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POETRY.

By the Democrat.

THE SICK MAN'S LAMENT.

How sweetly flows the summer breeze,
Along the murmuring woodland stream;
And fans the silent creeping vine,
That waves there in the moonlit beam,
So steals away life's sunny hours,
Where health and happiness combine;
For all is peace and pleasure there,
To render life a joy divine.

But different far the path I tread,
There wear away the gloomy hours,
With nought to cheer my solitude,
But foolish hope which early sooms—
My life is but a wildering dream
Which fills the troubled sleepers head,
And stores his nightly visions with
A feeling, wrought of fear and dread.

I once in childhood's tender years,
Could love each moment as it pass'd;
And oft I've wish'd, that artless youth,
With bliss so sweet could always last.
But ah! it's but a bitter throe,
And each succeeding day is but
A pang, of anguish, pain and woe.

But, time rolls on and in its round,
Brings nought of gladness to my heart
Except the thought that with its pace,
Will come the hour from Earth to part.
Oft I have dream'd of that glad time
When unencumber'd by this clod
I'll soar away to Heaven from Earth
And dwell in glory with my God.

But I must wait with cheering faith,
Nor murmur at His holy will;
But like the waves in silence rest,
When Jesus bids them "peace, be still."

B. H. W.

Brooklyn, Sus. Co., Pa.

LIFE'S HARVEST-FIELD.

By Miss W. D. WOODBRIDGE.

When morning dawns the earth from sleep
With soft and kindling ray,
We rise, Life's harvest-field to reap—
"This ripening day by day."
To reap, sometimes with joyful heart—
A non-wild tearful eye
We see the Spider hath a part—
We reap with smile and sigh.
Full oft the taris obstruct our way;
Full oft we feel the thorn,
Our hearts grow faint—we weep, we pray—
Then Hope is newly born.
Hope that, at last, we all shall come—
Through rough the way and long—
Back to our Father's house, our home,
And bring our sheaves with song.
[Home Magazine.]

MISCELLANY.

JUST TOO LATE.

By ANNA MARIA SARDEANT.

A friendly eye could never see such folly:
A father's sighing, though there were a host
As high Olympus. JULIUS CAESAR.

"I am afraid that you will be too late for the early train, dear Frank," was the exclamation of a gentle looking young woman, who, as she spoke, placed one hand upon the shoulder of her husband, and with the other attempted, half playfully, half in earnest, to draw away the newspaper he held.

"I have plenty of time, my love: it wants five and thirty minutes to seven, and I can walk leisurely to the terminus in ten" was the reply, as he glanced hurriedly upon the watch which lay upon the table by his side, and he commenced a frigid column.

The wife quietly re-asserted herself and resumed her needle-work, but her eye wandered ever and anon with an impatient glance towards her companion, and then rested on the monitor at his elbow, the tickings of which were audible in the otherwise unbroken silence. Rising at length, she once more placed her hand upon her husband's arm and mildly enquired what he had found so very interesting as to engage his attention under such pressing circumstances.

"You are anxious, I see, Mary," he returned, "but I tell you I have plenty of time to finish this debate."

"Will you, for the sake of reading a debate, hazard the probability of not seeing your Uncle alive, my dear Frank," she somewhat reproachfully asked.

"I am not hawarding it," he with a pettish gesture returned, "and you know, Mary," he continued, "I never made any professions of affection for my uncle—our tastes and habits were too dissimilar for me to feel any, and I scorn to play the hypocrite."

"Still, since it is his dying wish to see you, you would surely desire to gratify it," pleaded the wife.

The young man threw the paper upon the table, hastily caught up the cloak which had been lying ready at his side, and taking up his watch observed, "It still wants twenty minutes to seven, so I shall be there ten minutes before the train starts. Good-bye, my love," he hurriedly added, and with the utterance of the latter sentence no vestige of penitence mingled.

Mrs. Merton followed him to the outer door, she did not trust her voice in a response to the parting benediction, lest her tears should flow but having watched his retreating form till an angle in the street obscured him from her view she returned to the parlor he had just quitted and wept unreservedly.

