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WHEN WE ARE OLD AND GRAY.

When we are old and gray, love,
When we are old and gray,
When at last I shall all over,
The turmoil of the day,
In the still soft hours of even,
In our life's fair twilight time,
We'll look upon the morn, love,
Upon our early prime,
"Thank God for all the sweet days!"
We'll whisper while we may,
When we are old and gray, love,
When we are old and gray.

When we were young and gay, love,
When we were young and gay,
When I was some December,
And all was golden May,
And our life's a hard turmoil,
Our true love made us brave,
We thought not of the morrow,
We reck'd not of the grave,
So far seemed life's dim twilight,
So far the close of day,
When we were young and gay, love,
When we were young and gay.

Now we are old and gray, love,
Now we are old and gray,
The night-tide she loves gather,
We have not long to stay,
The last scene leaves have fallen,
The bare bleak branches bend,
Put your dear hands in mine, love,
Thus, thus we'll wait the end,
"Thank God for all the goodness!"
In peaceful hope we'll say,
Now we are old and gray, love,
Now we are old and gray.

—F. E. Weatherly.

STEP-MOTHER AND STEP-SON.

A Story of Love, Jealousy, Hatred, Revenge and Heroic Self-Sacrifice.

By the Author of "Down Thorne," "A Bridge of Love," "The War with Herod," "A Gothic Drama," "The High Lord," "The Best," "A Rose in Thorns," &c., &c.

CHAPTER IX.—CONTINUED.

Ross looked round and saw that they were all against him save Lady Viola, who cried out in pity. Then suddenly another young girl stepped forward, beautiful as a picture, a light on her lovely, Southern face, her dress of amber and white falling in statuesque folds around her, and amber roses nestling in her hair. She advanced to where the little group stood—Lady Cumnor, with her white face full of tragic sorrow, Sir Austen, too bewildered to speak, Ross, half indignant, half despairing, and Lady Viola, holding his hand, as though she would cling to him when all hope failed. Leam raised her face to Lady Cumnor; and those who saw it never forgot it.

"He is innocent," she said, calmly. "I did it. I will answer to Heaven and to you for the little life lost. I swear that he did not do it, and that I did!"

They fell back from her with a cry of horror, and left her standing alone. The silence of unutterable horror lay over them all. Lady Cumnor was the first to speak.

"You!" she cried. "What had I done to you that you should slay my child? You, a woman yourself, to take my darling from me!"

Leam's dark head drooped for one moment; then she raised her pale, agonized face.

"I repent now," she said, "but I killed the child."

"Leam," cried Ross, "you did not; you could not! It is impossible!"

"It is true," she declared. "Before Heaven I say that it is my fault the child is dead. I killed it!"

"I will never believe it!" cried Ross. "It is true," she repeated.

Then Lady Cumnor seemed to recover from her shock of horror. She looked at the girl standing before her. "I can believe it," she said. "I can sooner believe it of you even than of him. He is a man; he might hesitate before he took the life of a little child. You are a woman whose heart is on fire to avenge what you consider his wrongs. I will not say, Leam Dynevor, that it is a conspiracy between you; I will not say that between you you plotted the death of my boy. I will not say that, although it may be true."

"My dearest Hester," cried Sir Austen, whose distress of mind at the loss of his child was so great that he could hardly speak, "pray be calm! You must not say such things."

"May I not speak the truth to the murderer of my child? She tells you she killed our little Hugh. I believe there is always evil lurking in the dark face of a Southern woman. I demand that justice be meted out to her, and that a life be given for the life taken! Would any woman accuse herself of that which was not true? Would any woman endanger her life for a lie? Answer me!"

From the crowd came no reply; but Lady Cumnor read pity in every face.

"You pity her?" she cried. "What compassion have you for me, whose darling lies murdered there?"—a doctor had been summoned, but he had pronounced life to be extinct. "She tells me she has slain my child, and your hearts go out in pity towards her! I say she ought to be stoned to death, for she has slain the sweetest of children—my only child! Pity her? No; a life for a life! I will tell you why she has slain my child. She chose to-day because she thought that every one would be too intent to notice her movements, and she has killed him because—listen!"

A deeper silence fell upon the crowd, every man and woman of which bent forward to hear.

"Because she is going to marry Ross Cumnor, and this child stood between her lover and his fortune! That was her motive. Let her deny it if she can! She cannot!"

