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Select Poetry.

LIFE AND DEATH.

What is Life, father? "A battle, my child, Where the strongest lance may fall, Where the warlike eyes may be beguiled, And the stoutest heart may quail; Where the foes are gathered on every hand, And rest not, day nor night, And the feeble little ones must stand In the thickest of the fight."

What is Death, father? "The rest, my child, When the strife and toll are o'er; The Angel of God, who, calm and mild, Says we need fight no more; Who driveth away the demon band, Bids the din of battle cease; Takes the banner and spear from the falling hand, And proclaims an eternal peace."

OLD MEMORIES.

Who hath not treasured something of the past— The lost, the buried, or the far away? Twined with those heart-affections which outlast All save their memories—these outlive decay! A broken relic of our childhood's play, A faded flower, that long ago was fair— Mute token of a love that died untold! Or silken curl, or lock of silvery hair— The brows that bare them long since in the mould! Though these may call up griefs that else had slept, Their twilight sadness o'er the soul to bring; Not every tear in bitterness is wept, While they revive the drooping flowers that spring Within the heart, and round its ruined temples cling.

FOR THE TIMES.

HIS WIFE'S RELATIONS.

COPELY was a quiet but pretty village, and was honored by its being the residence of Mr. Orville Westcut. He was rather a singular and quiet sort of a man. He, however, had the habit of dropping into the Copely Hotel nearly every day to look over the register as though expecting to find familiar names among the list of arrivals. Mr. Westcut may have designed giving such an impression to his village acquaintance; but I should judge his application to the leaves of the hotel book was rather the result of innate curiosity—a broad seam of which ran through the fine timber of the Westcut family tree. Copely is a village somewhat famous for its mineral springs and romantic scenery, which draw crowds of strangers in that direction, in the "watering season;" and Mr. Westcut's humanity inspired him with interest to know the names, and learn some facts concerning every individual who visited the village. At all events, Mr. Westcut was never more astonished in his life, than on one fine summer morning, when examining the travelling records, as usual, he met with three names as familiar to his ears as household words. In large, heavy characters, there was written: "Mr. and Mrs. F. Pinkingham Powell." Then followed, in fine, precise lines: "Mariana Theresa Elroy." Mr. Orville Westcut turned pale.—Then a flush suffused his face, and perspiration started from his brows. He looked up at the landlord, with a guilty, fearful expression, and perceiving that he was not observed, glanced timidly around. The "coast"—to use a nautical idiom—"was clear." Mr. Westcut fixed his eyes upon the end of his nose, dropped his head, and glided into the street, like a thief afraid of detection. I am not aware that Mr. Westcut—who was a highly respectable citizen—had done anything for which he had reason to feel either fear or shame. Now

I can say, more positively, that no one has reason to be afraid of ghosts. Those three names were like ghosts to Mr. Westcut; he was afraid of them.

"Good heavens!" he murmured, wiping the perspiration from his brow in the open air, "Mrs. Westcut's relations!—Mrs. Pinkingham Powell—Miss Mariana Theresa Elroy!—Bless me, if they should condescend to visit my wife! What on earth should we do?"

I have said these names were like ghosts to Mr. Westcut. They were worse. No ghost ever haunted an unhappy mortal as these names had, for fifteen summers and winters, haunted him. Let us glance at his matrimonial history for an explanation.

Mrs. Westcut was an Elroy—Mariana Theresa was her cousin. Mrs. F. Pinkingham Powell was Mariana Theresa's sister. Now the Elroys—as Mr. Westcut piously believed—were an ancient, aristocratic race. Mr. Westcut was also conscious of everlasting obligations to Mrs. Westcut—who, as said before, was an Elroy—for honoring his family by a union with him. But there was one unpleasant circumstance, which caused Mr. Westcut frequently to regret that Mrs. Westcut was an Elroy. The connection had failed to elevate him to a level with that aristocratic race, and Mrs. Westcut had never been able wholly to forgive herself, for suffering love to bring her—an Elroy—down to a plane with the Westcuts. And from the day of their marriage—nay, from the earliest period of their acquaintance, when Virginia Elroy, appearing as a stranger in Copely, won Orville Westcut's affection—she had never ceased to dwell upon the wide distinction between their families.

