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Select Poetry.

The Washerwoman's Song.

In a very humble cot,
In a rather quiet spot,
In the ends and in the soap
Worked a woman full of hope;
Working, singing, all alone,
In a sort of undertone,
"With a Saviour for a friend,
He will keep me to the end."

Sometimes happening along
I had heard the semi-song,
And I often used to smile,
More in sympathy than grieve,
But I never said a word,
In regard to what I heard;
As she sang about her friend
Who would keep her to the end.

Not in sorrow nor in glee
Working all day long was she,
As her children three or four,
Played around her on the floor;
But in monotone the song
She was humming all day long,
"With a Saviour for a friend,
He will keep me to the end."

It's a song I do not sing,
For I scarce believe a thing
Of the miracles that are told
Of the miracles of old;
But I knew that her belief
Is the anodyne of grief,
And will always be a friend
That will keep her to the end.

Just a trifle lonelier she,
Just as poor as poor could be,
But her spirits always rose,
Like the bubbles in the clothes,
And though widowed and alone,
Cheered her with the monotone,
Of a Saviour and a friend
Who would keep her to the end.

I have seen her rub and rub,
On the washboard in the tub,
While the baby sopped in suds,
Rolled and tumbled in the duds,
Or was paddling in the pools,
With old rascals stuck in spoons,
She still humming of her friend
Who would keep her to the end.

Human hopes and human creeds
Have their root in human needs,
And I would not wish to strip
From that washerwoman's lip,
Any song that she can sing,
Any hope that songs can bring,
For the woman has a friend
That will keep her to the end.

A WOMAN'S SECRET.

A Story of the Revolution.

CONCLUDED.

ANOTHER day and still another had passed away. Ferguson and Lyndsay had successively taken the field against the ghost—but none would come when they did call for him. Old Jamaica was the only spirit that was raised, and tobacco-smoke was the only intangible essence that infested them. What was to be done now? It was plain that the ghost was more than a match for them. They believed that they might be his masters in the field—but he certainly had the advantage of them in the strategy which avoids the presence of a superior enemy. They felt, in the slightest degree in the world, like fools, that they should have lost their natural rest for three nights, and expended a degree of skill and energy sufficient to have raised the siege, and all for nothing. Friday night was come. The morrow was the fatal Saturday, when the orderly-book must be found, or the loss reported at head-quarters. The confederates sat rather gloomily over their wine at Ferguson's lodgings—for Ferguson was a married man, and did not live at mess—and considered with themselves what was to be done next.

"You have not won your supper at the Dragon yet, doctor," said Ferguson. "The ghost does not seem to regard you with any more favor than the rest of us."

"The Ideas of March are not past yet, my friend," observed the doctor. "I shall have a double chance, as I shall keep watch the last night of the siege, as well as the first. You cannot tell what this night may bring forth."

"So you are not discouraged, I am glad to find," said Ingram, "and still hold to your intention for the night. But don't you intend to go to Miss Clairmont's this evening? I know you are invited, and your watch can begin after the party ends."

"Not I, indeed," responded the son of Galen, "not I, indeed. I am not quite boy enough for that. It is all well enough for you youngsters, who have no turn for rational pursuits—but a pipe and a tankard for me, against all the gatherings together of flirting boys and girls, and gambling papas and mammas, that were ever held. I shall repair to my post early in the evening, and maintain it unsecluded and untrifled."

"And 'faith! I believe that I will bear you company, doctor," said Ferguson. "My wife has not got over the cold she got at that sleighing party, and intends going to bed instead of the party."

"Do so, by all means," replied Holcombe, "and I dare say that, besides having a rational time together, we shall have a good account to give of the ghost by the time these boys are ready to come home; only, I suppose, if we see the ghost both at the same time, you will expect to go snacking in the supper."

"To be sure I shall," said the major, laughing, "we will be partners in the battle and in the spoils."

The party soon after dispersed and went their several ways. And it will not surprise my readers to learn that Ingram's way led him to the residence of Helen. He just looked in to see if he could be of any service. He found the fair girl in some little perturbation.

