

# The Democrat.

BY HAWLEY & CRUSER.

MONTROSE, PA., MAY 24, 1876.

VOL. 33—NO. 21.

## OUT OF MY HAND.

One by one, one by one,  
In the kindred light of the April sun,  
While primrose and snowdrop gem the ground  
And the birds are making and building around,  
While laughing voices and dancing feet,  
With wakening fancy and budding hope,  
Beyond my reach and beyond my scope,  
They pass, while in fear and doubt I stand,  
Out of my hand, out of my hand.

Baby pleasure and baby care,  
Not one of them but was mine to share,  
Not a tear, but I dried it with a kiss,  
Not a smile, but I joined in its eager bliss,  
Now the young knight arms for the coming  
strife,

The sweet girl fancies start to life;  
They nestle, the maiden shyness beneath,  
As the bright buds bide in their silken sheath,  
By spring dews nourished in spring breeze fanned  
Out of my hand, out of my hand.

I dare not trench on thy realm my boy,  
Nor rob thy sway of one virgin joy;  
I dare not touch with my faulting fingers,  
The blooms where the light of sunrise lingers,  
Nor drag to the garish light of day,  
What youth's proud reticence would delay,  
I can but wait outside it all,  
Where the cold winds sigh and the brown  
leaves fall.

Oh! the castles I built, oh! the joys I planned,  
Out of my hand, out of my hand,  
Yet I did not bear them in peril and pain;  
Did I not lavish and waste and refrain,  
Quitting the pleasures of parting youth,  
The glories of science and art and truth,  
That the passing of those little feet might be  
Fresh and sunny and safe and free?  
Schemes and vision and hope of mine,  
They were but those golden beads to shrine,  
Now, alone and tired, slow drops the sand,  
Grain by grain, from my falling hand.

Father of all, Saviour of all,  
Behold at thy altar steps I fall,  
Thou wilt not disdain that I come at last,  
With my treasure spent and my noontide past,  
Take thou the guidance that I resign;  
Take this hard, embittered heart of mine;  
Take the baffled ambition, ungranted prayer,  
Baseless rest, repining care,  
Guide each fairy bark to the heavenly strand,  
Take my darlings, my darlings to thy hand.

## "WHO SHEDDETH MAN'S BLOOD."

BY JANE G. AUSTIN.

"WELL, I shouldn't marry her, that's all," said Rufus Baltry, rising from the log-walk and his brother, Manuel, had seated themselves to rest after cutting up the deer they had been hunting all the forenoon. "Not if I never spoke to a woman again would I call Myra Maunsel my wife."

"And why not, I should like to know?" replied the elder brother, eagerly. "Because a girl is handsomer and smarter and sharper tongued than all her mates put together, and so sets them to gossiping and trying to run her down, are men like you and me to join in and help along the slanders and backbiting, that's most broke her heart already?"

"Broke her heart! Broke Myra Maunsel's heart?" echoed Rufus, with a loud laugh. "Why don't you talk about breaking the heart of my slut, Sue, there. She's the most respectable female of the two, I believe upon my soul!"

And now Manuel Baltry sprang to his feet also, and clinching his sinewy hand upon the handle of his hunting knife, came close to his brother's side—close, perhaps, as Cain did to Abel just before that blow was struck over which the world mourns to-day—as he said, savagely:

"Look here, Rufus Baltry; that woman is to be my wife, and the man who evens her to a dog, let alone the slanders going against her, is my deadly enemy—let him be twice my brother! You understand."

"I understand; that you're a confounded fool," Rufus replied, sullenly; "but I've said my say. Marry whom you like and when you like, and if she and I don't agree to live together, we'll agree to live apart, and you shall help build me a shanty the other side of the grant, and we'll have the land surveyed and set in two halves."

"All right. I'm going to get the horse to carry home this meat, and after that I'm going to take one of the hindquarters over to Maunsel's; maybe I shant get home to night."

"Do as you like; you won't get me to say another word for or against, not if you live at Maunsel's!"

