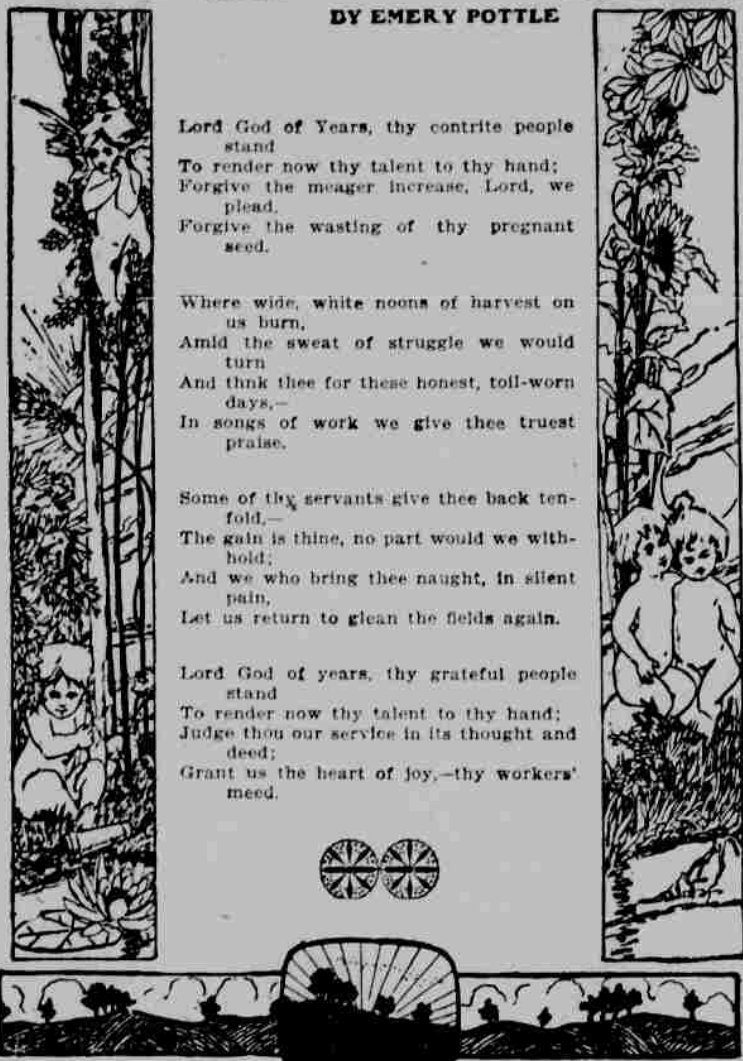




BY EMERY POTTLE



Lord God of Years, thy contrite people stand To render now thy talent to thy hand; Forgive the meager increase, Lord, we plead, Forgive the wasting of thy pregnant seed.

Where wide, white noons of harvest on us burn, Amid the sweat of struggle we would turn And think thee for these honest, toll-worn days,— In songs of work we give thee truest praise.

Some of thy servants give thee back ten-fold,— The gain is thine, no part would we withhold; And we who bring thee naught, in silent pain, Let us return to glean the fields again.

Lord God of years, thy grateful people stand To render now thy talent to thy hand; Judge thou our service in its thought and deed; Grant us the heart of joy,—thy workers' need.

Strategy.

BY F. H. LANCASTER. (Copyright, 1901, by Daily Story Pub. Co.) I could scarcely realize that it was indeed Dexter Boyton who came back to me after that summer out of town. He had been such a blithe, light-hearted fellow before he went away. Whistling over his work, singing snatches of operas on the stairs, smoking one cigar in two weeks and always ready with a cherry word.

Now he went about grave, pre-occupied. The same straight, steady look out of his eyes, but behind it something it hurt my heart to see. I pondered much over the change. Why had his clear, flexible whistle become a monotonous dead level of sound? Why had he ceased singing and taken to smoking incessantly? Why, in short, had my care-free, light-hearted boy leaped in one brief summer into stern, unyielding manhood? Was it love or money?

