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JOHN G. HALL,  
EDITORS PROPRIETOR.

# The Elk Advocate.

JOHN G. HALL, Editor.  
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## The Poet's Corner.

### THE PEACE OF GOD.

O FATHER, lift our souls above,  
Till we find rest in thy dear love;  
And still that peace divine impart,  
Which sanctifies the inmost heart,  
And makes each morn and setting sun  
But bring us nearer to thy throne.

May we our daily duties meet,  
Tread sin each day beneath our feet,  
And win that strength which doth thy will  
And seal, and so is still;  
And dwell on thy sustaining arm,  
While daily food and knows no harm.

Help us with man in peace to live,  
Our brother's wrong in love forgive,  
And day and night the tempest flee  
Thy strength which comes a one from thee  
Thou wilt our spirits find their rest,  
In thy deep peace forever blest.

## Selected Miscellany.

From "Once a Week."

### THE LAST LOVE.

#### EPISODE IN THE LIFE OF A PHILOSOPHER.

The Independence of the United States of America had been conclusively acknowledged and ratified by the Treaty of Peace of September 3, 1783; and, under the able direction of Benjamin Franklin, ambassador from the new Republic to the Court of Versailles, the diplomatic and commercial relations of the United States with France, had been successfully established by Treaty, in consonance with the views and wishes of Congress.

Philadelphia ardently desired the return of her famed fellow-citizen who had displayed so much prudence and skill in effecting the great objects of his mission. He, no less anxious to return to America, never wholly free from the fear that his declining health might detain him in France, perhaps to close his life there, and, withal, that his most ardent prayer was to be spared to end his days in his native land among his fellow-citizens, and surrounded by his grandchildren—he yet seemed to seek a pleasurable excuse for the delay of his departure, under the influence of a sentiment which had less concern in the settlement of such collateral details as yet remained for adjustment, than the American philosopher had, perhaps, deemed possible, or cared even to acknowledge to himself all that period of life.

During the latter part of his embassy to the French Court, he had taken up his residence at Passy, near Auteuil, in the environs of Paris.

In the latter charming village dwelt the widow of Helvetius. The relict of Helvetius was a most amiable and gifted woman. She reckoned among her friends the most distinguished men of letters of the period, by whom she was never otherwise designated than as "The good old lady of Auteuil."

Although she had past that term of female life which has been so arbitrarily assigned as the climacteric to the fascinating powers of the fair sex, the widow of Helvetius was another exception to that questionable rule; and still more fascinating both by the grace of her manners and the attractions of her person. The gentleness of her disposition, the charming versatility of her intellect, together with the prudent department which had distinguished her throughout a life of considerable trial, and had placed her beyond the reach of all approach, invested her as it were, with an aureole of feminine grace and purity, to which all who came within the atmosphere of her course paid homage of admiration and respect.

Strange as it may at first appear, when the then respective ages of the "good lady of Auteuil" and of Benjamin Franklin are considered, the American philosopher found the charm of her society too irresistible not to make a permanent alliance with her a serious subject of his thoughts; and inasmuch as length had believed it desirable for his happiness.

On her part, the amiable widow had not the most remote presentation of such a design; and always received Franklin as a friend who entertained no other sentiments towards her than those he had expressed, and as one in whose near society she would have esteemed herself happy to live.

Between Passy and Auteuil, a frequent intercourse of visits had for some time been established. Once in every week Madame Helvetius dined at Franklin's house, in company with the Abbey de Larouche, the physician Cabanis, who resided under her roof, and Morellet, another esteemed friend, but less frequent guest. Franklin on the other hand dined much more frequently at the house of the charming widow, where he often passed the whole evening, but had never yet paid her a morning visit.

The intercourse with Franklin was most cordial on both sides. The sympathy of his manners, his noble sense of right and duty, which revealed itself in the most trivial things; his affability, the purity of his soul, his cheerfulness,

and his delightful power of narration, were inexhaustible themes for admiration to Morellet.

Such in society was the man who had contributed so much to the elevation of his country to a free and independent state, and whom mankind has to thank for one of the most important discoveries of his time.

One morning contrary to his usual custom, Franklin left his apartment at a very early hour, and summoned the young man who officiated as a valet and general servant, by his usual appellation of "Dick! Dick! I am going to Auteuil, get thee ready to come with me."

