The Columbian.

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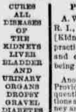

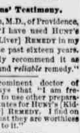

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BLOOMSBURG PA.

May 4-tf

lumbian.

DAY, NOVEMBER 13, 1885.

SELECT POETRY.

[For the Columbian.]

LIFE AND DEATH.

BY JOHN SUTTON.

A little while ago was seen,
  The landscape dressed in living green,
And as each object met the eye,
  It seemed too beautiful to die.
But now in every gorgeous hue,
  How changed the scene that comes to view,
All seared by autumn's frosty breath,
  All covered with the signs of death.

'Tis thus, on earth, with all that's made,
  The flowers only bloom to fade,
The leaves to wither and to fall,
  A common lot await's them all.
All life, on earth, must have an end,
  All progress does to this attend,
However fair or pure or high,
  It's but to live a while to die.

And man the noblest form of life,
  Is not exempted from the strife,
Each step he takes upon his way,
  Is but a step toward decay.
He's born and enters on his race,
  He grows and glories in his space,
In mahoods, strength he is matured,
  And thinks his life is still assured.

Vain dream, for since he drew his breath,
  He's been upon the road to death,
And while each step has led him on,
  Just so much of his life is gone.
We live, but dying while we live,
  The years take back the life they give,
And leave us with the numberless,
  As on our journey still we press.

But 'tis but forms of life that die,
  The powers of life all hidden lie,
The power that all existence gives,
  The real life forever lives.
The grass will yet be green again,
  The flowers will deck the hill and plain,
And man may perish from the earth,
  But find a higher nobler birth.

Earth then is not the living land,
  We see things die on every hand,
It's only when we look above,
  We find the land of life and love.
Life is a blessing God has lent,
  Death, in Mercy God has sent,
That we to him ourselves may give,
  And live to die, and die to live.

Stillwater, Nov. 2, 1885.

SELECT STORY.

A SWEET LOVE.

LADY CATHCART'S CONFESSION.

There was no more admired figure in London society in the season of 1879 than Lady Heward Cathcart. A widow of 28, as richly endowed by nature with wit and beauty, as by her late adoring and grateful husband with wealth unshackled by any odious restriction, she might well be reckoned among fortune's favorites.

Even the debutantes of the season, however fresh and fair, were constrained to acknowledge her supremacy, but men pleaded in vain.

For the most part she succeeded in evading, with equisite dexterity, the outspoken expression of their homage, or when this failed, she listened and declined with a grieved and grateful sweetness which riveted their chains. So many brilliant chances had been thus passed by that the world said that either her ambition was insatiable, or that she was one of the few women who prefer personal liberty to social distinction.

Bertha Cathcart sometimes smiled to herself when some of this sort of gossip was wafted back to her ears. Her ambition insatiable, when she knows it is bounded by the strong desire to lay all she is and all she has at the feet of the one who alone treats her with a courteous avoidance?

Ten years ago, on her first introduction to society, she had met young Laurence Kinnaird, the eldest son of a noble but impoverished family, who had passed his examinations for the India Civil Service with such special brilliancy and success, as to draw toward himself a certain amount of public recognition and regard.

He had obtained the enviable post of private secretary to a distinguished Governor of the Madras Presidency, and was within three months of his departure from England when their acquaintance began.

The latter part of that period was passed by him under the direct influence of Bertha Maxwell's gifts and graces, as they were both staying in the country house of a mutual friend. She was a girl of whom our choicest English homes offer so many fair samples; she was beautiful, highly intelligent and carefully educated up to the ever rising standard of the day. Care had never touched her; life had taught her no hard lessons, nor exacted any grievous discipline. Scarcely had a wish remained ungratified, or an inclination been crossed. It was not that she was incapable of sacrifice or averse to yield obedience, but that no demand upon her self denial had hitherto been made. Also she was an heiress.

