

A. P. Barker

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### NICE AND SOFT.

"Together they sat in the parlor alone, At the dusk of a Sabbath day, Her shapely head close to his own, In a tender, loving way.

"I like to lay my head, dear Will, 'Gainst yours," she murmured low, In tones which made his pulses thrill, And his face with rapture glow.

"And is it because you love me, dove?" He asked; and then she coughed, "No, dear Will, not that, but love, Because its nice and soft!" —The Judge.

### HIS WORD OF HONOR.

The "Green Dragon" at Orpington, assumed to be an inn, but was really little more than a wayside stopping place. Mr. Hunter, landlord and proprietor, was therefore not a little surprised and flurried when, upon a raw October morning, a young man presented himself at the bar of the Green Dragon and asked, languidly, if he could be accommodated with a bed and sitting room.

"A bed, sir?" replied Mr. Hunter, a big man with red face and gray hair; "yes, I think I can manage to give you a bed."

"And a sitting-room?" echoed the landlord, in the tone of one who is considering a great undertaking; "one minute, if you please, sir."

And Mr. Hunter disappeared into the little room adjoining the bar, there to hold counsel with some second person; the upshot being that, in a few minutes, Mrs. Hunter and a few Hunters just out of the crawling state, issued forth, bearing respectively working materials, socks in process of being mended, tin whistles, and decapitated dolls.

"You can have this room all to yourself, sir," said Mrs. Hunter, triumphantly.

"You really must not let me disturb you," replied the traveler.

"Don't you mention it!" replied the landlord, in a tone which was at once gentle and confidential; "we would not turn a customer away from our doors. You see we do not have much parlor company."

"And is this the only room you have that is disengaged?"

"Well, yes, sir; this is the only room at present, Susan! coals for the gentlemen's fire."

The traveler was glad enough to enter the apartment, and to draw close to the fire the one dilapidated arm chair.

Arthur Seton, barber by profession, and a writer from choice, was not really more than thirty, though he looked considerably older, for the dark hair and beard were streaked with gray, and the face, with its regular, handsome features, wore a look of intense mental weariness.

For some time he leaned indolently back, his hands clasped behind his back; at last he rose and took from his bag a locked up diary, which he opened and availed himself of pen and ink, which stood upon the table made the following entry:

October 17, 1874—Got up late. Called on the Brainstones: George was out. Had a pleasant chat with Annie; went, like a fool to Richmond, and, like a fool, hunted the Well House. It looked just the same as in the old, dear days; but I heard children playing in the garden. The house, I believe, is let to city people. Came to London; dined at the Pall Mall; went to the club; got back to chambers late; wrote a column "review." A weary, weary day. Shall I ever know a moments forgetfulness?

He drew then from the leaves of the diary a letter written in a delicate hand and addressed "Arthur Seton, Esq., 12 Gray's Inn." This letter he regarded with a long, sad, loving look; then resting his hand on his head he read it through very slowly. It read as follows:

"My dear Arthur—If you will be so suspicious, so jealous and exacting, I cannot see how we are ever to be happy. Faith without works is dead, and love without faith is no blessing, but a weary burden. I am tired of cross words and looks. Some women I believe, like the feverish excitement of quarrels, but I only look for peace. The miserable jealousy is quite unworthy of you. Do try and put it from you, and remember that love, once wounded, is sometimes hurt past recovery. I received your article quite safely, but I cannot speak of it now. You have made me too sad, too weary, and even a little indignant."

"Yours affectionately, ALICE CLAREFIELD."

He replaced the letter, closed the diary, took up his pipe and began smoking. The early part of this day had been fine and mild, but towards the afternoon the sky grew leaden and the wind shifted to the northeast. Now the wind was rising and the rain was falling—a cold, penetrating, impetuous, determined rain.

