

"AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING."

The days and months have lengthened into years
Since pale lips said "Farewell,"
And 'twixt thy heart and mine, oh, best beloved!
Death's strange, sad silence fell.

The air, so vibrant with our joyous laughter,
Has strangely silent grown;
The path so easy when we walked together
Is hard to tread alone.

Alone, yet not alone, for hearts so closely
Entwined as mine and thine
Are one forever, though we walk no longer
Thy dear hand fast in mine.

"For time and for eternity"—how often
I heard that low, deep tone;
Each day of time but linked our hearts more closely,
And thou art still my own.

Death only robbed me of the body, holding
Thy soul, my life's one star;
And still upon my life I feel thee shining,
So near and yet so far.

How rich is life! Fond memory illumines
The darkness of to-day.
Eternity's calm glory casts a brightness
Along my lonely way.

Patience, my soul! Think, in thy darkest hours
Of joys that thou hast known.
Courage, my heart! Each day the hour draws nearer
When thou shalt claim thine own.

—Donahoe's Magazine.

A TARDY PROPOSAL

It was exactly three years to a day since Harry Morton had set foot in the village, and the news of his return spread quickly among the inhabitants. The wildest rumors were, of course, afloat in next to no time, and he progressed from absolute beggary and failure to the very height of affluence and prosperity (and the reverse) in that brief winter afternoon.

The simple truth that he was neither rich nor poor, but that he had just managed to save a few hundreds and take a run home, would never have satisfied the gossip-loving villagers, to whom a voyage from Australia was such a stupendous affair that no man in his senses would undertake it otherwise than under great pressure.

It was getting late in the evening before the news reached as far as

Mrs. Marsden shook her head mournfully.

"You've changed your tune lately, Fred, that's all I can say, then," she retorted. "Why, look at the time you chased him across the spinney, and found when you laid hands upon him he'd got his coat simply lined with hares."

"And many's the time I've done the same," he chimed in sentimentally, "only, of course, I didn't tell young Harry so—that would never have done."

"And then his carryings-on with the girl up at the 'Mitre,' and—but there, that doesn't matter now, I'll tell you what, though; I don't believe a word about this fortune of his. He's not the sort of chap to put money by—it's easy come and easy go with him, to my way of thinking."

Mr. Marsden did not trouble to argue the point with his wife; but, like the good-natured man he was, allowed her to have the last word.

"Hetty!" he cried. "Come here, Hetty, I want you."

She came into the kitchen at his call, her face as white as a sheet of paper.

"Why, Lord sake alive! whatever ails the child?" exclaimed her mother, "you look as though you'd seen a ghost. What's the matter with you?"

With a knowledge born of long experience, Hetty threw herself down on the rug at her father's feet, mumbling words to the effect that her head was aching, and the good man with a frown and a shake of the finger at his wife, put his mouth down close to the girl's ear and whispered:

"Have you heard the news, Hetty? Young Harry Morton's come home."

He had expected to see her raise her head and a bright sparkle to come into her eyes; but he was grievously disappointed, for she obstinately kept her face averted and uttered merely a mechanical:

"Oh, has he?"

"Yes, and he's come back as rich as a—rich as a—"

"Oh, fudge!" interpolated the practical Mrs. Marsden; "don't you believe what he's saying, Hetty—it's only idle village talk."

"But he is really back?" hazarded Hetty, feeling that some remark from her was called for. "Isn't he?"

"Back? Yes," cried her mother, "and—well, bless my heart, if that isn't his knock—I should know it in a thousand."

She ran and opened the back door—the front one was only used on state and ceremonial occasions—returning half a minute later followed by Harry Morton.

Hetty had risen hurriedly from her seat upon the floor, as red now as she had been white before, and stood shrunk back into the shadow until the congratulations between her parents and the visitor were over. Then—there was no help for it—she advanced timidly, yet with a certain air of defiance, and put out her hand.

He took it quietly, with a quick look into her eyes and a sudden flushing of color into his bronzed cheeks.

"You haven't changed a bit, Hetty," he said; and she, laughing now, assured him that if his name had not been announced she would never have recognized him at all.

