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Select Poetry.

YOUNG AGAIN.

An old man sits in a high-backed chair,
Before an open door,
While the sun of a Summer's afternoon
Falls hot across the floor,
And the drowsy tick of the ancient clock
Has notched the hour of four.

A breeze blows in, a breeze blows out,
From the scented summer air;
And it flutters now on his wrinkled brow,
And now it lifts his hair,
And the leaden lids of his eyes droop down,
And he sleeps in his high-backed chair.

The old man sleeps, and the old man dreams,
His head droops on his breast,
His hands relax their feeble hold,
And fall to his lap in rest—
The old man sleeps, and in sleep he dreams,
And in dreams again is blest.

The years unroll their fearful scroll,
He is a child again;
A mother's tones are in his ear,
And drift across his brain;
He chases gaily butterflies,
Far down the rolling plain.

He plucks the wild rose in the woods,
And gathers ginseng,
And holds the golden butter cups
Beneath his sister's chin;
And angles in the meadow brook
With a bent and naked pin.

He loiters down the grassy lane,
And by the brimming pool,
And a sigh escapes his parting lips
As he hears the bell for school;
And wishes 'twere never nine o'clock,
And the morning never full.

A mother's hand pressed on his head,
Her kiss on his brow—
A summer breeze blows in at the door,
With the toss of a leafy bough,
And the boy is a white-haired man again,
And his eyes are tear-filled now.

THE OTHER SIDE—A TALK OF BUTTONS.

BY LUCY ELLEN GUERNSEY.

"Better is he that ruleth his spirit, than he that ruleth a city."

Breakfast was just over at the parsonage; the table was cleared away, the chairs set back, and Mrs. Ashton in a neat, morning dress, with a pretty little cap on her pretty, little head, was standing with her arm over her tall husband's shoulder, looking at the morning paper. And as fine looking a pair they were, as you will be likely to see in a summer's day. The Reverend Clement Ashton was indeed said to be the handsomest man in the parish, and that with good reason; whether he had any ideas of his own on the subject, was entirely his own affair. He was not the least bit of a dandy, however, though he always dressed with perfect neatness and taste, and his brown whiskers and abundant curly hair had never been seen disordered within the memory of man.

Mrs. Ashton as she was styled by the parish—Christiana, as her godfathers and godmothers named her—Crissey, as her brothers and her husband called her—was not usually regarded as remarkably handsome. Her features were not very regular, and the nose was not very fair; but her eyes so bright and clear, her figure so elastic and trim, her abundant hair, and above all, her frank, easy manners, and the expression of sunny, good temper and perfect openness, which lighted up her face, made most people consider her a very attractive woman. Every one in the parish liked her, from the two old black people who sat in the warm corner near the stove in church, and always came around to get their dinner at the parsonage on Sundays, to Mrs. Dr. Rush who was by far the grandest lady in the parish, and the two Misses Laden who were at first highly offended at the young minister for going off down to Philadelphia to get married, as if no one in Harddollar were good enough for him.

Mr. and Mrs. Ashton had been married about six months, after an engagement of almost three years, during which time they had corresponded vigorously, but had seen very little of each other; for Mr. Ashton was an assistant in an overgrown parish in one of our larger cities, and could seldom be spared; and Crissey was a teacher in another great city where she supported herself, and helped by her labors, to educate one of her

brothers for the ministry. It was not till this brother had finished his studies, and was placed on an independent footing, that she consented to be married.

"George cannot support himself entirely," she said, in answer to the romantic raptures of her lover; "he is not strong enough to labor as many of the young men; his classmates, do, and he needs my help. I know that he has talents which will make him eminently useful in the calling he has chosen; I know, too, that if he attempts any more than he is doing, his health will fail, and he will be discouraged. You must content yourself to board a while longer with your good friend Mrs. Bicketts, Clement."

And to this resolution she steadfastly adhered despite Clement's persuasions and those of George himself, who was very much distressed at the thought that his sister's marriage should be put off on his account. Under these circumstances, the lovers did not see much of each other, and they were finally married without Crissey's having once suspected her husband of an infirmity of temper. She had suffered much on discovering that such was the case, and felt inclined, sometimes to wish that she had never been disenchanted; but she was a wise woman; she knew her husband's intrinsic excellencies and strength, as well as his weakness, and altering an old maxim to suit her purposes, she resolved both to endure and to cure.

