

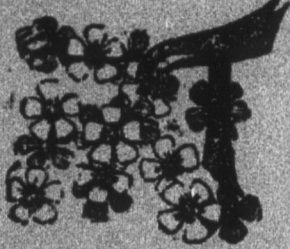
I little know or care
If the blackbird on the bough
Is filling all the air
With his soft crocicando now;
For she is gone away,
And when she went she took
The springtime in her loak,
The peachblow on her cheek,
The blue from out the brook,
The blue from out the May—
And what she calls a week
Is forever and a day!

It's little that I mind
How the blossoms, pink or white,
At every touch of wind
Fall a-trembling with delight;
For in the leafy lane,
Beneath the garden boughs,
And through the silent house
One thing alone I seek:
Until she comes again,
The May is not the May,
And what she calls a week
Is forever and a day!

—Thomas Bailey Aldrich, in Atlantic Monthly.

THE GHOSTLY SINGER.

By ALICE E. IVES.



HE Rev. Bronson Masters objected to Mr. Shelby, the first and foremost reason for this aversion was that Mr. Shelby had presumed to pay marked attentions to his daughter Eleanor.

Prejudiced people might have been ungenerous enough to observe that the second objection bore the most weight with the Reverend Masters; but such persons have never known the anxiety of a parent with a marriageable daughter.

"You are quite right, Bronson," said his sister-in-law. "What do you know about Mr. Shelby? You remember the acquaintance was begun in an irregular way—a very irregular way."

There was no denying it did begin in an irregular way. The Merchants and Traders Bank was next door to the residence of the Reverend Bronson Masters; and Mr. Jack Shelby, an industrious, energetic young clerk, with his ledger quite near the front window, had allowed his eyes to feast frequently on the graceful figure and pretty face of Miss Eleanor Masters as she fitted in and out of her father's house.

Strange to say, Miss Masters had also occasionally allowed her glance to stray toward the front window of the bank. Not that any one could positively state under oath that she had seen the rather high-bred face of a brown-eyed bank clerk in that same window; certainly not. But one day she slipped and fell on the icy pavement in front of the bank just as Shelby was coming out; and he helped her into the house, and was asked to call, and did call.

Another strange thing was that neither of them seemed to regret the accident, as it would seem natural they should.

Shelby, the third time he called, rather damaged his prospects by getting into a discussion with the Reverend Bronson Masters in which he manifested a tendency to spiritualism, theosophy and other occult and unorthodox beliefs. This bad impression was otherwise augmented by the discovery that he had no fortune, not even expectations, and was dependent on his salary for a living.

The growing affection of the young people for each other was noticed by Mr. Masters, and he immediately consulted with his sister-in-law, having no one else with whom to consult, and as has been seen, she quite agreed with him that such affection should be immediately nipped in the bud.

Accordingly Mr. Shelby was given to understand that Miss Masters was no longer at home to him. But Shelby's ledger was still near the front window, and Miss Masters had no mode of egress or ingress except by the front door of her residence, so Love still preserved his old reputation in regard to locksmiths, and laughed after the good old fashion.

About this time the Reverend Bronson Masters met a fascinating widow, Mrs. Horton Ver lance, who had lately become a member of his congregation. Mr. Masters intimated to Eleanor that he would like her to ask Mrs. Ver lance to call. Like a dutiful daughter she obeyed, and Mrs. Ver lance promptly accepted the invitation.

She came often, and dined and lunched with them, much to the pleasure of the host, but secretly to the annoyance of his daughter.

And she walked the floor in her helpless rage.

Shortly after this Mr. Masters announced to his daughter that he would spend his vacation in Europe.

"I have decided to take you with me," he added.

Eleanor was delighted with the prospect, and gave her parent an ecstatic hug.

"Shall you close the house, papa?" she asked.

"No, Mrs. Ver lance will rent it furnished. I consider myself particularly fortunate to have her here to look after things," he said.

Eleanor didn't agree with him, but concluded that silence in this case was wisdom.

