

Poetry

WRITE OFTEN.

FROM MARY.

Cut out the following and place it in the next letter you write to a dear friend. A more appropriate poem for such service was never written.

Write to me very often, Write to me very soon— Letters to me are dearer Than the loveliest flowers in June; They are affection's touches— Lighting of friendship's lamp, Filling around the heart strings. Like fire-flies in the damp.

Select Gales.

THE LOVE LETTER.

Robert Tracy wandered along the principal streets of the thriving town of Carlisle, lifting his hat and bowing gracefully to the numerous ladies of his acquaintance, whom he met on their way to the stores of Messrs. Radcliffe and Co. and their brother Mercantiles, all of whom as the daily papers inform those whom it may concern, had just received from New York a fresh supply of goods consisting of— what it is unnecessary for us to particularise, as it was daily set forth in the aforesaid papers, together with the unparalleled low prices at which these articles were to be had; since all the merchants adopted the motto, "large sales and small profits."

Many were the winning smiles of the fair shoppers that greeted Mr. Tracy's low bows, and many were the pleasant looks that seemed to invite him, or so the vanity of his sex led him to imagine, to turn and join them on their expedition. But he had been shopping before now, when he was younger and more inexperienced, and not even the bewitching smile of Miss Lizzie Raleigh, the acknowledged belle of Carlisle, as she tripped by, could inveigle him in the snare. He remembered too well his former experience—the sitting for an hour or more by a counter piled with silks, gazing at all the colors of the rainbow in quick succession, as the obsequious clerk held them up to view, declaiming on their loveliness in words as glowing as would have befitted a description of a gorgeous sunset; then the hesitation if his fair companion between "that lovely apple green poult de soie," and "that heavenly blue brocade,"—the referring it to him, poor wretch! who had been twisting about uneasily on his rotary stool all this time, and who was obliged to confess his utter inability to help them out of their dilemma; then the decision to "look a little farther," at which he as well as the clerk had inwardly groaned in bitterness of spirit, and the repetition of this procedure at nearly every store in town. These were some of the reminiscences of his first going shopping; and while the ladies grew more voluble, and oblivious to him in their consultations; he had leisure to make a solemn vow, which he has not as yet felt tempted to break, never again to go shopping with ladies.

Miss Lizzie did not know this, or she might have been spared wondering if she had offended Robert Tracy in any way, that he did not join her as he usually did, when he met her on his walks; he, meanwhile, strolled on, his eyes cast down, apparently in deep meditation, though if the truth must be known, his thoughts were on no more important subject than what he should do with himself—a problem of pretty difficult solution, considering the idle, aimless life he led.

To be sure, he had a profession—that of the law—and talent enough to make him eminent, had he chosen to apply himself; but unfortunately, he was wealthy and there was no occasion for burying himself in musty books; so after leaving college and the law school, he tossed them all aside, and determined to enjoy himself.

One would have thought this no difficult task, situated as was Robert Tracy, blessed with youth, health and wealth; but he soon found time drag heavily on his hands. He determined to travel, and for a time tho't he had found the road to happiness; but ere long he wearied of sight seeing, of strange places, strange tongues and strange faces, and returned to his native land. He made acquaintances, friends as they call themselves, but as he saw more of society, its emptiness disgusted him;

he took no pleasure in the wild and riotous scenes of dissipation into which his would-be friends would have plunged him, and, at the age of twenty-seven, Robert Tracy was wearied of himself and the world. What should he do with himself, for this one day? Ride—go fishing or gunning? Read or call on the ladies? Pshaw he was tired of all these amusements. Suddenly his eyes rested on a letter which lay in the sidewalk before him. Somebody had dropped it; he would carry it to the post-office—that would use up a half hour or so of his time. He picked it up and turned it over; there was no address, and it was unsealed. Perhaps it was a hand-bill done up in this way to attract attention; but no—it was written; he would look at it, the address might be inside, and it might be of importance. He unfolded it. It was in a lady's hand writing—not one of the ordinary writing school stamp, but firm, though delicate and rather peculiar. He had a theory about judging of the character from the handwriting, and this was so original that it attracted him. He glanced at the beginning of the letter. "My dear John"—John who? John was anybody; John Smith, perhaps. He turned it over and looked at the signature, "Flora." That gave him no further information, and, impelled by curiosity, he began to read the epistle.

