



A PAPER FOR THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

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SELECTED POETRY.

Mary O'Connor, the Volunteer's Wife. BY MARY A. HENSON. As I should I would to come here to your house...

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RATES OF POSTAGE.

Postage on all letters on half ounce weight or under 3 cents per annum, except to California or Oregon.

THE ANTE-NUPITAL LIE.

IN TWO PARTS—PART II.

Then began as hard a struggle as any woman could have been called upon to endure.

My husband went with me to town that same day, and parliament sat late that year.

During all that time he never wrote to me, nor save from a casual notice in the papers, did I know anything of his movements.

The intolerable suspense and misery of such a separation may be conceived. My love for him, indeed, was no mere dutiful regard, but of that profound yet passionate nature which men of his stern and reticent character seldom calculate by a strange contrariety, to excite.

Added to this, that I knew myself to be exposed to the plying wonder and suspicion of the world as well as to the charge.

Mr. Anstruther's character stood above all imputation, but at the best was but a successful parvenu, and had at length stumbled into some atrocious fault beyond even his infatuation to overlook.

The very servants of the household whispered and marveled at me; it was inevitable that they should do so, but all this added bitterness to anguish.

Worst of all, there was a wistful look in Florry's childish eyes, and a pathos in her voice as she pressed against my side, to stroke my cheek, and say, "Poor mamma!" which almost broke my heart with mingled grief and shame.

She, too, had learned in her nursery that her mother had become an object of compassion.

It was the deep sense of pain and humiliation which my child's pity excited, which amused me to make some attempt to relieve my position. I sat down and wrote to my husband I wrote quietly and temperately, though there was almost a delirium of despair in my heart.

I had never felt that my position in his feelings would be in vain, and I therefore directed my arguments to his justice.

I represented to him briefly that his prolonged neglect and desertion would soon irrevocably place me in the eyes of the world in the position of a guilty wife, and that for my own sake, but still more for the sake of our daughter, I protested against such injustice. I told him, if forgiveness was still impossible, at least to keep up the semblance of respect I proposed to join him in London immediately, or to remain where I was, on condition of his returning home again as soon as possible.

I waited with unspoken impatience for a reply to this letter, and the next post brought it. How I blessed my husband's clemency for this relief! My trembling hands could scarcely break the seal; the consideration of the sad difference between the past and the present seemed to overwhelm me—it was not that I had been accustomed to open my husband's letters, feeling like a criminal condemned to read his own warrant of condemnation.

The letter was brief and ran thus: As the late events between us have been the subject of my intense and incessant deliberation since we parted, I am sensible, Ellinor, to return to your letter at once. I consent to return and attempt the relief of hollow deception you demand, under the expectation that you will soon be convinced of its impracticability, and will then, I conclude, be willing to consent to the formal separation which it is still my wish and purpose to effect.

"Never!" I said, crushing the hat-ter between my hands, and then my passion, long suppressed, burst forth, and throwing myself upon my knees by my bedside, I wept and groined in agony of soul. Oh! I had hoped till then—had hoped that time might have softened him, that the past might have pleaded with him for the absolute of that one transgression. Had my sin been indeed so great that the punishment was so intolerable? And then I thought it all over again, as I had done a thousand times before in that dreary retirement, weighing my temptations against my offences, and trying to place myself in my husband's position. I did not wish to justify it; it was a gross deception, a deliberate faleness; but then I was willing to prostrate myself in the dust, both before God and my husband, and to beg forgiveness in the lowest terms of pardon and penitence. But the humiliation granted me by the Divine, was steadily refused by the human judge—against his head, impetuously I might dash my bleeding heart in vain—What should I do? What was the part of duty? And frail and passion-sick as I was, how could I hold on in such a rugged way? Had I

not better succumb? Suffer myself to be put away, as he desired, and—close the door of hope on what was left of life?—My child—he said he would give me up my child. Then resolution rose renewed. For that child's sake, I would not yield. I could not endure the thought of separating her from such a father's love, care, and protection, and of chafing with sorrow and humiliation her opening girlhood. No, with God's help she should yet honor and revere her mother. How ever my husband judged me, that one fault he had cut me off from all moral effort hereafter. I would not be vanquished by it. I would, as I had said, keep my post by wife, inside, if need be, on external forms, and leave no means untried of patience, meekness, and womanly art, to melt down the iron barrier between us. I should weary the reader if I detailed all the minute plans I formed, but at last I rose up from the prayers by which I strove to strengthen and sanctify my purpose with a firm heart and new-born hope of success.

