

# The Democrat.

BY HAWLEY & CRUSER.

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## HOME-COMING.

When brothers leave the old hearthstone  
And go, each one, a separate way,  
We think, as we go on alone  
Along our pathway, day by day,  
Of olden scenes and faces dear,  
Of voices that we miss so much,  
And memory brings the absent near,  
Until we almost feel the touch  
Of loving hands, and hear, once more,  
The dear old voices ringing out,  
As in the happy time of yore,  
Ere life had caught a shade of doubt.

If you should place against your ear  
The shell you plundered from the sea,  
Down in its hidden heart you'd hear  
A low and tender melody,  
A murmur of the restless tide,  
A yearning, born of memory,  
And, though its longings be denied,  
The shell keeps singing of the sea,  
And sometimes when old memories throng,  
Like ghosts, the chambers of our soul,  
We feel the yearning, deep and strong,  
A longing we cannot control,  
To lay our cares and business by  
To seek the old, familiar ways,  
And cross home's threshold, and sit down  
With comrades of our earlier days.

For, though our paths are sundered wide,  
We feel that we are brothers yet,  
And by-and-by we turn aside,  
From hurrying care and worldly fret,  
And each one wanders back to meet  
His brother by the hearth of home;  
I think the meeting is more sweet  
Because so far and wide we roam.  
We cross the lengthening bridge of years,  
Meet outstretched hands and faces true,  
The slight eloquence of tears  
Speaks welcome that no words can do.

But ah, the meetings hold regret!  
The sad, sad story, often told,  
Of hands that ours have often met,  
Close folded under churchyard mould,  
That eyes that smile into our own,  
Closed in the dreamless sleep of God,  
A sweeter rest was never known  
Than theirs, beneath the grave's white sod.  
A tender thought for them to-night,  
A tribute tear from memory;  
Beneath their covering of white  
Sweet may their dreamless slumber be.

## LILIES OF THE VALLEY.

BY CORA C. JENNINGS.

THEY made a very pretty picture, those two stood there in the grove at the left of Thornton House. The sun was shedding its last rays over field and mountain; it brightened and made the scene wonderfully beautiful. A calm, gentle wind softly stirred the dense growth of trees and lifted the hair from the pure forehead of the girl. She looked sweet, and was winningly lovely as she stood there, playing with the lilies she held in her hand. She was talking earnestly and passionately ever and anon, glancing up into his face. Ah! now the man's face darkened as he said,—

"Then you do not love me, Elsie or you could never talk to me thus. Darling do not make me leave you. I have loved you so dearly! O Elsie! is this all?"

He had taken her hands in his and drawn her closer to him, and she let him do so. Standing there before him she acknowledged to herself that she had said, while the tears started to her brown eyes, and her voice trembled,—

"I do not know that is all; that is for you to say. You call me cruel, but you do not know how cruel it seems to my own heart. O Harry, do not doubt me!"

The tears fell now, and he still held her hands, though she struggled to free herself.

"And why should I not doubt your love for me?" he said. "You have let me love you, and said that you returned that love, and yet, when I ask you to be my wife, you say, 'Oh, no, no' or, 'Yes Harry, if you will wait three years for me!'"

But she stopped him there.

"And you know why, Harry; you well know the good and sufficient reason I have for this, and in your own heart you own I am right. Speak to me, please; do you not?"

There was bitter scorn in his tone as he answered,—

"Right? Yes, oh, yes—I suppose so! Right for me, when I love you so fondly, to wait for you until your return from Europe, where you expect to stay three years! All this because I broke a promise, made long ago, but faithfully kept until last night, and then I—"

"Yes, I know. Say no more, Harry. You broke that promise, and shamed your manhood. You knew all the time what the consequences would be, and now I tell you, while I love you—oh, so dearly!—that if you will make a new promise I will also promise, as before, to be your wife in not quite so long a time as three years, dear, but nearly. Surely if I can trust you all that time you can trust me. And it will only be proving our love for each other, will it not, Harry?"

me, to keep me from temptation. Let it be so, Elsie! Take back all you have said, and prove to me your love by showing your trust."