His three years of rough life had certainly wrought a wondrous change

in him, and there were now a decision and manliness in his bearing, a firmness in his strong mouth, and a will and purpose in his keen, gray eyes which contrasted favorably with his self as she had formerly known it.

Hetty had not as yet trusted herself to take a full and comprehensive view of him, her sidelong glance having been sufficient to cause her heart to beat rapidly and her eyes to become dim and misty.

What a little fool she had been not to accept his offer of three years ago, when they stood together that night at the gate of the farm.

"I have always loved you, Hetty, darling!" he had said—and, oh, how low and tender his voice had been!—"and if only you could love me in return just a little bit—"

And she had swept his declaration aside with a laugh, spurning the offer, even at the very moment when her own heart was palpitating with passion. Another word from him and she would have confessed her love; but he had turned angrily upon his heel, and gone at a rapid pace down the road. Once she had called him back, but her voice was choking with sobs and he did not hear her, and, with a coldness of death at her heart, she had staggered into the house and thrown herself in a passion of rage and tenderness—the two strangely blended—upon the bed.

A week later Harry had gone on his long trip to Australia without so much as a word or a line of parting, and she had never forgotten that hopeless, dreary winter day on which she heard the news, with its long succeeding night of bitter tears and agony of remorse. How she had loved him! And he was lost to her forever—he would never come back—oh, how she cursed the feminine folly and light-heartedness which had prompted her to refuse his manly declaration.

Harry's home-stay was limited to one month, and the days sped swiftly by.

Hetty—her love increased now tenfold—lived in a perfect frenzy of alternating hope and fear, at one moment declaring herself the unhappiest mortal alive, at another confident that all would be put right before he went away again. That he still loved her was certain, conceal the fact how he might, and she judged by the strength of her own feelings, that it would be impossible for him to leave her, perhaps forever this time, without a word.

Three weeks passed—four! In two days more his ship sailed, and it would be necessary for him to leave home overnight in order to be in London in time to reach the docks.

She had gone into the village that day, the last, to make a few purchases, and just as she emerged into the open country he had come up with her.

"I am just in time," he said, taking the heavy bag from her hand. "Why what a weight for you to lug home by yourself?"

"Oh, I'm used to it," she smiled faintly, "and you know I'm pretty strong."

"I have something to tell you, Hetty, something that has been upon my lips ever since I returned. I do not know that it will concern you much; but—"

She was looking up at him in wonderment. Not concern her much? Had he not guessed a thousand times how matters stood with the poor, pitiful little heart? Had not her every wistful glance, her every timid response, her every pleading compliance with his lightest wish—had not these revealed to him how passionately she loved him.

"I am married, Hetty," he said. "I—"

She gave a low cry, like some affrighted, wounded animal, and shrank helplessly away from him, restrained only by his hold upon her hand.

"Yes, I was married a year ago in Australia. I found life right back in the heart of the bush was intolerably lonely, and—but what is the matter, Hetty—you are crying?"

She felt she could not answer his question had the world been laid at her feet for so doing, but she crushed back the deadly sickness at her heart and said in a low voice:

"It is very silly of me, but I have not been very well lately, and—oh, do please let us hurry home."

No further word was spoken until they reached the gate at which they had parted three years ago; and here, despite her efforts to escape he detained her.

"Do you remember when we last stood here together?" he asked.

She strove to disengage her hand; but he was too strong for her.

"Do you remember how you laughed at me, and let me walk off down the lane with never a word—"

"I called you—"

The words had escaped her lips unconsciously, wrung from her in the keenness of her agony, and he looked at her in amazement.

"You called me?" he asked.

"Yes," she retorted defiantly, casting shame and reserve to the winds. "I called you back and you would not come. I did not mean what I said, and

—ah! but what is the use of talking like this?" she cried passionately. "It's all over and past now, and I wish I was dead and away from every one."

He had released her hand and she stood leaning against her gate, her face buried in her folded arms, her tears flowing unrestrained.

He touched her lightly and pityingly on the shoulder.

"You must not cry so, Hetty," he said. "It has all been a horrid mistake—I can see it now, and," she felt his breath upon her face, "if I were to ask you the same question would you—"

She turned her tear-stained face upon him.

"You mustn't ask me," she cried, her cheeks aflame. "You are—married now, and I—"

Again he seized her hand.