That evening, I sent for Florry to keep me company in the drawing-room; I told her favorite stories, played her favorite tunes, and joined with her in singing a simple evening-hymn, which was her supreme delight. Then I took her up to the nursery myself, and bade her good-night with as much of the serene feeling of old as perhaps I could ever hope to know again.

I also, holding my husband's letter in my hand, told the assembled servants I expected their master home to-morrow, and gave the necessary orders in such a natural and collected manner as must have done far to disarm their suspicions. Then, then night when he was expected, I knew the hour when he must necessarily arrive, and, taking Florry with me, I went to a certain part of the grounds which commanded a view of the public road. I was externally calm; the morning's discipline had made me that, but the subdued excitement was intense. Florry ran and chattered by my side as children do, little guessing, poor innocents, the cruel strain they often make on their mother's patience. It chanced, as sometimes happens, that the very intensity of our anxiety caused us to miss our object; the train was evidently behind time, and our attention, so long kept at full stretch, began to slacken, so that when Florry, who had wandered to some little distance from us, espied the carriage, it was so near the park-gates, that there was no chance of our reaching the house before it. I was vexed at my purpose being thus partially defeated, and, taking the child's hand, hurried back by the shortest route.

Mr. Anstruther was waiting us in the accustomed room. Still by his Florry's hand, I went in to face the dreaded meeting. The first glance at his face nearly overcame me, he looked so worn and harassed; true, that might have been from parliamentary hours and hard committee-work, but it is a plea a woman's heart can rarely withstand. Florry ran into his arms, talking eagerly of how glad we were to see him, and how dull poor mamma had become without him, and the momentary diversion gave me time to rally my falling calmness. "We are very glad you are come home, Malcolm," I said at last, and then, in a low voice, I laid my hand on his. "Are you well?" "Do not trouble yourself to dress before dinner to-day."

Perhaps my self-possession was overdone, so difficult is it in such cases to keep the golden mean; for I saw the usual colour mount even to his forehead, and he replied in a hurried voice, as he slightly returned the pressure of my hand; "I could scarcely sit down to the table in this state—I shall not keep you waiting long."

I shall not keep you waiting long," and with Florry in his arms—I could see how he fought his embrace of the child—He did not sit down and weep, although I was sick at heart. I had imagined it would be something like this, and had fortified myself to endure it. I sat there, still, and then I heard him come down stairs, and then I went into the drawing-room. Immediately on my entrance, dinner was announced, and he offered his arm to lead me to the room, just as he had always been accustomed to do when we were alone. There was no hesitation, no perceptible difference in his manner; I saw he had made up his mind to do it. During dinner, we talked but little, but in days of old he had been wont to be absent and taciturn. Florry came in with the dessert, and her sweet patience was felt to be a gracious relief by both. I soon rose and took away with me, keeping her with me, and amusing her with talk and music until bedtime. My husband joined me at the usual time, and though he did not voluntarily converse, he replied to anything I said without apparent constraint. Before the servants, his manner was scrupulously as of old; indeed, so unobtrusively was his natural character, that it required no very great effort for him to appear the same. I indeed felt a radical difference, which out to the heart; the hard tone, the aversion or chilly glance convinced me of the reality of our altered relations. Could I live such a life as this, for so many years yet to go off? I had a vague perception that every day we spent like this would make the separation more complete and fatal.—Had I not better make one last attempt? Had I not better make one last attempt? Had I not better make one last attempt? Had I not better make one last attempt? Had I not better make one last attempt?

At last the gloomy depth was stirred.

"O God! I had prayed for the movement of the healing angel's wing, not for a stroke of judgment!"

One evening during the session, I was sitting up awaiting his return from the House. I was not accustomed to do so, but on this occasion, I was deeply interested in the result of the night's debate, and added to that, I was uneasy about Florry, who had been slightly ailing all day, and seemed increasingly restless as the evening advanced. When he came in he looked surprised to see me up, for it was already nearly three o'clock in the morning, and I could see that he seemed wearied and unmoyed.

"You are anxious, I suppose," he said, "for the news I bring? Well, the ministers are thrown out."

