

Dusk of Elder



# Catholic Messenger.

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"HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THEM THAT BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS!"

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MORNING STAR AND CATHOLIC MESSENGER.  
NEW ORLEANS, SUNDAY, JANUARY 3, 1869.

The tenderness and natural feeling, as well as poetic sentiment, embodied in the following lines, commend themselves to every heart. We shall be pleased to hear frequently from the fair authoress.

[For the Morning Star and Catholic Messenger]  
Anniversary of Our Baby's Death.

Memories of a Mother's Heart.

I am thinking of thee, baby,  
And my tears are falling fast—  
Of the time I first beheld thee,  
Of the time I saw thee last;  
Of the many, many hours  
When thy little nestling head  
Lay upon my loving bosom,  
Till they took thee from it—dead.

I am thinking of thee, baby!  
Once I lay so weak and pale,  
That the very life-blood's gushings  
In my heart had seemed to fail,  
When they brought my new-born treasure,  
And I looked on thee and smiled,  
Thinking life most sweet and precious  
For thy sake, my child.

I am thinking of thee, baby,  
When thy life had numbered days,  
And each coming day had added  
To thy beauty and thy grace.  
Waking, sleeping, I can see thee,  
Restless, eager in thy play—  
Biddlike, moving and unfeeling,  
Through the live-long day.

I am thinking of thee, baby—  
How, when eve was drawing near,  
And the day's last rosy tinges  
In the west would disappear,  
How thy bright eyes would grow misty,  
As in sympathy with earth,  
Till the snowy lids would cover  
All their radiance, all thy mirth.

I am thinking of thee, baby—  
Oh! my bursting heart will break,  
As it all comes up before me,  
All its grieving for thy sake!  
When those eyes would, pleading, seek me,  
Asking for relief from pain;  
Pleading—asking of thy mother—  
Pleading—asking—all in vain.

I am thinking of thee, baby—  
They had robbed thee all in white—  
They had laid thee down most gently,  
Covered o'er so very light.  
Coldly, coldly were thy fingers,  
Folded on thy little breast—  
No more lifted to thy mother  
From that painless rest.

I am thinking of thee, baby,  
As my Bible says thou art—  
Clasped in tender love and kindness  
To thy Saviour's heart.  
Oh! I could not bear it, darling,  
Were it not taught to me there  
Such as thou the gentle Shepherd  
Makes His choicest care.

I am thinking of thee, baby—  
Life to me is not so dear—  
All my hope and all my object  
Is to meet thee there.  
Pitying Saviour! when the hour  
Of my death shall come,  
Send my blessed angel baby  
To escort me home.

Plaquemine, La. K. D.

TWO BLOCKS FROM THE CHRISTMAS FIRE.  
BY CAVIARE.

[Concluded.]

Some minutes must have elapsed before I awoke to consciousness. When I did I felt very cold, and very confused, and for some time unable to realize the full extent of what had occurred. Was it all a hideous dream? Yes; there was the chamber, still filled with the white moonlight; there was the accursed portfolio. Who could that man be? Lucy had no brother; and I was intimately acquainted with the entire circle of her relatives. What rendered it necessary that he should hide like a thief under an honest roof? What devil had prompted him to come there and sow bitterness between me and her, who was dearer to me than even life? But, Lucy! how had I merited this outrage—how came it that she should strive to win my heart, and cast it away as a thing not worth the keeping? I heard a bell—heard my name called; and collecting all my strength

and resolution, stalked into the house, up into the drawing-room, where Lucy was sitting with a hypocritical air of innocence at the piano; where Fid with his future wife nestled pleasantly in a corner; where Major Whitley and Mr. Davis were discussing coffee and politics. Striving to smile, I stole to a corner of the room, and mastered by the sense of my own misery, sat down far from every one. Lucy was singing. Her voice was brilliant with its accustomed buoyancy; her nimble fingers chased the keys with their usual rapidity; her very air was instinct with a sense of happiness. Listen:

"Up and down the world may go,  
The stars do out, suns cease to shine;  
But a lowly cot and a passionate heart,  
Sweet sage, are mine, and enough for mine.  
There's music in his lightest tone,  
His breath is like the lighted dove,  
Give others power, and thrones and crowns,  
But give to me content and love.  
La! la! la! content and love."

