THE STAR O' THE MORN.

The star o' the morn is whitest,
The bosom of dawn is brightest;
The dew is sown,
And the blossoms blown,
Wherein thou, my dear, delightest.

Hark, I have risen before thee,
That the spell of the day be o'er thee;
That the flush of my love
May fall from above,
And, mixed with the morn, adore thee.

Dark dreams must now forsake thee,
And the bliss of thy being take thee.
Let the beauty of morn
In thine eyes be born,
And the thought of me awake thee.

Come forth to hear thy praises,
Which the wakening world upraises;
Let thy hair be spun
With the gold o' the sun,
And thy feet be kissed by daisies.

JOE BARRETT'S CONFESSION.

One seventeenth day of August, not many years ago, a party of four, consisting of Joe Barrett and his wife, their most intimate friend Phil Somers, and Miss Maud Mortimer, a young lady they hoped he might be induced to consider the future happiness of his existence, stood quite alone upon a narrow strip of sand on the Long Island coast, not far from the great metropolis. Joe Barrett and his wife had long ago been given over by their relatives and friends, and the genial circle of society they adorned, as an old-fashioned couple that prolonged their honeymoon to a most unprecedented and unheard-of period. They had lately celebrated their silver wedding, and for the amusement of others and the romance for themselves would have gone through with the original ceremony again had it not been for a serious obstacle. The clergyman was still alive and vigorous for his years, and Phil Somers, Joe's best man at his wedding, was yet his best friend, but the pale pretty little bridemaid had vanished long ago off the face of the earth, and become one of the shadowy band to which "we call, and they answer not again."

There was a rumor that if she had lived she would have become the wife of Phil Somers, thus making the happiness of the four complete. It was currently believed that because of this tender and romantic episode in his life Phil Somers had remained a bachelor. In his younger days this apparent halo of soft regret and unappeasable longing lent a melancholy grace to his already pleasing exterior, and many a damsel endeavored to console him; but although he was gentle and even chivalric to all womankind, he remained, to all matrimonial intents and purposes, unconsoled.

And here he was, a bachelor still, fifty years old, getting rather grizzled about the temples and crow-footed about the eyes, bronzed by his partiality for the open air, thin but muscular, tall but straight; while Joe Barrett and his wife might both pass for "fat, fair and forty," though they were not so many years Phil's juniors.

And here they were, plotting as lively as ever for Phil's connubial bliss. The present victim of their toils, although no longer in her first youth, would have seemed so in any other light but the critical one of sun against sand; and now that thick bands of gray clouds lay heavily across the sky, tempering the brilliancy of the sun's rays, and the young lady had pulled her veil about the outlines of her face, Miss Mortimer seemed at the heyday of her charms.

While waiting for dinner, which was in process of preparation in a long, low hostlery a dozen furlongs or so inland, they had strolled down to the water's edge, and, true to the plan in hand, Joe Barrett had pulled his wife's chubby hand through his arm and trotted her away from Phil and the young lady.

"Let's leave them alone together for awhile," said Joe. "It seems a propitious time for love-making, and I hope something will come of to-day's trip, Polly; I'm getting awfully tired of working like a pack-horse for Phil's happiness."

While strolling along they indulged in a spirited conversation about Phil and the matrimonial projects in which they had been engaged on his account. At last Joe remarked, looking fondly at his wife: "I'd be the happiest fellow in the world if Phil could be happy too."

His wife shook his arm impatiently.

"See here, Joe," she said, "I think you are absurd about Phil Somers, and you may as well understand, once for all, that if this thing falls through, I'm not going to bother about his marrying at all. It's none of your business or mine. I don't believe he wants to marry, anyway. Some natures are so constituted that they can only love once, and I believe all the love Phil had to give any one was squandered long ago on our dear little bridemaid. After all, there's something very sweet and touching in his remaining faithful to the one memory all these years."

Joe shifted uneasily from one foot to the other. He picked up a stone, and sent it savagely whirring over the water.

"Polly," he said, "I think I'll take a plunge in the sea; it will tone me up, and give me an appetite for dinner. There's a bathing suit in one of the little cribs behind us."