"My Dear John—I have been sitting for the last half hour, with my pen in my fingers, puzzling myself as to what I should say in this my first love letter.

"If I were a gentleman, now, I might fill up my sheet with pretty flattering speeches, and tender epithets; but I don't imagine you would be delighted, were I to call you an angel, though I presume you are just as near being one as I am, or any of my sex; so that is out of the question. Then, if I were to undertake to tell you how much affection I felt for you, why—love speeches do not look well in black and white, and if they did, what would be the use of filling up this sheet in making known the fact that I love you very dearly, expressing this one idea, in ten thousand different forms? Isn't it a self evident proposition, needing no demonstration, other than the fact of my scratching off these lines to you? I should get tired of it, if you didn't; so we'll dismiss that topic too. And now, what is left for me to write about? Why, a plenty of subjects, so you needn't look grave, in anticipation of future short letters; you ought rather, to groan under the impending deluge which I foresee for you; for I just intend, in this and other epistles that may follow in its wake, to think on paper, to get down what ever comes into this good-for-nothing head of mine.

"It is very pleasant to have a friend to whom we can open our secret souls, and to say all that we think or feel, without fear of being misunderstood; to speak of all that is highest and purest in our nature, without fear of meeting a sneering smile, or a scoffing reply; to know that our aspirations, hopes and aims are the same—to cultivate all the powers God has given us, and to do all in our power to elevate those around us; and it is because they will enable you to do so much more good in the world, that I am so proud of your talents; and I am ambitious for you to become a distinguished lawyer, not so much because I long to see you at the head of your profession, (though I confess that alone would give me great pleasure,) as because it will enlarge the sphere of your usefulness.

"All this will come with time. Don't get discouraged, as you sometimes do; plod on cheerfully, and don't neglect the little duties now, that you may hasten on to do great things hereafter. And that reminds me of poor widow Blair. I wish you would step in and tell her how well Willie is doing here on the farm; and while you are in Elm street, call at Mrs. O'Reilly's and if Nora needs anything—I shall like to hear from my proteges. It will be only three weeks before I am at home again; so keep up good courage, and I soon will relieve you of your unprofessional visits to these places.

"You are a dear, kind John, to do it; but I always knew that, under the rough exterior, (for you are rough, my dear nutmeg,) there was something gentle and good. You only needed a sort of grater to get at it, like the humble individual who now bids you farewell, and informs you that she's ever your affectionate—FLORA."

Robert Tracy sighed as he finished the perusal of this letter. What would he not give for the love of such a being;—something more than a mere butterfly—a cheerful, active woman—one that would lead him on to something nobler and higher, instead of dragging him down to an existence that could barely be called life. He could see Flora. Young, she certainly was—sprightly, pretty, he was sure, perhaps not regularly so, but with an elastic step, graceful figure, clear complexion, smiling mouth, and quick, vivacious eyes—fresh, frank, guileless, affectionate. Oh! what would he not give to meet her! to know her! to gain her heart! Pshaw! somebody else had won her already; and if it had not been so, how could he hope to be beloved by such a girl, neither his wealth, nor elegance, nor

manners, would be sufficient to gain the heart of Flora. She would despise his indolent, aimless life, as much as just now he himself did. But why should he not be worthy of her or some one like her? He, too, had talents and might do good. The letter had inspired him; and he would exert himself, and some day, perhaps, he might meet Flora, and tell her what her letter had done for him. Carlisle was not so large that he could not find her out; at any rate, as John had not got the letter, he would go to Elm street and attend to her commission. There might have been something besides pure benevolence in this resolution; he might have hoped to get a clue to her, unknown; but it isn't best to pry too closely into motives when the act is good.