"What do you set about to-day?" she asked, as Mr. Ashton, having exhausted the paper, arose from the sofa corner.

"Visiting," replied his reverent brother. "I must go up to old Mrs. Balcomb's and see the Joneses, and try to prevail on Phil Taggart to let his children come to Sunday School once more. Then I have to administer the communion to poor Maggy Carpenter who is much worse again, and if I have time, I shall get into the omnibus and ride out to the Mills to see the girl Miss Fowler mentioned to me yesterday."

"What a round!" exclaimed Crissey. "You will never get home to dinner at two o'clock. I think I will put it off till six, and run the risk of being thought 'stuck up,' like poor cousin Lily."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, you know they always dine at six to suit the Doctor's arrangements. One day Lily called about some society matter, on a lady who lives not a hundred miles from her street, about five o'clock in the afternoon. The lady herself came to the door, and Lily was about entering when she thought she perceived a smell of roast meat in the hall, and said very politely, 'But perhaps it is your dinner hour?'"

"No, indeed!" replied madam with indignation. "We don't dine at this time of day; we are not so stuck up!"

"Poor Lily!" exclaimed Mr. Ashton laughing; "what did she say?"

"Oh! she did her errand, and retired, of course. There was nothing to be said."

Mr. Ashton turned to go into the study, and as he did so, his foot caught in the carpet, and he was nearly thrown down. Crissey started in alarm, but he recovered himself, and said pettishly enough—

"I do wish you would have the carpet fixed. I have stumbled over it twenty times in the course of a week, I do believe."

"I thought Annie had fixed it," returned his wife with perfect mildness. "I am sure I saw her at work there. The door must pull it out of place, I think."

"Oh! of course, there is some excellent reason for its being out of order. It seems to me that, with all your ingenuity, you might find some way of making it more secure."

He turned into his study, shutting the door after him with rather unnecessary force, and Mrs. Ashton returned to the fire and arranged her work basket for the day, with something of a cloud on her fair face. She was not long undisturbed; for Mr. Ashton's voice was soon heard calling her in impatient tones. She sighed, but arose and entered the next room where she found her husband standing before his bureau, partly dressed, and with shirts, cravats, and handkerchiefs scattered about him like a new kind of snow, while his face wore an expression of melancholy reproach, at once painful and slightly ludicrous.

"What is the matter?" she asked.

"Oh! the old story. Not a button where it ought to be! Not a shirt ready to wear! I do not mean to be unreasonable," he continued in an agitated voice, as he tumbled over the things to the manifest disorder of the clean linen, "but really, Crissey, I think you might see that my clothes

are in order. I am sure I would do more than that for you; but here I am delayed, and put to the greatest inconvenience, because you cannot sew on these buttons! I should really think that a little of the time you spend in writing to George and Henry, might as well be bestowed on me."

This address was delivered in a tone and manner of mournful distress, which might have been justified, perhaps, if Mrs. Ashton had picked his pocket as he was going to church.

"What is the matter with this shirt?" asked Crissey, quietly examining one of the discarded garments. "It seems to have all the buttons in their places; and this one, too, is quite perfect; and here is another. My dear husband, how many shirts do you usually wear at a time?"

"Oh! it is all very well for you to smile, my love, but I do assure you, I found several with no means at all of fastening the wristbands. We had breakfast late, and now I shall be detained half an hour when I ought to be away. I know you mean well, but if you had served a year's apprenticeship with my mother before you were married, it might have been all the better for your housekeeping."

"It might have prevented it altogether," thought Crissey, but the thought was repressed in a moment. She picked up and replaced the scattered apparel, folded the snowy cravats, warmed her husband's overshoes, and saw that the beautiful little communion service, presented by a lady of the parish, and consecrated to such sufferers as Maggy Carpenter, was in readiness. Before he left the house, Mr. Ashton had forgotten both his wife and child. He kissed her for her trouble, and proposed that she should send for Lily to spend the day with her, and strode away with his usual elastic step and pleasant face.

Crissey watched him from the door till he turned into the next street, and then went back to the fireside, and to her own reflections. This fretfulness and tendency to be greatly disturbed at little matters was almost her husband's only fault. He was self-sacrificing to the last degree, faithful and indefatigable, as an apostle almost in his professional labors, liberal to a fault, and in his administration of parish matters, wise and conciliating to all. He could bear injuries, real injuries, with the greatest patience, and was never known to harbor resentment. But with all these good qualities Mr. Ashton had one fault—a fault which threatened to disturb and finally destroy the comfort of his married life.

