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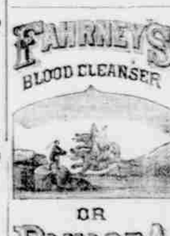

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### GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD MORROW

The fires are all burned out, the lamps are low,
The guests are gone, the cups are drained and dry.
Here, then, was somewhat once of revelry;
But now no more at all the fires shall glow
Nor song be heard, nor laughter, nor wine flow.
Chill is the air; gray gleams the wintry sky;
Through lifeless boughs drear winds begin to sigh.
'Tis time, my heart, for us to rise and go
Up the steep stair, till the dark room we gain
Where sleep awaits us, brooding by that bed
On which who lies forgets all joy and pain.
Nor weeps in dreams for some sweet thing long fled.
'Tis cold and lonely now; set wide the door;
Good-morrow, heart, and rest thee evermore.

—Philip Bourke Marston, in *Harper's Magazine for October.*

### THE COMEDY OF A STRAW HAT.

VIRGINIA W. JOHNSTON.

Barbara Williams inspected her hat meditatively, and turned it around, poised on her left hand. Spring had come, and flowers had not only bloomed in every garden, glorified the market place, and formed bowers of fragrance about the corners of old pallaces, but adorned the heads of all woman kind.

Barbara Williams was no longer young, and even cherished an intention of assuming the black and noiseless garments of the German Protestant Sisterhood a few years later. In the meantime it was spring, and her Paris hat had done good service for three years.

She was a calm and patient woman, with a slight figure, a pale, thin face, delicately featured, chestnut hair meekly smoothed on either temple, and brown eyes. This tranquil face was very attractive. Seen in a crowd, impassive and nun like in its repose, an Anglo-Saxon would have affirmed:

"The face of a woman who has overcome the world;" the more subtle Italian perception would have decided, in turn, "A Madonna in expression.'

The hat was made of black straw, rolled on one side in a graceful curve, and trimmed with ostrich feathers. This modest and serviceable head covering possessed additionally the harmony of French art in the droop of the plumes and the adjustment of the satin knot. It was not the true poetical bonnet of the French modiste, the airy fabric of lace and delicate tints evolved as an effort of genius to suit some beauty of the world. The hat of Barbara Williams belonged instead to the class made by wholesale for strangers, and was as likely to be worn by an English woman of fifty as an American girl of sixteen.

'They say a Paris hat always looks well, no matter how many seasons old,' said Barbara, still turning the treasure on her left hand. "I do wonder if this one might not be done over, though, and a bunch of lilacs or violets added to a great advantage?'

'Of course,' said Pet, glancing up from her drawing, and transferring some of the crayon adhering to her own fair countenance.

'Hats have poke fronts this year,' added Marion, who was pounding a chromatic scale on the piano.

'Yes, they are more poky than ever,' said Pet.

Barbara Williams sighed

"That is the way of the world," she reasoned. 'Nothing stands still. If hats are comfortably turned up, they should turn down. Now, I might take this one to a milliner, and have a sort of gutter of straw built on the brim, and, re-trimmed, and be ready for church next Sunday in fresh spring finery, all at the expense of a few francs.'

'You are such a dear, economical body,' exclaimed Pet, laughing.

'My dear, I have been as poor as a crow all my life, and poverty is the best of schools in which to learn lessons of economy,' replied Barbara, sedately.

Marion gazed at the musical score before her, and said, after a short pause:

'I wish you were rich.'

'Thank you, my child. The wish is as improbable as that I should meet a troubadour on our stairway prepared to offer me his hand and fortune in preference to all pretty young girls.'

Barbara spoke with a soft gayety, and taking the scissors from her work basket soon reduced the trimmings of the hat to an indistinguishable heap.

'The deed is done,' she proclaimed, holding up the rusty and battered structure thus robbed of all adornment.

