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ENTOILED.

BY GEORGE DOUGLAS.

Avant etre desillusione.

Where, my sweet enemy, lies your power
To move men's wills?
You are a deadly perfumed flower
That shines and kills.
Your face is brighter than a diamond's splendor
Or any jewel,
Swift-eyed, yet and seeming tender,
Demure and cruel.

Thrown back in warm and fragrant tresses
Your mingling hair
Falls from a brow too chaste for love's caresses;
Too chaste and fair.
Your lips blushed deeper than the roses;
Your murmuring words
Are better than the breath of violet closes,
Or songs of birds.

I watch you, love; my heart is trembling
To find you there.
So strangely self-same, undissembling,
So fair, so fair!
Calmer than death; a white-faced statue.
How can I move you?
I love you, darling, wondering at you,
Hate you and love you.

Let go, my soul, and let us hasten
Far from your spell;
Those bonds you bind me with unfasten
While all is well!
Why do you glisten with such beauty,
So strange and fateful,
While walking coldly down the paths of duty
You seem so hateful?

I think of treason, plot, defiance;
Your vivid presence
Comes on and holds me with magic science
That never lessens.
You are so subtle, so magnetic,
I thrill and crave
Servile beneath you and ecstatic,
Like a drugged slave.

Eyes swift like lode stars in clear winter weather,
Lids lashed and curled,
Oh! face more fair than the world's, together,
Than all the world.
Why will your glory ever pursue me
With pleasant pain,
Bright eyes that kill me with your burning through me,
And quicken me again!

I ask not love, nor love's endearment,
But only this:
To kiss the hem of my lady's garment
With a soul's whole kiss,
To have you near me, waking, sleeping,
Living and dead;
To give my heart, sweetheart, into your keeping,
And keep you in its stead.

—The Aldine.

A QUEEN OF SPADES.

BY M. W. HAZELTINE.

I.

It was a vexatious chance which kept me from New York when the Tyrrells arrived, for I thereby missed Bob Lyon, who came home in the same steamer.

A decent deference to the claims of kindred would have worded that sentence otherwise, and, indeed I am fond of Aunt Tyrrell, while Clara—but let that go. I was but a stripling, look you, grappling latin syntax, and she just learning to make eyes and prattle French, and, no doubt, the verb we conjugated in those languages described a callow, temperate yearning quite different to the peremptory passion for which you, madam (who inspire it), have a Saxon name.

But Bob—or Robin, as we liked to call him, recognizing, in a rude, unconscious, way, the sturdy honesty and simplicity of the lad—had laid hold of some college mates (he was no general lover) with a grasp which absence, possibly, and the slow alternative of time, but nothing else, would loosen. Our early friendships strike their rootlets deep, and a good many years must pass, and some rich, loamy natures be parched to thin arid soils before the crop of household interests quite strangles those hardy growths.

Well, I was not there to seize the old boy's hand, march him off to my own snuggery, and laugh with him over the vernal days when he daubed my class-books with nymphs and warriors, and revealed his dream of becoming a great painter. These diversions the young artist lost, but he did not want for hospitality during the week he tarried in Manhattan.

"Of course you come with us, Mr. Lyon, to Gramercy park. I don't know how we shall requite you all you did for us in London—poor, unprotected creatures that we were—and on the voyage, too. You must not think of going to hotels. So that is settled."

Thus did Aunt Tyrrell prescribe the movements of my tractable friend, and though Clara said not a word, why should her eyes brighten if she disapproved the suggestion.

It is true, Robin meekly protested that he ought to go to his people in the country, but it was clear a studio had first to be chosen, and some preparation made for the autumn's campaign, which he admitted might require a day or two. You are aware, however, that the selection of a studio, embracing grave questions of light, frontage, seclusion, and immunity from noise, not to speak of the traditions and associations which evolve an æsthetic atmosphere, is a business not lightly dispatched. The ladies, too, were sincerely anxious to attest their gratitude for the patient guidance which had laid open the art treasures of Britain, from Sir Richard Wallace's thesaurus even to those unfinished masterpieces (yet sacred from the vulgar eye) of embryo academicians, and were fain, by way of quittance, to show their guest those unrivaled collections which affluence and enlightened connoisseurship have accumulated in this island. And it may be that one of his companions in that edifying round could go back further than those London days, and recall long rambles in Florentine galleries, when a few, plain, thoughtful words had provoked a wistful sympathy and quickened a girlish mind to unaffected zest.

It is scarcely possible to know less, in a worldly sense, of a young gentleman, whom one chance or another has repeatedly thrown in your society, than the Tyrrells knew of Mr. Lyon. Concerning his outward circumstances and personal history, beyond the fact that he was a class-mate and friend of mine, those ladies were quite in the dark. Not that Robin could lay any claim to that austere discretion and nice reserve which some circumspect but rather empty-pated fellows succeed in passing for the very finest breeding. On the contrary, he would chat most freely about his little triumphs and reverses, his aversions and private hobbies, and confide to you, on moderate encouragement, the cherished dreams and wishes of his heart. But then, these all happened to be bound up with his vocation of painter, which did, in truth, evoke what solicitude and fervor he had; and it no more occurred to this eccentric youth to call the roll of his connections and acquaintances, or descant on domestic matters and the doings of the people at home, than it occurs to many lively persons to talk of anything else. You might as profitably applaud the sprouts of a potato for feeling their way toward sunshine, as try to make Robin comprehend that his own earlier struggles were anywise commendable or noteworthy.

His reticence did not offend Miss Tyrrell. A capricious, fanciful, rather arbitrary young woman was my cousin, who, I remember, at our children's parties, would often tease me with her wayward behavior, and was accounted by some juvenile admirers of quite a captious and sarcastic turn. And to this day many ingenious gentlemen, whose sprightly anecdotes find favor in drawing rooms, do not esteem Miss Tyrrell sympathetic.

