THE WORLD'S MOST BEAUTIFUL LOVE LETTERS

Poets, Philosophers, Heroes and Wits Have Left Behind Them Passionate Appeals That Bare Their Inmost Hearts

NOT very long ago a love letter of no less a poet than the great Dryden went to the auction block, in London. There it was, inscribed "To the Fair Hands of Mme. Honour Dryden," just as the admirer, destined to fame, had addressed it to the charming cousin with whom he had fallen in love.

"I kiss your letter," Dryden wrote. "The white and red of the wax and paper are but shadows of the vermillion and snow on your lips and forehead; and the inkhorne, if it presume to vye in whiteness with your skinne, must confess itself blacker than the liquor it contains."

Not at all a poor attempt at lovemaking, and wearing the air of all sincerity. But Dryden didn't wed her; and nobody else did, for that matter. Mme. Honour Dryden died unmarried. Some of the other masterpieces of love literature were fully as futile.

Jane Welsh Carlyle, Recipient of Philosophical Love Letters

Juliette Drouet Who Inspired Victor Hugo for Half a Century

Mrs. Fitzherbert to Whom George IV of England Sent Glowing Epistles

Lady Mary Wortley Montague, Who Wrote the Model Elopers' Letter

Countess Guiccioli Who Attracted Billets from Byron

Lady Hamilton, to Whom Nelson Wrote the Most Tragic of Love Letters

THE romance of Thomas Carlyle and the charming Jane Welsh was the very opposite. His was a wooing that called for persistence, if not in winning the maid, then at least in clearing away the obstacles of circumstances that barred him from her. So there exists a long series of letters, filled with love and worldly philosophy, which make two big volumes and are well worth the eye of that famous young man of anecdote who, when he asked for another volume by Carlyle in the English library and was refused for the best of reasons, cried in dismay: "What, aren't there any more?" He would have been rejoiced to know that such a mass of letters has been preserved.

Carlyle was writing to Miss Welsh from Hoddam Hill, on Monday, the 4th of July, 1825; he and his mother were expecting a visit from her. His knowledge of German, which served such quaint purpose of style of his "Sartor Resartus," turned to affectionate mildness in addressing her simply as "My Love" in beginning his letter:

"Meine Liebe, Tho' it is not yet a week since the utmost speed of postage could have brought me your Letter, I have begun to long for it with no little eagerness. A Letter from you is like a little rose in the garden of love: we must wait with patience till the Sun and the dew have unclosed the bud and sent forth the leaves; not pluck it unripened and mock the promise of its blushing fragrance. I might insult your love of me, and awaken doubts about what is not doubtful, if I made any more apologies about the rudeness, insufficiency, and so forth, of the accommodation you are like to meet with. Is it not my own vanity rather than my wish for your happiness that would prompt me to dilate on that 'head of matters'? Forsooth the Philosopher is afraid lest his Chosen Darling should find out that he is not rich enough, or of rich enough extraction; that he is in fact a sort of clod-hopper, and unworthy the attention, not to say the affection, of one like her! Poor Philosopher! he were but a young apprentice to the trade, if these things moved him. Or do I know so little of you as to think that pomp and circumstance are essential to your comfort, that kindness and affection might not make amends for every want? Come, then, come my darling; if you have the heart to venture, I predict that you will not repent. * * *

"How many quarrels do you think will serve us? One perhaps. Alas, that human souls have so much of the Devil in them! How could I find in my heart to say one cruel word to you? Or why should those kind, black eyes ever look on me with any other aspect than the melting light of love? * * *

"Poor miserable sons of Adam! There is a spark of heavenly fire within us, an ethereal glow of love and wisdom, for it was the breath of God that made us living souls; but we are made of the dust of the ground, and our lot is cast on Earth, and the fire lies lifeless among the ashes of our fortune, or burns with a fitful twinkle, which chance, not we, can foster. It makes me sad to think how very small a part we are of what we might be; how men struggle with the great trade winds of life, and are borne below the haven by squalls and currents which they knew not of; how they toil and strain, and are again deceived; and how at last tired nature casts away the helm, and leaves the bark to float at random, careless to what unknown rock or shore the gloomy tide may bear it."

Philosophy with a vengeance, in the midst of love, but both love and philosophy affording ample evidences of a spirit that held the heiress he wrote to enthralled until their marriage.

