 That she has neared a crisis, where the turn
 Leads up to life, or downward to despair ;
 That if his manner be, as be it must,
 Courteous, considerate, sympathetic, kind,
 But nothing more, her sun of hope hath set,
 To rise no more upon a darkened world.

[*Exit.*

Enter MISS COLMAN.

MISS COLMAN.

She said she would be here soon ; but we lose,
By her delay, this beautiful spring morn.

Enter younger MISS APSLEY.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

I'm sorry I have kept you waiting, dear :
But I have been unwillingly detained,
For, on my way here after getting this,

[She presents the bouquet.

Two gentlemen I met delayed me long.

MISS COLMAN.

I thank you much, 'tis beautiful indeed.
And now I go to fetch my hat and gloves.

Younger MISS APSLEY.

I will go with you. Then we'll take our walk.

[Exeunt.

Enter MR. HUTCHINSON and MISS APSLEY, taking leave of one another at the drawing-room door at LADY APSLEY'S.

MR. HUTCHINSON.

And now, my darling, we must part again.

[He kisses her. Exeunt.]

Enter FIRST and SECOND GENTLEMAN.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

We may, I think, regard the matter settled,
For twice since his return from his father—
(Her footboy saw them, hid behind a tree)—
Have they been seen conversing earnestly,
With all that freedom and those tender signs
Which mark the intercourse of lovers only.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Not well for you, but you must bear up under 't.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I long had seen how 'twas, and had my mind
Made up to bear it, with what fortitude
A man can muster who was badly hurt.
'Twas hard at first; but I have learned to see
We scarcely should have fitted each to each;
And incongruity in married life,
With all its many jars, however slight,

Grinds and wears down to merest commonplace
The deepest ingrained, most exalted love.

But I have met another, and to her,
Whose tastes and temper fit exactly mine,
I now am bound by every tie of love.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

And to your love for her, and love returned,
And wholly not, then, to philosophy,
May be attributed our perfect cure.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I know you are my friend, and tell you all.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

I thought there must be something in the wind,
When you could view things in this prudent light ;
Now I can see how you can be so sane.

Philosophy is startling in its power
To cure a lover who is not in love.
So far, indeed, as my experience serves
There's nothing reconciles us to a loss
Like greater gain,—(*aside*) or real or imagined.

[*He pours out a glass of wine for both.*]

I pledge you, dear philosophy, so able
To make us do the thing we like the best.
And yet thou art no fool, for thou persuad'st,
That what we like the best, is the best for us.

But honestly, my friend, I'm pleased you're pleased,
And, on the whole, think you have chosen wisely.

[*Exeunt.*]

MISS APSLEY *alone in her chamber, having had two meetings with her lover that morning.*

MISS APSLEY (*alone*).

Is it a dream this ; or am I awake ?
" In love with me ; truly, in love with me ; "
I am bewildered, " long in love with me ; "
Before he ever saw me e'en in love,
In love with the fair creature his own soul
Called into being and imagined me,
Which so enchanted him that when he saw
The blessed reality, he could not break
The strong enchantment, and, so, separate
Between me and the image in his soul.
Oh that he loved my very self ! or, oh
That I were *that* sweet angel of his dreams !
Yet vows he that it is " my very self "—
Dear, cherished thought, I cannot let it go—
" Myself and not another that he loves ;
" My concrete self, this soul and face and form,
" Just as I am," he says, " and no poor ghost
" Of brain-born abstract qualities, but *me*,
" My own fresh genial self, touched into life
" By the deft hand of nature, with the print
" Of her last kiss still warm upon my cheek "
I am ashamed ! Are men in love half-mad ?

In a wild dream? Then, may they ne'er awake ;
But if they should, shall we then have to bear
The fierce recoil ?

Striped of the bright, warm hues,
In which his own rich poetry hath draped
This outward, inward nature, shall he yet
Wake to translate it into common prose.
O God, it cannot be ! I could not bear
To lose his love : to drop from earth to heaven.
Better for both of us he should dream on.

My darling, my soul's joy, so noble, good,
And pure, and true, and all the world to me,
To think that all this time he should have loved,
And I not know it, when I would have hugged
It to my bosom, warmed it in my heart,
And hid it in the inmost shrine of thought,
As the most precious jewel of the world.

O sacred bliss ! O ecstasy of love !
Thou golden beam upon the crest of morn,
Flushing the orient of our life with joy,
And holding over us the golden bow
Of promise to continue to its close !

And after all those dreadful days and nights
Of torturing suspense, of doubts and fears,
To think that he is *mine*, and I am *his*,
My own, my joy, my soul's soul, my life's life !
One thing at least, sweet heart, I promise thee,—
Full, warm, devoted, changeless, holy love ;
And, twining round thy strength love's clinging arms,
Like oak and ivy we will ever grow. [Exit.

MR. HUTCHINSON *alone in an ecstasy of delight.*

MR. HUTCHINSON.

O, subtle, permeating essence, Love !
With what swift ease thou glid'st into the heart,
Steeping our being in a dreamy sense
Of holy rapture, thrilling every nerve
With new delight, and pulsing in the brain
With a wild fever of delirious joy.

But is't all true, or am I sense-deceived ?
Yet on this brain and heart each look and word
Is stamped in deepest lines, indelible,
And in that faithful chronicle I read,
And read again, and with new rapture dwell,
And ever dwell, with lingering fondness, on
The image of her sweetness ; on each smile,
And blush, and way of winning tenderness.

The fears, the hopes, the wild bewilderment
Of mutual love confessed, will ever flower
With all the freshness of a young romance.
The sweetest poem that was ever writ
By fervid child of genius, in his mood
Of highest inspiration of the heart,
What is it to this poem of my life ?
With its aroma fresh, the flower of love
Lives only in the garden of the heart,
Nor can the subtlest alchemy of thought
Transfuse its vital spirit, perfume, grace,
Into the vulgar vehicle of words.

Sweet angel ! is she not as good as fair,

And wise as good ; artless and frank as wise ;
And though adorned with rare and varied gifts
Of intellect and fancy, yet as if
A denizen of some far higher sphere ?
In her large heart our narrow interests found
No kindred aliment—her wider range
And subtler power of vision gender not
The giddy vanity that spoils all gifts.

But yet how rich in truest womanhood !
In the deep sympathy that deeper sees
Than intellect hath fathomed ; in the force
Of deepest, purest, self-forgetting love.

And she is mine,—this noble woman's mine !
With all her graces, gifts, and tenderness ;
My own, my own for ever ! Gracious God,
May I prove worthy as I prize Thy gift !

BY A PURITAN WHO KNEW THEM, AND OUTLIVED
THEM BOTH.

And they lived nobly ! It was such a life
As the great creatures of the world have lived :
A life of earnest purpose and high aim,
And brave endeavour, and enduring love—
The love of lofty natures, which had struck,
Like the strong oak, its roots into the soil
Of the deep heart : and when the tempest howled,
And shook the trunk, it clung the tighter, till
'Twas blasted by the lightnings. Then the sap
Dried up on one side, and the twin-soul lost

The half it valued most ; but still endured
To live to raise a monument to him,
Her loved, her all-but worshipped beautiful,
To last while men have hearts, and women tears :
And to herself, unconsciously, through him :
For all the love she lavished on his soul
Bends back its rays of radiance on herself.

It was a life fought bravely to the last,
Where conscience, magnetized by fear of God,
Kept trembling constant round the star of Right.

And their bright spirits, passed behind the veil,
Have left the prints of glory where they trod,
A legacy of blessing to the world.

If there were spots, 'twere spots upon the sun,
Lost 'mid the splendours of a whole bright life.



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