Now an artless, headlong enthusiast, like my friend Robin, would make, I should suppose, a capital butt for female raillery; yet, strange to say, this variable damsel bore herself very humbly in his society, and, after those Florence experiences before referred to, would let him pour fourth his quirks and theories (wild enough, I dare say), for hours together. Or it might be, when a pause fell, she would hazard some queer little notion of her own, which Bob was sure to proclaim vastly suggestive. I will not quarrel, however, because a high-flown rhapsodist may have preferred a girl's company to my own, for, while I have read Taine, and can impart to my discourse, when I choose, a very delicate æsthetic flavor, I trust I graduate too justly the claims of life to dawdle away my mornings in art galleries, or climb steep hills, as Clara will, to see the sun pop out some seconds earlier.

I would not deny that Bob's absorption in his art, and single-hearted devotion to that mistress, is a very fine thing indeed, and a refreshing spectacle in these languid times; but obviously it must isolate the artist from the sympathies and pleasant commerce of his kind, and lead him into many gaucheries and some neglect of the social amenities. Whether Robin had luckily escaped those untoward consequences may appear from some account of an interview with Miss Tyrrell, which took place the evening before his departure. Bear in mind that he was practically taking leave of the young lady, as it was most unlikely she would see him in the morning.

"And you mean to bury yourself in a farmhouse the whole summer?" Miss Clara said to Mr. Lyon, having for once been persuaded to discuss mundane topics. "I give you a month; you're no Arab, after all. You'll soon weary of those deserts, and we shall welcome you back to civilized life. We—that is, mamma, wants you to come to Newport.

"You don't know my country," said honest Robin; "I think no man leaves it willingly. You would love its rugged scenery, I know that. There's nothing like it east of the Sierra."

This was the moment to ascertain the precise State and county wherein the homestead lay, but the damsel's mind perhaps, was not dwelling on matters geographically.

"I might like it," she said dubiously, "for a week or two; but I should perish with nobody to talk to. Of course there can be no society"—this was put forward interrogatively—"none that you would care for, in those wilds?"

"Only my own people," said Robin, gently. "They are fond of me, I of them."

"O," she began, and stopped suddenly, flushing quite rosy with regret and self reproach. I suspect Miss Tyrrell, intent on a certain vein of inquiry, had dropped unconsciously that ungracious phrase. She tried another track.

"My poor picture"—this was a portrait Mr. Lyon had been commissioned to paint—"will you promise not to neglect it? Perhaps it might better wait till autumn. Are you sure you need no more sittings?"

"Quite sure," he said. "It ought to be finished in a week. I'll touch nothing until it is done, Miss Tyrrell, and then forward it instantly.

Perhaps the covenant to cede so promptly a lady's likeness is not particularly flattering, and probably you, accomplished reader, would have given the speech a pretty turn, but blundering Bob made matters worse. "I only hope Mrs. Tyrrell may like it," he went on. "I shall do my best, but portraiture is rather out of my line. The fact is, my heart's not in it." And then they began to talk of other things.

Now, I ask, was this a correct mode of parting from a young woman of fortune, who had really gone out of her way to notice and be kind to a struggling artist—on the eve, too, of a protracted separation?

When Aunt Tyrrell, next morning, after wishing the young painter godspeed, went to her daughter's room, she found Miss Clara dressed, and weeping. Of course she had the girl in her arms in a moment.

"My child, my own, what was I thinking of? O, my love, my darling!" But who can paint the pantings and soft moans of the parent dove fondling her stricken nestling and soothing it?

I can not tell what tender story was whispered in that rapt ear, but something it certainly was which made mamma ruffle her plumage fiercely.

"He's a selfish, moon-struck brute," she cried; "I wish we had never seen him!" And a feeling of resentment, akin to hatred, against that poor, harmless Robin began to stir in the maternal bosom.

II.

When I appeared in Gramercy park that evening, of course the hawk had flown, and, in perfect keeping with his tiresome heedlessness, neglected to leave his address.

"Somewhere in New England," said Aunt Tyrrell, peevishly, and vague reminiscences of the college catalogue helped me to place Bob's home toward the far north.

"And what do you think of my friend Robin? Isn't he a rare piece of rural honesty?" were my next questions; and here the acute female intellect might have drawn shrewd conclusions from my aunt's cautious, cynical replies, and perhaps connected them with Miss Clara's listless, abstracted air.

But the reader doubtless understands that the scenes and incidents heretofore recorded, as well as others to be presently set forth, were made known to the writer at a period considerably subsequent to their actual occurrence. Otherwise he would have bethought him at this juncture to communicate a little circumstance calculated to dispel with magic cogency the worst symptoms of a certain distemper, and cause the mind of a well regulated young woman to recover instantly its normal tone. I mean the circumstance of my friend's engagement, which I might, without much difficulty, have resuscitated from my memory (the idiot had engaged himself before he left off jackets), and even drawn a tolerable likeness of a rosy-cheeked, bustling lass, who, on class day, danced with ardor upon the college green, and betrayed a lively interest and sense of proprietorship in Master Bob's concerns.

While I was ruminating on Aunt Tyrrell's equivocal demeanor, and my kinswoman, by sheer want of confidence, lost the comfort and healing virtues of a timely word. Mr. Lyon was rapidly nearing the natal village, which proved to be—as I guessed—in New Hampshire, and was, in fact, no other than the township of Conway, in the country of Carroll. It was late at night when he reached the quiet station which lay nearest the farm, and, leaving his traps on the secure platform, set out cheerily to walk home.

How well he knew the road! There was the red schoolhouse and the Baptist Church, the clump of maples at the Four-corners. That was the Saco humming on his left, threading the meadows, and feeding the pool above Squire Allen's mill; and here were sheep on the upland—Ruth's sheep, perhaps—asleep in the dry June weather. West and north rose familiar hills, clothed to the peak with pines and hemlock, kneeling, it seemed, before the mountain lords that reared above them their bare heads, gaunt and weird enough in the moonlight, and hid somewhere in their shadow the wonders of the haunted Notch.

He spied the gleam of a candle—in the keeping-room, no doubt—as he swung open a little gate and strode up the graveled walk flanked with sunflowers and hollyhocks. "That is Ruth darning and mending—faithful soul;" he thought, letting the clapper fall against the door, and Ruth, indeed, it was, who trotted forward in great amaze, thurst back a bolt nervously, stared a second doubtfully into his eyes, then caught him in a warm embrace.