BROWNING'S DEVOTION

And here, in a love letter of Robert Browning to his wife, is a reference to the philosopher's wedded existence, twenty-one years after that missive of the love-longing 4th of July:

"My dearest Ba, my sweetest, only love must sit, if she please, in the gondola chair and let me talk today, not write to her—for my head aches—from pure perversity—and a little from my morning spent over a novel of Balzac's—that is it, not any real illness, I know—however, the effect is the same. Beside I got tired with the long walk from Carlyle's last night, for I went and saw him to heart's content—and he talked characteristically and well, and constringingly, bracingly. He has been in the country a little—that is, has gone down to see his wife occasionally, who was on a visit at Croydon, whence she only returned on Saturday. * * * Now, if I were to say to myself something is dear as 'thirty-six Bas'—I should be scared, as when looking into a mirror cut into facetes one is met on every side by the same face, twenty times repeated. Nothing can add to my conception of the one Ba—my one, only—ever dear, dearest Ba—what perfect nonsense,' says Ba—and nonsensical I will be—all she pleases so long as let live and die her very own."

These men were endowed with the gift of speech; and love could inspire one of them to utter philosophy and the other to utter nonsense. But both seem to dwindle into puerility beside the man of action, all but tongue-tied when he sought to write what proved to be a fond farewell on the eve of battle. This is what Lord Nelson, on board the Victory, October 19, 1805, "Noon, Cadiz E. E. E. 16 Leagues," snatched a few minutes from the deadly preparations to write to the beautiful Lady Hamilton:

"My dearest beloved Emma, the dear friend of my bosom, the signal has been made that Enemy's combined fleet (France and Spain's) are coming out of Port. We have very little Wind, so that I have no hopes of seeing them before tomorrow. May the God of Battles crown my endeavours with success, at all events I will take care that my name shall be ever most dear to you and Horatia, both of whom I love as much as my own life, and my last writing before the battle will be to you, so I hope in God I shall live to finish my letter after the Battle; may Heaven bless you prays your Nelson and Bronte.

"Oct. 20th in the morning we were close to the mouth of the Strelghts, but the wind had not come far enough to the westward to allow the Combined fleets to weather the shoals off Trafalgar, but they were counted as far as 40 sail of Ships of War, which I suppose to be 34 of the Line and 6 frigates.—May God Almighty give us success over these fellows and enable us to get a Peace."

After the battle, Captain Hardy found the letter on his desk, open, unfinished. Hardy delivered it to Lady Hamilton. It bears the indorsement, in the hand of that famous beauty:

"Oh, miserable and wretched Emma, oh, glorious and happy Nelson."

That amorous Bobbie Burns, who could be as dangerous among the peasantry as Byron was among the wealthier classes, could write love letters that would win the very soul of a woman. Pretty Ellison Begbie was a servant in a family on Cessnoch Water, who inspired Burns' poems "Bonnie Peggy Alison," "Montgomery's Peggy" and others among his sweetest verses. Ellison Begbie wouldn't have him; but she did admit that "it cost her some heartaches to get rid of the affair." So this is a love letter, by a past master in the art of writing them, that failed:

"I verily believe, my dear E., that the pure genuine feelings of love are as rare in the world as the pure genuine principles of virtue and piety. * * * Whenever the thought of my E. warms my heart, every feeling of humanity, every principle of generosity kindles in my breast. It extinguishes every dirty spark of malice and envy which are but too apt to infest me. I grasp every creature in the arms of universal benevolence, and equally participate in the pleasures of the happy, and sympathize with the miseries of the unfortunate. I assure you, my dear, I often look up to the Divine Disposer of events with an eye of gratitude for the blessing which I hope he intends to bestow on me in bestowing you. This, my dear, is a passion, at least in my view, worthy of a man, and I will add worthy of a Christian."

One of the most picturesque figures of the early eighteenth century in England was Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, whose father, Evelyn Pierrepont, Esq., became the duke of Kingston. Mr. Montagu met her when she was only 14 years of age, and although much her senior, became deeply interested in her. When she became older, she fell in love with him. But her father had risen to be marquis of Dorchester; he demanded a form of settlement for a marriage which her lover would not accept. She was 23 when her father arranged a match for her with another man and insisted that she obey him. She appealed to her lover. He proposed an elopement; and elope they did, after this little letter, which might serve as a model from any girl to her lover when she has determined to give up all for him:

"Friday night (15th Aug., 1712).

