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TO ANNIE.

AT SEA, March 31.

My love,
This last of March arrives
While I sail on mid-ocean's rage;
Yet will I sing, thy storm-wind drives,
The birthday of the best of wives,
Whose age—well, never mind her age.

Young April's folly stands next door,
Contrasting with the wisdom sage
Of March's queen, born just before,
Whose virtues and whose claims outscore
Her years—but I'll not tell her age.

At sweet sixteen she caught my heart,
And shut it fast in Cupid's care;
For three and twenty years her art
Has played for me the mistress part:
So, not for words I'd name her age.

When she was but a gentle maid,
Her life to mine she did engage;
Then, seventeen springs had crowned her head—
Now, twenty-two more Junes have fled—
But hold! I must not breathe her age.

The child-wife of heroic mold
At nineteen years met parentage;
Two little ones have joined our fold,
Now, eighteen, twenty summers old—
They must not hint their mother's age.

I'm not afraid to own my years:
Just seven times seven stands on my page—
Full ten more than my darling's hours,
Accept my love, and have no fears,
That I will e'er betray thy age.

Be thou assured, as when my bride,
And youth and beauty's arts I'd wage,
E'en now thou art my heart's dear pride—
Thou'rt still one year the sunnier side—
Of—why! I almost told thy age.

Thou' half I write in jesting rhyme,
Since jests the life of life assuage;
Doubt not my love till end of time:
To me thou'rt always in thy prime—
To me, sweet sixteen's still thy age!

—Chicago Evening Lamp.

JACK HASTINGS' CHOICE.

To say the sun had been hot would not in the least do it justice. It had shone from early morning until night, not even the smallest cloud had interfered to moderate for a moment its heat; and now that the hour was come, when, according to established usage, it must set, it seems to have gathered all its energy for a final effort, and hangs in the western sky like a ball of fire, lighting up Nahant's beach for a long stretch and reflecting in the placid water an image almost as brilliant as the original.

The scene is really beautiful, but poor humanity has suffered so much from that luminary that it is totally unable to appreciate its parting salute. One poor mortal is devoutly grateful, and sits on the piazza of the principal hotel, his chair tipped back, his feet on the railing and a cigarette in his mouth, contemplating the sunset with decided satisfaction. At this moment another individual appeared on the scene.

"Hot, ain't it?"

"Confounded," replied our friend of the cigarette, and offers one to the newcomer who takes it, pushes back his hat and assumes a position almost as graceful as our friend, and falls to contemplating the water and the sunset. The newcomer is a man of about five and twenty years. His light hair falls on a broad, intellectual forehead, his mouth is proud and sensitive, and the upper lip is adorned with a mustache that men take genuine delight in. His eyes are quiet blue, in which there is a drift of humor; although the face is very pleasing and the large stalwart figure which accompanies it makes the man decidedly worth looking at. This is Raymond Leister.

His companion is entirely different. Jack Hastings' best friend never ventured to call him handsome. His eyes are large and dark and have in them a dissatisfied expression. He does not revel, as does Leister, in a fine mustache, his face is smooth, and his mouth is perhaps a trifle large, but his teeth are fine, and when Jack Hastings laughs one feels like racking his brain for something to provoke his mirth afresh.

Jack Hastings is a favorite, and this summer he is a decided hero, for he has a history, and all the young ladies are devoutly interested in him in consequence. Last winter the news came to Jack that an uncle in England had died and left him a considerable fortune on condition that he marry a niece of the old man, who had lived with her uncle ever since her infancy, and in case of his not complying the fortune reverted to the niece.

Now, Jack had never been overburdened with lucre, and the idea of having a fortune was not in the least objectionable to him, but the incumbrance was not all to his taste. Up to the time that the news came of the will, Jack had been heart whole, and his friends, however, thought him a lucky fellow, for Miss Hellen Isabelle Leighton was said to be a beauty, but as the young lady had never visited America it was rather difficult to say whence came this important information.

Jack had made no decided objection, so it was arranged that the young lady accompanied by her aunt, after a short tour through the continent, was to start for America and was expected to arrive about the middle of September. Miss Leighton's aunt resided in Boston, and shortly after her arrival in that city she was to give a reception, the purpose being to present Jack Hastings to his future bride.

Jack had been informed of all these arrangements, but had taken little interest in them. As he must become a Benedict he had determined to make the best of the time left him; but the fates were against him. A few weeks after his advent at the beach he had fallen desperately in love with a young lady stopping at one of the cottages. In consequence of this Jack fully believed himself one of the most deeply

injured mortals on the face of the earth, hence, the dissatisfied expression in the young gentleman's eyes, as he looks toward the cottage which holds the object of his adoration.