As for Marion, she glanced tenderly at the engagement ring on her own finger. Was not her sailor lover, now doing duty on board a man of war in the Chinese seas, coming home next year? What were the troubadours of a Florentine palace to her?

The trio occupied a small apartment up under the roof of a great mansion in the city of Flowers, gained by an interminable flight of stone steps, and furnished by an ingratiating Italian landlord with chairs, tables and bedsteads apparently joined together by means of glue, so readily did these articles fall apart on the slightest application of external pressure. Barbara Williams was taking charge of the two Poppleton girls in Europe. Barbara was always taking charge of somebody, such was her vocation, as the poor relation of a wealthy family, and therefore accorded irreproachable credentials. The Poppleton girls wished to study the arts at Florence, and would enjoy their winter in the beautiful city more in retrospection than in the reality, if the truth be told. Pet had copied a head by Titian in the Pitti Gallery, and acquired chilblains as a result. Marion pursued music with ardor, and conscientiously attended classical lectures in sombre halls of colleges and dismantled convents.

All these avocations were more agreeable to write home about than to enjoy at the time. For the rest, young, and full of warmest instincts of enthusiasm, they felt themselves to be outside any circle of gay life about them, and were doubly homesick in consequence.

Spring floated up to Barbara Williams. At the open window, from the wealth of roses in the Count's garden, spring beamed down on her from the pure Italian sky, bending to a horizon of hills, steeped in the delicate haze of early heat. Beyond the palace garden flowed the Arno, spanned by the bridge, and on the opposite bank rose the Uffizi buildings, and that matchless cluster of towers, the Badia, the shaft of the Palazza Vecchio, Glotto's Campanile, with the purple dome of the cathedral behind, while Flesole rose on her cone of hill in the background.

She wrapped the straw hat in a neat brown paper and went out, descending swiftly the stone steps. The first floor, the piano nobile, of the Italian palazzo, was occupied by a foreign gentleman of wealth and leisure. The Count and Countess, fallen on evil days of exhorbitant taxation and a new railway system which drains Italy even of eggs, wherewith to make plum puddings the more for London or Manchester, dwelt on the ground floor. The Countess abated nothing of her splendor. She drove out daily in gorgeous carriages; her liveries were always fresh; her toilets were varied and startling with a preponderance of color. She excluded tenants from the garden by means of an iron gate in the vestibule surmounted by a gilded coronet. The Count was understood not to frequent the club any more of an evening when play is apt to run high.

A haughty, somewhat stormy browed lady, she now swept out of the door, attended by a footman clad in a blue coat with red facings, and a yellow waistcoat, like that of a wasp. She made a slight inclination of the head to genteel Barbara Williams, and passed on. The Countess was a woman of the world, but how could she divine that Barbara was so soon to be a rival? The latter went forth on her errand on foot, while the Countess rolled away in her coupe. As it happened, the mind of each lady was intent on a spring hat, with this notable difference; the countess was prepared to add such a trifle to the very long bill run up at her milliner's, while Barbara was equally ready to pay on the spot for all purchases with the promptness which has so truly endeared the American to the foreign shop keepers.

In the first little square Barbara was caught in the eddy of a popular demonstration, where musical bands brayed, bankers waved, and the guilds of cab drivers, banners, shoemakers or cooks met to form a procession. She paused a moment near the stand of a vender of cooling drinks, his little cart gay with red cloth hangings and burnished cans. A small boy, with an expression of owlish precocity, dropped the copper coins received in payment into a great earthen dish used to rinse glasses, thus adapting it as a till. Then Barbara was pursued by various flower merchants, their baskets freighted with pink hyacinths, tulips, and great plumes of white lilacs.

She crossed the bridge, and gained the narrow, dark little street of the Porta Rosa, redolent of cheese, ham and sausages. Here the shop windows were already full of Fiesole straw work and garlands of artificial flowers. In one of these shrines of the milliner's art, Barbara deposited her much worn Paris hat. A group of young women, handsome, black eyed, and ingratiating, with hair banged across the brow, and much Spanish lace deposited about the neck, received the hat, and promised refreshment to the dusty crown and the requisite poke brim for the modest sum of three francs.

