

## THE STORY OF LIFE.

Say, what is life! 'Tis to be born;  
A helpless babe to greet the light  
With a sharp wall, as if the morn  
Foretold a cloudy noon and night;  
To weep, to sleep, and weep again,  
With sunny smiles between—and then?

And then apace the infant grows  
To be a laughing, sprightly boy,  
Happy, despite his little woes,  
Were he but conscious of his joy!  
To be, in short, from two to ten;  
A merry, moody child—and then?

And then in coat and trousers clad,  
To learn to say the declogue,  
And break it, an unthinking lad,  
With mirth and mischief all agog,  
A truant off by field and fen,  
And capture butterflies?

And then, increased in strength and size,  
To be, anon, a youth full grown,  
The hero in his mother's eyes,  
A young Apollo in his own;  
To imitate the ways of men  
In fashionable sin—and then?

And then, at last to be a man,  
To fall in love, to woo and wed!  
With seething brain to scheme and plan  
To gather gold or toil for bread;  
To sue for fame, with tongue and pen,  
And gain or lose the prize—and then?

And then in gray and wrinkled old,  
To mourn the speed of life's decline;  
To praise the scenes our youth beheld,  
And dwell in memory of lang'ryne;  
To dream awhile with darkened ken,  
To drop into the grave—and then?

—[John G. Saxe.]

## ON THE RIVER.

"So Vane is at his old tricks again. If I were that girl's father or brother, I should be inclined to express my opinion of his tactics very strongly."

"Is that Miss Elliott? I have noticed him by her side more than half the evening—but, if I may judge from the lady's expression, his attentions are not otherwise than acceptable."

"Splendidly handsome girl, isn't she? Alice Hargreaves, the new beauty, is not a patch upon her in my opinion."

"Handsome enough—for those who admire that style—great eastern eyes and Juno-like figure. For my own part I prefer something softer and more feminine."

"So apparently did Vane yesterday morning. He was sitting in the park under Mrs. Fairfax's parasol for over an hour and a half. How a proud girl like Blanche Elliott can stand such an open rivalry passes my comprehension."

"Mrs. Fairfax? The widow of Jack Fairfax, of the artillery?"

"Even so—Nina Forrester that was. You must remember her, Graham—a pretty little fair-haired thing who looks as if a puff of wind would blow her away. She is awfully well off—Jack took good care of that, poor old chap! And really she looks hardly more than a child still, though she has a little girl, as pretty as herself, over five years old."

"And she is flirting with young Vane, you say?"

"Flirting! She is the veriest little flirt in England. Her villa at Twickenham is a paradise for that kind of amusement. Sloping lawn down to the river—boat always read—strawberries and cream—and a pretty little hostess so charmed to see you if you run down for a breath of fresh air on a hot afternoon. She has been up in town this week, staying with her brother, but was to go home yesterday."

During this last speech Colonel Grahame's attention had been chiefly bestowed upon Miss Elliott and the countenance of the man who is so assiduously bending over her.

It is a very good-looking face—a face which one of Sir Reginald Vane's dog-loving friends has sometimes likened to a Gordon setter, with dark, lustrous eyes and delicate profile—and if there are weak lines marring the mouth and chin, they are concealed by the black silky mustache which covers both. He is a popular man, especially with the women, who easily learn to call him "Reggie," and smile over the rather free-and-easy compliments which have a charm of their own when uttered in that low musical murmur. In fact, a drawing-room pet of the nineteenth century, such as one meets with here and there in the course of every season.

Of a very different type is Leslie Grahame, the man who, standing in the doorway, has been listening to the careless remarks of a gossiping acquaintance. Of Scottish descent and with a rugged cast of features common to that nation, he might, except for his commanding height, pass unnoticed in the crowd assembled at Lady Hetherington's "At Home." But probably, on Aldershot field-day, a spectator would pick out the cavalry officer who sits on his horse so gallantly (though three fingers of his bridle hand are gone, and he is fain to wind the charger's reins around his wrist) as an object of curiosity.

For do not other medals besides those so lately won in Egypt decorate his breast, and is there not some danger and heroism, almost unparalleled in

quent and natural to attract your attention—although it is rather wonderful for Colonel Greshame to condescend to notice any one. His head is usually in the clouds."

"He looks out of place here, and he feels it. See he is 'sloping off,' as you say. Grahame—I remember the name, a V. C., is he not?"