"Look at that big cloud, Joe."

"I won't stay in long, Polly." He gave his wife a tender squeeze, looked down upon her with an expression that seemed to say he'd kiss her if it wouldn't shock Miss Mortimer's sense of propriety, ran up to the bathing-house, and, to the surprise of Phil and Miss Mortimer, presently disappeared in a huge green wave that covered them with its spray.

"Joe is a regular water-dog," said Phil.

Miss Mortimer made no reply. She had not come down to the seashore that day to listen to laudations of Joe Barrett and his wife. Miss Mortimer felt that she had no time to lose, and was resolved to waste no words upon Joe Barrett's maritime proclivities.

Phil, however, kept his eyes upon Joe as he swam out to the open sea, and went on talking about him without requiring any special reply.

"Joe is a little impulsive and reckless, perhaps," said Phil, "but he's a capital swimmer."

"It is growing cold," said Miss Mortimer, contracting her shoulders in that graceful way that some women have of making a shiver attractive.

Phil remembered with remorse that her wrap was hanging forgotten upon his arm. He hastened to put it about her shoulders, but the wind, which was raising to a gale, made the effort a prolonged one.

"Don't you hate the wind?" said Miss Mortimer, coquettishly.

"I am never ungrateful," said Phil, capturing the ends of the shawl again, and holding them fast this time about her slender form. A keen look of incipient triumph flashed from Miss Mortimer's eyes. Phil's words always seemed to mean so much more than they said. And she could not, unfortunately, see that his eyes were still looking fixedly over her head upon the water beyond the surf.

A shaft or two of wild light flashed down upon the scene. An ominous rumble from the clouds mingled with the roar of the sea. Suddenly the earth and sky were enveloped in a blinding glare. In this spectral light Phil distinctly saw Joe Barrett fling his arms wildly aloft and disappear in the darkening waste.

Phil threw off his shoes and his coat as he ran to the sea, and Miss Mortimer had great difficulty in rescuing his vest, which was nearly carried out by a returning wave. Her costume was drenched with the spray, and she nearly lost her footing; but she saved the waistcoat, which contained Phil's watch and other valuables. Then she hurried to the shelter of the bathing-houses, for the rain now began to fall heavily. Through the blackness of the storm she saw the white face of a woman. Miss Mortimer knew it was Mrs. Barrett running wildly down to the water, but she attempted no remonstrance. She had made up her mind that of the party of four that went down to the sea that day two would probably never return, perhaps three. It was impossible to say what might happen where such impulsive people were concerned.

Some men from the inn were now hurrying to the scene of peril, and, finding it impossible to induce Mrs. Barrett to seek shelter, had thrown about her a rough tarpaulin, from the harsh folds of which her haggard face and wind-blown hair was a sorry sight to see.

The two bodies were now coming in atop of the foaming surf, with no help or hinderance of their own, and closely locked together, were swept swiftly ashore with other prey of the elements. They were narrowly rescued from the greedy maw of the returning wave, and carried with all speed to the little inn, where everything was in readiness to restore consciousness to the one and foster it in the other.

The storm passed away as suddenly as it came. The pale glow of twilight deepened into night. There was no moon, but the stars shone over the bay and the harbor and the dusky little promontory. To look at the gentle ripple of waves lapping lazily along upon the sand, Phil could hardly believe that so little time ago two men had been done almost to their death. He could scarcely stagger out into the wooden porch of the inn to breathe the cold-scented air. And as for Joe, God only knew what would befall him. He had been brought back to life, but not to consciousness. Polly had managed to get word to the town physician, but the way was long and the sand was heavy.

It must have been about midnight; Phil could not tell the exact time. His watch was in his waistcoat, under Miss Mortimer's head, in the bed of the landlady. Phil had told them not to awaken Miss Mortimer; under no circumstances; he was so glad she was asleep—and it would be impossible to say how glad he was. The latch of the door clicked behind him. Phil's heart sank. He was afraid Miss Mortimer had, after all, been awakened. But a faltering, uncertain step reached him, and the cold little hand of Polly Barrett clutched his arm.