"Parkson," said Mr. Davis, as Lucy ended, and with a shake of luxuriant curls, turned jestingly to Kate, "go down on your knees and apologise."  
"The prisoner is entitled to a copy of the indictment. Am I not, sir?"  
"And you shall have it, my boy," he replied. "How dare you absent yourself all this time without permission?"  
"Oh! I beg to offer the amplest apology. The truth is, I took the liberty of breathing a cigar on the lawn."  
"Wrong—against all regulations," observed the Major.

"The truth is," Lucy said, "Mr. Parkson is learning grievous habits—becoming, indeed, a confirmed truant." She said this with so much playfulness, and looked at me so reproachfully, that I gave her the credit of being one of the most consummate diplomatists I had ever met.  
"He's not right this time," said the Major; "I demand a court-martial."  
"And I would suggest," cried Fid, "that Miss Davis be named President."  
"Voted unanimously" cried the Major. "Miss President, I charge the prisoner with desertion from his post."  
"And what is the prisoner's defense?" asked Lucy.

I gave her a keen, cold look. "His only defense," I replied, is—"silence."  
"Well," said Lucy, with a mock heroic air, "considering the extreme youth and general good conduct of the accused, the court shall be lenient, and only condemn him to a fine of—  
"song."

The decision was graciously received, and I went to the piano.  
"Comic or sentimental, Miss Whitley, which do you prefer?"  
"It is Miss Davis's privilege to choose, I believe, Mr. Parkson."  
"Not this time," I said, with an affectation of gaiety. "Pray choose. I never differ with a lady on a point of taste."  
I saw Lucy start from her chair, and walk to the mantel-piece.  
"Oh, thank you. Well, let it be sentimental." I touched the piano.

"Stop, stop! my young friend," exclaimed the Major. "Give us the argument of the song first; Pope always does so. What is it about?"  
I turned round. Lucy was leaning thoughtfully on the mantel-piece, her face around from the light.  
"After argument, Major, is I regret to say, a very common argument. A knight loves a lady, and she pretends to return his affection. He discovers that she is false; and that, in his absence, she encourages the addresses of a rival, to whom she conveys letters by stealth." I saw Lucy's bosom heave quickly.  
"One night he discovers her secreting a letter addressed to his rival in a rent-roll—queer, isn't it!—and, on returning to the banquet where the ladies, bards, and knights are assembled, he takes a harp and sings this lay."  
"What a capital idea," said Mr. Davis. "I hope the lady didn't die."  
"I hope not," I replied; "but the affair is only a small fragment from an every-day history. Here it is:"

"The glory of the summer time decays,  
And broken moons around our planet range;  
Leaf, tree, and brook, and even love are types  
Of one, slow-paced eternity of change.  
A little speck of canker in the flower,  
A little rim of darkness on the moon—  
From narrow things, the fruit of fate or chance,  
The myriad changes of the earth are born.  
Do I reproach her if she shares the fate  
Of all sweet natural things that breathe or blow?  
If from the common to the rare she turns,  
Do I reproach her as inconstant? No!  
Mine is a love that wakes to sacrifice,  
And moves obedient unto her desires.  
If she would worship one, abjuring me,  
I'd cast my heart upon his altar fires.  
Peace go with her and blossom at her feet;  
Dumb all reproach; but, now and evermore,  
The benediction of forgetfulness."  
"Rather heavy," that" observed Major Whitley, when I had ended. "Why are young people so fond of raising ghosts—even at Christmas?"  
"You forget, papa," said Kate, "that Mr. Parkson was requested to sing a sentimental

song, and that before complying he explained its purport at your desire."  
"Right, my dear," replied the Major, with an abashed air and a penitent tone. "Right always. Come and box my ears, Kate."  
"Wasn't the knight very forgiving?" asked Mr. Davis. "Now, if I cared for a lady, I couldn't find it in me to let her off so easily. For instance, I should challenge my rival to the combat, unhorse him, and cut off his nose as a trophy."