At any rate, Robert Tracy was soon in Elm street, among a lot of tumble-down, rickety old buildings. He inquired for Mrs. O'Reilly's residence, and was shown a house a little farther on; he entered it, making his way through the dark with difficulty, but guided by the loud and angry tones of a female voice, he reached at last a small room, and rapped at the door, which was a little ajar. His summons was obeyed by a stout, red-faced virago, who answered in the affirmative to his inquiry, if she was Mrs. O'Reilly.

"What to say next, was the question; he mustered up courage, and declared that he was sent by Miss Flora to see her sick daughter Nora.

"Oh, thin, it's a doctor that yeez is," replied the woman, to whom Miss Flora's name seemed familiar—"but it's me first cousin ye're after findin', Bridget Brady, and not meself, at all, at all. Jist go up them stairs, and when ye git to the top, it's the door forrest ye see."

A gentle voice bade him enter, in answer to his rap, and he obeyed the request. The room was small, but scrupulously clean, and in the young girl who lay on a small pallet, he recognised Nora. He approached her, and stated, as before, that he had been sent by Miss Flora.

"And is it Miss Flora Mason that ye mean?" "Yes," replied Tracy, delighted, to find out who he did mean, and then he went on to her wants.

She was not at all reserved; she told of the kindness of Miss Flora in supplying her wants and said that now her mother had got work again, though it was rather lonely for her while she was out washing; they would get along very well. It was evident that the girl was in consumption, but she was very cheerful, and wiped away the tears that would come when she spoke of being a burden to her old mother. Robert did not very well know what to say. It was rather new business for him to be at the sick beds of the poor; but he said a few kind words, and put a bill into the girl's hand as he bade her good bye. During his conversation with her, she had named some other families, and told him that Mrs. Gallagher was in great distress; that her drunken husband, had stolen the money she had put away for the rent, and it must be paid that day, or they would be turned out into the street.

Robert now bent his steps in this quarter, and left the poor woman showering blessings upon his head, even after he had lost sight of her door. It was a new but very pleasurable sensation that the young Tracy experienced on leaving Elm street. He had never before received so much enjoyment from the expenditure of any sum of money, as from this small one. He returned to his office, which might more appropriately have been called his smoking room, and began to rummage over his law books. He really read a few pages in Blackstone, though I am afraid he did not give it his individual attention. Not long after this came off a grand soiree at Mrs. Raleigh's where Robert Tracy became introduced to Miss Flora Mason, and to Miss Lizzie's inexpressible annoyance, to this girl, just emancipated from school, he paid most marked attention. She was not pretty, but aside from this, she was all he had imagined her to be—a cheerful, sprightly and unaffected girl, whom he had admired very much; and after that evening he paid frequent visits to her father's residence, and as he came to know her better, it required constant reflections on John, to prevent his actually falling in love with her. He looked on all young men rejoicing in that name with suspicion, but to his surprise, no one of them seemed more highly favored than the rest.

The mystery was solved at last; by casual inquiries, he discovered that her cousin, John Somers, a young lawyer, had recently gone west. He was the rival, then, and from all he could learn of him, every way worthy of her. Everybody liked him and wished him well except Robert Tracy, and he, it must be confessed, so far from joining the rest; really at times wished him worse things than the fever and ague, though that would have been bad enough for any ordinary malignity. Yet, notwithstanding Tracy's inhumanity towards John Somers, his benevolence continued in active exercise in Elm street. He found out and relieved many cases of suffering, and assisted many in obtaining situations who were idle not from indolence, but inability to get work.

He had become a close student, and had already gained considerable practice, and the reputation of a rising young man. So passed away more than a year.

It was just before Christmas, and Robert, who was going to treat himself to making the most useful presents he could procure to his proteges, was just emerging from one of those dwellings where he had been to discover what was most needed, when the sudden apparition of Flora Mason, just opposite, rooted him to the spot.