"Mr. Burrows will take a room, too, so there will be the added protection of a man in the house," added Mr. Masters.

Mr. Berkeley Burrows was a nephew of Mrs. Ver lance; he had been introduced to the Masters family by his aunt. Eleanor felt something of the same aversion for him that she did for Mrs. Ver lance; but the Reverend Masters considered him a young gentleman of great promise. Besides, he had large expectations, as that gentleman phrased it, and such things are not to be looked upon as drawbacks in a son-in-law.

No communication being allowed between the young man in the front window of the bank and the young woman next door, Mr. Jack Shelby went off on his vacation without having had an opportunity to inform Miss Masters of the fact.

Shortly after he left she sailed for Europe, having cast a longing glance into the front window as she entered the carriage which was to convey her to the pier. The glance met no response, and she was both piqued and grieved, but gave no sign.

Mrs. Ver lance came into possession; and the bank clerk returned from his vacation. His weary eyes watching for Eleanor's fitting to and fro were greeted only with the apparition of a rather stout blonde woman handsomely arrayed, and not disposed to look his way.

He concluded she was a visitor of the Masters; and that perhaps Eleanor was away for a week or two. He knew nothing of the departure of the family for Europe.

One evening about half-past six, as he was going to dinner, he discovered that he had left in the bank two theatre tickets, which he wished to use that night. He turned back, wondering if he would be able to get in to find them.

The deaf old janitor was just finishing up his work; but he had some trouble in attracting his attention, the night watchman not having yet come on duty. He finally succeeded, and the old fellow sat down in a corner to wait for him, and dozed off.

How quiet it was! The street traffic and roll of teams had ceased, and for the first time Shelby heard the tick of the clock on the wall. He had never been in the bank before so late. This strange silence made him feel as though he sat with the ghost of the bustling, noisy business place whose features he knew so well. It was something dreamlike and unreal.

The strangeness of it all seemed to produce a peculiar impression upon him. He felt that could he sufficiently master the occult forces of nature, that in this great, quiet place, and so near her home, he might make the girl he loved feel his presence.

The silence became more profound. Suddenly he heard a low, musical sound. He could not tell from whence it came. It seemed almost under his feet. As he listened it became more distinct. There was a strain very like a well-known air from "Trovatore."

Next he heard a name which made his heart beat fast.

"O Eleanor," sounded the soft, mysterious voice, instead of the familiar words "O Leonora" in the opera.

from some spirit who wished to warn him of peril to her.

As he closed the door leading from the president's room the sleepy janitor awakened with a start. He eyed Shelby suspiciously.

"Was ye wantin' anything in there, sir?" he asked gruffly.

"No; I simply opened the door because I heard a strange sound. Do you ever hear strange sounds about here?" he asked.

"Don't hear nothin'," answered the deaf servant, crustily, and Shelby took himself off.

The next day he thought of nothing but the strange happening at the bank. He burned with curiosity to again investigate. After hours he went again a little later and found Flynn, the watchman, there. Flynn didn't seem disposed to give him much time alone for occult demonstrations.

He invented a pretext for getting Flynn away. It was quiet, and he listened intently. "Again he heard the low, musical sound. Then came the wailing words, low but distinct: 'O Eleanor.'" The voice, which seemed half reproach, half entreaty, was heart-rending in its appeal.

The cold drops gathered on his forehead. What did it mean?

The next moment the watchman came in and put an end to further investigations. He could invent no further pretext for remaining, and went away.

The morning after this the president gave him an odd look as he passed through. Shelby went and stared into the mirror to see if he had omitted his necktie, or if there was anything peculiar in his personal appearance. He saw nothing but his rather haggard features.

There was a new clerk installed near him, and this man he also caught looking at him in a scrutinizing way. He wondered why he had suddenly become so suspicious of every one. Was this mystery, together with his suspense about Eleanor, driving him insane? Was she menaced by some terrible peril?

If he could only spend a night alone in the bank, what might he not discover?

He determined to go boldly to the president, Mr. Bortree, and ask his permission to do so.