"I tremble for what we are doing. Are you sure you will love me for ever? Shall we never repent? I fear and hope. I foresee all that will happen on this occasion. I shall incense my family to the highest degree. The generality of the world will blame my conduct, and the relations and friends of —— will invent a thousand stories of me; yet, 'tis possible, you may recompense everything to me. In this letter, which I am fond of, you promise me all that I wish. Since I writ so far, I received your Friday letter. I will be only yours, and I will do as you please.

"You shall hear from me again tomorrow, not to contradict, but to give some directions. My resolution is taken. Love me and use me well."

He didn't use her well, for he was painfully penurious. From 1739 to 1762, when she died, they lived apart and she was the most striking, startling sensational female figure in English letters.

Such letters, written in the very crisis of romance, are almost numerous enough to make a volume by themselves. Lord Byron, in Venice, had been for weeks vacillating between departure and staying to carry on his amour with the beautiful Countess Guiccioli, whose husband had proved one of the blindest of guardians for a wife's honor. He wrote to her, in December, 1819:

"I . . . will already have told you, with her accustomed sublimity, that love has gained the victory. I could not summon up resolution enough to leave the country where you are without, at least, once more seeing you. On yourself, perhaps, it will depend whether I ever again shall leave you. * * * My opinion was that the best course I could adopt, both for your peace and that of your family, would have been to depart and go far, far away from you; since to have been near and not approach you would have been, for me, impossible. You have however decided that I am to return to Ravenna. I shall accordingly return—and shall do—and be all that you wish. I cannot say more."

Victor Hugo's account of the first hours of love spent with Juliette Drouet, who remained for half a century his inspiration, was addressed to her in her own album:

"Dost thou remember, my beloved, our first day? It was the time of Carnival in 1833. There was being given at some theater a ball to which we both were to go (I interrupt my writing to imprint a kiss on thy sweet mouth, and then I continue). Nothing, not even death, I am certain, can ever efface that recollection within me. All the hours of that day traverse my thoughts at this moment one after the other, like stars passing before the eyes of my soul. Poor angel! what beauty and love are thine! Thy little apartment was full of adorable silence. Outside we heard Paris singing and laughing, and the masked revellers passing by, shouting. Amid the great general festival we had, set apart and concealed in the shade, our own sweet festival. Paris had the false, we had the true, blissfulness.

"That day I spent eight hours with thee. Each of those hours has already given birth to a year (1833-1841). During those eight years my heart has been full of thee, and nothing will change it, thou knowest, even should each of those years bring forth a century."

It took the mathematically logical French mind to produce one of the most poetic of love letters—and that after years of possession.

The very beginnings of the wooing by George IV, as prince of Wales, of the beautiful Mrs. Fitzherbert, remain embalmed in a series of love letters that show the accomplished gallant eager for a new flame, and the woman of discretion who, happily, had more prudence than many another whose charms kindled passion in high places. History has about reached the conclusion that the royal suitor did honestly love her, however discreditable his act in allowing, later, his debts and a royal alliance to repudiate the morganatic but perfectly genuine marriage by which Mrs. Fitzherbert was united to him. It was she who opened the correspondence, with a bit of verse:

"Princes, like women, have few real friends.
All who approach them their own ends pursue.
Lovers and ministers are seldom true.

"So spake a bard well used to Courts and my sex—to you, my Prince, I ought, agreeable to the style of those who surround you, to pay an implicit obedience, and meet you as you desired on my quitting the ballroom last night. Meet you!—what you?—the Prince of Wales! whose character in the annals of gallantry is too well known for me to suppose that after such a meeting I should have any character at all. This may be too free—I am unused to address people of excessive rank—my manners are unaffected—I know not a sentiment that I would wish to disguise, and I should be happy to know only that behaviour from your Royal Highness that must command silent respect from—Your father's affectionate subject, Margaretta."

Her royal admirer took the cue promptly; and no lover, under like circumstances, ever sent a woman a more tactful reply:

"I find but too often cause to lament the rank in life—that perhaps is envied me by all the world—Princes indeed have few real friends—Even your sex fly me—and does the amiable Margaretta allow her better judgment to be biassed by public calumny? It is beneath the heart that reigns in so lovely a bosom! I do not command—far from it—I only entreat a further knowledge of you, and where is the impropriety of permitting me a meeting—a condescension that will make me most happy—not your Prince, the son of your Sovereign, but your admiring, your adoring Wales."

