The Democratic Watchman.

BELLEFONTE, PA.

INCONSTANT.

(The name of the woman, (if woman it was), who wrote the following, should not be allowed to pass into oblivion. It will strike a chord in many a heart

INCONSTANT

Inconstant! Oh, my God!
Inconstant! When a single thought of thee
Stands all my shivering blood
Back on my heart in thrills of ecstacy!

Inconstant! When to sleep
And dream that thou art near me, is to learn,
So much *of heaven*, I weep
Because the earth and morning must return.

Inconstant! Ah! too true!
Turned from the rightful shelter of thy breast,
My tired heart flutters through
The changeful world—a bird without a nest

Inconstant to the crowd
Through which I pass, as, to the skies above,
The fickle summer cloud,
But not to thee, Oh, not to thee, dear love!

I may be false to all
On earth beside, and every tender tie
Which seems to hold in thrall
The weary life of mine, may be a lie

But true as God's own truth,
My steadfast heart turns backward ever more,
To that sweet time of youth
Whose golden tide beats such a barren shore!

Inconstant! Not my own
The hand which fumbles this—it fell between our lives!
On the cold shadow strown
To perfect shape, the flower of love survives

God knows that I would give
All other joys, the sweetest and the best
For one short hour to live
Close to my heart, its comfort and its rest.

But life is not all dark,
The sunlight gladdens many a hidden slope,
The dove shall find its ark
Of peaceful refuge and of patient hope

I yet shall be possess
Of woman's need—my small a[illegible] apart
Home, love, protection, rest,
And children's voices singing through the heart.

By God's help, I will be
A faithful mother and a tender wife
Perhaps even more, for He
Has chastened the best glory of my life

But sacred to his loss,
One white sweet chamber of my heart shall be,
No foot shall ever cross
The silent portal sealed to love and thee

And sometimes when my lips
Are to my first-born's clinging, close and long,
Draining with bee-like sips
And its sweet lilly heart, will it be wrong

If, for an instant wild
With precious pain, I put the truth aside,
And dream it is thy child
That I am fondling with such tender pride?

And when another's head
Sleeps on thy heart (if it should ever seem
To be my own instead
Oh, darling, hold it closer for the dream

God will forgive the sin
If sin it is, our lives are kept so sacred
So cold, so passion-clear
I thank Him death comes at last—and so good bye

CUPID ASTRAY.

Bob had no idea that the doctor was behind him as he poked the valentine under the front door. Had he not been too illustrated to look round he would have seen him, and had not the doctor been deep in a medical research about Jane Todd's collar bone, he must have spied the dapper figure of the lover away. But as it was he fumbled for his key a minute, and then rang the bell, and while doing so, spying something white under the door, he picked it up and tore it open. 'Love is open' that letter! that letter which Bob had sat up till two A. M. rounding and curling the tails of his P's and Q's. Was it for this that he bestowed so many slaps on his forehead? O Fate.

Bridget, that faithful survitor, answered the bell, charged with a message which she was bent on delivering with the least possible delay. "If you please, sir, Morton Jones's wife's sister's been here, and little Johnny's stole through the bolt and took a peep at dead, and they'd like you to come this minute, an' two Irish women can't mind a baby, there's a little boy with a favor it is in Long Lane, and Miss Usher's sent this note."

"Long Lane must wait," muttered the doctor, as he threw his instrument-case and the letter on the table, and took the note Bridget held out. "Morton Jones, hey? He's that man on the Flats, isn't he?"

"Yes, sir."

"I'll go at once. Hum! skimming the dainty notelet in his hand, "Dear doctor: so nervous and depressed, my old foe neuralgia is upon me again—come as soon as you have leisure, and meantime send that prescription which did such good last year." "Prescription! Yes, of course, she longs to be dosing herself—all females do. 'Yours, sincerely, Madeline Usher.' 'That comes of being alone and famed up. If she had one earthly thing to do she'd be a well woman. I'll see she gets nothing to hurt her." And tearing a scrap from a pocket book, he pencilled some cabalistic signs.

"Here, Bridget. Fetch a sheet of paper, will you? or, stay, this will answer." And seizing Bob's valentine, the unconscious doctor wrote upon the back as follows:

"MY DEAR FANNY, I send you something which will suit you better than the prescription you ask for. It isn't exactly medicine, but will do you more good than if it were, and is a great deal better for you at this season of the year. Be sure to take a brisk walk after it. You know I always told you that half your bad feelings came from loneliness and want of occupation. I wish I could make you feel this half as strongly as I do. I'll drop in this evening if possible. Yours faithfully,

L. RAYMOND."

Miss Usher, sitting in her parlor by her bright fire, pale, dejected, wrapped in a shawl, was not a little amazed when, two hours later the missive was put into her hands. Dr. Raymond had written her notes before, half professional, half friendly, but this was something unexampled. Silver doves, a smirking cupid, with one pink wing and one blue one, roses, eglantines, and wat-not round the edges, these flowery lines enclosed:

"Oh may not it be wrong to love,
To love, to worship thee;
The sea yearns for the star above,
The stars look on the sea.
The hot moon woos the scented gale,
The parched flower the dew—
Their love, their loving does not fail,
And why should mine for you?