No word of denial came from the sweet lips; but Ross cried out:

"It is false!—all false!"

"Do you deny it, Leam Dynevor?" asked Lady Cumnor; but the girl made no reply. "You are quite right in not adding falsehood to murder. You have talked much about self-sacrifice—perhaps you think that in slaying the child who stood between your lover and his fortune, you have done a praiseworthy deed. You forget—you forget. He will have Larchton Mere now; but you shall pay for it with your life. That my child is dead and the Spanish woman's son has Larchton Mere will never benefit you. You will not be here to see it; you will pay the penalty for your crime."

"Leam," cried Ross, in agony, "you did not do it—I am sure you did not!"

"You are the chief witness against her," said Lady Cumnor. "You sent the child to her; and Ross trembled as he recalled what he had said. "You will have to give evidence against her. I appeal to all present—did you not say that when you placed the little one on the bank you told him to run to auntie Leam? You cannot deny it; you said so, unasked."

"He need not deny it," said Leam; "there is no occasion to say more. Lady Viola, you have been very noble and true; do not fear for Ross; he is safe. I, and I only, am to blame for the death of the child. I have no more to say."

Despite her avowals of guilt and the plausible motive ascribed to her, there were many who, touched by her youth and loveliness, would have defended her, believing her to be innocent; but Lady Cumnor would allow of no interference.

"Speak once more," she said. "I ask you, before I give you in charge, are you guilty or not?"

"I, and I alone, am guilty," replied the girl.

"Forgive me, Ross, for my false judgment of you," cried Lady Cumnor, upon hearing those words. "Alas, why did I ever trust my beloved child to strangers' hands? Oh, wretched day that this daughter of a treacherous race made my house her home! I know how I loved my little Hugh, and I would not have lost him for a hundred Larchton Meres. Oh, my murdered darling, wanting you, what is all the world to me?"

She wrung her hands, she cried aloud in her anguish, and Sir Austen, who was still overwhelmed with grief, implored her to be calm. She refused to be comforted, and she would not allow the body of her dead child to be removed until she herself had given Leam Dynevor in charge.

Ross would not leave Leam. Once he drew near to her, and said:

"Trust me, Leam, trust me." And she looked at him with pity in her beautiful eyes.

"I do trust you implicitly," she replied.

"But, Leam," he said, "you did not do it. You could not have done it. You, so gentle, so sweet, so good; you could not have done it. If all the world believed it, I would not."

"You know best," she answered; and there was something of reproach in her eyes that he could not understand.

Sir Austen, in his distress and alarm, asked his son to ride quickly to Marston Abbey in search of his great friend, Lord Snarestone, who lived there.

"I shall not be long, Leam, my darling," said Ross; "keep up your spirits. I will come back to you as quickly as I can."

Meanwhile Lady Cumnor knelt by the dead body of her child. The crowd broke up into groups. At last—and those who watched her had expected it for some time—Lady Cumnor fell, almost without life, and was carried senseless into the house, where so short a time before all had been festivity and mirth. Then the servants bore the little body away.

Ross rode hard, in accordance with his father's wish. His very heart seemed on fire. He was quite sure that Leam was innocent; it could not be, as his step-mother said, that she had committed the crime for his sake. He was almost mad with anger, pity and pain. It had stung him sharply for a few minutes, the fact that his father had made another will and had given away Larchton Mere; but he would have got over his disappointment, he would have lived it down. Larchton Mere and all his father's money besides were less than nothing compared with the life of his half-brother.

He rode as he had never ridden before. Leam in danger—his bright, dear, beautiful love! In his abstraction he forgot how dangerously low the trees met overhead at one part of the high-road. Suddenly, without a moment's warning, a bough struck his head with such terrible force that it was a wonder he was not killed on the spot. As it was, he fell from his horse; and the animal, terrified, rushed on wildly, dragging him until stopped by a passer-by.

Three hours after he had left home, Ross was carried back, a wreck of the hale, vigorous man who had left it full of life and energy. The occurrence added to the horror of the day. The doctors, who were summoned in hot haste, looked doubtfully at him. They thought he could hardly survive such injuries. One arm was broken, one of his wrists terribly injured, and a severe wound on the head rendered him quite insensible. The doctors knew all that had happened on that day; and they said that he would most probably have brain fever. And they were right. When he would have most wished to be up and doing, when the very life of the girl he loved was at stake, he was lying at death's door.

