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E. L. O. WARD, Editor and Proprietor.

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A MAN'S SECRET.

Oh child-love, my love of long ago,
How great was life when you and I were young!

The world was boundless, for we did not know;
And life a poem, for we had not sung.

Now is the world grown small, and we thereon
Fill with witte toil and woe each flying day;
Elves from the wood, dreams from my heart
Are gone,

And heaven is bare, for God is far away.

O my child-love, cannot you come again,
And I look on you with grave, innocent eyes?

Your God has many angels; I would fain
Woe for one hour one angel from the skies

O my child-love, some back, come back to me,
And, laughing, lead me from the care and din;

Lay on my heart those small hands tenderly
And lovingly, to let the whole world in.

The Head of the Class.

"How do you spell threshold, Aunt Katy?" asked Hal as he came to my room just from school.

"T-h-r-e-s-h-o-l-d," I answered.

"Good enough," he replied; "but I was sure as anything there was two h's in it—it sounds so, anyway. Poor Joe failed in it to-day, and he got down one.

He feels awful bad about it—you know he's been at the head of the class for two weeks."

"Oh, pshaw!" I answered, "I wouldn't feel bad over that—I don't think it's quite fair to keep at the head all the time, and not give any one else a chance. Go down and ask Joe and the rest to come up here and I will tell you a story of something that happened in my school life that I remember as well as if it were but yesterday."

Willie Fiske was one of the very brightest boys in town, and although he loved fun as well as any of the rest of his mates, yet he was very fond of study, and was never quite contented until he reached the head of the class in which he was.

When he was eleven years old he entered the grammar school, and his father said at that time, "Willie, if you ever get to be the first one of the first class in the first division—that is, to be at the head of this great school—I will give you a gold watch."

It looked like a big job; but Willie was quite ready to undertake it, and answered:

"All right, papa; you can just make up your mind to hand over the watch by the time I'm fourteen years old."

He went to work very much in earnest, and as he passed from time to time through the different classes, and succeeded in keeping at the head of them—often for weeks together—he began to see that the watch was a pretty sure thing, and would imagine how grand he should feel to take it out and "tell the fellows the time of day."

Willie was a very generous boy, and was never so happy as when sharing some good thing with others. He always defended the smaller boys, and if any one was in trouble he was on hand at once to help them out of it. Of course he was a great favorite with both the boys and girls, and no one ever seemed to envy him because he had a rich father, or because he was so good a scholar.

Just as he reached his fourteenth birthday he entered the highest class in the school. It was now that the watch was to be won or lost!

He had not been in the class a week before he found that he had a rival—a sweet little girl, named Flossie Lee. She had just come into the school, as her parents had only recently moved to our village from a distant city, and Flossie, after an examination, had been placed in the same class with Willie.

Her parents did not have much money, but as their little girl was a fine scholar, they felt that they must send her to school as long as they could; and Flossie had often told them that she "meant to be a teacher and earn lots of money for them."

So you see that, although she did not have a gold watch to work for, she had something worth a great deal more.

And that Flossie Lee was the rival Willie had found; for she very soon skipped over all the others and took her place at the head of the class; and it looked as though it was going to be a pretty hard task to get her out of it.

Quite in despair, one day, Willie said to his mamma:

"It's no use trying, I tell you, I shall never get higher than number two—never! Flossie Lee can't fail. But there's one thing about it; if any one has got to keep me from getting to the head this year, I'd rather it would be Flossie than anybody else in school, for I like her first rate." And I guess he did, for many a fine pear or bunch of grapes, or luscious orange did Willie take from his own home table, and watch his chance to put them into Flossie's modest little lunch basket that hung under her sacque in the hall of the school, "for," as he told his mamma, one day, "Flossie never seems to have anything but crackers or bread and butter for luncheon, and she almost

always goes off by herself to eat it, when all the rest of us are having lot's of goodies; and I tell you it's fun, mamma, to hide, and watch her eyes shine when she finds the good things I've put in! I guess she thinks it's some good fairy that puts them there, don't you?"

One day, at recess, as a group of boys and girls were chatting together about a very hard lesson they had just been reciting, in which every one of the class had failed at least once, save Flossie, one of the boys, who was rather rough in his way called out:

"Say, Will Fiske, you can bet on one thing pretty sure, and that is: you'll never get that gold watch as long as Flossie Lee's in the class. Number one she is and number one she will stay!"

"I know that," said Fanny Huntley, who never had a perfect lesson in her life, "I should think you'd be as mad as fire at her, Willie, instead of doing what I saw you do to-day. Who was it put that orange into her basket, I should like to know, eh?"

