

POETRY OF THE TIMES.

A Lament. Long ago, when I was young, then I didn't have to be the...

The Fall of a Boston Girl. She was a pretty South End girl - All South End girls are fair -

Some gentlemen were standing by And all of them displayed A great anxiety to try To give the mad one aid.

Before marriage, With wondrous care, She seeks the nurse And bangs her hair.

MY FIRST PATIENT. Six years to-day! Impossible! But it is though, for you are thirty-two today, and you were only twenty-six then, John Preston.

Would my dear father, had he lived, have approved of this start of mine in life? Should I accomplish, or be near accomplishing, my desire to make a name and stand in my profession by its means?

Six months before I should have started with nothing but bright hopes on my journey, and without one regret to shadow my future.

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"Certainly," I replied, "if my mother does not mind putting off her intended visit for a time."

"Nonsense," I said, "we can go afterwards, but unless you go now, I know you won't be able to go later."

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a person to be obeyed simply because it was a pleasure to obey her, and this latter fact would in no degree weaken the former; delicate but perfectly marked eyebrows complete the face, which, framed in rippling bands of deep brown hair, smiles at me whenever I open my case to feed on its contents.

Each day found me hating to go to my anxious duties like a school boy to his play, and when Mrs. Mason returned at the end of ten days and found her darlings on the road to recovery, thanks to the unwearied attention of their kind nurse, I awoke to the discovery that I loved deeply and passionately. No passing fancy for a beautiful face was this, but all-enduring love, such as a true man seldom feels but once in his life.

The days slipped by all too quickly, until the return of Fred when there was no longer the slightest excuse for my daily visits to my patients. I bared from him of Mrs. Mason's departure with her family, and I lived on the hope of future meetings on their return. I hastened my mother home a week sooner than she wished, greatly to her mystification, that I might not miss one chance of seeing my darling, for I had determined, short as our acquaintance had been, to ask her if she could care for me enough to wait for one year that I might make a home for her, to ask if she could consent to brighten the world for me, and me for the world—to give me an object, an aim in life—to render myself worthy of her.

"Oh, they are in town again!" he said. "But that pretty governess is not with them"—this with a stinging glance at me. "Mrs. Mason said something about family affairs and a runaway match—but that woman does run on so that I can never follow her."

"Was Miss Bertram one of the parties concerned in the runaway match?" "I don't think so," said Fred, "but I cannot assert anything, because I paid so little attention to what was said."

Then a country practice was offered me on most advantageous terms by one of my father's old friends. More to please my mother than from any interest I felt in the future, I accepted it, and was now on my way to commence legitimately my professional career. My predecessor Dr. Black, remained a week with me.

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my heart seemed to catch and stop altogether as I drew nearer and recognized my darling—my last love—of whom I had never ceased to dream. Forgetful for the moment of everything but that we were once more face to face, I exclaimed—

"How happy I am to see you again!" Then I suddenly thought that this must be the Mrs. Freeman for whom I had been fettered, and the bitter knowledge that she was another man's wife rushed across me. I stood mute with misery, while an expression of the most unbounded astonishment crossed her face; and then I remembered her abrupt departure from Mrs. Mason's. Could there be any cause for mystery—for silence as to the past? I stood waiting.

"Have you then met my niece before, Mr. Preston?" said Mr. Talbot, sharing the surprised expression on her face. "No," I stammered. "That is, I thought—then, seeing she was determined not to acknowledge a previous acquaintance, I recovered my self-possession by a desperate effort. 'I mistook Mrs. Freeman for some one else,' I said, bowing. 'She will excuse my mistake—indeed the likeness itself is sufficient excuse; it is marvellous!'"

"I wish I could claim old acquaintance; it is always so pleasant to meet unexpectedly; but, as it is, I hope we shall soon be good, though not old friends."

"Oh, heaven!" I cried, "the anguish of my heart, why am I thus made the plaything of fate?"

"What do you mean," I exclaimed, catching both her hands, and fixing my eyes eagerly upon her face. "For heaven's sake put an end to my misery! Is Mrs. Freeman and this widow you wish me to marry the same person? For pity's sake, don't keep me in suspense!"

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would cloud it for a moment at some indubitable change in my darling's character. The old steadfastness was wanting, the strength of will I had so much admired, and in its place there was a reliance on others which I should have thought impossible in her; the very thought seemed diabolical, and with an impatient sigh I resolutely stamped it down.

"Wait one moment, Mrs. Freeman; let me help you," I called out, exultant at the prospect of a few short moments' tête-à-tête, and sprang through the window on the open lawn.

"And indeed it seems as if I am to continue so to the end of the chapter; for when every one thought they had got rid of him, here I am in less than a year back again, as dependent as ever, and this time upon my husband's relatives. Oh, dear, I wish I was strong-minded enough to face the world and work for a living for a time."

"Why should you feel dependence a burden?" I blurted out, "while I feel myself a burden?"

"Ah, yes!" she said in reply to my remark of the storm of the previous night. "But you never have a real storm here; you should see as I have seen in Africa, when I was at those terrible diamond fields."

"Where you nervous? Did you not long for home and civilization?" "Home!" she exclaimed, turning upon me with flashing eyes. "My home was in my husband's presence, and his love was my civilization; my only nervousness was when he was cruelly taken away from me."

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And I, looking at the sweet face before me, saw that a close struggle between life and death was a hard, and feeling all the happy hopes of the last few months fading with each word, I answered quietly—

"Your happiness must always be of interest to me, my dear Mrs. Freeman; but you must let me talk to Mrs. Price a little now, while you try to get some rest."

"Read that, John Preston," he said, pushing it across the table; "you have been a great comfort to the poor thing in her trouble—its but right you should share the rejoicing."

"I placed the letter in its envelope again, and laid it on the table. I never see a foreign envelope even now without a vivid memory of the misery I then felt. Mr. Talbot, talking to himself in disjointed sentences, was pacing the room in too excited a state to notice my abstraction."

"Oh, fool, do! that I had been, blindly to accept that view of matters which pleased me most, without assuring myself of the truth of what I heard! Ah, me, I was punished now for my credulity! For many nights I went to my sleepless bed cursing my fate, hating my kind, and wondering why heaven dealt so hardly with me, until everybody asked, 'What has come to John Preston lately? He looks quite an old man.' The agony of those few days lined my face and bent my back more than ten years' work would have done. Strive as I would—and I did strive—my fate was too heavy for me."

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self-reliance I had missed in her sister, wondering each moment more and more at my own stupidity, in the assurance of my too deep words, there was a sound of wheels. They stopped at the gate, and Mrs. Freeman started up, exclaiming—

"What is that?" I hastily crossed the room to close the door, fearing any excitement, but it was too late.

"Where is she—where is my birdie?" a loud, jolly voice called out. A painful cry of "Ned, Ned—my dear Ned!" came from the bed, and a big broad-shouldered fellow came bounding up the stairs.

"I made way for him, and then we two went out and quietly closed the door; their joy was too sacred to be intruded upon."

Then silently I drew Maud to a deep window seat, and imbued with the spirit of time, in hurried whispers I told her my tale of love and sorrow. She listened in silence until a pause occurred, and then, looking up, she asked, quietly—

"Are you quite sure it is me you love, and not my sister?" "How can you ask such a question?" I exclaimed. "I loved you from the first moment I saw you, and then when I saw your sister I loved just that part of her which seemed to be you."

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