"Is it you, Bob—really you?" cried the eager girl. "Come to the light—let me see your face!" She led him to the low-ceiled room, where all looked spruce and prim, and neat as wax. "Why, how you've grown!" she said, scanning her cousin with admiring eyes. "You've got a beard, too—a great brown beard. Is it the fashion, Bob, in foreign parts? What haven't you seen and done! And is it true, Bob—do they give you heaps of money for bits of canvas like that you sent us from France? How much now?—come—"

"How are you all," said bewildered Robin. "How's little Nell?"

"Little—why she's a woman, Bob! Where is she?—Nellie!" And excited Ruth ran into the passage to bid her sister dress quickly, and come down speedily, and welcome somebody who had come home to his friends at last.

And then modest Robin was again inspected, and marveled over and catechised, and presently in bounced Nellie—a gamesome, sprightly lassie—and flung two plump arms about his neck; and Ruth made tea, and woke up Reuben the hind (hired help she called him) and dispatched him to fetch the great man's luggage, and Nellie filled Bob's pipe, and give him current wine, and altogether there was joy and festivity, that night in the Lyon homestead.

Nobody could help liking Ruth Lyon, who marked the kind, firm mouth, and honest eyes, or watched her earnest, matronly ways. A little too brisk, too careful and practical, you may think, with scarce sentiment or leisure enough to play the role of sweetheart, but no such doubt or cavil occurred to those who, like Cousin Bob, knew the story of her loyal life.

He ran it all over, lying awake by and by in the best bedroom, and noting the bright wood-work, spotless curtains, quilted coverlet and other vouchers of Ruth's housewifery. He remembered his introduction to the farm, when his father, the genius of the family—poor, luckless, abortive, rustic genius, we have all seen such—succumbing finally to strong drink and disappointment, left nothing behind him but a fretful wife and sturdy boy. He could see his uncle—plain, over-worked, kindly man—tending the widow (while she lasted), patient always of her peevish plaints, pinching his girls to buy Bob books, and putting the lad to Exeter school (for the son of a genius must have advantages), and at last throwing up in his turn the hard task of living. And then Ruth, a mere girl, not seventeen yet, with a big, barren farm, ill-stocked and mortgaged, with a little sister on her hands, taking up the burden quietly and singly (Bob should never forego his college and the chance of a fair career), wringing from those reluctant acres independence and comfort, and even profit. Was it not a fine, brave thing, he thought, and could heart of man wish more generous comrade, or helpmate more efficient and true? And Cousin Ruth had waited for him all those years, and now he was come home to marry her. They would be married at once. That, at least, was certain in an uncertain world—fixed and certain as that he would finish Miss Tyrrell's picture, and forward it as per contract, within a week.

I dare say it incommoded Ruth to sacrifice her capacious store-room, which, happening to open from Bob's bed chamber and to possess a skylight, was at once promoted to the function of atelier; but she proceeded cheerfully to transfer her household stuff, stowing it away in nooks and pigeon-holes, merely craving permission to leave some strings of dried apples which depended from the rafters. She could not find it in her heart, however, to rebuke the kitchen maid, who bewailed lustily the confiscation of her clothes horse (so she termed a drying frame), and probably Ruth condemned in secret the perversion of that machine to art purposes. But she esteemed it her plain duty to further Bob's wishes, and forestall them if she could, so when he had rigged a tolerable easel and got fairly to work, Ruth enjoined the utmost quiet on her sujects, and strove to compass the deathlike silence which she presumed congenial to æsthetic toil.

It was a shock, therefore, to the well-meaning girl, when she stole in on tip toe to announce the mid-day meal, to find Nellie at Bob's elbow, giggling and pratting right noisily, and daubing a strip of canvas with enthusiasm. Ruth disliked to scold, but some reprimand seemed necessary.

"Why will you be so thoughtless, Nell?" she said. "Look at all that fine paint wasted! How can Bob keep his wits with such a din?"

"O, let her stay," said the artist. 'Talking don't tease me, rather helps this sort of work."

"Does it?" said Ruth, astounded, and beginning to find small difference between such work and play. "Why, Mr. Greathead, the Baptist minister, locks himself up for days when he writes sermons."

"That's what makes them so musty," said profane Bob. "But come here, Ruth; what do you think of this?" and he pointed to Miss Tyrrell's portrait.

"I think she's lovely," protested Nellie, who had bestowed close attention on the young lady's toilet. "See how she does up her hair; and the ruff round her neck—I wish I had one."

"A comely face, but dreamy looking," said wide-awake Ruth, and picks up a landscape with more interest.

"That's a view in the Morena," explains Robin, "the region you're always hearing of in Don Quixote."

"I don't remember," said his bethrothed, dubiously. "It seems a hilly country. What breed of sheep is that?—such curly wool and twisted horns. Mine are common stock, but I clipped 200 pounds last shearing."

"We'll go and inspect them, dear, after tea," said Bob, who was looking forward eagerly to the evening walk.

"Oh, come here, shouted Nell, and made her sister look at some junketings in the Tyrol—a pretty scene enough—where the bright costumes of the women had caught the damsel's eye. "It's too sweet," she murmured tenderly; "how I should love to be there!"

But Ruth opined they were barbarous creatures, of thriftless habits, and probably Roman Catholics. "I guess there's more dancing than plowing over there," she said, and marshaled Bob and Nell down to dinner.

In the busiest households the evening is a season of leisure and refreshment; but after sundown 'Squire Allen must needs stroll over from the mill and shake Bob's hand, and take Ruth aside to disclose a notable project for supplying the Notch House with eggs and butter. The sagacious housewife discerned much promise in that scheme, forthwith got out pens and paper, and was presently deep in figures, renouncing utterly for that occasion such frivolities as moonlight walks.

"Nellie will go," she said; and accordingly Robin, who would have preferred, perhaps, to drink in solitude the spirit of the hills, was attended by that vivacious young person, and regaled with divers histories of sewing-bees, spelling matches, maple-scrapes and sleigh-rides which had signalized the previous winter.

