

The Rapides Gazette.

"LET US HAVE PEACE."

ALEXANDRIA, PARISH OF RAPIDES, LA.

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Miscellaneous Selections.

CHARITY CROSSES.

BY MARGARET MASON.

Tinted are her cheeks with rose:
She is waiting in the snows
Of the falling apple-blossoms.

Tinklings of a drowsy rill
Come from the upland orchard hill
Niches in her dreams to fill.

Dotted is her rustic shawl
With the apple-leaves that fall:
Twilight splendors cover all.

Deeper lined than earthly grace,
Rest of heaven diths in her face
Rejoice in its abiding-place.

Charity Cross, it groweth late:
Household duties for you wait;
Just beyond the garden-gate.

Leave the apple-blossoms to fall,
Far-off brook to vainly call:
Lightly climb the orchard wall.

All your dreamings softly fold:
Let them drift away uncolored
In the dying sunset's gold.

Down the path that leads between
Ferns and no-sea, shaded green,
The gabled house is dimly seen.

Winds, with poplar trees at play,
Chase with tossing boughs all day
Weather-beaten walls of gray.

Open wide the trellised door:
Sunset glories glow on floor,
Fall upon the kitchen floor.

Turn to gold the swif-glimp loom
Standing in the corner's gloom
Of the low brown-rattened room.

Brazen dogs that ever sleep
Silently the entrance keep
Of the fireplace huge and deep.

Charity, stop no more to dream:
Covers lift with puffing steam;
Waiting stands the rising cream.

Change to white your apron gray,
Sprinkled clothes to fold away,
Ready for another day.

Quickly now the table spread
With its homely cloth of red,
Savory meats and snowy bread.

On the shelf a pink-lipped shell,
That forever tries to tell
Ocean music, learned so well.

Tip-toe on the cricket stand:
Take it in your sun-browned hand
Shell from eastern tropic land.

Let your clear voice through it ring,
Homeward the tired help to bring
From the distant meadow-spring.

Far away they hear the call:
Look! they come by orchard wall,
Where the apple-blossoms fall.

Out that foremost leads the plover
Sees you in the doorway now—
Breaks a bending apple-bough.

Waves it by the meadow creek:
Answering blushes on your cheek
Tell the words you do not speak.

Out upon the rippling river
Purple lights of sunset quiver,
Bustling leaves reflected shiver.

Shell in hand, she goes to greet
Her lover, whose hat-grown street
And the meadow pathway meet.

Insect voices far away,
Hushed in silence through the day,
Whisper in the night of May.

While in vain the pink-lipped shell,
Murmuring in its hollow, tells
Would its own love-story tell.

Through the drifting apple-snow,
Where the four-leaved clover grow,
Hand in hand they homeward go.

And they vow, whatever the weather,
Mid the brook, through the heather,
They will walk life's way together.

Parting when the day grows late,
If a moment at the gate,
One alone is left to wait.

Yet each other they will greet
Where life's shadeless dusty street
And the heavenly pathway meet.

—Lippincott's Magazine for July.

A SELF-ACCUSATION.

I HAVE frittered away the happiness of my life.

"Why did I marry her? I have often made this mental query; I did so in the very days which directly followed our honeymoon. Still I loved her, as I love her still. The fact is, I should never have married at all.

She is a most peculiar character. I did not understand her in her girlhood, and I fear, I do not understand her yet. Ideas are fermenting within her, of which I can form no conception; and now and then her eyes reflect strange, incomprehensible emotions, which soon again disappear to her inner self, just like prisoners who at times peep forth from their bars into the outer world and then retire again to the concealment of their cells. She is my wife, and I hold her as few other men would. She bears my name, sits by my side when I drive out, or takes my arm when I promenade; but I know perfectly that the loved one no longer belongs to me, that she is but the shadow of the blithe Pauline whom I won in the bloom of her rosy youth.

