

The Democrat.

BY HAWLEY & CRUSER.

MONTROSE, PA., JUNE 28, 1876.

VOL. 33--NO. 26

NOTHING IS LOST.

Where is the snow?
'Tis not long ago
It covered the earth with a veil of white;
We heard not its footsteps soft and light,
Yet there it was in the morning bright;
Now it hath vanish'd away from sight.
Not a trace remains
In fields or lanes.
Where is the frost?
They are gone and lost—
The forms of beauty it gaily made,
The pictures rare on windows array'd,
"Be silent," it said; the brook obey'd.
The frost work's wild pictures all did fade;
At the smile of the sun
All was undone.
Where is the rain?
Pattering it came;
Dancing along with a merry sound,
A grassy bed in the fields it found;
Each drop came on the roof with a bound.
Where is the rain? It hath left the ground,
What good hath it done,
Going away so soon?
Ever, ever,
Our best endeavor
Seemeth to fall like the melted snow;
We worked out our thought wisely and slow;
The seed we sow—but it will not grow;
Our hopes, our resolves—where do they go?
What doth remain?
Memory and pain.
Nothing is lost—
No snow nor frost
That came to enrich the earth again;
We thank them when the ripening grain
Is waving over the hill and plain,
And the pleasant rain springs from earth again
All endeth in good—
Water and food.
Never despair;
Disappointment bear,
Though hope seemeth vain, be patient still;
Thy good intents God will fulfill,
Thy hand is weak; His powerful will—
Is completing thy life-work still.
The good endeavor
Is lost?—ah! never.

THE TWO BACHELORS.

IT WAS in the summer of '61 that Jack Ferrars and myself, then gay bachelors of thirty, weary with the business that had surged in upon us during the winter months, rented between us a small shooting in the Western Highlands, with a view of recruiting our wasted energies in a pastime of which we were both very fond. I admired Ferrars almost passionately. He was a fine, handsome fellow, with yellow hair and blonde moustache, and possessed the gentlemanly manners and easy flow of conversation which I esteemed above all things. But my attachment to Jack was no mere passing admiration of his brilliant parts and fascinating manners; it dated as far back as when we were boys at school, and had gone on in an interrupted flow ever since, strengthened by the test of time. We had, moreover, numberless things in common, among the most important of which was—we were both confirmed bachelors; in good truth, proud of the name—bachelors who never intended to do anything but bachelors, and we took a peculiar delight in saying so, and vowing allegiance to one another in a manner that would have done credit to the Corsican brothers.
It was therefore with brilliant anticipations of the delight we were to experience in each other's society, that we found ourselves the occupants of a pretty villa, on the outskirts of a little outlandish place in the Highlands, far removed from our friends and acquaintances.
With a sigh of relief, and a delightful feeling of freedom, we wheeled our chairs into an open bow-window on the right of our arrival, and lighting cigars, sat down to enjoy the really beautiful scene before us. In the foreground lay a lawn smoothly cut lawn and rectangular flower beds, with the moonlight shining in pale, bright bars over the sleeping flowers, and beyond, the silver loch, whence we could distinctly hear the merry laugh of some late pleasure seekers. They rowed slowly homewards; while above the loch the hills rose in dark fantastic outline against the pale beauty of the sky.
Jack, as apropos of the scene, had been speaking as best he could, between the puff of his cigar, Lord Byron's *Lake* in his hand, and an animated discussion, which had afterwards arisen, merits and demerits of that much maligned poet.
I was suddenly interrupted by a burst of sweet music I had ever heard.
It was a splendid soprano voice, accompanied by the guitar, singing the old Scottish song, *Auld Robin Gray*.
The expression thrown into the voice was simple and exquisite. When the beautiful minor key struck, Jack snatched his cigar from his lips and leaned forward in a breathless attitude, as if afraid to breathe a single vibration, and did not again until the song had ceased.
"How strangely affected myself. I had listened to the same song before, but never so soul-thrilling of to-night. As the

