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INCONSTANT.

Excitant! Oh, my God! Excitant! When a slight thought of thee sends all my shivering blood back on my shivering blood.

Excitant! When to feel That thou hast loved me—will love to the last— I fear from life—the future and the past.

Excitant! When to sleep And dream that thou art near me, is to learn, much of love that I have never known.

Excitant! Ah, too true; Turned from the rightful shelter of thy breast, My tired heart flutters through the air, The chaotic world—a bird without a nest.

Excitant! To the crowd, Through which I roam, as to the skies above The flock summer's cloud; Not to thee—oh, not to thee, dear love!

Excitant! May be false to all On earth, heaven, and every tender tie Which seems to hold me in this life.

Excitant! True to God's own truth, My steadfast heart turns backward, evermore, To the sweet time when I was a child, Whose golden tide bears such a barren shore.

Excitant! Not my own The hand which guides this wall between our lives, On its shadowy side To perch the sparrow, the flower of love survives.

Excitant! God knows that I would give All other joys, the sweetest and the best, For one short hour to live Close to thy heart, in comfort and thy rest!

Excitant! But life is not all that; The sunlight glows in many a hidden slope, The dove shall find its ark, The peaceful refuge and of patient hope.

Excitant! Yet shall be possessed Of woman's need, small world set apart— Love, protection, rest, And children's voices sing thro' my heart.

Excitant! By God's will I will be A faithful mother and a tender wife— Perhaps even more, that I may be, Hath chastened the best glory from my life.

Excitant! But sacred to this love One small sweet chamber of my heart shall be, Not to all sweet overtures, Not to the heart's desire to love and thee.

Excitant! And sometimes when my lips Are to my first-born's clinging clasp and long, Greeting with his blue eyes, It is his sweetly smiling face that I will see.

Excitant! For an instant, wild With precious pain, I put the truth aside, And dream it is thy child, That I am fondling with such tender pride!

Excitant! And when another's hand Sleeps on thy cheek, if it should ever seem To be my own, I know, Oh, saying, hold it closer, for the dream.

Excitant! God will give the dawn, To the heart that is ever swept so dry, To seek, an ocean clean, Thank him, death comes at last—and so good by!

THE TACHYPOMP.

[From Scribner's for March.]

There was nothing mysterious about Professor Surd's dislike for me. I was the poor mathematician in an exceptionally mathematical class. The old gentleman sought the lecture room every morning with eagerness, and left reluctantly.

So affairs went on swimmingly between the professor of mathematics and the junior class at Poly University. In every man of the seventy the sage saw the logarithm of a possible La Place, of a Sturm, or a Newton. It was a delightful task for him to lead them through the pleasant valleys of conic sections, and beside the still waters of the integral calculus.

But I was a disturbing element, a perplexing unknown quantity, which had somehow crept into the work and which seriously threatened to impair the accuracy of his calculations. It was a touchy subject to him, and he was not to be trifled with. He looked upon me with all the horror which an unalgebraic nature could inspire.

For Furnace Second there were no invitations to Professor Surd's house. Seventy of the class supped in delegations around the periphery of the professor's tea-table. The seventy-first knew nothing of the chariot of that perfect ellipse, with its twin bunches of foci, and its germinous in gorgeous precision at the two foci.

This, unfortunately enough, was no trifling deprivation. Not that I longed especially for segments of Mrs. Surd's specially celebrated lemon pie; not that the spectral demons of her excellent preserving had any allurements; not even that I yearned to hear the professor's jocose table talk about bionomics, and chatty illustrations of abstruse paradoxes.

The explanation is far different. Professor Surd had a daughter. Twenty years before he made a proposition to the present Mrs. Surd. He added a little corollary to his proposition, not long after. The corollary was a girl.

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of tutor and pupil; perhaps the failure is alone due to my own unmitigated stupidity. Rivarol had hung about the skirts of the University for several years; supplying his few wants by writing for scientific journals, or by giving assistance to students who, like myself, were characterized by a plethora of purse and a paucity of ideas.

We are not long discovering that even this eccentric genius could not transplant brains into my deficient skull. I gave over the struggle in despair. My unhappy year dragged its slow length around, gloomy, yet it was brightened only by occasional interviews with Abscessa, the Abbie of my thoughts and dreams.

Commencement day was coming on apace. I was soon to go forth, with the rest of my class, to astonish and delight a world of ignorant professors, and to avoid me more than ever. Nothing but the conventionalities, I think, kept him from shaping his treatment of me on the basis of unceasing disgust.

