

GENTLE WORDS.

A young rose in summer time, Is beautiful to me, And glorious the many stars, That glimmer on the sea; But gentle words and loving hearts, And hands to clasp my own, Are better than the fairest flowers, Or star that ever shone.

Miscellaneous.

MY NEXT HUSBAND.

A SKETCH FROM LIFE.

LADY GRACE GAYTON was—I should say is, but that would be adopting the style unhistorical; she was, then, a charming young person, whom one could not help loving. She has been copied for the heroine of a score of modern romances, just as Charles Lamb sat to a portrait painter for a series of the British Admirals; readers of books seldom know whom they are admiring. Lady Grace was as good natured as she was beautiful; I am certain that, like uncle Toby, she would not willingly have harmed even a fly. All the world knew Lady Grace's good nature; all the world, therefore, were astonished at her treatment of Frank Mildardour.

Poor Frank! I never knew a man so deeply in love; he existed only in her smiles; he would have attempted any exploit to gratify the slightest of her whims; a word from her would have made him fight a windmill, travel to Timbuctoo, or study German metaphysics. Frank had never loved any other woman than Lady Grace; his love had all the zeal and sincerity of a first attachment, all the intensity and devotedness of an absorbing passion. Poor Frank! I say again, every body sympathized with him, and declared that if he could not command success, he certainly "studied to deserve it." However, let us defer moralising till we come to the end of the story.

Frank and Lady Grace had been on familiar terms for many years; it was utterly impossible for the heart of the young lady not to respond to the passion of so ardent a lover—a passion that had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength. In plain terms, she positively loved Frank, and how could she help it? She had so good a heart, and so sweet a temper! They were certainly destined for each other, and everybody pronounced that nothing on earth could part them, for Lady Grace bestowed her sweetest smiles upon Frank, and Frank became the shadow of Lady Grace—but every body was somewhat mistaken. I don't know, by the way, a less infallible personage than that same every body.

Never was an enterprise so promising that Frank in making love to Lady Grace; she had a decided penchant for him from the very beginning, and her esteem for him did not increase on every moment's acquaintance, for Frank was one of the best of men. Never did a courtship promise a more happy consummation; nearly everything was settled, and Frank was only waiting for Lady Grace to name the happy day. "Well, my dear Lady Grace," said Frank, with the utmost impudence, at his next visit, "when is the hour to be that shall make me the happiest of men? Thursday, I hope, or Friday, or next week at farthest."

"My dear, Mr. Frank," replied she in some confusion, "I am the most unfortunate creature in the world—you are certainly one of the very best of men; it is unlucky—I am shockingly grieved at your account, but it is so unlucky that you did not propose sooner."

"What do you mean, Lady Grace?" said Frank in the greatest alarm.

"Dear me! Mr. Frank, I am afraid you will never forgive me," replied the lady, with the sweetest smile imaginable, "but the truth is, I have already promised my hand to Sir Billy Rattle."

"Sir Billy Rattle!" said Frank in unfeigned amazement.

"Yes, Sir Billy Rattle—you know Sir Billy; he's the most amusing creature in the universe; positively I think he will make me die with laughing one of these days; however, it is a pity for your sake that it happened so, as I have the most sincere esteem for you, Mr. Mildardour; but Sir Billy has such a fascinating way that he absolutely won my consent before I was aware of what I had promised him. La! me! 'tis a most awkward affair—I know what you will say, but it can't be helped; Sir Billy insists upon the promise; he is a strange creature."

Frank could hardly believe his ears while listening to this astounding recital. In any other case, he would have exploded with a torrent of reproaches and imprecations; but Lady Grace had such a sweet and amiable manner, and displayed such a charming affability while condoling with him on his ill luck, and expressed so much real regret at the occurrence, that it was impossible to feel the smallest anger against her. In spite of all, therefore, Frank loved her as strongly as ever.

