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The POTTER JOURNAL

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114-11

Poetry.

For the JOURNAL & ITEM.

A Valentine.

We poor, self-conscious ones that count
Each sigh we breathe, each tear that falls,
Touch nothing but from out the past
Some passion sweet recalls.

I look my babe upon my breast
And kiss his hands, his brow of snow,
Yet see between his face and mine
The veil of Long Ago.

If I should tell you all my grief
You would reply: "The end is near,
For sorrows fashioned into speech
Take wings and disappear."

If I reproach you, you will think
"I did her love no bitter wrong,
For she weeps not enough to change
The cadence of one song."

—Yet, nay! I scarce can reach your heart,
Though, leaning through the twilight drear,
I breathe the prayer I used of old:
"God bless thee always, dear!"

M. E. H. EVERETT.

For the JOURNAL & ITEM.

Shadows.

Down in the troubled waters
A quiet shadow lies;
A graceful fir tree stretched
Against the wintry skies.

There in the glare of noonday
And in the moon's pale gleam,
The wing-like branches shadow
The little restless stream.

Down in my troubled spirit
A restless shadow lies;
The shadow of a glory
Against the changeless skies;

What though my heart's deep fountain
Be Maral's bitter spring?
Since in its depth is hidden
The "Shadow of His wing."

M. E. H. EVERETT.

Miscellany.

From the

Manners upon the Road.

My dear Fred,—I saw the carriages

and the bridal favors at the door of

a church the other day, as I was

passing in the horse-car, and straight-

way my mind was full of the loveliest

pictures. Indeed, a marriage is like

spring. It is the most familiar of

facts. Yet how often a spring day

is the most melancholy of disillusions!

But it is not the chill, dull days that

spring suggests. The word is full of

sunshine and softness, the singing of

birds and the sweetness of blossoms

and the gurgling of brooks. To

think of a spring day is to think of

happy hopes and eternal youth, of

burbling beauty and of love. And

I say that this vision does not fade

although the spring seems often to

clude us, and to go from March to

June almost without justification.

May-day is a pretty name. But who

would promise that on the next May-

day he will dance garlanded around

the pole and salute the queen? Con-

sulting experience, we know the

chances of the easterly storm. But

while men often despair, yet in the

heart of man experience never yet

conquered hope. Spring still stands

upon the horizon, jocund and tiptoe,

a smiling Hebe.

In the same way, who permits the

figure of old Blue-beard to spoil the

vision of matrimony? Suppose that

he did cut off those poor dear heads;

suppose that at this very instant

sister Fatima is standing upon a hun-

dred towers in this very city, look-

ing eagerly for the fast-hastening

brothers, and spying only a flock of

sheep as she sees us placidly prom-

enading in the street; do we look

with any less tender joy upon Lucy

emerging from the church yonder in

a white veil, and leaning upon the

happy Harry's arm? That lovely

pair, that shy hope and modest con-

fidence—these, and not Blue-beard's

disagreeable closet, make the vision

of matrimony. As when we speak

of spring we mean roses and honey-

suckles and soft air, so when we

speak of marriage we mean the union

of youth and strength and beauty

and devotion which I saw as the

bridal party emerged from the

church. Indeed, there is one word

which seems to me to express it all

—we think of the honey-dew which

has fallen upon two lives.

What is honey-dew? It is a natu-

ral question, but it is useless to go

beyond its own suggestion. What

should you suppose honey-dew to be?

Something infinitely pure and sweet.

Well, it is a kind of saccharine de-

posit upon certain leaves. And

when the reverend hands are raised

over the heads of the kneeling young

figures, and the traditional sacred

benediction is spoken, do you not

ask, What is love but a deposit of

honey-dew upon life? I protest, as

the old writers used to say, that

when I see the newly married pair I

think of a surfeit of richness, of those

roses and honeysuckles of spring

steeped in honey-dew. I know that

there are withered leaves and thorns;

but what then? Here, at least, are

bliss and freshness and sweetness.

If the sun presently rises and burns

up the dew—very well, that belongs

to a later hour.

