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POETRY.

A SKETCH.

BY R. T. CONRAD.

She knelt by her lovers gory bed,
For his life was fast receding;
On her panting breast she pillowed his head,
And essayed to staunch its bleeding.

"Oh, look on me, love!" But he heeded not;
"Oh, tell me thou art not dying!"
He heard but the far-off battle shout;
He saw but the foemen flying.

"Rise, fly with me, Albert!" But vainly she wept,
And twined her white arms around him;
For far on the war-blast his roused spirit swept,
And the battle spell still bound him.

He raised from her breast: "On, comrades, on!"
The hot blood gushed as he started;
"Oh, calm thee, my Albert—the battle is done!"
"On! on!" and his spirit departed.

One wild look of terror the maiden cast
On the form of her lifeless lover!
One look—'twas the saddest, the loveliest, last—
One thro'—and the struggle was over.

Her head on the breast of her hero sank low;
No sobs her suffering betoken;
And the dew gathered thick on her pale, cold brow,
Cold—cold, for her brave heart was broken!

SELECT STORY.

How A Quakeress was Courted.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

Philadelphia boasts probably the prettiest troupe of Quaker girls in the world. To be sure of that one has only to walk out in the neighborhood of Friends' meeting-house before meeting time on the Sabbath, and watch them demurely wending their way toward their places of worship, in their dresses of gray, or white, or drab, with certain modifications of the sad hues and strait fashions adopted by the elder women, and pretending to be utterly unconscious of young male friends on the other side of the street. Lillies and rose leaves are their shins—placid their downcast eyes—shapely their quiet mouths. A habit of self control, the hereditary absence of all strong expression of emotion, gives them an expression to be sought for in vain in the countenances of other girls, and they remain young longer than any amongst the world's people.

Ten years or more ago, there dwelt at the corner of Chestnut and — streets a certain dealer in cheese and butter, by the name of Ephraim Prout. He had made a fortune in trade, and was widely respected, especially by those of his own sect. His aged mother, who resided with him, was one of those distinguished personages who take their seats upon the platform in the meeting-house, and occasionally, once in six months or so, have a call to speak. And his wife was an industrious body, as young looking as her own daughter. As for that daughter words cannot describe her. Nature, in pity for the prejudice which doomed her to wear her sad lined garments all her life, had showered upon her all the brilliant tints upon her pallet; red gold was her hair, sapphire blue her eyes, carnation tints were in her cheeks, and pearls are not more brilliant than her teeth. Even the solemn elderly friends who visited E-

phraim Prout had that vorily, friend Ephraim's daughter was fair to look upon.

Perhaps she knew it, for she had a looking-glass, but not a word of flattery had she ever heard; never had that conscientious Quaker mother ever even said the word "becoming" in her presence. When clothes were bought, it was with the remark, "That gown is no longer fit for thee to wear to meeting;" or, "The weather is so cold, thee must have a warmer bonnet."

To be sure there was always much discussion about the fineness of the fabric, and great anxiety lest a thing should be of poor quality; but the cloak of economy was thrown over this, and the touch of pride and vanity kept quite out of sight.

So, week after week, first day found Bessy at meeting; second day, busy with household affairs, while her mother superintended the washing; third day, ironing; fourth day, baking; and so on, till the seven we recounted. But always with all housework done by two, and plenty of time to visit plenty of girl Friends, who in turn visit her, with knitting-work, and went home before nine. Very notable was Bessy Prout, and very dutiful and very kind to every one, high or low. She would have been a modern miracle had she not been a Quakeress. Looking at her with world's people's eyes, you would have fancied her seventeen. In reality, she was twenty-four. Twenty-four and not married. Had you asked Friend Hannah Prout why, she would have said, "My daughter does not yet bake bread as I could wish, and I cannot allow her to marry until that is well learnt." This was the fact, as far as her parents were concerned; for herself, she had yet no fancy, or hope, or wish on the subject. It was a female Friend's duty to marry some time, she knew. When that time came she should be ready.

