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Select Poetry

THE MOTHER'S PRAYER

BY MRS. HELEN RICH.

It came from the lips that had pressed the first kiss On the brow of young innocence, sleeping in bliss.

It was murmured in accents soft, tender and meek, Tho' the eyes kindled brightly, pale was the cheek.

It asked for the loved one, not riches or power, Nor beauty that fades as the glow from the flower.

It may be slighted—it cannot be vain— It will cling to its memory thro' pleasure or pain.

It has breathed a deep spell o'er the soul in its morn, A charm from an evil, by memory worn.

It may seem but a trifle, yet do not withhold, Young mother, that boon far more precious than gold.

Your child may lack tinsel of fashion to wear, But strengthen his soul with a mother's fond prayer.

It was breathed to a God who can feel for our woes, A Father in whom all believers repose.

On the 31st of March an authorized statement from the Treasury Department was made partially exhibiting the debt of the nation.

Table with 2 columns: Item and Amount. Includes 'Amount bearing interest in currency', 'Amount on which interest has ceased', 'Amount bearing no interest', etc.

No very agreeable picture for tax-payers to behold. A debt of over \$3,000,000,000 to be paid when butter is down to 12 cents a pound.

The North American does not take the most hopeful view of the currency question. It says: "In some respects it (the exhibit of Mr. McCulloch) is not so favorable as had been predicted."

The unpaid requisitions have not been extinguished, no less than \$114,256,540 of them being still afloat, and with only means in the Treasury to meet some \$57,000,000.

We, of course, do not expect that the Secretary can or should take any step in that direction while there continues to be such a mass of unpaid requisition, or in plain terms, unhonored obligations.

To have any portion of our national debt bearing compound interest reflects no credit upon the country, and is well calculated to diffuse abroad an erroneous impression respecting our resources and willingness to meet its obligations regularly.

A Yankee auctioneer lately indulged in the following little bit of the pathetic: "Gentlemen, if my father and mother stood where you do, and didn't buy these boots, these elegant boots, when they were going for one dollar, I should feel it my duty as a son, to tell both of them that they were false to themselves and false to their country."

A good wife is the greatest of blessings. She always attends to things generally, and gets up in the morning and makes the fire in particular; besides slipping down to the market, over to the grocer's, up to the baker's and seeing to the breakfast all around. The husband of such an invention has little to do but to enjoy the luxuries of life, wear well starched shirts, white breeches, exchange winks with the girls opposite, and go down town about 11 A. M.

The best exercise is that in general that we most like to do.

Bedford Gazette

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A Chilling Story. A NIGHT OF PERIL. A DETECTIVE'S STORY.

Of course it is to be expected that in a life like mine I should often be exposed to danger of a personal character; it is the lot of all detective officers, and I have been no exception to the rule.

One day I was sent for by the President of the Bank of Commerce. When I arrived there I found the whole bank in a state of consternation.

The safe had been broken into during the night, and all the specie abstracted. I immediately proceeded to examine the safe, and found that the lock had been forced; but a single glance was sufficient to show me that the locks had been forced after it had been opened.

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"If you had left the matter in my hands, he should have been arrested without any trouble."

"I acknowledge I am in fault, and I am the more anxious to have him captured. Come, I will pay you well. Say you will go."

It was the middle of summer, decidedly not the best time to travel in. But the affair was imperative, and I was obliged to undertake the journey. The same afternoon at 5 o'clock, I started on my expedition.

Railway traveling in July! Who is there that has experienced it, that does not vividly remember its discomforts. The hot glaring sun, the dust, the intolerable thirst, and the warm water in the coolers, are all evils of such magnitude, that they make an indelible impression on the mind.

My position was anything but agreeable—in the midst of a forest on a dark night. I cannot tell how I passed the three ensuing hours—they appeared three centuries to me.

I must have walked the same path over and over again. I was at last completely overcome by physical fatigue, and sank exhausted on the stump of a tree.

I rested my head upon my hands, and determined to pass the night there, being now certain that it was perfectly futile endeavoring to find my way through the forest.