I assured my wife that it was money. I did it because I wanted to save the boy. Let even the best of women suspect a wound of the heart and she will drop the probe of her curiosity into the ugly hole until the helpless sufferer sweats with agony. There is this difference between men and women as regards the past. A man will bury the dead love, tramp the earth down hard in the new-made grave and go on his way. But a woman can never quite say "It is dead." For the rest of her life she must spend precious hours trying to galvanize a corpse. It may be that love never really lies in a woman's heart. I don't know. But I was glad that I had put Molly on a false scent about Dexter.

She was so pleasant in her own bright, easy way; talking politics and literature whenever I dragged Boyton home with me for a social evening, that by degrees the boy began dropping in of his own accord as he had been wont to do before he went away for that summer out of town. Only once in the six months that followed

Edward, you will take Helen into dinner. She was not pretty, but straight and strong looking, with deep, deep eyes and that perfect repose that goes with perfect strength and innocence. I caught myself thinking several times during dinner what a veritable angel of rest she would be in a pain-stricken room. I wondered as I watched her talking to Dexter if they had ever met before. When I questioned Molly about it later on she laughed merrily. It was on a raw, bleak day in March that the boy came into my private office with a queer drawn look on his face.

"Mr. Morton," he began quietly enough, "I am leaving town for a long time, perhaps forever. We had better strike my name from the firm." "Leave town?" I exclaimed aghast. "I see what you are thinking of." He moved to the window and looked out mechanically. Standing there with his back to me the poor fellow told me all about it. It was neither love nor money. Until last summer he had believed himself an orphan. But he was not. Out in one of the western states was a gray-haired man serving a long sentence. He was his father. He had seen him for the first time nine months ago. The question came stern and abrupt.

"You will agree with me, sir, that I have no right to offer my loved name to that superb woman. No love on earth could atone for or excuse the insult." "No, he was right," I agreed. Bitter and bad as it had all seemed there was nothing for it but to fill up the grave as best we could and go on. It was at this juncture that Molly came in to see about a check I had forgotten to endorse. "Gracious, what solemn faces," she laughed. "Is the world coming to an end?" "Yes, my world is," Dexter answered her. And then to my astonishment he told her the story.

"Well upon my soul," Molly broke out indignantly. "I think you might at least let her have some say so in the matter. Here you have been making love to Helen for six months and you propose to walk off without a word! You men may call it honorable, but I call it dastardly. Take your hat, young man, and go straight up to the house. Don't you dare to break that grand girl's heart unless she gives you leave to. Not if you have a hundred fathers in the penitentiary. Upon my soul, Edward," she continued as Dexter caught up his hat and went out. "Here I have been breaking my neck for a year to keep you from talking forgeries and penitentiaries in that boy's presence and now when he is fairly safe from being embittered for life you must go to work and upset everything with your tomfool honorable ideas."

"Molly," I said with a gasp of humblity, "I didn't know, I—do you think she will marry him?" "She can't very well unless he asks her to do it." "Oh, he will ask her. I saw it in his eyes." "I'm glad you have seen something." "There now, dear. I've been a blundering donkey. But do you think she will overlook that forgery business?" "She has known about that forgery business all along. For my part I don't see anything so terrible about it. I suppose the old gentleman needed the money or he wouldn't have taken it."

CHAPTER IX—(Continued.) "The bracelet could not have gone without hands to take it, Gerard," replied Lady Sarah. "How else do you account for its disappearance?" "I—I believe there must be some misapprehension, some great mistake in the affair altogether, Lady Sarah. It appears incomprehensible now, but it will be unraveled."

"Ay, and in double-quick time," wrathfully exclaimed the Colonel. "You must think you are talking to a pack of idiots, Master Gerard. Here the bracelets was spread temptingly out on a table, you went into the room, being hard up for money, fingered it, wished for it, and both you and the bracelet disappeared. Sir—turning sharply to the officer—"did a clearer case ever go before a jury?" Gerard Hope bit his lip. "Be more just, Colonel," said he. "Your own brother's son steal a bracelet!"