And Rufus strode away in one direction and Manuel in the other, leaving poor Sue, whose virtues had so invidiously been used as foil to Miss Maunsel's failings, to guard the remains of the unhappy deer, whom Manuel had pursued more for the sake of the one quarter destined to the abode of his lady than for the three quarters reserved for his own and his brother's bachelor establishment.

A month passed by, and true to his promise, Rufus had refrained from speech or comment upon the subject of his brother's frequent absence from the cabin which, since their father and mother's death, they had shared without quarrel or companionship; and even when Manuel, in a half-bashful, half-defiant fashion, began one day the somewhat herculean task of cleaning and tidying the place, and especially of cleaning the bedroom, unused since their mother's death, Rufus looked on for a while in grim silence, and then, snatching his gun from its corner and

whistling to Sue, he strode away into the forest, nor was seen again until after sunset, when he appeared, wearily making his way along the path between the forest and the house, with a brace of wild turkeys over one shoulder and a carcass of a deer upon the other.

"There's more meat than we can eat while it is good," said Manuel, in a conciliatory tone, as the younger brother threw his load upon the ground in front of the door, and turned toward the spring, where the family totter was performed.

"Do what you're a mind to with it," replied Rufus, sullenly, but yet with a half smile—eagerly hailed by the elder brother, whose rough nature was just now softened by that feeling and those hopes and expectations which throw a refining influence over the hearts of the rudest and most uncouth of beings; if only the love be honest and the hopes honorable.

So Manuel followed his brother toward the spring, and said, in a low and not unloving voice:

"Come Ruf, don't let's keep up any longer, brothers so, and all. Shake hands, old fellow, and come over to the wedding to-morrow, won't you? I'd a sight rather be friends for's I'm spiced."

"To-morrow is it?" replied Rufus, slowly, as he wrung the water from the brown curls and beard. "Well, then, Manuel, I'll shake hands, but—yes, I will, too. Folks will think better of her if your own brother goes to the wedding; and if its got to be, why, I'll try to help along as far as I can."

And so the next afternoon, when Manuel Baltry kissed his expected bride upon his arrival, he told her that after all, Rufus had consented to come to the wedding, and the bride with a well satisfied smile, said:

"That's right. Bring him in here and let me see him before I go out among the folks. Maybe he'd say something ugly before them all."

"No he wouldn't. Rufe ain't so mean as all that," replied the brother a little indignantly, but nevertheless obeyed, and brought Rufus quietly through the backdoor to the little bedroom where Myra, all ready for the bridal, sat alone waiting for the moment.

Rufus had never seen her, and as he stood listening to her words of welcome, and stammered a phrase of reply, he thought he had never beheld so splendid a beauty, so fine an animal of his own species. That wealth of chestnut hair brightly threaded with gold that he had heard of her as "red-headed" that warmly tinted complexion of cream and peach, those great soft eyes, colored like her hair, that voluptuous fullness of figure exposed by her low-cut and short-sleeved bridal dress, those ripe moist crimson lips, contrasting with the fleshy teeth behind them, and, to crown all, that rich sweet voice, toned expressly for lovers' talk, as the young man told himself. Yes, here was such a woman as he had dreamed of himself possessing, such a woman as he had not believed to exist in flesh and blood, and here in the wilderness, too, within his reach as much as Manuel's, and this was the girl whom he had rated lower than his dog, whose acquaintance he had scorned, whose marriage he had fought against, and now she was to live in their very house, be the wife of another man, and not his, under his own roof.

"Won't you be friends with me at all, then?" murmured the rich voice in his very ear, and walking with a start from his reverie, Rufus found that the siren stood close before him, her moist eyes raised to his, her ripe lips trembling, and her hands extended.

Manuel had already left the room on some hasty errand, and the two were alone.

"Won't you try to like me a little?" murmured the girl, and her sweet, warm breath, fanned his cheek as she drew a step nearer.

With a sudden impulse he threw his arms around her, drew her roughly, strongly to his breast, fastened his lips upon hers in one long imperious kiss, then pushed her from him saying:

"I'll do my best not to, and the less you say to me the better for us both, and for Manuel, too. Let me alone, and I will you."

He rushed from the room as he spoke like one pursued, and she, looking after him with a victorious smile, said to herself:

"I never saw a man yet I couldn't master."