It was in the country that I learned to know her. Although distantly related, we had never met. So fate brought me during a summer vacation to my aunt, who was living in a small, picturesque village on the Patapsco. Had I been cognizant of Pauline's presence, I should not have gone thither. I entertained a sort of aversion for the woman. What I had heard of her in the city was not calculated to raise her very high in the estimation of a staid, dignified limb of the law, like myself.

Pauline was not in the cottage. After examining my room, disposing of my luggage, and arranging my dress I strolled into the woods to seek my favorite haunts. Nearing a lovely, secluded spot, close by the bank of the stream which I was wont to frequent on former visits to my aunt, I was suddenly arrested in my progress by the menacing growls of a dog. Peering through the bushes, I saw a girl sitting on a mossy knoll beneath a shady holly; at her feet lay a large Newfoundland-labrador, who had raised his head and was showing me his teeth in a threatening manner.

The girl turned and beheld me, still half hidden by the shrubbery, staring in astonishment at her and the dog. She burst into a merry laugh.

Conscious that I presented a rather ludicrous picture, I advanced and said cordially:

"Are you Pauline?"

"So I am called?"

"Then, perhaps, I may be so bold as to call you cousin, for I am George."

"Ah! Cousin George. We have been expecting you. When did you arrive?"

"Just now."

"Fido! fetch my hat," she suddenly said to the dog. "It is time to get our supper. Are you hungry, Cousin George?"

"Yes—no!" I answered confusedly.

She laughed good-naturedly, and took the hat from the dog.

"How good you are to that huge animal!" I said, as we rose.

"Good! he is my idol; he is the only one who has at all times proven true to me, and the only one."

She suddenly checked herself. Stooping, perhaps to hide her embarrassment, she kissed the white spot on Fido's forehead. But I completed the sentence with:

"To whom you have been true."

"So they say," she returned, laughing. "But look into his beautiful eyes, and tell me whether you could help being good to him. Oh, if I did not possess you, my good Fido!" She stroked his head, while he wagged his tail and gazed at her with his large, fat hful eyes.

"You will hardly be able to keep pace with us. When I go through the woods with the dog, I generally grant him the felicity of a race with me!" And, without waiting for a reply, she bounded over the sod, the dog in pursuit barking jubilantly.

We soon became good friends—something like brother and sister. I thought. How this sentiment developed into love, I cannot satisfactorily explain. One day, as I was taking a ramble, I came upon her unexpectedly; she was walking slowly along, with eyes cast down, and looking more grave than I had ever seen her before. When she saw me her face suddenly became transfigured with radiance, but she quickly tripped by. This glowing of her face and the respondent throbs of my heart revealed to me what we were to each other.

It was late when I reached the cottage. It was one of those serene, warm, moonlight evenings which exercise such a soft, magical influence over us. Pauline was sitting in the garden arbor, the dog at her side. I seated myself so as to obtain a full view of her countenance, which was illumined by the moonbeams. Its expression made me ask, anxiously:

"Pauline, are you ill?"

"No." A pause. "I am going away to-morrow."

"Whither?"

"Home—to the city! But what all you, cousin? You—"

"But why must you go?" I interrupted her hurriedly.

"Why? for a number of reasons. In the first place, I had intended remaining only three weeks, and lo! I have been here nearly six. Secondly, I have business matters on hand, which I must not postpone. Finally, my friends demand my return, and should I not come, they would say—that you were the magnet that fetters me here. Is it not nice that my friends miss me? Oh, the consciousness of being missed is truly a delicious sensation!"

"Then, then you wish to return to your old mode of life, and in the course of time, perhaps—to marry?"

Pauline's hand rested in mine, and the touch of her warm, velvety little fingers quickly scattered my wisdom and self-possession. I, who had firmly resolved never to enter the matrimonial noose—I said to her, in a voice so soft and tender that both of us trembled at its tone:

"We have been so happy together here!"

"Very happy!" she whispered, quivering.