I knew he, and indeed, the country in general, had been quite unprepared for such a result, and that personally it was a severe mortification to him. As I involuntarily looked at him with an expression of earnest concern I hardly ventured to express, I saw his face soften. Perhaps in that moment of vexation, he yearned for the sympathy of old. Should I dare to risk another appeal?

"I would not," I said, "but at the now unfamiliar scene, his brow clouded again, and I finished my speech with some measured expression of regret. I knew I should damage my cause if I were to attempt to press into my service a momentary weakness he was ashamed to feel. I could not, however, command my feelings sufficiently to speak of Florry, and after leaving him, I flew up stairs to my child's room, and putting down my candle, sunk on my knees by her bedside. Oh, how my heart ached! I felt this life was killing me, and that one of my moments of abandonment was come. Before I had time to weep, I gave full vent to my tears. I paused midway, as it were, to look at Florry, and that look dried them up. I felt my cheek blanch, my eyes start; I felt—what has not felt?—a premonitory horror chill my blood. I had left her pale and restless an hour before, now her face was tinged with a crimson heat, her lips dry and parted, and she was moaning heavily. I touched her burning hand, her burning brow, and the shadow of that awful calamity seemed to fall before me. I did not moan, I did not even appeal; I despair-stricken my heart.

Mr. Anstruther I knew was still up. I went down stairs with a strange quietness, and reentered the room.

"I do not wish to alarm you," I said, and my own voice had a strange sound to me, "but Florry is not well. She has been ailing all day, but her appearance now frightens me. Will you send some one for a physician at once?"

I waited for no reply, but went back to the room. The fire in the grate was laid, but not lighted; I kindled it. I changed my evening dress for a morning gown, doing all mechanically, as if under a spell I could not resist. Then I sat down by the bedside to watch my child and await the doctor. I seemed to hold all my faculties in suspense; no tear moistened my eye, no tremor unnerve my hand, until this agony had reached its crisis: then let life and hope go together.

My husband and the doctor came in after what seemed to be an intolerable interval, but at first I only saw but one. Who knows not such cases how the very soul seems hanging on the physician's first glance, drinking life and death from his eyes? I drank death. The steady professional gaze did not deceive me, but the stroke was beyond my taxed endurance, and I fell senseless on the floor.

Thank God, it was but a brief weakness. For the few days that that sweet life was left to me, I held my post unconsciously of fatigue, enabled to comfort and sustain, and even smile upon my darling through her brief struggle with death. God bowed my stubborn heart, and strengthened me with the might of submission. I seemed, in the strong light of this fiery trial, to see the past more clearly, to acknowledge that I had not humbled myself sufficiently under the chastisement of my own sin.

It was midnight when she died. I was holding her in my arms, hushed and grief-stricken, when I saw that unspoken change pass over the sweet face which tells the sinking heart the awful hour is come. Her laboring breath fluttered on my cheek, the look of love that still lingered in the glazing eyes fixed upon my face died out, and I was childless.

My husband was standing at the foot of the bed, watching the scene with an agony all the keener that he suffered no expression of it to escape, but as the faint struggle ceased, and the baby-head fell prone upon my breast, I saw the strong form quiver, and drops of perspiration start upon his forehead.

"God forgive me," he said, in a stifled whisper, "for every harsh word spoken to that angel child!" Then as his eyes fell, as if involuntarily, upon me, the expression of stern anguish softened for a moment to one of pitying tenderness. "Poor Ellinor!—poor mother!" he added, "you think me a hard man, but God is my witness, I would have saved you that little life at the cost of my own."

"It was my own," I answered, "and yet—O my darling, how I have loved you!"

My husband had turned away a moment, as if to pace the room, but at the sound of my cry of irrepensible anguish, he came back hastily to the bedside, and bending over me, tried to separate me gently from the dead child in my arms.

As I felt the touch of his hand, his breath upon my cheek, crossing warm as of old, it recalled, even in that moment of supreme bereavement, the passionate yearning of my heart, and yielding to the uncontrolled impulse, I threw my arms round his neck.

"Only give me back what is in your power," I cried—"give me back your love and trust—our old happiness, Malcolm, and even the death of our child will not seem too hard a sacrifice!"

There was a moment's breathless pause, then he raised me in his arms, and strained me to his heart in a close vehement embrace.

"God forgive me," he said, "for what I have done to you! If your love has survived my long intolerance I may well trust you, be to me again all, and more than all that I remember in the sweet past. A hundred times during the last few melancholy days have I been on the point of confessing my injustice, and entreating your forgiveness; only it seemed like a mean thing to take advantage of the softness of sorrow. Life is not bearable without you, Ellinor; only satisfy me once more that I have not worn out your heart—that it is not magnanimity, but love."