The wedding was as gay as festivities are apt to be among laborious and scattered people, who seldom are able to indulge in any species of festivity, and even Myra Maunsel's most determined detractors could not but confess that she was not only the handsomest woman present, but that her active hospitality her untiring gaiety, and bright spirits were the most attractive features of the occasion.

One alone of her guests steadily avoided her presence, devoting himself to any one else than to her, and finished by flirting furiously with Nannie Burton, whom

no one else noticed, and who never had hoped to attract the attention of one of the handsomest young men in the whole country-side. Myra saw the flirtation, knew that Rufus had accompanied Nannie home, without so much as a good-night to herself, and she smiled well-satisfied.

"It's working faster than I thought," said she.

It was two or three days after the wedding before Rufus again sought the lonely cabin, where already the strong-armed beauty whom his brother had taken to wife was making such a revolution in domestic matters that the place was hardly to be known as the same.

Rufus greeted both her and Manuel in the half-careless, half-surlly manner habitual to him of late, and went about his share of the rude farm labor, and the hunting, shooting and fishing, which supplied the family with their only fresh meat, with as little reference as possible to the other inmates of the cabin.

This state of things endured for a while, until one soft day of the Indian Summer, when Myra Baltry had been four months a bride, she sought her brother-in-law where he sat apart a little distance from the house, and said:

"Manuel has gone over to mother's to get something she wants to send me, and it's lonesome in the house."

The man shot a sidelong, impatient glance at her from bloodshot eyes, stirred uneasily, but said not a word.

Waiting a moment, she resumed:

"Won't you come in, Rufus, or at least to the door?"

"No, I won't. Let me alone, can't you?" growled he, the dark blood rushing to his face in a torrent.

"Let you alone! Why, Rufus, do you hate me like that?"

And the siren voice faltered and fell, and the great dark eyes filled with tears, and one wisp, thrilling hand clung upon his till he shook it off like a serpent, and, springing to his feet, confronted her.

"Hate you! Yes, I hope it is hate; but it is something that makes me grind my teeth and curse you both in my heart whenever Manuel goes near you—sometimes that, when you look and smile into my eyes in your wanton fashion, would make me like to snatch you by my arms and press you to my breast until I broke every bone in your body, and crush the very life out of you—sometimes that makes me hate the sight of you, and loathe the sound of your honey-sweet voice, and that yet will not let me be easy unless I am within sight and sound of you. Yes, I hope it is hate, Myra Baltry, that I feel for you, for if it is not hate, it is the fierce, strong love that, when it goes wrong, makes a devil of a man, and the worst of devils of the woman who tempts him on. So now, Myra Baltry, knowing my mind, and having my warning, you know what I mean when I say let me alone, if you know what's good for yourself, or your husband, or for me."

He strode away as he spoke toward the darkening wood, and Myra, the rich color fading from her lips and cheek, until he was quite hidden, and then, shivering lightly, went into the house, murmuring:

"This is the man I ought to have had, not this. Hate me do you? Well, you shall hate me worse, and after the same fashion."

The winter passed, and the spring, and the hot, still summer days brought the time of the bridal round again and again the two brothers sought for game in the forest, and stopped to rest beside a woodland spring.

It was Manuel who said in an abrupt hard voice, and breaking the sullen silence which now usually prevailed between them:

"Rufus, hadn't you as lives have a house of your own? You spoke of it once, you know?"

"The house we're in is as much mine as yours. Why should I turn out?" replied the younger, defiantly.

"Well, you never seem to be satisfied. Whether you keep up your ill-feeling toward Myra or not, I don't intend to know; but this I do know—that you're not like honest brother and sister, with nothing secret or underhanded about it. Sometimes I catch you looking at her, and sometimes she at you, as if there was an understanding that didn't need words, and sometimes again you seem to be in a mad fit with each other, and won't speak, but try to spite each other every way, just as sweethearts do when they fall out; and then again I've come upon you whispering together as close as those same sweethearts when they make up. Them times you always look guilty, and color up and walk away; but Myra—she's a deep one. She'll look up in my face and laugh, and tell what you've been talking about, as honest—well, I don't know. Maybe I'm all wrong, and maybe I'm right; but anyway, I'd feel myself more comfortable if you'd a shanty by yourself, and keep away from mine."