"Just so. A great hero in his way, but not a very amusing companion in ordinary life. I only know him by sight, however. But tell me once more, when and where am I to see you again?"

Miss Elliott was playing with her fan, and contrives with it to hide the color that for a moment overspreads her face at this question.

As she remains silent he repeats it more eagerly.

"You know my hours—I always ride in the evening this hot weather—5 to 8—I shall probably do so to-morrow."

"To-morrow?" Vane's handsome face betrays evident disturbance. "I am afraid I shall be out of town. Very provoking—an old engagement with a relation."

"Why stoop to prevarication. Sir Reginald?" Blanche has risen now, and her dark eyes are flashing. "You are your own master. See, mamma is beckoning to me. Good-night. You will find it cool and pleasant on the river to-morrow." And with this parting shot she is gone; leaving Vane looking decidedly foolish, and what is worse, unpleasantly conscious that he is looking so.

"By George!" he soliloquized, as he lit a cigar during his walk to the club. "How savage she can look when she pleases! Yet I don't know but that I admire her all the more—a flare-up shows off those magnificent eyes and the very fact of jealousy betrays an interest in my movements. Still, the widow is decidedly pretty—and I have been down on my luck lately and sadly need a windfall. And I really believe she is fond of me, dear little soul!"

And Sir Reginald Vane's reflections not leading him to any satisfactory conclusion, the next afternoon finds him at Waterloo, taking a return ticket to Twickenham.

Five minutes' walk from the railroad station brings him to a charming little villa, with green lawn sloping down to the river, while from beneath a weeping ash a dainty little figure, emerging from the depth of a chaise longue, comes with hand extended to meet him.

In her cool, white, summer draperies, and with the flickering sunbeams lighting up her great childish blue eyes and waves of pale golden hair, Mrs. Fairfax is as pleasant an object as any man's eye could rest upon. So Reggie Vane thinks, as, with a sigh and murmur of satisfaction, he sinks upon a seat by her side, takes off his hat and helps himself uninvited from the fragrant pile of strawberries in the basket near at hand.

"Frightfully hot in London, is it not?" asks his hostess sympathetically. "Even here Queenie and I have been able to do nothing but lounge about in the shade and eat strawberries. Where is the child, by-the-by?"

A tiny counterpart of herself, giving promise of even greater beauty, here comes up and presents a tiny hand to Vane; but when he attempts to kiss her she shakes her yellow curls over her face and struggled away.

"Why, Queenie, what have I done?" he asks, half offended, yet too languid to go in pursuit of the baby coquette.

The mother's silvery laugh rang out merrily.

"You forgot to take away the rose she gave you when you were last here. Never mind, Queenie, you must forgive him now."

"And won't you bring me another in token of pardon?" as the rosebud mouth meets his half reluctantly.

Queenie hesitates, but finally conquered by that winning voice and smile, goes off in pursuit of the desired gift.

"And now, Monsieur," says the little woman, leaning back on her cushions, and surveying the visitor through the large innocent blue eyes, "how has the world been using you since last we met? Come, give an account of yourself. Where were you last night?"

"Dined at the St. Elmos. Stupid affair, and intolerably hot—and no one worth speaking to."

"Miss Elliott was not there?" this in a careless little tone of inquiry.

"No. I took in one of the girls of the house, who had not two words to say for herself."

"And who left the field open for your eloquence! Come, Reggie, don't be cross; take some more strawberries. I want you to amuse me now you are here. Where did you go afterwards?"

"To a couple of stupid crushes—really a barbarous institution in this weather. Lady Hetherington's rooms were tolerably cool, however."

"And you enjoyed yourself there? It is hardly like you to honor an evening rout when there is no dancing—unless some special attraction tempted you."

"And how could that be when you were at Twickenham?"

"Well meant, my friend, but hardly so gracefully expressed as I should have expected from you. Queenie, darling, run in to ask why they don't bring tea."

"Here it comes—and confound it!—another visitor. Why cannot that butler of yours learn discretion?"

"Because I prefer to exercise my own," replies Mrs. Fairfax. And the little figure is drawn up, and the baby face takes an expression for a moment which warns Vane he has gone too far.

"Who would have thought," he murmurs into his beard, "that the little pussy cat could show such claws?"

Meanwhile Mrs. Fairfax has risen and moves forward to receive her guest.