"Yes," said she, with a sigh, when brought to consent to become his wife, "yes, it is fate. I must sacrifice family to love!" And Orville was grateful.—When they were married, she sighed again, and said:

"I should like to visit my family, if I thought they would forgive me; but they are proud—proud!"

And when the "happy pair" had become domesticated in the respectable, but by no means ancient, mansion of the Westcuts, Orville was forever haunted by the ghosts of the Elroys.—Night and morning, they were ever present. If he had the nightmare, they were, in some manner, concerned in it; if he was troubled with hypochondria, they were responsible. They stalked in upon him at breakfast—they overshadowed the dinner table—they were served up by Mrs. Westcut (late Elroy) at tea. He grew thin upon them. Had he been a man of weak intellect, he must inevitably have become insane.—Whenever Mrs. Westcut desired a new dress, she had only to say in presence of her husband:

"O, dear! what would Mrs. Pinkingham Powell say, if she should see an Elroy in such frightful duds as I am obliged to wear?" And Orville's purse was opened. If the poor man was so unfortunate as to do anything displeasing to Virginia, she had only to say:

"O, dear! if you was a little more like Mr. Frederick Pinkingham Powell. But it is useless to talk!" And Orville exerted himself at once to conform to her beau ideal of a husband; feeling guilty, I suppose, on account of his presumption when he aspired to unite himself—a Westcut—with one of the race of Elroy.

On one occasion, Virginia, becoming disgusted with the ancient fashion of the vehicle in which the family rode to church, desired a carriage of modern style; and delicately hinting that never before had one of the name of Elroy stooped to appear in such a box, and that she felt remorse for the disgrace brought upon the family, through her, she succeeded in touching Orville's heart. A fashionable vehicle was bought—the shades of the Elroys were appeased.

After being haunted by the names of Virginia's relations for fifteen winters and summers, as said before, it is barely possible to conceive of Mr. Westcut's agitation in seeing three of them written in full in the book of the Copely Hotel! It struck Orville that he could never bear up under the indignation of these outraged relations of Mrs. Westcut. On his way home, he was driven almost to the verge of distraction with

imaginary fears of a descent upon Virginia by these stately representatives of the dignity of her family name. Moreover, in his tender regard for her feelings, he dreaded to acquaint her with the danger; he shuddered to think of her humiliation, knowing that the personages she had degraded by her plebeian connection were so near, and might condescend to look in upon her, in the humble home she had chosen.

Orville crossed the threshold with a dejected air, and paused to observe Mrs. Westcut—late Elroy—frying doughnuts over the kitchen fire. Belinda, the "help," was shelling peas in a corner, and laboring faithfully to pursue her work, and at the same time to keep Master Orville Elroy's mischievous hands out of the dish. Mariana Elroy was rocking Theresa Elroy—all the children were Elroys—in the cradle.—Mrs. Westcut turned to place a pan of freshly fried doughnuts on the table, and saw her husband standing in the doorway. She drew herself to her full height and gave him the look of an offended queen.

"Mr. Westcut," said she, "if you stand there watching me, to exult in the thought that one of the name of Elroy has finally been brought so low as to fry her own doughnuts, you'd better be somewhere else!"

"My dear, I—I do not exult—"

"No! you pity me! Well, there is nobody to blame but myself, so I will not complain. I might have done as well as my cousin, who married Mr. Frederick Pinkingham Powell—but what's done can't be helped. I don't say I wish I had kept up the dignity of my family, like her, or like Mariana Theresa, who never married, because she could not marry beneath herself, even though she has had as good offers as her sister."

"I sometimes almost make the wish for you," murmured Orville, desperately.

Virginia sat down the doughnuts and looked at her husband. Her face was very much flushed, either with anger or shame, or the heat incident to the frying operation. Her lips quivered, and her voice trembled as she spoke.

"Mr. Westcut! This—after the sacrifice of family I have made! You are—you are ungrateful!"

"My dear," said Orville, softening, "I meant no reproach. It is only for your sake, I sometimes think it would have been better if we had never been married. It is not pleasant for you to reflect that you have married beneath you—"

"O, I don't regret it—really!" replied Virginia, earnestly, for she had an affection for her husband; and with all her faults, she possessed considerable feeling.

