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MY MOTHER.

O for the olden days!
Those were the golden days—
Days that have fled.
O for the mother love!
Earth has no other love
Worn its stead.

Still, as it seems to me,
Comes she in dreams to me,
And her soft hands
Comb my fair hair for me,
With tender care for me,
Fashion its strands.

Is love a pain to me?
Friendship in vain to me?
Barren life's way?
Sorrow she shares with me,
Whispers at prayers with me,
"God bless my child!"

Sings like birds to me,
Speaks loving words to me,
Covers my bed;
Oh, I have need for her!
My heart doth plead for her—
Mother is dead!

What are life's thorns to her?
Life's sunless morns to her?
Moons that must wane?
Spring has no breath for her,
Autumn no death for her,
Lights are in vain.

What are my prayers to her?
Cumbersome cares to her?
She is at rest.
Roses bloom over her,
Snow blossoms cover her,
Earth on her breast.

Down through the dreary years,
Sorrowful, weary years,
Hears she my cry?
Are her hands holding me?
And her arms folding me?
Is she still nigh?

Sees she my yearning tears,
Pitiful, burning tears?
From Heaven's height
Comes she to talk with me,
Stealthily walk with me,
Morning and night?

Ah! as it seems to me,
These are not dreams to me;
Still thou art here,
Walking beside me,
Whatever betide me,
Mother, most dear.

When life's "good night" to me
Heralds new light to me,
In the unknown,
Unending bliss for me
Shall be thy kiss for me,
Mother, my own.

BARBARA ROY'S VALENTINE.

Allan Norton at five and twenty found himself a rising physician, with something more than a local reputation. He was decidedly handsome, and for abilities, they were so far beyond mediocrity as to promise him a distinguished future in his chosen profession.

But for nearly a year the young doctor had been growing more and more unhappy, until at last, one dull thirteenth of February, he flung himself back in his office easy chair, and clasping his hands over his head, thought, with a dreary yawn, that life was a very unsatisfactory business, and that his companion on the opposite side of the table was one of the most insufferable bores in existence, although he chanced to be none other than good natured, obtuse, gossipping Bob Trelawney.

Bob had been describing a society entertainment, and utterly unconscious of his victim's invisible writhings, had gone on descanting on the charms of a capricious belle, beauty and heiress known as Miss Barbara Roy.

"The Gaunts brought out Lulu Lushington—a grand, lymphatic, half caste nabob's daughter—you know," Bob continued. "Of course they meant to set up their great sleeping or dozing beauty against Bab—"

Here Allan interrupted in a savage temper and icy tone: "Do I understand you to allude to Miss Roy?"

"Certainly," responded Bob, suavely; "Bab Roy, and a beauty she is, too. Some of the fellows she has snubbed most unmercifully. Just a few, you know, did go over to Miss Lushington's camp, but they came back quick enough, I can assure you. Why, one glance out of Bab Ray's soft, velvet brown eyes is worth a King's ransom, if she only meant it—but that's the worst of it, she never does—and it just sets us poor fellows wild."

Another yawn on the part of the tormented physician, who vouchsafed no other reply.

Bob was imperturbable, and drawing a sheet of paper toward him began sketching a feminine head, with great delicacy and skill.

"I say, Norton," he remarked, as he elaborated the design, "aren't you becoming something of a woman hater? It really seems so to me, and I've heard more than one or two of your fellows say so."

"If to discover an absence of real, earnest character, benevolence, good sense, and all else but flattering vanity and a passion for novelty in the sex, make me a hater, I am one."

Allan almost snarled this ill-tempered speech at his friend. The facts may excuse him somewhat. Barbara Roy was his very distant cousin and his soul's cherished idol. Looking backward he could not remember ever seeing her equal in beauty, grace or intelligence. It was her empty, aimless life that frenzied him—her assuming the throne of a reigning society belle, and permitting her days to fly in a round of senseless pleasure—every new folly finding in her its readiest votary, and each sensation flung aside like a child's toy at the appearance of its successor.

This was the secret of Allan Norton's wretchedness.

