

MY LITTLE SWEETHEART.

I've a loyal little sweetheart; though the world should turn from me, She would only cling the closer, and my happy comrade be.

When I face the world's rough weather, I am sure of a retreat By my own bright chimney-corner with my darling at my feet.

VESTA.

By T. U.

VESTA VILLIARS stood at the window and gazed down at moving mass of people below.

Poor child, she must yet learn that one can walk through the busy streets of Boston for weeks, months—aye, even for years, without meeting one old friend, and yet it was strange that she had not a great many old friends here, for Boston was the city of her nativity.

But the reason is easily told. Mr. Villiars, who was once a wealthy merchant, had left Boston ten years before a penniless man. Little Vesta alone was with him, his fair young wife having died two years before his failure.

And now Vesta has returned to Boston, and a beautiful girl she is—rather small and slight, with rich golden-brown hair, which falls past her waist in silken curls, large, almond-shaped, thoughtful eyes—eyes that looked sad and tender, even while the well-formed lips were locked in stern determination and the fair cheeks dyed with the flush of indignation.

Why and how the fair young Vesta returned alone and in this disturbance of mind?

We shall soon learn. Mr. Villiars had gone to Frederickton when he left Boston, and three years after was again business.

About this time he married Mrs. Huntington, a widowed lady, who had seen about thirty-seven summers.

Mrs. Huntington possessed a fortune of a few thousands, and this, united to Mr. Villiars's business talents and present stock, set him firmly upon his feet again.

Little Vesta was now eleven years old, and her stepmother did not wish to have her at home; therefore, she was sent to a boarding school.

But the first year had hardly drawn to a close when she was summoned home. Her father's second wife had died suddenly.

Two weeks elapsed before the day on which Vesta arrived at her home.

As she drew near the house she saw a little coffin carried out and placed in a coach; then followed her father and a tall, strange youth.

Entering the house noiselessly and unobserved by a side entrance she met the old housekeeper and asked breathlessly:

"Her baby is dead, too, is it not, Ju- liet?"

"Yes," replied the old woman, "and it's safer with its mother than here. God help motherless little girls, I say, and she laid her hand fondly on Vesta's head."

"It was a little girl, then, was it, Juliet?"

"Yes, dear."

"But who is that young lad with papa?"

"His wife's first child."

"What?" exclaimed Vesta.

"Yes, dear," returned the old woman composedly, "the mistress sent for her son to come home from college a few weeks after you were sent off to please her ladyship."

"Did father know she had a son? I never knew it!"

"It seems to me master didn't know it until he saw a grown boy of nineteen walk in and call his wife 'mother' and be took on a bit for not being old beforehand. But he's fairly foolish about the boy now," said the housekeeper scornfully.

"Perhaps he is a good boy, Juliet."

"O, I suppose he's good enough, but there's a flash in his eye and a curl to his lip that I don't like—it don't speak much good, anyhow."

Five years rolled on and Mr. Villiars's stepson had grown to manhood.

Apparently he was a frank, true-hearted person, but away beneath the smooth, bright surface there dwelt a heart which was full of vice and deceit. His lips could smile and his eyes beam kindly on you even while his brain was plotting some dark deed to ruin you.

Vesta, who was now a beautiful girl of seventeen, admired his bright, light-hearted ways, yet she saw "a something" about him which prevented her regarding him as a sincere friend.

What the "something" was she could not tell—she liked to be with him, he was so gay, but she could never bring herself to that sweet interchange of thoughts which entwines hearts so dearly.

Not so with her father—he was perfectly wild about the "handsome boy."

No one was half so noble, half so truthful as his "son Louis."

His every action, every thought, was known by the artful Louis, and his dearest wish was that Vesta and Louis would marry.

Louis seemed to be delighted at the idea, but Vesta said nothing, for she did not at all like it.

Lifting up her pure white bosom of a child's unclad face, Lighting with her blue eyes shining every hard and lonely place.