Nor am I sure when the times were more auspicious, and no graver cares balked the communion of lovers, that Ruth and Robin were often betrayed into the rhapsodies of strong emotion, or developed a very fervent sympathy. You see their attachment was no giddy impulse, or brief heyday of the blood; it had withstood the test of years, and approached (on one side, at least), the calm beatitude of what wedded fondness which invariably (as you know, madam), gains depth and volume from close acquaintance with the dear object. You might have discovered many tokens of that serene affection, if you had followed them in their rambles and marked how inevitably the converse of this pair drifted away from the dreamland of sentiment to the homely topics of demestic life.

"Look, Ruth, what a site for a painter's home!" cried Bob, on one occasion, when they had walked out along the Bartlett road to a point where Mount Washington itself looms grandly against the northern verge, shouldering a way between Mount Franklin and Mount Monroe.

"You can't mean," said practical Ruth, you would exchange the old farm for such worthless ground? The view is very pretty here, and I know our house lies in a hollow, but the soil is ten times richer down the valley. Why, the country hereabouts is scarce fit to graze over, and even buckwheat would starve in land like that." And she pointed to a field where the stones were, no doubt, discouragingly numerous.

"But we don't intend to go on farming," exclaimed Robin plaintively. "I was only thinking of the summer months, and what a paradise we might make of this quiet hillside, ringed with forest and river and set in the eye of that glorious scene. We need know nothing of its bleak winter, for then we should be in New York. I thought you understood, dear Ruth. Didn't I tell you I had taken a studio in town?"

"New York!" cried Ruth, almost brokenhearted by this disclosure. "Give up the farm, take me away from home!" And the poor girl, though unused to the melting mood, gave way to most unreasonable tears.

Here was a plight for a sensitive young artist, who could not seriously think of relinquishing his calling, and yet was loth to see a woman cry—how much more a buxom cousin with a hundred claims to his regard! What arguments and blandishments, what humorings and compromises were here resorted to, I can not tell, but it is certain the betrothed pair did not quarrel. How could they? There exists not a gentler, more considerate being than modest Robin, or one less qualified to take the tyrant's vein; while Ruth, with all her sturdy purpose and executive turn, held quaint theories of female obedience and wholesome notions of the rights of man. Yet all the fostering and comforting in the world can not sweeten the cup of exile to the foolish Switzer lass, nor will the model meekness of your Griselda rob bereavement of its sting. I think Bob read this in his companion's patient looks, and, no doubt, he noticed that she seldom thenceforward went singing about the house.

There is no situation more trying to the temper than to find yourself the reluctant exactor of an irksome, rueful sacrifice, and no wonder Bob's spirits at this epoch underwent considerable depression. I suppose he was conscious of his uncompanionable mood, for he began to roam about the farm alone, and evinced less relish for Miss Nell's light chat during hours of labor. Over Miss Tyrrell's potrait he was most assiduous, but somehow the picture made no progress. Had Bob addressed himself specially to portraiture, he might naturally seek to make the most of a rather fantastic subject, and surprise by one piquant masterpiece the suffrages of the academy. But I have often heard him disparage that partiular province of his art, and am, therefore, at a loss to explain his present feverish and unsatisfied behavior. Two or three weeks slipped away, and still he was dawdling and fiddling with the canvas. Was it poor Ruth's pensive shadow which thwarted and obscured his work, or was there something in the face he pored over which drew the cunning from his hand?

Why should 'Squire Allen, who regarded art much as Bob regarded top dressing, select this moment to visit the studio and ventilate his unvarnished heterodox opinions? To be sure he was always loitering about the house and consulting with Ruth Lyon, but matters of moment engrossed these discussions, and it was a rather tardy politeness that prompted him to ask what Bob was doing.

The squire's attitude as he surveyed the atelier, whither Ruth conducted him, was very affable and friendly, and the discourse he pronounced on the occasion abounded in fresh, fruitful suggestions, which Bob in a normal frame of mind would have devoured with infinite gusto.

"Them pictures o' scenery," he remarked, in the course of his review, "air good and val'ble. They ain't no kind o' use to me, but city folks that live cooped up in them brick dwellin's, and hain't got room to keep a gardin, they kin hire a chap to paint suthin' green and country-like, which is hulsome to the mind. Ain't that the idee?"

Robin thought perhaps it was.

"As for them palaces," pursued the 'squire, pointing to a street scene in Ferrara, "and marble meetin'-houses, I set my foot agin 'em as savorin' o' the pomps and superstitions o' the Old World. They air the high places of idolatry and the sink o' corruption. Let 'em crumble to the airth!"

"Crumble!" said Bob, indignantly. "Can't you see the beauty of them as mere models?"

"As models, p'raps," allowed the critic, "for a State house or Boston postoffice they kin be used. But that 'ere thing," he continued, snapping a finger at Miss Tyrrell's picture, "you kin say nuthin' for! There ain't no sense in it."

"What do you mean?" cried Robin, reddening.

"Why, they was fust rate," the 'squire explained, "in the old times, and with money, too. I've got one o' them likenesses to home that cost a sight"—he referred to his sire's presentment, executed by Luke Slingbrush, a local artist of some fame—"but who's going to pay, nowadays, for all them paints and varnishes when you can buy a photograph for a dollar? You air smart, Robert, I kin see that; but you can't beat the sun, nohow!"

"The sun's an ass!" shouted Robin, provoked beyong endurance. "The sun would make Shakespeare look a blockhead, staring and gasping at that big bull's eye. Good Lord! man, do your features say anything? And the expression of your face, too, at a given moment, what is it but the reflex of one mood—a single letter in the alphabet of character? They're well fitted for tools—your photographs! But the pregnant face, the soleful face, demands a painter to probe and ponder it, until he has spelled out its last secret, and printed it there on the canvas for the world to read. Talk of photographs for a face like that!" And the excited artist flung a cloth over the insulted portrait.

I am not going to revile Robin for that ranting, intemperate speech, for he was presently heartily ashamed of it. Ruth on her part could not have looked more confounded if one of her sheep had bitten her, and speedily invented an excuse to draw the 'squire away.

"That's no business for me," the squire observed, when the two had retreated to a less fervid atmosphere. "I guess it pays, though, when you get the knack of it. I'll tell ye," he added, "what Robert ought to do; jest hurry up, paint off a dozen o' them picturs, stock the old farm complete, and settle down."