'I wish no trimmings,' said Barbara, in her best Italian. 'Can you let me have the hat on next Thursday?'

'Oh, yes, madam, without fail,' replied the forewoman, showing all her white teeth in a very brilliant smile.

Thursday came, and with it no hat. Barbara sought the little dark shop and the door of the recreant modiste. All the young women with banged hair bowed, and reassured her in caressing tones. The hat was not finished. Friday night it would be sent. Friday dawned and passed, with no hat. Barbara's face lengthened perceptibly. Petty vexations and commonplace cares had ever been the brambles that caught this woman's garments, and yet a courageous spirit had kept her brow unfurrowed.

The two Poppleton girls were already tying the azure bows of adorable little chip bonnets sent from Paris by the care of their fond mamma.

Saturday morning found Barbara hastening once more to the shop. Ah, how much wiser to have left her Paris hat untouched. The forewoman beat a hasty retreat, and left the duty of making excuses to another. All the shop girls bore evidence of late hours at ball or theatre in their heavy eyes, pallor, and sullen petulance of manner. A pressure of work had delayed Barbara's elongated brim. She should have it, positively, on Saturday night.

'My poor hat is lost,' she sighed, mournfully, gazing at the heap of trimmings. 'I shall never see it again. They have burned it up, or cut in two pieces, past mending. Of course the creatures will always lie about the matter.'

A dazzling surprise was in store for Barbara. At ten o'clock in the evening the maid of all work, Assunta, came bustling into the room, where Barbara was reading aloud the 'Makers of Florence' to her charges. A milliner's boy appeared behind Assunta, with a wooden box slung over his shoulder by means of a strap. Swiftest explanations tripped from the tongue of the deeply sympathetic Assunta. She had espied the boy afar off, and waylaid him in the vestibule below, in order that there might be no mistake. The boy left a small box and departed. A chorus of feminine exclamations greeted the raising of the lid. Within was Barbara's straw hat, but how recognize it under the transforming wand of a fairy? The hat was lined with fluted satin of a peachy tint; the crown was wreathed with blue feathers, shading from turquois to rose pink, while rich lace, black and white, was cunningly disposed in a drapery behind. Such was the elegant head covering revealed to Barbara's astonished eyes.

'I told them not to trim the hat,' she said, ruefully.

'Did you ever hear the wise adage quoted of being penny wise and pound foolish?' inquired the wicked Pet. 'Where is your fine economy now, Miss Williams?'

'Nonsense! In for a penny, in for a pound, suits better the nineteenth century,' said Marion. 'Do try it on.'

Accordingly, Barbara put on the hat, which rendered her charming, for the poke brim, lined with the rosy satin, formed a sort of wheel about her delicate face, and transformed it with a youthful freshness. Sunday was a cloudless day, but Barbara had made up her mind during the night not to yield to temptation.

'I shall take back the hat to-morrow morning,' she said, with firmness. 'The trimmings will render it frightfully expensive. How sly an Italian to put on all those feathers?'

'Pray keep it,' cried Pet, 'it is so becoming.'

'Yes, and it may not be too dear,' added Marion. 'At least wear the hat to-day, and you can take the entire week for judicious compromises with the milliner.'

Barbara listened to the voice of the charmer. She put on the exquisite spring hat, and accompanied the two Poppleton girls, looking as fresh as rosebuds in their pearl gray dresses, tiny mantles, and the chip bonnets, to one of the American churches.

Surely many glances strayed to Barbara during the service—feminine eyes with the anxiety of gleaning a new idea in fashions, and masculine eyes with a pleasant admiration. A becoming tint warmed her cheeks, and a dimple actually asserted itself at the corner of her mouth. 'The idea of a woman of my age being tricked out in such showy finery!' she thought, guiltily, and yet with an exhilarating sensation of excitement.