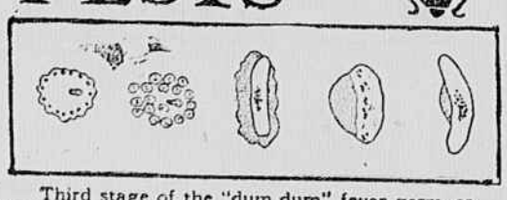
That proud, sad strain would have conquered any woman of the court who didn't mean what she said. But Mrs. Fitzherbert did mean it; she was afraid of her reputation. She did not hesitate to disappoint her prince, who reproached her with a certain note of discomfiture in his passionate plea:

"Cold, unkind, Margretta! Why am I forbid that attention which is your due—which all the world must pay you. Why am I doomed to pass an insipid evening with a woman of fashion only, when my heart and my better judgment would lead me to the most elegant, the most accomplished fair that Britain has to boast. Mrs. O—— is beauteous, but it is not mere beauty I admire—it is expression, 'a something than beauty dearer.' You know my opinion of Lady C—— B——; her rank entitles her to my hand, nothing besides could induce me. I respect her Grace for the sake of the best of mothers and of S——'s—and therefore I comply with what politeness and etiquette requires; but why must I give up the enjoyment of your conversation. Be superior to common talk.

"I felt your absence from the ball and rejoice that you will grace it this evening. It is impossible to see you with indifference! In vain would you exact so hard a task from the tenderest of your friends."

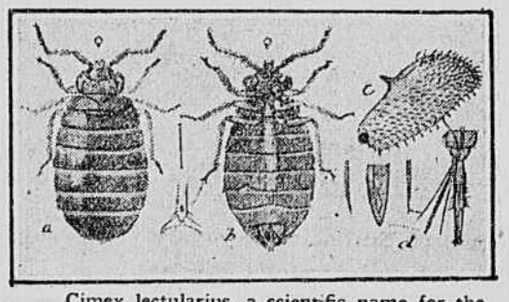
Persistence, and all the royal means of making opportunities, let him have his chance to see her, at a ball. He made such energetic love to her whenever they happened to be out of earshot of the other guests that she took real fright, and declared his attentions, in view of the political impossibility of a marriage, were an insult to her self-respect. There, except for a useless protest from him and a crushing quotation of half a dozen stanzas of poetry from her, the correspondence closed. But, this being a real love, the romance went on, leading to complications that have engaged the attention of historians for nearly a century.

"DUM DUM" FEVER DUE to HOUSEHOLD PESTS



Third stage of the "dum dum" fever germ, as it infects human beings.

Dr. W. S. Patten, Who Connected "Dum Dum" Fever with "Red Crawlers"!



Cimex lectularius, a scientific name for the familiar bedroom pest. A and b show upper and lower views of female engorged with blood; c and d show rudimentary wing pad and mouth parts, greatly enlarged.

By Dr. Leonard Keene Hirshberg

A. B., M. D. (Johns Hopkins).

IT IS the simple peasant that often startles the scientific world; toothpicks have been known to explode the tissue woven by the greatest of metaphysicians, while out of the mouths of babes may come the solution of complex philosophical questions. The tiny spark that Mrs. Rooney's cow ignites may wreck a metropolis, while the decline and fall of the greatest empires is now known to have been brought about by an insect, the mosquito.

In the old English Bible of 1551, a passage in the ninety-first Psalm reads: "Thou shalt not nede to be afraid for eny bugges by night." Since modern mock modesty has advanced to the point where the name of this particular bug is taboo in polite society, I shall no doubt be before our social tribunal in this article many times, and must fall back upon the holy book to witness my purity of intention. For that verse in the Psalm refers to nothing more or less than our "mahogany chingh," the bedbug.

THIS disgusting parasite is justly considered a disgrace by every good housekeeper, even though it is unfortunately capable of migrating at times to innocent houses. Its history is as old as roof dwellings. The ancient peoples of Asia, as well as the Romans, knew it by its first name. In England and this country it has been known for centuries under the name of chinch, wall louse, red coats, wall bug, flats and bedbugs.

The nasty habits of this "bird" have made it anathema among cleanly people, and the fact that it is a parasite of man, living upon the blood of those with whom it may come in contact, has been the reason that alert housekeepers could never be convinced that it did not transmit disease from man to man.

Now, although this has been always suspected by scientific investigators, no real proof has ever hitherto been adduced in support of this general notion. Even after malaria and yellow fevers were shown to have been due to insects, when elephantiasis—a disease in which the legs and other parts of the body become swollen to the size of an elephant's—the Congo sleeping system, Texas fever, and numerous other infectious troubles were proved to be transmitted by mosquitoes, ticks and other mites, the dirty red coat still escaped blame. But no more!