Of all the men who had already gathered round and worshiped the brilliant girl, competing for the favor as knights of old at a tournament, none pleased her so well as the grave and rather cynical student, the fame of whose prodigious attainments had already attracted her toward him. After the desultory intercourse of a London season, they met, as we have said, beneath the same roof, and under conditions the most favorable for quickening a latent inclination into love or friendship. For six weeks they met and parted morning and night, until the thought of the morning hand clasp became to each an anticipated rapture, and in the light chat of social intercourse, or the more earnest discussions of thought and opinion, their eyes intuitively sought each other's for agreement or dissent. Then as other guests, less closely allied to their hostess, dropped off, they walked or rode together in the cool autumn mornings, and the young man allured by the sweet interest she showed in all he said (his speech having become for her something different from other men's) opened out his heart.

He told her of his family history; of the heroic soldier father, disabled by a long life of hard service in India, and never uttered a complaint of the scanty recognition he had got; of the tender, sickly mother, oppressed but never overwhelmed by the weight of domestic cares, and of the little crowd of brothers and sisters who were one and all looking to him to pave his own way to fortune, that he might help them along the road. It was evident to Bertha that the chief satisfaction he derived from his present success was the chance it gave him of fulfilling what seemed to her these somewhat unreasonable expectations, and he spoke of it with a simple manly gratitude, not at all as if it had been won by his own energy of will and brain.

In one word they loved each other. She knew it and rejoiced, for what stood between them and happiness? He knew it and took his resolution.

She was sitting one morning in the pretty morning room which had been set apart for her use, when he knocked at the door for admission.

"Come in!" she cried brightly. "I have finished my letters, and am ready to talk; or perhaps you have some scheme to propose?"

He looked at her for a moment with grave earnestness; in her pretty thick white gown, with a crimson sash round the little supplee waist, and a red rose in the lace at her throat, he thought he had never seen her look so fresh and fair. Her sweet face had that expression of mingled softness and ardor which was one of her distinguishing charms. He turned away from her a little and referred to a letter in his hand.

"I am afraid," he answered, with a forced smile, that the time is gone by for schemes or plans. I have received a summons from my chief—we are to sail in ten days, and those of necessity I must spend at home. I am come to say good-by."

Her lips parted, but she checked the exclamation that had nearly escaped her; she could not, however, check the sudden paling of her cheek.

Once more he glanced toward her, grasped his purpose more firmly, and went on.

"I am going away, as you know, with the prospect of a long exile from England—my life's work is cut out for me. Any regrets I may feel, I am bound to stifle. My father reminds me once more that I have my foot on the first rung of the ladder, and must mount higher, if only to pull my younger brothers after me. You would smile if you knew all the hopes they are building upon my start in life at home. It is a foreign conclusion I must never marry."

"Yes," said Bertha, with that matchless self-command which comes partly from the highest training, partly from the exigence of the unwritten code of social tradition. "I have heard you say that before. It is, of course, a much finer role to play in life to be the prop and head of one's family than to make some commonplace match, especially when it can be played without effort or denial." And she had enough faith in her own courage to raise her lovely eyes and look at him.

He was silent for a few moments, and then he said, in the low, deliberate tones she knew so well:

"It seems an unworthy thing to try and found a claim to your approval, Miss Maxwell, or pose before I go in the character of victim or martyr, but the chances are that we may never meet again, and it may help me, and cannot hurt you, if I tell you the truth. I take away with me to India a sorrow that will help to make my pledge of celibacy easy—a love that I knew very well from the beginning was hopeless, but that I had not the power, scarcely the wish to struggle against or to conquer. Now struggle and conquest are too late. I don't know that I am to blame, and I will not pretend to ask you to forgive a folly that was all but inevitable—there was nothing in your kindness which reminded me of my presumption."

He stopped and looked at her wistfully; he could not read the expression of her downcast face.

"You are not angry with me, dear?" he asked in a tone that cut her to the heart. "Oceans, and plains almost as wide as oceans, will soon divide us, and what will it matter to you then that one man whom you may never see again accepts the bitter pain of your sweet memory as the test and safeguard of his life?"