"For a person who had just had a fortune thrown at his head, you are about as disconsolate as a fellow can be," said Raymond; but as the latter made no response, he continued, "I say, Jack, don't you like it?"

"Like it?" said Jack, turning fiercely on him, "I like the fortune, but who would like to have a girl thrown at his head: would you?"

"That depends altogether on the size of the girl," replied Raymond, smoothing his hair and laughing at his friend's eagerness, "but to be serious, Jack, I would not get entangled with anyone until I had seen Miss Leighton, and I should put a stop to my visits to the cottage, for pretty Miss Nellie's sake, if I were you."

Jack looked after the retreating figure and then utterly regardless of his friend's advice walked off in the direction of the cottage.

Miss Nellie Long had been expecting him. She lay in a hammock, her hands resting listless in her lap; white, soft hands that were strangers to labor. Her white dress just escaped the ground as she swayed lazily in the soft, summer twilight. Her head was covered with a shower of golden curls and her complexion was as fair as a baby's. Her eyes were large and blue, and just at present were fixed rather anxiously on the road where Jack would first appear.

He was late, and she had almost given him up, when the stalwart figure appeared striding along toward the cottage. A smile of satisfaction plays around the pretty mouth which breaks into a merry laugh as Jack leaps the low fence and stands by her side. Raising her eyes to his she says:

"You could not stay away, could you, Jack, dear?"

He stoops to kiss her, but she pushed his face away and says, gently, "You must not do it, Jack, I feel quite sure Miss Leighton will object."

"Confound Miss Leighton," says Jack, as he throws himself on the ground.

"That is what I say, Jack, but that does not alter in the least the facts of the case."

"I have told you, Nellie, a dozen times, that I never will marry her."

"I know it, but I am horribly jealous of her, and cannot get her out of my mind, night or day, and I know you think about her all the time, now don't you, Jack?" and she bends forward till her eyes are looking straight into his; and then as he made no reply, "I do wish you would smile, Jack, I am trying so hard to delude myself into the belief that you are handsome, and I never can if you look like that."

Taking no notice of her last remark, Jack straightened himself and says with decision, "I have made up my mind—"

"To marry Miss Leighton?" interrupted Nellie, doing her best to squeeze a few tears into her eyes. Nellie is a coquette, but to do her justice, she is very fond of Jack.

"I have made up my mind," repeated Jack.

"Well, you said so before," impatiently.

"I have made up my mind," again repeated Jack, slowly, "to write to Miss Leighton and tell her that owing to a previous attachment I am unable to comply with the conditions of my uncle's will."

"Jack, you dear, old darling," giving his hand a little squeeze, at which a smile lights up Jack Hastings' plain face, but it vanished on hearing her next words. "How about the fortune, Jack?"

"Hang the fortune, repeated the young man, and then as she looks dubious, "Nellie, you don't care about the money?"

"No, but —"

"But what?"

"A little money is very nice to have; but, Jack, I had ever so much rather have you," smoothing his forehead with her cool, soft hand.

"I know you would, Nellie; now when shall it be, dear?"

"Oh, not before you have seen Miss Leighton."

"But I never shall see her, she will not want to see me after she receives my letter."

"Oh, but I would rather you should. Just imagine your seeing her after our marriage and falling in love with her, I should die, Jack," and this time there are tears in the blue eyes, but whether of grief or with mirth Jack cannot tell. All his persuasion cannot move her, and so he leaves her.

As she watches his retreating figure her face dimples and smiles; she is quite sure of her conquest, now, and is a little less jealous of Miss Leighton.

The weeks sped swiftly by, and the second week in September had arrived. In two days Jack is to meet Miss Leighton, for, notwithstanding his letter, her guardian has sent word that he thinks it advisable for the young people to meet, as Miss Leighton is anxious to make some arrangement about the property, and next Wednesday is set for the meeting.

He has taken his farewell of Nellie, after swearing eternal fidelity; but she is not fully convinced. She has pictured Miss Leighton in glowing colors as a beauty, with dark flashing eyes and a stately figure, for since she is a relative of Jack's, Nellie cannot get the idea out of her head that she is a brunette, and is certain that Jack will fall in love with the young lady on the spot. She ends by asking him in pathetic tones, "What will then be left for me to do," adding to Jack's misery.