Dick a born American, had served with some distinction in the War of Independence under Washington. On the reduction of the army, he left his immediate service about the person of that General to take service with Benjamin Franklin, to whom he became greatly attached. Richard, or Dick, as he was familiarly called by Franklin, was no servant of the common order. Trusty, and devoted from impulse and from principle, he was as good a Christian from faith as he was American by birth and feeling. He accompanied his master everywhere, and when not making the necessary preparations for Franklin's Philosophical experiments, or engaged in other immediate duties, he was a diligent reader of his Bible. Like most young men of a genuine tone of feeling, when conscious of the genuine rectitude of their principles, he was somewhat of an enthusiast, and never more so than when the opportunity presented itself to speak of the land of his birth, or when the merits of his master, were the subject of discourse.

In his spare moments he was fond of enlightening the minds of the other servants on the effect of electricity, or of explaining to the simple peasants of Auteuil the great advantages of the lightning-conductor, invented by his master, Benjamin Franklin.

No sooner was Richard called, than he made his appearance, and almost in less time than it took his master to communicate his intention, the gold-headed cane, hat and gloves of the philosopher were handed to him, and without further delay, master and man were upon their way to Auteuil.

Under the already growing rays of a mid June morning sun, that had begun somewhat to embrown the meadows, and lit up copse, cornfield and vineyard with a dazzling flood of summer light, the travellers found the heat even at that hour oppressive, and quitting the high road, the paved *chaussee* of which reflected oppressively both the light and heat, pursued their way by side paths now become familiar to them, where they were screened, and frequent and agreeable intervals by the friendly shade of trees. The philosopher walking slowly in front, evinced by nothing in his manner how much he was in reality concerned to reach the end of his journey with more expedition, while his servant behind could scarcely suppress a feeling of impatience at the slowness of his master's pace.

Franklin found Madame Helvetius in her *salle de reception*, which looked out upon the beautiful garden of her house, from which close, and up to the very sill of the window, near which she had been seated, the thick foliage of a lime tree spread its cool and refreshing verdure.

"So early a visitor, my worthy Dr. Franklin!" said the charming hostess, as she rose to receive him. "I hope it may be no unpleasant intelligence that you have imparted to me, and which has set you astray at so unusual an hour?"

"Not in the least, Madame Helvetius," replied Franklin. "I am come thus early to relate to you a circumstance that occurred to me last night."

"Ah! then, my dear friend, how charming it is of you. You are come to relate to me some pleasant little story?"

"Well, you shall judge for yourself, dear Madame. You will perhaps recollect our conversation of last evening, and how I endeavored by the most cogent arguments to make you sensible that you ought no longer to lead thus a single life, but should marry again?"

"O heavens! my dear friend, why revert to such a subject! Let us rather speak on some other."

"Is it then possible, Madame Helvetius, that you have not perceived the regret I feel in regard to the strange persistence with which you still persevere in your truth towards your deceased husband, which is not only without any reasonable ground of excuse, but perfectly futile?"

"At another time we will talk of that—at another time, dear friend!" interposed Madame Helvetius, with a simulating motion of her hand towards Franklin's white head, as though she would have smoothed down his grey locks.

"Well," resumed Franklin, "after our conversation of last night, I returned home, went to bed, and dreamed—that I was dead. Shortly I found myself in that paradise where the souls of

the departed enjoy imperishable happiness and repose. The gate-keeper asked whether I was desirous of seeing any of the spirits of the blessed; and I made reply that I much desired to be led where the philosophers were wont to meet. 'There are two,' replied the guardian 'who much frequent a spot close by. They are most intimate neighbors, and take much pleasure in each other's society.' 'Who are they?' said I. 'Socrates and Helvetius,' was the guardian's reply. 'I have an equal esteem for both of them; but lead me first to Helvetius, for though I speak French, I am not a master of the Greek language.'

Helvetius received me in the most friendly manner. He questioned me eagerly upon the present state of religious matters in France, and on the political subjects which most engaged the attention of Europe. But I, who had imagined he would have been more anxious to be informed upon matters that concerned him more nearly, and surprised that he made no inquiries about you, interrupted him at length in his interrogatories, and exclaimed, 'But, good heaven! have you no desire to know how fares your old faithful friend and partner in life, Madame Helvetius?—she who still loves you with such affectionate constancy! Scarcely an hour since I was in her house at Auteuil, and had the most convincing evidence of the undiminished interest and devotion with which she regards you, and cherishes your memory!'

"Ah!" said he, you speak of my former matrimonial felicity. We must learn to forget those things here, if we would be happy. For many years I thought of nothing else, she was constantly before my mind, and even here I felt desolate. But at length I have found a consolation for the loss of her society. I have married another charming woman, and it would have been impossible to find one who resembled more my first wife, than her on whom my choice has fallen. She is not so handsome, it is true, as my former spouse; but she is gifted with as much feeling and intellect; and loves me tenderly. She has, indeed, no thought but to please me, and to render me happy. Stay awhile with me and you shall soon behold her."