"Fore I'd be such a tell-tale, Fan Huntley," said a bright little girl in the group; "if you weren't always peeping round you wouldn't see so much."

"I don't care," answered Willie, "I am not ashamed of it. Yes, I did put an orange into her basket, and I wish I had the chance oftener, for she's good and kind, and I like her the best of any girl in school—so there, now!" and turning on his heel, he called out:

"Come on, fellows, let's have a game of hoops before the bell rings," and in two minutes he had forgotten all about it.

Not so Flossie, who had heard every word. The children had stood directly underneath an open window, where behind the blinds Flossie had been seated eating the orange she had found in her basket. The tears were in her eyes as Willie turned away, but they were more happy tears than sad ones. "My goodness!" she exclaimed to herself, "then it's he that's been putting all these good things into my basket; and he can't get a gold watch because I always know my lessons. Oh, I wish I could fail!"

She puzzled over it for a long time how she could manage to fail honestly, for she said to herself: "I can never say I don't know if I do, when the questions are asked me."

At last she thought of a way. "I know how I can do it," she said, "day after to-morrow comes our geography review of the whole United States, and I won't even look at it, and then I will never remember everything, and I'll surely fail. Then Willie will have my place, and get his watch. 'Oh, goody, goody!' and I'll tell mamma and papa all about it, so they'll know I needn't have failed, and I'm sure they will want him to get the watch when I tell them how good he has been to me."

And so for the first time in months Flossie went to school the morning of the review lesson, hugging up the geography she had not opened. The class was called, and Flossie stepped quickly to her place.

"Oh, dear," thought Willie, "she looks so happy, I'm sure she knows every answer in the lesson; I almost wish she wasn't quite so smart."

For a time all went well. Flossie couldn't miss on giving the principal rivers, when asked; she knew them by heart. Questions on the great lakes, capes, bays, mountains, had to be answered when put to her, because her mind would remember them in spite of her. At last came the capitals of the States.

"Well, Miss Flossie," asked the teacher, "will you give us the capital of New Mexico?"

For an instant she hesitated, then with a look of delight that nobody but herself understood, she answered, "I can't think, truly I can't."

Flossie Lee had failed, and although every one was astonished, no one looked so distressed about it as the one who had been so anxious for so long a time to get above her, and as the teacher turned to him with, "Well, Master Fiske, can you help Miss Flossie out?" he answered:

"Please, Miss Harding, if you would only let Flossie think just a minute, I'm sure she would remember."

"It's too late now," she replied, "I have passed it to you. What is the capital of New Mexico?"

There was no look of pride in Willie's face, and no remembrance of any watch, as he answered in a low tone, "Santa Fe."

Quick as a flash, and with the brightest of smiles, Flossie stepped down and out of her place, and gently pushing Willie into it, took the one he had left. The scholars and teachers were much surprised to see her look so happy over what they thought would have made her so miserable, but Flossie kept what she had heard all to herself, and when after a few days Willie went to her and showed her a beautiful little gold watch that his father had given him for get-

ting to the head of the school, she was happier than ever.

Years after, Flossie told Willie what she overheard from the window that day, and how it was then that she found out who had been putting the good things into her basket, and then, too, for the first time, how it was she came to forget the capital of New Mexico. And the funniest part of the whole story is, that Willie has been giving her the good things ever since, and he still "likes her the best of any girl in school" or out.

"Ho! you can't fool me, Aunt Katy," cried Joe, as I finished. "Flossie Lee is Aunt Florence, and Willie Fiske is our own Uncle Will—and all I have to say is good for Aunt Florence."—*Golden Rule.*

How John Swore for Betty.

The laws of the State of Virginia prohibit marriage unless the parties are of lawful age, or by the consent of the parents.

John N——, a well-to-do farmer in the valley of Virginia, was blessed with every comfort except that important desideratum—a wife. John cast his eyes around, but unsuccessfully, until they fell upon the form of a certain Betty, daughter of John Jones, one of the prettiest girls in the country. After a courtship of six weeks, John was rendered happy by the consent of the fair Betty.

The next day, John with a friend, went to town to get the necessary documents, with the forms of procuring which he was most lamentably ignorant. Being directed to the clerk's office, John, with a good deal of hesitation, informed the urbane Mr. Brown that he was going to get married to Betty Jones, and wanted to know what he must do to compass that desirable consummation. Mr. Brown, with a bland smile, informed him that after being satisfied that no legal impediment prevented the ceremony, he would for the sum and consideration of \$3 grant him the license. John, much relieved, handed out the necessary funds.

"Allow me," said Brown, "to ask you a few questions. You are 21 years of age, I suppose, Mr. N——?"