"Such a grand and noble woman as she might be," he thought, when the beautiful Barbara went whirling by him in the park, drawn in a phaeton as fanciful as Queen Mab's, and by four pretty ponies. Behind her, like liveried mutes, with folded arms, hung a pair of flunkies; and on she sped, reins in hand, a marvel of French millinery and American beauty combined.

Coldly and gravely he raised his hat and bowed in answer to her merry laugh, or pouting toss, just as her mood might be, and then turned away to hide his altered color or the irrepressible pang that smote his heart and left its reflection on his mobile face.

"Don't, pray!" exclaimed Trelawney, affecting alarm at Norton's outburst against the sex; "don't take everything in earnest, there's a good fellow, and don't blame Miss Roy for being a butterfly, for it's rather a charming characteristic to me."

"Very probably," observed Norton.

"On which account I am on the point of asking her to become Mrs. Trelawney," pursued his companion, bending his head sidewise, the better to touch up a pair of Psyche wings with which he was ombellishing his subject.

It was well for Allan Norton's closely guarded secret that he had a patient's call that moment in the front office, into which he slipped, leaving the artist still elaborating his work.

Bob was a dilettanti trifler with the artist, and finding Norton likely to be detained some time, he turned his attention to rhyming on the fair subject of his pencil, taking her name as a key note.

It seemed the easiest thing possible, and he meant to make it rather a bright one, too; but things do not always turn out as expected, and the result was the following doggerel, written beneath a lovely female figure with Psyche wings, surrounded by bubbles, and floating through ether in a car drawn by butterflies:

Sunlit eyes that dance with joy,
Melt in languor, then grow coy;
Shine like gold without alloy,
Such thy orbs, sweet Barbara Roy!
Hair that glitters to decoy
With its silken locks to toy.
Bright as those of Venus' boy,
Such thy tresses, Barbara Roy.
Lips! what words can I employ
To express the ravished joy—
Rapture that can never cloy—
Dare I express them, Barbara Roy?

"Ah," cried Trelawney, charmed with the picture his fancy evoked, and tired of the effort of thumping his brain for rhyming, "ah, that would indeed be an unutterable bliss; but the deuce of it is, she holds everybody at arm's length, though I've sometimes fancied she thought of some unknown one with a hidden sigh."

Here he sighed vacantly himself, and presently discovering a bored sensation, he rose and after lounging about the room for a few moments, called through to the office:

"Good night, Norton. I'll drop in again, soon."

Then he took his departure in his usual careless, good humored way, running over in his mind the most attractive place to which he could turn his attention next.

It was midnight and long after when Allan returned to the rest and quiet of his inner sanctum. His head was weary and his heart ached heavily; the last two hours had been spent beside the bed of a dying girl, a poor consumptive wreck of what had once been a society beauty, and her nervous dread of the inevitable change before her filled his heart with intense pity for her, and her struggle against the Great Vanquisher. At her request he had, with disguised reluctance, undertaken to convey a message to her former school fellow and late acquaintance—in short, to none other than the beautiful Barbara.

"Ask her to come and see me tomorrow," she had begged most pleadingly. "I have something to say to her; promise me, O, I implore you, promise you will!"

And so Allan promised, though he thought the morrow's sun would never rise again for her; and dwelling on it now, his heart grew still heavier.

At last, as he sat musing very, very sadly, he drew the nearest sheet of paper toward him, and, thinking more than looking, began to write: *Miss Barbara Roy:*

MY DEAR COUSIN—I was called this evening in consultation on the case of Miss Clara Bell. Sne is dying, and desires to see you. She usged me most earnestly to deliver this message that I was unable to refuse. You will please bear in mind that I had no choice.

Yours, very truly
ALLAN NORTON.

No one who did not understand the intensity of Dr. Norton's regard for his distant cousin, could explain the nervous haste with which he threw this formal note into its envelope.

He took it out again to date it, and saw by the mantle clock that it was past one.

"February 14," he wrote, and with a queer sensation, remembered that it was St. Valentine's day.

"A dismal valentine," he thought, but he never dreamed of the verses and drawing on the under side of the sheet.