At last, in the very recklessness of despair, I resolved to see him, plead with him, and beg for a chance, and risk all my fortunes on one desperate chance. I wrote him a somewhat defiant letter, stating my aspirations, and as I flattered myself, shrewdly giving him a wedge to get over the first shock of horrified surprise.

Then I was to call and learn my fate. During the week of suspense I nearly worried myself into a nervous prostration, and then, when I was nearly crazy, bold, and then sner despair. On Friday evening, when I presented myself at the professor's door I was such a haggard, sleepy, dragged out spectre that even Miss Jacobsa, the harsh favored maiden sister of the Surds, admitted me with compassionate regard and suggested pennyroyal tea.

Professor Surd was at a Faculty meeting. Wouldn't I wait? Yes, till all was blue, if need be. Abscessa had gone to Wheelborough to visit a school friend. The aged maiden loved I would make myself comfortable, and do my best to get through the hours which knew Jocesta's daily walk.

Comfortable! But I settled myself in a great uneasy chair, and waited with the contradictory spirit common to such junctures, dreading every step lest it should herald the man whom, of all men, I wished to see.

At length Professor Surd came in. He sat down in the dusk opposite me, and I thought his eyes glinted with malignant pleasure as he said, abruptly: "You young man, you think you are a fit subject for my attention."

"I stammered some inanity about making up in affection what I lacked in merit; about my expectations, family, and the like. He quickly interrupted me. "You misapprehend me, sir. Your nature is destitute of those mathematical perceptions and acquirements which are necessary for the study of mathematics."

"What are they?" cried I, eagerly enough. "Only name them, of the profundity of the conics, and I think you expressed a desire to know more of that ingenious question. You shall have the opportunity. Sit down some day, when you have nothing else to do, and discover the principle of infinite speed; I mean the law of motion, as it is called in the books."

"I could stand his mocking no longer. I stumbled mechanically out of the room, and out of the house. I even forgot my hat and gloves. For an hour I walked in the moonlight, and finally I succeeded to a more hopeful frame of mind. This was due to my ignorance of mathematics. Had I understood the real meaning of what he asked, I should have been utterly despondent."

Excitant! My tutor's name was Jean Marie Rivarol. He was a unique Alsatian; though Gallic in name, he was a Frenchman, by education a German. His age was thirty; his profession, omniscience; the wolf at his door, poverty; the skeleton in his closet, a consuming but unrequited passion.

Excitant! He touched a spring somewhere, and the petty-hub adjusted, relaxed its horrid hold. I placed myself gingerly in a plain, case bottomed, rocking chair, which Rivarol assured me was a safe location.

"That seat," he said, "is an arrangement upon which I much felicitate myself. It is the work of my own hands. I have saved me a vast deal of annoyance. I consign to its embraces the friends who bore, and the visitors who exasperate me. But it is never so useful as when terrifying some tradesman with an insignificant account. Hence the pet name which I have facetiously given it. They are invariably too glad to purchase release at the price of the bill received. Do you well apprehend the idea?"

While the Alsatian diluted his glass of aqua fortis, shook into it an infusion of bitters, and tossed off the bumper with the rest of his class, I took time to look around the gloomy apartment. The four corners of the room were occupied respectively by a turning lathe, a Blumkopf coil, a small steam engine, and an orrery in stately motion. Tables, shelves, chairs and floor supported an odd aggregation of tools, reprints, chemicals, and apparatus of unknown uses.

"He said," he said, "I will not attempt to conceal that upon the maiden Jocesta my maiden heart has been bestowed. I give me your hand, my nephew in fiction, and my hand in fact. Rivarol dashed away not a discreditable tear, and resumed: "My only hope lies in the discovery of perpetual motion. It will give me the fame, the wealth, can Jocesta refuse these? If she can, there is only the trap door under Kerguelen's Land!"

"At another time," he said: "I am at present to say, that it is something upon the principle of a woman's tongue. But you see now why we must turn to the alternative condition of infinite speed. There are several ways in which this may be accomplished, theoretically. By the lever for instance. Imagine a lever with a very long and a very short arm. Apply power to the shorter arm which will move it with great velocity. The end of the long arm will move with a velocity which is equal to the rate of a mile a minute. Well, the train being drawn up with the latter end of the arm resting against a lofty bumping-post at the professor. We must seek another solution. Jean Marie will meditate. Come, let us see the mechanism of the tachypomp."

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