I locked earnestly, and became convinced that such was really the fact, I immediately determined to make for it, hoping to find shelter for the night.

I advanced in that direction, and soon reached a dilapidated house built entirely of wood, it was a miserable looking abode, and had it not been for my tired condition, I should have hesitated in seeking its shelter.

But anything was better than spending the night in the forest, so I resolutely knocked at the door. My summons was for some time unheeded, and it was not till I had knocked again and again, that the door opened and a gruff voice asked what I wanted.

"Can you give me lodging for the night?" I replied.

I was told to come in, and found myself in a room of moderate size, miserably furnished. A log fire was burning on the hearth, and two persons occupied the apartment.

The one that opened the door to me was a man about fifty years of age, very stoutly built, and possessed of a very sinister expression of countenance.

The second occupant was none other than the ascending clerk. I then knew that I was in Mr. Munsel's house, and I congratulated myself on my good fortune.

I noticed that as I entered he cast a scrutinizing glance at me, but as I felt assured he did not know me personally, I experienced no alarm.

"I have lost my way in the forest," said I, in answer to their looks of interrogation, "and if you will afford me shelter for the night, I shall be happy to repay you for your hospitality."

"Be good enough to sit down," said Theodore Munsel, his eyes sparkling when the word "repay" was used.

"Where are you going?" asked his nephew, and then fixing another searching look on my face.

"I am going to Centerville. I left Parkville at six o'clock, but I suppose I mistook the road, for I have been wandering about the woods ever since."

"You are fifteen miles from Centerville," said the uncle with a kind leer.

"You do not belong to this part of the country?" said the banker's clerk.

"No," I replied, "I am from the State of Virginia."

"What is your business?" "I am collector for a house in Richmond."

"I should have taken you for a Yankee," said the young man.

"No, indeed," I replied, with an attempt to smile.

The uncle and nephew now left the room, and I could hear them whispering together in the next apartment. Still I did not feel any uneasiness, for I relied on the fact that I was unknown to the ascending clerk.—They soon returned to the apartment where I sat.

"We have only one room in the house," said the uncle as he entered; "if you will not mind sleeping with a son of mine, you can have a part of his bed."

I, of course, immediately consented, glad enough to find any place where I could rest my weary limbs.

After a pause of a few minutes I pulled out my watch, and said I should like to go to bed. I noticed at the time significant looks pass between the uncle and nephew when they saw my watch. It was a fine one—a real Cooper—and had been presented to me by an importer of watches for services which I had rendered.

"You will find my son next to the wall," said the uncle. "You will have the goodness not to awaken him, for he has been sick lately, and has to get up early."

I replied that I would certainly avoid waking him. The uncle took up a candle, and showed me to a room up stairs; it was the only habitable sleeping room in the house, and was situated over that in which we had been seated. Cautioning me to put out the light as soon as I was in bed, he left me.

I found myself in a room the exact counterpart of the one below excepting that this contained a bedstead. Snoring on the bed next to the wall was a man some years younger than myself. I cautiously brought the light to bear on his face. The first thing that struck me was, that the man below had deceived me when he had told me his son was sick. He was undressed, and wore on his head a night cap.

A vague sensation of uneasiness crept over me. I regretted having entered the house, and looked round the room for means of exit.—There was only one door in the room, that by which I had entered. Opposite to the door was a window. I walked up to it, and endeavored to peer through the outside darkness, but could distinguish nothing. I tried to reason a-

way my forebodings, and succeeded in doing so to some extent.

I began to prepare for bed, and had already taken off my coat and waistcoat, when I fancied I heard a step on the stairs. I immediately extinguished the light, and waited with breathless anxiety; the door gently opened, and the uncle cautiously thrust forward his head.

In the gloom of the chamber he could not perceive me; and finding the light extinguished, I suppose he thought I was in bed, for he closed the door very softly and descended the stairs again.

I was now worked up to the highest pitch of excitement, I felt certain that something was going to happen. I remembered my lonely situation—the inquisitive questions of the men below. There was no possible means for me to escape, except going through the room in which they were seated—and such a course I knew would be perfect madness.