Penciling a direction on a sheet of paper for his servant to carry the note to its address the first thing in the morning, the tired doctor retired for the night, and, as the gray light of a wintry morn shown through his window ere sleep came to his pillow, it may be supposed that he thought much of the radient and careless creature who was wasting her existence in the worthless search of pleasure, and the shadowy outline of what had once been a votary of fashion, but who now found herself, like one of the foolish Virgins, with no oil in her lamp, while the cry had already gone forth:

"The Bridegroom Cometh!"

Something strange happened that Valentine's day.

Poor Laura Bell died quite peacefully and hopefully the following day; but it was not that which amazed the fashionable world, who had quite forgotten the poor thing long ago—it was the sudden and complete disappearance of the chosen sovereign, Barbara Roy.

Without a sign, an action, a single syllable to mark her flight, the queen of grace and beauty disappeared from her realm, and her bewildered subjects mourned for her in vain.

Her name was not on an European passenger list, nor was any one certain of her having committed the madness of leaving town in the very height of the gay season.

Dr. Nerton, her cousin, was consulted as to her health, and could make no report. He heard of her last at poor Laura's bedside, but that did not appear well *on dit*, so he never told it.

Her elegant up-town mansion was still inhabited, and her plainer equippages were often seen on the drive, but always in use by invalids and old persons—never occupied by their charming owner. The ponies and Mab's chariot were disposed of at private sale, and the Gaunt family had now the unutterable delight of seeing their East Indian niece, Miss Lushington, now undisputed ruler of the fickle realm, recline in sleepy splendor where so lately the brilliant Barbara sat enthroned.

Meantime Dr. Norton gave his disappointed heart all the more ardently to his profession, and no one enjoyed a more enviable reputation either for skill or benevolence. Like most of his brethren who love their art, surgery had grown to be a passion with him, and his intense sympathy with sufferidg humanity led him to invent many soothing methods of dealing with disease that rendered him a favorite and extolled benefactor of his patients.

Within a week of the close of the year since his introduction to the writer he was elected professor to fill a vacant chair in one of the colleges, and consequently transferred his attention to a hospital in connection with it. Attached thereto was a casualty ward, and on the first day of his service it was his painful duty to perform an operation on a poor young factory girl by amputating her left hand, which a week before had been dreadfully crushed in machinery.

She was much alarmed at the idea of what she was about to undergo, and according to his custom Allan did his best to assure her of the relief of anæsthetics, but to all such soothing she was deaf.

"I want the lady to hold the other hand, and then I can bear it," she protested to the persuasive nurse. "O, please let me have the lady. I will do anything for the lady," was her continuous cry.

Fearful of the effect of the excitement, Allan tried to pacify her, and inquired who this favorite lady was.

The nurse, conceiving herself best fitted to reply, immediately made answer:

"Oh, she's one of our visitors, sir. Mrs. Rore, is her name, I believe. She's a well meanin' lady, but sorter spiles the patients, you see, sir."

Then, turning to the poor, trembling girl, she continued, in a Gampish tone:

"Ye can't expect folks to keep up for ever. Kitty and Mrs. Rore was here till daylight, a waitin' on you, and now she's home a gittin' her sleep."

"She promised she would be back—and—ah, there she is!"

The girl's tone changed to a gush of gladness, her poor tearful eyes overflowed, her pale lips quivered, and she stretched out the hand that was whole with a gesture of tenderness and greeting to a lady who at that moment appeared in the doorway.

Allan Norton started as if he had beheld an apparition. Barbara Roy's disappearance from gay life was now accounted for. She had become a volunteer hospital nurse!

Never before in all the exquisite garniture of a rare taste and costly fashion had she appeared so lovely in his eyes as now, when he saw her dressed in simple gray and white, as became her chosen vocation. As for her beauty it seemed enhanced by the contrast, and her face had gained the only charm it had ever lacked before—the pure, deep tenderness of a soul awakened to the consciousness of duty and human sympathy. Kitty's expression of delight at her appearance affected her very much. She did not seem to notice Dr. Norton, but concentrated her attention entirely on his patient.