Steadily the number of parasitic diseases spread through the instrumentality of biting insects has been increasing. To the anopheles, culex and stegamyia mosquitoes are added the tsetse fly, the itch mite, the pediculus, the cattle tick and the typhoid fly, and now may be added the emigrating and immigrating chinch.

In India, as is well known by those who have come in contact with our returning soldiers and sailors, there is a terrible malady called dum dum fever, or kala azar. This vicious black fever has only been known since 1900 in its true form. Until then it was confused with numerous diseases of the east, such as plague, Asiatic cholera and other contagious affections. Then two English army surgeons, by name Leishman and Donovan, independently described the curious micro-parasites, that were to be observed on careful study in the blood and spleen of the sick.

Word has just been carried to the scientific world that Sir Ronald Ross, the discoverer of the mosquito as the cause of malaria, has received notification of an equally important observation made by one of his junior surgeons in the Indian service.

The United States government, the army, and all Americans who have relatives in the Philippines, Guam, Hawaii or other of our tropical possessions, will hear with pleasure that Captain W. S. Patten, of England, has just discovered not only the complete life history of the virulent germ that inhabits the blood of dum dum patients, but simultaneously promulgates the important news that if there were no bedbugs, there could be no black fever.

"There are three forms of illness," says Doctor Patten in his communication, "due to the Leishman-Donovan microbe. Kala azar, or black fever, is, so far as my work in India is concerned, far the worst of these. The discovery of the life cycle, then, of this parasite in such a domestic insect as the bedbug will for all time clear away much of the doubt and difficulty which have until now surrounded these insignificant and disconnected bits of knowledge about the spread and propagation of this disease."

When it is fully realized how completely yellow fever has been wiped off the face of the earth by the discovery of its transmission by mosquitoes, it cannot fail to impress us with the great value in annihilating black fever, which Doctor Patten's discovery will prove. For with the knowledge of the bedbug as the intermediate host of the Leishman-Donovan germ, the disease will be stamped out by removing each new patient from all approach of the insect. Once this is done, there will be no way for the new-born insects to become infected with the microscopic agent, and the malady will be prevented for all future time.

Captain Patten is the young assistant to the director of the King's Institute of Preventive Medicine, in Madras, India. He describes the parasite of dum dum fever as having three stages. There is a stage when tiny hairs or flagellae—the limbs of locomotion—are visible, and a pre-flagellae and post-flagellae stage. The flagellate stage is the one found in the stomachs of the filthy insect.

Once the protozoon parasite finds itself in such a strange place as the bedbug's stomach, it assumes a different appearance, and encysts itself into a marmot-like ball. It was puzzling to Doctor Patten at this point to find what then became of the germ. Happily, he called upon Dr. Patrick Manson, of malaria fame, who suggested the solution that the encysted germ worked its devious way into the salivary glands or biting apparatus of the insect's "stingers," or cete. This proved to be correct.

BROWNING'S DEVOTION

The Indian department of the imperial English government is now proceeding to disinfect the huts, cabins, ships, canoes and bedding throughout all infected regions, with the hope of eliminating the disease as quickly as possible. The natives resist cleanliness in India, because of some bizarre religious rites. The last English-Indian war was fought because the English insisted upon some procedure objectionable to the Brahmin religion.

The Brahmin sepoys were at that time informed by one who professed to know that they would have "to load their guns by biting cartridges covered with the fat of cows and pigs." Cows are the most sacred of all animals, and pigs the object of more abhorrence to the Hindu than to the Hebrew. Without losing caste, he may neither handle pork nor taste it. For fear of exciting the dirty natives into some form of fanaticism, the work of sanitation will, of necessity, be carried out less aggressively than might be desired.

The city of Madras, where the great investigation of splenic, or kala azar, fever was completed by Doctor Patten, stretches for several miles along the shore of the bay of Bengal, upon a flat, sandy plain. The walled city is densely populated with Hindus, who are spreading beyond its walls, where the English have their homes, schools and hospitals. Among the great educational institutions in Madras, besides the one mentioned, are the Medical School, School of Engineering, College of Art and Design, Horticultural School and some fifty-odd other schools and colleges of all kinds. Madras is the Boston of India, so far as education and intelligence are concerned.