"No, I do not; I never did regret it, and I trust I never shall. But I can't help thinking of what Mrs. F. Pinkingham Powell and Maria Theresa would say."

Orville sighed, and with perceptible agitation, led Virginia mysteriously into an adjoining room.

"My dear," said he, "prepare yourself for a surprise."

"O, for mercy's sake, don't frighten me! What has happened?"

"Your relatives—"

"My aristocratic cousins?"

"Yes; Mr. F. Pinkingham Powell and lady, and Miss Mariana Theresa Elroy—"

"What of them?" asked Virginia, with apprehension.

"They are at the Copely Hotel!"

Mrs. Westcut uttered a faint cry, and fell, fanning herself, upon a chair.

"At the Copely Hotel?" she gasped.

"Are you sure? the Powells, and Mariana Theresa?"

Orville confessed the truth with a sort of timidity, which would have given a stranger to suppose it was something he was to blame about.

"Mercy on us?" cried the disconcerted Virginia. "But you didn't see them?"

"No; but—"

What can have brought them here? They know I am settled here, and if it should be that they have come to visit me—"

"You need not be at home, you know!" said the sympathizing Orville. "I knew it would be a mortification for you to meet them."

"Dear me, I never thought of their coming to Copely!" faltered Virginia.

"Shall we shut up the house?"

"No, no! I think I could face them, for I have the pride of an Elroy to sustain me. But—I would rather they would not see you."

"So would I!" exclaimed Orville, from his heart.

"And if you could only manage not to be about—"

"I will go anywhere you please. For, really, I am not anxious to meet the Elroys."

This announcement gave Mrs. Westcut, late Elroy, great satisfaction; and in a short time Orville had stolen away from the house by the back door, resolving to avoid his own hearth, until all danger of facing the Elroys was past.

As I have said before, or, as I should have said before, if I have not, it was a fine morning, in the summer time; and Mr. Westcut, having no work of importance to perform, took his gun and went into the woods, which were shady and extensive in Copely, thinking he could do nothing better during the day than to shoot a few squirrels for the children. The weather was warm, however, in a little while Orville, becoming tired of his search for game, sat down on a log, near what was called by the inhabitants of Copely, the Spring Road.—He had been but a short time in this position, meditating, I suppose, on the dignity of Mrs. Westcut's relations, when, hearing voices and looking through a thicket of hazel bushes that grew by the road, he saw some persons entering the woods on foot. Orville sat still, waiting for them to pass; but instead of passing, they paused on the edge of a thicket, at the instance of a female, who complained, in feeble voice, of being "completely tuckered out."

"Why, can't you be a little more refined in your expressions?" asked another voice, in a shrill treble, peevishly.

"People can't always stop to pick their words," replied the voice that had first spoken; "specially arter coming up sich a mighty hill as this ere!"

"But it is just as easy to say you are excessively fatigued, as to use the vulgar expression—and tuckered," insisted the shrill voice; "and at this time in particular, when we are going to visit Jenny's relations, who are so genteel—"

"I don't know 'bout their being so very genteel, after all," interrupted a heavy bass. "The landlord didn't seem to be the least might struck when I told him we was connections of the Westcuts; so on the hull, I felt kinder sorry we didn't go straight to Jennie's house last night, instead of being to the expense of putting up at the tavern jes' for sake of being genteel."

By this time, the strangers had seated themselves on the further extremity of the same log which afforded Orville a resting-place—the hazel bushes preventing his discovery—and he now, as may be supposed, had become somewhat interested in this conversation.

"I don't care what the landlord thought, or didn't think," said the shrill voice. "Jennie has always been writing about her aristocratic husband, telling how well she has done, getting married off here in Copely, and why shouldn't we believe her?"

"Aristocratic husband!" thought Orville, overwhelmed with astonishment. "Goodness! that's me, I suppose, and I suppose these are the Elroys."

Yet Orville could not realize the fact. He peeped through the hazel bushes, and listened to the conversation of the strangers, without being able fully to give credit to his senses. At length the truth seemed to have come forcibly upon him. His countenance brightened—he laughed with inward satisfaction.

