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## Poetry.

### Tired Mothers.

A little elbow leans upon your knee,  
Your tired knee, that has so much to bear,  
A child's dear eyes are looking lovingly  
From underneath a tangle of tangled hair,  
And now it seems surpassing lovely touch  
Of warm, moist fingers, folding yours so  
I did not kiss more oft, and tenderly,  
The little child that brought me only good.

And if, some night when you sit down to rest,  
You miss this elbow from your tired knee,  
This restless, curling head from off your  
This clinging tongue that chatters constantly  
From your own dimpled hands had  
And never would nestle in your palm again,  
If I could but find the way to get it  
I would not blame you for your heartache  
I wonder as if mothers ever fret,  
If little children clinging to their gown,  
Or that the footprints, when the days are  
Are ever black enough to make them frown,  
I could find a little muddy boot,  
Or a cap or jacket, or my chamber door,  
If I could kiss a rosy, restless foot,  
And hear its pattering in my ears once more.

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nor collar, and you ain't a going to mend 'em for me, either, that's more. I just wish your mother'd send for you and take you home, for you are enough to vex my life out of me."

Paul made no reply, but turning loose all her bags, sat down on the door step and began to cry, while aunt Sally retired to her chamber to adjust her toilet; or as she said, "to put away her rags."

Sally Slocum was a maiden lady of some forty summers, well to do in the world; who, nevertheless, had her misfortunes and troubles.

Pauline Evergreen was her niece, the only daughter of an only sister, and as such, spent much of her time with her aunt Sally on a little farm not far from a village where this lady held her church membership.

Pauline's mother was a widow, and, though in the early part of her married life she had been in comfortable circumstances, yet, she had felt a great deal of sorrow; and, when her husband died, found herself in the most straitened circumstances. At the time of which we write she was making a scanty living with her needle, in the village, and it was of her and her trials that aunt Sally and her preacher had been talking.

While she is adjusting her toilet, and Paul is shedding her tears of mingled sorrow and repentance, we will tell the reader something of the recent conversation which had just ended, between aunt Sally and her pastor.

"The case," said aunt Sally, is just this: "Susan is a poor widow and has to depend on her needle for a living, and what I complain at is, that instead of trying to help her to get work, some of the members of her own church work against her."

"Oh, sister, I reckon you are mistaken," said brother Snyder.

"I'm not mistaken, and I'll just tell you what I think of such."

"Stop! Stop! sister, you are getting angry, and I fear you will say something that, will make it necessary for me to arraign you before the church, for evil speaking."

"Brother Snyder, do you think you can stop me from speaking the truth? If you do, you are mighty mistaken. I intend you shall hear what I've got to say, and then if you want to arraign me, you can do it. I just see how it is: you are afraid of your rich members, and a poor woman may suffer, as for you."

"Sister Sally, I cannot stand this! You must listen to advice and counsel."

"Listening to you don't put bread into my sister's mouth."

"Neither will evil speaking."

"If there's any evil speaking in what I say," retorted aunt Sally, "it's because you and others haven't done your duty, and I'm obliged to tell you of it."

"Well, well, sister; let me hear all about it."

"You shall. In the first place, do you know why Susan Evergreen came to be a widow so young, and to be left penniless in the world?"

"Why, I've heard it said that Mr. Evergreen killed himself drinking."

"That's true as far as it goes; but do you know whose liquor killed him?"

"I do not."

"I'll tell you. It was our good brother Ezekiah Green's, who lives in the palace on the hill just behind the village church; who sings so loud, and prays so loud, and talks so sweet to 'poor dying sinners.' Brother Snyder, do you know I can't bear to hear him pray?"

"Ah, sister, that's because—"

"It's because he made my sister a widow, by killing her husband, and sending his soul to hell. That's one reason. But, I've got another, and it is that which troubles me now."

"Be careful sister, you don't say something that's not exactly true, and—"

"When you catch me telling a lie, you stop me. I don't generally tell lies, do I?"

"But, sister, you are excited now, and you might say something you'd be sorry for."

"If I say anything wrong, and I know it, I'll make amends. I'm not afraid to own my faults. But, as I was going on to say: Ezekiah Green's whiskey killed Timothy Evergreen, and his whiskey was the cause of all the trouble which has come upon our family. He was the only man who sold whiskey in the village, and he has been a member of the church as long as I can remember."

selling it now; but I do blame him for what he has done."

"But, sister, we must hope that the good Lord has forgiven him; and we must try to forgive him also."

"Well, as for that, may be the Lord has forgiven him; but I hadn't forgiven him for what he done last week—Hain't you heard of it?"

"No, sister."

"You hain't heard that Squire Green came back from New York last week, and brought an outlandish woman with him, and has set her up in a store right next to his, as a milliner and manta-maker, to break down my sister's business?"

"Not to break down sister Evergreen's business, sister. Don't say that."