"The age of chivalry is gone," said Fid, "and God be with it," he added; "its cant and fusion would not hold water in our days."  
"Right, sir," observed the Major; "and yet, when we were stationed in Ceylon, and had nothing better to do, we revived it a bit. We had duels over disputed cockatoos and camp-kettles. Some were wounded—some killed in those little affairs of honor; but anything rather than be *blaw*."  
I seized on the first pretext, and descended to the Green-room. A light was burning on the table at which Lucy sat, writing. She lifted up her head as I entered, and tears were visible in her eyes. I was about to retire when she requested me to remain.

"Three hours ago, Mr. Parkson," she said, rising, "I implored of you not to judge me harshly. I as much as told you that I was bound to follow circumstances, and asked your good opinion to help me. You have broken your promise. When my heart is filled with anxiety for the fate of one to whose welfare I cannot be insensible, you came to strike me down with severe words and mortifying accusations. I know what you have seen. I know all."  
"Lucy," I said, "will you pardon me for saying that there are limits to the blindest credulity? Perhaps I had no right to think I had an exclusive claim to your affections. The proof is plain that I had not. And yet, fool as I am, I have enough generosity to resign all my hopes, to bless my rival, and accept the defeat."

I sat down; I leaned my head on the back of the chair, and gazed abstractedly into the fire.  
"He is no rival, I assure you," she said.  
"Then who is he—what is he? Why does he hide like a criminal, afraid of the light? Who is he?"  
"That," she replied, in a tone of trembling indecision, "I cannot tell."  
"You will not tell?"  
"I implore you not to ask me—now."  
"Miss Davis," I said, with a calmness which astonished myself, "we will say good-bye this night. Under the circumstances, it would be unfair to embarrass you and humiliate myself."  
"No, no," she exclaimed, "we shall, indeed, not. Trust me a day longer—one day, Richard."

"To-morrow morning I shall leave for L—. May his love make you happier than mine ever could."  
"And if," she pleaded, "the suspicions which you entertain shall be explained, and you shall know you have wronged me, where will the atonement be?"  
"In the consciousness," I replied, "that I have acted from no morbid feeling of jealousy—that I have used my senses, and been convinced that my conduct has been just and honorable."  
"And yet you have been deceived."  
"Deceived! Miss Davis. Is it deception that I accuse a lady of carrying on a secret correspondence with a gentleman, and she acknowledges it? On your honor as a woman, did you not kiss a note, and hide it in his portfolio an hour ago?"  
"That is true—true."  
"Well, let the quarrel end here. God forgive you."  
"Hark!" cried Lucy, springing from her seat and fixing a look of terror on the windows. "My God! he is lost."  
The tramp of horses' feet, and the dull crash of grounded arms on the graveled approach to the house startled me.

"Gwad all the approaches to prevent escape," cried a shrill, half feminine voice, in a commanding tone, outside. I heard the tread of men filing into the avenues that skirted the lawn, and the commotion which the circumstance caused amongst our friends overhead. Peering out through a slit in the shutters, I could distinctly see the black uniforms and bright bayonets of the police, drawn up in a double line facing the house.  
"Lucy!" cried Mr. Davis, who had rushed down stairs, and stood agitated and pale in the hall; "can anything be done to prevent a capture?"  
The crash of a musket-but against the door resounded through the house.  
"They will break in in a moment, Lucy; is there no hope?"  
She knitted her hands across her forehead, and for a moment was lost in reflection. "Papa," she said, with startling suddenness, "he must swing from the nursery windows into the walnut. Go, go—oh! save him!"  
A second crash of musket-bats at the door made our hearts leap with anxiety. Rushing up stairs, we found Miss Whitley, Fid, the Major, and the pale young man collected in a whispering group on the drawing-room landing.