last cadence died away, borne over the silvery water to the dark hills, it seemed to me as if it was an angel's whisper over the death bed of a child.
The sounds proceeded from the open drawing room windows of the villa next our own; and when at last they ceased, Jack, resuming his cigar in the most prosaic fashion, remarked:
"By Jove! that was good singing, Bob. That is better than a box at the opera; eh, old fellow?"
"It's the finest singing, without exception, I ever listened to. I hope I won't meet the fair possessor of such an exquisite voice," I answered.
"What an absurd fellow you are!—Why?"
"Oh, because, if she's pretty, I feel as if I should fall in love with her."
"Pshaw! Harding, don't talk like an idiot. Ten to one she's an ugly old wretch, with sunken jaws, with powder enough on her face to last a lord chief justice's wig for six months."
"I almost hope she is, for then my heart won't run such a chance of being captured."
"You're a consummated fool, Harding," was the flattering epitaph of my friend Ferrars.
"Sorry you think so, Jack, but if a fool or no fool, if that's a pretty young girl, I would not give a sixpence for your chances of retaining your bachelor notions much longer."
I leaned forward smiling, to catch a glimpse of his expression in the dim light. A haughty curl was on his lip, and a look of scorn in his blue eyes, which disappeared with a ludicrous rapidity as soon as he observed that I was rallying him.
"Ah, Bob, no fear of that, you and I are jolly enough together not to care about pretty girls, however fascinating, else we'd been married long ago."
"I began to think so, Jack, and, upon my word, I often wonder how a fellow like you, upon whom scores of designing mammas have had their covetous eyes, was never caught."
"I was just going to make the same remark about you," said Jack, with a laugh, as he stroked his handsome moustache.
"It seems to me we're a couple of extremely clever fellows," I answered, rising.
"We're a couple of extremely lucky fellows, at any rate, to have safely escaped all the snares and fascinations laid for us," returned Ferrars, shrugging his broad shoulders and looking the personification of happy bachelorhood as his matrimonial notions. "But what say you to a bit of supper, old boy? It is getting late."
I agreed, and we both descended to the dining room. Mrs. Mason, the worthy housekeeper, had lighted a fire in honor of our arrival, and the dying embers now cast a dark red glow on the walls, making a decidedly comfortable appearance, notwithstanding it was a fine autumn night. When we turned up the gas, a cosy little supper laid out for two was displayed, and the wine and fruit we had been using for dinner still stood on the sideboard. Never were there two happier, jollier, or more amiable bachelors than Ferrars and I that night, as we sat chatting over our walnuts and caviar and laying our schemes of enjoyment, until the small hours warned us that it was high time we were in the primary enjoyment of sleep.
"Good night, Jack," I said, as at last we separated for our respective rooms.
"Good morning, rather," echoed Jack, as he shut his door; "and I hope the ghost of Robin Gray won't disturb your slumber."
A sharp rat-tat on my bedroom door, and the familiar "Hollo, old boy!" of Jack, outside, awoke me from one of the most delightful and refreshing sleeps I had enjoyed for a long time. To say the least of it, I felt fierce to be thus awakened.
"Confound you, Ferrars. What do you want? Be off!" I shouted.
"Get up, old boy, get up; if you're not out of bed before I count ten, you shall have no breakfast. One—two—three—"
The threat was too awful to be anticipated, and before he had counted the given number, I had unlocked the door for him. He came in with a merry look in his blue eyes, and throwing himself down on the bed I had so unwillingly vacated, began kicking the white counterpane with his dirty boot.
"Jack, look what you're doing," I said, pointing to a mud patch on the clean linen. "Mrs. Mason will think I tumbled into bed last night in the disreputable condition of not knowing very well what I was about."
"Just tell her I did it, Bob, and she'll be delighted to put on a fresh counterpane, I am sure. But do you know what I was doing this morning while you were driving your pigs to market?"
"Reading the chickens, probably," I answered, feeling cross at Jack's good humor.
"Guns again."