"But, I do say it."

"Now, sister Sally, you are too hasty in speaking, and what I think you have been misinformed. I happen to know all about this matter, and if you will allow me, I'll tell you all about it, and satisfy you, I hope, that brother Green has no ill will toward sister Evergreen. He talked to me about the matter and I really didn't see anything wrong in it. He certainly had the right to do what he has done."

"Of course he had the right. No body doubts that. He had the right to sell whiskey and beggar a dozen families, and send a dozen souls to hell, and turn out scores of fatherless children upon the heartless charities of a still more heartless world. The law gave him the right to sell whiskey and the law makes it right in him to oppress the widow, and I suppose I must hold my tongue, or I'll be had up in church."

"I didn't say that, sister Sally."

"You'd just as well have said it; it amounts to that."

"But, sister, how does the bringing of Miss Alvira Butterfly into our village affect you or your sister; or why should you be so fretted with brother Green about it? Brother Green told me that she is a very nice lady—a number one milliner and manta-maker—and that if it is his intention to set up a large establishment in the village, and if the business will justify it, to give work to all the seamstresses in the place. And, besides, Miss Butterfly is an excellent performer on the organ, and sings well, and she will add very greatly to our village choir."

"And brother Green told you all that? Now let sister Sally tell you some more, for I think it won't hurt you much to hear the other side. You say brother Green had the right to bring Miss Butterfly here and set up a big business. Whether he had the right or not, he's took it, and that's all the same. But, I'll tell you this; if I read the Bible right, he has no right to oppress the poor, and that's just what he's doing."

"How?"

"By taking the bread out of their mouths. If that ain't oppressing the poor, I don't know what you call it. Why didn't he employ Susan Evergreen? Alvira Butterfly never saw the day when she could cut or make better than she can, and never will; and if a performer on the organ is what he wanted, she can beat Alvira, two to one, and he knows it. You know there's not a finer voice in the whole country, than hers. And besides all that, she's a member of our church. That ought to have had some weight; but it didn't, and that's what I complain of. Brother Green knows that Susan is a good seamstress—that she is poor—that she needs help; and that she's a member of his church, and if he had any work, he ought to give it to her. But, no; he wouldn't do that; but he goes to New York and picks up a stranger, who, if reports are true, is an infidel, and brings her down here and gives her more for doing nothing than he has ever been willing to give my sister for her work. Oh, you needn't try to stop me. It's so, and you know it—And I just want you to tell me if it's right."

"Well, now sister, you don't look at this matter in its true light. Hear me for a moment, and I think I'll convince you that you are wrong. Brother Green certainly has the right to employ whom he pleases. If sister Evergreen cannot do his work like he wants it, why, you must admit it is his right to employ some one who can. And since the matter has gone so far, I'll tell you what brother Green told me. He said he did not intend to interfere with the work which sister Evergreen, and others of the village had been doing; but his object was to add a millinery establishment to his business so that when the new college is opened, he might get the custom of the young ladies, who come into the village from a distance. So you see sister Sally, brother Green has thought over the whole matter, and that he does not intend to bring Miss Butterfly in competition with sister Evergreen and others."

"That's very kind in him, ain't it?"

Now, brother Snyder, I see there's no use in my trying to convince you that brother Green's anything else than a mighty good man, if he has the blood of a dozen dead men in his pocket, for you are just like everybody else now-a-days; you'll defend the rich against the—"

"Stop! Stop! I'll not hear that—It's not true. I deny it."

"Well, you'll let me say one more thing, won't you?"

"If you'll confine yourself to moderation, Not without."

"Then, I 'spose brother Green don't intend, with his Miss Butterfly, to take what little work my sister now gets from her, but he does propose to keep her from getting any more. That's what I understand you to say in so many words. He's brought her to poverty and misery and he intends to keep her there. When the college was first talked of my sister said to me one day—'Sister Sally,' said she, 'I do feel like there's good times ahead for me. If they start the college and a great many young ladies come here to school, I do hope that I can get enough work to do to buy me a small lot and house, and above all, to give my daughter an education and fit her for a teacher.' 'Oh,' said she, 'I shall then begin to feel like there is some joy in the world after all.' Now that spark of hope is taken away, and brother Green who is the slayer of her husband becomes her oppressor to keep her down in rags and want, and you come here to apologize for him—You can have me up in the church if you think I've said anything wrong or done anything wrong. My conscience tells me I'm right, and if you won't be afraid of losing some of that money you expect to get out of brother Green's pocket, you'd say I'm right too. If charity means, to grind the poor members of a church into the dust by preferring strangers before them, I don't care to have much charity. I'll just tell you what I think of brother Snyder, and then I'll let you do the balance of the talking. I firmly believe that the conduct of brother Green, and of other church members like him, is doing a right none harm than good in the world."