"Upon this I resumed: 'I perceive very clearly that your first wife is infinitely more true and constant than you are. Since your death she has had several very advantageous offers of marriage but he refused them all. I will candidly confess to you, that I loved her myself with the most intense affection; but she remained cold and insensible to all my entreaties and all arguments; in fact, she refused my hand from love for you!'

"I am exceedingly sorry to hear that she was so unreasonable, and pity her inconsiderate wilfulness; for she was indeed a most excellent and truly lovable woman."

"At these words, Madame Helvetius made her appearance; and in her recognition—imagine only, who I saw before me? No other person than Madame Franklin! my old faithful American friend and wife! On the instant I laid claim on her as belonging to me—but, in a cool and somewhat repulsive tone, she said: 'For forty years and four months, nearly half a century, I was your wife. Rest satisfied with that. I have here formed another alliance, which will endure forever.' Deeply chagrined to be rejected in so cold a manner by my departed wife, I immediately resolved to quit such ungrateful spirits. I longed to return to our planet, and behold once more the sun and you! Say, shall we not avenge ourselves for such inconsistency?"

But the charming widow of Auteuil was by no means disposed to avenge in such a manner the faithlessness of the spirit which the American philosopher's brain had so vividly impressed upon him in his dream. Her determination to remain single had long been an unalterable resolve. Had such not been the case, it might be readily believed she would have hesitated before she rejected an offer that conferred with it so much honor, and which, had she accepted, would have bestowed upon her a name equally celebrated in two quarters of the globe.

As they sat opposite to each other at the open window, it was not without a certain degree of emotion that she gazed on the earnest, truthful countenance of him who spoke to her, so frankly, and with a cheerful hopefulness of soul at once so tender, so affectionate! She appreciated at their full value the high esteem, and the sincere friendship, of which he had given her proof so incontestible in the solicitation for her hand. Neither in his manner, nor his words had Benjamin Franklin made himself ridiculous. There was nothing of the love-sick dotard in his demeanor. Before her sat a sage, who spoke deeply impressed with the conviction that, in all the circumstances, and in every stage of life, no partner was so desirable and indispensable as a wife who was fitted to embellish our existence, to give

twofold increase to our happiness, to alleviate the cares and sweeten the bitter anxieties which are our inevitable fate however highly or lowly cast; and, if destined to survive her husband, to make his death bed one of peaceful resignation.

On the previous evening in discourse with Madame Helvetius, Franklin had, indeed, purposely adverted to, and eventually dwelt with much earnestness upon the propriety of her entering again the marriage state; but in doing so, whether from timidity or forethought, he had expressed his opinion in a general point of view only, without in the least permitting his own personal sentiments towards her to betray themselves. Nor in truth, during that conversation, whether from less vanity than most of her sex, or a less share of that innate perspicuity in matters of the heart, which most women possess, she had not the remotest degree detected the deep interest he felt in the counsel he advised with such tranquil yet earnest eloquence.

But now the amiable widow's eyes became suffused with tears; she leaned her arm on the window cushion, and buried her face in her hand.

"Come, then," said Franklin, after a short silence,— "come, then, charming lady of Auteuil, let us both avenge ourselves."

"Wist! listen! my dear friend, listen!" said Madame Helvetius, in a low tone, and in an attitude of attention.— "Do not speak, for I hear voices in discourse close to us."

Both gently rose from their seats, and putting aside as gently the foliage of the lime-tree branch that obstructed somewhat their hearing and view of what was passing in the garden beneath, they beheld there, seated on a stone bench immediately under the window, Franklin's valet, Dick, in close discourse with Annette, the daughter of Madame Helvetius's gardener, a young maiden of seventeen, and a by no means unattractive specimen of those dark-eyed daughters of France, frequently to be met with among the peasant girls of the environs of Paris, whose rustic beauty is not a little enhanced by the charm of a custom at once simple and picturesque.

Between the leaves of the lime-tree both Franklin and Madame Helvetius remarked that the heads of the two young people were so closely inclined to each other, that the fair hair of the American almost touched the black braided tresses of the maiden of Auteuil.

"Let me go, Monsieur Richard!" said the damsel, the light olive complexion of her sunny cheeks suffused the while with a richer blush of red. "If Madame knew that you were following me, she would be sure to discharge me from her service. Let me go, I beseech you. O, I must go! There, don't you hear? I think my father called me to water his peas. Yes, and besides, I have not yet skimed the last night's milk."