"And I am happy my brother is not alive to know it," rejoined the Colonel in an obstinate tone. "Take him in hand, Mr. Officer; we'll go to Marlborough street. I'll just change my coat, and—"

"No, no, you will not!" cried Lady Sarah, laying hold of the dressing gown and the Colonel in it; "you shall not go nor Gerard either. Whether he is guilty or not, it must not be brought against him publicly. He bears your name, Colonel, and so do I, and it would reflect disgrace on us all."

"Perhaps you are made of money, my lady. If so, you may put up with the loss of a £250 bracelet. I don't choose to do so."

"Then, Colonel, you will, and you must. Sir," added Lady Sarah to the detective, "we are obliged to you for your attendance and advice, but it turns out to be a family affair as you perceive, and we must decline to prosecute. Besides, Mr. Hope may not be guilty."

Alice rose and stood before Colonel Hope. "Sir, if this charge were preferred against your nephew, if it came to trial, I think it would kill me. You know my unfortunate state of health; the agitation, the excitement of appearance to give evidence, would be—I cannot continue; I cannot speak of it without terror; I pray you, for my sake, do not prosecute Mr. Hope."

The Diamond Bracelet

By MRS. HENRY WOOD, Author of East Lynne, Etc.

denness and strangeness of the action. "Cleverly done," quoth Gerard, when he could get his breath. "I saw a shark after me, Thomas, and had to make a bolt for it. Your having been at the door saved me."

Thomas turned pale. "Mr. Gerard, you have locked it, and I'll put up the chain, if you order me, but I'm afeared it's going agin the law to keep out them detectives by force of arms."

"What's the man's head running on now?" returned Gerard. "There are no detectives after me; it was only a seedy sheriff's officer. Pshaw, Thomas! there's no worse crime attached to me than a slight suspicion of debt."

"I'm sure I trust not, sir; only master will have his own way." "Is he at home?" "He's gone to the opera with my lady. The young ladies are upstairs alone. Miss Seaton has been ill, sir, ever since the bother, and Lady Frances is staying at home with her."

"I'll go up and see them. If they are at the opera, we shall be snug and safe."

"Oh, Mr. Gerard, had you better go up, do you think?" the man ventured to remark. "If the Colonel should come to hear of it—"

"How can he? You are not going to tell him, and I am sure they will not. Besides, there's no help for it; I can't go out again for hours. And, Thomas, if any demon should knock and ask for me, I am gone to—to an evening party up at Putney; went out you know by the side door."

Thomas watched him run up the stairs, and shook his head. "One can't help liking him, with it all; though where would the bracelet have gone to if he did not take it?"

The drawing rooms were empty, and Gerard made his way to a small room that Lady Sarah called her "boudoir." There they were—Alice buried in the pillows of an invalid's chair, and Lady Frances careening about the room, apparently practicing some new dancing step. She did not see him; Gerard danced up to her, and took her hand, and joined in it.

"When the cat's away the mice can play," cried Gerard, treating them to a step.

"Mr. Hope," remonstrated Alice, lifting her feeble voice, "how can you indulge these spirits while things are so miserable?"

"Sighing and groaning won't make them light," he answered, sitting down on a sofa near to Alice. "Here's a seat for you, Fanny, come along," he added, pulling Frances to his side. "First and foremost, has anything come to light about that mysterious bracelet?"

"Not yet," sighed Alice. "But I have no rest; I am in hourly fear of it."

"Fear!" uttered Gerard in astonishment. Alice winced and leaned her head upon her hand; she spoke in a low tone. "You must understand what I mean, Mr. Hope. The affair has been productive of so much pain and annoyance to me, that I wish it could be ignored forever."

Lore; how could I tell that the bashaw would be at the opera? A shark set on me in the street, and I had to run for my life. Thomas happened to be conveniently at the door, and I rushed in, and saved myself."

"A shark!" uttered Alice, in dismay, who in her inexperience had taken his words literally—"a shark in the street!"