"What is your reason for such a strange request?" asked the official, looking suspiciously at him.

Shelby hesitated. Could he tell this hard, cold man of facts? "You are aware, of course, that should anything happen here it would immediately be traced to you," added Mr. Bortree.

Then it flashed upon Shelby that it was suspicion he saw in this man's face.

"My intentions are the most innocent," he said, straightening up. "I think the bank is haunted, that's all. I am fond of investigating such things."

"Why, so am I," said Mr. Bortree. "I'm a member of the Society for Psychical Research. Spend the night in the bank if you like; only I'm afraid you won't feel much like work the next day."

That night Shelby went to the bank about ten, settled himself in two leather covered chairs, and prepared to await developments.

An hour wore on during which he heard nothing.

Then he was startled by a sound. It was a soft, clicking noise. It was in front. The door was opened. There were the footfalls of two men. He got up, and peered out cautiously over the high counter.

The watchman and Mr. Bortree were coming toward him.

"I told you I was interested in the occult," said the President, cheerfully. "I've come to help you watch."

A shade of annoyance passed over Shelby's face. How could he expect any developments with this man there?

Two hours passed by in silence, during which the President read and smoked.

"Wait!" cried Shelby, clinging to his arm. "They are ready to come up, and they are ready for murder. They are watching on the outside, doubtless. Don't think of going out alone."

The president gave him a strange look.

"I am ready to risk anything. For myself I am not afraid," said the young man looking the other full in the face.

"Then take this lantern and hold it in the window."

It was an ordinary bull's eye lantern which Mr. Bortree took from under a chair, and which he had evidently hidden there.

In that moment Shelby knew that he had been the subject of a horrible suspicion. But he quietly took the light and obeyed.

After about three minutes, some one tapped on the door. The President opened it, and admitted two policemen.

Shelby spoke first.

"Put a guard on that house instantly," he said, pointing to the Masters residence. "Don't let any one leave it. There is a tunnel from there under the vault."

"Why, a woman and two men went away from there just as we came in," said the policeman. "I thought the minister was having some company."

"Quick!" cried Shelby. "It may be too late now."

His brain was in a whirl. It seemed so horrible to put a guard of police about her house.

Investigations revealed an empty house with the basement dug up, and forming the entrance to a tunnel under the bank.

An extract from the morning paper read:

"Mrs. Horton Ver lance, alias Arlington, alias Baker, is at her old tricks again. This time she nearly succeeded in carrying out one of the boldest bank robberies on record. Jake Perley, whom she had been passing off as her nephew, was her accomplice."

Mr. Jack Shelby is now assistant cashier, and the wedding with Miss Eleanor Masters is to take place just after Easter.

"Shelby," said the President, as he congratulated him the other day, "I won't deny that I had you shadowed. That new clerk was a special detective placed on you. To think you should only have been a crank, after all! But did you ever account for that strange singing of the 'O Eleanor'?"

"Oh, yes," said Shelby. "That was evidently a signal. It wouldn't excite suspicion like a whistle, you know."

A Predatory Crow.

For several weeks the residents of a neighboring town have been puzzled to account for the disappearance of small articles, consisting of jewelry, penholders, napkin rings and other trinkets, and the failure to apprehend the thief. On Friday, however, the offender was accidentally caught in the act. A gentleman who had been acquainted with the fact that the things had been stolen was talking to a friend, when his attention was attracted to a noise in his office, and on going to ascertain the cause was surprised to see a pet crow, belonging to Mr. Blank, pick up a gold pen and fly from the window to the ground, with the pen in his mouth.

The gentleman followed the crow, which went to a shed back of a bakery, and saw the bird deposit the pen under an old box. He drove the crow away, and, turning up the box, found all the articles that had been stolen from the different houses. The owner of the crow was called, and he identified several trinkets that had been taken from his room. The articles were returned to their respective owners.—Kalamazoo (Mich.) Telegraph.

Sewing on Board Ship.

SCIENTIFIC SCRAPS.