I've a loyal little sweetheart, and her years that count but three, Are worth more than gems and gold, for this true heart believes in me.

Another year has passed, and Vesta's eighteenth birthday has come. A grand party is to be held in her home—the guests are already arriving—music and laughter fill the air—brilliant—but hark! a wild cry rings through the building, and great confusion is in the lower hall.

"What is it?" all asked wildly. "Mr. Villiars has fallen to the floor in a fit," is the answer.

All hurry downstairs, and five, ten minutes pass before Mr. Villiars recovers, then he speaks a few words and expires in the middle of his sentence.

His last words were these, spoken in a faltering voice, while his eyes rested on Louis's face, who bent kindly over him:

"Louis, you know what I would like—I can trust you—take my place to Vesta—be kind to her—give—" death claimed him and the rest was unspoken.

Two weeks after the funeral Louis asked Vesta for her hand, which she declined to give him.

Then he told her if she would not marry him she should leave the house and earn her own living; that it was his mother's money that enabled her father to become so wealthy, and now it all belonged lawfully to him.

The fair young Vesta listened to him, but said nothing, but the next morning she was missing. This didn't annoy Louis; he told those who inquired after her that she had gone away on a visit.

Vesta had been in Boston two days and had not yet succeeded in getting anything to do.

She is tired and weary, yet she cannot give up the search; she must find something to do to keep herself from starving.

Turning from the window with a heavy sigh she says, "I will answer that advertisement; perhaps I shall be more fortunate this time."

Tying on her black crape hat over her soft, golden-brown curls she left the house.

Soon she was on Washington street, and after a wearisome, long walk under the hot sun she stood before Miss G.'s, a grand millinery establishment.

With a palpitating heart she entered, and in her soft, silvery voice told her errand.

But, alas! the same heart-sickening, soft words met her here as they had done every place else.

"My dear, we are just full. I'm so sorry, if you had been a little sooner, but just think of it, fifty girls have been employed this morning. Rather warm day, my dear."

Vesta answered not, her heart was too full; neither did she notice the kind-faced old lady, who looked so pityingly upon her as she turned to the door.

As she stood upon the sidewalk a little white hand was laid upon her shoulder, and a kind voice asked:

"Are you really in need of work, dear child?"

"In need," repeated Vesta, looking into the old lady's face; "my life depends on my getting it."

"Are you really so poor as that, dear?"

"I have neither home nor money," returned Vesta, sadly.

"Your parents, dear?" reminded the old lady.

"Are dead," sobbed Vesta, the tears flowing from her eyes.

"Come home with me, and I will see what can be done for you! Here, dear, this is my carriage, step in; we shall drive for home, Edward."

Half an hour after Vesta sat in a beautifully furnished room in the midst of silks and laces.

Old Mrs. Ervin had engaged her for a month to do sewing for her two daughters.

One afternoon, two weeks after, Vesta sat in the garden talking to little Agnes Ervin, and so interested were they with each other that they did not hear the approaching footsteps and started to their feet when a low, musical voice said:

"Good evening, Miss Ervin! Is this where you are hidden?"

"Yes," replied Agnes, gayly, "when I'm with Miss Villiars I like to go to some place when I shall have her all to myself—but forgive me, I'd forgotten you were not acquainted! This is Mr. Lawson, Miss Villiars."

Vesta blushed under his admiring gaze, but in a few moments she recovered herself, and the two spent a very pleasant evening.

The month passed, but Mrs. Ervin and her daughter would not hear of Vesta leaving, and she was only too glad to stay.

The summer passed away and golden autumn came, still Vesta was with Mrs. Ervin, and now she was more like a companion than a hired seamstress.

One beautiful autumn evening she sat in the library singing softly to her-

self when Mr. Lawson entered noiselessly and whispered: "Vesta! dear Vesta! I—"

"Don't ask me to tell you what he said. It was too sweet for anyone to hear but Vesta's dear self, and besides, I think you have some one dear" to whisper those sweet words to yourself at twilight, and you can imagine what Mr. Lawson said to beautiful Vesta.