"I don't know," Ruth said, in her heart much impressed with the idea; "you might talk to him—but I'm afraid he don't like farming."

"You don't mean to say," shouted the disgusted squire, "that he'd go on paintin' arter he'd made his fortin? Darned if he ain't takin' right arter his father, and he was crazy as a loon!"

"You mustn't say things against my uncle," said loyal Ruth, and the squire looked contrite, and then she confided to him the projected removal to New York.

The grief which shook her friend at this announcement was unquestionably sincere. "O Jericho!" the squire groaned, "that beats the Dutch! Who's goin' to post me about them new-fangled tools, and study the sile and lot out the crops accordin'? There ain't nobody reads them papers and gits the meat of 'm, Ruth, like you. And the winter evenin's, Ruth—what'll I do in the winter evenin's?"

"You must get married," said Ruth, archly.

"P'raps I will," he returned, gloomily; "I guess I'm young enough." And indeed he was, and some athletes of twenty might envy his stalwart frame and ruddy cheeks. "You wasn't thinkin' yourself," he went on with a curious hesitation in his tone—"I mean, you wasn't goid' to get married right away, was you? Next month—ain't that kind o' sudden? Howsomever, I wish the boy well, and you, too Ruth—from my heart, I do." And the worthy fellow meant what he said, but after all that he looked dejected.

"It'll be kind o' lively, next month, in Conway," the squire continued, with a fine assumption of cheerfulness, "what with weddin's, campmeetin's, fourth o' July, and city folks thick as bees! I'll have a houseful myself, I expect. Bill Cutler, up at the Notch House, can't take no more, and wants to send a string of 'em down here. I guess I'll have to accommodate 'em."

"From Boston?" Ruth presumed.

"Wal, no—they ain't Boston folks," the squire thought. "Teirell—Tyrrell! Sounds more like a York name," and then he bade Ruth good-morning, and walked homeward

III.

When they happen to possess a cottage on the cliff, the most inveterate nomads might subdue, I think, their roving propensities, and consent to sojourn—say three months—at Newport. I was surprised, therefore, by a summons to Mr. Tyrrell's bank, and my abrupt nominations to the command of an expeditionary corps. "Clara's not well," I was informed; "finds Newport much too hot. Your aunt proposes the White mountains, and wants you to take them there."

This intelligence distressed me a good deal; but I own that, coming from the hot pavements of a smoky town, I discovered all sorts of tonic virtues in the breezes of Narragansett bay, and eyed Miss Clara's lassitude with wonder, until my aunt reminded me how different, after all, the climate was to that of Scarborough or Trouville—which, no doubt, explained the phenomenon.

We were already familiar with the Franconia region, and, being minded to try the Conway side, were not disposed to quarrel with the accident which transferred us from a rather shabby hotel to absolute control of an old fashioned farmhouse. We promised ourselves not a little entertainment in the naive discourse of our primitive host, and my own contentment was complete when a preposterous, hair-brained painter fellow, whom 'Squire Allen hit off in his catalogue of curiosities, proved to be no other than my friend Robin. I must say, however, that Aunt Tyrrell seemed in no wise pleased with this discovery, having lately contracted, as I mentioned, a prejudice against my friend; but it was absurd to suppose a contretemps so trivial would be suffered to derange her plans. "Now, at least," she said, "that singular young man may have the goodness to finish my girl's picture."

It is not likely many hours could pass before Bob and I came together, and, of course, I was speedily apprised of an impending interesting event, and presented to the bride elect, before whom and her young sister—when Robin sped away to pay his respects to the Tyrrells—I pronounced a eulogy upon that artist. In the course of the same afternoon the Misses Lyon came to call on my kinswomen, and insisted we should drink tea at the farm, where they set forth all the dainties they could think of, showed us the flower garden, the bee-hives and the chickens, and treated us generally in a most hospitable fashion

I happened to be present at my cousin's meeting with Bob's *fiancee*, and thought I had never seen Clara look so well. Perhaps she may have been a trifle pale, but her eyes were very bright, and she talked with the greatest spirit and vivacity. She watched Miss Lyon rather narrowly, too, in a swift observant way, but no doubt her observations were satisfactory, for her manner was quite soft and kind when she took Ruth's hand at parting.

But, while clear-eyed, downright Ruth conquered the hearts of her new acquaintances—persuading even my Aunt Tyrrell, whose attitude at first was slightly captious, to declare her a good, active little body—Robin's behavior was less gratifying. No one certainly could have predicted that his native air would cloud the man's sunny temper, yet something of the kind seemed to have occurred. I found him taciturn and moody, and his demeanor at times decidedly tart. For instance, when he was taken to task good-humoredly by Mrs. Tyrrell about his remissness in the matter of the picture, Bob was almost surly, thought he must renounce the undertaking altogether, and condemned his harshness in meddling with portraiture at all. When we were alone, however, he bore himself more genially, and this circumstance led me to conclude that he had lost his relish for ladies' society.

Of course Bob's inclinations in this respect were not abetted by me. I had brought my friends, as you know, to Conway in pursuit of health and the exhilaration of fine scenery, and since Ruth's household duties would not suffer her to guide our rambles, Robin's services were plainly indispensable. It happened for the most part to be Miss Tyrell's fate to endure Sir Dismal's company in those excursions, and while what he vouchsafed to say was crisp and bright enough (Bob's tongue had a pretty trick of interpreting his eye), his fits of silence must, I know, have depressed her, although I can not remember that she made any complaint. I will avow that on one occasion the young man seemed to regain his buoyant humor, and shone out with his old flash and fervor.

We had driven out that day to the Notch, for, while we knew the Franconian pass, the grandeur of its southern namesake was yet strange to us. It was afternoon when we reached the middle of the gorge, and we lingered there until sunset, held and mastered by the scene. Who that saw it forgets the desolate ravine choked with bowlders and bristling with dark pines, the giant walls black and bare that seem to bulge and topple and hide the sky, and the puny, shivering river flung headlong down the jagged steep? There is, you know, a contagion in strong feeling, and I am sure the glow on Clara's cheek warmed us all. No wonder, Bob, then, watching the girl's kindling eyes, shook off the weight upon upon his spirits and gave himself to the empire of the hour. The Notch, and the eager talk of my companions, and the drive homeward in the twilight, wrought me up to so romantic a mood that I sat smoking in the 'squire's porch until a late hour, and, even when I retreated, a single candle was still gleaming from Bob's studio.