I summoned up all my philosophy, and determined to wait the development, and tried to persuade myself my fears were groundless. But when I thought of the significant looks that passed between the men when they saw my gold, I must confess the effort was a failure.

And then the thought suddenly struck me, if, after all, the clerk had recognized me, it was certain that he would never let me leave that place alive. Five long minutes passed away, and I heard nothing. At that moment a light flashed before my window. I went directly to it, and saw the uncle with a lantern digging in the garden. I watched him with eager eyes, he was digging a hole about six feet long and three broad.

"Good God!" I exclaimed to myself, "he is digging my grave."

I now felt certain that the young man had been left in the room below to prevent my escape. But I determined to satisfy myself if such were the fact or not. I opened the door noiselessly, and stole cautiously down stairs in my stocking feet.

I glanced through the keyhole of the door which opened into the room, and saw that my suspicions were well founded, for the ascending clerk sat beside a table with a revolver all ready cocked within his reach. I returned to the bedroom again.

I again took my position at the window.—Five minutes more of agonizing suspense ensued. I had nothing with which to defend myself, and was completely at their mercy. A sudden calmness now took possession of me. I suppose it was the calmness of despair, but with all my faculties were perfectly clear, and I turned over a hundred plans to escape the doom that awaited me. All this time I was eagerly watching the actions of the uncle.

The soil was very light, and he soon succeeded in opening the hole to at least four feet. He then threw down his spade and entered the house again. I expected every moment to hear them ascending the stairs, and made up my mind to sell my life as dear as possible, when a purring sound attracted my attention.

I now perceived for the first time that the light from the room below penetrated through several cracks in the floor. I lay down on the ground, and looking through one of the cracks, found that I could perceive everything in the apartment. One of the men was sharpening a large knife on a grindstone, and it was this that made the purring sound that I had heard. He felt the edge, and finding it sharp enough, discontinued his employment. They then began to converse, I could hear every word they said.

"Are you certain, Charles, that this is the detective?" said the uncle.

"Perfectly certain!" returned the clerk. "I know Brampton as well as I do you."

"It is certain he must die then. I suppose he has plenty of money with him beside his gold watch."

"Yes, he must be well provided with funds, and his business here is evidently to arrest me."

"Come, then, let us finish the business at once," said the uncle.

"Do you think he is asleep yet?" returned the clerk.

"No matter if he is not, he'll sleep well enough afterwards anyhow."

The clerk laughed—hideously I thought. "Will you do it, or shall I?" said the nephew.

"O, you may go, but be sure you make no mistake. Bill, you know, lies next to the wall, he has a nightcap on, the detective has none. Leave the light outside the door, for fear of waking Brampton; and above all, be quick about it."

In a moment my plan was formed. Bill was fast asleep. I gently turned him over to the outside of the bed, and pulling off his nightcap, put it on my own head. I accomplished this without waking Bill. I then cautiously laid myself in his place near the wall.

The agony of the next few minutes was intense—my heart seemed ready to cease beating. I heard a step on the stairs; it advanced, the door opened softly, the floor creaked with the weight of a heavy tread. The murderer approached the bed.—I could feel his hot breath on my cheek. I had presence of mind enough to imitate a snore. I felt his hand passing over my head—it rested on my shoulder. O, agony of agonies, he had found out my ruse, and was about to kill me!

My whole body was bathed in a cold perspiration. Suddenly I heard a heavy thud on the bed, which was followed by a groan, and then all was still. The blow had been struck, and I was not the victim. A pause of some moments ensued, and then I heard the uncle ascending the stairs. They wrapped the body of the unfortunate Bill in a sheet, and conveyed it at once into the garden. They had no sooner left the house than I leaped out of bed, and ran to the window. They had evidently not discovered my mistake, for the body was already in the grave prepared for it, and they were filling it up.

I lost not a moment to put on the rest of my clothes, and creeping quietly down stairs, es-

capel through the front door. I ran as fast as I possibly could, and by chance took the right road. In less than an hour I was at Parkville. I ransacked the whole village, and in a few hurried words told my story. A large party of men immediately set off for the scene of the tragedy accompanied by myself.

