POETRY OF THE TIMES.

From Miss to Mistress.

She who tails Mrs. to change from Miss,
Has Mr. chance of wedding bliss.
—[Cincinnati Gazette.

But she who changes from Miss to Mrs.
Has solved the Mr.y of kisses
—[Nyeum Advertiser.

When a Miss Mrs. to kiss a Mr.y,
A Miss is Maid to mo ern history.
—[Gorham (N. H.) Mountaineer.

Tho' a Miss, 'tis said, is as good as a mile,
When a Miss and see Mrs. Mist rs do smile.
—[State.

The Doubt Resolved.

To go or stay, I scarcely knew,
Perplexed by maids as twain,
For while my love pronounced "Adieu,"
Her aspect said "Remain."
'Twixt what I saw and what I heard,
My judgment wavered quite—
Whether she meant by glance or word
To part us, or unite

But now each lover I advise,
Like me, to make his choice,
In duty to his lady's eyes,
To disregard her voice.
Such orbs with kinder light are filled,
The nearer we adore;
And pouting lips, if bravely stilled,
Will banish us no more.
—[The Spectator.

On The Ice.

Mother, may I go out skate?
Yes, my darling Julia,
But don't you try the figure 8,
For it will surely fool you.
Just as you make the lightning whirl
To show your springy muscle,
The boys will see a foolish girl
Sleigh-riding on her bustle.

THE DEACON'S STRIKE.

The deacon had struck something at last. And, though the secluded gulch had been miles away from the nearest post—though the deacon was never known to have other companion than his ragged, gray little burro—the news had spread. The wind, ruffling the green plumes of the spruce above the deacon's head, as he bent over the glittering quartz laid bare by his pick, may have whispered it abroad; or the crested jay, furtively watching him with keen, round eyes from the spruce's topmost boughs, may have borne it afar. At any rate, the deacon's strike was a secret no longer.

Singly, and by twos or threes, the prospectors came, and, following in their footsteps, came the boom. Then, as if by magic, there arose Mountain City—a city of dug-outs and canvas tents, straggling up and down the narrow gulch and terminating in a nucleus of a few rudely-built log houses at its head.

The deacon, whose original discovery had called into existence this city of a day, was in no wise elated at his success, nor, after the fashion of the wayward prospector, given to conviviality thereat. He altered not a title of his ways, but, silent and self contained as ever, pursued his daily task of opening the lead with the same patient endeavor with which he might have followed the plow over the rugged hills of his native New England state.

Regarding the deacon in some sense as its sponser, the camp had not been unkindly disposed towards the morose old man. It had made many friendly and sociable efforts at affiliation, but, being invariably repulsed, had desisted, as it became tacitly understood its life and his held little in common.

For it was evident the deacon regarded with disfavor the recreations of the lively camp. The enticing strains issuing from the dance-house stirred not his sluggish pulse. He carefully avoided the velvet stroke of the "tiger's" paw and held himself aloof from the allurements of the "Miner's Retreat," where nightly a coterie of choice spirits met for a genial game of "freeze-out," and a sociable discussion of the affairs of the camp.

Naturally the deacon's self-elected isolation drew upon him many comments. Many were the wild and improbable conjectures as to his history, but as of this no man knew one iota, it continued to wrap in mystery as inscrutable as the deacon's hard-favored face.

A little thrill of excitement ran through the camp, therefore, when it was rumored the deacon had sold the "Green Mountain Boy" for a mere nominal sum. Nor was it allayed when one morning the deacon packed his little tent upon the gray burro and took his departure from their midst.

Away from the haunts of man, in the solitude of the hills, the deacon seemed in a more congenial element. His tent was finally pitched near the summit of the range on a rugged mountain side, scarred and furrowed by the hand of Time, like the deacon's own harsh countenance. And here daily from sun to sun he prosecuted, in his slow determined way, his search for the hidden silver vein beneath.

Seated near his camp fire one evening, he was quietly resting after the labors of the day, distributing, as was his custom, bits of bread and bacon to the gray burro. Suddenly the burro pricked his long ears, and the deacon glancing around saw a man appoaching slowly from below. As he drew near he recognized, with anything but pleasure, a young man who had been the liveliest of the lively camp. His dress, different from that of the ordinary miner, was stained and torn, and his face, haggard and sunken, was turned upon the deacon with eager expectancy.

"I am famishing," he exclaimed, abruptly, dispensing with any salutation. "Will you give me something to eat?"

For reply the deacon silently motioned to the viands still beside the smoldering fire. The other waited for no more, but set to at once. And as the deacon noticed his tremulous hand and the avidity with which he ate, something like compassion crept over his hard features.