It was that he was very particular in his habits, and in his administration of parish matters, wise and conciliating to all. He could bear injuries, real injuries, with the greatest patience, and was never known to harbor resentment. But with all these good qualities Mr. Ashton had one fault—a fault which threatened to disturb and finally destroy the comfort of his married life. It was that he was very particular in his habits, and in his administration of parish matters, wise and conciliating to all. He could bear injuries, real injuries, with the greatest patience, and was never known to harbor resentment. But with all these good qualities Mr. Ashton had one fault—a fault which threatened to disturb and finally destroy the comfort of his married life.

He thought, indeed, it was a pity he should be so sensitive, and sometimes said that he wished he had not such a love for order and symmetry, for then he should not be so often annoyed by the disorderly habits of other people. He said to himself that it was one of his peculiar trials—that even Crissey, perfect as she was, did not come up to his ideas in this respect; but that his peculiar trials, as he was pleased to call them, ever became trials to other people, he did not imagine. He had indeed remarked, in spite of himself, that Christiana's face was not as cheerful, nor her spirits as light, as when they were married, and he regretted that the cares of housekeeping should weigh so heavily upon her; but nothing was further from his thoughts than that anything in himself could have produced the change.

His first visit this morning was to old Mrs. Balcomb, a venerable lady, the mother of two of his most esteemed parishioners, and grandmother and aunt to half the parish beside. She was quite helpless as to walking, though she could sit up and use her hands, while her mind was as bright as ever. The Balcombs were plain, unpretending people, who went very little into what is called society, but interested themselves greatly in all church and benevolent enterprises, missions, Sunday-schools, relief societies, and so forth; and one of the daughters, a young woman of fine talent and warm piety, was at this time engaged in the African mission. Mr. Ashton was conducted into the cheerful sitting-room, where he found the old lady alone, seated beside the open coal fire, in her large easy-chair con-

trived by her sons for her especial convenience, with a reading and writing desk attached, which could be removed at pleasure, to make room for a work-box or basket. Mrs. Balcomb was a famous knitter and needle-woman, and kept all the children of the family in stockings and mittens. She was knitting at the present time, and only suspended her work long enough to shake hands with the minister.

"And how do you find yourself this cold morning?" asked Mr. Ashton, taking a seat near the old lady.

"Oh! very well," replied the old lady cheerfully; "very well indeed, thank God. I often wish that you, who are obliged to be up and about, could feel as well as I do, sitting here. I do assure you I enjoy myself very much."

"No doubt you do," said the minister, picking up the ball, which had escaped from its basket. "If all were of as cheerful a spirit, the world might go on much better."

"But, what have you been reading since I saw you?"

"Why, I hardly know. I have looked through a variety of things which the children have brought me, and I have read the books your wife sent, and the newspapers. Then we have had two long letters from my granddaughter Julia, and they are always very interesting. They would be, you know, even if they were from strangers, and so much the more from our own dear children."

"Of course," assented Clement. "And what does Julia say? Does she seem happy?"

"Oh! yes, very happy and contented, and thank God, very well. They have a great deal to do, of course, and many inconveniences to put up with, but they are devoted to their work, and live only for it, and for each other. It was hard for me to feel willing to part with Julia, Mr. Ashton, even for the work to which she was going, and if I had not felt perfect confidence in Richard, I never should have consented. But I have known him from his babyhood, in his father's house, and during his college career, and I may safely say that he never, by any little indulgence of selfishness or fretfulness brought a cloud over the face of any one connected with him."

Mr. Ashton fell into a reverie at these words, which made him rather inattentive to the old lady; but he was roused by her asking—

"And how is your dear wife, Mr. Ashton? I hope she keeps her health and her good looks!"

"She is very well," said Clement, reverencing himself, "and desired to be remembered to you. She is coming up to see you in a few days."

"I thought, the last time I saw her, she did not look quite as bright and cheerful as usual," remarked Mrs. Balcomb. "You must take care of her, my good friend; it is a great deal for such a young creature to leave friends, and go into a strange place, and among strangers, if she has everything made as easy for her as possible. You will excuse me for speaking so plainly. I'm an old woman, you know, and you young men seem to me almost like boys; even though you are in orders."