I did satisfy him. We began henceforth a new life, chastened, indeed, by the shadow of a little grave, but a life, I trust, humbler and more blessed than the old past had been.

A Stirling Proclamation.

The proclamation of Governor Yates, of Illinois, issued on receiving the recent order of the Secretary of War, contains these stirring passages:

"Illinois! the war is on your hands—the enemy now, in large numbers, is marching toward your borders. Every moment point on your rivers is threatened with attack. Shall it, he said, that the numbers, whose object it is to sustain a government as good as ours, are not one third so large as those which are in arms to put it down? Shall the handful of our first volunteers be required to oppose vastly superior numbers? How long shall the brave Siegel, in the unequal conflict, be forced to retreat? How long shall the blood of the noble Lyon cry from the ground unavenged? How long shall the fatal blunder and foul blot of Manassas stain our escutcheon?"

"The cause in which we are to engage is a good one. You are to fight for a Government you love, the very best Government on earth, endeared to you by the boundlessness of the blessings it confers; which has protected and nursed you with all the fondness of a mother for her child; which has secured our country respect at home and abroad, and made the title 'American citizen' prouder than that of 'Roman citizen' in the days of the Sapias and Cæsars. What undying memories cluster around it! What joys, what fears, what tears, what smiles, what destinies, what hopes are associated with it! The gift of Washington—the hero of our children—the asylum of the oppressed of every nation on earth; to aim for its perpetuity is the loftiest summit of patriotic aspiration, and to vindicate it the most shining height of human achievement. To fight for, to live for, to die for such a Government, is glorious."

"We fight for our nationality, for the life of liberty itself, for our Union—for the States to be one and undivided, now and forever; to establish, now and always, that free, strong, and happy Government of a people, founded upon the equal rights of a majority, to defend itself against all traitors at home and all enemies abroad. Cost what it may, then—an empty exchequer, ruin'd credit, prostrate commerce, and fearful loss of human life—the war, at any cost, will be cheap; and history, in all her ample chronicles, shall indite no sublimer event than the spontaneous uprising of this great people to establish the proposition which all the ages have not settled, that a free government shall be strong enough and vigorous enough to sustain itself, and that man is capable of self-government."

"Illinois! traitors are marching upon your National Capitol to tear down the flag which Washington planted upon its dome, and which for eighty-five years has waved to the battle and the breeze—the emblem of our national sovereignty, and the proud ensign of our national greatness and renown. Let us meet them, never giving ground, never yielding an inch, till the jubilant shouts of triumph shall go up from all our charging columns and all our victorious legions. Let there be no compromise till the last traitor shall lay down his arms and sue for peace."

"Illinois! we are soon to make a record of our State. Each State will be justly envious to inscribe her name highest on the scroll of fame which the historian of this war has already commenced to write. Shall not the star which answers to Illinois be brightest in the galaxy of the thirty-four? On many a field of glory she has written an imperishable record of her prowess, and while the names of her Harris, her Bissell, her Shields, and her Baker, and the gallant men around them remain, her fame is secure."

"Let us now send her proudest challenge into the field, and do nothing to mar the glories already achieved. Let us raise an army which, in numbers, discipline and press, shall of itself be sufficient to sweep the last vestige of treason from the Mississippi Valley, and to bear our flag in triumph to the ends of the Republic."

"RICHARD YATES, Governor and Commander-in-Chief."

The Grass Valley National relates the following incident as having recently occurred in that vicinity:

A lawyer of this village was consulted a few days since by an injured husband, who complained of the unfaithfulness of his spouse. Repeated acts of inconstancy on the part of the wife could be clearly proved, and the man of law told his client that there would be no difficulty in obtaining a divorce at the next term of the Court. "Divorce next term of the Court?" exclaimed the now excited bondmaid. "D—n your divorce! I don't want any divorce! I only want to get an injunction to stay her proceedings!"

"A lass Tam no more," as the girl said when she got married.

A Question—Whether the "old wife" so much prized is older than the older

How Post Office Robberies Occur.