Mary Merton was a tender affectionate wife, but her grief on this occasion did not wholly arise from the separation. The five years of her wedded life had been five years of care not unaccompanied with privation, and her trials had been less easy to endure from the knowledge that they were principally owing to her husband's dilatory, procrastinating habits. He had now left her and his children with no other means of support than her needle was capable of supplying, for every shilling they possessed was in requisition to meet the expenses of the journey he was about to undertake.

Our hero was one of that numerous class of young men who are without any settled occupation. Not having as it is termed a *turn for business*, and his father being without adequate means to enable him to study for one of the learned professions, he had been allowed to follow the bent of his own inclinations. His uncle's interest had been exerted in getting him early introduced into a respectable banking establishment; he was however, speedily discharged for want of punctuality. He next took a situation as a clerk in a lawyer's office, but the many hours he was now confined to a desk did not agree with his love of ease and readily impaired his health; from this position he had descended from necessity to the counter. His pride would not long brook the humiliations to which he was here exposed. Adversity had not yet taught him that valuable truth, that no occupation is really derogatory which is not dishonorable, and which has been undertaken from elevated motives; and thus he became the sport of fortune, and the amiable and gentle young creature who had unfortunately for her, linked her destiny with his, was a sufferer with him.

Mrs. Merton was still weeping over her past troubles and future prospects, when she was aroused by a well known knock at the street door. Her husband's want of prudence and perseverance had weaned from him every relative and friend save one. This was an old school mate, whose liberality was only equalled by his forbearance. Charles Leicester was a character rarely met with, and still more rarely appreciated, for in him were combined that noble sense of justice which permits not the claims of an enemy to be overlooked, and the warm hearted generosity which is ever ready to make a sacrifice of self interest in the cause of friendship.

Such was the early visitor who was now admitted to the mansion. "Ho, ho, you have the advantage of me, I perceive," he exclaimed as he entered the apartment where the breakfast apparatus gave sure indications that they had already taken their morning meal. "I came with the intention of taking a cup of coffee with you, and talking over some affairs of business before I went to the city."

"It is not often that my husband is out so early," Mr. Leicester. Mrs. Merton returned, whilst a faint blush suffused her before pale cheek. "Last evening's post brought a letter from a confidential servant of Mr. Gresham's, with intelligence of the old gentleman's approaching dissolution, and further stating that it was his wish that Frank should visit him immediately."

"And is he really gone by the first train this morning," Leicester inquired with evident surprise.

The check of the wife was again flushed as she faltered forth that she hoped so. Scarcely however had the words escaped her lips ere she caught his figure passing the window.

"This is surely he," cried her guest, whose eye had been roving in the same direction, for to confess the truth, both wife and friend had, from past experience, expected the result.

"Ha, Charles, my dear fellow, how are you?" "I'm glad to see you," Merton exclaimed, as he re-entered his house. "Glad to see you," he repeated, laughing to hide his chagrin, for he would just then rather have seen an dun. "But was there ever such an unlucky night as myself?" he jocosely added.

"You were just too late, I suppose," Leicester drily observed.

"Yes, my evil genius caused my watch to lose ten minutes during the night, and I got to the terminus just after the train had started," was his reply. "But it's my usual luck," he pettishly added, throwing his hat and cloak so carelessly on the table that the former by the irresistible laws of gravitation speedily found its way to the floor. Mrs. Merton quietly took up the ill used hat and busied herself in smoothing the few remaining vestiges of beaver on its surface.

"Mary has told you, I suppose, where I was going this morning," the young man pursued, "but I've very little hopes from uncle Gresham's liberality. He has been a prosperous man all his life, everything he has touched has turned to gold, and he makes no allowances for the misdeeds of an unfortunate fellow like me. Do you remember, Charles, his disappointing me of a handsome pair of globes he had purchased purposely for me, because I did not meet him to the minute he appointed on the morning of my twelfth birth-day."