"No; if you don't choose to tell me, my curiosity will wait," I returned as I arranged my neck-tie.
"Well, then, I've been getting on good terms with Mrs. Mason, and finding out who our friends of musical repute next door are."
"The chickens you have?" I ejaculated, pausing in the adjustment of my shirt studs. Jack nodded, his blue eyes fairly dancing with merriment. "And the result of your enquiries is—"
"That the household consists of a Colonel Hallam, his wife and one daughter."
"Is that all you know about them?" I asked, somewhat disappointed at the meagerness of the details, as I put the finishing touch to my toilet.
"You ungrateful scoundrel. Why, the people only arrived here two days ago, and Mrs. Mason herself only got the information this morning from the baker's boy at the door."
"Ah! then it's sure to be correct. But come, let's go down stairs and see if we can get a look at Colonel Hallam or his pretty daughter."
It was a glorious morning. The sunshine was dancing gleefully on the surface of the loch, and the flowers were lifting their dewy heads and filling the breakfast room with their fragrance. A very tempting repast stood awaiting us on the table, and Jack's blue eyes looked not amiss behind the coffee urn.
"Although this is quite pleasant, Jack, you look almost good enough to kiss, my dear," I remarked, as I took the cup he handed to me.
"Come, no chaff. Is your coffee sweet enough?" he returned, affectionately twirling the ends of his blonde moustache.
"Oh, it's there all right," I said, alluding to the handsome appendage; "I didn't make any mistake about that."
He turned his laughing eyes on me for an instant, and no sooner had they wandered to the window again, than he started up uttering a low—whew!
I stood up too, following his eyes inquiringly, and there over the low hedge that divided the gardens, I caught sight of a young girl in a fresh morning dress, engaged in cutting flowers, and daintily arranging them in a bouquet. What we saw of her face under the broad rimmed hat that shaded it was bright and beautiful.
"Good heavens! Miss Hallam," said Jack.
"By Jove! Miss Hallam," I echoed. And we both looked into each other's faces and laughed outright.
"What are you laughing at?" asked Jack; with the utmost inconsistency, as he sat down and resumed his breakfast.
"Just what you are laughing at," I returned.
"She's not old or ugly, either," he remarked after a pause.
"By Jove, she isn't!" I answered, as I gulped a mouthful of my highly-sugared coffee.
"Are you very sorry?"
"No. Are you glad?"
"It doesn't matter a rap to me what she is or is not."
"You are a cynical old bachelor, Ferrars."
"Allow me to return the compliment, Harding."
"I mean you to keep it."
"I decline it with thanks, as not suitable."
"When I want to expatiate on the charms of a young lady, you get as sour as vinegar; now, you know it's true; so not a word in reply, but hurry up, old boy—tempus fugit; and I pulled out my watch.
We were both in a hurry to be off to our sport, and soon all thoughts of Miss Hallam were forgotten in the bustle of arranging our shooting gear. The wagonette was brought round to the door, and two very happy heart-whole bachelors sprang lightly into it, and were bowled away down the gravel path, through the gate and out of sight.
We had a pretty good day's sport on the moors, and returned home in the best of humor with ourselves and tired enough to enjoy thoroughly an after-dinner lounge in our drawing-room, which we had converted pro tem. into a smoking room, and ornamented in every available place with meershaums, tobacco and cigar boxes.
Upon this evening, Jack, who was a fair player on the pianoforte, was performing the "Blue Bells of Scotland," with much elaborate flouring and crossing of hands, and I, of the audience, was stretched on three chairs at the window, lazily smoking my cigar, in that sort of half-dreamy comatose state that one feels in the enjoyment of well-earned rest. I cannot say that I was altogether in rapture over the "Blue Bells," but perhaps they helped to promote the pleasant tenor of my thoughts as I lay with my eyes half shut, letting the smoke from my weed curl affectionately in the folds of Mrs. Mason's lace curtains.
"How jolly Ferrars and I are together," I chuckled to myself; "this little trip of ours is going to be altogether a success. Girls are well enough to meet