"I am not angry," she answered gently.

"No," he said, "you could not be yourself and not be sorry for me; also you could not be yourself and I not love you. Give me a passing thought sometimes if you should hear of me as playing my part fairly well in life and carrying my burdens like a man. Remember, I shall owe a great deal of what courage or patience I may show to the wish to be worthier of the girl that I have dared to love."

For a moment it was in her heart to tell him how every pulse of her being responded to the words he had spoken, and that she asked for nothing better than to share her wealth, not with him only, but with every member of the family which weighed so heavily upon him, but the next convinced her that his pride would reject such charity, and that to let him know that he left her behind to suffer as he suffered would be to make the sorrow unbearable that he was now able to bear, thinking he endured it alone. Therefore she kept her secret, and young Laurence Kinnaird sailed for Madras without a suspicion that he had won the heart of the sweetest girl in England.

But that was ten years ago.

Bertha Maxwell was married some twelve months after his departure, with the full approval of her family and friends, as well as of society at large.

She did not marry one of her youthful suitors, but a Scotch peer of great wealth and still larger philanthropy, who was old enough to be her father.

Lord Cathcart was not too old, however, to love the grave and intelligent girl who listened with such winsome interest to his manifold theories and schemes for bettering the condition of the poor on his estates, and who ultimately consented to join her life to his for the purpose of carrying them out.

Was Laurence Kinnaird consequently forgotten? By no means; but this girl could not justify it to her conscience to bitterly disappoint the reasonable expectation of her friends and wound the heart of one of the worthiest of men, in order to nurse to her grave a hopeless passion.

It might be considered by some a stretch of conscientiousness, but before marrying the mature viscount, who told her that, old as he was, he had never loved any woman before, she confessed to him the unconfessed love of her heart, and that the career of young Laurence Kinnaird, already drawing public attention to it, would always be watched by her with sympathetic interest.

The seven years of married life which followed were full of quiet content and widespread human interests but they closed with her husband'

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RATES OF ADVERTISING

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1 inch	$ 75	1 25	1 50	2 50	3 00	4 50	7 00
2 "	1 50	2 00	2 25	4 00	4 75	7 50	12 00
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4 "	2 50	3 50	4 50	7 00	8 00	12 00	19 00
¼ col	3 25	4 50	5 50	8 00	9 50	14 50	22 00
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death, and Lady Cathcart, after a long period of seclusion, in which she nursed a very real grief, had again appeared in society, where she was courted and admired with greater zest than when she was either debutante or wife.

Was it a mere coincidence that this stepping out of her retirement occurred precisely at the same time as the return of Laurence Kinnaird from India, he having obtained a long leave of absence from his onerous post of duty? She answered the question to herself with the courageous truthfulness which distinguished her, owning that it was this circumstance, and this only, which had decided her course of action.

He was still unmarried and she was free—if the old love survived, what now stood between them?

Their first meeting took place at a crowded evening assembly, and though he recognized her instantly—as, indeed, time had done little more than develop into perfect beauty the crude loveliness of the girl—he avoided more than a passing recognition.

Was she not now even richer and more desirable than before—still further removed from him on the social plane and sought by men who had the highest prizes of life to offer her?

What measureless folly to suppose that the love which was presumption in the bloom of his youth could be acceptable now that time and care and the sharp harass of accumulated responsibilities had prematurely aged and worn him! True enough, the one passion of his heart had not grown old, though he had led too busy and strenuous a life to pine and fret over the inevitable. But in the depths of his strong nature, wrapped up in its virginial shroud from all contact with the outside world, lay his love for sweet Bertha Maxwell, as fresh, pure and vigorous as when his eyes had last fallen on her girlish face. And do you suppose that she, with a woman's intuition, did not discover this?

She did, and her eyes brightened and her heart leaped within her with a joy keener than any joy she had tasted before. He loved her still—the man she had played so gallant a part in the thick of difficulties, which would have baffled and crushed ordinary men, and whose claims to honorable distinction were recognized on all sides. For ten years he had kept her memory green. Would all her life be long enough to pay him back for his sweet fidelity?

