

Daily Eagle

BETWEEN THE TWO.

There are in our lives episodes which we should be glad to forget; of which we are so much ashamed that we scarcely dare to think of them, and when we do, find ourselves hurriedly muttering the words we imagine we ought to have said, or making audible apologies for our conduct to the air; and yet these are not always episodes which necessarily involve a tangible sense of wrong done either to ourselves or to others.

Once upon a time, to commence in an orthodox fashion, a man and a maid lived and loved. On the woman's part the affection was as pure and generous as ever filled the breast of a maiden; on the man's as warm as his nature permitted. His love did not absorb his whole soul; it rather permeated his mind and colored his being. Like most men of his not uncommon stamp, his affection once given, was given forever. He was not a jubilant nature, nor did his feelings lie near the surface, and his manner was unobtrusive. The girl was clear-sighted enough to see that what love there was was pure and true, and she made up for its scarcity with the overflowings of her sympathetic nature. She idolized rather than idolized. She gave in such measure that she could not perceive how little she was receiving in return; or, if she noticed it, her consciousness of its worth seemed to her a full equivalent. He was an artist, and circumstances forced the lovers to wait, and at the same time kept them apart. A couple of days once a month, and a week now and again, was the limit of the time they could spend together. This, of course, prevented them getting that intimate knowledge of each other's personality which both recognized as an essential adjunct to the happiness of married life, though they did their best to obviate it by long letters, giving full details of daily events and of the society in which they moved. The remedy was an imperfect one. Strive as they might, the sketches were crude, and the letters had a tendency to become stereotyped. Only mention these details to show that they tried to be perfectly honest with each other.

While the girl's life in her quiet country home was one that held little variety in it, it was a part of the man's stock in trade to mix with society and observe closely. Whether he liked it or not, he was compelled to make friends to such an extent as to afford him an opportunity of gauging character. Unfortunately for the purposes of my story, he had no sympathy with the society of the town. He loved the good and the beautiful for their own sakes, and in his art loved to dwell on the bright side of human nature, a side which the writer has found so much easier to meet with than the more sombre coloring we are apt to find in the people dominating one's life. Like most artists, he was somewhat susceptible, but his susceptibility was on the surface; the inward depths of his soul had never been stirred save by the gentle girl who held his heart, and she was such as to inspire a constant and growing affection rather than a momentary passion.

At one of the many houses at which he was a welcome guest the lover found a young girl, bright, generous, beautiful. Unwittingly he compared her with the one whose heart he held, and the comparison was unsatisfactory to him; do what he would, the homeliness of his nature compelled him to allow that this beautiful girl was the superior in a number of ways to her to whom he had pledged his life. He was caught in the Circe's chains of golden hair, and fancied, almost hoped, yet fearing, lest like bands of cobwebs in the fairy tale, the toils were too strong for him to break. He could see, too, that the girl regarded him with a feeling which was a change from the world's usual regard for him, and this gave her an interest as dangerous as it was fascinating. His fancy swayed. Day after day he strove with himself, and by efforts, too violent to be wise, he kept away from the girl until his intention finally forced him back to her side.

To the maiden in the country he was partially honest. In his letters he initially told her of his visits, and as far as he could, recorded his opinions of the girl who had captivated his fancy. Too keen an artist to be blind to her faults, he drew on them in his frequent letters to unnecessary length. When the lovers met the girl questioned him closely about her rival, but only from the interest she felt in all his friends, known and unknown, for her love for him was too pure and strong to admit of jealousy, and he, with what honesty he could, answered her questions unreservedly.

Little by little he began to examine himself. Which girl did he really love? Should he not be doing a wrong to both by not deciding? The examination was dangerous, because it was not thorough. The premise was true, but inordinate. Yet he should wrong him if he implied that he for a moment thought seriously about breaking off his engagement. Even had he wished, his almost mistaken feelings of honor would have forbidden it. The constant surface introspection, a kind of examination which had not the subject been himself, he would have despised and avoided, could have but one result, an obliquity of mental vision. He had a horror of being untrue, untrue to himself as untrue to his lass, and yet he dreaded causing pain to a lesson so tender and innocent. When he sat down to write the periodical letters to the girl to whom he was engaged, he found his phrases becoming more and more general and guarded. He took pains not to let her know what he felt was surrounding her, and the letters grew as uninteresting as they had been the reverse. They were descriptive of the man, rather than the reflex of his personality.