Any one but Phil would never have known her. The last remnant of her soft round comeliness seemed swept away with the storm. All her womanly crimps and fripperies were gone. She wore an ill-fitting gown of the landlady's. Her whole face was of a wan gray pallor, like the waves under the cold light of the stars.

"Is Joe better?" stammered Phil. "Does he know—"

"He knows everything, and perhaps he's better. Oh, Phil!" Polly repressed her sobs, and motioned Phil to the door. "He is determined I shall try and get some sleep, and that you shall watch with him for a while. As if I could sleep! But go to him, Phil; don't thwart him—go!"

Phil went in to Joe. He will never forget the low-ceiled room, the two wooden chairs, the pine table, whereon a mop of ragged wick flared from a saucer of oil, the bottle of liquor within reach, and the coarse green glass, the grim old clock in the corner ticking off the seconds, and Joe's ghastly face and motionless form upon the camp cot in the corner. Joe tried to stretch out his hand to Phil, but it fell back heavily upon the patchwork quilt of the landlady.

"You did your best, Phil," he said; "you brought me ashore, but the trouble was done out there; something seized me, God knows what—paralysis, cramps, palsy—who can tell? Anyway, I'm done for, old man. I can't move a muscle below. It's a mere question of time, Phil, and we can't afford to lose any."

"I hope you're wrong, Joe; we'll know better when the doctor comes. You were right not to tell Polly. But she must come to you, Joe."

Phil would have gone at once for Polly, but something in Joe's face held him back.

"Hold on a bit, Phil. I didn't send for you and drive Polly away to tell you something that you'll both know soon enough. There's a burden on my conscience, Phil; it's been lying there like a plummet of lead all these years. Listen to me, and don't interrupt me if you can help it. Give me some of that stuff from the bottle, and when I grow weaker give me more."

Phil lifted Joe's head and put the glass to his lips; then he sat down upon the edge of the cot, leaving his arm between Joe's neck and pillow. Joe could feel Phil's pulse now, and the loyal heart of his friend beating close to his own.

"It's twenty-five years, Phil," said Joe, "since that night we drove down to the shore here and had that talk together. You remember it, Phil?"

"Yes, Joe."

"Ah! you've remembered it too well, Phil; I've tried hard enough, God knows, to make you forget. The sun was sinking over yonder in the west, and sky and sea were all aflame. Some fleecy clouds dropped low over the old shed where we had ordered some clams. I remember when I saw Polly that night. The dress she wore was like a stab to me; it was of some soft floating material that reminded me of the woolly clouds over the old shed. You didn't eat the clams, Phil. You dallied with the shells, and turned them over with the queer old fork they had given you. And all at once you put them aside, and lighted a cigar, and turned your face to the sea, and began to talk of a woman you secretly loved. Now give me some wine, Phil."

Phil put the glass again to Joe's lips. "Don't talk any more, Joe," he said. "Let me go for Polly."

"Not yet," said Joe. "You were a handsome fellow, Phil, twenty-five years ago. As you went on to talk of the woman you secretly loved, some sort of a light shone upon your face from the splendor in the west that made it like that of an archangel. It seemed to me that no woman could withstand you. My heart grew like a lump of ice. My first thought was to walk out into the water and strangle myself; my next was a resolve to betray you. I must have been tempted by the devil, for, as God is my judge in this awful moment of my life, I never dreamed before that night that you and I were in love with the one woman. I got upon my feet and shouted, 'She is mine!' glaring upon you with a dogged, resolute stare. 'Have you, then, asked her to marry you?' you said, and your face still looked like an archangel's, while mine must have been inflamed with the passions that beset a man beyond his strength. As I repeated, 'She is my promised wife,' the words seemed to leap from a throat of fire; it was the first downright, hideous, malicious lie I ever uttered, for I had not yet asked her—I had not yet asked her; but when I did ask her, upon that very night, the next lie slipped easily from my perjured throat, though it was a worse one by far. For I told Polly, Phil—I told her before I asked her to marry me—that you had confessed to me your love for her friend, the poor little girl that afterward became our bridemaid. Whether it was my guilty conscience, that makes hell enough for any man, I fancied I saw something in Polly's eyes that told me, had it not been for my treachery, your chance would have been better than mine. Now take your arm away from my neck, Phil, and curse me if you will—my story is done."