From time to time they met and parted without a step's advance to the goal she had in view—he inaccessible in his courteous reserve and she striving to overcome it as best a fond but proud woman may.

It is now very near the end of the season; the cards for the last of her little dinners have been sent out and he is to be one of her guests to-night.

It was generally conceded that of all Lady Cathcart's successful little dinners the last most nearly touched perfection, and to explain the phenomenon where a woman rules alone, it was remembered that her late husband, who had been just as much of an epicure as becomes a wise man, had bequeathed her his cellar and his chief, with all the rest of his real and personal estate.

But she herself: when had her beauty been more influential, her voice touched with tenderer inflections, or her talk more characterized by that sweet freedom and cultivated thoughtfulness which made her, every other charm apart then, the most delightful and stimulating of companions?

The most silent guest at her table was Laurence Kinnaird, but then his tactiternity was poverbial, and might be excused in a man of action; or it might be that he thought it gave more effect to his weighty and incisive words when uttered.

When Lady Cathcart rose from the table with the lady who was her constant companion and friend, she signified that, the evening being so sultry, she had ordered coffee to be served in the garden kiosk, but at the same time begged that they would consult, not their courtesy, but their inclination in regard to joining them there.

Scarcely ten minutes had elapsed before she saw from within the shelter of her summer house Laurence Kinnaird approaching the spot, and he was alone. Behold the opportunity she desired, granted her even before she was prepared to meet it! But where was the supreme courage, rising above all feminine and social conventions, that she had resolved to put forth?

No young girl's heart could have beat more strongly, or her cheek changed color more swiftly than hers. Still was she such a coward? Should love's labor be lost for want of the fitting effort on her part? She rose from her seat, and tying the black lace hanndkerchief she had just thrown off over her hair and under her dainty chin, said carelessly:

"I will go and meet Mr. Kinnaird, and show him my flowering yucca. He will laugh at it, no doubt, but at least I would rather know what can honestly be said in disparagement.

A few moments more, and they were walking side by side where she had walked alone that afternoon, with the full-brimmed river gently kissing the green banks, and reflecting on its clear surface every leaf of the lush overhanging foliage, and every tint of the sunset sky.

Kinnaird looked about him, and heaved an involuntary sigh.

"These are the scenes," he said, 'which a man dares not recall in India, or he might well go mad with longing. How often I have sympathized with the wish expressed, I think by Leigh Hunt in Italy, to take bath for five minutes in the green grass of old England! But this is morbid."

"You are very hard upon yourself," she said. "I can so well enter into the feeling you describe, but why do you call it morbid? It is morbid, according to your creed, to let even a wish escape the bounds of reason?

If it were I should stand very much condemned by the creed; but I suppose all sane creatures do their best to square their practice with their theories, and draw on their reserve of patience when they find their 'best' a very inadequate quantity."

"Ah!" she answered, "you are not much changed from the old times—you were always one of the men whose reach is so much higher than their grasp, and yet some of us might be well satisfied to have lived your life during the last ten years."

"And what does Lady Cathcart know of such an insignificant life as mine? it cannot have touched her at a single point."

"All that the world knows," she said eagerly, "and more beside. I know of the hard and thankless work done through good report and evil report, through sickness and health I know much of all that with which your chief was credited was the result of your brain and courageous patience. He is the first to acknowledge it; he said to me himself, just before he returned to Madras six months ago, that you were the one man who had served under him who cared for the good done, and totally disregarded the credit for doing it. Surely, that was high praise."

"If it were, it would be saying very little for human nature. But there were a dozen men at least more disinterested than myself. If I did not labor and scheme for my personal profit, I did for that of my kith and kin. I was always on the lookout for a corner into which I could insinuate Jack, or some opening that would help poor Tom's career I was eager enough to utilize any goodwill that fell to my share for their benefit. I am scarcely to be persuaded that I am a hero, even by Lady Cathcart."