"Oh, yes, I remember it," Leicester laughing made answer, "and my memory is malicious enough to recollect also, that it was all owing to your having indulged yourself with an extra half hour's nap, which I suppose was the case this morning likewise. There, don't be nettled by my good fellow," he resumed, perceiving a flush of anger on the cheek of his friend. "I know the truth is not always palatable; it is nevertheless salutary to bear it sometimes."

"And right to tell it," he added, looking significantly at Mary, who was handing him a cup of coffee.

"You are quite out in your surmises," this once at least," Merton exultingly exclaimed, "I was up before sunrise."

"Then the political debates, perhaps, attracted your attention," Leicester pertinaciously continued, glancing as he spoke to the newspaper which still lay on the breakfast table in the place where Frank had thrown it. "Was it so, my dear madam?" he enquired, again directing his eyes towards Mrs. Merton.

"Don't ask me such a question, I pray you," Mr. Leicester, she returned in painful embarrassment, "it would ill become me to heighten my husband's disappointment, by casting reflections on his conduct."

"Not at all, my dear lady, if those reflections be from the mirror of truth, and they are made without any unkind intention."

The eyes of the wife were filled with tears and she turned aside to conceal them, whilst the husband vented his indignation in confused murmurs, of which broken sentences such as "freedom of an old school-fellow"—"taking to task"—"some people deem every misfortune a fault," etc., could alone be heard.

"Take care that you are not just too late for the next train," Leicester answered as he arose and caught the hand of his old schoolmate. "The pressure of that hand was not only the indication of sympathy and friendship Merton received, the palm became the recipient of a bit of soft paper of unmistakable value, and the donor darted from the apartment to avoid comment or thanks.

"Charles is a generous, kind hearted fellow," Frank Merton observed, as his wife re-entered the parlor, after having opened the door for her guest. "A very generous, kind hearted fellow," and he threw a five pound Bank of England note on the table, "but he presumes too much upon our long acquaintance and the few years he is my senior for all that."

"He can have no other motive than your benefit," pleaded Mary, whose heart overflowed with gratitude at this unlooked for supply.

"Nay, he always did like to dictate, even when we were boys together," Merton made answer, "and as I happen to be of a temper that cannot very well brook it, it is a rock on which we are constantly splitting. I hope, however, to pay him, some day, the long debt I owe him."

This last sentence was another of the young man's soliloquies which was not intended to meet any ear, but which nevertheless caught that of his gentle wife, who ventured to observe in reply, "that she hoped, with him, that they might be able to return the various sums his friend's generosity had so often furnished them with in their utmost need," adding, however, "that the debt of gratitude could never be cancelled."

Gaining wisdom by his past experience—a thing our hero was not prone to do—Merton was this time at the railway station ten minutes before the train started. His patience was however put to severe test by an accident, which, though not disastrous in its consequences, caused a delay of nearly an hour. "Was there ever anything so untoward, to think that my watch should deceive me, and make me too late for the first train, and that this should occur to hinder me further." These were the murmurs in which he now indulged, but if they were overheard, they were totally disregarded, for each passenger was too intent on his or her own discomfort to have any sympathy for him.

The passengers in a steam carriage may not usually be compared to men in the general transactions of life. They meet, as it were accidentally, secure the most comfortable places for themselves, whirl on from station to station, engaged by self, or at best by the narrow circle to which they form a centre—exchange a few words on the passing events, part again and take no further interest in each other's weal or woe. We must not however, moralize by the way, but follow our hero in imagination to the abode of his dying relative.

Mr. Gresham had fifteen years previous purchased a handsome estate in the vicinity of the large manufacturing town in which he had amassed a fortune. He was one of those men whom the more refined portion of the world denominated *money getting*, but to do him justice, it must be told that his gettings had not been at the expense of his probity. He was related to Frank Merton on the maternal side and being his namesake, and only nephew, he took too much notice of him, when a boy, that it was generally supposed that he intended to make him his heir. This expectation was, perhaps the reason why the youth did not pursue his father's business, or take to any other; but it was not avowed. The indolent habits and impatient temper of Frank were, however, a serious barrier to his long remaining a favorite with his uncle. They had many disagreements, and Mr. Gresham exacted more than his nephew thought his position warranted, he was also, as he imagined, too free with his censures, and too parsimonious with his money, and the result was that a rupture took place which left the young man very little hope of ever more enjoying his favor.