"What goes wrong, my love?" he inquired—"has the governor sent an excuse, or has *la belle* Wilton turned sulky and refused to come?"

"Worse than either, I assure you, Charles," she replied. "I could spare a dozen governors and beauties better than black Domingo, who has selected this particular occasion to fall sick, and to throw me back on the mercies of James, who is hardly equal, as you know, to such an emergency."

"That is unlucky, indeed," said Ingram, "but my John is quite at your service, such as he is; and he is certainly competent to the ministerial, if not to the executive, duties of such an occasion."

"Thank you," she answered, "he will be of great use, and I gladly accept your offer. But what will the doctor and Major Ferguson do without him to attend them—since you say that they are determined not to smile upon me?"

"O, never fear for them," replied Ingram; "John shall brew them a double supply of punch, and leave their supper ready laid for them, and they can wait upon themselves fast enough. They are too old campaigners to be disconcerted by a trifle."

"They shall be better treated than they deserve, then, for not coming to me," said she, "for I will send poor Peter over to them with their supper, and with a bowl of punch I have been superintending myself for the evening. So you will be good enough to let me have John as soon as you can spare him."

"He shall be at your command directly," he replied, "as soon as he can put himself in proper trim. Peter will answer all the purpose for the doctor and Ferguson."

After a few more passages between the lovers, which I do not think particularly concern my readers, the captain took his leave of his lady-love, and proceeded to his quarters. I beg that no unkind imputations may be laid upon my Helen in consequence of her holding this festivity on the eve of the important Saturday, for the arrangements had been made for it before she knew any thing of her lover's troubles. And as they were still a secret, and as she had as yet no acknowledged interest in them, if they were public, there was obviously nothing to be done but to go on. But the dear girl had suffered great distress and anxiety about it, especially as the week drew to an end without any tidings of the missing volume. But she had put a good face upon the matter, and would go through her hospitable duties with the best grace she could.

In those days the hour for the assembling of company was a very different one from that which now brings a party together. Before seven o'clock the rooms were filled. I cannot stop now to describe, (though description is my forte,) the beauty and splendor of the scene. We have nothing in these days, excepting the awkward imitation of a fancy ball, that approaches the glories of the days of brocades and scarlet coats, of gold lace and gold buttons, of diamond buckles and steel-hilted rapiers that looked like diamonds, of powder and high-heeled shoes. Ah! those were times when you knew a gentleman by his coat, and were not obliged to cypher him out by his conduct or his conversation!

The company were received by Mr. and Miss Clairmont, with all the ceremony of the old time. I have not introduced Mr. Clairmont to the reader as yet, simply for the want of time. As he made no objection to Ingram's proposals when they were laid before him, only declining to ratify the engagement formally, until the consent of Sir Ralph had been received, and as I therefore, could make no use of him in the only way fathers can be successfully managed as cruel tyrants trampling on the young affections of their daughters, I have had no occasion to mention him. He would have been well worth your knowledge, however, as a favorable specimen of the old pre-revolutionary New England gentleman. But I have no time left for you to cultivate his acquaintance. The fact is, I want three volumes to make use of my materials. *Maga* is very good but, like *Chanticleer* in the fable, "she is not enough." All that was eminent in rank or station, civil or military, all that was brilliant in beauty and attractive in manners, that the besieged town could command, was gathered together on that gay evening. Youth and dancing, old age and cards, were in happy proximity. And whatever there might be of love about the former conjunction, there was certainly nothing of it in the latter. Mrs. Battle, herself, never despised playing cards for love more heartily than the former generation of Boston dowagers. Gaming was in those days almost as much a necessity of life, as drinking. At the proper time, when supper was announced, His Excellency led the procession, bearing aloft the fair hand of his lovely hostess, and not tucking it under his arm like a walking-stick, or a wet umbrella. The tables were loaded with the choicest viands and the rarest wines, "and all went merry as a marriage bell."