The pulse at Joe's ear leaped and tugged as if it would burst an artery, but Phil's voice had the old tender ring.

"You might have spared yourself all this," he said. "I think Polly has proved who it was that she loved."

"Ah, after that night, Phil, yes. Polly is not the kind of woman to make the misery of men. But I cheated you of your chance—I cheated you of your chance!"

"Be it so, Joe. I forgive you, and I love you all the same. Now throw off the burden, and live for Polly's sake and mine."

"Too late, too late," faltered the failing lips. They refused to touch the glass. The limp body fell back almost lifeless in Phil's arms. Then Joe aroused himself once more, and called for Polly in a harsh, strained voice that reached her despite the roar of the sea. She flew to his side, but was only in time to catch a few indistinct, disjointed sentences. With a last effort the dying man lifted the hands of his wife and his friend, joined them together, clasped his own about them, and so the three remained till the soul of Joe Barrett fled.

"And if there could be such a thing as witchcraft," said Miss Mortimer to some friends, the other day, "Joe Barrett's widow would have been burned at the stake long ago. She was pretty well on in years when Joe died, and I'll leave it to anybody if she don't look like a blonde mummy now. Phil Somers has that air of distinction and elegance about him that he might marry almost anybody; Joe Barrett's widow is old and ugly and sick and poor, but I shouldn't be at all surprised if Phil Somers would marry her yet."—*Harper's Weekly.*

London's Vastness.

An American correspondent says of London: It covers 122 square miles, and I couldn't get through its streets in ten years behind Maud S. Its gin-palaces and beer shops would, if put in a line, reach seventy-five miles. There are 400,000 gas lamps in its streets. Twenty-seven miles of new streets are added every year. Every day 160,000 strangers come into the city, and 123 babies are born. I begin to feel crowded and shall get out.

SELECT SIFTINGS.

Bees taken to Florida become lazy, and make only as much honey as they need from day to day.

The Mongols have no equivalent for "good-bye," and bid farewell to each other with a bow and a smile.

Deaf mutes use a great deal of slang, learning it from the newspapers, of which they are generally regular readers.

The word tennis is derived from the old English plural of "ten," as the name "fives," given to another game, comes from the plural of five.

Attention has again been called to the supposed changes of level of the earth's surface reported from certain parts of Europe. Villages in the Jura which were hidden from each other no longer than forty years ago have gradually risen in sight, while in a village of Bohemia the inhabitants now see half of a distant church spire of which only the top was visible thirty years ago. The apparent rising of these places must, it is thought, be a result of the warping of the solid crust of the earth.

The Indians have a great hatred and contempt for Chinamen, because they are little and timid. Recently a party of thirty Celestials, under the direction of two white men, went out to work on a road in Idaho. The Indians fell upon them and massacred the white men, but contented themselves by merely cutting off the queues of the Chinamen and sending them ignominiously home. Indians have too great a contempt for them to kill them; they think them not "foemen worthy of their steel."

How long has man been on this planet? is a question often asked, but the answer is always unsatisfactory. The remains of implements and articles used by human beings have been found in strata hundreds of thousands of years old. Ages must have passed since the savage man first emerged from a semi-brute condition. Mr. Wiggins, of Waverly, N. J., found on the top of the Alleghany Mountains, in Perry county, Penn., a piece of metamorphic limestone, upon which was clearly visible the print of the right foot of a human being. The impression is about an inch deep, and shows the five toes and the perfectly formed foot of a man. This piece of stone has been sent to the Smithsonian institution. The rock is of great antiquity, and must have antedated the oldest memorials of Egypt. It certainly is the earliest trace of man in America.—*Christian at Work.*

Great Fires of the Nineteenth Century.

