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Vol 39

Poetry.

Verses in my Old Age.

BY BARRY CORNWALL.

Come from the Ends of the World,
Wind of the air or sky,
Wherever the lightning fly!
Come, with the bird on your bosom,
(Linnets or larks that soar.)
Come with the sweet Spring blossom,
And the Sun from Southern shores.

I hate the snake Winter that creepeth,
And poisons the limbs of May;
I shout to the Sun that sleepeth,
And pray him awake to-day,
For the world is in want of his power,
To vanquish the rebel storm:
All wait for his golden hour,
Man, and beast, and worm.

Not only the seasons, failing
Forsake their natural tone,
But Age droops onward, sailing
And is lost in the seas unknown,
No wisdom redeemeth his sorrow,
For thought and strength are fled:
No hope enlightens to-morrow,
And the Past (so loved) is dead!

Interesting Tale.

ETHEL'S LEAP-YEAR PARTY.

BY EMMA BASSETT.

Jennie Harrington flew into Mrs. Barlow's kitchen like an east wind, breaking in upon Ethel's reveries so suddenly that she was taking the iron from her hand and drawing her into the bright sitting-room before the abstracted girl fully realized that she had a visitor. Jennie shoved her into the big rocking-chair, closed the door, and sat down on the arm of the chair, hugging Ethel's neck.

Well, said Ethel, with a breathless laugh, "what exciting information am I to hear now?"

"Have you an invitation to the leap-year party?"

"Yes, Jackson Taylor brought one two weeks ago."

"Are you going?"

"I have not thought about it much, yet."

"You're a most provoking iceberg. There's not a girl within five miles of us who has thought of anything else for the last week. Two or three of them have been miffed, and Amanda Taylor says that she will ask until she secures an escort, if it should bring her a dozen gittens. Would it not be fun if she were obliged to take Lechelor McLane after all?"

"Whom have you invited, Jennie, may I ask?"

"Oh, I secured cousin Hal the very day of the invitation, and have been taking lessons in harnessing ever since, so that I can do it all in style. I'm to have the new cutter and Dick's bells. I've baked the splendid fruit-cake, and it is all frosted and set by to-morrow."

Ethel had been thinking busily, while her friend rattled on, and when she jerked her head around so that she could see her face, saying impatiently, "Of course you'll go?" she was ready with her quiet but decided reply:

"I think not, dear."

That being just the answer that Jennie had expected, she made no pretence of astonishment. Her next question was asked in a suppressed tone which brought a wondering look from Ethel.

"Is the party at variance with your creed of the proprieties?"

"I did not think of it in that way. You have all been neighbors so long, and there is a perfect understanding among you with regard to it. I am acquainted with so few, that I would never dare to run the gauntlet like Amanda, and could not find it in my heart to step between her and what may be her dernier resort. Dr. McLane is one of the three gentlemen to whom I should dare make proposals, you have secured a second, and—"

"You would not risk the disgrace of having entered company with the third," broke in Jennie, impudently.

"Dear Jennie, what can you mean?" And Ethel looked wonderingly at her friend's flashing eyes. She had risen, and was standing by the window in an attitude that suggested Boadicea.

"I mean that you are just like all the rest of them. Dick has had no invitation to the party. He has not had an invitation since he came home from the asylum. I did not know that. He always made me think that he did not go because he did not care for them. If I had known that he did not invite him, do you think that I would have gone to one of their old parties? Harry and

Dick were talking on the porch yesterday, while I was dressing in my room, and I heard every word. Dick said that they were all glad enough to have old Harrington's heir in their parlors while he was dashing about the country in style and spending his income in saloons. They laughed then, and called it youthful folly; but when he made a manly effort to place himself beyond temptation, until he should be strong enough to resist it, they treated him as an outcast, calling that a disgrace. Yes, the very ones who led him into these youthful follies which came so near ruining him. If it were not for father's paralysis, he would go away somewhere; but he hasn't the heart to leave us now. He's getting discouraged, I know he is; and he'll go to town to-morrow, I know he will, and Jim Blake will be sure to find him out—and—Oh dear!"