"Ah! my dear Lady Grace," said he with a deep sigh, "I must submit, since

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destiny will have it so; but to live without it is impossible—I will live no longer. "Nay, my dear Mr. Frank," replied she, smiling upon him in a manner not to be resisted, "you must on no account hang or drown yourself—you must not, for my sake—because Billy, who is a great hunter, may break his neck, poor man." Here Lady Grace put her handkerchief to her eyes, which, however, Frank thought never looked so bright as at that moment; and then, continued she, "Frank, I know you will continue to love me—you shall be my next husband."

There was a drop of consolation in this assurance, but Frank took the disaster terribly to heart. When the matter came out, everybody predicted that the disappointment would be the death of him, and perhaps it was only Lady Grace's prohibition that withheld his hand. But Lady Grace married, and Frank lived on. But a lover never despairs! Sir Billy Rattle broke his neck at Melton within a year; 'twas nobody's fault but his own, though his lady did predict it.

Mr. Frank Mildardour was thus, when he least expected it, raised from the depth of despondency to the summit of confident assurance. His first impulse was to rush to the presence of the fair widow, with protestations of his unabated attachment, but a slight consideration convinced him that he ought not to intrude his vows of love upon the sacredness of grief. He allowed, therefore, a few weeks to pass, at the end of which time he ventured to approach her with a condolence on her loss, and an assurance of his unabated love. "Tis melancholy," added Frank, with a deep sigh as he could put forth on the occasion, "this domestic calamity of yours—poor Sir Billy! But you may yet be happy, my dear Lady Grace; you know your promise?"

Lady Grace was as beautiful and engaging as ever. "I am sure, Mr. Frank," said she, "I shall ever feel the deepest obligations to you; you are so good, so constant, and the most sincere lover I ever knew. I would rather a thousand pounds it had never happened so—but must I tell you the truth? I have promised my hand."

"Promised your hand!" exclaimed the astonished Frank—"what! a second time? Oh, Lady Grace!"

"My dear Mr. Frank!" returned she, "I knew you would be angry—no, I know you are too good natured to be angry. 'Tis an awkward affair, and I wish with all my heart it were not so; but I promised this very morning to marry Colonel Flashdagger; he loves me to distraction; and no matter for that, I wish you had been so fortunate as to have seen me somewhat earlier. A few days earlier—only a few days—would have totally altered the affair."

"Earlier! my dear Lady Grace, Sir Billy has been dead but three or four weeks."

"True, true, Mr. Frank—he died very suddenly, poor man—but I always predicted it. However I am very sorry for this disappointment of yours; but the colonel has been so assiduous in his attentions, how could I refuse! These military gentlemen have a way with them indeed! Dear Mr. Frank I shall remember you as long as I live; I know how devoted you are, and if the colonel should ever get killed in the wars, why then, of course, you are my next husband."

Frank could not restrain himself from starting up and vowing to challenge Col. Flashdagger, but Lady Grace protested in the most positive manner that she would not hear of a duel. His next vow was to love Lady Grace no more, but this was as ineffectual as the first; he soon discovered that she had more power over him than ever, since his love continued unabated through circumstances that seemed calculated to inspire a different feeling. Frank thought it the strangest combination of events in the world; but he was convinced that Lady Grace loved him—how could he help it? Lady Grace had such a bewitching smile, and such an engaging air, and talked so charmingly, and manifested so deep a regret at his misfortune, and was so polite, and good natured, and sincere. "She is the most beautiful, fascinating, tantalizing creature in the world," said he, "and the colonel is not bullet-proof, so—"

With this assurance, therefore, that Lady Grace was an angel, and that Colonel Flashdagger might be killed, Frank shrugged his shoulders, and let the second misfortune pass. The colonel went to the wars, and had his head shot off by a cannon-ball. "Now," quoth Frank, "my time is come—nobody shall anticipate me by having less scruples in wiping away a widow's tears!" So without losing a moment's time, he hurried to Lady Grace, and claimed the fulfillment of her promise.

