

# Democrat and Sentinel.

THE BLESSINGS OF GOVERNMENT, LIKE THE DEWS OF HEAVEN, SHOULD BE DISTRIBUTED ALIKE, UPON THE HIGH AND THE LOW, THE RICH AND THE POOR.

NEW SERIES.

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## Select Poetry.

### WHAT IS HOME WITHOUT A MOTHER?

What is home without a mother,  
What are all the joys we meet,  
When her loving smiles no longer  
Greet the coming of our feet?  
The day seems long, the nights are drear,  
And times roll slowly on!  
And oh! how few are childhood's pleasures,  
When her gentle care is gone!

The things we prize are first to vanish  
Hearts we love to pass away,  
And how soon, 'e'en in our childhood,  
We behold her turning gray;  
Her eye grows dim, her step is slow,  
Her joys of earth are passed;  
And sometimes 'er we learn to know her,  
She has breathed on earth her last.

Other hearts may have their sorrows,  
Others that quickly die away;  
But a mother lost in childhood  
Grieves the heart from day to day.  
We miss her kind and willing hand,  
Her fond and earnest care,  
And oh! how dark is life around us;  
What is home without her there.

## THE STEP-MOTHER.

By Mrs. F. A. S.

"A LETTER for Minnie." Scarcely were these words uttered when like an echo, they resounded from one to another until at length it reached a bright and beautiful girl of perhaps twelve summers. When the sound reached her ears everything was pushed aside, and with a quick bound reached the side of one who, with letter in hand, stood smiling upon the beautiful being who, with outstretched hands waited for the letter.

She gave one glance at the familiar writing, then broke the seal and began to read, her eyes brightening at every line, until at length, with a glad cry of joy, she broke forth—

"A new mama! Oh, I have got a new mama!" And, throwing the letter into the hands of Mrs. Lamott, bid her read it, while tears of joy flowed quick and fast.

This letter, which had brought Minnie so much joy was from her father, who had written to her, his only and adored child, the news of his marriage with a dark eyed beauty of only twenty summers, and added, "now Minnie you shall have what you have so long wished for, a mother's love; yes, she will care for my little dove, who but for the kind care of Mrs. Lamott, would have been entirely deprived of that which a childish heart seeks most, sympathy. But my child," he concluded, "I shall be in W. in a few days to bring you home to your mamma, who is impatient to behold her little daughter."

There are but few who would not have felt the joy that Minnie did at these tidings; but early deprived of a mother's love, this had been her greatest desire; and when the other children would read to her their mother's letters, it would bring tears to Minnie's eyes, and she would sigh—

"Alas, I have no mother."  
But, although she was the child of wealth and luxury, the joy of a fond father's heart, the favorite of all who knew her, still she was not satisfied. She longed for that tender, loving sympathy which only a mother's heart can know. But, now that joy had come, is it strange that the first thought of it should have so completely overpowered her?

There was but one in all Mrs. Lamott's school who did not sympathize with Minnie in her joy—and that one was the room mate and almost constant companion of Minnie ever since she entered Mrs. Lamott's school, which was in Minnie's sixth year. Let us look at the two girls as Minnie, reaching her father, eager for her to join in her happi-

ness, as was her wont to do, placed her arms around her, and dancing her around the room.

Minnie, bow frail and fair she looked in comparison with the dark eyed beauty of the other. Minnie's curls, which hung around a well shaped head, were of a rich deep auburn, while those of her companion were of the deepest black.—The contrast was strikingly beautiful, but those young hearts were joined by the strongest ties of love, which were about to be broken, for Lottie, the elder would share her joy with none.—And when the exclamation of joy broke forth from Minnie's lips, she shook her head until the dark ringlets concealed her face and the dark frown that was lowering there. With her hands clenched and her brow contracted she vowed revenge upon the woman who was about to claim the heart of Minnie, which, until now, had been her own.

"If Minnie loves her when she comes to see her, all the Indian blood of Lottie Clinton shall be used to cast asunder this new tie!" said she to herself. "But to accomplish this, I must play the part I have so long taken in earnestness and love."

Thus the days passed on, until at last, to Minnie, brought the welcome morning, and with it her own dear father.

"Papa, tell me of my new mama," said Minnie.  
"Wait my child until you see her; then you can judge for yourself. She left her home, her friends, her country, to pass her life among strangers, for your old father and his little daughter's sake; but she is very anxious to see you Minnie."

"Is she father? Oh, I will love her so much," she said.

At last everything is ready, the final good bye said, and Minnie, with Col. Pierce are on their way.