Nevertheless, Annette rose from the bench on which she was seated. But that might be accounted for by the circumstance that Richard, though without the least effort to detain her, had put his arm around her slender waist, doubtless to prevent her escaping.

On witnessing so much undue familiarity on the part of his servant, Franklin evinced great uneasiness, and from a sentiment of virtuous indignation his cheek became crimson red. He was about to speak in anger to the thoughtless young couple, when Madame Helvetius, putting her small white hand over her mouth, compelled him to silence, and to listen further.

"You will not understand me, Annette," was Richard's reply to the maiden, "What I say to you, I would as openly say in the presence of Madame Helvetius and Monsieur Franklin. Go call your father if you will, and I will speak before him."

The young girl inclined her pretty head in silence, and as though her inmost heart responded in sympathy to the frank avowal of the young man's sentiments towards her, the slight motion made by the neat little foot that mechanically rubbed up the gravel path on which it rested, brought her somewhat yet closer to Richard. No further reply from her was needed.

"Well, then," continued the young man, "we will be married. I will open my mind to Monsieur Franklin. He will speak to Madame Helvetius, and then both will arrange matters with your father."

"Are you really in earnest, Richard? You wish to marry me?"

"In all truth and earnestness I mean it, dear Annette. We will go to America and you will see that it is the finest country in the whole world. Monsieur Franklin will give us some land which I will cultivate. We shall be free there, and live content and happy. O my dear Annet! if you but knew my magnificent native land! How gloriously the sun rises above our forests, you would long, as ardently as I do to be there; and the sooner the better, for I am sure you will learn to love it as I do.

Compared to the grandeur of our rivers, your Seine and Rhone are mere insignificant brooklets, and in one of our lakes you might sink all Paris, and not a vestige of it would be seen. Say but the word, Annette, and before Monsieur Franklin leaves the house all may be settled."

"How? said the maiden, her dark, soft eyes expanding with an expression of astonishment and her whole countenance breathing, as it were, the doubt and curiosity which Richard's description of his native land had awakened in her simple mind; above all, at hearing of lakes in which all Paris would disappear, without leaving a trace of it. "Are there, then, such grand and beautiful things in your country?"

"Yes Annett, indeed; and God knows that I speak the truth."

"And is there then, also, there, a duck pond, like here at Auteuil?"

"What! the duck pond of Auteuil! That little pond you pass by at the entrance to the village—that mere ditch planted around with sickly trees, and full of nothing else but frogs and toads?"

"Yes, yes," resumed the village lass, withdrawing herself gently from Richard's circling arm. "A duck pond like here in Auteuil!"

"But, Annette, how can you think of that duck pond? You surely do not love me; and there is some young man in the village whom you love better than me."

"No Richard. But the duck pond of Auteuil is more to my taste than your great lakes which you seem to have a fancy to put all Paris in; and then your rivers, as compared to which Seine, my loved, beautiful Seine, the river of my native land, is but an insignificant brooklet! Richard, I will be your wife; but you must remain in Auteuil."

"What, Annette? You would have me leave Monsieur Franklin? Have me abandon forever my native land? That would be as though you would have me desert the flag of my country? You would surely never require such a sacrifice from me, Annett? Reflect only a little that my country has need of all her citizens, however humble their station. That England, which could not crush us out, may again become our enemy. Good Heavens! what would Monsieur Franklin say to such a thing, were I to tell him I would not return with him to America? Annette! I love you; I would willingly lay down my life for you, if my country had no call for it. Annette! my beloved Annette! there is yet something greater, something higher than love, than happiness; and that is the duty we owe to the land that gave us birth. But you—you are not so situated. What can withhold you? France has no need of you a humble maiden. You can leave your native land, and your absence would never be remarked; you, whose name is perhaps not known beyond Auteuil, and who never can render any service to your country."

"You are in error, Richard!" repeated the maiden, rising from the seat and assuming a graceful dignity of attitude that struck Richard with astonishment, as with the spontaneous impulse of all her genial nature, she exclaimed, "I, too love my country—our beautiful France! And I will that my children, should it please God that I have any, shall love it too, as I do! Have you never heard in your America of that maiden of France, the humble village girl of Douremy, who delivered our land, too, from the yoke of those proud English, against whom you have fought? Duty, you say, calls you back to America. My happiness binds me to France. You love your lakes, your rivers, your forests; I love the duck pond of Auteuil on whose bank I was born. As a child I sported by that pond side; and those sickly trees of which you spoke with such contempt, were witnesses to the pleasure of my youth. Adieu, Monsieur Richard! Fare ye well! I must go water my father's peas, make the cheese for Madame Helvetius, and skim last night's milk."