"From the camp?" he asked, at length, as the other had somewhat satisfied his hunger.

"Yes. I left three days ago. I have eaten nothing since till now. My departure was rather sudden, as you can judge," he added with a forced laugh.

The deacon glanced at him inquiringly. The other avoided his gaze and fixed his eyes in a sullen stare upon the fire. After a pause he continued abruptly, in a tone of assumed levity:

"I was invited to leave for the good of the community by the vigilance committee."

"Ah!" exclaimed the deacon, with a grim look.

"Yes," the other continued, never once taking his eyes from the fire, and speaking as though the words were drawn from him forcibly. "I might tell you that it was a case of mistaken identity and all that—but I won't. I've got a bad name in the camp, and I don't say but what I deserve it. My partner was strong for stopping the coach, but they couldn't prove it on me, so they only told me to skip."

"They couldn't prove it," said the deacon, shortly. "But did you——"

"No, I did not!" the other broke in fiercely. "I have been bad enough, but not so bad as that. I told them so, but they wouldn't believe it. I tell you the same, and I don't expect you to, either. I have eaten and rested, and now I'll go," he added, in a weary tone as he arose, trembling partly with excitement, partly with exhaustion.

"Go!" said the deacon; "where to?"

"I don't know and I don't care." and the utter hopelessness of his voice went to the deacon's heart.

"Sit down," said he quietly, "and let me think."

The other fell back into his place by the fire and fixed his gaze once more upon it. For a time neither spoke, as the deacon absently continued to feed bits of broken bread to the burro.

"Deacon," the young man said at length, "I don't expect any leniency from you. And yet it was kind of you to let me sit here and eat, and I wish you would believe me innocent of this last."

"Why should I not?" the deacon replied, as much in self-communion as in answer to the other. Then, in his usual harsh manner, he added, "Perhaps you now see, young man, the folly of the life you led over there," and nodded his head toward the camp.

"Don't moralize, deacon not to me, at least, It is too late for that now," the other sullenly replied.

"Too late! It is never too late!" said the deacon, with energy.

"It's all very well for you to talk that way, deacon," said the other, despondently: "but, then, you don't know how hard it is for one to get up after he's been down."

"No!" said the deacon, in a curiously interrogatory tone.

"No," the other replied, growing warmer as he spoke; "and, then, you don't know what temptations such as myself have either, and you've never had to go through what I have—thrown out to shift for myself, for my mother died when I was a child, and my father——"

"Your father!" said the deacon, inquiringly, as the other stopped abruptly.

"Do not speak of him!" he said, vehemently, as he arose and walked to and fro. "It's little enough I have to thank him for. 'Like father, like son!' that's what I have to remember him by, for I've heard nothing else about him since I can remember. He was bad enough, I suppose. I never saw him, and I don't know; maybe, after all, he wasn't as bad as I was told," he added, in a softer tone.

The deacon followed his nervous movements with a curious gaze, not a little surprised at his vehemence.

"I'm not one to judge too severely, young man," said he, as the other reseated himself. "What's your name?"

"Amos Sethwell," the other replied, and, raising his eyes, saw the deacon's fixed upon him attentively. And it may have been mere fancy on his part, but as the fitful camp fire flared up brightly for a moment, he thought a curious spasm contracted the rigid line of the deacon's mouth. It was only for an instant, for the deacon quickly averted his eyes and turned them upon the peaks above gleaming softly in the light of the rising moon.

A long silence ensued. The young man gazed despondingly in the fire, the deacon absently at the gleaming peaks, so absently that it was plain he saw them not. Far beyond their snowy domes his thoughts had wandered back to his native town, and a party of wild young men. And, though it had been long ago, it seemed but yesterday as he saw them disperse and followed the footsteps of one returning home followed him as he entered the empty house, and saw him take up a little note lying open on the table which told him that his wife, driven to dispair by his dissolute ways, had left his home forever, and that henceforth their ways lay separate, for never did she wish his unborn child brought under his evil influence.

Perhaps it had needed some shock, sharp and sudden like this, to check the downward course of his life and rouse his better instincts. He was not one, however, to steer a middle course—he must be one thing or the other—and, as he shook the dust of his native place from his feet, so also he cast away the shackles of his ill-spent life, and became instead a cold, silent man, shut up in his shell of stern self-reliance. And so he had remained through many a weary year of wandering to and fro, until he was now a lonely and morose old man.

