

Why is it So?

Some find work where some find rest,
And so the weary world goes on;
I sometimes wonder which is best;
The answer comes when life is gone.
Some eyes sleep when some eyes wake
And so the dreary night hours go;
Some hearts beat where some hearts break;
I often wonder why 'tis so.
Some hands fold where other hands
Are lifted bravely in the strife;
And so thro' ages and thro' lands
Move on the two extremes of life.
Some feet halt where some feet tread,
In tiresome march, a thorny way;
Some struggle on where some have fled,
Some seek where others shun the fray.
Some sleep on while others keep
The vigils of the true and brave;
They will not rest till roses creep
Around their names above a grave.

THE TRUE FRIEND LOST.

I had been foolish and weak, but not wicked, in my innocent coquetry with Leigh Lake. I say innocent because I had imagined it sport to him as well as to myself. He had the reputation of not only the handsomest man in his regiment, but the greatest flirt' and I laughed when he had been presented to me, and said to myself, "It should in this case be diamond cut diamond." Somehow my eyes had fallen under his first admiring glance, but I fortified myself with the thought:

"So he always looks. It is the first move in his attack."

I met glance with glance, smile with smile, and petty speech with saucy retort, or sentimental repartee, according as one or the other could be delivered with more telling effect.

Are you sincere?" he questioned, one evening. Answer me frankly, if you are not, tell me so now."

"In other words," I answered, "throw down my weapon, acknowledge my unarmed condition, and smilingly invite you to advance to victory."

"No," he said. At your hand I prefer defeat. You acknowledge, however that you hold weapons—in other words that you wear a mask.

"No," I replied, "I wear no mask. I carry no weapon. Be merciful, Colonel Lake."

He grew pale and opened his lips as if to speak then hastily arising, and making a brief adieu, he left me.

For the first time I was a little frightened, a little in doubt as to its being wholly a matter of amusement to him, a little dubious as to how Roger would regard my conduct in the matter, for Roger played a very important part in my life, even then, since—though 500 miles away—he had my promise that on his return I would become his wife, and I determined on the Colonel's next visit I would turn the convention into other channels.

But I had no opportunity to carry my good intentions into effect. The first act when he entered the room next evening, where I sat alone, was to cross directly in front of me, then stoop and take both my hands in his.

You asked me last night to be merciful," he began. God help you if you do not mean those words. They have been ringing in my ears ever since. Child do you know—do you dream—how I love you? You have raised in me the first passion of my life, though I am to-day thirty-three years of age. What a little frail thing you are, and yet you hold in these little hands a strong man's destiny. Speak to me, love? Tell me that my wife is before me!"

In that moment my coquetry took wings and fled away and in its stead came a dull realization of what I had done.

I strove to draw my hands from his. As well might I have tried to dislodge stone imbedded for centuries in the mountain side. My self-possession forsook me. In my fright I blundered out the worst possible thing I could have said.

I cannot do that, I cannot be the wife of two men! I thought you knew I was engaged."

A look of steely icy contempt lashed into his eyes. He wrung my fingers until I cried out with pain, then threw them from me and folded his arms across his breast. You dare tell me this," he said in a low concentrated tones. Answer me one question. What mean, pitiful motive has made you do this thing?

I did not know you were in earnest," I replied, remembering as I spoke how hard I had tried to make him think so—though never in my inmost thought to this extent—as the great father is my judge, to blast his future, or to bring about his mouth the white line of agony drawn there.

"I thought a moment ago," he answered then, very slowly, "that in my life I had no other prayer to make to heaven. I make it now, and that is that I may live to see you suffer through your love as you have dealt suffering to me through life."

His words seemed like a curse.—They filled the room, and oppressed my very soul with a nameless dread and haunting presence of the future.

Shivering, I buried my face in my hands. When Roger comes home I will tell him all I whispered to myself.

But somehow, when three months later Rogers came home I had so much to think of in the busy preparations for my marriage and my sky was so blue that I could not bear to risk upon it a single cloud.

The Colonel's words were idle now. As though any misery could grow out of the deep heart-love Roger and I felt for each other. How small, how unworthy of him and of myself had been my idle coquetries of the past. Never mind, I had all my future to atone.

Then came my wedding day, when the outer world gave me its smiling benison, in bright sunshine and balmy breezes.

I was Rogers now—his very own—and could have defied the universe in my exquisite happiness.

Six months later my husband entered our little sitting room, one morning, bearing in his hand a letter stamped with an official seal.

"Be," he said—my name was Beatrice but I was too dignified for its possession and so they shortened it to Be—and his voice trembled a little—"it is very soon, darling, to remind you that you are a soldier's wife, but I am ordered to report at once at Fort—under Colonel Lake's command. They anticipate trouble with the Indians. God knows how I hate to leave you, my precious little wife, but there is no alternative. I must start within twenty-four hours."

"Leave me?" I cried, starting to my feet and throwing myself sobbing on his breast. "You shall not leave me! Take me with you or you will break my heart."