The house was a plain brick structure in which convenience rather than elegance had been studied. Our hero, in his boyish days, had often amused himself with planning its fall, and in imagination rearing a tasteful villa, in its stead. His thoughts wandered back to that period as he now approached, and the latent sparks of affection were rekindled as he once more trod on ground associated with youthful feelings and youthful hopes. His summons with the ponderous knocker was answered by the old servant before spoken of, and the now doleful aspect of the usually cheerful old man, told an unwelcome tale ere the visitor had time to put a question.

"Ah, Master Francis, I wish you had been here two or three hours earlier," Jonathan exclaimed as he took him familiarly by the hand. "I fear you are too late."

"Does my uncle yet live?" Merton gasped forth.

"He breathes, and that is all we can say." "Then I will see him," and suiting the action to the words, the young man was about to bound up the stairs leading to the chamber Mr. Gresham was wont to occupy when he was a frequent guest at the mansion. "He was however, forcibly delayed by his aged companion, who brought him with tears in his eyes, not to shorten the few minutes his uncle might yet have to live, by forcing himself unannounced into his presence."

"I have something to tell you, sir," he added, "before I can allow you to see him."

"Tell me quickly then, I cannot submit to a delay."

"But how comes it Master Francis," the old

man asked, "that you were not in greater haste before, my master expected you by the first train, he was then perfectly calm and collected, and had you come, it would have prevented the foul work that has been going on since."

"Foul work, what can you mean old man?" "Well, sir, I don't know that I ought to call it so—perhaps Miss Gresham, being my master's own sister, had as great or a greater right to the property than you have, but I always stood your friend, Master Francis."

"Miss Gresham! Has my Aunt Gresham been here?" "She is here now—she travelled post thro' the night, and arrived early this morning. How she got the intelligence that my poor master was dying, I don't know. I am sure he didn't expect her, and I don't think he wanted to see her either, for you know sir, they were not on very good terms."

The young man bit his lips with rage—"And the avaricious old fox has been wounding my poor uncle out of his property, and ruining me," he said, bitterly.

"I fear so. The housemaid was sent to town in a mighty hurry for Mr. Cribb, master's man of law, and then the cook and she were called up into master's bedroom. I guessed too well for what purpose, but they were bribed, I fancy, to be silent, for they wouldn't enquire a syllable."

"This is foul work, Jonathan," Merton furiously exclaimed; "but I'll shew her yet, I must see my uncle instantly."

The old man again expostulated, but it was now in vain for, mounting three or four stairs at a stride, our hero, urged by anger and disappointment, pursued his way regardless and even thoughtless of consequences, to the chamber of his sick relative.

His progress was however impeded at the door by the gaunt figure of Miss Gresham. Though in the decline of life, she was possessed of masculine strength, and her powerful arm was now put forth to obstruct his entrance.

"Let me pass, woman," Merton vociferated. A malignant smile was the only answer he received, and she still maintained her hold on the door, which effectually prevented his proceeding.

"Oh, for the sake of your poor uncle, be calm," cried Jonathan, who had by this time followed the young man up the stairs.

"Calm! when I am robbed of my right by—" "Hold, hold, Master Francis. Think of your dying uncle!"

"I must think too of my starving wife and children," Merton fiercely made answer, as with a desperate plunge he forced himself through the half open door. The suddenness of the movement caused Miss Gresham to stagger, and not being able to maintain her hold, she fell to the floor.

The young man had no intention of injuring his relative, he was only intent on reaching the bedside of the dying man, but, gladly availing himself of the unhappy circumstance, Miss Gresham uttered loud screams, which summoned the other inmates of the house to the spot, and led them to suppose that her life had been attempted. She then gave peremptory orders that a constable might be sent for, that her nephew might be given in charge, but to her infinite chagrin, after Jonathan had stated the truth, no one seemed disposed to obey her.