I held both of her hands tightly; she avoided looking at me, but did not turn away her darling little face. I continued:

"Betwixt you and me there is a considerable disparity in age, and I am by nature much more seriously constituted than you. Excepting you, I have never loved a woman, while you have conquered—Heaven knows how many hearts. You are not what the world says of you; you have a heart that can love and be true. Therefore I pray you, tell me frankly and faithfully whether you can love me—or do love me. I am not accustomed to addressing such questions, and I do not know, perhaps, how to express myself conformably to the requirements of an occasion like this; but believe me when I say that you have won my heart, and that I do not think I could be happy without you."

"I believe you."

"But will you trust me, too, and love me?"

"I love you and trust you," she answered frankly. "Are you not surprised that I tell you this so quietly? That is because I shall never marry you. I am capricious and presuming, and would soon make you weary of life with my constant demand for attention. I was born to be treated like a spoiled lap-dog; you are, although capable of loving, nevertheless not an affectionate man. We should not have passed two months in wedlock before you'd wished me in Cayenne, or some other torrid locality. But as that would not be practicable, therefore you would break my heart—not rudely and harshly, oh no!—undemonstratively and calmly. That is just as clear to me as if I had it all before my eyes at this moment!"

She looked at me, and her whole soul was in the glance; it spoke love, passion, and yearning tenderness. Oh, what strange feelings, never hitherto experienced, this glance awakened within me! The next moment I held her in my arms, and exclaimed:

"Pauline, if ever man loved woman with all his heart and soul, unreasonably, madly, and yet so truly and honestly, it is I."

"But will that last, George?"

I bent down, and our kisses breathed all the delirious fervor of a first true love.

"You must be my wife, Pauline!" I cried. Her head drooped upon my shoulder, and her hand sought and clasped mine.

"Is this your answer? May I call this hand mine?"

"If you wish, George!"

master at last. And how gladly I carry the chains of my master!"

She loved me. Every chord of her delicately-strung heart vibrated at my merest touch; nevertheless I was not satisfied. I undertook to modify the tones; her dotting throng itself was the instrument. True—no! I see all clearly—this instrument was a sword, with which I cruelly wounded her. A very sage idea entered my head, and whispered to me that I was making a child of Pauline with my indulgence, and that with so much warm sunlight her full womanly power would never be developed. I acted according to this idea, altogether overlooking the fact that her mental and moral force had already been entirely unfolded and matured, and that, too, at a time when others just beginning to be aware that there are rocks and storms, shoals and quicksands in the ocean of life. I also forgot that, in spite of her youthful gaiety and exuberance of spirits, the lessons of a long, bitter, gloomy past would never be lost upon her; their impress was merely hidden from my eyes beneath a blithe exterior.

One day, as she raised her eyes to mine, I happened to be in a very unreasonable frame of mind; her rallying love-look almost irritated me, and I said shortly:

"You annoy me when you look at me in that manner."

Glad to get an opportunity to chat with me, she dropped her pen, came to my side, and bent over me, and said:

"Why, my dear? The glance was for him I love."

That was a poor beginning for the precepts I wanted to enforce. I collected myself and began to study my papers profoundly.

"Am I irksome to you?" she asked, the least bit sensitively.

"Not exactly."

Her soft hand toyed with my locks and her warm breath caressed my cheek. I felt that my wisdom was rapidly expiring. Again I collected myself and assumed an air of coldness.

"One kiss, only one, and I will go!" she begged.

"Nonsense, Pauline! I have no time for kissing."

She gazed into my face and asked: "Do I vex you?"

"Exceedingly."

A sigh scarcely audible escaped her lips, and she left the room.

For this morning at least I had destroyed her cheerfulness. It was the first cloud in our matrimonial sky.

My plan had succeeded excellently well; she had learned to doubt my affection for her. That was revealed to me occasionally by her stealthy, wistful glances, and the manner in which she began to occupy herself with Fido—as if she now relied alone upon his love and faithfulness. But I was too proud to admit my wrong, even to myself, and daily widened the breach.