"But if I were single," he urged. "Tell me, would you repulse me again? There can be no harm in a simply reply, and I really have a reason for asking."

"But you have no right to ask me," she flamed; "it is an insult—you are taunting me, and it is cowardly."

There was a strange light shining in his eyes, and suddenly, ere she could escape, his big arms were around her and he was pressing his lips feverishly to her hot cheeks.

She endeavored to push him away, with all the strength of her two hands; but she was as a little child in his grasp, and at last, worn out with her exertions, she hung spent and exhausted at his mercy.

"Tell me," he whispered. "Tell me and I will release you—only tell me."

His persistency had conquered, and she gave the faintest shake of the head and a tremulously muttered "No;" and he instantly released her, to catch her again the next moment as she was sinking half fainting to the ground.

"Oh, let me go!" she cried wildly. "You must not—oh, you must not!"

"Really," he laughed. "I think I may, Hetty"—she shrank from the cool incisiveness of his tones—"when I went away from here three years ago I swore never to set foot in the village again, but my love for you proved stronger than my resolution, and I was forced to return. Since I have been back I learned to love you more every day; but I did not dare to confess it to you. I have wavered and wavered, putting it off until this last day of all; and now—"

He paused and took her cheeks between his hands, forcing her to look up into his eyes.

"Now, Hetty, darling! Now you have said you will not repulse me. I have gathered the necessary courage, and I ask you—to be my wife."

"But—"

"Oh!" he laughed, "you need not fear. I shall not be committing bigamy. My first wife is a—a pure myth, and if you will say 'Yes'—"

She did not say "Yes" even then; but under the circumstances, perhaps words would have been superfluous.

The shipping company made no objection to Harry's postponing his passage for a month, on the understanding that he would require tickets for two instead of one.—Detroit Free Press.

A Matter of Orthography.

After a few weeks at boarding school Alice wrote home as follows:

"Dear Father: Though I was homesick at first, now that I am getting acquainted, I like the school very much. Last evening Grayce and Kathryn (my roommates) and I had a nice little chaffing dish party, and we invited three other girls, Mayme and Carrye Miller and Edyth Kent. I hope you are all well at home. I can't write any more now, for I have a lot of studying to do. With lots of love to all. Your affectionate daughter,

"ALYSS."

To which she received the following reply:

"My Dear Daughter Alyss: I was glad to receive your letter and to know that you are enjoying yourself. Uncle Jaymes came the other day, bringing Charles and Albyrt with him. Your brother Henrie was delighted, for he has been lonely without you. I have bought a new gray horse whose name is Byllye. He matches nicely with old Freddie. With much love from us all, I am, your affectionate father.

"WILLIAM JONES."

The next letter from the absent daughter was signed "Alice,"—Woman's Home Companion.

The Deciding Factor.

First Physician—Did you advise an operation?

Second Physician—I was about to do so, when I happened to see a letter which was on the patient's desk.

First Physician—What did it say?

Second Physician—It was from his bank, telling him that his account was overdrawn.—Judge.

Custom.

Be not so bigoted to any custom as to worship it at the expense of truth. All is custom that goes on in continuity. All customs are not alike beneficial to us.

An overworked woman's idea of a good time is to sit in the dark and rock, and rock, and rock.

COULDN'T KILL THIS SHARK.

Old Tar Cut Big Fish Into Bits, but It Came Back.

The shark hovered in the clear green water, a ghostly gray shadow on our starboard quarter. It had haunted the wake of the cable ship Kingfisher for three days. I had a splendid hook, but couldn't use it for fear of getting the line tangled with the propeller, says a writer in London Tit-Bits.

"Lot of vitality these creatures have," said the third officer, who had joined me by the weather rail. "I went out sharking once."

"You went out what?"

"Catching sharks. The liver of a shark, you must know, is full of an oil that is just as good as cod-liver oil. Well, we caught a huge shark, hauled him aboard, whipped out his liver, and flung him back."

"Alive?"

"Rather. You don't imagine we'd sweat for half an hour exterminating the beast, do you? Besides you needn't waste your sympathy. Listen. In five minutes came a fierce pull at my line, and up I hauled Old Johnny Liver Pills."

"The same shark?"