Why would he not stay and smoke a cigar, and what in the world could Robin find to do alone in that grim and comfortless chamber? Was he going over, perhaps, the pleasant day, and yielding anew to the sweet sorcery of an emotional nature, which had quickened and compelled his own? Or did he check those thoughts sternly, and recognize with sad sincerity that such companionship was not for him? Must his days, then, know no storm, no torrid sunshine, but be always cool and sober and calm? Could he call it living, the pale, spiritless existence which stretched before him and Ruth? Poor Ruth! No, upright, noble Ruth—who was he, to pity that true heart? Had he forgotten what her life had been—the patient, cheerful self-surrender, the long, meek sacrifice to duty; and was the fault hers if her eyes, fixed on that mild star, had missed the hectic splendors of the west? Was he not man enough to love her for what she was, and mock and stifle the mad thirst for sympathy? That holy, mystic charm of sympathy, truly a potent spell in Paris saloons; but such simple words as gratitude and honor may out-conjure it amid Yankee hills.

On the day following our drive to the Notch—it was just a week, as I remember, before Bob's wedding—Clara and I strolled over to the farm, and found Miss Nellie strumming the piano and Ruth busied about many things.

"Where's Robin?" I inquired.

"Nobody knows," said Nellie, laughing, "he was prowling up and down his den all night, and, this morning, he went out at daybreak."

"In that case," I suggested, "suppose we avail ourselves of the priest's absence and invade his sanctuary. There are many tricks and devices familiar to the painter's art which I shall be happy to expose. Likewise, the business of an unfinished picture seems to require investigation."

There is no doubt that Clara looked inquisitive, and Ruth at once volunteered to show the way.

"You would never know my trim storeroom," said Ruth, as she let us into the atelier, and indeed it was a chaos of disorder.

Bob's easel was near the window. Nellie ran to it and gave a cry.

"Look!" she said, and stared in stupor at the canvas.

We looked. My cousin's figure was still there, but some studious stroke of the brush had totally erased her features.

"Hullo!" I cried, "what's the meaning of this?"

Clara's face was very pale. She did not speak.

"It means," said Ruth, with a quivering lip, "it means we had no right to come here." And she led us silently from the room.

I do not claim to possess the fine intuitions of some gifted natures, but I confess that Master Bob's performance provoked sundry reflections, which I was shrewd enough to keep to myself, and I think it regrettable that another member of the company, having less experience of the ways of men, failed to exhibit an equal discretion. I had strolled into the garden, having observed that the ladies were drifting toward feminine topics, and was ruminating over a cigar, when Miss Nellie, equipped with a basket, intent on blackberries, came running out aglow with mischief and hilarity.

"Such fun!" she exclaimed between peals of laughter. "We were in the parlor just now, Clara and I—she was teaching me a waltz—when Bob came in, glum as a ghost. So, of course, I began to tease him about spoiling that lovely picture, and said he just wanted an excuse to putter over it, and then he grew white, and Clara was in a flutter, so I left him to defend himself. Won't she scold him, though!" and the picture of Bob's predicament afforded her infinite delight.

I was not quite heartless enough to be carried away by the damsel's merriment, and opining that the presence of a third person might be grateful under the circumstances, set forth to break the tete-a-tete. But a veranda skirted that side of the house, and a window of the keeping-room, which adjoined the parlor, standing open, I glanced into it as I passed, and stopped. There was Ruth, half-risen from a chair, in a strange, irresolute attitude, her work fallen to the floor, one hand shading her eyes and the other pressed against her side, while her lips looked dry and parted, as if some word she sought to utter found no breath. While she failed to hear my step I understood when presently voices, low but audible, reached us both through an open door. I recognized Clara's first.

"Indeed you must not say that, Mr. Lyon; it is we who owe excuses. You must have been greatly annoyed about that picture, and it was a selfish thing to ask it at such a time. If mamma had known; but I—but she—you must try to pardon us."

"Clara!" Bob could say no more.

She went on hurriedly.

"Let me have it as it is. I will not like it less because the artist was too happy to finish it! It will remind me of your happiness and Ruth's—dear Ruth, whom I love so dearly, and who loves me."

"Clara!"—Bob's voice came hoarse and short—"you are worthy of each other, and I of neither. Do what I will, I must be false, disloyal. I can not even give you that blotted canvas, because"—here the man's voice shivered into a kind of passionate sob—"because it is a confession and a prayer."

He was gone—I heard his footsteps in the hall. But I would not look at Ruth; my own pulse quivered, and I moved away.

Ruth and Clara were thrown much together at this period, and a very cordial, sincere attachment appeared to bind those young ladies. It had been decreed in secret conclave that Miss Tyrrell should be one of the bridesmaids—Miss Nellie, of course, being the other, and urging forward with the utmost zeal and excitement the necessary preparations for the wedding. That event was now at hand, and Robin bore himself quietly and thoughtfully, as became a man vowed to grave responsibilities, and evinced little of that petulance and restlessness which I had remarked at an early stage.

It may have been a day or two before the ceremony that Bob was roving about the orchard, when Ruth came out to him, and laid her hand shyly on his arm.

"What is it, dear?" he said gently, for the girl's cheek was flushing, and her eyes did not meet his own.

"There is something," Ruth whispered, something, Bob, that ought to be said. You are different now, dear, from what you were when we liked each other first. Something greater and higher, I know well. While I," she went on sadly, "am just the same—a farmer's child, fit only for the farm. I can not talk to you and hope to feel as others do."

"Dear Ruth!" he said, and his eyes were wet with generous tears, "what could put that nonsense in your hear? You can make me happy, dearest. None knows you but is happier and better."

"Thank you for saying that," she said simply, and looked up once into his face; "you have a loyal heart, dear. I judged it rightly. Perhaps I may be worthier of you than, I said, and" here her voice again sunk to a whisper—"I will try to prove it."