This last number of Holbrook's United States Mail has these timely hints:

"Within a few months past, an unusual number of post offices have been broken open and robbed—mainly in the New England States—and it is believed most of them desperadoes. Whilst most mischief and inconvenience by the destruction of correspondence had been the result, so far as we know these robberies have yielded but trifling gains to their authors, owing to the fact that the quantity of mail matter remaining over night is usually very trifling—especially in that class of offices usually selected. In many instances these burglaries are no doubt invited by the exposed condition of the buildings and apartments in which country post offices are kept. When a postmaster accepts, at the hands of the government, so responsible a position, such acceptance of course, implies all necessary and proper precaution for the security of the correspondence and other property entrusted to his custody. And upon every principle of justice we do not see why personal liability for the loss of such property, when fairly taken to negligence in this particular should not follow, as when shown to have been the result of carelessness and neglect in the internal management of a post office, the decisions of the courts, so far as the question of responsibility in the case last mentioned."

"In many of the robberies of which we have been speaking, an extra bolt, bar, or shutter would have prevented them. We trust that this brief allusion to the subject will result in an increased vigilance on the security of post offices, against the operations of outside desperadoes."

LET THE FIRST WORD HE LIPS BE

"WASHINGTON."—Let the first word he lips be "WASHINGTON." Hang on his neck, on that birthday, that day of his death, at Mount Vernon, the annual of Congress, by its dark-ribbons, tell him the story of the flag as it passes glittering along the road; bid him listen to that plain, old-fashioned stirring music of the Union; lead him, when school is out at evening, to the grave of his great grandfather, the old soldier of the war; bid him, like Hannibal, at nine years old, lay his little hand on that Constitution, and swear reverently to observe it; lift him up, and lift yourself up, to the height of an American feeling; open to him and think for yourself, the relation of America to the States; show him upon the map the area to which she has extended herself; the climates that come into the number of her months; the silver path of her trade, wide as the world; tell him of her contribution to humanity, and her protests for free government; keep with him the glad and solemn feasts of her appointment; bury her great name in his heart, and into young hearts; contemplate habitually, lovingly, intelligently, this grand abstraction, the vast reality of good; and such an institution may do something to transform this surpassing beauty into a national life, which shall last while sun and moon endure.—Rufus Choate.

ROMANTIC LOVE SCENE.

"Tis past the hour of midnight. The golden glow of day drove its emblazoned chariot through the heavens, has ceased shining upon the earth, and a black pall reigns upon the lower section of our city. Night is heard save the distant murmurings of the equipages de la nuit; or the step of the melancholy bill-poster, as he pursues his homeward way. Suddenly a sound breaks the stillness of the night; it is the sweet voice of Frederick William, calling in plaintive tones upon his beloved Florence Amalia."

"Throw open the lattice, love, and look down upon the casement; for I your own Frederick is here."

"What brings thee, love, at this time of night, when all is so still and gloomy?"

"Come to offer thee my heart. On my soul I love thee—truly, wildly, passionately love thee. Dost thou reciprocate?"

The maiden blushed as she hesitated.

"Ah!" cried he, and the face of our hero lit up with a sardonic smile, "thou lovest!"

"No! no!" cried Florence.

"Then why not return to this bosom that is bursting to receive thee?"

"Because," replied the innocent, but still trembling damsel, "I'm afraid you're blawin', Bill!"

The Cleveland Plaindealer has the following hit on the rage for office under the new administration:

"Another Republican got something," said Joe to Dave.

"Sender!" Has he got something?"

"Yes, sir, he has, sure, and brought it home with him."

"Well, what has he got?"

"The measles!"

SCHOOLMASTER'S ABROAD.

The following is a literal copy of the last questions proposed for discussion in a debating club out West:

Subjects of Discussion. Is daisies morrisio rong? Is the recdin of fetichus works commedible? Oz femals to take part in pollytix? Duz dress constitut the moral part of winnim?

A BRIGHT IDEA.—An examiner of schools, while lately examining the young children of a country school, asked them the following questions: "Are there any mountains in Palestine?" "Yes," replied the children.—"How are they situated?" "Inquired the examiner.—"Some are in clusters, and there are isolated ones," they answered. "What do you mean by the word isolated?" asked the examiner. "Why, covered with ice, of course," quickly replied one of the children.

ELOQUENT.—A young lawyer lately concluded his argument in a case of trespass, with the following sublime burst: "If gentlemen of the jury, the defendant's hogs are permitted to roam at large over the fair fields of my client—then—yes, then indeed have our forefathers fought and bled and died in vain!"