For want of something better to do, Seton began to write a letter; but he made slow work of it. For minutes together he sat holding his pen listlessly, listening, as we all listen when alone, to what sounds may be going on near us, from a feeling that is not curiosity, but more overpowering.

Suddenly what must have been a very light vehicle dashed swiftly down the road and drew up at the door of the "Green Dragon," while the voice of the new comer became audible. Seton, however, could only catch a few disconnected words, such as "caught in the rain—delicate—shelter—Chiselhurst—closed carriage."

Then the door opened, the landlord presented himself upon the threshold, and said, in a very pointed manner:

"If you please, sir, a young lady, driving over to Sevenoaks in a light, open trap, has been caught in the rain, and her servant wants to know if I can give her a sitting-room while he drives back to Chiselhurst for a close carriage."

"And this is the only one you have?" rejoined Seton. "O, ask her in, by all means. However, I am sorry the room smells so of smoke," he added, as he knocked the ashes from his pipe.

"Don't mention it, sir, and thank you very much," replied the landlord.

In another moment the door opened again, and the unexpected intruder entered—lady, tall and graceful, having a pale, Madonna-like face, and golden hair shining like an aureole round a classic head.

Seton's face had grown white to the very lips, and quivered perceptibly as, extending his hand, he said:

"Very unexpected," echoed the lady, removing her wet mantle and sitting down on the leather sofa. The recognition had been mutual, but women, as a general thing, have more than the sterner sex.

"Let me recommend this chair," said Seton, laying his hand upon the one from which he had just risen.

"No, thank you; I prefer sitting away from the fire."

"I am sorry the room should smell so of tobacco," observed Seton, after a pause, "but, you see, I did not expect the pleasure of a visitor."

She smiled a rather forced smile by way of an answer, and Seton folded elaborately and put into an envelope a blank sheet of paper.

"The country is very beautiful around here," he observed, writing his own name with great care upon the envelope.

"We have only been back from the Continent six weeks," she observed, after a pause. "Mamma has taken a house near Chiselhurst. I was driving this morning, and was caught in the rain, and induced to ask for shelter here."

"And how is Mrs. Clarefield?"

"Mamma is quite well, thank you." Then, after a pause, "Are you stopping here?"

"Hardly," said Seton, with an assumption of gaiety in his tone; "but I'll tell you all about it. My friends kindly took it into their heads that I was sticking too closely to work—that I wanted fresh air and exercise; so they bound me over on my word of honor to walk from London to Hastings in a week. I acquiesce in everything now; so, of course, acquiesced in this, and this is my first day of hard labor and imprisonment."

"But you used to be a lawyer," then she coughed a little and seemed unwilling to finish her sentence; "you used to be so fond of walking."

"But a man changes a good deal in three years," he replied, wearily.

It would weary you, reader, to set down here the dreary commonplace with which these two tried to beguile the time over an hour. At last they took refuge in silence, while the wind roared and the rain lashed the window. Dusk came on prematurely, and Seton, looking out on the cheerless prospect, shivered as with cold. Then the lady rose very quietly, stirred the fire into a blaze and resumed her seat on the sofa.

"No, you shouldn't, really," said Seton, not turning around, however, and with a look of pain on his face. "It is wonderful what suffering some small, commonplace word or action may cause us."

"What vistas of possible joys may they not open up to us!" "I suppose the carriage will soon be back," said Alice, presently, and speaking with effort; our coachman drives very fast."

"Yes; your term of imprisonment will soon be up," rejoined Seton, resting his arms upon the mantelpiece, and examining with critical interest a photograph before him.

"How the time passes!" said Alice, in a low voice, as if speaking to herself. Then, with a sudden energy, "I cannot tell when we shall meet again. But we part answer me one question. You are looking worn and weary—are you happy?"

Now he stood before her, and through the firelight his eyes flashed on her, as he said in a low, harsh voice:

"From your lips that question is an insult."

"Of which you need not fear the repetition," she rejoined, with cutting formality.