His face was close to hers, his arms were around her, and she loved him, oh, so well! He could never know how her heart ached; she longed to tell him she would do as he wished, but she dared not. Oh, it was indeed very, very hard! He drew the beautiful head to his bosom.

"Elsie, tell me you will let me love and care for you darling! I want you!"

She lay upon his breast and sobbed, the tears dropping one by one on the lilies she still held in her hand. Her lips trembled so that she could not speak if she would. He bent his face to hers, pressed one long, lingering kiss on her white lips, and whispered, as he looked, with his beautiful eyes, lovingly, tenderly into hers—

"Tell me darling."

The girl threw both her arms around his neck, and looked straight into his face.

"Harry, do not tempt me any more or you will kill me! I love you and you know it well, and you are cruel, cruel, to urge me thus when you know it almost breaks my heart to leave you. Harry, forgive me! It is for both our sakes—Pity and love me still when I say that it must be as I have said, or not at all!"

Gently, but firmly, he undid the hands clasped so tightly about his neck, divided the lilies she held in her hand, thrust part of them into his inner coat pocket and handed her the others. Silently he offered her his arm, and all the way back to the house not a word was spoken. At last, when they had reached the house, he offered her his hand, and said, with his face strangely white and still,—

"Elsie, it is not at all. Good-by."

So he left her standing there, bewildered and miserable. She went up the steps, softly entered the wide, cool hall, crept up the stairs to her own room, and threw herself in utter abandonment upon the bed; she lay there, pressing both hands wildly over her throbbing temples, and whispered, over and over again, to herself,—

"It is not at all—it is not at all!"

She lay in this way for hours, until her hand accidentally touched the cool, fading lilies; then the long imprisoned tears gushed forth, and she buried her face in the pillows, and sobbed and cried as if her heart would break. So the long night wore at last, away. With the early morning sun she arose, went to the window, and looked out; but the beautiful scene, the carol of the birds, had no power to bring joy to her heart, for she felt that now happiness would ever be a stranger to her.

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Harry Weston was tired of the bustling, hurrying crowd—tired even of the many friendly greetings he received; so, as the city hall struck six, he turned his steps toward the upper and more quiet part of Broadway. He was walking moodily along, thinking, not lovingly; not kindly of Elsie Thornton; but bitterly, angrily, and vowing never to see her again.

Is the reader inclined to think he did not love her—was not worthy of the great love she had for him? He was one of those incomprehensible beings about whom—who was it that said, "Every being is sufficient unto himself?" He had an indomitable will, was passionate, often reckless, and yet he more often than otherwise held his passions under his firm, controlling will, and generally was the courteous, high-toned gentleman. Hand some, accomplished and wealthy, he had in his life, made many firm, fast friends—some of whom, I am sorry to say, were indeed fast; for Harry's will, although so strong and powerful, was, as often is the case with such men, not pure enough to rise above that so-called, "manly" habit of taking a social glass, now and then, with a friend. Will men ever know how repelling such men are to those who have good sense enough to see it? The victim knows it in his heart; while he urges that "once in a while" a drink does not do any harm, he knows, I say, that it does.

Harry had not proceeded far in his walk before a hand grasped his own, and a ringing voice roused him from the unpleasant thought he was cherishing.

"Walking in your sleep, old fellow? You do look like a ghost, that is a fact."

Harry wrung the hand he still held in his own, and looking into the handsome, laughing face of his friend, Max Norton, he determined, in his self-will, to throw aside all thought of the past year, and enter again into the old life he was leading before he ever met Elsie Thornton.

So he answered all the questions put to him in an off-hand, laughing manner, and linking his arm in that of his friend, they walked until the gas-lighters were going their rounds. At last they stopped before a brilliantly-lighted restaurant. The two went in, ordered wine and cigars, and talked, smoked and drank until far into the night. Then they parted, each perhaps the worse for the wine they had indulged in.