"Do you admit there is any satisfaction in having succeeded so well in doing what was required of you?"

"A little," he answered, with an impatient sigh, "but scarcely enough to justify a man's career. And there is another side to my good deeds, Lady Cathcart, and a very seamy one. What of the miserable and far-reaching mistakes which I have made in my official capacity?—of temper of judgment, aye, even of justice and mercy. Then, again, what merit lies in being without ambition, when you know the one prize of life is out of reach? To do stolidly one's routine duty saves many a man and woman among us from despair. But I am forgetting to whom I speak—or no, I remember it only too well, but it seems with less power of self-control than when I was a boy."

He turned away abruptly as he spoke, as if with the intention of breaking off the interview; but she laid a detaining hand on his arm.

"Stop!" she said, in a low but firm voice, and with a sudden flame of color sweeping over her pale cheek, "you shall not leave me this time under a mistake. I am going to confess how much that boyish self-control made me suffer. Suppose I had told you that sad Autumn morning that if you went to India you would take with you all my joy in life, would you have stayed behind? And yet it was true!"

He started and turned a little pale.

"Aye! You can venture to own a girl's folly now, but you wisely kept your secret then!" was his answer.

"I kept it," she answered with a sweet forbearance, "though it cost me a hard struggle to do so. You were bound to go away—you had the fortunes of your family to make—you would have refused to take what I yearned to give. It would have hindered, not helped you, if you had known how keenly the girl suffered whom you had left alone in England."

"For mercy's sake," he said hoarsely, "spare me, and say no more! Is it not the very refinement of a woman's cruelty to tell me of a good I never knew I had until I lost it? You loved me once, but thought it kind to keep the secret. Would that you had kept it till the end! Is it within my right to ask if the girl had ceased to suffer when she became a wife?"

"Yes and no," said she, fixing her softened eyes upon his agitated face. "When we have buried our dead, and take up the daily duties of life to those still left us, we do not cease to remember because we consent to submit to the inevitable. You had told me our love was hopeless, for you could never marry, and it seemed to me wrong to sacrifice the reasonable wishes of my dear parents, and refuse to make a good man happier. He was quite willing to take me even when he knew what I have told you, and from that hour I strove to do my duty toward him, and was happy in the doing of it. I hushed my love to sleep and buried it out of sight and hearing. I thought," she added, almost in a whisper, "that it was dead—but—but the old life stirs in it yet!"

He caught her hand eagerly and leaned toward her, to question more closely the glowing averted face.

"Is it not pity?" he asked, with the sharp abruptness of intense feeling, "not a woman's passion for self-sacrifice? Are you sure that what you felt long ago was anything more than a noble girl's sympathy with the pain she had given, or that now—now your kindness goes beyond compassion for the love you have detected after so many years' fidelity? But even if you were in doubt, at least you give me leave to try and win you, sinking my unworthiness, and no future will be long enough to tire out my patience, my love, my queen!"

She looked at him with a smile, though her beautiful eyes were wet with tears.

"Take what the present gives you, and let the future take care of itself," she said. "No need to wait or try for what you have got already. I believe I loved you in the past, Laurence, and I have strong faith that I shall love you in the years that are to come; but all that counts for nothing in comparison with the conviction that I love you now—now, with all my soul!"

Need of Caution.

The New Orleans *Picayune* tells the following story, which has a good moral whether it is true or not:

A clerk on Canal street was standing in the door of his establishment witnessing the parting interview between a fellow clerk and a fellow clerk's sister. The young lady started away, but, forgetting something, hurried back. Both young gentlemen had turned around, and were about proceeding to business, when the sisterless clerk felt a pair of arms flung around his neck, and his face pressed lovingly by two rose-bud lips.

"I forgot to kiss you, Charley," was the laughing explanation.

"So you did!" replied the blushing recipient.

"O!" screamed the lady.

"O!" aspirated the clerk.

The young lady begged pardon. It is needless to say the pardon was granted.