While these festive proceedings were going on, in the next house Doctor Holcombe and Major Ferguson were whiling away the hours as best they might, in such talk as the garrison and the mess afforded. The punch-tankard stood between them upon a little table, and filled up many pauses in their conversation. As they lazily puffed out the smoke from their mouths, they thought with satisfaction of the wisdom of their choice. The distant hum of the party, and the music, only enhanced the solitary satisfaction. At length, a tap was heard at the door, which opening, admitted the sable form of poor Peter, to whom we introduced our reader in the second chapter. He entered the room with a dogged and almost unconscious air of stupidity, bearing a basket in either hand, from one of which he produced some elegant extracts from the great supper, and from the other a fresh flagon of the most delicious punch that they had ever dreamed of, and, besides, two bottles of the celebrated old Madeira, which had "put a gridle round the earth" in its travels, and knew more years than I dare mention. It is hardly necessary to say, that as soon as Peter had disposed of these edibles and potables upon the table and retired, the friends drew up to it and commenced an assault upon its contents which did infinite honor to their military education. The flagon was in constant requisition, and was pronounced nectar worthy of the Hebe who had dispensed it. Then, after their supper was finished, they uncorked the wine, and, drawing up to the fire, set in for serious drinking. They were seasoned vessels; but, I am sorry to say, that in due time, the liquor began to make inroads upon their brains, and to set their tongues in perpetual motion. They told excellent stories, only forgetting the point; but this, as they both talked at once, was of

the less consequence. The doctor grew professional, and the major musical. The one described operations, and the other broke down in the midst of songs, all of which he sung to the tune of "*Bonnie Doon*." Their eyes began to glaze, and their tongues to trip. They were not at all surprised at seeing duplicates of all the objects in the room; nor at finding themselves stopping short in the midst of their stammering sentences. In short, I grieve to relate it, they were getting very drunk.

"Fay—doctor," stammered the major, "won't you take another glass—of—ghost!"

"D—n the—ghost!" hiccoughed the doctor. "I do be-believe you're dr-drunk! I should like to see the gh-ghost that would face me n-now."

"Suppose—you—see, doctor—whether the door's—drunk?" said the major—"it looks d—d tottering to me!"

The doctor laid his course for the door, and, after a few judicious tacks, succeeded in making it. It was slightly ajar, so he shut and locked it meandered back to his chair saying:

"You'll have to e-come through the k-key hole, to-night, m-my friend—if you e-come at all."

Having with great generalship recovered his seat, they attempted to resume their "rational enjoyment" and improving conversation. But nature was too strong for them; and it was not many minutes before they were both fast asleep in their chairs. I am sorry to say that such scenes were not so rare, or so discreditible in those three-bottle days, as they have happily since become; and the sight of two middle-aged gentlemen drunk on either side of a fire-place would have been no astonishing sight one hundred years ago!

How long it was after this point of their adventures, I cannot exactly tell—but it was not long before the men who were keeping guard were alarmed by a loud and most startling noise in the haunted chamber. They all rushed incontinently to the door, and heard within the sounds of a clamorous struggle. The ghost was evidently caught at last. But it was also plain that he was fighting for his life. He was game to the last. He was apparently almost a match for his two adversaries, for loud cries resounded through the house.

"Here he is, d—n him!" "I've got him!" "By—, he's choking me?" "Murder! murder!" "Help! help!" "Where are you, you scoundrels?" All attended by a running accompaniment of furniture breaking, and chairs tumbling into chaotic heaps. The men tried in vain to open the door, when Ingram rushed up stairs in hot haste, having been summoned, by his own direction, at the first alarm.

"Where are your muskets, men?" he cried, in strong excitement. "The bloody rebels are murdering them! Dash open the door with the butt-ends!"

Seizing a musket he suited the action to the word, and the door was soon broken down—though not without difficulty, as doors were then. The scene was frightful. The furniture was overturned. The lights were out; and lying on the floor, either mortally wounded or exhausted by a fruitless struggle, lay the watchmen of the night.

