

THAT OLD SWEETHEART OF MINE.

I have seen a wondrous picture of "that old sweetheart of mine." Of the girl whose soul is fairer than the world's most sacred shrine; And the long months seemed as nothing, for I heard her softly sigh, And once more I was her lover in the happy days gone by.

And I stood there gazing on her as a soul from outer space Gazes through the gates of heaven on an angel's deathless face; All the world around forgotten; all the past a mystic dream; With the old love burning in me and its passion all supreme.

Every nerve within my being seemed a harp string tuned to love, Trembling with the music learned from Israel above, As I stood there in the silence with her fair face close to mine, And my tired spirit longing for the days that were divine.

Slowly faded the ship of evening out into the sea of night; Slowly into darkness faded all save mem'ry's holy light; And the dream of life was ended. But the stars of mem'ry shine Through the soul's wide-open windows on "that old sweetheart of mine."

THE CONSEQUENCE.

THE doctor looked into the woman's brave eyes and slowly pronounced her sentence.

"The operation must take place within a few days or—"

"Or what?"

"It may be too late to operate at all." "And—I will get through it safely?" "I hope so."

"You are not sure. You think there is a risk?"

"There is always a risk in every operation," he answered evasively.

"Tell me the truth, doctor; I can bear it."

The old man looked into the desperate eyes and put his hand gently on the woman's shoulder.

"You are a brave woman. I will tell you the truth. This operation will be a very serious one—in fact, there is only a chance that you will survive it. But there is a chance, and for the sake of it you must not lose heart."

"Couldn't I wait till next month—just for a few weeks longer? It surely would not make any difference if it was postponed till then."

"My child," the doctor answered, "if we postponed it for a few weeks, for even one week, you will lose your one chance of recovery. Besides, you will suffer such agony that your life will be unbearable. Let me advise you, and make up your mind to go through it immediately."

"Immediately?"

"Within the next few days. You must go into the hospital to-morrow to be prepared for it."

Then he explained the arrangements he would make for her, and after listening in a dazed, half-stupid fashion, Elizabeth said "good-by" to him, and wearily went out in the cold and darkness of the December evening.

She drove alone in a hansom with tears running down her white cheeks, and her heart rebelling at the cruel hand of Fate that had so unsparingly dealt her this blow. Had she deserved it? Was this trial sent to her because she had set one man upon a pedestal and worshipped him to the exclusion of the whole world? Or was it because she, like a fool, had thrust away with laughing eyes the happiness that had been held out to her, and the gods had guessed it was only a freak, and were punishing her because she insolently played with the best thing they had to give? Six months ago, when David Moore had started to tell her how dear she was to him, she had stopped him with a laugh, and had warned him that it would be wiser to wait till he returned from abroad before he decided that she was the "only woman in the world." She did not know why she had done it; why, when her heart was craving for his love, she had coquetted and warded him off. But right deep down she knew that it was for his own sake, to give him a fair chance of seeing other younger, more beautiful women, before she let him tell her that she was the best of all.

"I'll be back in six months, Elizabeth," he said, holding her hands, tightly, and looking into the sweet gray eyes. "I'll come straight to you. You will listen to me then; you will then believe that I am in earnest." And so he left her.

And now the six months were at an end; for that morning a telegram had come telling her of his arrival in England, and to expect to see him to-night.

She had lived every hour of her life in these months for David; everything she did was for his sake—was to please him. And now, when the time had really come, and he would be with her in a few hours, she must gather up her strength and send him away without a word of love, without a sign of regret.

It was because the pain had waged so fiercely through the night that she determined to go to a doctor to beg for something to give her relief, for the time at least. She had gone, and had had her sentence pronounced.

Although he had not actually said so, Elizabeth guessed that even if she did survive the operation she would al-

ways be a weak, delicate woman. And in her great love she decided to sacrifice even one hour of joy—she could never bear to be a drag on David, she must send him away again without explaining the reason.

When she arrived at the house where she lived in Kensington, she turned down the lamps under their red shades and told the maid to put more coal on the fire. She decided to postpone her preparations of her illness until after her visitor had gone. She would only have time now to prepare herself for the scene she must go through with him.

After she had some tea she went to her room. The frock she had chosen to wear was lying on the bed. It was a soft blue silk, and was very simply made. Quickly she put it back into the wardrobe and took down one that was just sufficiently old-fashioned to be dowdy.

"Molly said I look twenty in blue and thirty-five in black," she whispered, as she laid it on the bed.