Here the dash went slowly out of the girl's eyes. She flung herself on a chair and sobbed wildly. Ethel went to her and put her arm about her, but she was so shocked at her revelation that she could find no word of comfort. Jennie flung off the twining arm and began again:

"Oh, there's Nancy Dent and Ellie Evans and all their tribe going to prayer-meeting every week, with their earnest desire to take up the cross and battle for the Christian cause, yearning over the poor heathen, and all that, and not one of them returned the recognition when he went to church last Sunday, pretending that they did not see him. I never want to hear them talk again about Christ's little ones, and I never want to be one, if that little one is invisible. Of course, if Dick is earnest about reform, he should be independent of all such things; but, unfortunately he is a son of Adam—has not yet outlived his appetite. You would have been disgusted, I suppose, to see him turning pale when he refused the glass of wine which Uncle John offered him the other day; and you cannot understand why it should be easier for one who was bred and educated as a gentleman to gratify his appetite in a saloon, where he would find any number of friends to welcome him, than to pursue the narrow way, when it is so very narrow that not one of your good Christians can walk anywhere near him for fear of soiling their white robes. Oh, when you dear little angels go up yonder to express your Heavenly yearnings with a golden harp accompaniment, may the mystery show you have fought such a valiant fight, have too much consideration to introduce a reformed drunkard to your select society?"

Jennie had crossed the creek and entered her own home, before Ethel was sufficiently recovered from the effect of her bitter, irrelevant words to move. She returned to her room with a troubled heart, wondering if her life had been so inconsistent as to furnish cause for Jennie's reproaches. She knew that she had never thought of her brother in connection with the party. Since coming to the farm she had declined all such invitations, feeling that in such mixed company as she was sure to meet, she neither gained nor improved, while her time for study was wasted and her health injured by the late hours. This was the inauguration of the circle of amusements with which the young people of the thickly settled neighborhood were wont to spend the winter on flying feet. No, she would not go to the first and it would be easier to resist the second. She must see Jennie to-morrow, and convince her that she did not remain at home because of her brother.

Her cheek flamed suddenly as she asked herself the question: "Would I be ashamed to go with Richard?"

He was so intelligent—such a genial, graceful companion! She knew that he was the pride of the home-circle, and that the enjoyment of many of her visits to them had been greatly enhanced by his efforts for her entertainment. She had fancied that he avoided her of late. Was it because he thought that she shared the feeling which shut him off from all companionship but that of his own family? and did she share that feeling? She did not try to answer the question, but, setting down the iron, she went to her room and prayed that her friends might become lowly followers of Jesus, and that she might never, through fear of the world, be tempted to refuse the cup of cold water to any of his little ones.

The morning came bright and beautiful. Ethel wrapped a little shawl about her, and ran down the hill to feed the chickens, laughing, as she thought of her New Year gifts and calls in the old city days. What would some of those callers think, to see her now?

"Whatever they might think, I know that I am a happier and more useful girl than I was then, with all our wealth and position. I half believe that I am glad that father lost his money."

She chirped to the poultry, and they came flying and gobbling and strutting about her as she scattered the corn. She laughed gleefully as the circle drew closer to her.

"Don't let them fly away with you, Miss Ethel," said a voice behind her.

"Turn about is fair play, Mr. Harrington. I ran off with a goodly number of them last night. I

they should see their comrades hanging in a dismal bow with all their small necks cut in two; they would be mercifully disposed towards me."

"Oh, they will not be so merciful if you will continue to distribute the corn. It's the way of the world."

She looked up into his face, and the cynical look pained her so that she could not reply. After a little silence she said:

"Why, I forgot to wish you a happy New Year."

"It is not too late yet. Wish it, please."

The words were spoken in such a child-like wisdom, that Ethel felt like crying—she hardly knew why—but she said, simply and sweetly:

"I wish you a very, very happy New Year."

"Thank you; I am on my way to town to seek for the day's share of it."

"Be sure to look in the right place, then."

She was sorry for having said that. She knew his interpretation of the remark when she saw the flash on his face.

"Thank you again, Miss Ethel. May your New Year be all so happy that you never need that warning 'Good morning.'"

And she went on slowly up the hill thinking that Jennie's brother was running into the very temptation that she had feared.

As she reached the house she had another glimpse of Richard going down the road with a steady, even pace.

"How he walks! he looks so athletic. Not every young man would choose to walk seven miles to town and back with so many splendid horses in the stable. Oh!" with a deep sigh, "I hope that he will come home with a step as firm."

A thought came to her suddenly, as she gazed over the shining snow-track.

"Could I—could I do it?" she said aloud.

Then after a long silence, during which her face settled into a look of deep thoughtfulness, she sighed softly, "I'll try."

"What will you try?" said the hired man, coming out on the porch beside her; "to take cold standing there in the snow?"

"To coax the best man in the world to James Prince to the cutter, that I may have a sleigh ride."

"That don't mean me, Miss Ethel."

"Indeed it does. You know that I never have to ask you twice for anything, and that gives you full claim to the name."

"Well, this time will be an exception, then, for Prince and Star are all harnessed to the body and to go for wood."

Ethel stood still for a moment, her mouth and drooping lashes showing her disappointment. Then she looked up with the earnest face that won any request from Leroy before it was made.

