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WHOLE NO. 164

SELECT POETRY.

THE RAINY DAY.

BY H. W. LONGFELLOW.

The day is cold, and dark and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the moldering past,
The vision still clinging to the moldering past,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
As you and like them, my little ones,
My life is cold, and dark and dreary;
It rains, and the wind is never weary;
My thoughts still cling to the moldering past,
The vision still clinging to the moldering past,
But at every gust the dead leaves fall,
As you and like them, my little ones,
Some days must be dark and dreary.

SELECTED STORIES.

MY HUSBAND'S MOTHER.

It was the morning after Helen's wedding, and I stood in the large parlour, now so still and loneliness, where only the evening before merry words and light laughter had resounded. I began for the first time to realize that Helen had gone.

I threw myself on the sofa near the conservatory, the wind from the open window swept over my cheek as I pulled myself into shape, and assuming an easy position prepared to indulge in a favorite amusement of mine, day-dreaming.

My thoughts reverted to the distant past, and the scenes of my childhood came vividly before me.

I seemed to see my own quiet home, my gentle mother bending over her sewing, as she was wont to do from early morn to the late evening, and cheerful, ever busy until she sickened and died.

The death had! How well I remember it! Her last fond embrace and her last falling tears, as she lay on the lowly bed, her thin hand resting on the white counterpane, and the blue curtains blowing out gently into the room flanking her pale cheeks.

Good Mrs. Evans sat by the bedside weeping, but restrained her grief, in order to follow the directions of my mother's nursing maid. I only complained that my mother was to leave me, and crying to her maid, looking at her wretchedly.

Had I not known what she was to do I had never seen her so many times, and knew so little of her when she was!

I watched her as she breathed fainter and fainter, her eyes still the while fixed on me with a loving expression that I can never forget.

"Haven't you, Father," she breathed, "to those I commit my child?" Her eyes were fixed on me, and I felt that she was to make the grand mistake. Indeed, she had admirers by scores.

She sang and danced with the gay young gentlemen, played whist and talked politics, or what is more strictly true, listened to politics with the elderly ones, was the wisest and merriest in all parties of pleasure, the kindest in sickness, the most benevolent to the poor of all our city, and with all these charms married a poor minister, to Aunt McLean's infinite disgust.

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It required a good deal of strategy to win her consent, and not until visions of her daughter, as the wife of the Right Reverend Bishop Wilton, which I conjured up, as in the future, had my glowing representations, assumed in her mind all the vividness of reality, did she yield. It was now the day after the wedding, and Aunt McLean had acted the part of a living martyr, which she really was to perfection.

She was in her element, during the whole progress of a wedding, from the preparatory process of making garments of all sorts, shawls and sizes, to the last embrace in the presence of admiring friends as the bride left home for the wedding tour, on which our mother always insisted as quite necessary to the proper union of the parties as the words spoken by the person.

"Here am I, then, left alone," I half said, aloud, concluding my reverie; and, starting up, I searched my duster, which had fallen from my hand and began to wipe some stray particles of dust from the polished rosewood of the piano; then running my fingers over the keys, I began to sing a simple melody.

"Very well done, Sibly," said my aunt, who had entered the room unperceived, and now stood by my side. "But now come up to my chamber; I want to talk to you."

I followed her to her room, and took my usual seat, a low rocking chair by the window.

A few common place observations followed, on the wedding, and I watched for the subject on which she wished to speak. At last it came.

"Did you see Dr. Carter last night?"

"Dr. Carter," I mused. "Really, I saw so many strangers, I can hardly tell; but I dare say I did. I think I do remember a tall dark man who was introduced to me as Dr. Carter, something I didn't hear what you know people always mumble over an introduction, as if that was a very unimportant matter. Well, what of him?"

My aunt was inconsolable; in fact we were all overwhelmed with grief. Death we knew must come to all, but we had never dreamed that it would come so soon, so suddenly, and that my uncle, in the pride of manly vigor, must go down to the narrow grave.

We felt at first as people always do, that we could never be happy again. We mourned for my uncle sincerely, but yet two weeks before he passed before the old homestead was as gay as ever.

The death of my uncle had brought to light the fact that we were no longer wealthy. My aunt's large fortune had melted, no one knew how or where, but it had gone. We were poor.

I do not know what my aunt would have done, if straggling poverty had come upon us; for she realized nothing of its evils, and the announcement of the fact of her situation did not trouble her in the least; she was spared the painful task of endeavoring to satisfy the expensive habits with inadequate means; for an old uncle of hers settled upon her annuity for her lifetime.

Upon this, she lived just as ever, gratifying every present wish, with but one thought for the future.