"Minnie, behold your new mama!" said her father, as they all alighted at his home.

Eagerly she sprang forward and was caught in the arms of Mrs. Pierce, who covered her with kisses as she laid her head among the deep rich curls of her step-mother.

But, while the introduction is going on, let us satisfy our curiosity as to how this wonderful being looks. No wonder that Minnie cannot keep her eyes off of her, for she is indeed beautiful. Her figure is tall and symmetrically formed, with deep black hair and eyes, and just the faintest tinge of the carnation shade upon the lily white cheeks. She was, in fact, one to whom Minnie would naturally cling.

Minnie had indeed found a mother, but in gaining that friend she made an enemy.

Days, weeks sped on Minnie and Emma Pierce (for that was her mother's name) scarcely left each other's side.—From one room to another, through the old mansion, they would roam together, wander out into the garden and gather the beautiful flowers and weave them into bouquets and wreaths, and ride horseback in the morning and again at night, each bound in the other's love.

Minnie and Lottie exchanged letters often, each of which was full of love for her new mama, and the warm deep love she gave to her in return.

"And," she would say, "as much as much as I long to see you, dear Lottie, and good, kind Mrs. Lamott, I cannot bear the thought of separation. Oh, she is dearer than even my childish heart dreamed of."

Each letter sank deeper and deeper the wished for revenge into the heart of Lottie Clinton.

"Oh!" she would cry, "I will tear their hearts asunder! Minnie shall yet hate that woman, and I will again have all her love. She shall cling to me for support, but I must wait—wait until the time comes."

The mother and daughter sat gazing out upon the lovely sunset, for, on the morrow, Minnie was to return to Mrs. Lamott's school, and the thought could not but bring sadness upon both hearts. But it was best for her to go and so the sacrifice was made.

"Only four years more, my dear mama, and I can say farewell to books and live at home with you and dear papa forever. Oh, I am so glad you are going with me, for then Lottie can see you and love you as I do."

So young and so beautiful they were we might gaze, lost in respectful admiration, and never suspect the relationship between them; the one in her womanly beauty, the other in her childish happiness and faultless beauty.

A carriage rolled up the avenue of Col. Pierce's residence, and Minnie, accompanied by the Colonel and his wife, after taking leave of the servants, amidst many exclamations of sorrow and regret at parting with their favorite and well beloved baby, as they continued to call her, stepped into the carriage and was gone not to return until the end of the second year.

"Welcome back to school my Minnie and to the hearts of all," exclaimed Mrs. Lamott, as Minnie sprang from the carriage at the door of Mrs. Lamott's school.

All the girls rushed forward, eager to kiss and claim a kiss from one who had been sadly missed.—Among them was Lottie, all smiles and good wishes; and, when introduced to Col. Pierce, conducted herself so well as to pass as the dear friend of Minnie.

When pressed by the Colonel and his wife to visit Forrest Grove, Minnie's home, she gladly accepted, for was not that what she longed for, nay, sought for? Was it not in that expected visit that all her hopes were concentrated?—Yes, she would go; and so it was agreed that, at the end of the second year, they should return together.

At last the final scene is over, the father and mother return home, and Minnie is to remain two years, uninterrupted save by the long and cherished letters from her parents.

Two years had come and gone. Minnie and Lottie are on their way to Forrest Grove. After a fatiguing journey of six days they arrived safely to the anxious hearts that waited for them.

"No wonder, Minnie," said Lottie, "you feel at leaving such a home as this. Oh, how poor, how miserable is mine compared with this; no father no mother there."

"Do not mention it Lottie, for this shall be your home as long as you wish; for mama and papa love you as a daughter, and need I add that Minnie loves you as a sister?"

Ah! was that not what she wanted? for, in the short vacation of five weeks, how could she, single and empty handed, work out such a revenge as she wanted? No, but if she should return at the end of the next two years, then, as neither were to return again, she could stay until she had accomplished it. Other arrangements were made, for the first year after Minnie left school was to be spent in travelling. But when she returned then Lottie was to return with them. So with this arrangement, after a happy vacation, they returned to school.

The three years, two of study and one sight-seeing, have passed away and brought back to Forrest Grove, not our little Minnie and Lottie, but two tall, beautiful ladies of the respectful ages of seventeen and nineteen.

"Where is Lottie, Minnie?" asked Emma Pierce, coming into the room where Minnie was reclining on a sofa all alone.