Then she unfastened her hair. She remembered some one saying, "To part the hair in the center either makes a woman look much older or much younger than she actually is. I think, Elizabeth, that it makes you look much older." Taking up the comb, she carefully made a parting down the center of her head and twisted her hair into a tight knob at the back.

The reflection that the mirror sent back to her made her shudder.

Then she put on the dowdy black frock. Ugh! she did look plain and old and commonplace. No man could make love to a woman who looked like that. And of all men, not David Moore, for she knew so well that he liked a woman to be good to look at.

Having finished her strange toilet, she went down to her sitting room, and waited. Fifteen minutes later her visitor came.

Elizabeth saw him start and the surprised look in his eyes as she held out her hand to him and asked coolly how he had enjoyed his trip.

"Are you ill, Elizabeth?" he said, quickly, without answering her, and looking anxiously at the face that had changed almost beyond recognition since he last saw it.

"No, no! Why should I be ill?"

"You look so white and—"

"Old," she finished. "Well, I am six months older you must remember since you went away, and I am not the type of woman who wears well."

"Is anything the matter? Are you in trouble?"

"What should there be to trouble me? I never do anything but have a good time. I love excitement, and all that sort of thing."

The man looked as if he was not sure he had heard aright.

"No," Elizabeth continued. "I am not really different, but you have been accustomed to fresh young faces lately, and so poor mine seems old and withered in comparison. But please don't waste the time in discussing my appearance. Tell me how you enjoyed your visit."

"Fairly; but I was so anxious to get back to London to see you again that I did not think much about it. You know why I wished to be here by the 15th, Elizabeth?"

She looked as though she was trying to remember.

"Darling," he went on, coming close to her, "you have not forgotten that you said you would listen to me when I returned. You know, without any words, that you are the dearest woman in the world to me, and that I wish you for my wife."

"Your wife!" she echoed, with a sneering laugh. "Thank you, no. I must decline the honor."

"Elizabeth!" and his face went white as he held her hands tightly, "what do you mean?"

"Just that," she said. "I decline the honor."

"Then," and he dropped her hands and turned away, "I had better go. I was a conceited fool. Forgive me.

My love for you has carried me too far."

Even in the half-lit room, Elizabeth's face looked strangely white as she put her hand to her side and leaned back in the cushions.

But she laughed again. "Ah, it does not matter. You will forget it as readily as I will. And perhaps, after all, it was my own fault. But you must always allow for a woman changing her affections. It is a woman's way, you know."

"No, I did not know," coldly.

"Why not? She may vary her frocks—why not her affections?"

"For heaven's sake, don't talk like that. You might be a heartless flirt by your tone."

"I hardly think I am that, for your sex does not interest me sufficiently. But I am a woman of the world, and not a silly, love-sick girl."

"I never imagined you to be a silly, love-sick girl, any more than I thought of you as a 'woman of the world,' as you put it. Perhaps it will amuse you to hear that I was foolish enough to think you were—well, altogether different."

"Yes, it is rather absurd," she answered, driving her nails into her left hand as she stood up and held out her right one to him. "Goodby. There is no need to extend this interview. Besides, I am busy to-night. You will excuse me."

He took her hand and held it tightly, as he looked into the tired gray eyes.

"Elizabeth, Elizabeth," he whispered, "what does it all mean? Have you nothing kind to say to me?"

"Yes; forget me as soon as you can. And—you will lose your beauty sleep if you don't go quickly."

He dropped her hand and went out of the house.

Her acting had been a success, too much of a success, for not only had he gone away with the idea that she was indifferent to him, but she had forced him to despise her for her levity. Yet, after all, it was better thus; it would be less difficult for him to cast her out of his heart.

She certainly did look plain. Yet her appearance had not made any difference to him. Ah! that look of concern in his eyes when he asked her if she was ill. Why couldn't she have told him? It would have been so sweet to have had his loving sympathy!

And if her operation was to be as serious, and the result as fatal, as she feared, was there not some way in which she might, before it was too late, wipe out the false impression she had made to-night? She could not bear the thought that he would think bitterly of her—afterward. Surely it would be some comfort to him to know the truth then. Yes, he must be told. She would write a letter and confess all. If she lived, it must be destroyed; if she died, it must be delivered.

"I have sent you away from me," she wrote, "and am now breaking my heart because I will never look into your face again. David, to-night I acted a part to you. I forced myself to be cold and false. I made myself a fright to prevent you telling me of your love. I knew that if you did so I would not have the strength to resist you. I did not want you to guess that I cared. I wanted you to think me a heartless flirt—to despise me—anything, rather than you should regret or have a heart-ache."