occasionally, but they become a bore—Now, suppose I had a wife here, instead of Jack, she wouldn't be contented unless the house was filled with visitors and servants, and—"
Just at that interesting juncture of my ruminations, the flourishing and dashing at the piano stopped, and presently the chairs on which my legs rested, were pulled from under me, and I was left ignominiously sprawling on the carpet, with Jack's face grinning down in my face in evident enjoyment of my discomfort. But the fall did not cause me to forget the thread of my meditations, and as I gathered up my elegant limbs, I remarked:
"My wife would not have done that, Jack."
"No; she would have kissed the poor, tired darling, and thrown a shawl gently over him, to keep him from catching cold," said Jack in a tone of mock affection.
"Picture of domestic happiness," I returned, laughing, as I readjusted the chairs. "Hark! what is that?"
The stillness of the night outside was broken by the same exquisite music we had listened to on the previous evening. In an instant our banter was hushed. It was a gay lively air which I recognized as a selection from the "Students' Frolic," and the singer seemed even more at home in this style than in the pathetic. It made me feel as joyous as a bird in spring, and had I not been too lazy, I would have danced, in the very exuberance of my spirits.
"Jack, we must get an introduction to that little girl," I cried, enthusiastically, throwing my half-finished cigar out of window.
But, to my surprise, Jack seemed in no mood to talk, and kept staring out of the window, taking no notice of my remark. Feeling aggrieved at not being met with the position and contempt I expected for proposing such a thing, I went over and slightly shook him, at which he ran his fingers through his blonde curls, and looking up with an expression of innocent surprise, asked:
"What is it?"
"Wouldn't you like an introduction to Miss Hallam?"
"Why, yes; of course, Harding; you needn't have shaken a fellow half out of his senses to ask that silly question," and Jack readjusted his broad shoulders and relapsed into silence again.
I tried to talk of Miss Hallam, music, literature, politics, but all to no purpose. He sat staring out of the window, as if the seven wonders of the world were visible on our path of moonlit lawn. Rather disgusted, I left him stargazing and retired to bed, but as I went up stairs I must own to a little curiosity as to the cause that had made my amiable and talkative friend suddenly so laconic and disagreeable.
The warm August days ripened into mellow September. Since the night of Jack's revelry, a change had certainly come over him, but as yet he left me uninformed as to the cause. Sometimes his old gaiety would return, but it was sure to be followed by a fit of more sombre silence than before. I chaffed him about it often, but his testy replies invariably shut me up. We never met Miss Hallam, and the only time we saw her was in the morning among the flowers, or in the evening, when, after having ravished us with her music, she stepped out on the balcony, leaning on her father's arm, to enjoy the moonlight. On such occasions Jack seemed strangely affected, and would either break forth into voluminous praises of her grace and beauty, or sit gazing minutely at the apparition.
Such a state of affairs led me naturally enough to the conclusion that whatever might be the matter with Ferrars, the fair cantatrice had something to do with it.
One afternoon we resolved to have a row down the loch, and as I crossed the lawn, with an oar over each shoulder, I chanced to glance at Colonel Hallam's window, where the two ladies were seated sewing. The younger one was scanning me with a half-amused expression in her brown eyes; and as Jack came sauntering down the gravel path, with a hand in each pocket, I quietly said:
"Miss Hallam's at the window."
He looked in the direction I indicated, and, to my surprise, he immediately blushed up like a girl.
"Why, Jack, old fellow, what is the matter?" I asked, with a smile I could not repress. Miss Hallam was viewing us with the aid of an opera glass.
"Pshaw! Harding, get on board quick and row as well as you can," he answered, throwing himself into the stern of the boat in a position where the sunshine struck forcibly on his handsome face and auburn locks.
I bent as gracefully as I could to my oars—I had been a fair oarsman at Cambridge—and soon the little craft was skimming over the unlit ripples.
As it was still early when we returned we strolled down the road until it would be time to go in to dinner, when, turning a corner, we came suddenly upon