That is to say, that it usually

does. But I am sorry, in a short

sermon upon so sweet a text, to be

obliged to say that sometimes the

sun exhales that dew at a very early

hour. When I saw Lucy in her

white veil coming from the church

and moving toward her carriage, I

pulled the string of the car and I

jumped out, and ran to the sidewalk,

and just as the door of the carriage

closed I went to it, and removing

my hat respectfully, I put my head

in at the window and I said, "Mrs.

Lucy, don't let the sun exhale the

honey-dew of this moment!" And

with that I bade her godspeed, and

she bowed and withdrew. She looked

at me over her flowers and smiled,

and I suppose she told Harry that

it was only their harmless old friend

Mr. Bachelor. And I can fancy

Harry saying as the carriage drove

away, "Just fancy, Lucy—fancy to-

day, of all days, the misery of be-

longing to the Bachelor family!"

But I will add for the information

of those who are liable to be con-

fused upon the subject, that he knew

of the family to be married.

When I see some of the tough

survivors, so to speak, Fred—some

of the matrimonial campaigners, as

they would be called by you scoffing

around with a tossing head, and then

with peevish impatience exclaimed,

"I won't sit here. Why did you get

into this car? The chairs are not

half so comfortable as they are in the

other car." And my lady fumed

and bounced and pouted, and then

added, "You are always so stupid!

You always get into the wrong car!"

Poor Harry replied in a low tone,

feeling, I fear, very foolish, because

he knew that I heard, although I

looked abstractedly out of the win-

dow, with an air of wondering wheth-

er Dr. Livingstone was still at Mjumbz

or had advanced to Guxji. Indeed,

I assumed the most Central African

air possible, in order to relieve Har-

ry of the awkwardness of my pres-

ence. Harry, I say, mumbled some-

thing deprecatory of the wrath of

Junio, and begged Lucy to be seated.

But she held her hands in her muff

and tossed her head again, and per-

formed the same founcings and bounc-

ings until Harry suggested that he

was very sorry indeed, but that the

other car was not going through, and

if she did not seat herself soon the

chairs would all be taken. Then the

bride Lucy flung herself sullenly into

one of the chairs, and Harry seated

himself in the one beside her. Sudden-

ly she rose, and said, angrily,

"I'm not going to ride backward!"

and Harry, rising, begged her to take

his chair, which was next to mine,

while I continued to explore equator-

ial Africa out of the window.

After a long time Harry made some

remark, which his wife's partner snap-

ped at like a vicious bird at a finger.

But nothing could rival his patience.

I thought at first that he would glad-

ly join Dr. Livingstone, if he were

only sure that the doctor would never

come back; but I soon saw that

he was simply refusing to believe

what was not pleasant. He spoke

very low, and I could catch the de-

precating, soothing tone; but I pined

him profoundly. Presently I returned

from Central Africa, and gazed

around the car and looked carefully

at Lucy. She was a well-dressed

young woman, with the face of a

spoiled beauty. But her cross, irri-

table temper was the hot sun that had

so soon dried the honey-dew from

her nuptial bower. Harry would evi-

dently try to believe it still there,

Patient, soothing, thoughtful, he

would evidently insist to himself

that these freaks were but vapors of

the morning. I am much older than

Harry, and I turned to that sulky

little Lucy and said, "My dear, while

the dew stays upon roses and honey-

suckles they are fresh and fair. They

do not wither until that dries. And

the sweetest of all dew is honey-dew.

Gentle lady, beware! Don't let it dry

away."

She looked at me for a moment in

amazement, and then said, in a half-

hysterical tone, to Harry, "There!

I told you I didn't wish to sit here.

And here is a crazy man!"

Poor Harry! By-and-by he will

lay a handkerchief over his head after

dinner, and Lucy will awaken him

to say that she wishes he would not

snore. Will you like that, Lucy?

Will you wish sometimes for the old

lover of long ago? And before it

comes to the hard, cold tone in which

you disturb his snoring, will you

perhaps sometimes passionately say

"Once it was different. Once you

were devoted to me?" Then should

this letter chance to be seen by you

—or Fred is very apt to drop his

correspondence!—will you not re-

fect upon the words of the crazy

man who sat next you in the car

going to Persepolis, and shield

the honey-dew new-fallen upon your

life from the withering glare of a

peevish temper?

Your friend, Fred,

AN OLD BACHELOR.

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