"Exactly. Well, you can guess we were rather vexed. Aboard we hauled him again, took his heart and most of his clockworks out and dumped him over once more. He had no more inward, I assure you, than a dried haddock. I felt another pull at my line—the same old pull. I knew it, and yelled to Billy Slocum, our Yankee skipper, 'He's at it again, Billy!'"

"The same shark?"

"Exactly. Over the side he came again, at the end of the line. The skipper clawed at his billigout beard. He was a trifle put out. 'I never saw a shark so set on being cotched,' says he. 'We hain't an ax nor a gun; keep him aboard we can't, and he's runnin' the fishin' grolpin' round us without lites or liver, and scaring away every decent fish in the seven seas. Take that. Take that, y'old scarecrow, and he put the shark's eyes out, and we dumped it over again."

"Well, my line hadn't been down more'n a minute when I felt a nibbling—a kind of blind groping, as it were—and I shouts to Billy Slocum, 'I've got him again, Billy!'"

"Be dashed to him!" growled our skipper. "He must 'a' had spectacles in his pocket, and we must 'a' overlooked 'em. Haul him aboard!"

"And you hauled the same old shark on deck?"

"How did you know that?"

"I guessed. Go on."

"He came on board fresh as a mackerel, and frisking his tail as if to say, 'Here we are again, boys!' 'Give me the old saw out of the after locker,' says Billy. 'I'm about sick of this yer.'"

"What d'you want with the saw, Billy?" I said.

"Want!" he snorted. "I want to cut its bloomin' head off."

"Well, he sawed away and sawed away, and old Johnny Catch-'Em-Alive-O flapped his tail in a dreamy way, as if his best girl was fanning him asleep, and twisted a bit sideways as if to say, 'A little bit more on this side, please, where a fly's tickling me;' and old Billy Slocum sawed and sawed and cussed and cussed till at last he got the head apart from the body, and we dumped the head to starboard and the tail to port."

"I know, and they joined together and you caught them again."

"You've evidently been reading some lying magazine article about shark fishing," answered our third Ananias, "and, as you seem to know such a lot about the business, you may just finish the story for yourself."

Plea for High School Cookery.

In a High School paper published in a suburb of New York one of the student contributors puts up a strong plea for a course of domestic training to be added to the High School curriculum. In her article she says that the main requirements of a good housekeeper is cooking. She adds that fathers and husbands are often driven to get their meals away from home on account of bad cooking. Every girl may not be able to attend college, she says, but she may have to keep house. Where is there a better place to learn than at school?

The same young woman makes the plea that cooking need not be taught more than once or twice a week, and that while the girls are learning the art of cooking, the boys can take lessons in manual training. Domestic science should be taught for the purpose of diverting and relieving the mental labor of the pupils, the young woman adds.

A Heroine.

Tess—I think I'm entitled to a Carnegie medal. I saved a life the other evening.

Jess—The idea! Whose?

Tess—Jack Hansom's. He said he couldn't live without me.—Philadelphia Press.

When a boy dies and his body is laid out in the front room, it seems strange that no one exclaims: "Now what is that boy doing in the parlor?"



DO YOU REMEMBER?

Willowlea Farm, which lay some miles away on the outskirts of the village, and that it had not lost anything in traveling was only to be expected.

"They do say," remarked Mr. Marsden, as he settled himself down comfortably in a capacious chair at the fireside, lifting his church warden from the mantel at the same time, "they do say as how young Harry Morton's come back."

"Young Harry Morton back?" cried his wife incredulously. Why—"

A crash of breaking china in the scullery (which led out of the kitchen in which they were seated) cut short the worthy lady's sentence.

"Whatever are you doing, now, Hetty," she cried. "I declare, you're always breaking something or another."

There was a muffled expression of regret, followed by a rapid acceleration in the speed of the duties being performed, and the farmer and his wife took up the thread of their interrupted conversation.

"Why, it's only three years since he left," Mrs. Marsden said, "and if he's come back the same as he went, then all I can say is that it's a bad job for his poor mother."

"Ah! but he's not," chuckled the farmer; "he's come back, so they say, with a big fortune, made up on the gold fields of Australia, and as to its being a bad job for his mother, I never could see any harm in the lad—a bit wild, perhaps, but nothing worse."