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SELECT POETRY.

THE TALL GENTLEMAN'S APOLOGY.

BY ROBERT BELL.

Unbroid me not, I never swore
Eternal love to thee;
For thou art only five feet high,
And I am six feet three.
I wonder, dear, how you supposed
That I could look so low;
There's many a one can tie a knot
Who cannot fix a bean.

Besides, you must confess, my love,
The bairn's scarcely fair,
Never could we make a match,
Though we might make a pair;
Marie, I know, makes one of two,
But here's the horrid bore,
My friend's declare if you are one,
That I at least am four.

Tis true the moralists have said,
That love has no eyes,
But why should all my sighs be heaved,
For one who has no size?
And on our wedding day, I'm sure,
I'd leave you in the lurch,
For you never saw a steeple, dear,
In the inside of a church.

Tis usual for a wife to take
Her husband by the ear,
But pray excuse me should I hint
A sort of fond alarm,
That when I offered you my arm,
T'cappiness to beg,
Your highest efforts, dear, would be
To take me by the leg.

I do admit I wear a glass,
Because my sight's not good;
But were I always quizzing you,
It might be deemed rude;
And though I use a concave lens,
By all the gods, I hope,
My wife will ne'er look up to me
Through a Herculean telescope.

Then fare-thee-well, my gentle one,
I ask no parting kiss—
I must not break my back to gain
So exquisite a bliss;
Nor will I weep lest I should hurt
So delicate a flower—
The tears that fall from such a height,
Would be a thunder shower.

Farewell and pray don't throw yourself
In a basin or a tub,
For that would be a sore disgrace
To all the six feet club;
But if you ever love again,
Love on a snerf plan—
For why extend to six feet three,
The life that's but a span?

SELECTED STORY.

BORROWING TROUBLE.

BY MRS. S. P. DOUGHTY.

"The children are very late this afternoon," exclaimed Mrs. Ashby, "as she suddenly arose from her work and looked anxiously from the window."

"Only ten minutes past the usual time, Lucy," replied her sister, to whom the remark was addressed.

"But they are not in sight, Mary, and I care see for a long distance in the direction of the school house. I hope no accident has befallen them."

"No danger of that, Lucy. It is a direct road, and Willie is a brave lad, and well able to protect both himself and his sister."

"Still there are a thousand things which might happen to them. Willie is very thoughtful. I cannot help feeling anxious at their delay."

Mrs. Ashby resumed her sewing; but it was with a troubled countenance, and in a few moments she again threw it aside and returned to her station at the window.

"Twenty minutes pass the time," she pressed, "This will never answer. I must go to meet them, Mary."

"You are not well enough, Lucy. Think how ill you were yesterday, and you are still feeble. If you are really anxious concerning the children, I will go myself, although I doubt not they will be here directly."

"You do not know a mother's heart, Mary. I must go at once. They may have been run over by some passing vehicle."

This idea, although an exceedingly improbable one, seemed like reality the moment it entered Mrs. Ashby's imagination; and hastily throwing on her hat and shawl, she walked with rapid steps towards the school house. Contrary to her expectation, she did not meet the children on the way; but as she came in sight of the little seminary of learning, a noisy group issued from it, among whom she soon recognized her two darlings. They came bounding toward her with joyful shouts of welcome.

"And why were you kept in so late?" asked the relieved mother, as soon as her voice could be heard.

"Mother, I forgot to tell you," replied Willie, "that school begins an hour later in the afternoon than it did, and so we cannot come home so early as we used to. But it will give us more time to eat our dinners, and I shall like that better."

A rapid walk of half a mile in Mrs. Ashby's present state of health, was quite too much for her. It was with great difficulty that she retraced her steps, and upon reaching home she

was quite unable to sit up for the rest of the evening.

Sister Mary looked concerned, and wished she could have persuaded her to have remained at home; and her husband was evidently disappointed that she was not able to meet him at the tea-table, and said, with some vexation of spirit, that he "wished Lucy would give up borrowing trouble. It would come fast enough without looking for it." But Lucy would not give it up. It was a part of her very nature. Blessed with a comfortable home, a kind husband, intelligent and well-disposed children, and being herself of an affectionate and amiable disposition, there seemed nothing wanting to ensure her happiness.

