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FRANK, MY DARLING.

BY ELEANOR C. DONNELLY.

How heavenly calm the soul looks out
From baby's azure eyes!
As pure and fair, as clear and sweet,
As the stream that flows through the golden street
And waters Paradise.

And surely the flowers of that bright land,
Where deathless verdure grows—
Brighter than in this dewy life,
In his shining shoulders and finger tips,
In his cheek's delicious rose.

And surely those white-robed ones who bathe
Their wings in feature's light:
Three souls of children, who perished pure
In their early youth, and were caught secure
From the touch of coming blight:

Surely those angel children fair,
Smile as they float afar—
To see these world-weary, dark and dim,
The stainless soul of our baby Frank
Shine out like a sister star!

O happy darling! I clasp thee close,
I clasp thee, faint with fear,
For looking into thy liquid eyes,
I hear the music of Paradise,
And feel the angels near.

And I hide thee in my bosom, babe,
I kiss thee o'er and o'er,
Lest the angels catch thee, as if in play,
Out of my arms, in happy play,
And breathe away—away—
To bring thee back no more!

Many a darling, fair as thou,
From mother's breast as fond,
Has floated away with the happy dead,
Tiro the golden gates, by the angels led,
To swell the ranks beyond.

And blessed are they, I know full well,
For they rest and know no sin,
And the bowers of Heaven are bright—and they
May drink with their innocent lips away
The waters that gush therein.

Yet, angels dead, lead not my boy
Where that fair River rolls!
His little sparkling life would be
Only a drop in Eternity—
A drop in your rich Eternity.
Rejoice with happy souls!

You—you can spare him not my wife—
You court shall lessen never!
But I, ah woe!—how could I rest,
With empty arms and yearning breast?
By night—by day—how could I rest
And miss my babe forever!

—Saturday Evening Post.

PUSS BURBANK'S ENEMY.

"How now, Vallance, speculating on to-morrow's chances, eh?"

Captain Dana threw himself lazily down on the grass beside his friend, and began to whistle softly.

"I should not be surprised if to-morrow's chances came to-day," said Vallance St. Cloud, thoughtfully, "I suspect the enemy are nearer than we think—a difficult thing for him to be hiding away somewhere down there but that was not the subject of my speculations. Did you know, Dana, I spent two years in this vicinity once. Everything looks as natural to me as the book I learned my letters in would. Do you see that hill yonder, the bluest crested one, lower than the others?"

Dana looked and nodded.

"I staid just at the foot of that—the other side though—two years. It was the queerest, old-fashioned, big-roomed farm house, with the oddest little maiden presiding over it. I should like to know what became of her. She wasn't a sweet-heart, Dana, so you need not laugh; I was only a lad then, too. My mother left me there for the air; she fancied I was consumptive, I believe. I used to be ill sometimes; I remember, and this little girl took care of me. Such a demure little puss, you know; and, by-the-way, they called her Puss too. It's a fashion they have in these Southern families. There's always a 'Puss' among the children, and I never heard her called anything else but Puss Burbank."

"There's a Burbank a rebel colonel, isn't there?" interjected Dana.

"It can't be Puss's father—no, of course not. He was an old man in those days—broken with drink too; treated the child shamefully sometimes, and petted her ridiculously at others. I'd give a month's pay to see the little thing again, if he hasn't killed her in one of his drunken rages. Why she could't have been—well—not more than eight, I should think, and she used to take care of me like a regular grandmother. She liked me wonderfully; clung to me as though she would never let me go the morning I left; and when I finally had to start, I left her in a kind of swoon. Children have such fancies occasionally you know. I promised to go back and see her sometime, but I never went."

"She's probably dead or married before this time," said Dana.

"Possibly," St. Cloud said, with a half sigh; "but it seems to me as though I could find her right there in the old house, yet, poor, patient little Puss! I don't know why I never went to see her; I always meant to. There, Dana! didn't I tell you?" as

a shell suddenly came screaming toward the lines from the plain below. It fell short though, and the two young men sprang up the bank, the long roll sounded, men flew to arms; it was a battle.