Perhaps the sight of this younger man, already started on the downward path, where he had been before; perhaps his desponding words and the sullen despair written in his face, or perhaps something more than all these stirred the well of loving kindness hidden so deep in the deacon's rugged breast that no sign of it ever reached his impassible face. For, when he at length spoke, it was in a tone very different from his usual harsh one.

"Amos, go into the tent and lie down on my blankets. I will join you presently."

"Deacon," said the other, slowly, as he arose, "I didn't expect any such kindness from you, of all men. I—I thank you ——" and, breaking off, he hurried into the tent.

Long after the camp fire had burned to ashes, the deacon still sat beside it, with his head in his hands and his eyes fixed on nothing. The gray burro once or twice nibbled softly at his sleeve, but, eliciting no attention, grazed slowly off. Then upon his reverie broke the heavy breathing of the sleeper in the tent. Glancing in, he saw him lying on the ground with one arm under his head and his face half covered by one slim hand. Moved by a sudden impulse, the deacon arose, raised the sleeping head and placed his pillow under it, and covered him with a blanket with a touch so gentle that he never stirred in his deep repose.

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It was late when the tired sleeper felt a hand upon his shoulder the next morning, and, starting up, saw the deacon bent over him.

"I see you have rested well. Come, now, and have some breakfast," he said, in a kindly voice.

Their meal being concluded, the deacon again addressed him, speaking slowly as if in pursuance of some preconceived purpose.

"Amos, mine is and has been a lonely life for many a year. It is a hard life, also; but such as it is I will ask you to share it with me."

"Do you really mean to give me a show, deacon?" asked the other with a brightening face.

"I do," said the deacon, simply "Here's my hand upon it," and, extending his hand, he held the slim one of the young man in an earnest grasp.

From that day forward the twain worked together on the rugged hillside. The deacon never alluded to the cause of their meeting, but, day by day, set the force of an example of patient, persevering labor—an example the other was not slow to follow. The deacon noticed this with silent satisfaction, and noted also how the healthful exercise in the bracing mountain air filled out the hollows in the younger face, and erased its marks of dissipation

Gradually the two were drawn together by a strong bond of affection—all the stronger, perhaps, from its undemonstrativeness, for the young man became imbued with the silent ways of the solitary old man, and unconsciously fell into them himself.

Yet there were times when, sitting at night by the fire before the little tent, the two spoke of the results of their labors and their hopes of 'striking it,' and of how, in that event, their future lives should be shaped. For it was tactily understood they were to be spent together. At such times, too, the young man often spoke of his past, dwelling with a curious pertinacity upon the father whom he had never seen, and always ending by saying, in a softened voice, "He mightn't have been so bad, after all." To these retrospections the deacon always listened in silence before the fire in his old musing way, and falling into fits of abstraction which lasted long after the other had ceased speaking.

"Amos," said the deacon one evening, "I am expecting the final payment on the 'Green Mountain Boy.' It ought to come on the coach the day after to-morrow, and as we are running short in the grub line, suppose we go to the city, get the money, and lay in a new supply"

"As you will, deacon," the other replied.

And so in the morning they set out, driving the 'burro' before them. Towards evening, as they drew near "the city," Amos began to betray signs of uneasiness.

"Deacon," said he, "you never thought it might get us both into trouble if I was seen in the city after—what I told you that first night, you remember?"

"True, boy," the deacon replied, as he stopped still. "I had forgotten about it."

"It would be best, I think," Amos continued, indicating the spot with his hand as he spoke, "for me to camp to-night in this little gulch off the trail. You can go on to the city and I will await your return in the morning."

So they separated and the deacon went on alone. It was late when he arrived; the express office was still open, however, pending the arrival of the coach, then due. After having waited vainly for its coming for some little time, he walked away and sought lodgings for the night.

The next morning he found the city in excitement. The incoming coach had been "held up" the night before by a single road agent, and the treasure box rifled of its contents, and parties were even now in search of the depredator. Hurrying to the express office, the deacon learned it was true, and learned also his expected package had been taken with the rest.

The loss bore hard upon the deacon for it had been all he had except the little now in his possession. This, however, he now expended in provisions, and, packing the burro, set out to rejoin his companion.

Arrived at the spot where the two had parted he found no one. Vainly he shouted and waited; there was no response.

"He has gotten tired of waiting, and returned alone to the tent," thought the deacon, and, so thinking, hurried onward to the tent also. But he was again disappointed—there was no one there.

Mechanically the deacon drew off the pack and released the burro to graze. Then, for the first time, he begin to connect the robbery of the coach with his partner's disappearance.

"He could not do it—he would not!" muttered the deacon, as he walked to and fro, shouting at intervals and listening vainly for a reply.