But the constant inclination to borrow trouble was a dark cloud upon her clear sky. Perhaps Mrs. Ashby had not read the fable of the pendulum, or if she had, she must have passed over the moral with little attention, as we ourselves have too often done in by-gone days. She had surely never learned that one moment must not be burdened with the trials of the next. Her spirit would often faint from anticipation of the duties, the labors, the trials to temper and patience, which may be comprised in a single day. But this is unjustly laying the weight of many thousand moments upon one. "One moment comes laden with its own little burdens, and is succeeded by another no heavier than the last; if one could be borne, so can another and another."

But as we have said above, Mrs. Ashby lived not in the present, but in the future. Trifles light as air,—imperceptible to human vision,—magnified themselves in the distance, and awakened dread and consternation. Her sister, who had rested with her since her marriage, was of a far more hopeful and jocund temperament, and her cheerfulness frequently diffused sunshine throughout the little family, when but for her, all would have been wrapped in clouds.

Let us forget the restraints of ceremony, and invite ourselves to pass a social day with Mrs. Ashby, introducing ourselves even into her sleeping room at an early hour one bright September morning. The blind had been left partially open the evening previous, and the light of the morning sun streamed somewhat brightly into the pleasant apartment.

Awaking suddenly from her morning dreams, Mrs. Ashby uttered an exhalation of dismay, and shaking her still sleeping husband, endeavored to arouse him by representations of the lateness of the hour.

"No later than usual, I think, Lucy," was his quiet reply, as he proceeded to rise in a very leisurely manner.

"No later! Why, William, do you not see the sun? We must be half an hour behind the time, and you know you have important business to attend to this morning, and must leave early."

"Very true; but I think we are in time. Look at the watch."

"The watch has run down. I will go to the clock when I have finished dressing. But do hurry, William, for I assure you I am right."

Mrs. Ashby's toilet was but half completed when she became alarmed lest the girl should have overslept herself, and that no breakfast would await them.

"No fear of that," replied her husband. "Ann is always up bright and early. Breakfast will be on the table the moment we are ready for it."

"I hope so; but it is wonderfully still down stairs. And sister Mary, can she be sleeping still? She generally comes to assist me with the children, but they are not awake yet."

"All of which proves that I am right in supposing it to be no later than usual," remarked Mrs. Ashby, smilingly.

"We shall see. You had better lose no time," was the reply.

Before Mrs. Ashby was quite dressed, one of the younger children awoke and claimed her attention, and she could not run down to look at the clock, as she intended.

For the next half hour she was constantly employed, and constantly in a state of nervous agitation lest they were too late. At the end of that time, her sister tapped at the door, and obeyed the summons to "come in."

"The children dressed already!" exclaimed she. "You are smart this morning, Lucy. Only half-past six yet."

"Only half-past six! And I have hurried my life out for nothing. William wanted to have breakfast at seven, precisely, and I was so afraid we should be late. I declare I am all in a tremble!"

"Lie down then for a few minutes, and I will take the babies down stairs."

"O, no, I must see if Willie and Clara are ready. I neglected to attend to their morning lessons yesterday afternoon, and I fear they will not be prepared for school."

"I saw the children studying while you were engaged with your company," replied her sister, as she left the room with the little ones.

"It does not do much good for them to study unless they have some one to direct them," thought Mrs. Ashby, as she passed hastily to Willie's room. "I do hope they will not be prepared for school."

"They are good children," she said to herself. "The thought was a comforting one; but new anxieties were awakened by a glance into the kitchen. Ann was just slicing the ham.

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"Ham not broiled yet? Why, Ann, did I not tell you that Mr. Ashby wanted his breakfast earlier than usual?"

"Yes, ma'am. You bade me have it ready at seven o'clock. It wants a quarter yet."

"You will be late, Ann."

"Not a minute ma'am. Trust me for that?"