Puss, she wasn't dead or married, or gone away from the very roof that young St. Cloud had lain ill under years before. I dare say she has grown some, but she was a little thing yet; and if she had looked womanly when she was a child, she looked strangely childlike now she was a woman. There is an expression of countenance natural to some woman that is always childlike; and, curiously enough it so often accompanies us to almost mean patience and meekness under great calamity.

A little earlier than St. Cloud and Dana were talking of her Puss sat in the low doorway of the farm-house sewing. Short, low-dropping curls clustering against her faintly-cremated cheek, and deep outturning lashes fringed the blue-veined eyelids. As she now and then cast expectant, yet shrinking glances down the path, her eyes had the serious brightness of a startled child. Puss wasn't thinking of the impending battle. Living in a very secluded and by-place, she caught only vague rumors of it. She thought of the war sometimes; often perhaps; but she was full of her own troubles, poor Puss! and the conflict of yonder had not yet deadened with its roar the clamor of this other—a vital one, too, in her own home. Her home: a plain and bare enough one, but owing what comfort it had to her little hands, that never ceased trying to brighten it—never wearied of caring for the old man, whose sole housekeeper she had been since her mother died, more than ten years now. She was older than St. Cloud thought.

He had called Burbank broken with drink when he knew him; but there had been vitality enough left in him to drag through these years since, getting more broken and worse with drink, and leading Puss such a life as is not easily described.

She never murmured though, and when her mother's relatives would have removed her from his control, she always said in her little quiet, unanswerable way, "I promised mother, you know, and he's all I've got besides," and staid.

Burbank was afraid of her leaving him; and after one of these scenes used to hang about her in a pitiful kind of gratitude, that half maudlin as it was, used to shake her heart over with loving tenderness toward him.

She should never be sorry, that she should not, for staying with her old father. She'd get her reward some of these days; and one night he told her what it was to be.

There was a bold, coarse man with whom Burbank had of late formed a drunken intimacy. That heled her father into even deeper excesses than he would seek himself Puss was very sure, and aside from his natural repulsiveness, that made him hateful to her. She shuddered at his very presence, but endured till her father commanded her to receive him as her future husband. This she utterly refused to do; but, emboldened by the old man's encouragement, and the girl's helplessness, the ruffian continued to persecute her with his loathsome suit. Poor Puss! Her mother's friends had gone away from that part of the country; she and her father lived very isolated lives, and she had nobody but God and herself to look to for protection from this danger—this outrage, which Burbank in his drunken dotage was capable of perpetrating.

Suddenly, as she sat sewing, she heard the approaching voices of her father and this man, who was always with him now, and shrank within the house. The two sat down to the meal that waited them, and Puss, after waiting upon them, retreated to the window and resumed her sewing, betraying no consciousness of having heard Mallory's coarse flattery. While they were eating the first sullen boom of the attacking cannon sounded, and the two men started up.

"That means business, and sooner'n I reckoned on," said Mallory, and while Burbank lingered in the doorway he went and stood near Puss.

She drew back from his too near vicinity, not speaking, however.

"See you now, my girl," said he, "I was goin' to fix this yer matter of ours to-day, if it hadn't been for this fight comin' on. I'm goin' to hev a hand in that now, but when I come back I shan't stand no more triflin'."

Puss only shrank a little till he touched her round white chin familiarly with his hand, adding some meant-to-be conciliatory words.

She rose trembling then, calling "Father!" in an agony.

Burbank did not hear. He was already nodding in the doorway; and with a brutal shackle the ruffian bent toward her again.

Quick as a flash Puss struck him with her little hand once, two, three, sharp stinging blows across the eyes; and as he recoiled involuntarily, blinded by the smart, she leaped through the door, like some scared animal, and bounded up the hillside with such frantically swift feet that the fellow, after the first rush, gave up the chase.