The night has at last arrived, and Jack has spent a longer time than usual on his toilet and feels in a dissatisfied

mood as he rides along towards Beacon street. At last the carriage stops, Jack is admitted and shown into a small reception room by a servant in livery. He hears the low strains of a waltz, but his attention is instantly caught by a portrait which hangs over the mantel. It is the portrait of a lady; the face is proud and intelligent, the eyes large, dark and brilliant; instinctively Jack knows that it is a picture of Miss Leighton, and he laughs to himself as he recalls Nellie's description of her. He hears the rustle of a silk dress in the hall and the original of the portrait, only prouder, hand-omer, if possible, is standing beside him.

For a moment, Jack remained motionless, his breath almost taken away by the suddenness of her appearance. All his fine speeches fly to the four winds.

"I—I believe you wished to see me," he stammered.

"Yes," Her voice is low and contrasting strangely with his. "Mr. Cary, my guardian, thought it best, as he wished you to know that it is over half a million that you are refusing when you refuse to—when you refuse the alliance."

A soft flush covers face and throat, as she speaks. She is very beautiful and so Jack must admit.

His thoughts fly back to a golden head, and not for a moment does he falter in his allegiance.

"I am unable to comply, as I am to be married to Miss Long in two weeks."

A smile curls the lady's lips.

"Yes, so Mr. Cary informed me, and we have decided to make over to you a portion of the fortune, for which I have had a deed of gift made out."

She said this in rather a sarcastic way, as she handed him the paper.

Something in the tone offends Jack, and taking the paper he deliberately tears it up and throws it into the grate.

"I am obliged to you, Miss Leighton, but you must excuse me if I decline your gift."

Utterly unprepared for this contingency, the lady stands staring at him. Feeling rather awkward, and not knowing what to do, Jack bows and takes his leave. The lady hides her face in her hands and cries? no, laughs! Her mental observation is, that he must, indeed, be in love. Then she returns to her guests, not without a feeling of mortification that, not only has she been rejected herself, but her gift has been indignantly thrown at her feet by this haughty young man.

Jack has told Nellie everything, and Nellie, at last convinced of his constancy, is all the fondest lover could wish.

They are to be married in a week; Jack has bought a small house and furnished it as well as his means will permit. Nellie has been over it and declared it to be the loveliest, coziest little house in the world. The wedding

is to be a quiet one, they are to have a few friends at the house, among others, Raymond Leister, who mentally sets Jack down as the biggest fool on record.

It seems as if nature had made a particular effort on this day, or at least so Nellie thinks as she returns home from the church with Jack, now her husband, to their cozy little home. As they enter they are met by a servant who hands them two cards or, which are written, "Miss Leighton and Mr. Cary."

Jack becomes dignified, feeling quite sure that they have come to renew the offer of the money as a wedding present, and he is fully determined to refuse it as bluntly as before. Nellie, for the first time in her life, is seized with bashfulness and begs her husband to go in alone; but he will not hear to this for a moment, and putting his arm reassuringly around her, walks into the room and up to Miss Leighton.

"Miss Leighton," he begins, "allow me to present you to —" when he stops. Nellie has slipped from his arm and is seated on the sofa laughing in anything but a dignified manner. Jack looks from one to the other in bewilderment. Nellie, finally taking pity on him, slips her hand through the lady's arm and leading her up to Jack, says, "Mr. Hastings, allow me to present to you my aunt, Mrs. Leighton."

"And you," stammered Jack.

"Mrs. Jack Hastings, at your service," making him a low courtesy, turns to the old gentleman, and taking both his hands, says gravely, "I told you, Mr. Cary, he should not marry me for my money, and I don't think he has."

Proper Care of the Orchard.

Speaking of poor orchard management, Mr. Barry says that he has seen trees standing in grass neither broken up nor manured for many years, making a feeble and stunted growth, and producing heavy crops of fruit, one-half or one-fourth of which may be merchantable, the balance hardly worth picking up. We find orchard after orchard in this condition. This will not pay. Trees may be kept in a vigorous and healthy condition by proper tillage of the soil, abundance of fertilizers, and judicious pruning. These involve labor and expense, but you cannot grow fine fruit without both, and a good deal of them. A fruit tree shows neglect very quickly. In his pear orchard, to lessen the chances of blight, he slacked off in both cultivation and manure. The result was, in two years, one-half his crop was culls. His trees, instead of making stout shoots twelve to eighteen inches long, made scarcely any growth at all. He had observed similar results in the case of other fruit trees. In some soils, especially in those of a light and sandy nature, a moderate top-dressing every year is necessary; in others, every second year will be sufficient. There can be no rule laid down. The trees and fruit will tell what is wanted. —*Bureau New Yorker.*

Our Young Readers.