At last it came, the wedding day. We were assembled in the big parlor—Aunt Tyrrell, the 'squire and I—joined presently by the two bridesmaids; Miss Nellie radiant and eager, Clara colorless as a white rose. Bob followed in grand tenue, and our little cortege was ready to set out for the village church, whose bell was ringing a merry peal.

"Where's Ruth?" cried Nellie. "Ah, here she is!" And Ruth came in, robed in white, as became a bride; with her wedding veil, too, but that she carried on her arm. There was a dew, I think, in her kind eyes, but her lips were parted in a smile.

"Were you waiting for the bride?" she said.

A screen stood in the corner of the room, and she moved toward it, holding Clara's hand.

"Move the screen, dear Bob," Ruth said; "I want to show you something."

He pushed it aside, and saw the mutilated portrait.

"You can finish that," said Ruth, softly, "if the lady sits to you all her life." And she put Clara's hand in his.

Of course, the wedding, ladies, did not take place that very day; but, although Aunt Tyrrell's bewilderment and perplexity were extreme, she was not long oburate, being naturally of a romantic turn, and recalling sundry episodes of her youth. Besides, she could not but acknowledge Ruth's authority in the premises, and consented at the end of a week that her will should be made law. Possibly, had my advice been solicited, I should have counseled a still longer postponement, remembering a certain banker in New York who might be deemed to have an interest in the matter. But the stoic army of husbands holds no veteran more thoroughly disciplined, and I doubt not my excellent uncle received such dispatches from his commanding officer as well-nigh reconciled him to the catastrophe.

I can vouch that the wedding breakfast—for that feature of the ceremony was not omitted—was in all respects a delightful feast, although the happiness of the married pair may have been a thought less beaming and irrepressible than we are wont to see on such occasions. 'Squire Allen was the life of the banquet; indeed, he could scarcely have shown more elation had the wedding been his own. There was another person in the company who might have liked a place beside the gentle hostess, but, as the 'squire sat on Ruth's right hand, Miss Nell and I diverted one another.—*Overland Monthly.*

On Women and War.

Mr. Ruskin, in his "Crown of Wild Olive," says that women, if they wished, could easily put a stop to war—that all war is waged for their sakes, and because they desire it. Although this view may exaggerate their power, it is certain that they could do much to prevent war if they would only be in earnest about it. Most women profess to dislike war; but when a conflict is imminent, they will not move a finger to prevent it. It is not true, as Mr. Ruskin adds, that they "draw the curtains of their boxes and muffle the openings, so that from the pit of the circus of slaughter there may reach them only at intervals the half-heard cry and a murmur as of the wind's sighing when myriads of souls expire. They shut out the deathcries, and are happy, and talk wittily among themselves." A lay writer, in quoting the above remarks, "Or if their hearts are moved with pity, and they meet together to prepare lint and clothing for the sufferers, it is a nice operation, and they are rather sorry when it is over. They rarely take the trouble to inquire into the effects of war upon their fellow-country women and the women of other lands. As to the military system, with all its surroundings, they have a positive admiration for it. Every officer is to them a hero, and a prospective Leonidas; every soldier is a devoted patriot. They will go out of their way any day to see a regiment, or to hear a military band; not simply for the sake of the bright colors and tuneful strains, but the warlike element in the show. As long as women's practice differs so widely from their professions, it will be in vain to expect any good results from their influence upon society. Again, women must use their practical influence at home in the cause of peace. An irritable, unjust mother will probably make an irritable, unjust son, who will grow up into a narrow-minded man, incapable of comprehending the laws of right and justice. Public opinion in each country must greatly depend upon the conduct of the nation. And further, let all women who have time to spare devote a portion of their leisure hours to earnest work for the cause of peace in union with the men and women who are already laboring for this end. For it is no destructive and revolutionary work which the peace society advocates. It is the gradual reduction of the armaments which are filling the earth with dismay; the establishment of law in the place of anarchy; the avoidance of quarrels whenever possible, and the peaceful settlement of such disputes that must arise. It is not unfeminine and degrading work, unfit to be touched by a woman's hand, neither is it effeminate and undignified, beneath the efforts of a brave man. It is the work of ennobling the human race, and spreading order, peace and love throughout the earth."

A Martyr to Science.

When, only a few weeks ago, the cholera was raging in the slums of Berlin, a young physician, scarcely past his thirtieth year, made himself remarked by the boldness and persistency with which he entered the infected quarter, and the apparent recklessness with which he exposed himself to the contagion. It is worth while that his name should be remembered; it was Otto Obermeir. He had another object besides that of relieving, and if possible, curing the poor creatures whom he visited. He proposed to to himself to investigate, in the presence of the living pestilence itself, its causes and its development. At last the brave young soul thought he had discovered the clue, and with a heroism far above the heroism of the battle-field, as it is nobler to sacrifice one's self to save men than to destroy them, he resolved to test his discovery upon himself. It was an awful experiment; Obermeir knew full well that he staked his life against the hope of conquering the cholera.

Obtaining from one of his patients some of the deadly choleric germs, he went deliberately to his room, placed a table with pencil and paper at his bedside, lay calmly down upon the bed, opened a vein in his arm, and inserted the deadly poison. He thought he had discovered how to neutralize it; if so, man was master of the pestilence forever. But he was wrong, and the error was fatal. He lived seven hours and then died; but during those seven dying hours, the young hero observed, with scientific exactness, the effects and progress of the disease upon him, and one after another, he noted his observations down, until within the very half hour when the spirit left the body. These notes are pronounced to have the highest value, and will serve the commission with new facts of the first importance, and so the dying legacy of Otto Obermeir, may, after all, lead to the victory, which he condemned himself to self-destruction in trying to achieve.—*Appleton's Journal.*

THE BALD-HEADED BABY.

BY M QUAD.

She had him carefully wrapped up as she entered the street car, but after getting seated she removed the shawl, and the bald headed baby was given a shake, a twist, a wrench, a flop, and came right end up, with his big blue eyes wide open.

Some of the people in the car merely glanced at the bald head—looked just long enough to be able to swear, if called upon, that it was a baby instead of a goat. Others smiled pityingly as they thought of his bald head breasting the cold blasts of a hard winter, and wondered if woe and poverty and sorrow had prevented a growth of hair on his pate.