The gloom did not pass away from the house even when little Hugh, whose loss every one deplored, was

buried; for, on that very day, when the bell was tolling for one son, the doctors told Sir Austen that all hope was at an end for the other. But in this they were mistaken; Ross' time had not yet arrived.

CHAPTER X.

The trial of Leam Dynevor for murder was the sensation of the day, and people came from all parts of England to be present, for the story was a most romantic one, and it had gone the round of the newspapers. The result was as many had foreseen. The jury came to the conclusion that the prisoner was of unsound mind; and she was ordered to be confined during her Majesty's pleasure.

The verdict gave general satisfaction. It appeared terrible that, even if guilty, she should be punished with death. Lady Cumnor, however, was not well pleased. To her it seemed that the one who had taken her child's life ought to atone for it with her own.

Leam Dynevor was to remain in the prison at Larchton for a few weeks, and then be removed to a criminal lunatic asylum.

Six weeks had passed since the trial ended, and already it was almost forgotten. It had been a nine day's wonder; but other wonders had succeeded it. Leam Dynevor was forgotten except by a few. Lady Viola Carlien was faithful to her; and, when the handsome Neapolitan urged his suit with almost irresistible fervor, she said to him, in her frank fashion:

"I like you much better than I did; indeed, to be quite frank with you, I like you better than I ever thought I should. But I will never marry any one until the mystery of Leam Dynevor is solved. She never hurt that child. I was near her all the day of the trial; she is more like an angel than a woman. There is a mystery, and it must be solved. Try to unravel it, Prince; and then—well, we do not know how joyful the bells of Larchton Church may peal afterwards!"

The Prince looked dismayed.

"If I may not marry you until that mystery be solved, *carissima*, we shall never marry at all. It is a strange, dark affair which I cannot understand."

"You must try to do so," said Lady Viola. "I shall try. If ever the day comes when beautiful Leam Dynevor stands before me as I believe she stands before Heaven, then, Prince, you can again put the question you have asked."

The roses and the lilies had faded, the autumn flowers were in bloom, and the fair earth lay smiling in the autumn sunshine, when Ross Cumnor slowly came back to life again. It had been a hard struggle. All that he had gone through—mental anguish, the horror of the day of little Hugh's death—culminated in the terrible fever which laid him low and took the strength of his manhood from him. He was thin, almost shadowy in appearance. His face was white and worn; while the large Spanish eyes seemed to have grown even larger.

The first moment that he regained perfect consciousness he asked:

"Where is Leam?"

His anxious watchers soothed him with gentle words, and told him that she was quite safe. Then he asked how long he had been lying there; they told him six weeks.

"Six weeks!" he repeated—and they never forgot his cry. "Is she living?" he demanded. "Tell me the truth—do not deceive me—is she living?"

His agitation was terrible. Reason, returning to him, brought back the whole dreadful story, and he remembered that Leam had owned herself guilty of murder, and that she was to be tried for her life.

"Tell me the truth," he cried; and he looked so ill and so near death that they were frightened.

She was quite well, they assured him, and he should see her as soon as he was strong enough.

"I will get strong," he said, trembling with emotion. "Has she asked for me?"

"Yes—not once, but many times," they told him.

"I must make haste to get well," he said; and he did. No patient was more obedient or docile. He had an object in view.

Lady Cumnor had been in his room every day. At first she would not show any anxiety about him. If he had not slain her little son, the girl he loved had done so, and she could not forgive him. But, one day, when he was unusually violent in his delirium, she went in to try to soothe him. While she stood by his bedside he held out his arms to her and called her "mother." At first she shrank from him and shuddered at the word. The second time he uttered it her heart was pierced; the third time, she, the haughty, jealous woman who had pursued him with implacable jealousy, laid his head on her breast and soothed him with kindly words. All the anger, jealousy and bitter hatred died out then. She was a woman with passions stronger and deeper than those of most women, but with a heart that could be softened. When Ross' burning head rested on her breast, she forgot to hate the Spanish woman or her son. From that time her feelings toward him changed.

She still hated Leam with undying hate; but Ross—well, Ross in his weakness had called her "mother," had clung to her, had fallen asleep with his head on her breast, and she could not dislike him again. She thought, too, how much misery and anguish might have been spared her had she tried to like him from the first. As he grew stronger they talked more together. She would say to him, with listless, folded hands:

"Life will never be the same to me again, Ross. I loved my baby so well!