And so it went on. Night after night

our friend, Harry, returned from his old time resort, "the club," from a friend's private rooms or a ball. Nearly two years had passed since the day Max Norton met our friend in New York, and this time had been spent in a whirl of gaiety and pleasure.

Harry was carelessly walking along one day, watching the careless throng of passers-by when suddenly at his side, a little, piercing voice uttered, plaintively,—"Lilies, sir! Please buy my lilies!"

A heavy frown darkened his face for a moment, then left it white and smooth. He bought a cluster of the lilies, however, and turned away, going directly to his rooms, where he found a letter awaiting him. It was addressed in an unknown hand. Breaking the seal he found it was from Mrs. Thornton—Elsie's mother. Elsie she wrote, was not well—had not been since his departure for the city. Although no such reason had been given, they all knew that her sorrow and trouble was on his (Harry's) account. It cost her a great effort, the lady said, to smother the feelings of pride she had, and write to him thus, but would he not run down to Thorntonville? It might be that Elsie would reconsider the words she had said to him at their parting.

Weston read this letter over twice, a scornful smile curling his lips as he thought how Elsie's beautiful brown eyes would flash did she know this letter had been sent. He would not go; he made up his mind, because it would do no good. He had been, during these two years, what know man, with respect to himself, can be. He held up the lilies in his hand, and looking at them, made a solemn promise—it was to himself, if this time to give up all the friends who were leading him downward, and from henceforth to lead a better, purer life. And he kept that promise for months; but not one thought of going back to Elsie ever entered his mind.

One night he was in the library of a handsome house on L-street, standing at the window, looking out in the beautiful pure moonlight. He was not alone. Belle Norton stood at the window with him. Harry had been introduced to her by her brother, had paid some slight attention to her at first, and after a time was known as her chosen cavalier. Belle was not handsome, neither had she the winning sweetness and grace so characteristic of Elsie Thornton. Elsie was indeed beautiful; tall and slender, with soft, pleading brown eyes, a lovely mouth sweet, winning ways—truly she was as Harry had always thought her altogether lovely. Belle's chief attraction lay in the variety expression of her face. Her hair was a rare shade of brown; she had a petite form, and her eyes were blue, clear, thoughtful and earnest. It was not of her Harry was thinking, but of a night long ago, when he stood at another's side. Ah! he could never love again as he had loved Elsie. Suddenly he started back. What was it that continually came between him and this woman he would make his wife?

"What is it, Weston?" she asked.

"Nothing, Belle," he replied, as he released her to a gentleman who came to claim her hand for a redowa.

Harry went to make his adieux to his host and hostess, then, out in the cool night air, he resolved to go to Thorntonville the next day and try to gain an interview with Elsie. He had inhaled the pure, sweet fragrance of the lilies of the valley which Belle had in her hair, and it had taken him back to the beautiful, happy long ago when he so dearly loved and was loved.

"God pity them both, and pity us all, Who vainly the dreams of youth recall."

It was almost dark, the next day, as the train rushed into the village of Thorntonville. Harry Weston got off at the little station, and with long, impatient strides soon reached Thornton House. At the foot of the steps he looked up.

"O, Heaven!" he cried. "Not this! Spare me this!"

Trembling in every fibre of his frame, he rang the bell. The door was soon opened, and he stood in the wide hall. To the footman he managed to say, pointing to the heavy streamer of crape which fluttered in the wind:

"Who is it?"

The footman did not know him, for he had not been long in the family; but he pitied the man's weakness, and, pointing to a chamber, he said, sadly, for he had loved her:

"Miss Elsie, sir."

Harry looked up almost fiercely now, and asked:

"When was it?"

"Day before yesterday."

"Ah! Does Mrs. Thornton see any one? If so I—"

At that moment the lady herself opened a door at the other end of the hall and came toward them. Traces of sorrow and tears were still on her face. She laid her hand silently in Harry's, which he had impulsively extended, and asked him into the library, which she said was pleasanter to her than any other place now. She treated him coldly, and he knew he deserved it. After a while Mrs. Thornton simply said, pointing to the door across the hall:

"In there. Do you wish to go in?"