"Child, it would be madness for you to undertake the hardships of frontier life. I cannot consent."

But I pleaded so pitifully that at last he reluctantly yet gladly promised we should start on the evening of the next day.

When I had time to think it over I remembered he said the post was under Colonel Lake's command. I shuddered. He it was, doubtless, whose influence had ordered my husband from my side since he had not dreamed of my accompanying him. Or what further evil might he not work him? Was it not my duty to tell Roger all, and warn him? My courage failed me—I would wait and watch. At least he could only strike at him through me.

Our journey lasted three weeks and I was worn and exhausted at its close. The Colonel himself met our ambulance on its arrival.

"You have brought your wife?" I heard him say in amazed tones, in answer to some remark of Roger's, after the first greeting. "We will do all we can to make her comfortable, but very little. Besides—"

He added something in a voice so low that I failed to catch it.

A moment later I caught sight of his face, as Roger lifted me down in his arms. I almost cried out in my surprise. His hair which had been black as a raven's wing one short year ago, was almost white. He looked fully fifty years of age. The sight caught my fear and resentment to vanish, and I held out my hand.

"Won't you welcome me Colonel?" I asked.

He bowed, without seeming to notice my out stretched hand, murmured some courteous words of greeting, and then turned away to give a command to an orderly standing near.

I saw very little of him in the weeks that followed. They were weeks of excitement, for the Indians were constantly molesting us, and fears were entertained that they meditated an attack. Indeed, they expected on the night of our arrival, and this is what the Colonel had confided to my husband.

Still in spite of all, I was glad to be here. Away from Roger I should have sickened of suspense. Now I was by his side to meet and know the worst.

"Why are not you and Lake better friends?" he said to me one day. "I can't understand it."

Nor could I explain, now that I kept silence so long; besides, the distrust was wearing away. Although distant and reserved quietly repulsing all my advances I felt that Colonel Lake would do Roger no wrong.

Until one morning my sophistries fled. The Indians had made a sortie. No one knew their numbers or their strength. It was necessary to send out an advance guard from our little garrison, though each man who went well knew that he might never return.

At 11 o'clock my husband, to my amazement entered my room in full uniform.

"Good-bye, little Be!" he said.—"Pray for my safe return, dear. I am ordered to command the advance."

"You shall not go!" I cried wildly. "It is his revenge! Fool that I have been to have trusted him."

"My darling, calm yourself. What do you mean?"

"Wait here a moment," I exclaimed.

ed. Leaving him transfixed with astonishment, I flew across to the Colonel's room.

He was buckling on his sword as I entered.

"You have done this thing, I began; you have seen how happy I am, and must convert it into agony. Rescind your orders—leave me to my husband I throw myself at your feet, at your mercy."

"I would have spared him if I could. He is the officer at the post capable of just this attack, I accompany him. Mrs. Lee. The danger is divided, and equal for both."

"Go, if it must be, to your death!" I answered cruelly. "You have no right to drag my husband with you. He shall not go!"

Words were useless though I fancied as he turned away, I saw a tear glimmer in his eye.

Still I pleaded, clinging to Roger's neck, when he crossed in search of me. At last they tore him from my senseless form, and when I recovered consciousness they were far beyond the reach of my entreaties, but not my prayers sent to a higher throne.

"Punish him, oh God!" I cried, in my agony but spare my husband an bring him back to me. He said I should suffer. Ah what was his suffering to this intolerable torture and suspense?"

The day wore slowly on. At nightfall when my brain was bursting, we heard the note of a distant bugle. Some at least, of the little band had returned.

Like a white statue I went forth to meet them. They came slowly, bringing with them some shrouded forms. Among the latter I knew that I should find my husband even as finding him I knew I should go mad.

But no! leading the van he came on his horse, though in his eyes there smiled no welcome, and on his face was a ghastly palor; but I was not a widowed wife.

I threw myself on the neck of the horse; I kissed his mane, his forehead, I clung to Roger in my wild joy at seeing him again.

"You are alive—you are alive," I said over and over.

"Yes," he answered, but at what a cost! A man to-day has given up his life for me.

He sprang from his horse then, and led me to the litter in the rear. The white, dead face of Colonel Lake looked up at us both.

"We have killed him, Be—you and I, my husband said. "He was the noblest man that ever lived."

And then he told the men all the story. He had ridden on a little in advance of the command, when he was suddenly surrounded by the foe. Fight desperately as he would, he would have been overpowered, but the Colonel had seen his danger.

Spurring his horse ahead of his men, he had flown to his rescue, charging down in the very midst of a shower of arrows.

"It truly was a deed worthy of a god," my husband continued, "Though we were both unhurt, almost miraculously so. We were beating a retreat to our command, when one of the wily savages launched his tomahawk at my breast. The Colonel saw it glittering in the air, and throwing himself before me caught the blow. The next minute we were in safety gained too late. 'Don't regret it,' he said, pressing my hand. 'Tell her I did it for her sake. I love her Roger, my boy.—I have not cared much for living since; and now—now that I have spared her the suffering I once wished her—I am glad to die. Ask her to forgive me those rash words—I never meant them—and let her future happiness buy my stonement.'"