People think that sins are not punished in this life. Ah, see how Heaven has punished me! I was jealous and hated your dead mother, Ross; and, in punishment, I have lost my child. If I had been patient and loving, my little Hugh would have been spared to me—my little Hugh!"

But the more kind and gentle she became to Ross, the more virulent and intense became her hatred of Leam. She fully believed that she had destroyed her child, and that the sole motive for it was her love for Ross. Lady Cumnor would talk to him by the hour about it; but he was steadfast and loyal. Nothing ever shook his faith in Leam for one moment—nothing could.

"But, Ross," Lady Cumnor would say to him, "you admit yourself that you saw her in the distance and told the child to run to her. He started off, and nothing was seen of him again until he was found drowned."

"There is some way of accounting for it," said Ross.

"Then why did she say she did it—why accuse herself?"

"I cannot tell. That is the mystery. The little one admired the water-lilies very much. He would have gathered them all if I had allowed him. He may have fallen in. One of a hundred unforeseen accidents may have happened."

"Yes, yes," cried Lady Cumnor, impatiently; "I grant all that! But why did she accuse herself?"

"That is the mystery I mean to solve," he said. "As soon as I am strong enough to move I shall visit her, and then I shall discover how to go to work. If I had not lost my health and strength, that absurd trial would never have taken place. The bare idea of calling Leam mad!"

"It was the only means of saving her life," replied Lady Cumnor. "Better to be called mad than wicked, Ross."

"She is neither, Lady Cumnor; and I will prove it," he said.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Born Deaf and Blind.

All infants are deaf at birth, because the outer ear is as yet closed, and there is no air in the middle ear. A response to a strong sound is observed, at the earliest, in six hours, often not for a day, sometimes not for two or three days. The awakening of the sense may be recognized by means of the drawing up of the arms and the whole body, and the rapid blinking which a loud noise provokes; and it is a sign of deafness if the child, after its ears have had time to come into a suitable condition for hearing, fails to respond thus to a strong sound. The faculty of seeing has a similar growth. Light seems at first unpleasant, and only faint lights are borne; the baby shuts its eyes tight when a candle is brought near them. Brightness and darkness, if they are marked, can be distinguished, but with this the office of the eyes in the earliest day is exhausted. One will look to the right, the other to the left; one may be open, the other shut; one will be still while the other moves. On about the ninth day most infants begin to stare into the void, or if a bright object, as a candle, is brought before them, as if they were looking at it; but it is easily found out by trial that there is no real seeing, for it is only when the light is brought directly within its line of vision that the eye is directed toward it.

Greek Brigands.

Greek brigandage is a regularly organized business. A little capital for the purchase of arms is required. Papers are drawn up, in which the shares of the captain and the men are specified. Sometimes routes are let by one band to another for a percentage. It proving exceptionally good in one case, the parties came very near bringing the affair into court on a law suit. Death to the captive is almost certain if the ransom is not paid. A ransom which was once on its way from Constantinople was stolen from the messenger by another band, but the captive was killed all the same. A farmer having two children captured could send the money only for one, and the boy was returned. He begged a little delay, but the band were on the move and could not wait. The little girl was found afterward with a stab in the heart and wild flowers in her hand. These robbers never drink wine, never neglect their religious duties, always cross themselves before eating, and never omit the numerous fasts the Greek Church insists upon. Some are well read; one leading scoundrel always travels about with a small library.

The Reporter's Failure.

Such was the eagerness to "scoop" the other fellows that one Western newspaper sent a man across the Atlantic to steal an advance copy of the new *New Testament*. After having tried in vain at the publishing houses he turned to a guileless country parson who had been engaged in the revision, saw in his study a copy of the book, took its dimensions, noted its binding and lettering and went away to have a volume manufactured which should be its precise duplicate in appearance. He tried during another interview to exchange the spurious book for the genuine, but failed at last. Boasting, on his homeward voyage, of his plan, one of the party remarked that "it was a pity he had not secured a copy that he might discover that an ancient legend, 'Thou shalt not steal,' had not been revised out of it."—*Detroit Free Press*.

—Reminiscent: Jones says that the clouds of his early childhood were no bigger than a woman's hand, but a squall always followed them.