The loss of her property seemed to have produced but one result, that of making her anxious to settle her daughters well in marriage, and very soon both Charlotte and Lizzie were disposed of. Both married wealthy men, both made "good matches," as they are called.

This was somewhat to our surprise; for Charlotte had nothing but her never failing good humor to attract; for she was positively plain; yet her husband was considered one of the "greatest catches" in town.

Lizzie was very talented, and had always treated the common herd as quite beneath her notice; but she married a silly fellow, with nothing but his good looks and his wealth to recommend him; what was stranger than all, she almost adored him, gave him credit for all the brilliant remarks that she made in conversation, and finally cheated herself and some others, her husband among the number, into the belief that he was a man of fine mind, who had never before been appreciated.

Maggi, Helen and I, being left soon found that our only chance of resting quietly depended on being at least, engaged.

Maggi declared that she had a decided vocation for the life of an old maid, and absorbed in her own pursuits, scarcely thought of marriage; and Mr. Carroll, a bachelor, of good fortune, presenting himself as a suitor, she resolutely refused to object all his attentions.

My aunt and he were equally determined that she should marry him; and after a long and vigorous siege, the fortress surrendered.

Maggi became Mrs. Carroll.

Helen and I had enjoyed tolerable quiet until the skirmish; but it was now our turn.

As Helen was the beauty of the family, my aunt had decided that she was to make the grand mistake. Indeed, she had admirers by scores.

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"That I am commissioned to offer you his heart and hand."

I was amazed. "To me?" at last I gasped.

"Yes my dear; it was a case of love at first sight." I burst into a fit of laughter, for suddenly all our conversation flashed upon me.

"My dear Auntie," said I, you must be joking. The only words that we exchanged were these:—

"I will pass over all the details of the wedding, thousands before me.

We were neither married in a care, nor on a mountain, in a picture gallery, nor under Niagara Falls.

All was commonplace in the extreme. The same responses were uttered by the bride and groom, the same remarks made by admiring friends.

Even poor and homely I was pronounced "a beautiful bride," and if I may credit the same authorities, "the groom appeared remarkably well," also.

Even my aunt's termination to the wedding festivities, a wedding tour was warranted, unless the journey of fifty miles by railroad, to my new home, may pass for that, for Dr. Carter could not leave his duties for pleasure.

I could hardly realize, as I was whirled along behind the snorting locomotive, that I had become a wife, and when I stole a glance at my husband, who sat by my side reading the *Scot's*, I certainly thought that he was far from duly appreciating the importance of his newly acquired position.

"Binghamton!" shouted the conductor, popping his head in at the car door and disappearing as suddenly.

My husband rose. "Here we are," said he, as he gathered up my carpet bag, shawl and veil, and led the way to the depot.

Away whizzed the panting steam-engine, and I stood in the platform by the side of the baggage. Presently the Doctor led me to a carriage, and a few moments' ride brought us to my new home.

I had pictured to myself a cottage embowered in trees, situated on a sloping hill, as my future home; but no! a stately brick home stared me in the face, and so there was an end to my day dreams of love in a cottage.

I dare say I looked disappointed, for I felt so on entering the parlors, where nothing was wanting that money could procure.

"Does it please you?" asked my husband.

"Oh yes!" I replied, though I told a bit of a story; then, in a lower tone, I added "that I always thought physicians were poor."

Dr. Carter laughed and assured me that he had not taken me from a good home without having the means of supplying an equally good one in its place.

So there was an end to a second of my day dreams, that of working for his sake, of sacrificing my tastes that I might minister to his, in short, of becoming a heroína in some way, I hardly knew how.

I pleaded fatigue and went to my room.

The air of comfort that it wore provoked me, and I shed tears as my future prospects rose before me.

I was to settle down as a respectable married woman, nothing more.

I, who had imagined that my wedding day was to usher in a series of unparalleled trials and exertions, through which I was to pass triumphantly, "winning golden opinions from all sorts of people."

There had been no romance in my engagement, there was none in store for me.

But these heart-rending reflections were interrupted by steps on the stair-case.

I hastily washed my eyes, and tried to look cheerful when my husband came in, and really I was astonished to find how soon I regained my composure, and how soon I forgot in his conversation on books and authors as he showed me his extensive and well arranged library, the disagreeable fact that he was rich.

He had just taken down a copy of Young's *Night Thoughts*, which I hastily threw aside, declaring "that I hated Young, that there was not a word of poetry in his whole book, and that I would give more for three of Byron's poorest lines than for four hundred volumes of such terribly prosaic thoughts put into the blankets of blank verse," to all of which he was listening with a smile, "when the rustle of a silk dress startled us both."

My husband sprang from my side and presented me to the stately lady, his mother.

He had often spoke of his mother, and I had imagined that she would meet me at the door, clasp me in her warm embrace, calling me her child, and praying for my happiness.