With the native grace of her countrywomen, she uttered slowly and slightly to her dumb-stricken and bewildered American lover; then, turning from the spot in visible emotion, and eyes suffused with impressive tears, she hastened to the kitchen garden where her father had been engaged all the morning with his watering pot.

"My dear friend," said Madame Helvetius to Franklin, "you are a more valuable citizen than Richard, at least you are more useful and needed by your country than he. Will you, can you resolve to give up your America entire, by? Will you end your days in France near the duck-pond of Auteuil, far away from your great rivers, your immense lakes, your sun that rises so gloriously over your virgin forests? I for my part—I think like Annette. I prefer the little insignificant duck-pond of Auteuil to that new world that you have contributed so much to enfranchise. Your narrative of the dream is as charming as it was ingenious," she added, "but my dear friend what say you to the little narrative we have just heard

together?"

Franklin spoke not. After a short pause in which he seemed to be collecting himself he raised the hand of the woman he loved to his lips, kissed it with respectful tenderness, and immediately sought the apartment of the physician Cabanis, who was to prescribe the regimen he was to follow during the long voyage across the Atlantic, in alleviation of the suffering he always experienced on the passage.

A few days afterwards he embarked with Richard at Havre for America. Annette left neither the duck-pond nor France. But after the lapse of twelve months, she married one of her neighbors, who in 1785 joined the army, and was accompanied by her on the march to the frontiers Under the Empire, Annette played a brilliant role and her husband fell gloriously on the field of honor in 1813.

As far as relates to Madame Helvetius, "the good lady of Auteuil" proved herself constant both to her predilection for that quiet village and her resolution to remain a widow. Her house was still the favorite resort of the most distinguished men of the day. Benjamin Franklin had for his successors Turgot, Garat, Destat Tracy, and Bernardin de Saint Pierre. When Bonaparte, then first consul, was walking one day with her in the garden, she said to him, "General, you do not know how happy one can live on a small patch on this globe of scarcely three acres!" Those were truthful words from the lips of a woman who had rejected the hand of Benjamin Franklin, and preferred to live and die in modest retirement, in which, sustained throughout by the noble impulses of a kindly heart and gifted intellect, the love of her country, was next to that of God, the constant aspiration of her gentle soul.

—A new Radical paper is to be started at Norfolk, Va., to be called the *Republican*.

—The Roberts Fenians contemplate an early resumption of operations in Canada.

—The leading English newspapers approve of the Derby reform measures.

—The habeas corpus in Ireland has been suspended for three months longer.

—Since 1821, Mexico has had 23 presidents, 7 dictators, 2 emperors, 1 vice president, and 1 generalissimo.

—The United States Government is censured by Earl Russell for pleading for Fenians.

—The bill for the confederation of the British Provinces of North America has passed the House of Lords.

—Government officials in Brooklyn, having found that seizing liquors does not stop frauds, have taken to seizing distillers.

—The difficulty between the American minister at Bogota and the Colombian government has been satisfactorily arranged.

—The public debt statement, to be issued March 5, will not show any material change from the last statement.

—The Senate Committee on Agriculture has recommended the erection of a building for the exclusive use of the Department of Agriculture.

—Rumor has it that General Fremont is soon to open a banking house in New York in connection with several well-known operators in Wall street.

—Two dredging sewers, built by the city of Petersburg, Va., have been launched and christened. One is called General Grant and the other General Lee.

—One of the largest real estate owners in Mobile has deducted one-third of the amounts due from his tenants on notes given last year, and receipted them in full.

—A number of Federal soldiers are engaged in disinterring the dead at Goldsborough, North Carolina. They are to be carried to Raleigh for reinterment in the Federal cemetery there.

—The Scandinavians of Chicago held a grand ball on the 19th February, in which numbers of Danish, Norwegian, Swedish ladies and gentlemen appeared in their old national costumes.

—The Commissioner of the General Land Office has just adjusted titles of one hundred pre-emption claims in the San Francisco land district of California. On these claims are twenty-five vineyards and fifty five orchards.

—A rebel soldier, while in an Indiana prison, whittled out a model of a cotton-press. He claims that, with the help of a good gin, he can gin and pack a bale of cotton, weighing five hundred and twenty-five pounds, in two hours.

—A man in Poughkeepsie recently got a neighbor into the lunatic asylum, and then married the neighbors wife.