She, on her part, seemed equally astonished, but almost immediately gained her self-possession, and exclaimed, "can it be possible that you, Mr. Tracy, are the young gentleman of whom I have heard so much here?"

Robert was silent; he blushed as if caught in some disreputable act, but his very looks confirmed Flora in her suspicions.

"But I have a grave charge to make against you," she continued, laughing. "You declared that Miss Flora sent you, so I have been credibly informed by the good people who have detailed the circumstances against you. When did I send you, sir? I have no recollection of the fact."

"But you did, Miss Flora," replied Robert, in his turn recovering himself; and drawing out the letter which we have already read, and which he carried very suspiciously near his heart, he handed it to the writer.

It was now her turn to blush, and her cheeks, neck, and brow were crimson, as Robert went on to tell her what an effect it had upon him. He did more—he declared his love for her, concluding, "forgive this avowal, Miss Flora; I know how hopeless is my love for you; yet vain as it is, I do not regret it. It has roused the better part of my nature, and whatever in the future I may be, I owe to your influence. God bless you for that! May you be happy. Farewell!"

His voice was choked, and tears stood in his eyes; he pressed her hand warmly, and turned away.

But Flora recalled him. "Mr. Tracy," said she, "let me explain. This letter is not what you suppose it to be. It is nothing more or less than a school teacher, who had a great many queer notions, bid us all write a love letter one week, and this is mine."

"And John," interrupted Robert. "Exists only in imagination," replied Flora. What Robert Tracy said next, and what Flora replied, it is quite unnecessary to repeat. Suffice it to say, that her first genuine love letter began, "My dear Robert," and that even when they were old enough to have outlived the age of romance, a sedate old married couple, they still cherished the yellow, time-worn pages of Flora's first love letter.

Gambling in Washington.

PREP INTO A WASHINGTON GAMBLING HOUSE. —The Washington correspondent of the Cleveland Plaindealer thus describes a visit to a gambling-house, and what he saw and heard there:

Having heard much of the grandeur and magnificence of the metropolitan gambling-houses, I with several Cleveland friends paid one a visit the other night. The entrance was through a narrow, lighted way opening from the avenue, just east of the National. A pair of stairs at the further end of the hall brings you abruptly against a small door, fastened on the inside; you ring a bell; a colored servant looks through the latticed panel to see if all is right. If he discovers a well known customer, or a frequent visitor of such places, the whole party is admitted, on the principle, of course, that "a person is known by the company he keeps." Gamblers understand human nature better than any body else. We were admitted first into a room beautifully carpeted, fresco painted, with chairs, sofas, lounges, &c., of rose wood, a large centre table, on which were the leading newspapers of the country, and around which sat several well-dressed gentlemen, leisurely reading and discussing the news of the day. This was but the half of a double parlor, the reception room, or, as Milton would say, "the vestibule of hell."

Our guide, who was a known Washington gentleman, introduced us to the keeper of the establishment, telling him that we never had been in such a place before, and were led by curiosity to explore his infernal domains. He appeared highly delighted and immediately opened up the inner temple. We entered, and found that the half had not been told us; a chandelier, costing from \$300 to \$400, brilliantly lit up, flung its glittering rays on gold papered walls, satin damask curtains, &c. In the centre, and near one end of the room, stood a large six legged table with a richly embroidered spread, falling in folds to the floor; on the wall over this table hung a massive gilt frame, and large as life a huge crouching tiger, with eyes of glaring fire, lips apart, and apparently ready for a spring upon his unsuspecting victim. The cloth being removed from the table beneath revealed a Faro Bank, with all the implements of that well known fascinating game—ivory chips, representing \$1, \$5, \$25, \$50 each, lay piled up

in one corner, for the convenience of the bettors; in a small box beneath lay piles of bank bills and heaps of double eagles for the redemption of these ivory issues.

