

A Secret.

I tell my secret to the sweet wild rose,
Heavy with dew, new walking in the morn,
And they had breathed it to a thousand others
Before another day was slowly born.
"Oh, little rose!" said I, "you shall peep!"
So pluck them for my lady sweet to wear
In the pure sunshine of her maiden bloom,
The curled luxuriance of her chestnut hair.

I told the secret to a bird new building
Her nest at peace within the spreading tree,
And ere her children had begun to chatter
She told it o'er and o'er right joyously
"Oh, traitor bird!" I whispered; "stay thy singing!"
Thou dost not know, there in that nest above
That secrets are not made to tell to others;
That silence is the birthright of true love!"

I told the secret to my love, my lady,
She held it closely to her darling breast!
Then as I clasped her came a tiny whisper:
"The birds and flowers told me all the rest.
Nor shouldst thou chide them that they speak the
secret—
The whole world is a cord of love divine,
And birds and flowers do fulfill their mission
In telling secrets sweet as mine and thine!"
—All the Year Round.

"A WITLESS THING."

"A document in madness; thoughts and remembrance fitted."—HAMLET, act. iv. sc. 5.

"Now remember, Lord Grayton," said the Doctor, solemnly, "all I told you. You are very welcome to come to our ball, though, as a rule, we only ask a certain set of wise men and maidens who know our ways and their ways. Still, you are good-looking, humorous, and cheery, and if you are sensible you can enjoy yourself and, may be, do them a world of good. I believe in electricity as a curative agent—not the quack nonsense of belts and chains and musical boxes, that only shake the nerve-centers, but the real electricity of animal spirits, the tonic of good health."

"I shall do exactly as I am bid," said Lord Grayton, a handsome, florid, muscular young man, strong as a horse, buoyant as a balloon, just back after a self-imposed exile of five years in India with the big game; "but tell me of all those confounded cautions again. I did a lot of dancing of various kinds years ago, before I went after the tigers—and he laughed as mingled memories of Mayfair and the Lotus Club swam back to him—and I've tried both the Corroboree and the Solonga; but 'pon honor I never danced with a lunatic girl yet."

"Are you quite sure of that?" said the Doctor, grimly; "they are to be met with outside Copswood, I can tell you. However, listen; the rule is simple. Be civil and don't contradict. If old Crackton asks you to play chess, play. He's a good player, and will beat you fairly if he can; if he can't he'll make a false move and call 'checkmate,' and you must resign. If poor Snobly thinks you are the Prince, and 'Sirs, you all over the place, and throws out hints about being asked to Sandringham; if you are asked to listen to the chiming clock in Baker's interiors, or to avoid some one else, because he's glass and might break, you must do your best to be courteous to them all, and on no account laugh at their fancies."

"Sounds rather jumpy. And the ladies?"
"I'll see to that, and introduce you to the nicest, and tell you what to avoid speaking about; the men will make the talking for themselves, the women don't talk much."

"Sign of insanity, I suppose. And what am I to talk about?"

"Everything save one thing—the Empress of Austria, or the stage or white roses, or Mr. Mollock, or black stockings. I'll give you the cue—never fear; only it may happen that one of them will ask you to dance, and then you must steer as best you can—talk society or art or chance. My own girls and their friends get on famously with the male patients, and you must do your best. Come, you are going to be our best tonic to-night, and you must be off and dress; nine sharp, mind, as they all go to bed at midnight."

"Queer thing this," soliloquized Grayton, as he completed an elaborate dressing, "beginning my first season after five years by dancing with a lot of lunatics. Hope they won't wear straw in their hair; if they do I shall bolt to the Congletons' dance."