"There is a great deal of truth as well as force in what you say," sister Sally, and I regret that brother Green has thought proper to go into a business which will interfere with the living of others. I will see him and talk the matter over seriously with him; perhaps he will change his mind, and after all these troubles will be removed. But, I must say, sister, you did me injustice when you said awhile ago that I was influenced by the money I expected to get from brother Green's pocket. I want you to pray over all these matters, and see if you cannot feel better toward brother Green. If he has injured you and your friends, don't injure and jeopard your soul by hating him. If he has sinned, God will punish him for it; 'vengeance is mine—I will repay,' saith the Lord.—Our troubles may be great in this world—we may see the rich rejoicing in their riches and the poor suffering and groaning in their poverty; and oftentimes we may feel in our blindness and wickedness, that the ways of God are unjust; yet, we should remember that, 'like as a father pitieth his children,' so doth the Lord pity us if we are his faithful followers. We must bear the cross if we would wear the crown. Try to forgive."

Here the preacher took his leave, and it was at this juncture that Pauline came running into the house with her bags just in time to hear aunt Sally say: "Them were mighty comforting words, and I 'spose I must try and feel comforted, but I don't feel much like it—I just don't."

"What are you talking about aunt Sally?" asked Pauline Evergreen, as she sprang into the house with bonnet in hand, bringing a dozen June-bugs which, having been tied together, went sailing around Paul's head, one of which struck aunt Sally right in her mouth at the very moment she said: "I just don't!"

"Get out of here with your nasty bugs! I'd as soon have a buzzard about me as one of them pesky things. What on earth are you doing with 'em?"

"Oh, aunt Sally, they make such delightful music, humming and buzzing around my head. Don't you like music, aunt Sally?"

"I ain't heard no music yet, but—"

Another one of Paul's bugs lighted on aunt Sally's ear just at this juncture, and, in trying to knock it off, she unfortunately knocked it down her back, whereupon a scene ensued which may be imagined, but not described. Suffice it to say, aunt Sally did not stop squalling until the bug was gotten off, when she declared that "the nasty thing had claws as sharp as a crow's beak, and as for her part, she'd just as soon have had a terrapin crawling on her back."

Aunt Sally had fixed up mighty nice to receive her preacher's visit, but Paul declared, as she stood just outside the door, laughing, fit to kill herself, that aunt Sally "looked for all the world like a tree that had been struck with lightning."

"You ought to be struck with nine and thirty, you good for nothing hussy, for having no more sense than to bring them good for nothing, nasty bugs in the house. Jest look at my best new collar, torn in too, and my best calico dress ripped all to pieces, and my—"

"Well, aunt Sally, I couldn't help it. I didn't know the foolish bug was going to light on you. I am sure I am very sorry."

"Yes, but that don't mend my dress,

do as well without the church and the preacher, as they could without him and his money. Let Miss Sally Slocum rant and abuse him as much as she pleased. She couldn't hurt anybody. In fact, it was expected that old maids would be quarrelsome, soured people. And if her sister was a poor widow he couldn't help that. He didn't ask Tim Evergreen to buy his liquor. In fact, he had told him many a time, after he had spent all his property, that he didn't want him about his shop. Didn't want anybody about him who couldn't drink without getting drunk, and making a fool of himself. For his part, he thought it was a good thing for the community to be rid of such a character as he was. There was plenty of work for sister Evergreen and her daughter too, as for that matter. He needed hands to chop his cotton, and he'd give them as much as any of his other hands, provided they'd do as much.

Brother Snyder is a Presiding Elder now. Not long since he stopped with the writer, and stated that he had recently been to the village, where, twenty years ago, the scenes above narrated were enacted.

Brother Green and all his family, except one daughter, are dead. That daughter is the wretched wife of the vilest drunkard in the village. Pauline is a beautiful woman—the wife of the leading merchant of the place, who owns all the Green estate, and should you go to that palace in the rear of the village church, you will see two old, but very sprightly ladies. These are Miss Sally Slocum and her sister, Mrs. Evergreen. You will also see a half dozen intelligent and handsome boys and girls, some of whom are most grown. These are Pauline's, or rather I should say, they are the children of Augustus and Pauline Mansfield. It would be difficult for a stranger to tell which of the two elderly ladies is the grandmother. Indeed it is very difficult for the children themselves to tell.

"While I sat," said brother Snyder, "in the great arm-chair on the porch, where I had so often, twenty years ago, seen brother Green sit for hours, I saw a poor, ragged child passing along the street. Aunt Sally stopped at the gate and filled its little arms full of vegetables to carry to its mother. That was the grand child of the man who, twenty years ago, owned that palace. 'I will repay,' saith the Lord!"