Merton meanwhile rushed to the bed, and drawing the curtain which had before obstructed his view of the occupant, gazed almost frantically upon the wasted and haggard form of the old man; his eyes were still open, but they were glazed, and every feature bore the rigid aspect of dissolution. The sight caused an instantaneous revulsion of feeling in the breast of our hero. The solemnities of the scene overcame the stormy passions which had before possessed the mastery: remembering only that the pale cold form before him, was the brother of one, around whose memory his tenderest affections clung, and that he had caressed him in his childhood, and counselled him in his youth; moreover that his own waywardness and impudence had been the cause of the estrangement which had subsequently taken place, he sank beside the bed and wept.

Merton spent the night in that chamber of death, now pacing it with rapid yet uneven strides, now stopping to look upon its ghastly occupant, then turning to the open window to catch the cool zephyrs, hoping thereby to allay the feverish throbbings of his temples. Jonathan was his companion, but the old man did not often interrupt him in his musings; he was too much absorbed by grief at the loss of a master he had for twenty years faithfully served and warmly loved. He took occasion, however, to tell our hero, that Mr. Gresham had been much disappointed when he found he had not availed himself of the first means of conveyance, that he had expressed anger, which he, Jonathan, had attempted to avert, by supposing it possible that the letter containing the information of his illness had miscarried. This attempt at expiation had, he said, effectually made Miss Gresham his enemy, and from that time she had studiously avoided him.

Miss Gresham issued the orders for her brother's interment with the air of one who already felt herself mistress of the mansion. She gave her nephew many intimations that his presence was not necessary, and that his society might be dispensed with, and Frank, notwithstanding, resolved to stay and witness the reading of the will. He could not doubt that the testament in her favor had been drawn up previously to his arrival, his only hope lay in finding proofs that his uncle was not in a state of insensibility when the last will was signed, but this Jonathan discouraged, by averring his belief to the contrary.

The day appointed for the solemn obsequies arrived, and Miss Gresham came forth arrayed in the habiliments of mourning, which ill accorded with the triumphant smile on her countenance. The emotions of her nephew were varied: he was, by turns, burning with anger and penetrated with grief and compassion. The body consigned to the tomb, the usual forms succeeded, and Merton's impatience could not be longer restrained, he was about to

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The day appointed for the solemn obsequies arrived, and Miss Gresham came forth arrayed in the habiliments of mourning, which ill accorded with the triumphant smile on her countenance. The emotions of her nephew were varied: he was, by turns, burning with anger and penetrated with grief and compassion. The body consigned to the tomb, the usual forms succeeded, and Merton's impatience could not be longer restrained, he was about to

remonstrate, "that you were not in greater haste before, my master expected you by the first train, he was then perfectly calm and collected, and had you come, it would have prevented the foul work that has been going on since."

"Foul work, what can you mean old man?" "Well, sir, I don't know that I ought to call it so—perhaps Miss Gresham, being my master's own sister, had as great or a greater right to the property than you have, but I always stood your friend, Master Francis."

"Miss Gresham! Has my Aunt Gresham been here?" "She is here now—she travelled post thro' the night, and arrived early this morning. How she got the intelligence that my poor master was dying, I don't know. I am sure he didn't expect her, and I don't think he wanted to see her either, for you know sir, they were not on very good terms."

The young man bit his lips with rage—"And the avaricious old fox has been wounding my poor uncle out of his property, and ruining me," he said, bitterly.

"I fear so. The housemaid was sent to town in a mighty hurry for Mr. Cribb, master's man of law, and then the cook and she were called up into master's bedroom. I guessed too well for what purpose, but they were bribed, I fancy, to be silent, for they wouldn't enquire a syllable."

"This is foul work, Jonathan," Merton furiously exclaimed; "but I'll shew her yet, I must see my uncle instantly."