Young men who saw Bessy at meeting, or at home, or in her father's store, were not so calmly indifferent. More than one Quaker youth, with a pleasant appreciation of Bessy's beauty and thrifty consideration of her father's wealth, were, like Barkis, "willing." But on none of them did the paternal eye fall with favor. Ephraim Prout and his wife Hannah had already selected a husband for their child. That husband to be was one Peter Potter, a widower of forty, who talked, and occasionally preached, through his extremely long nose, who had four children and owned three blocks of Arch st. property—"squares" in the parlance of the Philadelphians—and was reported to have a million of money out at interest. Verily, the placid breast of an elderly Friend is open to one temptation. He does love money. He cannot respect the man who does not make any. When he sees it, he would not steal it, nor murder for its sake; nor would he lie squarely out and out; but he will contrive to possess it if possible, and will hold it when he gets it. Ephraim was a good man, but in his heart he coveted Friend Peter's money, and the only way to have it in the family was to let him marry Bessy. The two had spoken on the subject, and Friend Hannah consented as soon as Bessy's loaves should be faultless.

Bessy had not been consulted. She knew Friend Peter came every first day to tea.—She knew he talked much of the dreariness of a home without a wife. Often she acquiesced in the maternal opinion that Friend Peter was a worthy man. And, probably, she would have as calmly acquiesced in the opinion that he was the proper husband to select when the time came, but for one unlucky circumstance. About the middle of December, just when Bessy's loaves were beginning to merit approval, Selina Grief was married. After passing meeting, and going through the other ceremonies, the new-made couple gave a house-warming; and thither, of course, went Bessy; Bessy's mother and father and Friend Peter.

Thither also came a young man of the world's people; one Mr. John Hubbard, who wore a black coat, a blue cravat, a pair of patent-leather boots and a stove-pipe hat; and who was regarded by the youthful Friends with feelings of mingled admiration and terror; as a fascinating Hottentot or gentlemanly South Sea Islander might be in ordinary society. He called first day, "Sunday." He said "you" instead of thee and

thou; and other instead of thee, for he is a grammarian Friend, indeed, who uses "thou" in common parlance. He owned to smoking, and absolutely "wished they had a piano on a fiddle, and could get up a dance."

Poor, misguided creature, nobody had taught him better. The Quakers were gentle with him, and Bessy explained, "We Friends don't dance, friend Hubbard," to which he replied, "Ah, I was not aware of that; I beg your pardon, Miss Prout, and that of the other ladies and gentlemen."

"If he had said, 'Thee and other friends must excuse me, friend Bessy,' it would have been better." "Ladies and gentlemen," and "Miss Prout," frightened the Quakers—it was such worldly language.

Of course, there was neither singing nor dancing, but they played "hot butter, blue beans," and "ring a'rosy," and the forfeits being generally kisses, Mr. Hubbard enjoyed himself amazingly. Perhaps no one noticed it, perhaps they did—but he managed to kiss Bessy oftener than any one else. And that night walked home with her, while Friend Peter was searching for his broom-brimmed hat.

Questioned by her mother, Bessy answered: "I thought it best to allow thee to see he should think Friends proud—my young man. Doubtless friend Peter found a pleasanter companion and was nowise hurt."

So maternal solicitude was put at rest, and few impressions were awakened by the fact that Mr. John Hubbard soon took an immense interest in butter and cheese, conversed with friend Ephraim on those subjects with great animation, when they encountered each other at that Friend's store, and managed to be invited home to tea because he really could not leave friend Ephraim until he quite comprehended the advantages of the new patent churn. Very naturally, very easily, he became sociable. His merry voice and dancing black eyes were welcome. Hannah Prout took some pains to provide sundry good things in the eating line which he was fond of. Friend Ephraim talked cheese and butter to him; and Bessy—we pause there.—We do not know the Quaker term for falling in love, but we believe it might be allowable to say that Bessy was pleased with the young friend. Her improvement in bread-making was miraculous. One evening Hannah cut the loaf, and smiling turned to her daughter and said:

"Bessy, thee makes bread as well as thy mother. I never cut a nicer loaf."