Lottie had just left her, after telling her that which she said she had just overheard passing her mother's room on her

way down stairs: "your father and mother," she said, "were in close conversation, when I heard in loud and angry tones, this exclamation. 'That as for having that Lottie Clinton here all the time, she shouldn't do it, and if he wouldn't tell her to pick up her things and go to her own home, she should, or go herself, for Minnie was as much care as she would be burdened with, and that she didn't expect to be brought here as a slave; but if that was what he wanted, why then she would return to her mad-don home; and that her father had gently remonstrated, saying—'Why, I supposed you all enjoyed each other's company, but if not he would gently hint to Lottie that he feared her friends would think them unkind in monopolizing all her time; and then, without giving offence to either Lottie or Minnie, she would return home.' 'Yes, just as I said—must please them first, your wife afterwards.'"

This she said was all she heard, for she hurried away so she could hear no more. And Lottie with tears in her eyes, added that she should return on the morrow, for she did not want to make trouble in a family which she so dearly loved, and supposed she was loved in return.

This was enough to arouse anger in the bosom of Minnie.

"To think she said that I ever should have loved that woman so fondly, to find her thus!"

Oh, yes, it was too much, and so Lottie had no difficulty in drawing from Minnie a promise never to tell either her father or mother of what she had just told her—a promise she knew if once given would never be broken.

"Go Lottie and leave me a little while she said.

Thus it was that Emma, the same beautiful woman, the same warm, loving heart, was wronged by one whom she cherished as her daughter's friend, and did all in her power to make her happy. Oh! that woman's heart could be so false!

"What, in tears, my beautiful Minnie? How is this? What has caused them? Look up, my child, and tell your anxious Emma why those tears?"

"Go away! Go away! Oh, you cruel, cruel woman?"

"Minnie, Minnie, why these words? Oh, do tell me, do not keep me in suspense another moment. I shall die of grief, if you do not recall those dreadful cruel words," and tears streamed from the eyes of Mrs. Pierce. "Some wrong has been done, and by some one. Look up my darling, and tell me who has so cruelly deceived you?"

But not a word came from between those cold lips.

Emma gazed again at the strange girl, and started in surprise, for in the excitement she had fainted.

Everything was forgotten in the efforts to bring to life the almost inanimate form of Minnie; but after the blue eyes again opened and the lips parted, nothing was said, no questions were asked for of again agitating that frail child; and thus the mother waited and wondered.

The next day Lottie told of her determination to leave Forrest Grove and return home. There were many exclamations of regret, and all save one were so desirous for her to remain that she was at length persuaded to do so.

"For," said she, "I do so love you all I cannot bear to leave you and go to that cold, unhappy home of mine. No father, no mother, nothing but a guardian to love."

So she was again settled for at least another six months. But it did not escape her notice, as well as Minnie's, that while all were so eager for Lottie to remain, Mrs. Pierce had said nothing. No, for Mrs. Pierce felt that Lottie was at the bottom of the mystery. No, she in her heart did not wish the girl to stay, and her expressive features told the tale.

This was enough to satisfy Minnie, and a coldness began to spring between them and her time was more and more given to her friend, and Mrs. Pierce was almost given up entirely, going whole days without meeting her only at their daily rides and at the family meals.

Many, many times had Emma remonstrated with Minnie, striving by every kind look and deed to bring her back, but no, she was as cold towards her, and the tender heart of Mrs. Pierce was nearly broken. No company save her husband's, who was the same as ever—kind and tender, as well as proud of his beautiful wife. She would not tell him of Minnie's coldness, for fear of paining the noble father; and so she lived day after day, until at length wild with despair she was ready to sink to the ground, and would have wished, only for her husband's sake, that death might come, and thus free her burdened heart.

But how was Minnie's heart? Was she happy in thus treating one whom she had loved almost to idolatry? Oh, no; her tender heart was by turns still all her mother's, and had it not been for the cunning artifice of Lottie she would have begged forgiveness of her mother long before. But Lottie was ready at all such times to show some other words or acts of ill-will toward either herself or Minnie. Thus she ruled supreme; thus she had again seduced Minnie's heart. Poor child, thou hast turned from thy best friend; thy heart had never cherished one more worthy of it than thy kind, thy tender, loving step-mother.

"A letter for Minnie." Again those words broke the stillness of a room where each although not engaged by 'Fasquelle,' or any other school book, were deeply engaged with their own thoughts.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## THE WEDDING RING.

"THINK WELL ON IT"

Reasons for the Use of the Wedding Ring in the Marriage Ceremony.