Pleasant Homes.

A little time and labor will make the grounds about the house look tidy, neat and inviting. There is no use in having the yards all covered with sticks, chips and last year's burdock stocks, to stick their hateful burs into clothes and stockings. A garden rake, and a wheelbarrow, with a pair of strong hands, will clean up all the refuse stuff, and if there are dry leaves drifting around so much the better, it will all make a good absorbent for the manure shed or piggery. No matter if the house is old, or brown, or moss grown with age, if it is cleaned up neatly, it will look as if it were comfortable and give a favorable impression of the inhabitants, and a few flower roots set out and trimmed up nicely, will make the homeliest place look pleasant. A few vines, running up the sides of the house so as to shade the windows and doors are as much of an ornament to an old house, as they are to a fine mansion. A pretty porch can be made over the door, by setting long poles each side of the steps and passing strings over the top backward and forward. If hop vines can be obtained set out some roots close by the poles and train the vines up the poles and string across the top. If you cannot get hop vines, plant beans, morning glories, or sweet peas; and train them to run up, and you will have something that will give pleasure all the long summer days. Boys will enjoy helping if you only show them how to do it, and it will be a life-long pleasure to them to know how to make things look pretty.

Do not think it will take too much time, for what is time for, only to make one happy and good. Children can be taught early in life to make themselves useful, and there is no child but that likes to see a pleasant home, and if they know how to do it, will take hold and help make it pleasant.

We all of us form an idea of a person's character when we pass his dwelling. If we see the yards all in a litter, and pigs, calves and chickens hopping over logs and chips; we are immediately impressed with the belief that shiftless people live there. A row of sunflowers, or a clump of hollyhocks are an improvement to any place; and look far better than rank pig weeds, or mayweed, growing everywhere. There is no excuse for the surroundings of a farm house to be filthy and cluttered up with everything; only just sheer laziness, and *don't-care-itness*. I guess that is a new word, but it is as expressive a one as I know.—*Cor. Rural New Yorker*.

The Settlement of an Assigned Estate—A Remarkable Case.

The final proceeding in the matter of the Frank Leslie assignment was taken in New York City a few days ago. An order was entered acquitting Mr. Isaac W. England, the assignee, from all further obligation to the trust, and discharging and releasing the bondsmen who had become his sureties in the sum of one hundred thousand dollars, and canceling their bond. The case has been a remarkable one, and, it is said, probably stands unparalleled in the judiciary history of New York State. It is peculiar in that it probably is the only instance on record where an assigned estate, instead of being sold in accordance with the provisions of the assignment, has been carried on by the assignee in the interest of the creditors for a period of nearly four years. The experiment was a hazardous one, but in this case it seems to have been attended with the best results. The estate at the time it came into the possession of the assignee was inventoried at seventy-five thousand dollars, and was encumbered by debts amounting to about four hundred thousand dollars. In less than four years the assignee has compromised and obtained releases from all the creditors and has turned over to the executrix of Mr. Frank Leslie, who had meantime died, an estate worth certainly not less than five hundred thousand dollars. Though several millions of dollars passed through Mr. England's hands during his assigneeship, his accounts were passed without the challenge of a dollar. In these days when so much has to be published about delinquent trustees and estates absorbed in the process of administration, it is gratifying to find so conspicuous an illustration of a trust faithfully and wisely administered.

—A man in Eureka, Nev., has a curiosity at his store in the shape of a whisky-tipping mouse, that comes up as regular for his liquor as the most veritable old toddy tippler in the town. It appears that his mouse-ship has acquired a taste for the ardent by lapping up the stray drops that fall from the facets of the long row of barrels in the store, and, like a real human, has been led into a whirlpool of an overweening indulgence by the practice of occasional "nipping." When under the influence the long-tailed toper cuts up the most curious antics. He rolls around on the floor in a perfect spirit of drunken recklessness, stands on his head, and plays regular "high jinks" among the barrels and bottles. As with mankind, whisky seems to make him sociable, and when on one of his jamborees he cuts around through the store and office without the least apparent fear, and is as familiar and friendly with the boys as can be, even running up their legs and allowing them to handle him.

—A cypress tree in Clay County, Florida, is 25 feet 6 inches in circumference four feet from the ground.

—To be short in his accounts is, in a cashier, a crime; in a reporter it is a virtue.