Lady Grace received him in the most obliging manner possible, and Frank thought her a good deal handsomer than ever. "I beg ten thousand pardons, my dear Mr. Mildardour," said she, "but there is a circumstance which I cannot control, I would it were otherwise. You are the man of all the world I most esteem; but the colonel, poor fellow! has laid a solemn injunction on me, by his will, to marry his second cousin, Tom Starling, on pain of forfeiting his whole estate."

"What can I do, my dear Frank," said she with an awkward smile, "do you know Tom? he is a queer creature—sings a splendid song, they say—but I am sorry for you, with all my heart!"

"Oh, Lady Grace! Lady Grace!" exclaimed Frank.

"Really, Mr. Mildardour, I feel quite as

much grieved as it was you—I do indeed, you are such an excellent man. But you won't deprive us of your company, we shall have such delightful concerts—quite charming, I assure you."

"My dear Lady Grace," said Frank, wringing his hands, "what will become of me?"

"Oh, Mr. Frank! you know I have the greatest regard for you; and if Tom, who is a fiery, choleric fellow, should ever be shot in a duel, why then, positively, Frank, nothing can prevent it—you must be my next husband."

Frank ran away from her in despair, and made another vow not to think any more of Lady Grace; but he only thought the more of her on that account. She was such a sweet creature, indeed, that the hope of possessing her might have supported a man through a thousand misadventures. But Frank began to think himself doomed irrevocably to disappointment, and fell into a desperate melancholy. He set off for the continent, traversed France and Italy, and got to Naples in a fit of the most doleful dumps that ever clouded the brains of a hapless lover. He was just about to throw himself into the crater of Vesuvius, when he received intelligence that Mr. Tom Starling had died suddenly of a surfeit, at a harmonic celebration of the Anniversary of the Sons of Thunder.

"There is still a chance left," said Frank, as he ordered post horses for his return. "Ye Gods! annihilate both space and time! But the Gods refused to do any such thing, and Frank arrived too late. Lady Grace had given him up for lost, and was engaged to Mr. William James, late of the city, a rich banker, just retired from business."

Poor Mr. Frank Mildardour—there seemed nothing wanting to overwhelm him. He did not wait upon Lady Grace to extort a renewal of her promise, but abandoned himself to his melancholy, conceiving his case to be utterly hopeless.

When things are at the worst, however, they are sure to mend. Passing along Oxford street one afternoon, he saw a great crowd collected before a new building, and by dint of inquiries, soon learned the particulars of the accident that had assembled it. He flew like lightning to Lady Grace.

"Lady Grace," said he, "you are once more a widow!"

"I cannot be, Mr. Mildardour. How a widow! Mr. James walked out in perfect health not half an hour ago."

"Exactly, my dear Lady Grace—I am sorry to be the bearer—ahem!—of such ill news, but I will tell you just how it happened. Mr. James was walking along Oxford street, arm-in-arm with Sir Henry Wildgoose."

"Ah! the very man; Sir Henry is always here. Sir Henry is quite a friend of mine—but go on, Mr. Frank, with your relation."

"Mr. James, I say my dear Lady Grace, happened to pass out near the scaffold of a building just as the workmen were hoisting a big stone, when a horse in the street taking fright, ran against the scaffold; the stone fell, and oh, Lady Grace—Mr. James was killed on the spot!"

"Dear me! Mr. Mildardour! you don't say so!"

"Positively true. I saw him with my own eyes."

Lady Grace put her handkerchief to her eyes, and there was a dead silence for some time; at last Frank thought it time to remind her of his purpose by saying: "Lady Grace you know your promise?"

"My dear Mr. Frank, there is only one obstacle in the way—I have promised to Sir Henry Wildgoose—it was only but last week—'tis an unfortunate thing—but if Sir Henry dies, then upon my honor, you shall truly and positively be my next husband."

"In your honor!"

"Then, my dear Lady Grace, I am the happiest man in the world, for the same stone has killed both of them!"

Lady Grace started with surprise, but her feelings I need not attempt to describe, for how few can guess what it is to lose two husbands at a single blow!