Like bird all spent in wandering
An weary must I roam,
Until I rest my restless wing
In the dear nest at home.
But what were home without thy face,
O fatal love of mine!
Then oh can that humble home to grace,
And bless your Valentine."

It was rather [illegible] that but a little [illegible] passed over [illegible] some time back the [illegible] been [illegible] round the corner, which he hoped some day to adorn as a partner. Whether the doctor would have admitted it as addressed to Kitty—that baby, as he called her—is questionable. But Miss Usher quite glowed as she read. It was so poetical, so sweet. The little confusion of pronouns in the first verse escaped her notice altogether. She read and re-read, and then turned to the more prosaic second page.

"Not *exactly* medicine"—O that funny man! Much better suited to this season of the year. Oh! very much." Dear, dear! What could it mean? But there was no doubt about *that*—it could mean one thing! Lonely! Yes, indeed. Dear delicate little Miss Usher had often felt so, but there seemed no help for it. There was nobody in particular she wished to have live with her, and no one to marry suited to her taste. Dr. Raymond, to be sure—he was so superior—so good; but then she had never thought he would marry again—he was so devoted to his first wife. And thinking how fond she still was of that little Kitty and Will and what a lonely life it was, after all, for a man to try and keep house for himself, Miss Usher felt her cheeks flushing, and a glow and a stir coming into her heart, which quite made her forget how ill she had fancied herself just before.

"Well! this looks cheerful. Women certainly have a knack of making things cosy, which men never get. Now, I found out at once that I was cold as I sat in my office, and I don't think you have felt it at all in this snug little bower of yours, and how are you to-night?"

The doctor was shaking hands all the time he said this.

"Take this chair, doctor, it is a comfortable one."

"Well, did you take the prescription?"

"The walk? Oh! yes, and feel much better for it, thank you."

"That's right, I knew you would. And how did you like the other?"

"The other?" with deepening color, "oh! I liked it very well, that is, very much."

"I am glad to hear it. It was a simple thing, but I thought it would suit you. I scribbled a line to go along with it, because I wanted to ensure your getting out to-day, and now I want a little plain talk with you on the same point. Let me ask, to begin with, don't you think you have lived alone long enough?"

"Perhaps so," replied Miss Usher, with maidenly hesitation, "but—"

"You see," interrupting, "if we could make an arrangement by which you could have some young person with you, a bright, lively girl of Kitty's age, for instance, who would be a companion, and not too much of a charge, it would be the very thing. It's sitting here forlorn and solitary, and having nobody to keep you company or urge you to go out, which is playing the mischief with your nerves and making you fancy yourself an invalid. You are no more sick than I am. You only need rousing. Now don't you think so yourself? Couldn't you bring your mind to like it?"

Miss Usher fluttered, looked up, turned scarlet, and looked down again.

"It is easy enough to find the person you want," went on the unconscious doctor. "I'll see to that. Only say the word."

"I have been so used to living alone," *faltered Miss Usher, "that I'm half afraid to try the experiment.* But if I had you to help me, doctor—"

"Of course you'd have me," said the hearty physician, "that's business, you know."

"Business!"

"*Oh! well, pleasure, too, of course, but it is business after all.* What's a great, strong man good for if he cannot look after little delicate souls like you: to say nothing of my being your doctor, and your school friend. 'Tis an agreement, then? In that case I'll look about me at once, and begin to make arrangements."

"But," interposed *Miss Usher, timidly*, "are you sure as to Kitty's and Willie's feelings, dear?"

"Kitty and Willie, you see, dear—"

"Yes. Because you know, even if *you mean, very kind of you, sweet letter this morning*, it would depend a great deal upon that. I couldn't do anything to grieve their dear little hearts."

"My letter! What was my letter?" mused the puzzled doctor. "Do you happen to have it about you? I want to see if I made any mistake in the quantities."

With sleeper blushes, Miss Usher drew it from her pocket.

"Here it is," she said. "I think a great deal of it, I assure you."

Doctors by dint of long practice, acquire great command over the facial muscles. Our doctor was master of his. He surveyed the flowery page, with outward composure, but within his soul was rent with a convulsion of wonderment and mirth which was terrible.

"How in the world did I come by that *homoeopathical farrago?*" he asked *himself*, "and how ever am I to explain to this poor little soul?"

And suddenly it popped into his head, "Why not?" "With the blue ribbins, the flushed cheeks, the pleasant little room, *his full knowledge of her sweet temper and lady-like ways*, the idea was not unattractive.

"Not a bad thing for any of us," he muttered half aloud.

"What did you say?" inquired Miss Usher.

"I say," responded the doctor, with a great presence of mind, "that you have heard enough, quite enough for to-night. You won't sleep a wink if I let you go on. Go to bed at once, please, and to-morrow I'll come and discuss it thoroughly." And after a graceful leave taking, he stole out on [illegible] professional toe, [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]