

The Examiner.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND NEWS.

EDWARD WHELAN

This is true Liberty, when Free-born Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free.—EURIPIDES.

[EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.]

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MOON'S PHASES.—DECEMBER, 1856.
First Quarter 4th day, 11h. 14m. evening. W.
Full Moon 11th day, 3h. 50m. evening. N. E.
Last Quarter 19th day, 2h. 30m. morning. S. E.
New Moon 27th day, 4h. 32m. morning. E. N. E.

Literature.

ROUND THE CORNER.

BY C. SWAIN.

Round the corner waiting—
What will people say?
If you wish to see me,
There's a proper way.
Village tongues are ever
Ready with remark;
Eyes are at the easement
If a dog but bark.
Round the corner waiting—
What will people say?
If you wish to see me,
There's a proper way.

When the Church hath bound us,
Linked two hearts in one,
I shall care but little
How their tongues rail on:
But, until the bridal,
Never let them find
Aught to cause me blushes—
Hurt my peace of mind!
Round the corner waiting—
What will people say?
Manly hearts should ever
Take a manly way.

Fifty things are stated,
Things you'd ne'er suppose,
If but something secret
In a neighbour shows,
Boldly take the pathway,
And their lips are stay'd;
All are quick to censure,
If you seem afraid!
Round the corner waiting—
What will people say?
If you wish to see me,
There's a proper way.

NOT FOR MONEY.

"If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small."

"And this is your decision?"
"Yes, Mr. Stowell, and I have made it calmly, deliberately. I cannot marry a man I do not love."
"And yet, Mary, permit me to ask you once more to reconsider it. You are a sensible girl, and I can talk with you candidly on this subject. I do not demand or expect any romantic girlish affection from my wife, only the respect and attention due my position as her husband. I want a wife who will preside with grace and elegance over the luxurious home I shall provide for her. The offer I have made you is sufficient proof of your ability to do all this; and remember what different lives are this moment placed within your choice."

"On the one hand, a kind and attentive, if not a loving husband, with wealth sufficient to gratify your highest pride and ambition, to indulge all your exquisite tastes and deep love for the beautiful, and to make your outer life at least, all the brightness and poetry you have dreamed it."
"And now look the other side fully in the face. You cannot disguise from yourself the real truth—poverty and suffering must await you. The last penny of your father's property is gone—I know this from the creditors; and your mother's very precarious health will not permit her making any exertion in your behalf. What will become of her, of your young brother and your sisters? All the exertion will, of course, fall upon you, and how can you go out and brave the winter and the storms—you who have been so tenderly loved and cherished all your life? Forgive me, Mary, that I have spoken the truth so plainly; and now, in conclusion, I ask you once more to revoke your decision."

I rose and walked up and down the parlor, that elegant parlor, with its soft, mistlike curtains, and velvet carpet strewn thick with tropical leaves and blossoms, and then I turned and looked at him; there he sat, stiff, stately and sixty!

Oh! how my heart recoiled at the thought of marrying him, and yet every word of his had told well!
Then with what a world of storming, conflicting emotions, I looked down that night on the two paths which diverged from it. One was bright with life's sunshine, and fragrant with its summer blossoms; the other was dark and cold, full of thorns and sharp stones, and oh! how tender were the feet that must walk over them!

I did not think of my own sufferings then. I thought only of my mother and brother, and sisters—the widow and her orphans!

Mr. Stowell, though a pompous, was not a penurious man, and I knew him well enough to feel that pride would influence him to surround the family of his wife with everything necessary to that high social position it would be for his interest to see them occupy.

How could I see those I loved better than my own life suffer? The thought for the last week had been haunting and almost breaking my heart, and here was a way opened to purchase their redemption. But oh! what a price was asked for it! The love, the sentiment, the life of my life must be offered up. No matter! I must make the sacrifice. Do you wonder I said this, walking up and down the room, for great was my temptation? So great that I have never since wondered at, or censured another woman who has yielded to it under like circumstances, and married an old man for his money.

I leave it to those who have never been tried to sneer at and condemn her.

He sat there, watching anxiously the transitions that passed over my face. He loved me as he did his new stone house, or his pet horses, or anything else that illustrated his money—his money!—his god!

Once more I turned and looked at him, and thought how his palace home would be a prison, and his bridal gifts but gilded chains, crushing and festering my heart, and once more I said—"No matter! I must make the sacrifice."

"Mr. Stowell, I will be your wife." The words were on my lips, when that old, ever new prophecy sounded suddenly in my heart—that prophecy which rolled sweetly from the harp of the royal Judean—"I will be a Father to the fatherless, and a Husband to the widow."

How my heart sprang to it! No, no! God would not forget us. I would trust him. I would leave my future and theirs with His love, and I would go out and work, bravely, faithfully, to the end!

He must have read the change of my feelings in my face as I drew near him.

"Mr. Stowell, I have reconsidered," I said, calmly, "and I cannot reverse my decision. My heart revolts from this union, and how can I ever ask God to bless it when it will be a lie? I have chosen my path. It is, as you say, a very flinty one, but I will place my hand in our Father's who is in Heaven, and he will lead me over it."

The millionaire rose up very pompously. He was disappointed, and his self-love was wounded.