The country girl was quick of perception. The letters were more full of endearing terms than ever; they were longer and told more of his life, yet between the lines she could see that they were by one whose heart was not at rest, and that a sense of duty and not of pleasure prompted the ample details. Their very regularity was painful; it seemed as if the writer was anxious to get up to the letter of his understanding. She knew that the letters were often written when he was tired out. Why did he not put off writing, and, taking advantage of her love, let her know her trust in him? Eagerly she scanned the pages to find the name of her rival, and having found it, would thoughtfully weigh every word of description, of blame or praise.

When the lovers met she questioned him more closely than she had ever done before. He was seemingly as fond as ever, no endearing, no accustomed caress was forgotten. He spoke of himself and his friends as freely as usual, and all her questions were answered without a shadow of reserve. Yet the answers were slower, and his manner absent and thoughtful. For a time she put it down to the absorbing nature of his pursuits; but little by little a belief that she was no longer desired crept into her heart and would not be dislodged, try as she might. She thought she was jealous and struggled night and day against a faith she doubted above all others, then in a paroxysm of despair she allowed herself to be convinced of what she feared, and, loving him deeply, prepared to make the greatest sacrifice an unselfish woman can offer. He no longer loved her, it was best he should be free.

When he had been with her but he had told her that his ensuing absence must perforce be longer than usual, and this she thought would be the best time for her purpose.

"Dear Frank," she wrote at the end of a pitiful little letter, "I am going to ask you not to come here next week. This will surprise you, for in all my other letters I have told you that what I most look forward to in life

is your visits. But I have been thinking, dear, that it will be best for us to part forever. I often ask myself if we loved one another as much as we did, and I am afraid we do not. A loveless married life would be too dreadful to live through, and I dare not risk it. It is better that the parting should come through me. Do not fancy that I am reproaching you; I can assure you that I am above reproach, above blame. All I see is that your affection is colder, so we had better part. God bless you, Frank; I can never tell you how deeply I have loved you.

"Elsie." Frank was almost stunned by the receipt of this letter. He read and reread it till every word seemed to burn into his brain. That the girl's love for him was less he did not believe; he could read undiminished affection in the vague phrasing, in the studied carefulness to take equal blame on herself. That she should be jealous was out of the question! Long years of experience had taught him that that was totally foreign to her trustful nature. There was but one conclusion to come to. She had given him up because she thought his happiness was involved. Yet she wished him to be free; might it not be ungracious to refuse to accept her gift? Free! There was a terrible fascination in the word. Be the bondage ever so pleasant, be it even preferable to liberty itself, the idea of freedom is irresistibly alluring. If the same bondage will be chosen again, there is a delight in the consciousness that it will be your own untrammelled choice. Frank was aware of a wild exultation when he realized the fact that he was once more a free agent. In the first flush of liberty poor Elsie's image faded out of sight and that of the siren took its place. Now, without wrong, he might follow his inclinations. He determined to write to Elsie, but knew not what to say and put it off till the morrow.

There could be no harm in going to the home of his fascinator; it was pleasant to think that he might speak, think, look without any mental reservations. There would be no longer any need to watch his actions or to force back the words which would tell her that she exercised a deadly power over him. The girl received him with a winning smile, yet when he touched her hand he did not feel his brain throbbing nor his blood rushing madly through his veins as he had expected. He called to mind that when he was abroad for the first time he had been served with a peculiar dish, which he remembered and often longed for when unobtainable. After several years he visited the same cafe and ordered the same dish. The same cook prepared it and the same waiter served it, but the taste was not the same; expectation had heightened the flavor, and the real was inferior to the ideal.