"Yes," said John.

"Do you solemnly swear that Betty Jones, spinster, is of lawful age (made and enacted by the Legislature of Virginia) to take the marriage vow?"

"What's that?" said John.

Mr. B. repeated.

"Well," said John, "I want to get married but I joined the church at the last revival, and I wouldn't swear for a hundred dollars."

"Then, sir, you cannot get married."

"Can't get married! Good gracious, Mr. Clerk, they'll turn me out of church if I swear! Don't refuse me, Mr. Clerk, for heaven's sake. I'll give you \$10 if you let me off from swearing."

"Can't do it, Mr. N——."

"Hold on, Mr. Clerk, I'll swear! I wouldn't give up Betty for a dozen churches. I'll swear: 'May I be damned if she ain't 18 years old'—give me the license."

After the clerk bursted a few buttons off his vest, he granted the license.

He Lost His Fortune.

He was a hollow eyed, desolate and forlorn looking individual, and presented a sad type of humanity as he leaned up against a lamp post. The winter winds sang mournful dirges through the rags that hung from his coat, and his neglected beard resembled the fibres on a cocoanut. He had evidently seen many better days and much whiskey that might have been better.

"Move on," said an officer in a gruff voice, as he came up to him.

"That's it," said the desolate looking man; "that's what I've heard from the world ever since I lost my fortune. This big world is too busy to allow me to stand still even for a few moments, and I must 'move on,' although I have nothing to move and nowhere to move it to. Oh, if I'd only saved my fortune this would not have been. I'd been riding in a carriage with four horses and red painted wheels, I'd had diamonds, fine clothes, servants, deadhead tickets to shows, an aristocratic case of dyspepsia and——"

"How did you lose your fortune?" asked the officer, who was perhaps ignorant of the art and desired the information for his own private benefit.

"Well, you see," replied the broken man, "I was in Chicago in 1873 when wheat jumped twenty-five cents on the bushel, and I knowed a man who had 400,000 bushels for sale on the day before the jump, and if I'd had the money to buy I'd have made a cool hundred thousand on the next day. So you see I lost a fortune in one day, and here I'm busted flat—on the tramp and out of mon——"

"Now, then, you move on or I'll take you in," said the officer, and he moved on.

A Thoughtful Wife.

Doctor S——, the whitom Professor of Hebrew in one of our theological colleges, had a strong impression that his wife was not the most tender-hearted woman living, and it had even entered into his imagination that she was not capable of deep and self-sacrificing love. In fact, he had more than once let her see how his mind was bent in that respect, and be sure that it did not at all mend the matter.

One day the doctor had gone to a neighboring town, to visit a friend, on foot. On his way home, and when far from any human habitation, a sudden shower befell him,—aye, it quickly came to be a storm with lightning and thunder, vivid and crashing. The poor man was in a terrible plight. He was subject to rheumatism, acute and painful, and a thorough wetting by rain would be sure to bring it on. As a strange and ghostly luck would have it, at that moment the old sexton came up on his horse. He had to drive directly by the doctor's door. The good man hailed him and begged for a ride.

"I shall die if I get wet," he said.

"There ain't room up here, Doctor, for only one, and a plagued small seat at that; but if you're a mind to get inside, you can do so. Sakes alive! I'd rather ride in there strong and well than dead."

The doctor did not stop long to consider. Any port in such a storm as that, he thought, as he crept into the body of the hearse, and pulled the narrow door shut after him.

In due time—just before noon—the sexton pulled up at the doctor's door, and the good wife, who chanced to be standing at the front window, when she saw the ghostly equipage stop at her door-stone, went to see why it was.

"For mercy's sake, Mr. Frout, what've ye stopped here with that dreadful thing for?"

"I have the doctor—your husband—inside, Madam."

"Goodness me! Who'd 'a thought it! No more midnight tramping over them everlasting old Hebrews!—Sally!—Sally!"—suddenly turning, and directing her voice down into the cellar kitchen—"take that mutton out of the oven! Take it right out! It'll make dinners for to-morrow, and——"

She stopped suddenly, for just then she saw her husband crawling out from the hearse. She saw this much and then retired within the citadel. What transpired there we cannot say. It was better not to tell, perhaps, even if we knew.

Babies.