"I have thought, myself, that Crissey was not quite as cheerful as formerly," replied Clement. "I supposed it might be owing to the pressure of her new cares, and to her being, as you say, among strangers. She is used to care, however, in her school. I hardly think it can be that. Perhaps it is natural that she should lose her elasticity of spirits as she grows older."

"Not at all, Mr. Ashton," returned the old lady, "not at all. I am older than almost any one in the parish, and I don't believe there is a more light-hearted person in it at this moment. Well, my dear, it is not my affairs, perhaps, but again I tell you, take good care of your pretty wife, and don't let her get the habit of looking sad. It's a hard one to get over, I can tell you, when once it becomes fixed."

Mrs. Balcomb paused, and other members of the family coming in, the conversation turned to other things. Mr. Ashton left the house, pondering pretty deeply on all he had heard, especially on what Mrs. Balcomb had said in regard to her granddaughter's husband—

"He never brought a cloud on the face of any one belonging to him!"

He felt that the same could not be said of himself. Crissey's face as she stood at the door when he went out, was almost sad. To be sure, it was very annoying to be delayed, and find things so out of order, but then he need not have said so much about it. It was probably an accident, for Crissey was really very careful; another time he would bear the inconvenience in silence.

He visited Phil, who was finally

persuaded to let his children come to Sunday-school, called at the Joneses, and then proceeded, to Mr. Carpenter's, where he was to administer the communion. Maggie Carpenter was an only daughter, and had been a beautiful and very fashionable girl. She was engaged to be married to an officer in the army, and the time set for the wedding was not far off, when she went to make a short visit in a distant city. Something went wrong—the train was run into by another engine from behind. Many were killed at once; others lingered a few days in horrible tortures; and a few carried home to their friends helpless and disabled for life. Of this number was Maggie Carpenter. The beautiful, healthy girl, returned to her father's house to spend the rest of her days in helpless confinement, and almost unintermittent suffering. Of course the marriage was now out of the question. Captain Manners was almost frantic at first, but he was not one of those men whose emotions last long. It was not reasonable or right he thought, that he should be expected to spend the remainder of his days in solitude, for really there was hardly a possibility of Maggie's recovery, besides, his father and mother wished him to marry, and his duty to them required it, and so, after a hardly decent interval, he wooed and won a fair Southern beauty, who was visiting some friends in Harddollar, and the wedding had taken place only a few days since. Mr. and Mrs. Ashton were not much surprised to hear that poor Maggie was much worse; and so far did Mr. Ashton carry his indignation at the gallant captain's heartlessness, that he left town expressly that he might not be called upon to perform the marriage ceremony.

"Maggie will never get over it, never!" said Crissey, while indignantly 'freeing her mind' to old Mrs. Balcomb.

"Oh, yes she will, my dear," replied the old lady. "At first she will feel it greatly, no doubt, but by degrees, her eyes will be opened to the fact of his being a most heartless coxcomb, as I always knew he was," said grandmother in a parenthesis, "and then in spite of herself, she will begin to despise him; and let me tell you, my dear, a little hearty contempt is the best cure in the world for a disappointed affection."

"How is Maggie to-day?" asked Mr. Ashton of her maiden aunt, who met him in the parlor.

"She is more comfortable," replied Miss Kony, "but she has had a dreadful time. That miserable fellow, John Manners—I could see him hung with all my heart."

"Not see him hung?"

"Why, no, not exactly; but hanging would be too good for him. I did not mean that she should hear anything about the wedding, but that meddling Miss Laden and her sister, came in to see her, and when I was out of the room, they told her the whole story."

"What in the world could have been their object?"

"Oh, Heaven knows! To hear themselves talk, I suppose. But will you come in?—Maggie is waiting for you."

Mr. Ashton entered the sick room. Maggie was lying on a low French bed, partly sustained by pillows, partly resting on her father's arm. The outline of her face was as beautiful as ever, though the fine features were sharpened and worn by pain and sorrow. Her eyes were very large, and almost unnaturally clear and bright, but amid all the expression of pain and weariness, there was a most lovely aspect of resignation and patience, more lovely than any perfection of form or color. Maggie had found, in the midst of misfortune and grief, what she had never known in her prosperity, and felt herself happier than on the morning of that day when, expecting to return to the bridal feast, she had set out all unconsciously to meet her fate.