"Up," cried Lucy, taking the latter's hand; "unfasten the nursery window and leap into the walnut."  
"God bless you," he cried, and kissing her hands, darted up stairs.  
"Ellen," said Lucy to a terrified domestic, "take all the books and papers you will find in the Blue room, and hide them in the air-bed. Be sure to fill it." The servant disappeared, and returned in a few minutes loaded with papers, amongst which I recognized the accursed portfolio. Shortly afterwards the hall door was thrown open, and the police entered. There was a great clatter of feet in the hall, and a loud banging of doors, in the intervals of which the hum of coarse voices, modified by an occasional shrieking order, reached us. In less than a minute, a delicate knock was given at the drawing-room door, and a man of some thirty summers, of slender person and affected air, entered. Placing a glass to his left eye, he swept the room, when, seeing Mr. Davis, he exclaimed, in a mincing, snobbish style of delivery:  
"Beg pawdon. Ve'y disagweeable, Mr. Davis, but my dooty, sir—"  
"I can anticipate all your apologies, Mr. Inspector," said Mr. Davis. "Pray discharge your duty."  
"My dooty, sir, is of a pecoliarly painful nature. But a man must not shrink, as you know, on that account."  
Our host bowed.

"I am instructed that you harbaw' a rebel here," he continued, directing a look, meant to be facetious, at the ladies.  
Mr. Davis drew himself up. "My house, sir," he replied, with the least tinge of irony, "never harboured a man who was ashamed to show his face to honest people."  
"Ve'y pwobable," observed the inspector; "spose I am to understand that you have no rebel in your house?"  
"You have my answer, sir," said our host. "Doubting that, have the goodness to satisfy yourself."  
"Because my instructions are," the inspector went on, "that—who has taken up arms against the government of our gracious queen, has been hiding several days in Southbank Cottage."  
"Act upon your instructions, sir," said Mr. Davis. "You shall have every facility if you wish to search."  
"It's pwoinful—very pwoinful," soliloquised the Inspector, as he tapped his dress boots with his dress sword. "Have the men found any traces?" he asked, turning to a constable who stood, musket in hand, on the door mat.  
"None, sir."  
"Poked all the beds, fired up all the chimneys, tapped all the walls—have they?"  
"Yes, sir," replied the man, with an ineffectual attempt to suppress a laugh. "Sergeant Watson poked an air bed with his bayonet, and you should hear it squeak. My eye!"  
"Ah. Then draw off and report in the morning." With these words the inspector placed his sword under his arm, bowed separately to each of us, and stalked out of the room. The men, who had tumbled down stairs from all parts of the house, quickly followed him; and, in less time than it takes to tell it, peace and quiet was restored to Southbank.

"I breathe freely again," said Lucy. "Mr. —has escaped. There is no one in the walnut."  
"Major Whitley," said our host, "I may tell you, as an honorable man, that a brave young fellow, gifted above his years, the husband of a charming and accomplished woman—a man whose only crime is that he has been too faithful to his unhappy country, has been my guest for the last two days."  
"God bless him," exclaimed the Major. "God bless him."  
"Does the circumstance compromise Major Whitley?" asked Mr. Davis, with some anxiety.  
"Kate," cried the Major, "box Mr. Davis's ears." We all laughed.  
"I hope he may escape the patrols," said Fid.  
"And his papers," cried Lucy. "Oh, papa, I fear he has no money."  
"I have taken care of that dear," said Mr. Davis. "I knew he was proud; but I contrived to force the acceptance of fifty pounds on him this morning. His papers will be safe in your custody, love."  
"Heaven prosper all brave men," cried the Major, enthusiastically. "Whether they forge, or weave, or fight, or write, Heaven prosper them."  
"And a double blessing," exclaimed Lucy, with an inspired light in her eyes, "crown the men who are not ashamed to forge, and weave, and fight, and write for Ireland."  
"Bravo!" cried the Major, striking the table.  
"That's the stuff that makes revolutions—bravo!" and he struck the table again.  
"Papa," exclaimed Kate, "I declare you have broken a sugar bowl."  
"Then box my ears, darling," said the Major, thrusting his noble head into his daughter's lap. Did Kate box his ears? No, she kissed him tenderly and reverently. Fid immediately gave her his arm, and led her and the Major out on the verandah. Lucy touched the bell.  
"Oh! I have such a wicked secret to tell you,

papa," she said, knitting her hands on the old gentleman's shoulder, and looking at him appealingly.  
"Pray, don't go Mr. Parkson. Our friends share our confidences."  
"A secret, dear?"  
"Yes, papa. I have been so naughty, so imprudent, you will never forgive. Ellen fetch that portfolio."  
"I think Lucy is getting up a Christmas mystery for our edification, Mr. Parkson," said Mr. Davis.