We always did dote on babies. In fact, we were a baby once ourselves. Or rather were babies, as we were twins. We called our Ma Louisiana, because she was run by a dual government. There are numerous kinds of babies. Some are white, and some are black. Not quite so white, and some are black. Then there are doll babies. Rag babies are the favorites of the Greenback party. Then, again, there are wax babies. We were wax babies, because our mother whacked us so much when we were small. But we are not proud. China babies do not wear pig-tails, or blue shirts, neither do they spin. There is a vast difference between China and Chinese babies. No one ever saw a Chinese baby. Perhaps our love for babies arises from the fact that we never owned a baby, or ever had a part interest in one. A mother always has a "part" interest in one when she tries to comb its hair. When we feel lonely, we just borrow our neighbor's baby to cheer us up. We don't feel lonely long, then. It is more busy than lonely. It is a study to sit and watch a twelve-month old (or young) baby enjoying itself. There is that utter naive and reckless abandon about them that we cannot but admire. There is no hesitation on their part in sneaking your light pants with molasses candy, or the pulling over of a malachite card-table. They are imbued with a sort of a don't-care-a-continental element that makes them attractive. We have seen a three hundred dollar watch ruined in two seconds by an investigating baby. Both the baby and the watch rolled down a flight of stairs. It was our cousin's baby, and we were watching it while the mother was sewing for the little heathen. We never took a job like that on tick again. Both the baby and the watch were sent to the dry-docks for repairs. A poor man once told us that when he was despondent, there was nothing buoyed (or girled) up his spirits so quickly as his wife's baby. We took his word for it. He couldn't give a note. Babies have many advantages—and disadvantages. They do not smoke nor drive fast horses. They do drive fast asleep away, however. There is nothing, as yet, invented that will more effectually rob "tired nature's sweet restorer" and a feather bed of their comforts than a choleric baby. We used to think we would like to be chief matron or pa-tron of a foundling asylum. We have changed our mind

now. A visit to the baby show fixed that. Babies, as a fiend in human form told us the other day, would make good farmers, as they are so used to sighs and wry faces while being cradled by nervous mothers. Some babies are born with a silver spoon in their mouths. Perhaps that is why some young men are so spooney. It is to one's advantage to be a baby during a riot. But when free tickets to the circus are being distributed it is very much otherwise. Were there no babies, the cheering spectacle of a ninety-five pound man pushing a coach full of twins and followed by a two hundred and forty-three pound woman, would no longer be seen on our streets. The soldiers stationed in cities would, like Othello, find their occupation gone, and would mourn for the nurses that were not. It is wise, therefore, that babies are. We trust they will continue to be. Some people despise babies. We don't, for we were taught to "despise not the day of small things." A baby does not last more than ten or twelve years, except in rare cases. On looking over the causes of death, weekly, in the city papers, we find there is one thing of which babies never die—old age. Hence, the wisdom of being a baby. Nearly everybody was a baby once. The only notable exceptions to this rule are Adam and Eve, old Bill Allen, the Colorado stone man, Joyce Heath, Cleopatra, Sergeant Bates and old man Bender. Your own baby is always a success, your neighbor's a failure.

What He Wanted.

The bolt on the back door had needed replacing for a long time, but it was only the other night that Mr. Throcton had the presence of mind to buy a new one and take it home. After supper he hunted up his tools, removed the old bolt, and measured the location for the new one. He must bore some new holes, and Mrs. Throcton heard him roaming around the kitchen and woodshed, slamming doors, pulling out drawers, and kicking furniture around. She went to the head of the stairs, and called down:—

"Richard, do you want anything?"

"Yes, I do!" he yelled back. "I want to know where in Texas that corkscrew is?"

"Corkscrew, Richard?"

"Yes, corkscrew! I've looked the house over, and can't find it!"

"Why, we never had one, Richard."

"Didn't eh? We've had a dozen of 'em in the last two years, and I bought one not four weeks ago. Its always the way when I want anything."

"But you must be out of your head, husband," she said, as she descended the stairs. "I've kept house seven years, and I never remember seeing you bring a corkscrew home."

"O, yes, I'm out of my head, I am?" he grumbled as he pulled out the sewing machine drawer and turned over its contents. "Perhaps I'd better go to the lunatic asylum right away!"

"Well, Richard, I know that I have never seen a corkscrew in this house."

"Then you are as blind as a owl in daylight, for I've bought five or six. The house is always upside down, any how, and I never can find anything!"

"The house is kept as well as any of your folks can keep one!" she retorted, growing red in the face.

"I'd like my mother here to show you a few things," he said, as he stretched his neck to look on the high shelf in the pantry.

"Perhaps she'd boil her spectacles with the potatoes again!" answered the wife.

"Do you know who you are talking to?" he yelled, as he jumped down.

"Yes, I do!"

"Well, you'll be going for York State, if you don't look out!"

"I'd like to see myself. When I go this house goes!"

"Look out Nancy!"

"I'm afraid of no man that lives."

"I'll leave you!"

"And I'll laugh to see you go!"