The room was bright and cheerful; the windows were filled with flowering plants, and some Christmas decorations surrounded the mirror and pictures. Everything was arranged to look as little like a sick room as possible, and with success, for the well filled book-cases, the lovely landscapes on the walls, and the pretty furniture, gave the apartment the aspect of a pretty little study. A small round table, covered with a white cloth, and a hassock, were placed near the bedside for the use of the minister.

Mr. Ashton conversed for a few minutes with Margaret and her friends, and proceeded with the holy ordinance. He was not the man to approach such a service lightly; the night before the regular administration of the sacrament, was almost

always a sleepless one to him; but he never felt so deeply its solemnity and divine tenderness as when he was called upon to celebrate it at the bedside of some such sufferer as Maggie. The service proceeded, and after the prayers of consecration were ended, the holy elements were administered to those attending and then to the sick person. Maggie's face as she received the cup was as the face of an angel. As Coloridge beautifully says, the fear of God, which passeth understanding, "lay upon it like an untroubled moonlight."

Mr. Ashton turned towards home with his mind and heart full of all that he had seen and felt. He said very little during dinner, but when the table was removed, and he sat down in his dressing-gown and slippers before the open coal fire, he related to his wife all the events of the day, describing with all the enthusiasm of his earnest nature, Maggie's patience and holy resignation, and ended by saying—

"Certainly the religion of Jesus has power to sustain and console his disciples under all trials and misfortunes."

"Except the loss of a button," roared Crissey, seriously. "That is a misfortune which neither philosophy, nor religion can enable one to sustain."

The Reverend Mr. Ashton started as though a pistol had been discharged at his ear.

"Why, what do you mean, Crissey?"

"Just what I say," returned Crissey, with the same soberness. "Yourself, for instance; you can endure with the greatest resignation the loss of friends and fortune; I never saw you ruffled by rudeness or abuse from others or show any impatience under severe pain; but the loss of a button from your shirts, or a nail from the carpet, gives you a perfect right to be unreasonable, unkind, and—I must say it—un-Christian."

Mr. Ashton arose and walked up and down the room in some agitation. "I did not think, my love," he said at last, in a trembling tone, "that you would attach so much importance to a single hasty word. Perhaps I spoke too quickly; but even if it were so, did we not promise to be patient with each other's infirmities? I am sure I am very glad to bear with—"

Mr. Ashton paused; he was an eminently truthful man, and upon consideration, he really could not remember that he had ever had anything to bear from his wife.

"If it were only once, my dear husband, I should say nothing about it; but you do not seem to be the least aware how the habit has grown upon you. There has not been a day this week in which you have not made my heart ache by some such outburst of fretfulness."

Mr. Ashton was astonished; but as he began to reflect, he was still more surprised to find that his wife's accusation was quite true. One day it had been about the front door mat; the next about a lost pair of gloves, which after all were found in his own pocket. He felt that it was all true, and as his conscience brought forward one instance after another of unkindness—real unkindness—he sat down again, and covered his face with his hands.

"But that is not the worst," continued Crissey, becoming agitated in her turn. "I fear—I cannot help fearing—that I shall be led to feel as I ought not towards you. I fear I shall in time lose the power of respecting my husband, and when respect goes, Clement, love does not last long. This very moment I found myself wishing I had never known you."

Crissey burst into tears; a very unusual demonstration for her; and Clement, springing up, once more traversed the room once or twice, and then sat down at his wife's side.

"Christiana," he said mournfully, "is it come to this? I have deserved it—I feel that I have—but to lose your respect, your love—my punishment is greater than I can bear, Crissey!"

"It was but the thought of a moment," replied Christiana, checking her sobs; "but I am frightened that the idea should ever have entered my mind. If I should cease to love you, Clement, I should die. I would rather die this moment."

"God forbid!" ejaculated her husband, clasping her in his arms. "But why, my dearest love, have you never told me of this before?"

"It is neither a grateful nor a gracious office for a wife to reprove her husband, or a woman her pastor," replied Christiana, laying her head on his shoulder; "and if I had not been left alone here all day; I think I should hardly have got up the courage now. But if you are not angry, I am glad that I have told you all that was in my heart; for, indeed, my dear, it has been a sad,aching heart, this long

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