The servant mumbles a name which she does not catch, and she lifts her pretty appealing eyes in some perplexity to the stranger's face.

Something she reads in that grave, bronzed countenance brings back old memories—recalling a time long passed away, before poor Jack Fairfax won her with his hasty, impetuous tale of love—before she had, as it were, leaped suddenly from childhood into the glare and excitement of a spoiled beauty's life. Nor is the dream dispelled when the visitor speaks, unconsciously softening his deep tones with the gentleness he would have used in addressing a child.

"You have not forgotten me, Mrs. Fairfax? I do not wonder—it is years since we met—and—"

"No, no," she suddenly cried, with a joyous clap of her hands. "You are Captain Grahame—my playfellow of long ago. I remember you quite well; but so much has happened since those days—"

"I know," he answered, gently, wondering whether the shadow in her blue eyes is caused by Jack's memory, or—as he looks at the handsome young fellow so evidently at home in this garden—by Jack's chosen successor. And then the two men glare at one another, after the fashion common to Englishmen when they meet for the first time, and are uncertain whether to be on friendly terms or to fly at each other's throats.

"Sir Reginald Vane—captain—no, it is Colonel now, surely? I thought so—Colonel Grahame." And while a stiff bow is exchanged she proceeds to pour out the tea.

Vane renews his attentions to Queenie, but she from some perverse instinct of coquetry bestows all her favors upon the colonel, whose grave aspect would hardly prove attractive to children in general. Yet it melts into a kindly smile as, lifting the little one upon his knee, he glances from her face to that of her mother, older only by some eighteen years, and recalls the days when Nina Forrester had sat so confidently on the knee of the shy young cornet.

"You will let me scull you up the river, Mrs. Fairfax?" says Vane, as he puts down his tea-cup. "I have not forgotten" (here his voice takes a more tender inflection) "our last experience to Hampton Court."

Mrs. Fairfax looks doubtfully toward her other guest, who somewhat stiffly observes: "Don't let me be any hindrance to your plans. Or perhaps you will allow me to take an oar in your service?"

Vane's face darkens, but the widow claps her hands and answers gaily, "Capital! It would really have been hard work for one alone in this boat."

So Queenie runs to fetch her mother's hat, but at the last moment finds the charms of a favorite kitten's society irresistible, and selects to remain on terra firma herself.

Vane pulls stroke, and the boat glides smoothly away from the Emerald bank and out into the glossy expanse of water, amid scores of others gayly laden with a similar freight, and looking as if playing their part in some holiday scene.

"This has been very hard on me," murmurs Vane, so that his words are audible to the fair steerer only. "My pleasant afternoon all spoiled because—"

"Because you are a foolish, self-willed boy," answers the little woman, who albeit some four years his junior, sometimes likes to play at maternal airs. "Come, shake off your fit of the blues! Be agreeable, and stay and dine with us."

"With us? Are you going" (very low) "to invite that fellow, too?"

"Certainly I am. He is one of my very oldest friends"—(old enough! grumbles Vane)—"and I have not seen him for years. We have heaps of things to say to one another."

"Then you will certainly get through them better uninterrupted," says Sir Reginald, in a spiteful sotto voice. Then aloud: "I am awfully sorry, Mrs. Fairfax, but I have just remembered that I am to dine out to-night. I am afraid I shall have to ask you to land me at Surbiton, so that I can get home by train. Steer more to the right, please; you are running us into that barge."

"What are you growing nervous?" and again that sweet, clear laugh rings out, and Vane grinds his teeth as he feels, rather than sees, that a grim smile is overspreading the face behind him.

When Surbiton is reached at length he scarcely attempts to disguise his relief as he springs ashore.

"Good-bye! Many thanks, Mrs. Fairfax. I may come over again, soon."

"If you like—only it is best to give me notice beforehand, as I might be in London for the play. But, yes, come when you like. Any day this week," softening as she sees his face fall.

The colonel's heavy mustache has sustained sundry pulls during this colloquy, and his face is a shade graver than usual as he steps into the vacant seat and possesses himself of both oars. And with a vigorous stroke the boat is once more in motion, the widow's eye for the first time lights upon the maimed left hand, and she exclaims in dismay: "When—how—did this happen?"

"In South Africa—long ago. Don't be afraid. My sculling may be somewhat clumsy, but I will promise to get you home in due course of time."