1. As turning a ring for ever no end can be found, so the friendship cemented by marriage should be *endless* or *perpetual*; not even broken off finally by the interruption of death, but the marriage party separating merely during the night of the grave, in sure and certain hope of meeting again on the following morning of a glorious resurrection when all that was pure and lovely in the union, shall be more so still, with the high additional perfection of continuing uninterrupted throughout the *endless round* of a blessed immortality.

2. As the marriage ring should be made of *pure gold*, which is the most pure or simple of all metals, so the marriage union, cemented by that impressive pledge given and received, should be pure in its origin, pure in its continuance, and so pure in all its motives as to contradict the contracting parties from all intimacies founded upon gross or carnal principles, as nearly as possible resembling the love of Christ for his spouse the Church, who so loved the Church that he gave himself for it.

3. As gold of which the marriage ring should be made, is esteemed the most *valuable* of all metals, so the love and friendship implied in the marriage ring should ever be considered as infinitely more *valuable* than any other system of human nature is capable.

4. As gold is the most compact or at least porous of all metals, so the marriage love and friendship should be so closely cemented by the blending into each other of all the kind and good affections of the parties, as to leave no possible aperture of the opening for the introduction of any strange or for hidden affection. Each party should always be prepared to say of the other,

"Thy loveliness my heart hath possessed And left no room for any other guest."

5. As gold, by the action of the most intense heat, even in a crucible, cannot lose any particle of original weight and

worth but comes out of the crucible as heavy and as valuable as when it was put in, losing nothing in consequence of the fiery ordeal except whatever portion of the dross or alloy may have been incorporated with the pure metal; so the most severe afflictions, intense troubles, and fiery persecutions which may be the portion of the marriage parties, during the changes and chances of this mortal life, should never be able to deteriorate or take from the marriage union any part of its intrinsic worth or beauty; but the parties should rise from the furnace of afflictions and the dishonors of the grave, without having lost anything except the grosse, particles of earth and sin which may have unhappily attached themselves to the mystic action which was intended to secure their felicity.

6. The marriage ring should be perfectly *plain*, that is no *chased*, *raised*, or *artificial* work should appear on its surface, implying that the marriage sermon should be the result of any *artifice*, on account of *wealth*, *equipage*, *honors*, or the *indue influence of friends*, but the plain result of an honorable religious affection between the contracting parties and that God who instituted the holy estate of matrimony.

7. As gold is *incorruptible* metal, that is, if thrown into the mire, or imbedded in the most impure soil, it will never corrupt, corrode, imbibe one speck of pest or impurity, so should the marriage love, and friendship, however it may be sometimes obliged to descend from the elevation of influence into the deepest valley of penury or distress, be doomed to waste its sweetness on the desert air, be incarcerated in the gloomy confines of a prison cell, or associate with the poor the mean, or the illiterate; still, like its incorruptible emblem should it continue as bright and beautiful as ever.

8. As gold is the most ductile of all metals, so that an ounce can be beaten out to cover an acre of land, or gill a attenuated thread to embrace the circumference of the world's surface, so should the results of the marriage union fulfil the original command to increase, multiply and cover the air with "The precious sons of Zion, comparable to find gold."

9. As the marriage ring exhibits nothing to imply pre-eminence of the one party over the other notwithstanding the the word *obey* is applied to the lady rather than to the gentleman, yet the gentleman should ever recollect, that as in forensic courts especially courts of equity, the plaintiff must appear with what are called "clean hands," in other words, have fully done his part and duty so, before the husband can claim any right to *command*, or the wife under any obligation to *obey*, he must remember the test of his love and sincerity, which is given in the Holy Scriptures, viz. "Has bands love your wives, as Christ loved his Church;—but how did Christ prove his love for his Church?—by dying for it. When a love of which this be the model, predominates in the husband's heart, he can require no obedience from his wife, but what she will ever feel it to be her honor, pride, privilege, and delight to honor.

When a lady 'reads marks learns and inwardly digests' the foregoing, with all the implied suggestions and endearments and then glances at the honored finger, which bears the pure insignia of such voluminous delights and serious responsibility, how inexpressibly happy must she feel that she can be at all times, and under all circumstances, the bearer of so dear and portable a pledge of what constitutes real terrestrial felicity, and may she often recur to the title or motto, "Think well on it."

"This is love and worth commending, Still beginning never ending."

I shall conclude this article by hoping that every married couple will live so as to deserve the following Epitaph on their Tombstone:—

"They were truly one that none could say Whether did rule or whether did obey. He ruled because she would obeying be She was obeyed, ruled as well as he."