"O, dear, lady," exclaimed the sufferer, "this good doctor is going to perform the operation. He speaks very good and kind, and says he will give me something to smell that will take away the pain, or make me kind of dead like, so I won't feel it. I know he's kind, and he talks so soothing; but I jes' only want you near me to hold my hand, and let me feel you'll stay by me when I don't know nothing."

With a ready sweetness Barbara assented; her manner had that earnest, cordial kindness in it that went straight to the sufferer's young heart.

"O, thank you," said Kitty, with a sigh of relief; I know'd you was the kindest lady as ever was."

A flush of pleasure warmed the young lady's pale face; she looked up and for the first time saw who the doctor was. Their eyes met, the flush dyed into deeper red on Barbaras face; then suddenly disappeared and left it very pale.

Allan was even more overcome; all he could do was to murmur her name and bow profoundly; and were it not for the poor girl over whom they met after a year's estrangement, their embarrassment would have proved painful.

"I fear this will prove too great an ordeal for you," said he in a low tone, referring to the operation, and glancing in the direction of his assistant physician, now arriving on the scene.

"Do not waste a thought on me," she responded quickly, "I am quite accustomed to such things."

"What a wonderful change a year must have wrought in the butterfly," was his unspoken comment.

She seemed to read his thoughts, for she added quietly:

"A great deal can be learned in a twelve month where one is an earnest scholar."

She had certainly proven the correctness of her words. To Dr. Norton's amazement, her skill in preparing the sufferer for the operation as far surpassed that of the hired nurse as her native intelligence did. He had often been annoyed by the silly and ineffective interference of those regular society ladies' bountiful help, who persist in treating sick people and those in extreme poverty as if they were a species of incapable children to be cajoled and smothered by meaningless words, and not human beings like themselves, open to reason and capable of distinguishing real help from affected small talk. How different were Barbara's ministrations! It was evident she had grown to love the work she had begun as a mental discipline, and to have forgotten its painful features in the joy of serving and aiding those who suffered.

It was well that Dr. Norton's skill in surgery was so great that even his deep emotion could not baffle its success. The operation was completed satisfactorily and when everything that could remind the poor girl of what she had passed through was removed, and she was aroused again to consciousness and saw Barbara's gentle face bending hopefully over her, she exclaimed:

"O, dear, lady, I know'd it would be just right if you was by be, and now I feel as if I only need to thank the Lord and get well again."

"You are an admirable surgeon's assistant," Dr. Norton said in a low tone. "You insure the success of this work."

Again the warm red blush dyed her pale cheeks, she dropped her beautiful eyes, but her voice failed her, she could not answer, or she felt too much.

An hour later Dr. Norton, having made the rounds of his new sphere of action in company with his assistants, parted from them to see how Kitty, the factory girl, was progressing.

Miss Roy was still beside her, and reported that her patient was doing admirably.

"Have you a list of directions for the night, doctor?" Barbara asked, as they moved a little aside from the couch.

"What has she been taking as an anodyne?" Norton asked in return.

Barbara felt in her apron pocket, and, after rummaging a moment, she handed him an envelope.

"It is inside that, on a card, I think," she said, "you will find it all explained."

He opened the packet and saw his own photograph, cut from some medical journal. A very handsome one it was, as one could see at a glance. The instant the picture passed out of her hand into that of the original, Miss Barbara Roy saw her mistake. She saw that the secret of her life was told, and but for the strongest effort of will she had ever made, she would have sunk powerless at the surgeon's feet. As it was she uttered a low, pitiful cry, and clasped her hands hopelessly.

"Barbara—Miss Roy—my dear cousin," cried Allan, quite beside himself at the possibility before him, as he drew her into the nearest alcove and caught her hand in his, "pray tell me if I am frantic to think—to hope—that you care for my picture or me; that my life devoted to you could awaken one thought for me in return. Oh, Barbara, if you could know or I could tell how long, how tenderly, hopelessly, I have loved you——"

"And yet only one year ago to-day you sent me that picture of myself, at the same time directing me to go to a dying girl and learn what a useless creature I was——"

"I!" cried Allan, "It must have been a dream," for he had quite forgotten poor Laura Bell and the note of St. Valentine's day.