He had many strange adventures that evening as he strolled about the pretty ball-room at the Copswood private asylum. He was duly defeated at chess by the venerable Crackton, who deliberately slid back a captured queen on the board, and performed prodigies of valor with her. He sympathized with the gentlemen who had swallowed a crocodile, and he noticed the pale cadaverous man who amused himself by counting the lights on each side of the room and singing softly to himself, "Sorry I can't admit it sir, sorry I can't admit it!" He had been an Acrostic Editor once upon a time. He noticed the fuzzy little man, with a pale-blue shaven face, who wanted to stage-manage the sixteen Lancers, and who pitifully entreated the dancers to "go back over all that again, please, and try and get it crisper;" and the erratic journalist who wrote paragraphs on his shirt-cuffs, and many other strange folk that passed by in the motley pageant of

unsettled reasons.
"There's King Lear," whispered the Doctor, as "a very foolish fond old man, fourscore and upward," passed them muttering of "Brighton As's;" "you know who he was?" and he whispered a name in Grayton's ear that made that nobleman whistle softly.

"And are there any Ophelias, whose young maid's wits should be as mortal as an old man's life?" asked Grayton, showing that he knew his Shakespeare as well as the Doctor.

"Yes, but we keep their secret. Now go and dance;" and the Doctor took King Lear off for a cup of coffee.

It was a sad, weird sigh altogether, and as Grayton watched it, it reminded him of Kaubach's "Dance of Death," and he felt oddly morbid as he thought of his own lonely life. He had once loved and given his heart to a woman whom he had both idealized and idolized; he had youth, brains and position, and with her he felt he could conquer the world. It was an old story; she turned out to be as loveless as she was lovely, and so he took to the tigers. He had got over it all now, but he shuddered as he remembered the fret of it all, and thought how near madness he had been driven when he heard of her ultimate fate, and where her life had drifted to. So there was Ophelia here! More like Audrey, he thought, as he watched some uncouth gamboling in a corner. His eyes wandered round the room, and rested at last on a face;

It was an exquisite oval face, somewhat sad and wistful in expression, of that rare delicate olive color one sees in the South, with the skin of so fine a texture that the red flush springs up through the vein-tracery at moment's excitement; the large brown eyes were soft and dreamy, the chiseled mouth was parted, and the dark brown hair, looking black at night, was worn Greek fashion close to the head, sweeping in undulating lines past the tiny rose-tipped ears. She was seated on a low sofa, carelessly clasping one knee with both hands. She wore a simple white frock just mysteriously frilled round the little white column of a throat, and a great black-red rose nestled in her breast. One little high-arched foot, in peach-colored netted silk, kept swinging to the music. No one seemed to talk to her except the Doctor, who smiled pleasantly as he passed and said something to which she answered with a nod.

"Ophelia at last," said Grayton to himself; and in melancholy vein he wished he were a Hamlet and could lie at her feet and watch the play.
"Poor Ophelia! divided from herself and her fair judgment!" (the quotation was irresistible). "I wonder what sent her here—some brute of a man, or a soldier-lover killed at Kasassin. Gracious! I hope this terrible Meg Merriels is not going to ask me to dance!" and he moved away, as he saw a wild-eyed woman bearing down upon him, to a seat somewhat nearer the pale girl with the black-red rose.

For a time he watched her; then he tried to magnetize her. At last their eyes met, he stared her full in the face. She never shrank from his look, only a sort of pitying light seemed to glow in the sorrowful eyes. A moment passed, and then she rose quietly and with perfect self-possessed grace walked over to him—to his intense astonishment sat down quietly by his side, and said in a soft musical voice:

"You seem sad to-night; I am sorry." For a moment he was tongue-tied; then he recollected his instructions and pulled himself together.

"Well, I think I was sad because you were looking sad."

"Was I? I suppose I always do, then. Of course, being here naturally makes one feel sad. But we won't talk of that," she added quickly. "Do you care for dancing? I'll dance with you, if you like."

"Dance! with you?"
"O yes, if you like; many of the others dance, you know."

"How calmly she seems to recognize her sad state!" thought Grayton, as he stood up; and passed his arm round poor Ophelia's slender waist, wondering how she would "jig and amble." They were playing the "Dream Faces," as they swung in undulating rhythm to the pretty song he felt that few slips of sane seventeen should come up to her.

"That's right," said the Doctor, encouragingly; "set a good example." "Means I'm to be a tonic, I suppose," thought Grayton; so he carried off Ophelia for an ice.