"No, it can't end like this," he went on. "Do you know, ever since you have been here, I have bitten my lips through to keep them from speaking of the past? This morning was not of your seeking, and it seems to me unwise to take advantage of this opportunity."

"We are sometimes so much mistaken," she said hurriedly, but her words were hardly audible, and he continued: "Alice, you have treated me badly. On that day, now three years ago, when I gave you my love, and believed in yours, I was frank with you. I told you how wild and irregular my life had been and how full of faults I was. You reclaimed me—you transformed my days—you made life pure and fair, and in a short time, because some thorn in my love hurt you, you threw all away, and left me to perish miserably." She would have interrupted him, but he silenced her with a gesture, and went on: "And now when we meet, after three years, you ask me if I am happy?"

"I think there were faults on both sides," she said, quietly.

"Yes, there were," he replied; "but I was reading your last letter only to-day. O, how terribly bitter it was!"

"And have you forgotten your answer to that letter?" she said passionately, her voice quivering and her breast heaving.

"I don't remember it word for word," he returned, quickly; "I know it was written on the impulse of the moment."

"But I have it by heart." Then, very slowly: "You said if your love, in its heart and strength, was a little exacting, mine was cold and tireless; in fact, no love, only a cold, sluggish, affection, on almost thought I was right, and that we could not be happy. I am naturally proud," she went on; "but a woman with less pride than I could not have acted differently. Only one course was left me—to be silent."

"Well, it is all over now; we shall probably never meet again." "You won't take my friendship, then?"

"No, thank you; you are very generous, but I do not want that gift."

He threw himself wearily into a chair, and for a time there was silence. Hope is so subtle, so intangible that we are only aware of its existence when it has ceased to be. Arthur Seton looked upon himself as a man without hope. It seemed to him that his life could not be more desolate than it was, yet who shall say what feeling, of which he was not directly conscious, may have sustained him during the last three years? Now everything seemed gone—there was nothing left for him but death.

Presently a carriage came down the road; carriage lamps flashed through the dusk, and grew stationary opposite the windows. Mr. Hunter bustled in, and announced that the carriage had come for the young lady, and had done the distance wonderfully quick. Then the door shut and they were alone again.

Softly and distinctly Seton heard her speak his name, "Arthur!" but he did not move. It seemed to him that he would keep back all his love, clench fast his heart, till she was gone, and then die swiftly of the pain.

"Arthur, I am waiting, dear. Won't you come? Are you not going to forgive me?"

He groped his way toward her. She stretched out her hand and drew him to her. Then he bent down; she raised her face, and the hearts and lips so long separated came together in a long, passionate kiss. He knelt down by her, his head sank upon his shoulder, and for many minutes they remained thus, lost in love's profound peace and mystery.

And the clerks continued to pop, and the wagons on their way to London (tramped in and out of the bar, and good-nights were exchanged between customers and landlord, and as Arthur folded Alice's mantle around her, she said shyly: "You are coming back with me to see mamma, are you not?"

"May I?" he answered joyfully.

So the bedroom which Mrs. Hunter had been preparing all the afternoon, and of which she was not a little proud, remained unoccupied; but the payment was lavish, and the day's labor was not regretted.

O, the never-to-be-forgotten ride to Chiselhurst through the wild, windy evening! The rain ceased, and the strange voices were abroad in the wind, singing jubilantly over the love-renewed redempted. The clouds drifted away, and the pure, sweet moonlight quivered over the wet trees and fields and seemed over benediction.

The reader is left to imagine the arrival home. Arthur had always been a favorite with Mrs. Clarefield, who in the old days of quarrels would always take his part. When dinner was disposed of, Mrs. Clarefield pleaded household duties and went to her room. There she sat down before the fire and wept, she said, over the happiness of her children. Down stairs those two were very quiet. To them love was a solemn thing, and they were silent lovers. The moments went swiftly on.