Leroy, I am going to ask a favor—a very great favor. If I am refused, it will be more of a disappointment than I care to tell. You know that father is afraid to let any of us drive Fanny. I am sure that I can manage her, and it is of the greatest importance that I have a horse this morning. Will you harness her for me? I'll bear all the blame."

"I would never mind the blame; it's the broken bones I'm thinking about."

"There will be no broken bones, and I must have her, Leroy."

"Will you let me drive?"

"Thank you. I must go alone."

With one more look at the determined girl he turned to obey her wish. She called after him—

"Leroy, I shall tell mother that I am going, and you must not tell her about Fanny until I come home."

If you ever do come home, he muttered as he went on.

In less than an hour Ethel was on her way to town. Fanny flew over the snow as a spirited horse will when released from the stable after being long a prisoner. Every time she spoke a leg, or a hind leg up to the road, she started, so that Ethel's slender arms acted with the effort to hold her. This kept the girl's thoughts busy for the first three miles and preoccupied them from dwelling upon the object of her visit to town; but, as the gray became calmer the misgivings at Ethel's heart grew stronger, and more than once she had nearly turned Fanny's head toward home.

Richard walked away from Ethel that morning with bitter thoughts in his heart.

They expect me to fail. Not one of them has the last faith in me. Even mother turned pale when I told her that I was going to town. I will just show them that it was possible to go near a fire and not be burned."

His first call was at Mr. Wilder's. Eva Wilder had been one of his favorites in the old, gay days, and he was curious to know if her greeting would be chilling with the cold undertone of "Inebriate Asylum," running through it like that of his country acquaintances.

She stood in the midst of a gay circle as he entered, but she turned to him with a look of pleasant surprise, and returned his greeting warmly, at the same time examining the hand which he held out to her.

clear, cold eye. He was soon surrounded with outstretched hands, which he took with the easy frankness which made him once so popular, watching all the time Eva's white hand playing with the dainty silver cup which she held out to him, the wine sparkling and changing color like a flaming ruby. He had opened his lips to decline it gracefully, as he had learned to do, when she suddenly drew back her hand, turned red and pale alternately, and stood staring into his face, the very picture of distressed confusion.

Richard felt that a dozen pair of eyes were watching him curiously, and he held out his hand for the cup, drank its contents with a smiling bow, and set himself lightly to the task of assisting his little friend to regain her composure. He very well knew the meaning of her confusion and he told her while he inwardly cursed her blunder. He soon took his departure and walked down the street without heart for any her call and wondered if he could find any worse than her.

Where's the good of trying? very one expects me to fail, and still be disappointed if I do not. I'll go to distraction, anyway, and the sooner I reach the bottom the better.

While he was letting the bitterness settle over his heart, Eva Wilder stood with pale, determined face, while the servants removed the wine from the side-board, replacing it with rich creamy coffee.

Gentlemen, she said firmly, I have always hesitated to offer wine to those to whom it may be a temptation, but I never felt the sin of it as now. With God's help, I shall never again taste wine myself, nor offer it to a friend.

Anna, said Jim Blake, not much extending his hand for the coffee; and in a few minutes he was following in Richard's foot steps.

Hallo, Dick, he said gaily, as he overtook him, what's your hurry man? I have come to thank you for the best cup of coffee that ever I drank, and to inform you of the fact that you have become the benefactor of the human family. Queer that one man's fall should be its ruin, while another's its salvation. Let's take a glass of Hage's best over it.

He very well knew Richard's impetuous nature, and just how to work on his present mood. He knew, too, what taste of wine had done for him after his long abstemiousness. It is any wonder that when Fanny flashed along Main street, Ethel's quick eye saw the fulfillment of her heart's prophecy? Richard stood with Jim Blake among the crowd of elegant loungers upon Hage's corner and his face was turned to the steps which led down into the saloon.

The girl's heart thrilled painfully as she looked into one familiar face after another, and realized that it was no private act of charity which she was about to perform. In another moment, just as Richard's hand touched the railing, she had raised Fanny close to the walk, and electrified him with his own name, spoken in a tone cheerful and confident, but which sent an ecstasy echoing through all the chambers of his heart.

He turned quickly, pushing the hair from his face with the deft gesture which she knew so well. Fanny gave an unexpected start and Ethel almost lost the reins. Richard jumped and caught her, looking inquiringly at Ethel, who spoke hurriedly, her eyes wandering nervously over the staring crowd:

See, Mr. Harrington, that is the way she has behaved ever since we started from home. She has quite lamed my wrist, and I am afraid to drive back. How soon do you intend to return Mr. Harrington? Would the prospect of a ride induce you to take charge of such a wilful horse?"

No more wilful than her mistress I fear, or your father has played a splendid trick on you, your capacity for driving, said Richard as he told her to Blake and took a seat beside her.