"So, then, these are the Elroys! Real flesh and blood, after all! Well, I understand now why Mrs. Westcut didn't want me to meet them, but thought she could face their majesties! And only to think," muttered Orville, his face darkening with a mingled expression of anger and shame, "only to think, that for fifteen years I have entertained such veneration for these simple people!—for fifteen years I have trembled to hear their names! O, I can never forgive Mrs. Westcut for the deception! But I will have my revenge!"

Mr. Westcut came out of the thicket and appeared before the travellers. One was a tall, bony man, in stiff dicky,

white cravat and new broadcloth, in which he did not appear to feel at ease. By his side sat a thin, prim, antique female, in rustling silk and showy ribbons. At her elbow was a smaller specimen of humanity, who appeared much more at her ease, however, than the man; and much plumper, and less prim than her sister. Orville, at a glance, determined the identity of Mr. F. Pinkingham Powell, Mrs. F. Pinkingham Powell, and Miss Mariana Theresa Elroy. He was saved the trouble of addressing them, as he had resolved to do, by the prim Miss Elroy, who, the moment she perceived him, inquired:

"Can you tell us if we are in the right road to the country house of Mr. Orville Westcut?"

"Orville Westcut, madam?"

"Yes, sir. We are connections of Mrs. Orville Westcut. We have come to Copely Springs for our health—we are taking a little stroll for pleasure, and understanding that the Westcuts live in the neighborhood, we thought of making them a morning call."

"If you are going that way now, I can conduct you," said Orville. "Mr. Westcut's house lies just through the grove."

"Then you know the Westcuts?" cried Mrs. F. Pinkingham Powell.

"O, perfectly well, madam. And I have heard Mrs. Westcut speak of you, I presume, hundreds, nay, thousands of times."

"And Jenny has married well, hasn't she?"

"Some folks think she has, madam; but you had better judge for yourself. At all events, Mr. Westcut will be delighted to see you in his house."

The Elroys were already on their feet. Miss Elroy hoped they were not putting Orville to any trouble; and being assured that their guide undertook his task with pleasure, the whole party set out for Mr. Westcut's house.

"Mrs. Westcut, late Elroy, had brought the frying operation and other domestic duties to a close, and was on the point of dressing for the afternoon, when Master Orville Elroy screamed at the top of his voice:

"O, look! Papa is coming through the gate with some country stragglers!"

Mrs. Westcut looked accordingly, speechless with dismay. The thin and prim Miss Mariana Theresa Elroy, she recognized at a glance. Mariana's Theresa's sister, and Mariana Theresa Elroy's sister's husband, with their frightful oddities, could not be mistaken, although Mrs. Westcut had not seen them for years. Then the evident satisfaction and pride he took in marshaling the army of "stragglers" into his own house, filled his wife with painful emotions. The first thought was to retreat to her chamber, and fortify herself against the enemy, but her cruel husband cried out:

Mrs. Westcut! here are your own blood cousins, a branch of the Elroy family! Mr. F. Pinkingham Powell, Mrs. Westcut. Mrs. F. Pinkingham Powell, Miss Mariana Theresa Elroy."

"La, cousin!" said the thin, prim lady, "how do you do? This gentleman appears to be pretty familiar with our names—I am so glad to see you, cousin!"

And the thin and prim lady, with great precision, shook hands with Virginia, kissed her, and re-introduced her companions; after which, turning to thank Orville, she requested to know his name. Mrs. Westcut, stammering with confusion, introduced Orville.

"I wished to afford you an agreeable surprise," said Orville, appearing as awkward as he could.

"La, me!" said Miss Elroy. "This is Orville! Who would have thought it?"

"Mrs. Powell said 'Why Jenny!' and looked incredulous; while Mr. Powell, evidently relieved at finding his wife's cousin's husband an approachable mortal, after all he had heard, shook him heartily by the hand.

"So now come in—glad to see you!" said Orville. "Why, I've heard so much about you—with a sly look at the disconcerted Mrs. Westcut—"that I feel acquainted with you already. I will send to the hotel for your baggage immediately, and you shall stop with us a month."

The Elroys, although surprised, did