"To-day my doctor told me that I must go under the knife within the next few days. He said that there was a slight chance, but in my heart I know that, if I do live, I will be a weak, sickly woman. But I don't believe there is a chance, so I want to tell you how dear you are to me before it is too late. I love you as only a woman can love a man who represents everything that is good and strong and true to her. For nearly two years I have waited to hear you say what you said to-night. Six months ago I prevented you because I was not quite sure; I thought it would be wiser for you to wait until you returned. I could not realize that the glory of your love should be showered on me. I thought it fair for you to see other women before you offered your life to me."

"David, I want you to understand how desperately hard it was to refuse to listen to you to-night. It was the greatest sacrifice I have ever made in my life, and I prayed for strength to do it. My whole being revolted at the part I set myself to play, although I felt it was best for you—now and afterward. Can you forgive me, David?"

She then rang for her maid, and, after explaining about what was to happen to her, she gave her the letter and said what she wished her to do with it.

No surgeon can ever be quite certain to what length a disease has spread until he starts to use the knife, and oftentimes he finds it more or less serious than he anticipated.

So it was that when Dr. Sanders commenced to operate on Elizabeth Trent he was agreeably surprised to find that, instead of her case being most complicated, it was merely an ordinary one.

"She will be all right now, nurse," the great surgeon said after the opera-

tion. "Fortunately, it has not been so serious as we feared. It is a decidedly interesting case, and she will pull through splendidly with careful nursing."

It was two weeks later when Elizabeth asked her maid if she had destroyed the letter she had given to her the eve of the operation.

"Destroy it, Miss Elizabeth?" the woman answered. "I thought you said to post it if you lived."

"Oh, Harmon! You surely have not sent that letter?"

"Yes, Miss Elizabeth, I have. I thought you wanted me to destroy it if anything happened to you, and to post it if you got safely through the operation. I waited until last night to make sure that you did not have a relapse, then I thought it was time."

Before Elizabeth could answer, a nurse came in with a florist's box in her hand and a bright smile on her face.

"This is for you, Miss Trent," she said. "Shall I unfasten it?"

Elizabeth cried out in joyous surprise at the wealth of beautiful flowers with which the box was filled. But her eyes went beyond them to a letter that lay partly hidden in their leaves.

"It is from David," she whispered softly, as she gazed at the dear, familiar handwriting. As she opened it with quick, trembling fingers, the nurse and Harmon quietly went out of the room.

"My darling," Elizabeth read, "I have just received your letter. Only half an hour before, I met Mansfield, and he told me of your illness. I thought he must be mistaken, but he said his wife had been to see you at the hospital yesterday. My first impulse was to go and beg them to let me see you, but I remembered that you would not care to have me. Feeling deadly miserable, I went back to my rooms, and there found your letter waiting for me. Oh, Elizabeth! It seems too wonderful to be true—that you should love me like that. Why, my dear, you were never more lovable in my eyes than you were that night. You looked ill and tired, and I longed to have the right to take care of you and shield you from all annoyances. When I remember the hard things I said I feel that it will take all my life to endeavor to wipe them out. Elizabeth, almost as soon as you read this I will be with you. And then—my atonement will commence."—Black and White.

HOW ZOOS GET WILD ANIMALS.

Bait Used by Recruiting Agents and Travelers.

Getting recruits for the zoological parks is not by any means the easiest thing in the world, though the authorities themselves do not bear much of the trouble in this connection. The work is mainly done by travelers and natives of countries from which the wild beasts come, from whom the various zoological societies of the world buy, except when the purchases are made from professional wild-beast dealers.

Some of the latter employ regular recruiting agents, whom they send out whenever they receive orders which they cannot execute with stock they have in hand. If the park authorities order an African lion of a dealer and the dealer has not a suitable beast on hand recruiting lions in Africa begins at once and continues until a good specimen has been obtained.

The different methods by which the various wild animals are captured in their native state are interesting. Lions are generally caught by being tempted to thrust their heads through nooses of strong cords composed of twisted hides. Pieces of meat are used for bait, but frequently the hunters have many days of hard chasing before the lion can be persuaded to try the noose. When he does the cords are pulled quickly around his throat, stifling him, and other stout cords are then bound around his legs. Restoratives are then administered to revive the animal, whose efforts to free himself from the noose have brought on exhaustion, and he is carried away and put in a specially constructed cage for shipment.