Six weeks after that autumnal evening Vesta was a bride, and the beloved mistress of Mr. Lawson's elegant home.

Years have passed since Vesta became Mrs. Lawson, and Louis still resides in Frederickton, and does not know where Vesta is, nor does it trouble him.

He has told his friends that "she has married well in the States," little dreaming how truthfully he speaks. He is far richer now than Mr. Villiars was, and seems to be very happy with his young family.

Thus do the wicked sometimes prosper—but we should be charitable, and not wish them ill, for in the next world God shall deal with them justly, and their misery will be great.

Vesta is happy, and although she has told her husband of Louis's actions, she expressed a wish that he would take no legal proceedings, and he loves her too well not to gratify that wish. She thinks God is the best one to deal with Louis Huntington.—New York News.

Extraordinary Finds in Roman Forum. The excavations in the Forum at Rome recently resulted in "finds" of extraordinary value and interest. Among the objects discovered are the following:

- 1. Two equestrian statues of Castor and Pollux. These statues, which belong to the best period of Grecian sculpture, stood before the temple of Castor and Pollux. The statues were broken by the barbarians, but all the pieces have been found, and the sculptures can be completely restored.
2. A large Greek statue of Aesculapius.
3. A magnificent Greek statue of Apollo.
4. A Greek bust of Jupiter.
5. Two arches in Parian marble, with Greek bas-reliefs.
6. The Fons Juturna, which belongs to the epoch of Rome under the kings.
7. The rostra of the Republic, which every one thought has disappeared.
8. A portion of an aqueduct dating back to before the foundation of Rome.
9. A prehistoric inscription which as yet has not been deciphered.
The most important discovery is that of a great Christian basilica in the Palatine. Magnificent frescoes, marble columns, and beautifully decorated sarcophagi have been found. The basilica belongs to the third century A. D.—London Standard.

Skunks Invade Kansas. The people of Western Kansas have been confronted with many pests. Wolves have destroyed their sheep, prairie dogs have taken possession of great areas and made it impossible to grow crops, and recently the skunk has made its appearance in many localities to prey upon the farmers' chickens.

Skunks have multiplied by the thousands in Western Kansas in the past three years. They take possession of the farmers' barns and outbuildings and keep the owner at a distance. They not only kill chickens, but also keep watch of the hens' nests for eggs. Out in Thomas County Farmer Hoston has permitted a large family of skunks to reside under his house for two years. He knew of no way to exterminate them without abandoning his home, so he gave them the freedom of the premises, and has had no trouble from them except in the loss of many of his chickens.

A public school in Sherman County was closed for a week because of a swarm of skunks that had taken up their abode under the building. Some of the pupils learned of the presence of the skunk family, and at the noon hour undertook to dislodge the pests. It was a hopeless task, and the school had to be closed.—New York Sun.

Feminine Beauty. Pride hides in the curved nostrils of a sensitive woman. Health is the mother and strength the father of beauty.

It matters little what color are the eyes so they be eloquent and clear. Filbert nails and slender wrists bespeak pedigree. Beauty with a bad breath is in disgrace. To speak well a woman must speak low.

A perfect form requires the carriage of a goddess. A woman may have a classic face, yet a haug-dog expression to deform it. A beautiful skin always has under it a faint blush. The voice is capable of both music and discord, evoked as the owner wills. The fairest work of God is the evolution of a child into a beautiful woman.—Philadelphia Record.

Digestibility of Cheese. The digestibility of various kinds of cheese has been carefully tested by a German chemist, who placed the samples in an artificial digestive fluid containing a considerable proportion of fresh gastric juice. Cheshire and Roquefort cheese took four hours to digest; genuine Emmentaler, Gorgonzola and Neufchatel, eight hours; Romadour, nine hours, and Kottenberger, Breis, Swiss and ten other varieties, ten hours. As an ordinary meal is digested in four or five hours, the common belief that cheese aids digestion appears to be an error.