Then the dog began to grow sickly; he had grown old and feeble. She abandoned her work and devoted the time taken for her labors to the dumb brute. When life was extinct, she bent over him, but at into tears, kissed the white spot on his forehead, and then closed the eyes which even in death, seemed to regard her with affection.

Great as was her grief, she sought no condolence from me. She provided for the burial of Fido, who was interred by the gardener close under the window of our study. She would frequently tarry by the little mound, at which times gloomy reflections seemed to agitate her soul. Now still, while sitting at her desk, she often gazes pensively toward the spot. She is true to him beyond the grave, because—she had remained true to her.

The year so auspiciously begun was approaching its end, when one morning I was amazed to hear Pauline singing merrily; it was the first time since Fido's death. Soon thereafter I heard her confiding toward my room, and I at once affected profound preoccupation.

It was a warm, beautiful morning, and her entrance seemed to usher in a happy sunlight. Her face, too, beamed with that serenity which it had in her girlhood.

"What is it?" I asked, looking up from my work.

She placed a lovely little nosegay of violets, tied with a blue ribbon, before me, and said: "See, George, these are the first violets of our garden. I have something else in petto, but that of this hereafter."

And now she stooped over me, placed her hand lightly upon my shoulder, and kissed me. It was the first exhibition of fondness she had voluntarily tendered me these many days. I contemplated her in surprise and said:

"You appear to be in an unusually happy humor to-day, Pauline."

"It is somebody's birthday to-day," she rejoined, as she sat upon my knee and gazed into my eyes. "May Heaven grant this some one many happy returns of the day, and—and—" she paused for a moment, then continued in a voice whose quivering was not easily concealed—"if, during the past six months all has not been between us as it should have been, then let us forget it all from this day forth."

Silently she encircled me with her arms and sunk her head upon my bosom. How would it have been possible to remain insensible thereto? Kissing her silken hair, I said that I would gladly forget all (as if I had anything to forget but my own culpability!), whereupon she raised her eyes, smiling blissfully, and thought, in sober truth, that I was very magnanimous to her.

"Now, George, we will begin anew to-day."

"As you wish, my child." And at once she proceeded in her old way to daily with me.

Shall I meet with credence when I say that hardly had my wife been gone five minutes, before I began to fancy that I had let her see too freely the influence she possessed over me? For months I had practiced the art of appearing tranquil and indifferent, yet the first smile or kiss had proved sufficient to overpower me. She had harassed me insufferably the last six months—and I put it to myself, therefore to grant her at once a full pardon seemed to me at least a matter for consideration. So, when she returned, she found me absorbed in my documents.

"One moment, if you please!" she cried, taking the pen from my hand and holding it above my head. "I have a present for you—will you have it?"

"Why, certainly, if you will give it to me."

"Then beg for it."

I said nothing, and seized another pen. That disconcerted her.

"Don't you—want it?" she asked timidly.

"There was once a saint named Francis de Sales," I began to sermonize, "who was wont to say that one should never ask for nor refuse anything."

"You are no saint, and it was I that spoke to you. Will you not accept my little gift? Say yes—if it be only to please me—to make me still happier on this day than I already am."

"Don't be so childish, Pauline!"

"It is childish, I know; but do me this favor, George. It is so little that I ask, and yet it would make me so very happy."

"I shall never decline what you offer me. But be good enough not to disturb me any longer."

Scarcely had these words escaped my lips when the present—an exquisitely ornamented bronze inkstand, in the shape of a Cupid—lay at my feet. Pauline turned away, exasperated and hurt. I picked up the pieces.

"How you stoop to get him?" she asked sarcastically.

"Upon my word, you are the most unreasonable creature in the world!" I exclaimed. "Fortunately the little love-god may be mended."

"Yes, but wounds will leave scars. O George! she continued reproachfully, casting herself down before my chair, "why do you tempt me thus? Do you really, truly love me?"