I have been Roger's wife many happy years now. He was too noble to reproach me, though I told him all; but though my happiness mingles ever my heart's self-reproach, and the wonder if, at the judgment bar of God, Cain's brand will be upon my brow.

A Confederate Egg-Nog.

One cold, cloudy Christmas day, when the prospects of the Confederacy were as gloomy as the weather, an Arkansas soldier, whose clothes looked as though they had been run through a threshing machine, approached Gen. Hindman, who sat on a stump near a fire, and said: "General, wouldn't a little sign-nog go purty well this mornin'? You know in Arkansas we allus cillbrate Christmas with a little o' the stuff."

"Yes," the General replied, "and I should like to have a quart of it right now."

"Well, let's go to your tent, whar nobody keen see us, an' we'll make some 'rangements.'"

When they entered the tent, the soldier said: "You git the whiskey and I'll git the aigs an' sugar."

"All right."

The soldier went away; and after a while, with dejected countenance, he returned with the information that

some one had stolen the "articles." "I'm devilish sorry," said he, "for I've been er savin' them things for yer benefit for a long time, krowin' how sign-nog would strike yer Christmas day."

"That is bad," said the General, "and if I could discover the thief he should be punished. Stay here and let me go out and skirmish."

The General after much difficulty succeeded in securing the ingredients, and ere long a bowl of the frothing drink was prepared.

"Ah," said the soldier, refilling his tin-cup for the third time, "this tastes like old times, when I uester get up before day an' fire off the old fuzee. Put two men's heads together, an' sunthin' is goin' ter happen."

Shortly after the soldier left the tent Col. Bob Newton, chief of Hindman's staff, entered and said: "Do you remember old David Pickett who used to run a flat boat on White River?"

"Yes, he was here a few moments ago."

"He came to me this morning," the colonel continued, "and began to talk about egg-nogg; said that he had been keeping eggs and sugar for me a long time, and that if I would furnish the whiskey we would have a Christmas drink. I agreed, and he went away, returning pretty soon, and sorrowfully announced that some one had stolen his treasure. Rather than see the old fellow disappointed, I furnished everything, and for a few moments we—"

"Good morning, gentlemen," said Gen. Churchill, entering the tent; "had a fine egg-nogg early this morning. An old fellow that used to run a flatboat on White River said that he would furnish the eggs and sugar—"

"But did he do it?" asked Hindman and Newton simultaneously.

"No; some wretch had stolen the stuff. Hello, here is Fagan."

"Gentlemen," said Gen. Fagan, "you ought to have been with me this morning. An old fellow, a former flatboatman, came to me and talked about egg-nog till he made my mouth water. He said that he had been saving up a lot of eggs and sugar for my benefit, and that if I would furnish the whiskey we would celebrate. I agreed, and he went away, but I never saw a more cast-down man than he was upon returning. Some one had stolen the eggs, but I furnished the outfit, seeing that disappointment would about kill the old fellow. Hello, Reynolds!"

"Good morning, gentlemen," said Gen. Reynolds, "I have had a fine time this morning." An old fellow—"

"Hold on," shouted the other men; "we know all about that egg-stealing business."

Gen. Hindman called an orderly, and giving him the name of the egg-man, said: "Find that man and make him drunk, if it takes every drop of whiskey in the Confederacy. Such merit shall not go unrewarded."

The Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railway line has become teetotal, if that is possible. An employe found drunk, either on or off duty will be discharged: so say its most recent order. All persons who are known to even visit drinking places shall not be employed and no man once discharged for this cause will be employed again. This is stringent, but necessary. Science demonstrates that alcohol is a foe to that certainly and security which the railways promise their passengers, and the officials are only applying the conclusions of science to the benefit to travelers.

Measuring the Height of a Tree.

There is a very simple way of measuring the height of a tree which can be practiced by any one on a sunny day or in bright moonlight. All the apparatus that is necessary is a straight stick, of any length. Draw a circle with a radius (half the diameter) of a little less than the length of the stick. This will be done by holding one end of the stick, say two inches from its end, and moving the other end around, making the circle with a knife or a chip. Then place the stick in the ground exactly in the centre of the circle, perfectly upright, and press down until the height of the stick is exactly the same as the radius of the circle.

When the end of the shadow of the stick exactly touches the circle, then also the shadow of the tree will be exactly in the length the same measurement as its height. Of course, in such a case, the sun will be at an angle of 45°.

Measurement of this character can be best effected in the summer, when the sun is powerful, and has reached to a good height in the heavens, and when the trees are clothed with living green so as to cast a dense shadow. To many to whom this idea may not have occurred, it might be made annually a matter of interest thus on warm summer days to take the height of prominent trees, and so to compare growth from year to year.

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