Evening Prayer—"Our Father."

"Our Father." The mother's voice was low, and tender, and solemn.

"Our Father." On two sweet voices the words were borne upward. It was the innocence of reverent childhood that gave them utterance.

"Who art thou the heavens," repeated the children, one with eyes bent meekly down, and the other looking upward, as if she would penetrate the heavens into which her heart inspired.

"Hallowed be thy name. Lower fell the voices of the little ones. In a gentle murmur they said—Hallowed be thy name."

"Thy kingdom come." And the burden of prayer was still taken by the children—"Thy kingdom come." "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven."

Like a low, sweet echo from the land of angels, "Thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven," filled the chamber.

And the mother continued—"Give us this day our daily bread." "Our daily bread" lingered a moment on the air, as the mother's voice was hushed into silence.

"And forgive us our debts as we also forgive our debtors."

The eyes of the children had dropped for a moment. But they were uplifted again as they prayed—"And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from all evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

All these holy words were said piously and fervently by the little ones, as they knelt with clasped hands beside their mother. Then, as their thoughts, uplifted on the wings of prayer to their Heavenly Father, came back again and rested on their earthly parents, a warmer love came gushing from their hearts.

Pure kisses—tender embraces—the fond "good night." What a sweet agitation pervaded all their feelings! Then the two dear heads were placed side by side on the snowy pillow, the mother's last kiss given, and the shadowy curtains drawn.

What a pulseless stillness reigns throughout the chamber! Inwardly the parents' listening ears are bent. They have given these innocent ones into the keeping of God's angels, and they can almost hear the rustling of their garments as they gather around their sleepless babes.

A sigh, deep and tremulous, breaks on the air. Quickly the mother turns to the father of her children, with a look of earnest inquiry on her countenance.

"And he answers thus her silent question: "Far back, through many years have my thoughts been wandering. At my mother's knee thus I nightly, in childhood, my evening prayer. It was the best and holiest of all prayers, 'Our Father,' that she taught me. Childhood and my mother passed away. I went forth as a man into the world, strong, confident, self-seeking. Once I came into a great temptation. Had I fallen into that temptation, I would have fallen, I sadly fear, never to rise again. The struggle in my mind went on for hours. I was about yielding. All the barriers I could oppose to the in-rushing flood seemed just ready to give way, when, as I sat in my room one evening, there came from an adjoining chamber, now first occupied for many weeks, the murmur of a low voice. I listened. At first, no articulate sound was heard, and yet something in tones stirred my heart with new and strange emotions. At length there came to my ears, in the earnest and loving voice of a woman, the words 'Deliver us from evil.' For an instant it seemed to me as if the voice were that of my mother. Back, with a sudden bound, through all the intervening years, went my thoughts; and, a child in heart again, I was kneeling at my mother's knee—Humbly and reverently I said over the words of the holy prayer she had taught me, my heart and eyes uplifted to heaven. The hour and the power had passed. I was no longer standing in slippery places with a flood of waters ready to sweep me to destruction; my feet were on a rock. My mother's pious care had saved her son."

In the holy words she taught me in childhood was a living power to resist evil through all my after life. Ah! that unknown mother, as she taught her child to repeat his evening prayer, how little dreamed she that the holy words were to reach a stranger's ear, and save him, through memories of his own childhood, and his own mother! And yet it was so. What a power there is in God's word, as it flows into and rests in the minds of the innocent children!

BEAUTIFUL AND TRUE.—In a late article in Frazer's Magazine, this brief but beautiful passage occurs: "Education does not commence with the alphabet. It begins with a mother's look—with a father's nod of approbation or a sign of reproof—with a sister's gentle pressure of the hand, or a brother's noble act of forbearance—with handfulls of flowers in green and daisy meadows—with bird's nests admired but not touched—with creeping ants, and almost imperceptible emmetts—with humming bees and glass-beehives—with pleasant walks in shady lanes—and with thoughts directed in sweet and kindly tones, and words to mature to acts of benevolence, to deeds of virtue, and to the sense of all good, to God himself."