"Oh, I was not thinking of myself. But does it not hurt you? I am sorry I did not know before Sir Reginald left us. Or stay—could I help you, I wonder?"

"With those tiny hands of yours? No, no, I am getting on perfectly well;

but give that steam launch more space, or we shall get a tossing after she has passed."

A silence follows, during which both are busy with their own reflections. When Mrs. Fairfax lifts her eyes to her companion's face it is so grave that she exclaims in wonder:

"I was going to say, 'A penny for your thoughts,' but from the expression of your countenance yours must be weighty enough to be worth more. Won't you be generous and impart them gratis?"

A long pause, during which she leans over the side of the boat and idly dabbles one hand in the water.

"Take care," he says, warningly, "you will lose your rings."

"I have none on that hand except—" and she takes the little white fingers out of the water and gazes half sadly on the thick gold band—Jack's wedding ring—placed there six years ago, and only eighteen months before Jack's own honest heart was still and cold.

Leslie Grahame is looking at it also, and somehow the sight nerves him to the next words he has to say.

"It is a long time since we met, is it not? I was riding with poor Jack when he bought that ring, and a few days later I had orders for India, and so I missed the wedding. But I did not forget my old friend or his bride—nor," he adds more gently, "did I forget you when sadder news reached me. Poor Jack," he says, dreamily, his thoughts busy with the boy friend of his youth, and in a manner forgetting that he is speaking to that friend's widow; "so young, so open-hearted and generous."

"All that and more," she says quickly; "he was too good for this cold, hard world. Ah me, to think that Jack, who was so strong, should have been taken and little left me to face life alone."

"You have your child." Unconsciously his tone has grown a little stern again.

"Darling Queenie! Yes. But it is dull sometimes, and one wants some one to consult—to lean on."

"And you think you find that some one in Reginald Vane?"

He is sorry the next moment after to have blurted out the words, but it is too late to recall them. She flashes a glance at him, and he meets it steadily, expecting to be assailed with a torrent of feminine wrath, but is taken back at meeting instead a sudden burst of tears.

"Mrs. Fairfax—what a brute I am—forgive me. I have lived so much alone that I have fallen into a dreadful habit of speaking my thoughts aloud."

"But how came you to have such thoughts?"

"Could I help it? Only last night I heard your names coupled together by the voice of common gossip, and to-day have I not seen some confirmation of the report? And I would not presume to find fault, though I was once not only Jack's friend, but almost a rough elder brother to you in the forgotten days of long ago."

"Not forgotten," murmurs a stifled voice; "only I wondered why you never came to see me."

"It was best not. I—Jack loved and trusted me—his mentor—as he used to call me, poor boy! But now—now, Nina, I cannot but think of the old days when I see you about to take an irretrievable step with one whom I cannot think worthy—"

"You are jealous! Our grave colonel actually condescending to such weakness? And pray, may I ask, what makes you think Sir Reginald Vane unbecomingly worthy of little me—but of any good thing that the world can bestow?"

"His dishonorable conduct towards another woman. Forgive me, Nina—heaven knows I would sooner bite my tongue out than say it—but he is playing a double part in this, making up to you for fortune, while his heart—what he has to give—belongs to Miss Elliott. I saw him by her side last night. I watched the looks and signs that passed between them, and I speak solemn truth when I say that I believe he has won that poor girl's affections, and that in sober earnest he cares for her. And now that I have said my say, and brought a cloud over the face I have always connected with heaven's sunshine, I will go my way, only asking that, as time softens your anger, you will try to think a little kindly of me. Here is your landing place."

And he pulls the boat into the tiny creek, and resting on his oars waits for her to spring ashore and give him his final dismissal. But Nina does not move. Her head is bent down and so overshadowed by her that he cannot read the expression of her faintly flushed face.

It seems an age to him before the silence is broken. At last—"Did you always think me a dreadful flirt?"

He is startled and taken unawares by the appealing tone. Fain would he answer a reassuring negative, but memories of the old days again rise before his mind—visions of the sweet little playmate grown suddenly into an exalted, vain piece of womanhood—of poor Jack's alternate raptures and despair in the days of his brief, ill-considered courtship—and the truth, the guiding star of Leslie Grahame's nature, compels him to answer:

"I don't think you could help it—some women are formed to be the torment of every man who comes near them—it was your nature to be sweet and lovable."

"And now I am grown older and harder and care only for admiration, so that I could stoop to pick up a heart that belongs of right to another woman. Oh, Leslie, you thought this!"