An Ohio man has been sentenced to the penitentiary for 198 years. He probably wonders why the judge didn't make it for life and be done with it.

John D. Rockefeller's income is estimated to be about \$60 per minute. How long that makes a month seem to the young Absalom who gets only \$15 per week.

It is said that whales cannot swim faster than ten or twelve miles an hour. Since the decadence in the whaling industry, that would seem to be fast enough.

Professor Starr, of the Chicago University, has reached the scientific conclusion that the Americans will eventually become Indians. He has probably been led to this conclusion by frequenting football games.

The Newport (Ky.) defaulter has made a new record for bank embezzlements. His shortage is \$200,000, or double the capital of the bank, and more than the reserve and all the assets, including real estate. He was considerate enough to leave the vault and furniture and fixtures.

It is an interesting fact that during the last ten years Georgia has increased in population more rapidly than Ohio. Ohio has gained 485,229, which is an increase of 13.2 per cent. Georgia has gained 378,978, which is 20.6 per cent. This is probably the most rapid gain of any State in the South except Texas.

With the return of normal conditions of traffic on the western section of the Siberian railway and a sufficiency of rolling stock to meet the growing wants of the trade, Russia threatens to become a formidable competitor of America in the British and European markets in regard to a great variety of agricultural products.

The British campaign against American jockeys has reached the labored point where Punch is supposed to print poisonous jokes about galvanic saddles, chemical bits, electric whips and hypodermic spurs—all of which pretty playthings are dubbed "American." One by one our ideals vanish. The old stand-by of "British fairplay," so rudely jostled by Dunsravel, seems to be disintegrating.

A New York minister's advice not to read vulgar books, silly books or morbid books is good advice, but somewhat difficult to follow. Normality is only a matter of opinion, and the reading public is not likely to take the word of any self-constituted judge of morbidity. And what is a "silly" book? What may appear silly to one may have a meaning and a message for another. Minds run in different grooves, and it is very lucky for the makers of books that they do.

According to a report of the United States Commissioner of Education, the American people are better taught year by year. In the public schools of the United States a child received on the average three years of training in 1870, four years in 1893, and four and four-tenths years in 1899, approximately. The amount of training given in different sections of the country varies very greatly, however, and is least in the Southern States, where it is less than half as much as children of Northern States receive.

United States Consul Thomas Smith, at Moscow, sends to the State Department the following description of a new Siberia, very unlike the old, made familiar to Americans by George Kennan's recital of his experiences there: "Ten years ago the name 'Siberia' conjured up a picture of wastes of snow and ice, boundless steppes and coasts white with icebergs. To-day this same Siberia is a land filled with thriving villages of peasant farmers, producing grain and vegetables in plenty, and giving promise of a mineral wealth which will astonish the world."

The London Daily Telegraph's description of the Society of American Women of London gravely asserts that "when an American has made a fortune he finds it almost impossible to live quietly in his own country. The chief attraction is England, where Americans can escape the newspapers." This is the chief reason, according to the Telegraph, why the American colony in London increases, though it admits that many love to go to England for the sake of the country alone, and "because it makes them feel like being on a visit to their grandmother's home, where everything is dignified, proper and nice."



Tragic Fate of a Doll. I used to have a rubber doll. And she was like a cat— That she had many lives, you know, Is what I meant by that. She'd tumble off the table—bang! And not be cracked at all; If she'd been made of wax, she'd not Have stood so hard a fall.

She dropped into a river once, But wasn't nearly drowned; She bobbed up quite serenely, and She calmly floated round. A cab ran over her—of course. It seemed a bad mishap; But, when I picked her up, I found She wasn't hurt a scrap.