Presently Alice said, as she looked up in Arthur's face:

"You are not going to continue your walk to Hastings this week?"

He answered with a smile: "But, dear, I have pledged my word of honor to do so."

"I command you to break it!"

He did so; but none of his friends brought it as an accusation against him, for on his life he had broken his word of honor.

### Wit and Humor.

Dr. McClellan, the famous rifle-shot, gave an old colored man the other day a dollar to hold a target in the shape of the ashes at the end of a freshly lighted cigar. The darkey took the dollar in his hand and the cigar in his mouth. McClellan walked back, raised the rifle and shot the ashes from the end. The exploit was repeated successfully, but the old man objected to the third attempt.

"The third time an eder lucky or it am unlucky."

A store up-town has a sign which reads: "This is a tin store." An old inebriate staggered in recently, and after a good deal of fumbling in his pocket, put five cents on the counter. "What do you want?" asked the proprietor indignantly. "Wa-wa-wa-wa—a d-d-d-drink!"

"This is not a liquor saloon," said the proprietor, with awful emphasis. "Wha-wha-what!" said the drunken man, astonished. "Why, Jo-Jo-Jones said I could get a horn here!"

Fond parent: "How can you make your son sorry that he plays poker? Just you send the boy around to see us, and unless he knows the game mighty well we'll make him so sorry that he'll never want to see a pack of cards again."

Saved: "Isn't it delightful, Horace, to think of the awakening of nature after her long sleep! A few weeks ago and all was buried beneath the cold, white blanket of winter, and the frost king held the life-giving sap of the trees, and sowers in his mighty grip. Now all is changed. The sun, with its penetrating rays, revives the long dormant principles of the growth, and in a short time a few days at most—the earth will be clad in her spring suit of green, beautifully figured with dandelions and daisies."

"Oh, Almira Ann," said he, as he looked into her eyes a look of wrapt admiration. "If I thought you would always sing English like that I'd—I'd—but you might turn your language batteries on me." A moment more he would have been lost, but his guardian angel did not forsake him.

### Sticks to the Kaiser.

Said Prince Bismarck, at the close of his recent speech in the Reichstag, opening the debate on the tobacco monopoly: "If you ask me why, in the event of your not adopting the monopoly, I do not comply with the intention I expressed in 1877 of resigning, I reply that I remain out of personal considerations for his majesty. When I saw him lying in his blood after the Nobiling attempt at assassination, I vowed I would never resign without his consent. I shall not have many opportunities of addressing you again, but I entreat you not to dim the national name of Germany in the eyes of Europe, upon whose horizon there is a cloud now arising."

John Boyle O'Reilly, Boston poet and Irish leader, has this record: "Imperial convict, No. 9,843; absconded February 18, 1869." He escaped from west Australia. He has reason to sprinkle patriotic ink upon the British crown.

Mr. and Mrs. Sartoris are at Green Bay, Wisconsin, where he owns lands, and their children are at Long Branch with Grandpa and Grandma Grant.

The sultan of Morocco has 364 wives. He might with more propriety be called the sultan of More-rocker.

### A WOMAN'S NAY.

No, Impudence, you shan't have one! How many times must I refuse? Away!

Or else you'll sure my friendship lose. I can not bear such forward fun, So, quick, begone! If not, I'll run! Why, now I'll have to be severe—No, not a kiss to you I'll give—Take care!

I swear I'll tell papa, as sure's I live! I never saw a man so queer! But—are you sure there's no one near. —Yale Courant.

### A DESPERADO.

The Career of a Notorious Murderer and Mail-Robber as Related by Himself.

Philadelphia Press.