"Like to turn me out to shift for myself, eh?" asked Rufus, with a bitter laugh. "Turn me out of the place we

both were born in, and that our father left for us both to live in together, and all because you've married, against wanting, a woman you can't trust, even with the man who warned you against her? Don't be a fool, Manuel—not a second time at least."

"Then you won't go?" demanded the elder brother, angrily, and clinching his hand upon his gun barrel.

"Not to-day I won't, nor tomorrow, neither," replied Manuel, scornfully; "but I'll think it over, and see what I'll do. Perhaps I'll get married myself if you'll wait a decent time. That Burton girl is a pretty little piece."

"Well, make up your mind pretty quick, or I'll see if I can't make it up for you," growled Manuel, shouldering his piece, and striking off into the wood.

For a long hour his brother sat still, beside the spring, his head between his hands, his eyes bent upon the ground in gloomy thought; then, rising with a groan, he strode into the forest, mechanically taking his way toward the clearing.

The sun was already setting, and its level rays striking through the undergrowth, contrasting forcibly with the dense shadows, throwing a strange and confusing light over the most familiar objects, and changing their shapes and proportions to the wild forms of fairy-land.

So weird was this effect of the falling light that Rufus stood still and looked about him, half in admiration, half in wonder, at the change a few minutes had wrought in the familiar scene; standing thus motionless, his trained ear caught the sound of a large body moving through the undergrowth at some distance from him, and toward the west; shading his eyes from the blinding sunrays, he looked in that direction, and distinguished a form which he took at first for a bear, rearing himself upon his haunches, as these creatures often do for convenience of observation.

"The fellow that was in our corn last week!" muttered Rufus, raising his piece and sighting along the barrel, with his finger on the trigger.

But in that very instant the changing light stole on, and one finger of five falling full upon the vague form, showed it to be no bear, but a man, the well-known form of the brother from whom Rufus Baltry had parted in anger an hour before.

What was it? Who was it that pulled the trigger in the very instant that the mind of the miserable man told him of his error and bid him drop the weapon in horror, thanking God for his escape?

It did not seem, it could not seem, to Rufus that it was his own act, his voluntary deed, and yet in the instant when he clearly saw his error, even while his own form shook with horror and his heart turned cold within him, the muscle of that finger upon the trigger contracted with a convulsive motion, the piece was discharged, and Rufus Baltry knew himself a murderer and a fratricide.

His first motion was to flee like Cain to the waste places of the earth, but a second motion restrained him, and set him hastening headlong to his brother's side, the still smoking rifle in his hand. But the chance shot had sped as one aimed with deliberate care seldom does, and the bullet had so justly touched the life of the unhappy victim that he had fallen dead almost without a moan, certainly without knowledge of whence this instant and painless death had come.

Satisfied of this Rufus Baltry turned and fled—fled like one pursued by an army of demons, nor paused until he burst into the presence of the dead man's wife, gasping, hoarsely:

"He's dead, and I have killed him! no, not I, but you, you fair, false woman! Oh, curse you—curse you—curse you a thousand times!"

"He is dead and you have killed him!" repeated Myra, turning pale as ashes, but heeding the curses and reproaches heaped upon her. "When? How?"

But when in broken, scarce intelligible sentences, the stricken man had told his story the woman's face charged and cleared with a look of relief.

"It was pure accident, of course; only accident. Don't you see it yourself, Rufus? The sun was in your eyes, you were looking for the bear, and, luckily enough we told Stenton when he stopped here yesterday that a bear had been in our cornfield and in the queer sunset light you took him for the bear rearing up to get a look at you. Its all a straight story if you'll only tell it straight, and not look scared. Go saddle the mare, and start as quick as you can; go straight to Stenton's and then to Burton's and tell them what has happened, and that we want them to come and help bring him home and see that its all right. Come, Rufus, the only way to get over it decently is to put a bold face on the matter and tell your story in your own way. There'll have to be a jury an' all of that to-morrow, and men got from all around to make it; then we'll have them stay to bury him, and all will be over. Get some one—Nannie Burton if you like—to come and stay with me, and when all

is done, I'll go home and stop a while till folks have done talking, and then—"

She looked into his eyes and smiled, but he, flinging off her hand with a repaid look with one of loathing terror, as he cried:

"What, you would talk of love to me with his blood still hot upon my hand, with his murdered corpse stiffening where it fell. Oh, bend—bend—bend what I ever done that you should be sent to curse my life in this way?"