"Precisely as the old wives say, when the nicely broiled ham and the dish of smoking hominy, and the family gathered around the table, Nothing had gone wrong. All was as it should be. And yet poor Mrs. Ashby was actually unfeigned for the duties of the day by the nervous anxiety which she had indulged, lest they should not be punctual to the appointed hour. A cloud was upon the brow which should have worn the serene cheerfulness of a happy wife and mother, and the meal was ended, it had spread itself more or less over the little circle, and a gloom, which it would have been difficult to account, was felt by all. Breakfast over, lessons well recited, and children sent to school, Mrs. Ashby with a mind much relieved, took her accustomed seat in the nursery; and while busily with her needle, superintended the sports of the two little ones who remained at home.

Her sister joined her after performing some domestic duties which devolved upon her.

For a while all was cheerfulness and contentment; but anxiety was soon awakened by the flushed countenance of the youngest child, as she came to her mother's side, and said, appealingly, "Put away work, mamma, and take little Mammy. Sick, mama, sick."

"My darling child," exclaimed the alarmed mother, as she hastily took the little one in her arms. "What can be the matter with her, Lucy? See how feverish she looks."

"Her face is flushed, but her skin is cool," replied her sister. "I do not believe she is much sick. She has been running and jumping too long while we were busy talking, and now she needs rest."

"But I am afraid of scarlet fever, Mary. There have been two cases in the neighborhood lately. It is a dreadful disease," and Mrs. Ashby shuddered as she spoke, as if she already held her child a victim to it.

"Do not think of it, Lucy. There is not the slightest symptom of that complaint. Your agitation distresses the child. Be calm, and she will soon fall asleep."

Mrs. Ashby made an effort to follow her sister's advice, and the little pet was soon sleeping quietly in her cradle. The red spot had faded from her cheek, but even this could not a lay her off to sleep.

"But I am afraid of scarlet fever, Mary. There have been two cases in the neighborhood lately. It is a dreadful disease," and Mrs. Ashby shuddered as she spoke, as if she already held her child a victim to it.

"He has indeed, ma'am," replied the woman, looking up and entreating to her visitors; "but we have reason to be thankful that his life is spared. He is in great pain this afternoon, but the doctor said we must expect this."

"How did he meet with this misfortune?" asked Mary, advancing to her sister's side, and looking compassionately at the face of the poor sufferer.

"He is a bank-digger, ma'am, and while busy at his work three days since, the earth caved in, and a large mass of stones and rubbish fell upon him. One leg is broken, and his whole body is dreadfully cut and bruised. But thank God, the doctor says he will do well. It is strong aid indeed he will have against the disease."

"Did you depend entirely upon his daily labor for support, my good woman; or have you something to bid which will help you now that he is ill?"

"Not a cent, ma'am. John is a sober, industrious man, and as kind a husband and father as ever lived in the world. But we have seen hard times, and have had a good deal of sickness, which has hindered our laying by anything for a cloudy day. But God will provide. And it is not a great blessing that there are yet many weeks before the cold weather. He will be on his feet again before then. And as soon as he is a little better, so that I can leave him with the children, I can find a bit of work for myself, which will keep the food in our mouths."

"I am glad that you can look on the bright side," said Mrs. Ashby, thoughtfully. "But it may be many weeks before your husband gets about again, and even then he may be a cripple."

"No fear of that, I trust, ma'am. I always try to look up when misfortunes come upon us. It is the only way to get along; and besides, it seems like distrusting Providence to be too anxious and fretful like."

"We must do the best we can to help ourselves, and then be content with what comes."

"Your case has been brought before the benevolent society, and something will doubtless be done for your relief."

"A great deal has been done already, ma'am. The doctor has offered his services free of charge, and several kind ladies have sent provisions of different kinds, which will last us to two weeks, and by that time things may look brighter."

"We will hope so, at least," said Mary, coming to her sister's relief, for Mrs. Ashby was almost overwhelmed by the determined hopefulness of the woman, which formed a strong contrast to her own anxious temperament.

Placing a dollar in her hand, and promising to see her again soon, the sisters left the cottage. At the door they stopped to speak to the children, who were playing happily with some little blocks which they had collected from a new building near to them.

"Circumstances have changed since then, and I doubt not we will be quite contented to see me wear the old hat. There are many who would be thankful to have one as good."

"Undoubtedly, and you told me this morning that you intended bestowing it upon poor Mrs. Walton, who I am sure would bless you for your kindness."

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