"Pauline!" I said impatiently, "do I stand up; this is getting tiresome."

She did so, but a deathly pallor mantled in her face.

"I will go; yet one question before. Do you love me, George?"

I was a little fretful and very headstrong, that was all. Did she mean to threaten me?

"Did you love me when we first exchanged vows of affection?" she demanded anew.

"Of course. But—"

"But you love me no longer!"

"Well, since you will have it so—"

"Speak! only speak!"

"I don't love you—exactly—in the way you mean."

An ominous silence followed. She became so white, gazed at me with so strange, rigid a look, that I forgot my impatience and self-will, and said anxiously:

"I don't mean it so seriously. Goodness, how pale you are! Why, I was only joking."

"I can bear it, George. Oh, what cannot a woman bear—this way or that!"

She went, looking mournful it is true, but apparently tranquil. I dreamed not that I had killed her love for me.

From that time Pauline ceased to be a child. But the sunlight, too, had departed from her. Silent and sedate, but rarely mild and smiling, she carefully superintended her affairs; she disturbed me no more. But she grew paler and weaker, so that the doctor earnestly counseled a trip to the saubrons South. My business affairs did not allow of my traveling, but near acquaintances were just about making a journey to Florida and Cuba. My wife joined the party.

At last she came back. One evening I received a telegram from Hampton Roads, where the steamer had made a stop, in which Pauline informed me that she would arrive at home the following day. How feverishly I was excited by the tidings! My estrangement had lacerated my heart so terribly, and I saw now how deeply I had wronged her, that I fervently longed to win back her love at any price. I went to receive her. I approached her and embraced her. She returned it all, but there was no life, no love in the greeting. It was all mere form.

Holding her at some distance from me, I scrutinized her closely and inquired: "Pauline, are you not well?" Her eye met mine openly, but I missed the old, tender sparkle.

"Perfectly well, George," she replied, rather indifferently. "It is so long since I have seen you that you appear to me somewhat altered."

For weeks I endured this wretched, dead existence. One morning, as I vainly strove to become interested in the newspaper, I felt more bitterly than ever the full extent of my wrong, my joylessness, and my isolation. I rose resolved, and went to her.

"Are you busy?" I inquired, as she ceased writing and turned her head.

"Not too busy to speak with you," she returned.

"Pauline, how long shall we continue this mode of life?"

"What mode of life, George?" she asked, changing color.

"The life we are living. It is not the unshadowed, happy life of yore. You do not look to me as you once belonged to me."

fruit? Ah! yes, yes, it is you who are weeping now!" She seemed suddenly exhausted, and growing calmer, after a while continued: "Do not weep, George; take what I can give you—my friendship—and, so God wills, we will remain united here and beyond."

"Will you then love me in the life to come?"

"What would a lone soul do in heaven itself? Plainly, George, love alone is life in heaven and on earth!"

"God knows, dearest Pauline, that I loved you truly on the day we plighted our troth, and loved you as truly on that ill-starred day when your heart became chilled, and that I love you now with the same devotion, but more wisely."

"It gives me a real pleasure to hear this," she cried with animation.

"Heaven alone knows, George, how I suffered at first, day and night. I thought then actually that I would have to yield up my life. I believe every one thinks the same when struck by some fearful blow. But the strength to endure my existence came with time, and afterward also came calm and peace. George, believe me that even though I may not be able to give you love, I shall nevertheless feel a felicity in being about you and to live with you until death doth us part."

I opened my arms, and now of her free will she fell upon my heart and placed her arms about my neck. Our lips met—not as they did once, yet tenderly.

"We are older, more sensible than we were, George, though sadder too," she said smiling. "But, who knows! It is yet possible that the old love may not be altogether extinct." This kindled a momentary spark of hope within my breast; but alas! no fuel has been offered since to keep it living.