"Go, saddle the mare and gallop to Stenton's, and then to Burton's. Forget all else, and do not forget your story," replied Myra, and to Stenton's and Burton's.

With a groan of wrath and despair, the weaker spirit yielded, as he was sure in the end to do, and ten minutes later he was riding at full speed toward his nearest neighbor four miles away.

A ten-day winter-weather, with gloomy whispers, and saggie, copious, and an increase of the ancient coldness with which Myra Maunsel had been held in her unmarried days among the stricter of her acquaintances, that the life of the Baltry family had been so saddened in the neighborhood, so sparsely settled, that both the food and the opportunity for gossip were very limited, and when some months passed quietly away with Myra living at her father's house, and Rufus remaining alone in the forest cabin, they and their affairs in a manner dropped out of public sight, and the public mind, while the public tongue proceeded to exercise itself upon some new subject, did not how keen would have been the interest in how scorching the comments, how rampant the tongues, could that little public have known what not even Myra's own family knew, that rarely a day passed that she did not see Rufus in the wood or field, or by pretended accident at her father's house, and no one could be more astonished than the inmates of that house, when a year and a day from Manuel Baltry's death his widow was married to the house of the nearest justice of the peace, to the man who, however innocent he had been the means of her husband's death.

Of course, at this, the gossips gave tongue again, and for a little while more loudly than ever, but little cared the objects of their comments, for, buried in their woodland home, they saw no and heard nothing, and were as nearly independent of public opinion as it is possible for any one to be while belonging, however remotely, to a civilized community.

"And now at least we are going to be happy," said the bride, a few hours after she had entered the home she had left as a widow; "just you and I alone together, as we always wanted to be."

"Alone! I wish we were!" muttered Rufus, gloomily.

"Why, we are! What do you mean?" echoed Myra, following the glance her companion cast around the room. "What hinders our being happy, Rufus?"

"Conscience, woman, conscience! I groaned the unhappy man. 'He is here or I fancy him here, and that is as bad as he watches us, he listens to us, he poisons every moment. I was a fool to consent to our marriage—I might have gone away somewhere, to rest, to foreign lands, somewhere away from everything I had ever seen or known, and he would have let me alone, but now—'"

And, hiding his face in his hands, he gave way to gloomy despair. But Myra had not yet lost her influence, her siren spell was not yet broken, and by word and voice and touch she soon won him back to the passionate and feverish emotion which her guilty heart called love.

But this power was on the wane, and all the sweeter, finer, more humanizing elements of life in that lonely cabin were vanished with it.

A gloomy winter passed, Rufus growing every day more gloomy, sullen, and forbidding in his manner, and Myra feeling that her short-lived and happiness was changing to a condition of doubt, and even terror almost impossible to bear, for remorse and fancy, working together in the rude mind of the untaught man, had nearly destroyed its balance, and his wild fancies at times amounted all but to mania. Aside from that fancy that his brother was for ever hunting him with eyes and gestures of stern reproach, he had reverted to his old suspicions, and doubts of Myra herself, and vague but violent jealousy of now one and now another of the men who had paid her court during her widowhood, or even before her marriage, possessed his mind at times with even frantic violence.

Quite innocent so far as this suspicion was concerned, Myra bore it with everything but patience, and, after awhile, her fiery temper gained the ascendancy over her equally fiery love, she began to retort her husband's accusations with shrewish violence, and even to taunt him with the murderous weakness that had led to his brother's death, for in her heart she did not believe that the act had been deliberate, else even she would never have married the fratricide.

Upon the occasion of one of these quarrels in the early spring, when Myra had

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