And yet for all his protestations the thought would obtrude itself, causing him to walk about in agitation, and mutter again and again. "He would not; he would not." And still he was more shocked than surprised, when at nightfall a party came up the little trail with his partner in their midst.

"Deacon," said the spokesman, as they gathered about the little tent, "we brought him here at his last request—for it's a clear case against him. He was caught skulking about the trail this morning, and we found this on him," and the speaker extended a package.

Mechanically the deacon took it, and saw it was still sealed, and saw also that it was the package he had been expecting. Then in a dazed way he looked at his partner standing with his eyes fixed on the ground, and the old, sullen, despondent look on his face. Raising his eyes, he met the deacon's for an instant, and read the horror in his face.

"I see you, too have judged me he said, in a voice so low as to be nearly inaudible. "Well, so be it; I can but die like a man and an innocent one, too; for, deacon," and he faced the old man with a steady look. "I found that package lying in the trail this morning. I had grown tired of waiting and started towards the camp to meet you. When I picked it up I knew something was wrong, and it flashed upon me to keep out of sight, especially after what had happened before. I asked them to bring me here that I might tell you the truth and tell you also I appreciated your kindness. I have nothing more to say," he added, wearily, and his despondent face fell once more upon his breast.

Still the deacon never looked at him, but covered his face with a hand that trembled in spite of himself.

"Well, deakin," at length said the bluff voice of the spokesman, "you see how it is—a likely story; but then, of course, he wouldn't confess it. This is the second time, too. The first time we let him off easy, but now—" and the speaker paused ominously.

A low but determined murmur of assent came from the others. The deacon heard it, and his hand fell from his face and grasped the breast of his flannel shirt convulsively, as he turned and faced them.

"Now," he said, in a low, firm voice, "you know me. You know that never once have I left the straight and narrow path to join in the abominations over there," pointing to the camp.

"That's so, deakin," said the spokesman, a little taken back at this abrupt address. "We all know you have followed the straight trail, and that your ways wasn't exactly our ways."

"Yes," said the deacon, "your ways were not my ways. For, men, I saw the folly of it all, and had long ago found out life was not given us to be frittered away like that; that it was a terrible earnest thing to be fought and conquered and trampled under feet, and be made subservient to the end."

"For twenty odd years," the deacon continued, as the others were silent—"for twenty odd years I have walked as straight as it was in me to do, keeping steadily on without friend or companion until—he came. Then I saw what a wreck he had made of life, and thought I might set him right and stand his friend, and may be in time he might—he might at least be a friend to me."

The deacon's steady voice trembled slightly as he paused, and his auditors still kept silence, held by not any eloquence in his speech, but by the grim earnestness of his manner. Still facing them, he moved to the young man's side and laid his hand on his shoulder.

"He is innocent," he said, in the same steady voice. "I feel it—I know it, and you shall not harm him. But if he were not"—and the deacon threw one arm about him and shielded him from them with his broad breast—"if he were guilty of all you say, you should not harm him while I draw the breath of life, for, men, I am his father!"

For an instant his auditors gazed at the deacon's gaunt figure upraised before the other. Then a bluff voice said, softly, "Boys, we'd better git," and the two were left alone.

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Half way down the mountain side the leader of the little party suddenly stopped.

"Boys," he exclaimed abruptly, "what will the camp say to all this?"

There was a moment's silence ere one replied, uneasily. "They will say we're a lot of —— soft hearted fools!"

"Let them!" defiantly said the bluff voice of the leader. "Let them say what they please, for, boys, there ain't any of this crowd going to part them two now."

But the camp didn't say so at all. The camp instead worked itself up to such a state of enthusiasm over the deacon's pluck and drank so many and such hearty healths to the deacon and his newly-found son, that the resources of the "Miner's Retreat" were well nigh exhausted. For, upon their return, the real culprit had been captured and his last confession revealed the truth.

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Magically, Mountain City had sprung into existence—like magic it faded away. The "Green Mountain Boy" had proved to be a "blind lead," the mines had failed, and the camp was abandoned. The tents have long since vanished, with their tenants, and only the moldering log houses, their dirt roofs fallen in, mark the site of the once prosperous camp.

With the rest the little tent upon the mountain side has disappeared, and its inmates have gone, no one knows whither, most likely to follow the beacon light of Fortune westward over the mountain tops.

But, though the silver mine hidden in the mountain's breast was destined never to be discovered, yet the deacon was richer by far. For, in the reverent affection of the son he had saved and reclaimed, he had struck a vein of pure gold yielding more and more abundantly, and never to be exhausted.