Presently an old man left his seat near the front end of the car, and bending over the child he asked of the mother:

"My dear woman, do you want to do me a great favor?"

"Why—why, sir—," she stammered in confusion.

"I have not long to live, for I am old and feeble," he continued, "but before I die I desire to lay my hand on that baby's head!"

She made no objection, and he placed his hand on the shining pate, moved it this way and that, and asked:

"Madam, have you given this child a cognomen yet?"

"Yes, sir; we've named him," she replied.

"And, madam, allow me to hope that it is a name befitting the intellectual appearance of the child."

"We call him Bascomb," she replied in a whisper.

"Bascomb! Capital! You don't know what a load you have taken from my heart! I feared you had, like many other people, named him after some big man or woman, or racing horse, or something. You are sensible, you are, and if I was a brass band I'd come around and serenade you this very evening!"

She was very red in the face from embarrassment, but he saw only the baby, whose bald head kept trying to dodge out from under his hand.

"Yes, I'm truly glad," he presently continued, "that you didn't name him George Washington. Washington was a deceiver, sure's your born, though lots of Americans hate to own it. Did you ever hear, madam, that General Washington once stole a cider mill?"

"N—no," she stammered.

"You didn't? Why, it wasn't two weeks before his death that he stole a cider mill from a nice old Baptist minister, and if he hadn't died when he did he would have been jailed and made to pay smart money. If you had named the child after Washington I could never have met him without feeling my heart ache over your lack of judgment."

Little bald-head shrank up to his mother, and she turned and looked out of the window. The old man, however, continued:

"And I'm so glad you didn't name him after Daniel Webster. Mr. Webster was a good public speaker, and he knew considerable about business, but he wasn't the man he was cracked up to be. Why, madam, that same Daniel Webster was caught with a ham on his shoulder one dark night, just when he was the most popularist, and he had to pay $200 to settle it. He was a big man, and it was all hushed up, while you and I, madam, would have been jerked to jail in a wink, because we are only common folks. It makes me shiver when I think of how you might have named this baby Daniel Webster and blasted his bald head for life!"

She looked up at the bell-rope and around the car, but there was no escape.

"And you might have named him Patrick Henry," softly continued the old man, as he rubbed the bady's head again. "Named him after a man who'd hook fish off'n an orphan boy's fish-line. I know what I'm talking about, madam. Patrick Henry had quite good learning, and he wore good clothes, and you couldn't get a counterfeit bill on him, but he had his balky tricks, after all. Would you believe, madam, that he would walk seven miles on a dark night to hook seed-wheat?"

The bald-headed bady had got tired of the thing, and now began to cry. The old man nudged him in the ribs, and said:

"Bascomb, be a good boy! When you grow up, my boy, beware of polygamy, Brighamy, and the many evil influences to be met with around a corner grocery."

And he raised his eyes to the mother and added:

"Well, I don't know as I can give you any hints as to how you had best bring him up. If you should ever get sick of him I'd take him in a minute, for there's something about his head which has touched a tender spot and made me love him."

She was yet four blocks from home, but she pulled the bell.

"And I'm glad you didn't name him General Jackson," said the old man as he patted the bald head for a last time. "General Jackson whipped the British at New Orleans, to be sure, but what about his passing a counterfeit ten-cent piece on General Lafayette? If you had named this baby General Jackson I should have wept—going, eh? Good-by, my son, and don't never walk on the railroad track, and don't try to sit down on a picket fence!"—*New York Graphic.*

The Bells of Limerick.

The old bells that hung in the tower of the Limerick Cathedral were made by a young Italian after many years of patient toil. He was proud of his work, and when they were purchased by the prior of a neighboring convent, near the Lake of Como, the artist invested the profits of the sale in a pretty villa on the margin of the lake, where he could hear their *Angelus* music wafted from the convent cliff across the waters at morning, noon and night. Here he intended to pass his life; but this happiness was denied him. In one of those feudal broils which, whether civil or foreign, are the undying worm in a fallen land, he suffered the loss of his all, and when the storm passed he found himself without home, family, friends and fortune.

The convent had been razed to the ground, and the *chefs-d'œuvre* of his handiwork, the tuneful chime whose music had charmed his listening ear for so many happy days of his past life, had been carried away to a foreign land. He became a wanderer. His hair grew white and his heart withered before he again found a resting place. In all these years of bitter desolation the memory of the music of his bells never left him; he heard it in the forest and in the crowded city, on the sea and by the banks of the quiet stream in the basin of the hills; he heard it by day, and when night came and troubled sleep, it whispered to him soothingly of peace and happiness. One day he met a mariner from over the sea, who told him a story of a wondrous chime of bells he had heard in Ireland. An intuition told the artist that they were his bells. He journeyed and voyaged thither, sick and weary, and sailed up the Shannon. The ship came to anchor in the port near Limerick, and he took passage in a small boat for the purpose of reaching the city. Before him the tall steeple of St. Mary's lifted its turreted head above the mist and smoke of the old town. He leaned back wearily, yet with a happy light beaming from his eyes. The angels were whispering to him that his bells were there. He prayed. "Oh, let them sound me a loving welcome. Just one note of greeting, O, bells! and my pilgrimage is done!" It was a beautiful evening. The air was like that of his own Italy in the sweetest time of the year, the death of the spring. The bosom of the river was like a broad mirror, reflecting the patines of bright gold that flecked the blue sky, the towers and the streets of the old town in its clear depths. The lights of the city danced upon the wavelets that rippled from the boat as she glided along. Suddenly the stillness was broken. From St. Mary's tower there came a shower of silver sound, filling the air with music. The boatmen rested on their oars to listen. The old Italian crossed his arms and fixed his streaming eyes upon the tower. The sound of his bells bore to his heart all the sweet memories of his buried past; home, friends, kindred, all. At last he was happy—too happy to speak, too happy to breathe. When the rowers sought to arouse him, his face was upturned to the tower, but his eyes were closed. The poor stranger had breathed his last. His own *chefs-d'œuvre* had rung his "passing-bell."—*Harper's Magazine.*

Max Strakosch and Frederic Robinson are said to be the best chess players in New York. Robinson plays chess better than he plays *Hamlet*.