OUR LITTLE KING.

His kingdom is the nursery,
And mother's lap his throne;
His subjects—all the household,
Over which he reigns alone.
Wee monarch of our hearts is he,
This white-robed, blue-eyed "Willie wee,"

We speak in softest whispers
When'er he lies asleep,
And at the dainty slumberer
Take many an anxious peep;
And e'en a fly can hardly dare
To brush the silken, golden hair.

And every twinkling dimple
In neck, and cheek, and chin,
Is where we snuggle kisses
And kiss them deeply in;
For loving baby so, you see,
A trundle of sweet love is he.

And when our King awakens,
For his first glance we run,
And fast the glad news travels—
"The monarch's nap is done!"
And on his throne he sits in state,
While loyal subjects on him wait.

No King e'er ruled a kingdom
As rules our Willie wee,
O'er hearts as fond and loyal
As ever hearts could be.
Long live our little King so fair,
With sweet blue eyes and golden hair?
—*Mary D. Brine, in Youth's Companion.*

LIZZIE'S FIRST DAY AT SCHOOL.

"Lizzie!"

How the little girl started!

"Lizzie," again mamma repeated; "if you'll mind baby for an hour, tomorrow you may go to school with Cady."

"And wear my new ruffled apron?" exclaimed Lizzie, throwing down all her playthings, and, jumping to her feet, she clapped her hands in very glee.

"Yes," returned the indulgent mother, "but you must not murmur during the hour, or in any way be unkind to Baby Fred."

"O, I'll be the *goodest* little girl in the wide world, mamma, the very *goodest*," and little Lizzie spun round and round, until Grandma declared it made her own head grow dizzy to watch her.

The low-spoken, "Be quiet, dear," by mamma, who was tying her bonnet in front of the large mirror, was answered by:

"I can't, mamma, I'm so happy."

"Happy—happy—happy!" she kept repeating, stooping over the cradle where Baby Fred lay fast asleep.

First, she said "happy" in a whisper; then louder and louder, until grandma had again to reprove her.

"Yes, dear," mamma once more said, "you must be quiet; rock the cradle every time baby stirs," and she kissed the little, rosy lips, and went out.

"Going to school!" meant for Lizzie what a journey through Wonderland might mean for you and me.

Over and over, until it did seem that grandma's patience must be completely worn out, had Lizzie said:

"If Cady can go to school, why can't I?"

"Cause I isn't old enough!" she would exclaim, when grandma tried to explain the reason. "I's big as Cady! That's nuffin, grandma; nuffin't all."

Now, she was really going to school, if only for half a day, and in anticipation of the event she was quiet, after mamma went out, and did not bother grandma with a single question. When Freddy awoke, she found for him the pretty, bright-colored blocks, which possessed great attraction for the blue-eyed baby, and to him also, she confided:

"I'm going to school to-morrow!"

"Co-o-o-o," replied Freddy.

"Yes, I am," affirmed Lizzie, "and wear my ruffled apron, too."

Baby Fred crowed loud, then, and threw down ever so many blocks with a bang! which made grandma jump, as she slept in her easy chair. But baby did not cry, and when mamma returned, she was convinced that Lizzie had earned the favor.

It was only down one street, then around the corner, and a few steps up another street to the school-house.

"Take but a minute to get there," Lizzie said, when they started.

So many girls! Why, in all her life before Lizzie had never seen so many at one time. When the bell rang, however, they dispersed themselves into different rooms, so that by the time she was seated at the desk with Cady there were not so many new faces.

It was not like school as she expected to find it, though Lizzie's little imaginative brain had associated the school-room with her class at Sunday-school, and when the teacher assumed a commanding voice the dear little girl grew frightened, and wished herself at home.

But after she began watching the scholars at their studies she forgot all about it, only it was terrible to be quiet for so long a time.

They read pretty stories that interested her, and recited their lessons very nicely, so it seemed to Lizzie. The class in geography was the most astonishing of any.

When the teacher asked a little girl about the shape of the earth, she told her it was "round, like a ball or an orange." In reply to another question concerning its motions, she said that it "made two revolutions; one daily, the other yearly."

Then followed explanations. There was a big wooden globe, which swung on pivots, that the teacher said represented the earth. By turning it over and over, she showed her scholars how the earth turned on its axis and revolved around the sun.