"No dream, Allan," said Barbara, and she gave him a look of gratitude through her tears that made her heart throb with joy. "No, it was for me a most blessed reality, though I shall never forget the shock I felt to see poor Laura, to hear from her faded life how wretchedly wasted my life was, and how Heaven would require an account of my miserable squandered abilities. From that moment I tried to change, and when I faltered in in the way (at first some of the duties I tried seemed revolting) I looked at your bubble valentine, and thought of the selfish idle picture there——"

Allan took it from her, and gazed for the first time on Bob Trelawney's handiwork. Then he looked at his own note written by mistake on the other side. The expression of his bewildered face explained the error, and they laughed together. Then Allan glanced at his own picture and laughed again.

"Barbara," said he, "we have exchanged valentines, for to-day is the 14th of February. Shall it be for life?"

If ever words were full of pleading love those five overflowed with it. Her answer was quite as tender, though given with her old arch smile.

"You said I would make a good surgeon's assistant, and I am willing to try."

It is a mistake to ask a precocious child to show off before company. A gentleman who was dining with his family at a friend's table, where a number of invited guests were present, had a bright little daughter, who as soon as the host had asked grace said: "That's a pretty grace, but that isn't the way my papa says it." "And how does your papa say it?" asked the host, expecting to hear one of the bright replies for which the child was famous, while the rest of the guests echoed, "Yes, tell us how your papa says grace?" The unhappy father could not reach her, and she said, sweetly: "Why, when he comes to dinner he looks at mamma, and then says "Well this is a h—l of a meal to set before a white man!"

Mothers Don't Know.

How many children are punished for being uncouth, willful and indifferent to instructions or rewards, simply because they are out of health. An intelligent lady said of a child of this kind: "Mothers should know that if they would give the little ones moderate doses of Hop Bitters for two or three weeks, the children would be all a parent could desire."

One of the prettiest girls in Boston has discarded an American lover and engaged herself to an Englishman. This fact has not been brought to the attention of the tariff commission, we believe.

A Few Hints About Horses.

Give horses salt frequently.

Road horses should have their front feet stuffed with flaxseed twice a weak.

When light shoes are needed particularly hind ones, have them made of cast steel.

Don't hook your horse to the sleigh the same at to your wagon, but give him more trace.

Keturning from an afternoon drive, let your horses cool off before entering the stable.

Horses wearing boots should have them loosened while under the shed at the road house.

If your horse should pull on one line or throw his head up and down fight and pull on the bit, have his mouth and teeth examined.

The hand pieces of driving reins frequently become smooth from use, causing the hands to shift. In such cases rub the lines with powdered rosin.

If you wish to drive your horse with an open bridle, have him tied with one before putting him to your top wagon, otherwise he might get away from you.

When horses overreach lengthen the hind shoes; when they hit the front of the hind feet have the toe of the front shoes made narrow and concaved on the inside.

Some horses in trotting, in putting their hind feet to the ground strike principally on the toe. Such horses should have their heels lowered, and should wear shoes without heels.

Skunk cabbage is said to be good for heaves, given in teaspoonful doses night and morning. Moisten the hay and grain. Be careful with the diet. Never work a heavy horse on a full stomach.

Steel bits should be kept in a warm place until they are placed in the horse's mouth. Any person can realize the sensation of placing a cold bit in a horse's mouth by first touching it with his own tongue.

An excellent remedy for mange is: Oil of turpentine, one pint; add cautiously two ounces of vitriol, stirring the mixture constantly; then add eight ounces linseed oil, to be rubbed in with a brush twice a day.

If your double team did not work to suit you to-day, one crowding to the pole while the other would pull his head to one side, see that the reins are right, and in hooking them to your wagon to-morrow, put the off horse on the near side.

Tar is one of the most useful article to be kept about a stable. Internally use a teaspoonful night and morning for chronic coughs; externally it is particularly useful in thrush and all diseases or wounds of the foot. Mixed with fish oil it is one of the best remedies for hard or brittle feet.