The greatest destruction of life and property by conflagrations of which the world has anything like accurate records must be looked for in the current century. Of these the following is a partial list of instances in which the loss of property amounted to some $3,000,000 and upward:

Dates, Cities.	Property destroyed.
1802—Liverpool	$ 5,000,000
1803—Bombay	5,000,000
1805—St. Thomas	20,000,000
1808—Spanish Town	7,500,000
1812—Moscow burned five days; 30,800 houses destroyed	150,000,000
1816—Constantinople, 19,000 dwellings, 3,000 shops	....
1820—Savannah	....
1822—Canton nearly destroyed	....
1828—Havana, 350 houses	....
1835—New York ("Great Fire")	15,000,000
1837—St. John's, N. B.	5,000,000
1838—Charleston, 1,158 buildings	3,000,000
1841—Smyrna, 12,000 houses	....
1842—Hamburg, 4,219 buildings, 100 lives lost	35,000,000
1845—New York, 35 persons killed	7,500,000
1845—Pittsburg, 1,100 houses	10,000,000
1845—Quebec, May 28, 1,650 buildings	3,750,000
1845—Quebec, June 28, 1,300 dwellings	....
1846—St. John, Newfoundland	5,000,000
1848—Constantinople, 2,500 buildings	15,000,000
1848—Albany, N. Y., 600 houses	3,000,000
1849—St. Louis	3,000,000
1851—St. Louis, 2,500 buildings	11,000,000
1851—St. Louis, 500 buildings	3,000,000
1851—San Francisco, May 4 and 5, many lives lost	10,000,000
1851—San Francisco, June	3,000,000
1852—Montreal, 200 buildings	5,000,000
1861—Mendoza destroyed by earthquake and fire, 10,000 lives lost	....
1862—St. Petersburg	5,000,000
1862—Troy, N. Y., nearly destroyed	....
1862—Valparaiso, almost destroyed	....
1864—Novgorod, immense destruction of property	....
1865—Constantinople, 2,800 buildings burned	....
1866—Yokohama, nearly destroyed	....
1866—Carlstadt, Sweden, all consumed but bishop's residence, hospital and jail, 10 lives lost	....
1866—Portland, Me., half of the city	11,000,000
1866—Quebec, 2,500 dwellings and 17 churches	....
1870—Constantinople, Pera suburb	26,000,000
1871—Chicago, 250 lives lost, 17,450 buildings burned, on 2,124 acres	192,000,000
1871—Paris fired by Commune	160,000,000
1872—Boston	75,000,000
1873—Yeddo, 10,000 houses	....
1877—Pittsburg, caused by riot	3,200,000
1877—St. Johns, N. B., 1,650 dwellings, 18 lives lost	13,500,000

The five greatest fires on record reckoned by destruction of property are:

Chicago fire, of October 8 and 9, 1871	$192,000,000
Paris fires, of May, 1871	160,000,000
Moscow fire, of September 14-19, 1812	150,000,000
Boston fire, November 9-10, 1872	75,000,000
London fire, September 2-6, 1666	53,652,500
Hamburg fire, May 5-7, 1842	35,000,000

Taking into account, with the fires of Paris and Chicago, the great Wisconsin and Michigan forest fires of 1871, in which it is estimated that 1,000 human beings perished and property to the amount of over $3,000,000 was consumed, it is plain that in the annals of conflagrations that year stands forth in gloomy pre-eminence.

Speedy Justice.

When Mr. Bookwalter was in China he became acquainted with a judge who invited him to see a case tried. The culprit was arraigned for larceny. Within thirty minutes that Chinese court tried the prisoner, convicted him, sentenced him to death, took him out in an alley and cut his head off.—*Cincinnati News-Journal.*

The Oldest Priest.

Germany possesses the oldest priest living in the world. He is 108 years old, and has been eighty-four years in sacerdotal orders. He lives at Lupel, enjoys excellent health, and fulfils all his religious duties with the most scrupulous exactitude.

Within three years the number of sawmills in Arkansas has increased from 319 to over 1,200.