Puss never paused till she stood at the top of the hill which commanded the far-away battle field, whose din by this time was shaking the very earth. In a fascination that swallowed every other feeling she stood watching the lurid flash and rolling smoke clouds, nor turned away till she saw by the flying squadrons that Northern bayonets had won the day. Then she crept fearful and stealthily back to the house.

But no one was there, nor seemed to have been all day. Her sewing lay just as she had dropped it, and the door was wide. No one came near the house all night, though she sat and watched; not even her old father; and in the morning she went out, white and scared, to look for him.

Not stopping, as on similar occasions before, to look for him, asleep perhaps among the fastnesses of the hills, she went straight on running sometimes, to yesterday's battle-field.

A little way out upon the plain past sights that left her lips bloodless, though here had not been the heat of the fight, some one called her name. It was a young officer who lay near, half crushed under the body of his horse.

With a strangely throbbing heart the girl approached him.

He had recognized her, and not much wonder, she had changed so little; but it was somewhat singular that she knew him through the blood and dust, and after the years since she had seen him. Some women hold some faces in their hearts forever though, and defy time or ought to put the memory past recognition.

"Oh Vally!" she said, clasping her hands. It was what she used to call him. He smiled faintly. "I'm not worth hilt, if only some one would lift this carcass off me. I've got something in my shoulder that won't let me help myself."

Tears blinding her, Puss tried with her own little hands, but of course in vain.

An ambulance came up soon, however, and released St. Cloud from the incubus. As they lifted him in he held his well hand toward her. "Come and see me, Puss, won't you?"

With a gasping sob the girl turned toward the officer in charge.

"Where are you going to take them?" she asked. "Is it fat?"

"About three miles."

Puss glanced at the ambulance, containing now as many of the poor wounded fellows as it could accommodate; and the thought of the long way before they could be at rest almost stifled her utterance.

"I live up there," she said, eagerly, "hot heat'll melle. I'll take care of them all, if you'll let me, and as many more as you choose to bring."

The officer hesitated, glancing at the young pale face; perhaps some red-tape stultic vexed him; but if so, he risked it, ordering the ambulance in the direction indicated.

"In going over the field have you seen an old, quite an old man?" Puss asked, in a low and stricken voice, as they were moving off.

The officer understood her. "Poor child! yes," he said gently. "He lies over there, just beyond that rise of ground." And as Puss, catching her breath, turned away, he spoke in a low

voice to two of the men, who followed her.

The poor old man was dead.

A little while later, but quick, Puss followed dreamily after the men as they lifted and bore the body between them.

The day's happening was not yet done. Taking a little different route, than that by which she had come, they found a man frightfully torn with wounds, and howling in agony. Puss knew him—it was Mallory—and stopped.

The ambulance had gone on. When the man saw her he entreated piteously that she would call it back; that she would bring him water; that she would not leave him there to die alone.

Fear and shuddering lost in pity, Puss promised to stay by him in his mad terror and agony till other help came. She brought him water, and knelt beside him, holding it to his lips.

Her enemy! Words cannot tell how she had feared him; but he could not hurt her now; and with her hand upon him, pitiful and forgiving, he died there.

Puss made a capital nurse. Her patients thrived as no others did.

Vallance suspected from stray gleanings something of what her life had been all those years; but she never liked to talk of it, and he never knew that it was her enemy whose dying moments Puss had soothed that day.

She kept that memory, so connected with her dead father, to herself. No body should blame him for that. But something of her long pain broke into her voice when one day after Vallance was all time well, and had been talking in low, cheek-flushing words to her, she crept into his arms, crying,

"I waited you so long, Vally—I wanted you so!"

"I knew it, my darling! God forgive me for not coming sooner! But how I want somebody. Can I have her?"

He knew, but he liked to hear her tender, timid whisper, "Yes