"You dance beautifully," she said, "No, you sit down and I'll get you the ice; there—now, there's a spoon and a wafer; now you feel comfortable, don't you? Isn't that a lovely waltz?"

"Yes, I'm fond of Dream Faces; the people one meets in dreams are generally vastly nicer than the real folk. I have many dream friends."

"Have you? she said, looking amused; "tell me of them."

"Well you know, I think I'm married to a dream-wife—just like Gilbert's Princess Toto, you know, with her dream-husband. And she comes to me

sometimes and scolds me if I've done anything wrong in the day; and sometimes she's cross and doesn't come near me for weeks."

He felt as if he was telling a 'airy tale to a child.

"How charming! Do tell me more of her. Is she beautiful? What is she like."

The fanciful conceit seemed to amuse her, so he went on drawing pictures of an ideal woman; then growing unconsciously eloquent, he burst out, "Ah, if one could only meet her alive, what a wife she would make! A very second self, aiding, sympathizing, helping, loving—at once the cheeriest of chums and the most idolized of idols."

She had flushed a little as he spoke, but she went on; "What a pretty picture! Where did you get your beautiful thoughts about marriage?"

"I suppose my dream girl taught me."

"Is she pretty?"
Grayton wondered if a delicate, bare-faced compliment would be a good tonic for a lunatic. "Yes, beautiful. She has large brown eyes, wonderful hair a low voice, an olive oval face, she dances superbly and she wears a black-red rose in her white dress."

Ophelia looked a little frightened.
"Forgive me, I didn't mean to be rude, but she is—really, you are not angry with me?" and he laid his hand gently on hers.

"O no;" then there was a pause.
"Come, and let me show you some pictures; I am something of an artist myself;" and she led him into a long gallery, and talked art so sensibly and sympathetically that here, at all events he felt there was a very pleasant method in her madness.

"Talking art" is a recognized method of interchanging sympathies.

He was no bad judge of a picture; but he preferred to affect ignorance, and asked the stupidest questions simply for the pleasure of hearing her talk. There a kind of innocent dignity about her that fascinated him. She was more like a Vestal virgin than a Bacchant. So the evening passed all too quickly, till he suddenly bethought himself that there was an important division in the Lords that night, and that he was bound to be a "not content" before the clock struck eleven, and after that he was due at Lady Congleton's dance.

"Must you go away?" she said; "why?"
"Well, you see, I'm one of those much-abused people that the Radicals call Hereditary Legislators, and I am not abolished yet; I must be in our House at eleven."

Of course she could not have understood a word he said, for she murmured to herself, "Poor fellow! so young, too!"

He rose and held his hand out.
"Good night; thank you for a very charming evening."

"Good night" said Ophelia tenderly.
I should like a little memory of this meeting; will you give me that rose? I've been longing for it all the evening."

"Of course I will, why didn't you ask for it before?" and she took it from her dress and fastened it in his coat. "I shall see you again, there will be another dance here soon. How is it I never saw you before at one?"
"This is my first dance here," he said gravely.

Why it was that Ophelia's eyes suddenly filled with tears he couldn't understand, but she left him with a quiet bow and went back to the dancing-room.

"You've been enjoying yourself, I see," said the Doctor, as Grayton came to say good bye, "though I must say it was rather selfish of both of you."

"Selfish! why I did all I could for her, poor dear girl!"

"poor! why, my dear Lord Grayton, she has six thousand a year of her own!"

"Dear me! and what is done with it?"
"She does what she likes with it; she helps all the big charities, and she helps me and Copswood in particular, and she generally does a lot of good to our poor people—picks up some one she takes a fancy to, and cheers him up a bit. She's one of my best tonics, and this is the first time I have noticed that she never danced once with a patient; that was your fault, you know."

"Good gracious! then she isn't—a—a patient herself?"

The Doctor laughed till the tears rolled down his jolly face. "Bless my heart, no! That's Lady Mary Petigrew, daughter of old Lord Ponolius, and she's just one of the cleverest and sweetest girls in the world. I thought you knew her."