Lady Frances Chenevix laughed. "One with sharp eyes and a hooked nose, Alice, speeding after me on two legs, with a polite invitation from one of the law lords. He is watching on the opposite side now."

"How shall you get away?" exclaimed Frances. "If the bashaw comes home before 12 Thomas must dispose of me somewhere in the lower regions; Sunday is free for us, thank goodness. So please make the most of me, both of you, for it is the last time you will have the privilege. By the way, Fanny, will you do me a favor? There used to be a little book of mine in the glass book-case in the library; my name in it and a mottled cover; I wish you would go and find it for me."

CHAPTER XI. Lady Frances left the room with alacrity. Gerard immediately bent over Alice, and his tone changed. "I have sent her away on purpose. She'll be half an hour rummaging, for I have not seen the book there for ages. Alice, one word before we part. You must know that it was for your sake I refused the marriage proposed to me by my uncle; you will not let me go into banishment without a word of hope, a promise of your love to lighten it."

"Oh, Gerard," she eagerly said, "I am so glad you have spoken; I almost think I should have spoken myself, if you had not. Just look at me."

"I am looking at you," he fondly answered. "Then look at my hectic face, my constantly tired limbs, my sickly hands; do they not plainly tell you that the topics you would speak of must be barred topics to me?"

"Why should they be? You will get stronger." "Never. There is no hope of it. Many years ago, when the illness first came on me, the doctors said I might get better with time; but the time has come, and come, and come, and—gone, and only left me a more confirmed invalid. To an old age I cannot live; most probably but a few years; ask yourself, Gerard, if I am one who ought to marry and leave behind a husband to regret me; perhaps children. No, no."



"Go straight to the house."

Then with sudden softening. "Don't worry, dear. A little common sense will save any situation. She will marry him before the year is out." And she did.

The Fashionable Frowner. Even in these days of ultra-modernness the subject of wrinkles is one of vast importance and a new preventive has been evolved. It is called by the suggestive name of "frowner," and consists simply of a rather stiff bit of white paper about the size and shape of a postage stamp, and having on its back a similar coating of gum. Especially it is designed as a preventive of the wrinkles between the brows or at the corners of the eyes; and in these places, after being moistened, these should be pasted whenever one is about to engage in some occupation that causes the habit of "wrinkling." At the fashionable shops of large cities "frowners" are now as regularly on sale as almost any other accessories of the toilet. Many, however, prefer to make them at home, a process simple and inexpensive. It has also been found by those who are ingenious that it is best to cut them circular in shape instead of square, as they leave less of a trace when removed. Heavy writing paper from which to fashion them is available to all, and a little dissolved gum arabic will stick them on good and tight.—Montreal Herald and Star.

GIRL WHO GOT PRETTIER.

An Embarrassing Misunderstanding Caused by a Vocal Cockneyism. Mr. Charles Whymper, the well-known engraver and animal painter, told the following anecdote a few years ago: "I dined at Mr. So-and-So's at Highgate last night, and as a mark of honor his eldest daughter was assigned to me to take down to dinner. She's a bright girl, and I got along very nicely with her and Lady Blithington on the other side, until the ladies were on the eve of retiring to the drawing room. I was talking about the beautiful scenery near the house, the views from the windows, the fine air, when Miss — suddenly said: 'I think I get prettier every day—don't you?' What could she mean? I did not dare to answer her, so I said: 'I beg your pardon—what did you say?' 'I said I think I get prettier every day.' There was no mistaking her words, so I answered: 'Yes, indeed, you get prettier; and no wonder, in such fresh air, and—' Just then she caught her mother's eye, and with the other ladies she left the room. As she went out she looked over her shoulder with such a withering scorn in her eyes that I knew I had put my foot in it some how. Then it flashed upon me that I had misunderstood her; she had 'dropped an 'b.' What she had said was not a silly compliment to herself; the sentence really was: 'I think Highgate prettier every day.' Mr. Whymper's hair is quite gray now.—Chambers.

The friends of the Hon. Carter Harrison should take him into some quiet nook and inform him that "the man of destiny" business has been over-worked.—Washington Post.