It was early in the evening, and the players had not got in. The keeper entertained us with tales of the table—how foolishly young men came there as we had out of curiosity, and were induced to "try their luck," out of curiosity, which generally left them out of cash, out of character, and out of friends, in the end. We proposed leaving, when he politely invited us to stay to supper; he showed us his bill of fare, which included soup, roast beef, oysters in all styles, ducks, venison, quail, fish, chocolate, coffee, nuts, and all the wines and liquors to be found in the best restaurants. Whoever is admitted to the rooms, either as players or spectators, are also admitted to these suppers free of charge. Don't gamblers understand human nature? The keeper was impatient to have the House organized, so members could draw their mileage and make his business better. This is but one of many institutions in this city, and the Tiger is bound to be fed though the people starve.

A Genteel Boarding House.

A lady correspondent of the New-York Mirror, furnishes a few glimpses of life in a genteel boarding-house:

A very genteel establishment is Mrs. Puffit's—very. One may be assured of that by the manner in which the meals are served. There is no superfluity at Mrs. Puffit's table. The smallest quantity of food is placed symmetrically upon the greatest number of gilt-edged plates. Coarse minded persons, unused to society, might say that there was not enough to eat. But what of that; the silver salt cellars are carved superbly, and the napkins are of the finest quality, and even if the joints of meat have to be very carefully carved to make them "go round," surely the silver and finger-glasses are ample compensation for such slight deficiencies. Things are called by their right names at Mrs. Puffit's, too. She never asks any one if she shall help them to a potato; no indeed! she inquires if she shall accommodate them to a pomme de terre? Neither does she send a slice of pumpkin pie to Mr. Glubbins; she says, "Jeemes, the pompon pastry to Mr. Glubbins;" and Mr. Glubbins is forthwith provided with a triangular wedge of that article, nearly the size of his own forehead, and an immensely large silver fork to eat it with. And then it is worth something to see Mrs. Puffit preside. She always dresses in black velvet at dinner time; and she has such a pretty juvenile way of shrugging her fat, white-shoulders out of her bodices, and is so ingenious in the display of her pretty arms and glittering bracelets, that it is a treat to see her. And then the society—they are not all common-place people at Mrs. Puffit's—not by any means. First and foremost, there is Mr. and Mrs. Glubbins, from England, who having, of course, lost a large fortune and an estate of great magnitude, have come to this country for the purpose of taking notes of the manners and customs of the Americans. Then there are any quantity of dapper little counter-jumpers, done up in pink and blue cravats, with enormous bows. And there is a maiden lady of some note in the literary world, who has written poetry of the most pathetic description for many years, for the sole purpose of convincing the public generally that she is possessed of a distracted and disconsolate lover, residing at present in parts unknown. Then there is the Reverend Mr. Pinkman, who has been brought up on pin-cushions, pen-wipers, and other products of fancy fairs, and is only waiting a suitable opportunity to start on a mission to the heathen. Then there is pretty Mrs. Barlow, who addresses her husband as "Chrysalis-love," before company, and boxes his ears in private. —The domestic establishment consists of "Jeemes," the waiter, and one Irish girl, who is expected to do the work of six women, and sleeps in the coal-hole, when she sleeps at all.

A SHREW D FATHER.—The Paris correspondent of the Boston Atlas tells a good story of a rich and miserly father, a certain Marquis de B—:

He has two daughters, whom he tenderly loved, and desired to have advantageously settled, but hesitated to consent to their nuptials with two rich, fashionable and loving young men, for the reason that he would have to pay out large sums for the marriage settlement. He suddenly became ill, and the physicians pronounced his recovery to be very doubtful; the young men became so very ardent in their protestations of love, that the father finally consented to their wishes, but declared that he would not make a marriage settlement. Believing that the old gentleman would soon leave them the whole of his immense fortune, they said they cared nothing for the settlement, and were accordingly married, when, to their chagrin, he recovered speedily from his sickness, and bide fair to live and retain his clutch upon his money-bags many years.