Yet, something always happens, and I've lost my rubber pet. So I'm feeling sad, although I'm told I mustn't fret. I lent her to my brother Fred. And this was the result: He went—oh, dear—and sliced her up To mend a catapalt.

Then Pussy Rang the Bell. A favorite cat fifteen years old lives in Lancaster, S. C., in an elegant home, writes Rev. James Boyce in the Associate Reformed Presbyterian. He has always enjoyed the best of care, and has grown to a large size. He has been so well cared for that he feels he ought to have just whatever he wants, and generally gets it.

The family formerly lived in a house which had a cat-hole in the kitchen doot. When they moved into their elegant new home they did not feel like cutting a hole in the kitchen door for "Tommy." So they put him out at night and locked the door.

One cold night Tommy wanted to get in very much, and about 4 o'clock in the morning the family was aroused by the ringing of the door bell. The gentleman went down and opened the door, expecting some urgent call of distress. Mr. Tommy deliberately walked in without even thanking the gentleman for opening the door. Since that time he always rings the bell when he wants to get in.

Things Worth Knowing. The fact that fish are slippery is accounted for in this way: The slimy coating protects them from the attacks of fungus, a form of plant life found in all waters. If a fish is uncovered by slime the fungus lodges there and grows until in time it kills the fish. The slime helps also to increase the speed of the fish through the water.

Ever since the World's Fair, when the Japanese Government laid out a dwarf landscape in front of the Japanese Building on the wooded island, interest in the dwarfed forest trees produced by Chinese and Japanese gardeners has been growing in this country. In making the dwarf the gardener breaks a branch from a tree. Just below an "eye" on the branch he cuts and removes a ring of bark. Then he sticks the branch in a ball of specially prepared earth. This he crams into a flower pot and keeps it moist enough to start the roots. After the roots are well grown the water supply is lessened. As the branch puts out limbs these are clamped with wire bands to produce a rugged and ancient look. The roots are kept down by cutting. Honey is smeared on the trunks to attract insects which give it a wormeaten appearance. It often requires twenty years to perfect the dwarfing.

The Ocean. Far out in the ocean, where the water is as blue as the prettiest corn flower, and as clear as crystal, it is very deep, so deep, indeed, that no one can measure it. Many church steeples piled one upon the other would not reach from the ground beneath to the surface of the water above.

We must not think that there is at the bottom of the sea only bare, yellow sand. No, indeed, the most singular plants and flowers grow in this "dim water world." The leaves and stems of these plants are so easily bent that the least motion of the water causes them to move as if they had life.

The flowers are bright with color. Some are red as the sunset rays, and others yellow as a golden flame. One plant, the sea willow, hangs its branches so low that the green leaves play with the pure, white roots, gleaming in the sand.

Only one thing is wanting to make them as beautiful as our land plants; they have no fragrance.

Fishes, both large and small, glide between the branches as birds fly among the trees upon the land. Over everything lies the clear water, just as the air is about us and the light of the sun, moon and the stars shine faintly through it.

In some parts there are beautiful caves and grottoes. The sides of these are sometimes made of coral. The roof is formed of shells that open and close as the water passes over them. In each shell often lies a pearl fit for the crown of a queen.

If we cross the ocean in early spring in some parts icebergs may be seen. At a great distance an iceberg looks like a great crystal palace or marble cathedral. They are of most singular shape, and glitter like diamonds in the sunshine.—The Bouquet.

The Water of the Fjords. The water of the larger Norwegian fjords, or rock-bays, though in direct communication with the sea, are so saltless as to be drinkable.

"CASH" AND CUPID. He met her at the counter— She presided o'er the wares— And she sold the silks and satins And such feminine affairs. She was willowy and charming, With a subtle sort of dash, And her voice was most alluring When she sweetly carolled.

So he wooed her at the counter, 'Mong the grenadines and lace, And he vowed that all the fabrics Paled to cheapness by her face. Oh, he wooed her and he won her, With his airs and his mustache, And he vowed he loved to listen To her sweetly murmured "Cash!"