Then the gentleman took from his pocket a morocco case upon opening which he exposed a gold watch. John took the watch; and turned to the gas jet, and upon examining it, he found it to be a master-piece of one of the most celebrated Swiss makers—a stem-winder, full ruby jeweled, of most exquisite adjustment and finish. He knew that the first cost of that watch had been not less than three hundred dollars in gold.

"How much did you want on this?" he asked returning the watch to the case.

"I want enough to get me safe to New York."

John started off upon the many and extreme risks of his business; but the gentleman stopped him abruptly.

"I ask you to run no risk on my account. I do not propose to sell the watch. I only wish to leave it with you as security for a very small sum. I have another just like it—I bought them as presents for two friends of mine, and would not sell them for ten times their value. Fifty dollars will answer."

John tried to cough down the idea of advancing so much, but the cough stuck in his throat.

"For how long do you want the fifty dollars?"

"For—say—two weeks."

Never mind the various dodges attending the transaction on the part of the broker. Suffice it to say that he at length counted out fifty dollars for his customer and took the watch; and "trade" as he termed it, stood thus: at any time within two weeks the gentleman could redeem the watch upon the payment of sixty dollars.

"Rather steep interest," said the elderly gentleman, with a smile far more grim and severe than any that had preceded it.

John would have again explained the enormous risks of business, but the customer would not listen.

"What name?" said John, holding his pen over his entry book.

"Put it down Simon Snibbs, if you must have a name."

"So John put it down, and then he put the watch away, and the customer departed with the fifty dollars.

After the man had gone John Gledin took out the watch and looked at it again. His eyes sparkled eagerly.—Suppose anything should happen to prevent the prompt redemption of the valuable pledge? The thought thrilled him through and through.

The days past—and a week passed. The days past again, and another week had sped by.

At length the elderly gentleman returned, and asked for his watch.

"What name?" asked John, professing to have forgotten.

"Snibbs—Simon Snibbs."

"Ah, yes. I remember. Let me see." And he looked over his book.—"Really, Mr. Snibbs, you must have made a mistake. I have no watch of yours."

"How, sir," cried the customer in

blank amazement. "Did I not leave with you a valuable gold watch as security for a certain sum of money which I borrowed of you?"

John smiled blandly.

"Not exactly as you put it, Mr. Snibbs. If you will refresh your memory you will recollect that I bought the watch,—that for value received, you gave me a regular bill of sale,—with the proviso, however, that if, within two weeks from the date thereof, you should pay to me the sum of sixty dollars in current funds the watch should become again your property.—The two weeks expired yesterday, sir."

"But—sir! Will you—"

John put his hand reprovingly.

"There is no need of going into a passion, my dear sir, you see just how the matter stands."

From a towering rage, the old man descended to argument and explanation. He told how he had been detained in New York by an unavoidable accident, and how he had embraced the first possible opportunity to call for his watch.

"I had not worried much, he said, because I had not thought that any man could be so unconscionably mean and cold-bloodedly heartless and vile as to rob me upon such a pretext."

At this John waxed wroth and ordered the man to leave his office.

And the old gentleman, evidently fearing that he should be led to the commission of some foolish outrage if he remained longer within the villainous influence closed his lips tightly together, and went away.

On the afternoon of that very day, John Gledin sold the watch to an agent of a Philadelphia house for two hundred and seventy-five dollars.

"Hi yah!" he cried, as George Austin dropped in during the evening.—"Plod on at your type case, old fellow, plod on!"

"What's up, John?"

"The greatest operation I ever made,—two hundred and twenty-five dollars in pocket at a single turn of the die—interest of fifty dollars for two weeks? What'd ye think of that?"

"If money were man's chief end, said George soberly,—if money were the sole source of happiness,—I should say you were on the road. But you know my sentiments, and we won't argue the point. And, besides, we haven't time. I came to let you know that Uncle Moses has got home."

"Uncle Moses!" cried John clapping his hands.

"Yes. He has just arrived, and called on me this afternoon. He wants you and I to come and see him at the Tremont this evening."

"Of course we'll go and see him," said John starting at once to put away his valuables. "The old fellow must be rich as mud, and you and I are his only relatives."

"He is certainly rich," responded George quietly, "and we are his only near relatives; but I don't think of that. I only remember how I used to love him in the old days, when my mother was alive and he used to cheer and comfort her, and used to play with me under the great trees."

"And I remember," added John, "how he used to tell me that I ought to have my ears boxed because I robbed bird's nests, and stole apples and peaches from the neighbors' gardens. But that was a long time ago. I have forgiven him for all that. I say George, if he should take a fancy to us, we're in luck, ain't we? You won't say anything about—about—"

"About what?"

"I was going to say about my business; but never mind. Only those who have been behind the scenes know the crooks and turns."

"You need not fear that I shall say anything to your disadvantage, John. You'll find Uncle Moses just one of the jolliest and kindest hearted men you ever saw."

And as John had locked his safe, and finished his toilet, the two cousins set forth.