So it was with Frank. Before, when the siren had seemed unobtainable, he had luxuriated in her beauty, admired her grace and genius and revelled in her wit; now, when he felt that he might call her his own, his eyes began to detect deficiencies. The girl noticed his critical attitude, and chafed at the eagerness of his keen, watchful glance. Where was the open admiration she used to read in his eyes? Tired at his indifference she grew silent and brittle; and when he told her farewell both were conscious that an ideal had been shattered.

He buttoned his overcoat, and prepared for a long walk to the lonely chambers where he lived the usual careless, comfortless life of a bachelor whose purse is limited. All the way home he submitted himself to a deep and critical examination. He felt as if he were sitting by the ashes of a falling fire which he had no means of replenishing; the night was coming, and he must sit in the cold. If passion died out, where was he to look for sympathy, the respect, the true friendliness which alone can supply its place in married life? Then he thought of Elsie. He had made a mistake, but a very common mistake. He had thought that the excitement of his interest, the enchanting of his fancy and the enthrallment of his senses was love, and lo! it was only passion. He analyzed his feelings more deeply yet, and getting below the surface currents, which are stirred up by the winds, saw that the quiet waters beneath had kept unwaveringly on their course.

When he reached his chambers he sat down by his table and drew paper and ink toward him. "I will not accept your dismissal," Elsie," he wrote hurriedly in answer to her previous letter. "I should be very shallow if I could not read the motive which prompted your letter. I shall come down as usual, and we will talk it over till we understand each other fully. Till then you must believe me when I tell you that I love you all the more for your act of sacrifice, and that I love you more than I have done before."

Frank and Elsie have been long married, and are content. There is no fear of his swerving again; but the event described left its mark on Frank. He knows now that he was on the verge of committing a grievous mistake, and one which might have darkened all his life. For it is not great events, involving tragedies and tears, that impress themselves most deeply upon the body of our haluts and thoughts; but the tendency of our life, as in the case before us, is often most deeply affected by what is no more than "an every-day occurrence."—Chambers' Journal.

**Sale of Bar-room Spices.**  
The reporter's informant said: "Perhaps you don't know that quite a business is done in the sale of bar-room spices, such as you see in those jars over by the cigar case. Thought I bought my cloves in a grocery store, but Oh, no! grocery stores don't sell good cloves; for a first-class cafe. I pay twenty-five cents a pound for cloves, which are selected out of the best quality. Every drinker takes a few cloves, and men now look for them in bar rooms, and if they are not in sight ask that they be sent. Beans, coffee and celery root are always in demand, but customers who wish to mask their breath prefer the last named spice. Celery root is expensive, and is made by the blakers, who refuse to divulge the secret of its preparation. Sassafras root and alspice are also used by liquor drinkers to sweeten the breath. All the spices mentioned above are sold by a little old man, who makes a round of the liquor stores in Brooklyn and New York each week. He carries a large sack, in which he keeps his goods—'Brook

**Surgery for Piano Players.**  
"Surgery for piano-forte players," as recommended by one of the leading piano-forte teachers of this city, and now being practiced at in San Francisco to a degree that will at least make this an interesting spot for the rest of the musical world to watch, in seeing how such a large average of the venturosome come out. The clever physician, with his knife made expressly for the purpose, and his hands, active and firm, little about piano-forte playing, but let that the results of the operation are satisfactory. There then follows something about liability to "loss of grip," etc.  
During the halcyon era of piano art, when Liszt was electrifying Europe, and Mendelssohn and Chopin vying with each other in the production of compositions embodying the utmost artistic perfection; and when gigantic Beethoven was astonishing Vienna with a succession of his sonatas—why was there no knife then? Surgeons were skillful fifty years ago, and knew as much of the mechanism of the hand as today. There were enthusiasts in those days who would have gone to the bottom of this method, and as readily yielded themselves up to a trial of it, and yet we do not read of any hand-strung artists coming to the front. Yes, there was one who tried a regular road to perfection. Poor Robert Schumann essayed some expediting method on his third finger, and ran himself hopelessly and disastrously out of the field of execution. He has stood as a warning monument from those days as to mechanical contrivances and all sorts of extraneous devices, and it would be well for every intending victim to the knife method to first read through his "Advice to Young Musicians."—Cor. San Francisco Chronicle.

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