Miss Hallam and her father, mounted on a couple of splendid grays. As she came past us with a smile, her beautiful face flushed with the exercise, I certainly thought I had never seen any one half so lovely. Her perfect form; the grace of every fold of her dark green-riding habit; the indescribable coils and twists of her brown hair, with the sunshine shading it to gold; the coquettish little felt hat, turned up at one side, with its dancing plume and streaming gossamer—combined to make a charming tout ensemble, which was altogether irritable. Jack had stared at her in open-mouthed admiration for such an indecent length of time, that I was constrained to accuse him.
"Ferrars, you admire Miss Hallam," I said.
He had his head bent, and was kicking the dead leaves with his foot as he walked. When he raised his blue eyes, they were filled with the expression of a passion I had never noticed in them before, and which fully corroborated the four words he uttered, as his eyes met mine:
"I do love her!"
"Strange as it may seem, I was thunder-struck at the announcement. Much as I had noted the change in Ferrars, I had hesitated to ascribe it to the circumstance of his being in love. I protested and raged against such folly—falling in love with a woman with whom he had never exchanged a word.
For answer, a passionate confession was poured into my astonished ears, in which he must and would win her. Matters were made considerably worse when we received our letters that evening informing us of business engagements, requiring our immediate return to town.—It would be impossible for us to remain more than three days longer.
"Humph! your time is rather limited, Ferrars," I said with more sarcasm than sympathy. "You'll be a pretty sharp fellow if you win and win a handsome girl in three days.
The next morning he came down to breakfast looking pale and haggard. I don't believe he had slept all night, but I made no inquiries, as I felt annoyed, at this alarming impulse of my old friend, and was altogether out of temper with this adventure of his. He ate little or no breakfast, and looked so dejected that at last my sympathies were aroused, and I shouted cheerfully:
"Cheer up, old fellow, we'll manage it all beautifully, and you'll go to London the accepted suitor of Miss Hallam."
Gradually he became more animated, and began to talk, and finally quite shocked me by declaring that he was going to write and propose to her that very day. I considered him to be simply mad, but he had apparently thought it well over, and was determined what course to adopt.
"But, Jack, the thing is preposterous," I argued; "she knows nothing about you. Can you expect anything but a distinct refusal?"
"And what would you recommend?" he asked, curling his lip as he waited for my advice.
"Why, get introduced to her first, and wait at least until you know her a little before you make such a proposal," I answered.
"Have I not been waiting for the last two months? And do you forget that in two days I must leave this place.—There is no time for waiting now; it must be action, immediate and peremptory!"
"And are you quite determined to do this thing?"
"Quite."
"And will nothing persuade you that it is an extremely foolish action, and one which will be certain to defeat all your wishes?"
"Under the circumstances, I consider it the only thing to be done."
I succumbed. In difficulties of a different nature he had generally proved a better diplomatist than I, and perchance his skill might extend to this department also.
"Well, if it must be action as you say it must action let it be: you must write your proposal," I said, pulling out the writing materials with alacrity, and placing a chair for Jack at the desk; and after a full hour's scribbling down and scratching out a clean copy was penned, which ran as follows:
Dart D'Annoor Lodge, Sept. 23, 1861.
Dear Miss Hallam—I regret that circumstances have prevented me making your acquaintance ere I address to you words which I pray you will not think lightly of, from the mere fact that I have never spoken to you. Since I came here, two months ago, you have excited my intense admiration, which feeling has ripened into a deep and passionate love. My business engagements now demand my immediate return to London, but I feel I cannot go without first learning from you my fate. I make you now an honorable offer of my hand in marriage, and beseech you not to think lightly of it, as on your decision must depend my life's happiness or misery. If possible an answer per to-day's post will very much oblige.
Yours respectfully,
JOHN FERRARS
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