When heels and toes are required on a horse's shoes, instead of having the shoe turned down for heels, have the heels and toes of cast steel and welded on. The heels should be put on half an inch from end of shoe and placed endwise.

For a horse that "pulls" use the over-check, with strap attached over the nose and under the lower jaw. For an extra hard-mouthed horse use a four-ringed bit. Have a slide-loop on the front of the over-check, so that it can be moved up and down, as may be required. Then have the check-piece and over-check attached to loose rings and the driving lines alone to the large rings.

Be Ready Early.

A season of activity is near at hand. Spring is coming, with its pressing work. Are farmers ready for sowing and planting? Every implement should be provided beforehand, that no time may be wasted in making purchases or repairs after the work should begin. We have known a half-day of plowing to be lost because the whiffletrees were not at hand. Some farmers start out with their spring plowing without a single plow point in stock, and when one is needed, the team is taken from the field and driven to the store. Such a loss of time is a serious matter, and should be thoughtfully guarded against by ample provision of all such articles of the farm. It is a poor time to mend a harrow when it should be at work in the field.

We do not favor that economy—if it may be so called—that relies upon the neighbors for many of the tools of the farm. There are certain farm implements that may be owned in partnership, as a roller or reaper, but the constant borrowing of rakes, forks, etc, is not a wise and economical practice. Be provided with all these essential farm tools, and have them in good order, and at hand when the time arrives for using them.

Now is the time to look to these matters, and make all needed preparations for the busy days that will soon be here. In the peace of winter prepare for the war of spring.—*American Agriculturist.*

An Honest Boy.

In a country school a large class were standing to spell. In the lesson there was a very hard word. I put the word to the scholar at the head, and he missed it; I passed it to the next, and the next, and so on thro' the whole class, till it came to the last scholar, the smallest of the class, and he spelled it right, at least I understood him so, and so he went to the head, above seventeen boys and girls, all older than himself. I then turned round and wrote the word on the blackboard, so that they all might see how it was spelled, and learn it better. But no sooner had I written it than the little boy at the head cried out: "O! I didn't spell it so, Miss Wilson; I said e, instead of i." And he went back to the foot on his own accord, quicker than he had gone to the head. Was not he an honest boy? I should always have thought he spelled it right if he had not told me, but he was too honest to take any credit that did not belong to him.

A Muscatine school boy has gone insane from sitting up nights trying to find the streams mentioned in the river and harbor bill.

How to Swim.

A writer in *Knowledge* gives these directions:

The swimmer is supposed to be simply balancing himsel in the water when he prepares to try the movements now to be described. Placing the hands together close to the breast, with the wrists touching the collar bones, or nearly so, the palms downward, and in horizontal plane with the closed fingers, the swimmer launches his arms forward to their full reach in front of him, still keeping his hands together. While he is doing this, he kicks his legs out backward to their full extent and so as to throw the feet as far apart as possible. Of these movements only the latter is propulsive. The former merely brings the arms to the right position for their backward propulsive stroke.

But though the legs and feet being kicked out backward produce a propulsive effect, especially if the feet are well planted, as it were, against the water during their backward sweep, yet it is not in this motion that the legs do the most effective part of their propelling work. The arms are now to be carried backward with a powerful sweep, the hands being held in a slightly cup shaped form, and the stroke being taken with just so much downward movement, and no more, as is necessary to counteract the tendency of the head to sink when the support of the hands is removed. While the hands are thus brought toward the lips, the legs are to be brought forcibly together, like the legs of a pair of shears when we close it. It is in this movement that the legs produce their greatest propulsive effect, an effect which many who think they know how to swim entirely lose, simply kicking their legs straight out backward, and then drawing them up under them for the next stroke. This drawing up of the legs under the abdomen must only be begun when the legs have been forcibly brought together, both perfectly rigid till they are in contact.

The closing movement of the legs is completed while the arms are doing their backward stroke. The legs are then drawn up under the stomach, the feet being bent back as when we stand on tiptoe, while the hands are brought to their first position by passing from the hips to the chest, and palm and fingers as it were gliding over the body. Then the movements described are repe