"By heaven, I did you injustice, cries the colonel, in a burst of self-reproach. "I've been insulting you all this time—and you have borne it like an angel—just as you used to be in the old days when I was a big unmanly boy, and tyrannized over you like the ruffian I was."

"And I liked you through it all." This was spoken very softly.

"Nina, Nina, do not drive me mad. You can do it—you always could—I went away years ago because I knew you cared for Jack."

"You did?"

"Was I not right? You would never have chosen me—the grave, stern Scotchman, fifteen years your senior—in preference to that bright, sunny-hearted lad. And now don't think, dear, that I have come back to harass you. I would not have seen you to-day, but that I could not bear to leave you unwarmed of the gossip aloft. But now that you know your woman's wit and your own brave little heart will prove your best defense. Good-bye, Nina. Say once that you forgive me—as you used to long ago."

"Leslie!"

It is well that the drooping branches of a weeping willow have made a secluded little bower of the landing place; well, too, that the gardener, coming down to moor the boat, does not arrive a minute sooner, or his astonished eyes might have seen what Queenie afterwards mysteriously reports: "My mamma crying, and Colonel Grahame comforting her, as mamma does when I tumble down, holding her hand on his shoulder and stroking her hair."

For Leslie Grahame's long-repressed tale of love has been spoken at last, and the little playfellow of early days—the prize which he gave up in bitter self-denial to his boy friend—has whispered to him the "yes," which, had he been more far-sighted, might have been spoken long ago and have spared him years of self-indicted exile.

## Susan B. Anthony.

Washington letter to the Chicago Journal.

The ever-hopeful Susan B. Anthony continues to hope. She is here, with her home at the Riggs house, watching every movement of congress, with an eye single to the prize—woman suffrage. And she believes that she will get it—perhaps not that she herself will get it, but that the agitation which she has so long led will sooner or later bring suffrage to the women of this country. "We are gaining every year," she said, as she sat in the parlor at the Riggs, and talked of her hopes and years of work to your correspondent; "we are gaining strength every year, and we are going to triumph by-and-by. Women vote in eleven states, on certain subjects, now, and have the full right of suffrage in three of the territories. But that is not all. We are gaining strength in congress, where our hope for the remedy prompts us to most anxiously look."

And after all the ill-natured things that have been said about Miss Anthony, she is not half so unhandsome as the remarks themselves. True she is not Lavigny for beauty. She does not, evidently, make any pretensions to personal beauty. She is rather tall, rather angular, rather unfortunate in having a decided "cast" in the right eye, rather past the age when personal beauty is most likely to be at its highest stage of development, rather old-fashioned in her personal habits. She was very neatly dressed in a well-fitting and lately cut black satin, trimmed with rare lace, with the proper amount of ruffling and fluting and flummery of this sort to proclaim her a woman in spite of all the unkind efforts of unkind writers to the contrary. The pretty boot which peeped from beneath the folds of the satin dress, as she talked enthusiastically of her hopes and sadly of her fears, was not the smallest that has been seen in Washington, but it was so small that many ladies with much greater pretensions to personal attractions than Miss Anthony could never wear it.

## Santa Claus Visiting the Dog-Outs.

Cor. Hastings Journal.

On the line of the St. Paul branch of the Union Pacific are several families living in sod houses to whom Santa Claus prompted "the boys" who run the passenger train to pay their respects on Christmas day. On the down run at each one of these lowly dwellings the train was halted and the genial baggage master, laden with packages of confectionary, toys and nuts, hurriedly made them a call and gave each child a full supply; in some instances a second load had to be taken that all might have a supply. The purse for all this was made up by Conductor Frank Williams' crew and was kept a secret until the distribution began. Many of the passengers would gladly have contributed to the fund had they been allowed; and so great was their satisfaction at the pleasure it gave the sterling little homesteaders that, although the train has ample time for such brief delays, they would rather have missed the connection at Grand Island than the scenes they witnessed. To say that that crew will have warm hearts to greet them in their daily trips past these dog-outs would be putting it too mildly.

The christening of an infant Archduchess of Austria occurred lately. The fact came by cable. The name of the royal infant will be sent over by steamer as soon as the royal secretaries get it copied.

An Indiana family that uses black tea because they are in mourning, are probably as sincere mourners as though they wore crape on their hats.—[Peck's Sun.]