The tenant of the first floor, emerging from his door, met the trio on the stairs, Barbara resplendent in pink and blue, and the cherubic faces of the girls peeping over her shoulders.

He was a grave and silent man, and wore a white silk handkerchief folded carefully about his throat, like the King of Wurtemburg. He bowed to the ladies with a lingering glance at the group, and went down stairs.

'Strange that people may live in these apartment houses for years without ever knowing each other!' mused Barbara.

'Who is he?' whispered Marion.

'I know all about him,' proclaimed Pet. 'He is a learned man from Scandinavia, and his name is Mr. Oscar Christianson. He lives in Italy because he has no lungs—or something. He is rich and I wish he would show us such an Aladdin's palace as his apartment, for the bric a brac merchants bring him pictures, majolica, Venetian brass work, and bits of old damask almost every day.'

The Countess had awakened about the time these tenants returned from church, for she was too true a Florentine to retire before two or three o'clock in the morning. Propped up in the great state bed, with hangings of amber satin, she sipped her coffee, while pleasant thoughts of the afternoon drive in the Cassine in a new toilette filled her mind. The Milanese maid, Marguerite, hovered about the waking lady. If no beau is a hero to his valet, what must madame the Countess have been to her Abigail at this early hour?

'Has my new hat been sent home?' she demanded abruptly.

Marguerite vanished, and returned with a hat-box.

'This came at half-past ten o'clock last evening, Signora Contessa, and Pietro received it from the boy,' she said, glibly placing the box on the bed.

The cover removed, an untrimmed straw hat was disclosed, with a poke brim for a different braid, and indifferently sewed, at the best.

'Misericordia!' cried Marguerite, clasping her hands tragically.

How the black eyes of the Countess flashed, while a dark red flush of anger suffused her swarthy countenance—for she was a very plain woman.

'What does it mean?' she exclaimed. 'Is it a trick?'

She flung the despised black hat across the room, and summoned the bewildered Pietro.

'Go to Madame Millefleurs and ask if she wishes to insult me. Stay, take this thing, this object, back to her, and tell her I will never enter her shop again. I withdraw my custom. I will warn my friends. This fool's prank shall prove her ruin.'

The Countess grew hoarse with rage, the veins in her throat swelled like cords, and she made a gesture as if about to crush the unfortunate milliner in her nervous fingers. She loved dress above everything else in this world, and she beheld herself hatless on the fashionable drive of the afternoon. Bitter disappointment swelled her heart.

Pietro, the groom of the yellow waistcoat resembling a wasp's, was respectful but practical. He argued the matter with all the familiarity surprising to a foreigner in the intercourse of great Italians with their servants, which so readily assumes the channel of easy gossip, without stiffness on one side, or insolence on the other. Shops are closed on Sunday, and it would be useless to assail the portal of Madame Millefleurs before Monday morning. The culpable milliner must be left unquestioned for another twelve hours at least.

At five o'clock Barbara Williams and her maidens joined the throng wending their way toward the cascine to enjoy the fresh foliage, velvet turf of the meadows, the music, and brilliant spectacle of superb equipages passing in a file, or pausing in groups in the piazza—a true open-air drawing-room. In this procession of vehicles our trio, in a modest street cab, crossed the dashing steeds of the Countess, and the lady, attired in crimson and yellow lace-flounces, assuredly gave Barbara a sombre glance in passing. Barbara was flaunting in the lovely pink and blue head gear, while the Countess, with rage in her soul, was condemned to a reception bonnet of the past winter season. Could swift suspicion have winged that sharp scrutiny on the part of the noble lady? No; she did not even recognize the tenant of the third floor of her plazzo. How much wilder the conjecture, then, that Barbara Williams, most raspectable of chaperon, was wearing her hat on that spring Sunday! Such was the astounding truth. The maid of the third floor, Assunta, had waylaid the boy bringing the hat of the Countess, while the bearer of Barbara's straw had left his box on the ground-floor, as no other address save the house had been impressed on his youthful mind.