TO A BACKWARD LOVER.

A truce with this palling, this fearing and fooling!

Such ague-struck awe, boy, is none of love's schooling. No blushing and frowning, no languishing, sighing: She wants a stout woe, not one that is dying. Be colder or bolder, your love or fear smother; Be saint or be sinner, and leave her or win her; Yes, leave her and let her be won by another!

But why should you lack her? You know not a fairer, Attend her, attack her; and win her and wear her. When your passion you name, give it language of flame, But let her in dreamy faith know not your aim. But still breathe your woe, in a voice soft and low,

For thus the heart's dearest drops ever outflow. Be the tones of thy prayer—she can never refuse it—Like the harp of the air, when the fond zephyr woos it.

And look in her eyes, they are love's truest book, As star upon star, in their sky they love look. Press her hand to your lip, and let your arm haste, Unnoticed to slip round her delicate waist; Then your cheek touches hers, how it crimsones its tint!

And if lips do not mingle, the demon is in 't! But if she's resistful, why turn you then trifling; Woman for sorrow is wilful and wistful. Weep you an ocean, I warrant 't will move her; For earth has no spell like the tears of a lover. If she still spurns thee, relentless and bitter, Why swear she a Hecate, and laugh at, and quit her!

The Flag of our Union.

One thing has been established by Captain Schuyler Hamilton's recent investigations respecting the national flag, namely, that it meant, and was intended to mean, UNION! It grew out of the Union Jack. Its star of stars symbolizes the Union. Its thirteen stripes are the record of the UNION. From the thousand flag-staffs and mast-heads it is ever keeping alive the spirit of UNION. Capt. Hamilton's work enables us to compile its brief history.

On the 17th of January, 1776, the captain of an English transport, then lying in the port of Boston, wrote home to his owners: "I can see the rebel's camp very plain, whose colors, a little while ago, were entirely red; but on the receipt of the king's speech, (which they burnt) they hoisted the Union Flag, which is here supposed to mean the union of the provinces." The captain could not, probably discern the devices upon the flag, but he noted the changes of color, from royal red to union blue.

A variety of flags were used by the continentals, in the early months of the revolutionary struggle. At the taking of Fort Mifflin, Sept. 26th, 1777, a peculiar flag was employed, which Holmes in his Annals, refers to thus:—"A flag being thought necessary for the purposes of signals, Col. Moultrie, who was requested by the Council of Safety to procure one, had a large blue flag made, with a crescent in one corner, to be in uniform with the troops. This was the first American flag (adds Holmes) displayed in South Carolina." The crescent, he it observed, is an emblem of sovereignty. On the twentieth of October, in the same year, Col. John Reed wrote this order to Col. Glover and Stephen Maylan: "Please to fix upon some particular color for a flag, and a sign by which our vessels may know one another. What do you think of a flag with a white ground—a tree in the middle—the motto, 'Appeal to Heaven.' This is the flag of our floating batteries."

February ninth, 1778, Col. Gadsden proposed the following design for a naval flag:—"A yellow field, with a lively representation of a rattlesnake in the middle, in the attitude of going to strike, and his words underneath, 'Don't tread on me!'" Many other designs for flags were proposed, and several, as we have just observed, were in use.

It was not till June 14th, 1777, that Congress passed the resolution which gave to the infant nation a National Flag. That resolution was in the following words:—"Resolved, That the flag of the thirteen United States, be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the Union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field representing a new constellation." This was the flag of the latter triumphs of the revolution. It remained unaltered till January 19th, 1794, when the admission of two new States, added two stars to the "constellation," and two stripes to the "rainbow." This was the flag of 1812—the flag of Lake Erie, New Orleans, and the Atlantic Ocean. In 1818, the following resolutions were adopted by Congress:—"That from and after the 4th day of July next, the flag of the United States be thirteen horizontal stripes—alternate red and white; that the Union be twenty stars, white in a blue field representing a new constellation." 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