"Where is the villain?" cried Ingram rushing into the room.

"Here's the scoundrel!" cried the doctor, laying hold of the major.

"This is the infernal rascal!" bellowed the major, seizing the unhappy Holcombe by the throat.

And as they shook each other, they vainly endeavored to rise from among the wreck of things that surrounded them.

It needed no conjurer to tell how the matter stood. Ingram sank into a chair which, fortunately, had survived the fray, and made the whole house ring with interminable peals of laughter. His followers could not resist the contagion, which was made the more irresistible by the drunken gravity of the two heroes, who sat like many tipsy Marluses amid the ruins of another Carthage. You would have thought that a legion of laughing imps had taken possession of the mansion, and were consecrating it to their service.

As soon as Ingram could command his voice, he gave directions to the men to separate the unlucky ghost-seers, and

to carry them carefully to bed. Then, taking a candle he surveyed the prospect before him. The emptied flagons and broken-bottles sufficiently accounted for the scene he had just witnessed. He glanced his eye upon the table. His color changed. He started forward. THERE LAY THE ORDERLY-BOOK!

Two or three years had passed away, and a happy family party were assembled around a Christmas fire at Hazlewood, the seat of the Ingrams. Vigorous age and blooming infancy clustered around the hearth, but the centre of the circle was Charles Ingram and his lovely Helen. He had consented, reluctantly, to retire from the army, that he might sustain the declining years of his parents. He had brought his wife with him, and there they sat, as happy and beloved a pair as ever lived and loved.

The evening had been sped away with games and gambols. At last, the sports were over, and the party, closing round the firebricks, yielded to the inspiration of the hour, and vied with each other in tables of *diablerie*. At last, Charles is coaxed to narrate his adventure. He told it well, and was rewarded by alternating deep-drawn breaths of interest, and by peals of laughter. But the mystery still remained unsolved. While they were all offering their several explanations, Ingram exclaimed—

"I would pay down a handsome reward to any one who would tell me where that book was during those four days!"

"And would you grant an amnesty," asked Helen, "to all concerned, if you could know it?"

"That I would, with all my heart—for the excellence of the joke, now that no mischief came of it, redeems its roguishness."

"Then I can easily satisfy you, my dear," resumed his wife—"it was all the time in my dressing-table drawer."

There was a moment of silent astonishment, and then Ingram exclaimed—"In your drawer! Why, were you the ghost, Helen?"

"Not exactly," she replied; "but I had an Arite that did my will quite as well as any ghost could do."

"What do you mean, my love?" inquired her husband. "You are jesting. What Arite do you mean?"

"You remember poor Petas?"

He nodded assent.

"Well, he was the ghost, and none but he. I never meant to tell the story, but it is too good a joke to be kept to oneself."

"But how? What had you to do with it?"

"Remember your proclamation of amnesty, and I will tell you. You know that he was the servant of the Vaughns—"

"No," interrupted Charles, "I knew no such thing—only that he belonged to a family that had left the town."

"True," she resumed; "I remember that I kept back that particular, for fear of exciting your suspicion. But their servant he was, and treated with merited kindness for the service done his master, which resulted in disordering his poor brain. After he came to live at my father's, he never seemed to feel at home, but would often wander away at night. I suspected that his resort was to his old master's house, and that it was his prowling about it that gave it its bad name. But as the officers who first occupied it were not especially pleasant neighbors, I did not interfere with his amusements. But when you came, my dear—"

"You took me under your protection, and I thank you," said Charles, laughing.

"Certainly, I did," she continued, "but I thought he might just try your courage for one night. I had him watched out of the house by my maid, and from the glee in which he returned, I had no doubt of his entire success. That was the first night—"

"But pray tell me," asked her husband, "how he performed the feat, if you happen to know. He must have had wings, though I never saw them."

"That I can," she replied. "Poor Peter was a native African, and was as agile as a monkey, though you would not think so to look at him. He could go up the side of a house by the spout, or the slightest inequalities, like a cat. When you heard him walking over your