In a recent test of floor material the most durable turned out to be a tile made of rubber. An English earthen tile comes next. Vermont marble, flagstone, granolith, marble mosaic, pine, oak, Oregon pine and teak come in the order named.

Putrefactive bacteria, once gaining access to the household refrigerator, live and contaminate meat, butter, milk and other foods kept therein. Wash and scald refrigerators often. A butcher's refrigerator may become so contaminated as to taint his meats and lose him customers.

Although the possibilities of the production of aniline dyes from coal tar are by no means fully developed, according to chemists, it has already yielded sixteen shades of blue, sixteen yellow tints, twelve orange tints, nine shades of violet, and over two score other colors, shades, and tints.

The expedition of the Sydney geographical society, under Professor David, to the Ellice islands, between the Gilbert islands and the Fiji islands, northeast of Australia, has obtained evidence confirming the theory of Darwin as to formation of coral islands. Diamond drilling in coral to the depth of 557 feet failed to reach bottom.

Sea water is suggested by the American Druggist as the best possible disinfectant for use in street sprinkling, because all chemicals are either too expensive or dangerous. The organic dust of the streets is one of the most potent factors in the spread of disease in cities. While the use of water settles the dust, it also converts it into the most favorable sort of culture ground for the development of all kinds of bacteria. Salt water, if used, would remedy that danger.

Great contraction incident to cooling has always made the production of sound aluminium castings well-nigh impossible. This trouble is now remedied by adding a gram of phosphorus to a kilo of the molten metal, but that makes the castings too brittle for rolling. So to secure ingots fit for spinning rape oil is now used in treating the molten metal as soon as it is run into crucibles and while the process of contraction continues, with the result of a metal that is fairly ductive and malleable.

Many of the violent changes which occur under the surface of the sea, as Professor John Milne has recently shown, produce effects that are distinctly and sometimes disastrously felt on the land. Wherever a profound cavity exists in the bed of the ocean near the land, and wherever the border of a continent slopes off into a deep sea, great slides are apt to occur, and these often cause earthquakes. In Japan, Mr. Milne says, a large number of earthquakes came from the deep sea off the mouth of the Tonegawa, the largest of the Japanese rivers. The river brings down alluvial detritus, which is deposited on the brink of a deep hollow in the ocean, and from time to time the accumulated deposit slides into the depths, shaking not only the sea bottom, but the adjacent land.

How Cents Are Coined.

When the copper sheets ready for stamping reach the Philadelphia mint, where all our minor coins are made, each one is tested to see that the alloy is in the right proportion. Thence they pass directly to the coining room. Here the sheets are cut into strips, from which the round blanks, called "planchets," are punched, and these are run directly through the stamping machines, where they receive the impressions from the dies.

The stamping machine consists of a heavy cast-iron arch above a small round table, at which the operator sits. A nearly round brass plate, called a "triangle," is fastened by a "knee" joint to the lever of the arch. This triangle holds the die, which is forced down on the blanks and leaves the impression. The brass blanks or "planchets" drop through a hollow tube upon feeders, which carry them beneath the dies. Any imperfect pieces are rejected by the women operators, who acquire wonderful dexterity in detecting them.

From the stamp the coins go to an automatic weighing machine. This intelligent piece of mechanism, a German invention, perfected by a former director of the mint, throws out all pieces that are above or below the required weight, and an electric alarm attached to it warns the operator in case two coins try to pass into the receptacle at once. The pieces of correct weight pass on to the counting-room, and the others are sent back to be recast.—Washington Star.

Cure for Sleep Walking.

Lady Visitor (at office of eminent physician)—I have called, doctor, to ask if there is any cure for sleep walking. I have had the habit for years and lately it has become worse.

Dr. Higginson—It can be cured, madam. Take this prescription and have it made up at Cold, Steele & Co.'s.

"Cold, Steele & Co.'s? Why, that is not a chemist's, but an ironmonger's."

"Yes, madam. The prescription calls for a paper of tacks. Dose—two tablespoonfuls scattered about the floor before retiring."—Fit Dag.