With heavy gyves clanking in dull, metallic ring at each movement, Henry W. Burton, confessed murderer and mail-robbet, sat wearily on the bench in a cell at the Central station, where he was brought from a prison in Detroit one evening by United States Marshal Matthews, of Michigan. He raised the short chain on his ankles from time to time with a nervous hand to let the iron links drop back to the asphalt floor with a noisy little clatter. He had removed his shoes and the fetters clasped tightly the thick woolen socks which covered the chained ankles. The prisoner is sentenced to imprisonment for life. His criminal operations were confined to Texas and Colorado. He had been sentenced for life once before, and prior to that time he had been convicted of various robberies, but the prisons of the west were never strong enough to hold him. Sometimes he escaped and sometimes he was pardoned, as was the case during his former life sentence, but in one way or another he was sure to be a free man. Burton's life has been peculiarly romantic; he never smoked a cigar or pipe or used tobacco in any form, nor has he ever taken a glass of intoxicating liquor. He never swears, and he said last evening that the sound of an oath cut him like a knife. "I have done much wrong, but the only remorse I feel is that I prove ungrateful to kind friends."

Burton is unmarried in the 29th year of his age. He was born in Texas. "My father was a ranchman," said he, "his name was White and my right name is Samuel White. I will explain afterwards why I am known by another name. When I was 13 years of age my father was shot by James Row in a quarrel. I vowed then that I would be revenged for my three sisters and I were left destitute by my father's murder. I grew up among the rangers, and I had many a fight with them before I was 21 years of age."

"It was when I reached that age that I met Row for the first time. It was in a camp in Rockdale County, Texas. I was told who he was. Stepping in front of him I exclaimed, 'You are my father's murderer, and before he had time to draw a pistol, I shot him through the heart. As I fired the weapon, Brown's eyes dilated with fear; he fell over backwards dead. I was arrested afterwards for the offense, and served a short time of imprisonment. After my discharge I began my career as a mail-robbet, or a train-agent. I worked without any assistance whatever; always alone."

There is nothing in the convict's countenance to suggest a vindictive nature. Not even when alluding to the slayer of his father, whom he found and killed after an eight year's hunt, did he betray any malevolence in his voice or manner. When he related the tale of the stage-coach load of passengers whom he frightened into surrender by means of dummy confederates pointed behind an ambuscade he laughed as he added, "They didn't know I was alone. I blundered each one as he or she came out. I always tried to keep everybody in a good humor and let them feel their losses as easy as possible."

The group outside of the bars joined in the merriment provoked by the ludicrous idea of keeping people good-humored while they were being plundered. Passing on to other adventures, Burton said, in answer to the Chief's question whether he had ever seen the James boys: "Yes, I saw Jesse once and it was a funny meeting. It was several years ago. I was quite a young fellow then, and had been doing some work on the road in Texas. I stopped at a ranch near Waco. I noticed a well-built man, who seemed to eye me closely. I made up my mind that he was an officer and was after me, and the moment I saw him I kept my hand on my pistol. He kept his eyes on me, and I saw him get his pistol. I felt queer then and I reached for my own, but he got the drop on me. He said: 'No you don't, kind of laughing like as he covered me with his weapon, but I kept my hand on my pistol. I said to him: 'You've got it on me, but I'm going to fight for it.' Well, we both saw that it would be a fight, so we parlayed, and then he asked me who I was, and I asked him the same thing; but I was afraid of him, still thinking he was an officer. Then he said that Jack Younger had told him about me and that he was Jesse James. He was getting together a lot of fellows (this before the raid on the train at Fort Worth) and he wanted me to join him badly, but I wouldn't go. I afterward found out who he was."

"I became an expert shot with the pistol riding around. I generally fired off a hundred cartridges a day, but not at people, you understand. When I was on horseback and saw a bird on the wing or an animal going by I just blazed away at it, and in that way got plenty of practice and became a good shot."

Mr. William H. Vanderbilt last week gave \$1,000 toward the debt of Grace Memorial Church, Lexington, Va., a handsome structure erected in honor of Robert E. Lee.

Mr. Walter C. Jones, a munificent Englishman, has recently given \$360,000 for the religious missions in Japan and China.