The little girls reciting their lessons could comprehend it, but Lizzie could not. She began wondering how it was possible for the world we live in to turn over and over and not upset everybody living in it.

Dear little Lizzie! She did not consider the number of years she had already lived, and that papa and mamma

and grandma had lived a great many more, and had never yet been upset by the turning over of the world.

No; she did not reason at all, only grew more frightened while they talked about it. Cady must now know it, Lizzie thought, so she folded her arms on the desk, making quite a comfortable pillow for her poor little head that fairly ached with the amount of knowledge so shortly obtained. There she lay, until it was time for the school to dismiss.

"Too tired to talk about school tonight, please," Lizzie replied to grandma, papa and mamma, when they questioned her. A whole hour before her bed time Lizzie declared she was sleepy, and said:

"Please, mamma, hear me say my prayers, now," and by the time she was fairly "tucked up" in her little bed the blue eyes closed, and she never knew that mamma kissed her good-night.

How long she had been asleep she did not know, but the first thing she remembered when awaking was that the earth turned over.

"Likely as not," Lizzie began to conjecture, "it begins turning over in the morning, 'cause it's so big, it would take it all day to roll over. Why, of course," she concluded, "it would have to get turned over by night-time so as to be all ready to begin new in the morning." And what if she should slide off, or if the bed should turn upside down?"

"Cady!" she called; "Cady!"

But Cady was sound asleep, and the door leading into mamma's room was closed, too. What could she do! The more she thought about it, the more frightened she grew. Just then she remembered that the under drawer of the bureau pulled completely out. It was big enough for her to get in and lie down, "and it's so low," she reasoned, "that if the earth rolls over she wouldn't be smothered, as she could by the mattresses and heavy bed-clothes that would fall on her in case her own little bed went bottom-side up."

So she pulled out the drawer and dragged it into the middle of the room, and, instead of blankets to keep her warm, she put another night-dress over the one she already wore, and then buttoned her heavy ulster over all, and tried to lie down. But dear me! she had to "cuddle all up in a little heap," just like kitty in the basket.

When grandma came in next morning to call the little girls she was very much alarmed, supposing, of course, that Lizzie was forming the habit of walking in her sleep.

Before waking her, she called papa and mamma.

"What shall we do?" exclaimed the frightened mother.

"Consult our physician at once," papa was saying, when the sound of their voices caused Lizzie to open her eyes.

"O, papa! mamma!" she said, before trying to get out of the drawer, "has the world got turned over?"

Each looked at the other in astonishment.

"Tell me, grandma," she continued, reaching her little pink-colored foot over the edge of the bureau drawer, "has the earth rolled way over?"

"She is thinking about the geography lesson," Cady laughed, sitting up in the bed close by. "Yesterday the lesson was about the motions of the earth—"

"Yes," interrupted Lizzie; "all about the earth rolling over and over, and making folks turn somersets."

How papa laughed! So did mamma, and grandma laughed and laughed.

Then papa took Lizzie right up in his strong arms, and, tossing her on to his shoulder, carried her into the nursery.

After his merriment had subsided, he told her that every evening she repeated her little prayer, and asked God to take care of her through the night.

"Has He not done so?" papa questioned.

Lizzie said, "Yes."

Then papa explained to her that the earth was cared for in the same way—the earth, and all that live on the earth. He told her, also, that there was knowledge too vast for her little brain to comprehend, but as she grew older, she would be capable of attaining to the same, as was Cady and her older brother.

"You must love mamma, grandma, Baby Fred and your older brothers and sisters—"

"And papa—" Lizzie interrupted.

"Yes, and papa," he repeated, kissing the little upturned face, and folding Lizzie close in his arms. "Love every one, dear; be kind to all your little playmates, but always keep in mind that if you obey rightly, and learn the lessons to be taught you, you need never fear that God will not govern aright this great, big, wonderful world, which He made," and papa kissed her two or three times, over and over.

Ask your mamma, little boy and little girl, to tell you all about little Lizzie's perplexity.—*Golden Rule.*

—A gentleman in New York met a rather "uncertain" acquaintance the other day, when the latter said, "I'm a little short, and would like to ask you a conundrum in mental arithmetic."

"Proceed," observed the gentleman.

"Well," said the "short" man, "suppose you had ten dollars in your pocket, and I should ask you for five dollars, how much would remain?" "Ten dollars," was the prompt answer.—*Shoe and Leather Reporter.*

—When one Senator calls another a liar he immediately says he means nothing personal or offensive. He merely makes the statement so that it may go on record.—*N. O. O'Keefe.*