"Not I! She came over and spoke to me, and—"

"I see it all—took you for a patient! O, this is too lovely!" and the Doctor was positively boisterous in his merriment.
Grayton bolted to the House, and having duly recorded his vote against the bill, sent up from the Commons, for chloroforming grouse instead of shooting them, betook himself in a strange state of bewilderment to Lady Congleton's. His hostess welcomed him warmly, like the returned prodigal that he was, and insisted upon introducing

him to some one in whom she seemed to have a special interest.

"Really a delightful girl, Lord Grayton, quite after your own heart—devoted to Art and Philanthropy, you know."

Grayton was too full of thought to protest, so submitted meekly. What were girls to him just then? He was thinking over Copswood as his hostess took his arm and they set out on a pilgrimage.

"Ah, here she is! Lady Mary Petigrew, Lord Grayton. I'm sure you two will get along capitally;" and her ladyship was off, leaving Grayton staring vaguely at his fascinating lunatic.

Lady Mary could hardly suppress a scream as she turned her head and blushed as deep as the rose he still wore in his button-hole.

"How—how—did you get out?" she asked, awkwardly.

"I never was in, Lady Mary; the fact is, I'm afraid there has been a little mistake on both sides. I only found out from the Doctor as I left that you weren't a—"

She put her feathery fan up with a warning "Hush!" then said, "What brought you there?"

"Curiosity; and you?"
"I often go there and try and do some good. I cheer them sometimes; but to-night! O, how wrong and stupid of me!"

There was a little pause as he looked at her with his frank, kindly eyes.

"Let us forget and forgive, Lady Mary, after all you were very good to poor Hamlet."

"And you were very nice and kind to foolish Ophelia. Listen! there's the 'Dream Faces' again; let us see if we can dance it in our right minds," she said, as she rose with a nervous smile quivering in the corners of her lips.

And it so happened that in a month they both came to their right minds, and the Doctor was at the wedding.—*London World.*

Some Curiosities of Government.

Next to the President of the United States the best paid Federal official is the Clerk of the Supreme Court.

The States of Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Nevada, Oregon, Rhode Island and Vermont have less than one-half the population of Illinois, but have the same number of representatives in Congress—twenty-two.

Pennsylvania has a larger number of post-offices than any other State.

Not a clerk in the Pension Office in this city draws less than \$1,000 a year salary, the average for the 1,173 clerks being \$1,294. Even the copyists get \$900 a year. These clerks have light labor and short hours. The average salary of the railway post-office clerks throughout the country is only \$977 a year. These men work hard, at the most trying labor, and have long hours.

Eighty years ago North Carolina had as many representatives in Congress as New York. North Carolina now has nine, or one less than she had in 1800, while New York has thirty-four.

There are 419 typesetters, besides apprentices, in the Government printing office.

Estimating Congress to be in session 200 days in a year, the salaries of Senators and Representatives amount to about \$10,000 a day.

The State of Nevada, which has two Senators and one Representative in Congress, has not so large a population by 617 souls as the city of New Haven, Conn.

A number of the United States Senate's employees are put down on the records as "skilled laborers," and draw pay at \$1,000 a year, while those who are merely "unskilled laborers" get \$840 a year. The distinction between the two is in the kind of brooms they manipulate. The "skilled" laborer uses a common broom to sweep stone flagging; while the "unskilled" laborer wields a coarse broom in sweeping carriageways.

During the past ten years the Government has expended nearly \$70,000,000 in caring for the Indians. The total number of Indians attached to agencies is only 246,000, and of these 60,000 in Indian Territory, 7,700 in Wisconsin, and 5,000 in New York are supposed to be at least partially self-supporting.

Last year the Post office Department used \$11,000 worth of ink for stamping and cancelling letters.

The five States of Delaware, Colorado, Florida, Nevada, and Oregon combined have not so great a population by about 100,000 souls as the city of New York. Yet New York city has but eight Representatives in Congress, while the five States have sixteen, besides their ten Senators.

In the fiscal year ended June 30, the Government's disbursements for pensions reached a sum which exceeds by six millions of dollars the disbursements for all purposes in the year 1860. From the five States of New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Massachusetts and Ohio, the Government derives one-half of all its postal revenues.

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