And Bessy blushed with satisfaction—as you might, dear young lady reader, should Herr Tweedledom say—"You play as well as I do myself, Madame," after your execution under his tuition of some difficult piece of music; for, amongst the Friends the maker of good bread is honored.

That afternoon was one to be remembered, for the placid stream of Bessy's life was turned and the waters grew somewhat turbid for awhile.

The time had come when friend Peter Potter might be gratified. His wife was ready for him. A conference was held between the father and the anxious widower respecting Bessy's pecuniary prospects, should her future spouse die first, and the courtship commenced. Not by Peter going down on his knees to Bessy, not by a love-letter, but by Friend Ephraim agreeing to "speak to the child."

That night he spoke.

The three sat before the fire—Ephraim twiddling his thumbs; Hannah darning stockings; "The child"—Bessy—knitting.

Ephraim begun.

"Bessy."

"Yes, father."

"Thee made a good loaf yesterday."

"Yes, father."

"Thy mother says it was not chance, but understanding."

"Yes, father."

"Thou art fit to manage a house of thy own."

"I think so, father."

"In fact, it is time thee should marry."

"Yes, father, I have been thinking so myself."

"I am sorry to hear thee say that, child," cried Hannah. "A young girl should not

think of such a matter until suggested by her parents or some wise Friend."

Bessy looked down abashed.

"Mother, thee must have said I never had such a thought until thee suggested."

"Well, child."

"Only last week a Friend spoke to me of the matter."

"What friend? Good Sarah Rose, doubtless; she is ever for having women marry betimes."

"No mother—not friend Rose."

"Perhaps thy aunt Eliza."

"No mother."

"Who was it, child."

"Friend John Hubbard."

"Friend—John Hubbard!"

"Yes, mother. He spoke of thinking well

of me, and suggested that our lives would be passed happily together."

"What did thee tell him, Bessy?"

"I said I would consult friends. That my head was not what it ought to be, I feared."

"Bessy thee knows a female Friend may not marry a young man of the world's people. Christie Brown was read out of meeting for so doing."

"Yes, mother."

"Well, child, since the time has come for thee to marry, thee will be glad to know that friend Peter Potter is anxious for a wife and prefers thee."

Bessy turned pale.

"Widow Ann Billings or Sarah Fox would be more suitable to him," she said.

"And why?"

"They are older."

"So much the more honor for thee Bessy."

"I fear I should not be a blessing to friend Peter."

"Well."

"I—I—know I should to friend John."

"How does thee know that?"

"He—he—said—that—"

"Well, child."

"That he'd die if I didn't marry him."

"Ah!"

"And that I was a—a—oh, my—a—"

"Go on, Bessy."

"An angel!"

"The profane youth."

"He thinks so well of me."

"Indeed!"

"And I think so very, very, very well of him."

"Bessy."

"Yes, father."

"Friend John is of the world's people and has fifteen dollars a week."

"Yes, father."

"Friend Peter is worth a million of money."

"Yes, father."

"Also, he is a friend."

"Yes, father."

"Consequently thee had better marry him."

Of course friend John is out of the question.

As to friend Peter, I have not relied on my own judgment, which is fallible, as I am only fifty odd years old. I went to one older and wiser—thy grandmother, who is eighty.—Thou canst not set thy opinion against hers. She says Peter is destined for thee by Providence."

"Yes, father."

"Next First day Peter and thee will pass meeting for the first time. Thee knows the course things regularly take, and thy mother will purchase all that is necessary. I desire thee to be well provided with clothing of the finest quality. It is now time for thee to retire. Good night, Bessy."

"Good-night," said Bessy, with a trembling lip.

So it was settled. It never entered into any one's heart that Bessy was not used tenderly. No one knew how wet her pillow was with tears. And the days hurried on, one after the other, toward the First day on which the twain were to "pass meeting" for the first time preparatory to the solemnization of their nuptials.

It was what world's people call Friday—what Friends term Fifth day. All the week placid Bessy had been a little sad, not quite herself. The extremely fine fabric of her muslin wedding dress did not seem to interest her as it should have done. Perhaps had your bridegroom been Peter Potter you might have felt as she did. But on this Friday