Monday morning, Pietro, the groom, hastened to Madame Millefleurs, and spread consternation through that establishment by presenting Barbara's poke bonnet. Madame refused to receive the object, and returned with Pietro to the palace, scolding the boy *en route.*

'Was it a charming production quite worthy of Madame Millefleur's talents, the color pink and blue?" inquired the Count, cigar in mouth, a Turkish fez on his head, a velvet morning coat on his back, and the unlimited idleness of a noble gentleman always at his disposal.

'Yes, yes, signore,' assented the poor milliner, eagerly.

'Then I think, one of the foreign ladies of the apartment above stairs wore it out yesterday,' said the Count with a mocking smile. 'A very pretty woman.'

'My hat!' shrieked the Countess, and stamped her foot on the ground. 'That comes of renting the palace.'

'We must have patience,' observed the Count, using a favorite formula of his nation, and flecking the ashes from his cigar. Indeed the rent of the apartments above-stairs was very carefully consigned to his own aristocratic pocket.

'You should insert in your contract that my hats are to be first worn by the lodgere," stormed the lady, continuing to pat the gravel with her foot, as she was seated in the garden, with a little crowd of menials crowded around her headed by the crestfallen milliner.

Madame Millefleurs, escorted by Pietro and the errand boy, wended their way up stairs. Assunta opened the door.

'I gave her the box on Saturday night,' proclaimed the errand boy.

Four pairs of Italian eyes scanned each other, ready to impute the worst possible motives with the best graces in the world. Concealment was no longer possible.

In the meanwhile Barbara had sought the street of the Porta Rosa to gently reproach her milliner for the perfidy of retrimming the Paris hat.

'Madame is satisfied?' inquired the polite forewoman.

"The hat is very pretty, but I did not order you to put on black and white lace and satin.'

All the young women with banged hair gathered about Barbara and stared at her.

'Madame's hat was untrimmed,' remarked the forewoman at length, with benevolent tolerance of foreign tongues.

'Of course it was,' assented Barbara, a trifle testily, and then relented. 'Well, what do you charge, after all?'

'Three francs,' said the forewoman, simply.

'Three francs!' repeated Barbara, with sudden horror.

'Oh, if I promised the alterations for two and a half—'

'Two francs and a half!' echoed Barbara wildly.

The youngest girl, sewing in the darkest nook of the shop, dropped her task and came forward to inspect this customer as an object worthy an ardent curiosity. Was she mad? Was she only odd, like all *forestieri?*

'The hat I received was beautifully trimmed,' faltered Barbara. 'I have kept and worn it. Does it belong to somebody else?'

Sanctissima Maria!' ejaculated the forewoman.

'Sanctissima Maria!' cried all the girls in chorus.

The milliner promised to question the errand boy, and have the missing article at once produced. Barbara returned home just in time to confront Madame Millefleurs and realize in the modiste's cold politeness the doubly awful truth that she had worn the spring hat of the Countess, and the noble lady was aware of the fact. The Poppletons burst into irrepressible laughter when the door closed.

'The Bargello may be re-opened for you. Perhaps you will be arrested and cast into a dungeon,' giggled Pet.

'It is as good as a play,' cried Marion. 'Do you recall Goldini's fondness for reproducing houses in sections on the stage? Our palace, thus set to comedy, would show Miss Barbara Williams on the third floor arrayed like Solomon in all his glory for church, while the Countess waited below for her new spring bonnet.'

'What would the Scandinavian gentleman be doing between, then?' demanded Barbara, yielding to weak mirth over the situation.

'I don't know,' sharply retorted Marion.

Marion did not know, indeed, not being in receipt of fern seed, and able to slip through the key-hole of Mr. Christianson's abode. The gentleman was pacing his cool and lofty chambers in an Eastern dressing grown and slippers.