When we entered the house we found the front room still occupied by the uncle and nephew. When they saw me they turned deadly pale, and I really believe they thought I had risen from the grave, for they had not yet discovered that they had sacrificed Theodore Munsel's son. When they saw that I was really alive, they assumed an air of bravado, supposing that I had come to arrest the clerk for the bank robbery. Their dream, however, was soon dissipated, for in a few moments the body of the murdered man was exhumed, and they were confronted with their bloody work.

It was shocking to see the uncle's agony when he discovered that his son had been murdered. Neither of the criminals attempted any defence. Three months afterwards they were tried, convicted and executed.

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GIVING THE RADICALS A WIDE BERTH.

The special despatch to the Philadelphia Ledger, a paper which has given the present administration its entire and hearty support, we regard as most significant: WASHINGTON, May 2.—There are certain indications which go to show that President Johnson, like the lamented Lincoln in his later days, is giving the extreme radicals a wide berth, and I hazard nothing in saying that the proclamation offering the South to trade will be soon followed by evidences still more conclusive of the desire of the President to heal the breach as quietly and pleasantly as possible, and unite the two sections again in "one harmonious whole."

You will note that his proclamation reviving trade is not addressed alone to the loyal people of the South, but includes the "well disposed" in its privileges, and that, too, without compelling them to take the much abused and often broken oath of allegiance. The South, in so far as trade is concerned, could ask no more than this, for the door of commerce is open as wholly and as freely to all the people as if such a thing as war had not been known. Whether they will avail themselves of the offer remains to be seen, but they must be rebellious, indeed, if they allow so handsome a privilege to remain a dead letter with them.

I understand, upon authority which I cannot doubt, that terms equally generous to those offered, but not accepted by Lee and Johnston, will be shortly offered the whole Southern people—a few of their leaders in the rebellion alone excepted. In other words there will be a general amnesty tendered, and a disposition evinced to make the situation for our "wayward sisters" as pleasant as possible.

The radical element have got an inkling of the policy of the President, and declare that its adoption will end in the retention of slavery at the South, thus defeating, as they believe, the great object for which the war, during the past four years, has been fought, and leaving the old "house of contention," still to be attacked and gnawed around by the opposing factions.

But let those beware who attempt to oppose the policy of President Johnson. Mr. Lincoln has been credited with firmness, but in his successor's little finger there will be more of the Jacksonian firmness than there was in Mr. Lincoln's whole hand.

Let Andrew Johnson but show himself the man to pursue such a line of policy as is indicated in the above despatch, and he will receive the support of the entire Democratic party from the moment he indicates that to be his intention. Surely with that, in addition to the support of all the conservative men of his own party, he would feel fully strong enough to face the impracticable radicals of New England.—Under such a policy each of the Southern States could be brought back to the Union most speedily, and with the least possible injury to its material resources. All the best interests of the nation imperatively demand that President Johnson should give the extreme radicals a very wide berth.

A railway is to be built in Palestine. It will connect Jaffa with Jerusalem, will be about forty miles long, and, with a harbor at Jaffa, will cost half a million pounds sterling.

"I suppose," said the quack, "you think me a fool." "Yes," said the patient, but I did not think you could ascertain my thoughts by feeling my pulse."

A wag seeing a lady at a party with a very low-necked dress and bare arms expressed his admiration by saying that she out-stripped the whole party.

"I shall be at home next Sunday," a lady remarked, as she followed to the door her beau, who seemed to be wavering in his attachment. "So shall I," was the reply.

There is nothing that so awakens the divinity within us as lofty music. In the labyrinth of the ear, as in those of Egypt, gods lie buried.

It is not a single sadder blow that crushes permanently, but the long endurance of heavy burdens, or an accumulation of smaller ones.

The official statistics of the War Department shows that upwards of 64,000 Union prisoners have died in rebel prisons.

Did the man who ploughed the sea and afterwards planted his feet upon his native soil, ever harvest the crops?

Ladies will sooner pardon want of sense than want of manners.