He bowed his head in assent and followed her. She opened the door and softly closed it, leaving him alone in the room. With tightly compressed lips he advanced toward the dark silver-mounted casket. Oh, how beautiful! With one mighty effort he contrived himself and gazed down upon the sweet face; the mouth, so winning, so wistful always, was now drawn down and looked so sad and sorrowful. Nevermore would the tender, loving light fill the beautiful brown eyes; never again would the longing, wistful, pleading look enter her eyes, as on that night he parted from her. Oh, no! the long, dark lashes lay upon the pure white cheek. Her hair curled in little rings and fell over the marble forehead. One long, golden curl lay upon her bosom; one little waxen hair held a small bunch of lilies—their dark, rich leaves contrasted beautifully with the whiteness of the lilies and the hand that held them. With a groan she man bent and touched his lips to the still, cold ones.

"Oh, my sweet darling!" he cried. "Why was I so headstrong, so cruel to myself, and to you? Elsie!"

He laid his hand gently over the cold one on her breast, and then the tears came. They fell on the lovely hair; on the lilies in her hand; they fell thickly at first, but soon ceased. There was a hard, dry, choking feeling in his throat. He felt the bitterness of a lost hope; felt as if all the sunshine had indeed gone out of his life, and he wished it might be himself lying there so still and white. He stood there until long, dusky shadows filled the room, then, pressing one more passionate kiss on her lips and brow, left her, thinking, oh, how hopeless!—It might have been!

All night long he paced his room, longing for, yet dreading the morrow. At last the sun arose, clear and bright, giving promise of a beautiful day. That day was a never-to-be-forgotten one, in Harry's memory. After the funeral, when he returned to the sad, lonely house with Mrs. Thornton, she handed him a package which she said Elsie had wished him to have. Harry thanked her, made his adieux to the family, and by dark the same day was back in his own room in New York. Looking the door, and turning on the gas, he seated himself at his desk, and, taking out the package Mrs. Thornton had given him undid the wrappings, and untied a ribbon around a smaller one inside. There was a letter addressed simply to "Harry," and a faded bunch of lilies. The letter ran thus:

"MY DEAR FRIEND—Were it not that I never expected to see you again, I should not write to you now; but it will not be long now before I shall change my home for a brighter purer one, I trust. As I shall never see you again, I want to write and tell you, Harry, that in all these long, lonely, wearisome years I have never for a moment forgotten you or ceased to love you. You left me angrily, I know, but I know your love for me was just the same after the first feelings of passion were over, and that has kept all the bitterness I might have felt out of my heart. I have loved you as few women can love, Harry dear, and we might have been happy had it not been for that one dreadful thing that darkens and ruins the life of so many young men. Dear one, it was not that I loved you less, but more, that I would not consent when you asked me to be your wife. After you were gone I waited and hoped for your return, until at last I had to acknowledge what before I would not do, that woman's love is stronger and more enduring than man's. Harry, they tell me I shall not live much longer now, and after I am gone, they will send for you. If you come before it is too late, will you if you can, kiss me and love your own Elsie for just one moment? I shall know it, dear, and I shall love you and wait for you. I cannot write longer. I am very tired. Good-night, dear; think kindly of me, and often. God bless you, and help you to overcome all and every evil! And now, good-by."

Your still loving Elsie."

Harry buried his face in his hands, and sat there until late into the night, and fell into a deep sleep which lasted till morning. Then he arose and hurried out into the fresh air, for he felt lonely and sad. And the lonely, disconsolate feeling did not leave him. For a year he traveled from place to place, trying, not to forget, but to stifle the feeling of remorse. At the end of the year he went back to New York. On the way to his hotel he met Max Norton. They exchanged greetings, and Max noticing Harry's pale face and troubled manners, Harry noticed a slight coolness on the part of his friend. As they parted Max said:

"You disappeared suddenly and mysteriously, Hal. Belle has been tearful and disconsolate since you left." Then looking over his shoulder he said: "Call up at the house, Weston."