"Indeed she is not. Now you will judge and Mr. Parkson will plead for me. Poor Mr. —. You know—"  
"Yes. I hope he is safe by this time."  
"Well, papa, a hundred little things, which only a woman sees, made me think he had no money, and I pitied him from my heart. This morning you gave me a ten-pound note as a Christmas-box. I enclosed that note in a letter to Mr. —, begging of him to accept from one who wished him well. I placed it in a letter and—"  
"Well, what did you do with the letter?"  
"I kissed it."  
"Was that all?" asked Mr. Davis.

"Oh, papa, that was a great deal. But I kissed it only for the sake of dear Ireland, and then hid it in his portfolio."  
"You darling," said Mr. Davis, passionately, as he pressed the noble girl to his bosom, "you darling."  
"And, papa, and pray, look, Mr. Parkson, there is the portfolio, and here is the note. Read it, I beseech you."  
Mr. Davis opened the letter, and took out the bank-note, and read as follows:—  
"DEAR MR.—Will you forgive the freedom I know I am guilty of in begging your acceptance of the enclosed? Even should you not keep it for yourself, do so for the sake of others who have incurred the displeasure of government, and have no means to escape it. With this go—wherever it goes—the best wish of—"  
Lucy Davis.

I heard the letter read, in a sort of half-dreamy stupor, through which the recollections of my reproaches and suspicions flashed with painful force. I was penitent and humble. Brave, generous, devoted little woman, nobly had she suffered, nobly had she triumphed! Overwhelmed with shame, I turned my eyes away, only to encounter hers, deep, luminous, and forgiving. We were alone. A light touch on my shoulder, a low voice in my ear:—  
"Dear Richard, you are blameless. Had you been less provoked I could scarcely think that you—you cared for me."  
"Lucy," I said, and the dear name thickened in my throat, "you are all goodness, you are all greatness, all generosity. I—O God pity me! am unworthy to know you longer."  
"—it was, and," she sobbed; "the trial was bitter—it was cruel; let it strengthen while it humbles us. Who is it that has not had something to regret—something to atone for? We all need forgiveness."  
"I know," I said, "how you must despise me—how the insulting words I uttered must have stung and hurt you. Let my forgiveness be your silence—my penance your forgetfulness."  
"No," she whispered, "were it a hundred times worse I could forgive you; forget you I could not. Dear Richard," and she laid her head upon my shoulder—"can you love me and speak of forgetfulness?"

"Dearest, did I not love you—I should never have suffered this terrible debasement. With you have been associated all the plans, the hopes, the aspirations which have grown up within me since I shook off the wishes of a boy and assumed the cares of manhood. If I have ambitious riches, independence, whatever the world respects and applauds, it was for you, that you might share them. For many years I have been building up a home, that you might sanctify it. To part from you would indeed be misery; and yet I deserve it."  
"Look at me," she whispered.  
I raised my head—I gazed into her forgiving eyes. All resolutions, all dreams of parting dissolved in their pure light. Dear Lucy, there was no parting. Whom God has united by such tender sympathies, though one should err, let no one separate. Place thy dear hand in mine, and trust in me."  
"Only think of it," cried the Major, bounding into the room, and drawing in Mr. Davis by the hand. "Up comes the young rogue, sir, and asks me for Kate—to my face. And up comes Kate, sir, with a look which threatened that she would box my ears if I refused. What could I do but strike colors and surrender?"  
"Well," said Mr. Davis, rubbing his hands and smiling, "I suppose you did the best for the young culprits." Here Fid, looking very important, entered the room, Kate leaning on his arm, flushed and diffident.

"Mr. Davis," I said, taking Lucy's hand, "I am afraid there are more culprits than our friends, present. Look on us, sir, and be merciful."  
"By Jove, Major, this is too much of a good thing," said our host. "Why will no one marry me?"  
(Continued on Eighth Page.)

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