I had often pictured to myself a very pretty tableau of this kind, but as I saw nothing of her on my arrival, I had concluded that she was absent.

She had, I judged from her appearance, spent the time which had elapsed in making her toilette, and I should have ventured to embrace Pompey's pillar as to clasp that stately dame in my arms.

In fact she seemed as far from expecting any such demonstration. I took her offered hand, and replied to her comments on the weather in as polite and frigid a tone as she herself used.

I knew at once that whatsoever her son might have done, she was far from falling in love with me at first sight, and I was equally sure that her feelings towards her would not come under the head of unrequited affection.

Tea was soon announced, and as if I were a guest, she led the way to the tea table, gave me a seat by the side of my husband, and took her place at the head of the table.

My cheeks flushed a little at this summary mode of disposing of me and my new dignity.

I never was ambitious of the duties of presiding officer at any post, particularly of the onerous ones devolving on the occupant of the post of honor at table, and would most willingly have resigned in favor of Madam Carter, had I the empty distinction of an abdicator, even if it were a forced one offered me. I said nothing.

But, underneath all my mother-in-law's scrupulous politeness towards me, I discovered the fact that she was jealous of me, and determined to yield nothing to me.

"If this is a declaration of war, I am ready," thought I, as I took very quietly my cup of tea.

As weeks passed, I found that her tactics consisted principally in assuming a patronizing manner towards me.

She very kindly assumed the task of entertaining the ladies who called on me, and on their departure, informed me to whom I should pay the greatest attention.

One lady, in particular, she had warned me against, and, though not very favorably impressed by Mrs. Bryan on her first visit, as I saw it annoyed Madam Carter, I called on her quite soon.

She returned my visit speedily. I soon found that she sung well, and very readily complied with her request that we should learn duties together. So that we soon struck up quite an intimacy.

My husband's time was very much occupied, and he gave himself no concern whatever about my acquaintances. This did not please me. In fact I should have infinitely preferred the most rigid surveillance to the cool indifference which he displayed.

I began to imagine that he did not love me and determined to prove him.

I had imagined that where love existed there must be perfect sympathy between husband and wife, in all their varying moods, but when I was moodily he took no notice of it, when I was gay, he smiled indeed, but that was all; in fact, he was always the same calm, cheerful and practical, and I therefore drew the very logical conclusion from my premises that he did not love me.

"Will nothing rouse him?" I asked myself, and my evil genius replied: "If you could only make him jealous, and I resolved to try the experiment."

Opportunity was not long wanting.

Mr. Canning, a brother of Mrs. Bryan, came to pay his sister a visit. She introduced him at once to me, and I found him both handsome, talented and agreeable; he appeared to find me equally interesting, and began to show me considerable attention.

I enlarged on his attractions both of mind and person, to my husband, he only yawned in reply; but my mother-in-law looked on his frequent visits with far different eyes.

Mr. Canning was not slow to perceive Madam Carter's dislike for him, or my dislike to her, and though never ungentlemanly, it was evident that he would not pay her that marked deference which she demanded of her acquaintance.

She had not as yet expressed her disapprobation of Mr. Canning, as, in fact, she could bring nothing positive against him.

One night, however, when he had been at a party where Mr. Canning had been as close an attendant as my shadow, my husband informed me that he wished me to be less intimate both with Mrs. Bryan and her brother.

I replied, "that I found them both agreeable and saw no reason for pursuing the course he recommended."

"They are extremely disagreeable to my mother," said my husband. "They are extremely agreeable to your wife," retorted I.

"My mother declares that she will not go into the room when they visit here," said he.

"A very sensible resolution on your mother's part," was my reply. "She has therefore been particularly careful to be present on such occasions."

"Do you mean to say, then, that you persist in retaining these people as intimate friends, when it is contrary to the wishes of your family?"

"Say rather to the wishes of your mother, and I reply yes. I recognize no right that she has to dictate from mere caprice, who shall be my associates."

"But it is no mere whim, Sibly. Mrs. Bryan has always been accused of improprieties of conduct to say the least, and her brother is said to be really unprincipled."

"Nonsense," retorted I; "some sewing circle gossip of a few tattling old ladies. I shall not give up my friends for such baseless rumors."

"I understand you to say, then, decidedly, that you intend to pursue your own course, to cling to those people?"

"Place your request to give them up on its true ground, I solemnly, and I might answer differently."

"Jealously!" repeated my husband in a most contemptuous tone. "So you have imagined me jealous. It is no high compliment, when the cause of it too, is supposed to be a brainless puppy, like Canning. No, Sibly, you are much mistaken. It is my regard for my wife that leads me to warn her against two unprincipled persons."