Tigers are more savage than lions and can rarely be captured when full-grown. Recruiting is accordingly carried on among the cubs, the parent tigers being killed and the young, left without protectors, being easily caught. The cubs readily accustom themselves to captivity.

Perhaps the most difficult of all wild animals to capture is the giraffe, says the New York Times. In addition to being very rare, giraffes are exceedingly timid and are very swift-footed. There is no special way to capture a giraffe, as almost every way has been tried, and all have been almost equally unsuccessful. The method which has occasionally resulted in a capture is by using a long cord, at each end of which is a round weight. This cord is thrown by the hunter in such a manner as to wind around the animal's legs, either bringing it to the ground or rendering it incapable of escaping before it is made a prisoner. Most of the giraffes in captivity have been caught by chance when young.

If a man can't be contented poor, he will never be contented rich.

SPRING HOUSE CLEANING.

Take One Room at a Time and Do Work Thoroughly.

When a bright, sunny day comes in early spring and reveals the accumulated dust of the winter, the neat, tidy housekeeper begins to think of house cleaning. But this is one department of the housekeeper's realm where it is best to make haste slowly. There will be many cold, blustering and wet days before settled weather comes, and the housewife will find that there will be days when the men folks, in spite of all their care, will bring in more grime and dirt on their shoes. If the house has had its usual fall cleaning, there is no need to be in a hurry about the spring work.

There is much work, however, that can be done early greatly to facilitate the work later on. Every closet may be cleaned and the contents carefully examined to find what is worth saving, and some disposition made of all that is worthless. There is no real economy in keeping useless material in the shape of cast-off garments, old and broken utensils of whatever kind, year after year, to be handled every time the house is cleaned. The bureau drawers, all trunks and boxes used for holding clothing, etc., may be tidied any dull, dreary day that you can rally your forces sufficiently to tackle the job.

When the time comes that you feel you can wait no longer, go to work systematically, and do not have the house torn up all over at once. Theoretically, you should begin at the top of the house and take one room at a time. But with the average family this is not always possible. A great many families are not able to buy a new carpet whenever one begins to give way, but must change them about, making over the carpet for some large room for a smaller one, thus getting all the wear there is in it.

But with all this, with careful management, the work may be accomplished without upsetting things all over the house. It will be found very convenient to have some food prepared before hand. A ham boiled, cake and pies baked, Boston baked beans, etc., will make it very much easier to prepare the meals, and these articles will keep fresh for several days.

Then, last, but not least, take the work as it comes, without worry and do not be afraid that some one else will get the spring cleaning done before you do, and you will come out of the siege in better shape, and your work more satisfactorily done.

OVERMATCHED BY A WOMAN.

The late W. W. Corcoran, the millionaire philanthropist of Washington, who gave to the city the magnificent art gallery which bears his name, was very fond of telling how he was once overmatched by a wealthy maiden lady, from whom he desired to purchase a piece of property.

Mr. Corcoran was the owner of the Arlington Hotel, at the corner of Vermont avenue and H street. Adjoining the hotel property on the H street side was a handsome brownstone mansion owned by the maiden lady. The lot upon which the house was built extended back to I street, a distance of four hundred feet, and abutted on the rear of the hotel property.

Mr. Corcoran found it necessary to enlarge the hotel, and with this end in view desired to purchase the rear end of the lot owned by the maiden lady. As she was very wealthy, he knew that a large price would not be any special inducement, and for a time was at a loss to know exactly how to approach her. He finally concluded to go straight to the point, and therefore addressed her the following note:

"Dear Miss C. How much will you take for your back yard? We wish to enlarge the Arlington Hotel. Yours sincerely, W. W. CORCORAN."

Promptly came the reply:

"Dear Mr. Corcoran. How much will you take for the Arlington Hotel? We wish to enlarge our back yard. Yours cordially, A. C."

Thibet Not Much of a Temptation.

Thibet is no temptation to the greediest of nations. Save for a little patch in the south and east it is a barren land. Gold in insignificant quantities is washed down in the sands of the rivers. This, the lama's teach, is the power of which the buried nuggets are the roots. To remove the nuggets would "diminish the vitalizing fluids of the earth," so mining is not allowed.

Showing His Gratitude.

She—But if you say you can't bear the girl why ever did you propose?

He—Well, her people have always been awfully good to me and it's the only way I could return their hospitality.—Punch.

What We Exported.

The chief growth in American exports to Russia has been in cotton, agricultural implements, copper and its manufactures and naval stores.

A woman doesn't enjoy a trip half as much as she enjoys telling about it afterward.