Now, however, she still wishes To surround herself with lace, And with velvets, silks and satins, And to lead him a merry pace. For she murmurs o'er the cutlets, Carols o'er the hash, One insistent, constant note, Whose recurrent theme is "Cash!"

—Baltimore American.

HUMOR OF THE DAY. "I'm getting rich fast." "How?" "I got my wife to take my camera and lock it up."—Chicago Record.

Sillicus—"The Bible tells us to love our enemies." Cynicus—"We do. Most of us are our own worst enemies."—Philadelphia Record.

"What makes you work so hard when the boss is away?" "I'm absent-minded and I might forget myself when he gets back."—Chicago Record.

Nell—"They used to be such good friends, and now they scarcely speak." Belle—"Yes; you see they would persist in going to bargain sales together."

During the courtship he sued For the maiden's hand with vim; But after the marriage her hand Had to sew o' buttons for him. —Chicago Daily News.

She during the tiff—"Man was made of dust you will remember, but woman wasn't." He—"That's right. If you were made of dust you'd dry up once in a while."

Parke—"What did you take out an accident policy for? You never travel." Lane—"But my next-door neighbor has just bought an automobile."—Detroit Free Press.

Little Willie Fashionplate—"Mamma, I broke one of the Ten Commandments to-day." Mrs. Fashionplate—"Oh, you careless child. You are always breaking something."

The man who has money to burn May appear an extravagant soul When he hears the cashier say, "If it's not cheaper than coal." —Philadelphia Record.

"Am I the first man you ever loved?" he inquired, fondly. "Well," replied the truthful Miss Passee, "you are never mind, dear. You are the first man who ever loved me."—New York Journal.

"I must admit," said the jaunty girl, "that I'm very fond of men's clothes. You don't like them—do you?" "Yes, I do," replied the girl, frankly, "when there's a man in them." —The Bus.

"Is my dinner never coming?" roared the King of Mbywka. "Your present highness will remember," murmured the slave with his face in the dust, "that you ordered one of those messenger boys."—Indianapolis Press.

Mrs. Church—"Your name is not spelled right on this list." Mrs. Gotham—"What's the matter with it?" "Why, Lillie is spelled with only one L." "Oh, well, my husband wrote that it's nothing new for him to forget one of my letters."—Yonkers Statesman.

"These aren't the kind of biscuits my mother used to make," he said. "Oh, George," she faltered, on the verge of tears. "Well, they're not!" he repeated emphatically. "They're enough sizz better." And then the sun came out again.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

"I suppose you have to take care to be absolutely correct in your calculations?" said the man who was watching the statistician work. "No," answered the man of mathematics. "These figures are for campaign purposes. What is expected of me is to be convincingly inaccurate."—Washington Star.

Observing the manager of the drug department, the woman accused him in a spirit of badinage. "I have kleptomaniac," she said. "What would you advise me to take?" "The elevator, by all means," said the manager, wittily. "And not something just as good?" exclaimed the woman, affecting great surprise.—Detroit Journal.

Stops the Rush to Towns. It is asserted editorially in the Electrical Review that the surprisingly small increase in the growth of cities in the United States shown by the recent census returns, is directly due to the de-centralizing influence of the trolley and telephone. These two agencies, permitting of ready communication between distant points, have had a decided effect in influencing the growth of the suburban districts, which have thus become available for working people, as well as the wealthy. The rush of population to the great cities, so marked since the close of the Civil War, has had its first set back recorded in the last decade, and electric agencies have accomplished it.

Canadian Militia. The Canadian militia consists of about 40,000 men, and although legislative power exists to enable the Government to keep up its strength by ballot if occasion should arise, and to call upon the entire male population between eighteen and sixty years to serve under arms in case of emergency, service has been cheerfully offered, and no difficulty experienced in keeping up the proper strength of the force.