It was only yesterday that he said nothing would induce him to let any one but himself drive her. How did you alter his opinion?

He was not at home, and I felt obliged to come, and she was the only horse at my disposal. Leroy harnessed her under protest, and I expect to find him sadly disappointed because there are no broken bones in consequence.

Nothing but some important shopping expedition, which is to result in the culminating glory of the grand party which will call forth such daring. Where shall I drive?

Ethel's face flamed and her eyes drooped beneath his look, but she made no reply, for she was entirely unprepared for the question. Richard watched her until his heart caught the meaning of it all, when he turned the horse's head to the street through which she had just passed, without seeming to notice Ethel's confusion. As they neared a modest little bakery with a pale tiny woman standing in the doorway, Ethel said quickly:

I will have my leap year party now, with your consent. This is the widow of the man who was killed in the mines a few months ago, and I can testify to the superior quality of her cake and coffee. I shall starve before we reach home. Will you tie Fanny and partake with me?

He laughed as he assisted her to alight. She ran in alone, and when he was at liberty to follow, he found her talking familiarly with Mrs. Colley, while a brisk little girl arranged the cake and coffee for two.

When they were seated, Ethel's assurance failed her. It was not a tempted man who sat before her—one whom she would dare a great deal to save, but a handsome, elegant gentleman, who looked very little like a brand plucked from the burning.

What will he think of me? Well, I did not do it to win his high opinion. I wanted to help him for his own sake and for his family's; and, if my act has been unwise, let the thought of a worthy motive comfort me.

She raised the coffee to her lips, but dropped it quickly with a cry of pain, saying faintly: "I was so sure to hit him!"

My arm is hurt worse than I thought. And it needed only one glance at her pale face to show them that she was suffering.

They looked at the swollen wrist with wet cheeks, and Richard held the cup to her lips, bidding her to drink to the success of her leap-year party. She obeyed with scarlet cheeks, and was very glad to find herself once more in the sleigh.

They talked of many things, but they were very near home before he made any reference to the day's adventure. Then he asked with a smile:

Will you promise me, Ethel, the next time you go to prison, a window not to trust your life to so willful a horse?

She looked so distressed—so doubtful of his opinion of her act—that he left it down and took the limp hand in his, saying gently:

I know you are suffering this for me. It will not be in vain, believe me. If ever again I am tempted as I was to-day, the memory of the one woman in the world who cared enough for my honor to endure mortification and pain to save it, will make me strong to resist.

Oh, if you would only learn to resist for his sake, who cares so much for your soul that he died to save it?

Do you think that there is real help, there, my friend?

I know that there is for all who seek it. I have always doubted it, judging from the lives of his professed followers; but your words have your example to enforce them. Will you pray for me, and let me to seek? Run in now and get warm, I will take care of Fanny. Good bye, my friend.

He stopped and kissed the helpless hand, sprang into the sleigh and drove to the barnyard, while Ethel went to her room to bathe her eyes before venturing to meet her mother.

As she sat by the fire in the evening, some one gathered her up suddenly and kissed her many times.

May, dear me, I lit right on at the party.

I had no heart to go, after talking so to you yesterday. Ma-dy Taylor took pity on Harry at the eleventh hour, and I have come to ask if you can forgive me.

Can you ever forgive me, Jennie, for being so selfish and worldly as to call forth your words?

Don't, Ethel darling. Dick told me all about it when he came home. He called you God's good angel, and said that you had restored his old faith in human nature, and made it possible to believe in God's loving-kindness. He said that he knew that you had a higher motive for your act than the world could give. You will help us both to your peace, will you not Ethel?

I pray for you both, and God will give you peace, if you ask.

The jingling bells passed the house and the girls heard merry laughter and gay voices. Jennie turned and said softly:

But yours is the best leap-year party, dear Ethel.

An old weather worn trapper was recently seen sauntering along the main street of one of our western villages. Pausing in front of a little meeting house for a moment, he went in and took a seat among the congregation.

The preacher was reading from the text of the "sheep and wolves," and, having evidently been drawing a contrast between the two subjects, said: "We who are a mid here from week to week and do our duty and perform our part, are the sheep; now, who are the wolves? A pauper, and our friend the trapper rose to his feet. 'What, stranger, rather than see the play stopped, I will be the wolves!'" The preacher was vanquished.

A LITTLE GIRL who was walking with her mother, was tempted by the sight of a basket of oranges exposed for sale, and quietly took one; but after wards, struck by conscience, returned it. On her return home she was discovered in tears, and, being asked the cause of her sorrow, replied, sobbing: "Mamma, I haven't broken any of the commandments, but I think I have cracked one a little!"

The shipwreck and caulkers of Halifax are obtaining \$2.50 per day. They have also forced their employers to adopt the nine hour system.



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