'I ordered a new hat on Saturday,' he said to his valet.

'It has just come,' said the valet, and presented a small round hat box.

The philosopher felt a pleasurable interest in a spring hat, from a masculine standpoint. He opened the box, and drew forth the straw bonnet of Barbara Williams.

'The devil!' exclaimed M. Christianson, with a droll grimace. 'Some poor woman will be disappointed if she loses this treasure. Keep it in the vestibule until called for.'

Barbara waited all day, and then the crest-fallen Assunta confessed to have seen a milliner's boy on the stairs, but she had not ventured to meddle with him. Sudden inspiration akin to despair, dawned on Barbara.

'If they have ever found my old hat at all, they have probably bestowed it on the Scandinavian this time,' she said.

She went boldly to the door and was about to pull his bell when M. Christianson emerged in person. Explanations ensued, and Barbara received back the wretched Paris hat which had made her so much trouble, and yet was an instrument of destiny.

'I had it made over,' she said, encouraged by his gentle smile. 'The economy has cost me dear.'

M. Christianson had a large, massive head and humorous blue eyes beneath shaggy brows.

'It is nothing,' he said, reassuringly. 'I owe the Count a visit, and I will explain all to him.'

'If you kindly would,' sighed the usually calm Barbara, while a deep blush of mortification suffused her cheek.

She had a glimpse of stately rooms adorned with tapestries and Persian hangings—the Aladdin's Palace of which Pet spoke, and then withdrew, the recovered bandbox under her arm. She was ignorant that her presence had penetrated those cold, shrouded chambers like a ray of sunshine. The invalid philosopher had fallen in love with Barbara Williams' placid face as he beheld it framed in that pink satin lining of the Countess's hat. That evening he called, and presented the Count's flowery compliments. He admired Pet's drawing's and Marion's music, and exacted of Bertha a quotation from Longfellow for an essay he was contributing to a Scandinavian periodical.

'He's the most charming old gentleman I ever met,' said Marion, with enthusiasm, after he had gone.

'A man of culture,' added Barbara, with the appreciation of maturity.

Invitations to the Aladdin,s Palace followed. Barbara and the girls spent delightful hours amidst the art treasures of their neighbor's apartment. What more natural than that Pet should copy the design on the panel of a Renaissance cabinet in the grand salle of M. Christianson, with Barbara as chaperon? What more natural than that the lonely man should bring a roll of his favorite music for Marion to play of an evening? He described the land of the midnight sun to these new friends in faultless English, and professed a warm interest in the new world in return. Yes, M. Christianson had every gift of fortune save those of health and happiness. He found a solace of tranquil enjoyment in the shabby little salon on the third floor.

There came a time when he took the party to a villa at the environs, traversing a portion of the blooming Val d'Arno to gain the spot. When they returned, in the June twilight, the Poppleton girls found a cable dispatch summoning them home.

'You must come with us,' cried Pet, embracing Barbara. 'When Marion is married I intend to be a strong-minded old maid, too, and we will live together.'

'Thank you, my dear. I fear I cannot accompany you,' said Barbara, her tender face beautified by some emotion.

'Why?' cried the girls, in a breath.

'Mr. Christianson has just asked me to marrry him.'

'Then you did meet a troubadour on the stairs, after all,' said Marion, with the sympathy of a bride elect.

Pet clapped her hands. 'Depend upon it, the hat of the Countess did it all,' she laughed gleefully.

Barbara married Oscar Christianson, and they dwelt happily in the state apartment of the fine old palace. Viewing life as an apartment house, what a difference the *etage* makes in social amenities! The Countess kisses Madame Christianson on both cheeks when they meet, but her black eyes instinctively revert to the head covering worn by the American lady at the time. She would not be human otherwise.

For the rest, M. Christianson shows a preference for delicately tinted satins in the attire of his nun-like wife, and especially for rose