Harry went back to his rooms, resolving to go to Belle Norton that day, tell her all, and ask her to be his wife. He did not love her as he had loved Elsie,

but he liked her better than any one he had ever known. He knew she loved him. Every look of her expressive face told him that. He well knew that he had done very wrong to let her think he loved her, while up to this time he had courted her society merely for his own amusement.

That afternoon he did go to her and ask her to be his wife; and Belle, placing her hands in his, and looking fondly up into his face, promised not to be at all jealous of his thoughts of Elsie, but that she would love her memory, too. She kept her promise, and in after years, when Harry refused to drink with a friend, she knew it was for Elsie's sake more than for hers, and often, in the beautiful June evenings, when he sat looking out into the moon-light, she knew he was thinking then of Elsie. Sometimes she would steal up to him, softly, put her arms around his neck, and, laying her cheek close to his face, whisper lovingly,

"Harry I love you."

"And I love you, darling—my own sweet wife!"

So they were happy in their love, for each other.

With one picture we will leave them. Belle is sitting on a low stool at Harry's feet, resting her arm on his knee, and reading to him. He is, softly, tenderly, stroking her soft, brown hair; it is pleasant and sweet for him to be here. And over there, on the little round table in the corner, where his eyes turn wistfully, ever and anon, there is a little vase of a bunch of lilies of the valley, bought of the little flower-girl who brings them as long as they last—not by Harry's order, but by Belle's.

Deeply buried from human eyes.

## The Lady Soap-Peddler.

You may have noticed her on the street says the St. Louis Republican, passing from one house to another, with a basket on her arm. You may have seen that she is very sprightly, and although somewhat strong of voice and abrupt in manner, that she has a dash of humor, and is, in vulgar parlance, quite up to snuff. You may have observed her bounding into a place as if in the full determination to "bounce everybody" else out of it, and you may also have observed, if you have watched her closely, that when she emerged she has a little more money and a little less soap than when she went in. And although she is a woman, she prosecutes it with such vigor, and in such a novel way that she is unusually successful.

The other day she entered a prominent house on Fourth street. It is not necessary to state what prominent house, except that it is the one where George works. George is a young man who is contemplating matrimony. He is a very nice young man. But he is, at the same time, a very bashful young man. And when she entered and made a straight dash for his desk he colored to the roots of his hair.

"I want to sell you some soap," said she, in such a peculiar loud voice that George colored still more. And the clerks and the lady customers looked at George in surprise.

"I've got some of the nicest soap here that you ever used," she went on dabbing a cake under George's nose to have him smell it.

"I—I don't want any soap, madame," stammered George. "I—I'm very much obliged to you, but I—I really don't want it."

"Oh, yes, you do, I know you do. You wash yourself don't you? You want to keep clean, don't you?"

"Of course you do, and here's the article to do it with. Genuine brown Windsor, three for a quarter, half dozen honey fifty cents. Just think how cheap it is. And here's transparent soap, five cents a ball. How many will you have, sir?"

"But I don't want any," burst forth from George.

"Oh, come now, you know you do; any way, if you don't, your wife does, and of course the baby needs it."

Here there was a roar from the clerks, and George felt as if he would be grateful to the floor if it would give way, and deposit him gently in the cellar.

"And you know babies can't be kept clean without soap. And the great thing to keep babies healthful is soap. Here there was another roar.

"Madame, I have no wife and have no babies, and want no soap."

"Well, nobody knows what may happen. You look like a nice young man. I'm sure the ladies will fall in love with you—provided you keep yourself clean. You can't do it without this soap. Do take just one cake. Or, if you don't want soap what is there that I can bring you? Will you buy some hair oil, or some nice pomade for your moustache, or complexion powder, I've got some better than you're using, or socks, or—"

"Madame, I'll take the soap," George said, in despair. And the heartless clerks roared again. She bustled out to find another customer.