"Say in compliance with your mother's will, I replied, and you will tell the truth."

"As you will," he answered coolly; "but I tell you I will be obeyed. If you cannot comply with a request, obey a command. Drop these people at once and forever."

"Is your mother to be mistress here, or am I?" I exclaimed in a fit of ungovernable passion.

"She has domineered over me till I can bear it no longer. We hate each other. We cannot breathe under the same roof; either she or I must go from it."

"And can you ask me, Sibly, to warn my mother from her husband's house?"

There was no need of words then, all was forgotten. He could not bear to have me to leave his side, and I was happy nowhere else.

I had become very humble, for I bowed myself to my mother-in-law. Was she not his mother?

My husband slowly recovered, and when I would have spoken of the past, and begged his forgiveness, he replied:

"Forgive me too, Sibly, for my severity. We have both suffered much, but we loved much and we have learned a great lesson, that of mutual forbearance."

He opened his eyes, fixed them on me with a look of love, sprang forward, and fell back fainting.

"Woman! you have killed him!" shrieked his mother.

But it was not so. The shock had indeed been a great one, but he soon recovered his consciousness.

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ALFRED SUMMERSON!
OR THE
YOUNG COLLEGIAN'S PROBATION.

BY M. V. ST. LEON.

"I've come to bid you good-by, Jessie, and it will be the best thing I've done this three years!"

The speaker was a youth of about seventeen, fine looking, and spirited, but with a pair of large grey eyes that plainly showed their owner's love of mischief but was a terrible hindrance to a sober, steady course of improvement. The young girl addressed looked up in surprise at the sudden entrance and abrupt speech of the animated speaker, and a shade of amazement and reproach was in her eyes as she slowly replied:

"The best thing you have done for three years is bid me good-by, Alfred?"

"There, now! I didn't mean anything to punish myself!"

"You have a most odd and singular way of telling your intentions, certainly, and no doubt quite above my powers of comprehension; as I cannot see in what way your rushing into the room with the announcement that the best thing you've done in three years is to bid me good-by can be rendered synonymous with 'I'm going to punish myself.'"

"There don't get vexed, Jessie. I beg your pardon, but the truth is, I have been reflecting ever since I left home to come and see you, on a plain, and forgetting you had not been following the same train of thought, I put 'finis' where 'preface' should have been. But I'll do right at last. You know, Jessie, I'm not the readiest student that ever saw the inside walls of a college. Now the fact is, every new term I resolve to conduct myself in such a manner that the 'big wig' shall rise up in wonder and astonishment, to call down blessings on Alfred Summerston's head. Well, to be sure, I generally succeed, but not in the way exactly I had intended, and in consequence, instead of being praised for my good intentions, and my 'fall from grace' being made a matter of condolence, I am well thrashed (by word of mouth) for consequences it was impossible to foresee, and for which Dame Fortune, and I, was to blame."

"Father looks black, mother disconsolate, Kate is cross, and my little Jessie, here, is nearly drowned in tears. Now I think this state of affairs has lasted long enough, so I'm going to turn over a new leaf. Oh, yes! it's the truth, and you need not look so despairingly. I really believe you think that expression signifies 'I'm going to fight, drink, insult the president, and get expelled'; but indeed Jessie you are mistaken, and now I'll tell you something that will prove I'm in earnest. I ain't going to see you again till one year of trial has proved me an altered fellow. There, now, you know it all," throughout the first of this speech Jessie had listened half inattentively, but at its conclusion the tears started into her eyes as she said:

"But, Alfred, do you think that privation will help you any? Will it not lose all power after a very short time, and shall I effect as much by my absence as by my presence, as small as even that influence has been upon you?"

"No, Jessie, I don't think you or I know how great a pleasure your society is to me; and I'm sure if I know I cannot see you until I have earned the right, and that it depends solely on myself, it will be a short year before we meet again. I have told Kate of my resolutions, and she laughed at me, saying, 'we should have a worse report of me than ever; she had noticed it was the inevitable accomplishment to all unusually good resolutions of mine for me to leave you; keep up a good heart and see what a year will bring. Good-by, good-by,'—and in another instant he was gone.

Alfred Summerston was the son of a gentleman of fortune and family. Generous, warm-hearted, quick-witted, with a source of amusement that was inexhaustible, good sense, and faculty for all he undertook, there was nothing to prevent his being the best of scholars, except that unconquerable love of fun, and the knowledge that he could make up lost time by a little extra application; but most unfortunately this little extra application never was put in practice, and in consequence his friends began to fear for his future fate.

Jessie Grey was the only child of a widowed mother, and the darling of every one. Gentle and affectionate, she loved the wild youth who had just left her, with her whole heart, but her mother dreaded to allow the young people to