Thus ended this chapter of our lives. Since that day we have never touched upon this subject. Years have passed and I have waited patiently for the return of Pauline's love, but I can never see aught shining in her eye but the same clear calm. My heart yet thrills as of yore when I hear her speak or sing. An angel could hardly be gentler or kinder than she, who once was so impulsive and fiery. She was unreasoning, passionate, and exacting in those days, and my phlegmatic nature was sorely exercised to keep pace with her. I know that all well—but oh! what a winsome, fond, bewitching creature she was!

Whosoever thou mayst be that readest this, remember in time that a kind word and a tender glance cost but little, yet can accomplish much, and that no wrong is greater than that which is committed against a loving heart.—P. H. Marcellus, in July Galaxy.

Graveyard Humor.

In a town in Connecticut a man died, who had a large wen on the top of his head, and his tombstone bore the following tribute to his memory, and also to the wen:

"His father lies beneath his head,
His spirit's gone unto his God,
We never shall see his head,
Nor see the wen upon his head."

A stone-cutter received the following epitaph from a German, to be cut upon the tomb of his wife:

"Mine wife Susan is dead, if she had life till next Friday she'd be dead shut two weeks. As a man must die, all things is impossible mit God."

A monument in Burlington, Iowa, is said to have this stanza upon it:

"Beneath this stone our baby lies,
He neither cries nor hollers,
He lived just one and twenty days,
And cost us forty dollars."

At Crosskirk, Northampton, Scotland, an epitaph reads thus:

"He was a quaint man, and to all appearance a sincere Christian. His death was caused by the stupidity of Lawrence Tulloch, who sold him after instead of epson salts, by which he was killed in the space of three hours, after taking a dose of it."

The tombstone of a child, in Portland, Maine, has the affecting couplet:

"The little hero that lies here,
Was conquered by the diarrhea."

In Cape May Cemetery is a stone erected to the memory of "Mary Jane, aged 11 years and eight months," and tells the following mournful ditty:

"She was not smart, she was not fair,
But hearts with grief for her are swelling,
And empty stands her little chair,
She died of eating watermelon."

The following lines are said to have been composed by a stone in Oxford, New Hampshire:

"To all my friends I bid adieu,
A more sudden death you never knew,
As I was leading the old mare to drink,
She kicked and killed me quicker 'n a wink."

On a tombstone in South Carolina, is the following beautiful tribute to departed worth:

"Here lies the body of Robert Gordin,
More brightly, and teeth accordin',
Stranger, tread lightly over this wonder,
If he opens his mouth, you are gone by thund'ring."

An inscription on a monument in East Tennessee winds up with the following touching obituary:

"She lived a life of virtue, and died of cholera morbus, caused by eating green fruit, in the hope of a blessed immortality, at the early age of 21 years, 7 months and sixteen days."

"Reader, 'Go thou and do likewise.'"

Training Heifers.

Nothing is more agreeable to most cows than the operation of milking, except, perhaps, eating, and a cow with a stunted udder will usually prefer to be milked. Nevertheless, heifers are generally nervous about it, frequently kick, and never stand still at first. Kind treatment and a gentle hand are essential. A rough man will be sure to make the heifer a ki-ker. The best way to begin is to sit by the heifer, on her right side of course; make her place her right foot back, then grasp the cord above the hock of the leg with the left hand and hold on. She cannot lift her left leg well, and will not try; but she will try to step over your right foot. This is easily prevented by raising the elbow, and she is absolutely forced to stand as she is. Meanwhile you can first clean and manipulate her bag and teats with your right hand with entire safety. When she stands quiet you can use both hands, but be ready on the least suspicion of movement to replace the left. The heifer should be tied in a stall at first and have something to eat, perhaps, and if very wild it may be necessary to begin by handling her, rubbing, brushing, or carding her gently, and gradually getting her accustomed to have her udder handled; but all this ought to have been done before she calved.—Ez.

Smuggling.

There is no part of a ship or its cargo, or of the