"Very well, Miss Marshall. I hope sincerely you may never have cause to regret your decision."

And he passed out of the parlor and left me alone—no, not alone, for God was with me.

Well, in less than a week, the sheriff's officer was in possession of our little property, and the furniture was knocked off under the hammer of the auctioneer. We had a few friends who remained true to us in this winter of adversity—friends who secured to us some of the household articles which they knew were relatively or intrinsically dear to us.

We procured a small but neat cottage in the suburbs of the pleasant half-country town where we had always resided, and though the rooms were small and forcibly in contrast with the elegant ones we had left, a little exercise of taste and skill gave them, as they will almost every room, a pleasant, graceful appearance.

Two weeks went by swiftly in the arranging of our new home, which devolved chiefly upon me, and then I stood up and bravely met the question, "What is to be done?" It was a hard one for a girl of twenty-two to answer, one whose energies had never been aroused and developed, one who saw an invalid mother and three children—the eldest, a boy of hardly fifteen, and hitherto the idol of the household—dependent solely upon her exertions for their support.

Hour after hour I walked up and down my chamber floor, trying to solve this problem, but it was impossible. At last I said, "I will go down and ask mamma. Her maturer judgment may suggest something, and it is high time we were acting in this matter."

She sat by the window over which I had trailed the sweet-briar vine that very morning, her pale, sad face, enclosed in its widow's cap.

"Mamma, you know we must talk about our circumstances, painful as it is to introduce the subject. I must do something for our support at once, and I want you to help me to devise some plan."

"You, my poor child!" And her dark sunken eyes rested with pitiful tenderness upon me. "What in the world can you do? What would your father have said had he heard you? Oh, William! William!"

She clasped her hands, and the tears swept down her faded cheeks.

I inherit all my energy from my father. My mother is loving, gentle, vinelike; but there are no elements in her character to meet and conquer adversity. She can suffer and endure for those she loves, but she cannot work and triumph.

"Don't, mamma; don't give way so. He has only gone home first, you know, and every day is bringing us closer together."

I could not fashion the conclusion of the sentence for the sobs that choked me.

After awhile, however, we discussed and dismissed a number of projects.

There was my piano, that had been secured to us through the kindness of a friend. I might give lessons on music. But the remuneration would be small, and it would take several months to form a large class.

Then my mother suggested a school. But the flourishing academy on the hill had already appropriated all the children in the town. I could not think of contending the claims of superiority with an institution that had the prestige of age and wealthy patronage. It was very plain there was no employment to be obtained in my native town.

"If I were only in some city!" was my mental ejaculation, as I leaned my head, bewildered with revolving fruitless plans, on my hand.

A beam of light leaped suddenly through the darkness. My old nurse, to whom I had always been greatly attached, had a married daughter residing in a large city. She was only a few years older than myself. I would write to her, explain our circumstances, and entreat her to procure me some situation (I hardly cared what!) to save our family from starvation.

To resolve was always with me to perform. That night the letter was dispatched. Two days later the answer came. My application had been successful. Mr. Mason, the husband of my nurse's daughter, had just learned of a vacancy, where a young lady was wanted to assist in keeping the books, and occasionally wait on customers. No extensive knowledge of book-keeping was required, only a thorough mathematical education. The salary for the first year would be one hundred pounds.

"We are living in a private street, in a very quiet, unpretending sort of way," wrote the young wife, "but if you choose to come to us, we will do all we can to make you comfortable, dear Miss Mary. Mother has done nothing but cry since she learned of the misfortunes that have come upon her sweet darling and the family! And you will find warm and true, if humble hearts, ready to welcome you."

"You shall have the front chamber, Miss Mary, and your board." And so ran the practical but kindly letter that decided my destiny.

I remember how the hot-blood dashed into my cheeks as I read Hannah's suggestion of "standing in a shop," for I had been nurtured in the very lap of luxury, and what young girl is ever totally indifferent to the verdict of the society whose atmosphere she has inhaled all her life?

But the after memory of our family silenced the whispers of pride. "I will go," I said. "God will help me to lift the great burden upon my shoulders."

That night, after supper, we went into the little sitting-room, where a few articles of luxurious furniture bore witness of the wealth that had "taken to itself wings and flown away." There after a brief preface, in which I depicted our present situation, and its imperative call for immediate action, I disclosed my intentions and read Mrs. Mason's letter.

The information was at first received with mute astonishment; and then my leaving home was positively interdicted by my mother and brother.

"You shall not leave us, darling sister, and go off to that great strange city, and make a slave of yourself for us. I'll work and support you all—indeed I will, if it kills me.

And too proud to let me see his tears, Frederick laid his wet cheek against my own. I lifted it, and smoothed away the warm rich curls from the broad forehead. Ah, he would have been a slender reed to lean on, with his highly-wrought, delicate, nervous organization, and his poetic temperament, albeit his heart was brave and strong as a man's.

"No, Fred, dear boy, you must not look and talk thus. You will do all you can to strengthen mamma and me for the trial that lies before us. It will be very hard to go away from you, I know, but we must submit to circumstances, and in two or three years, perhaps, we can lay up money enough to buy a cow and some chickens, and I'll return and make butter and cheese, and we'll all turn farmers. Meanwhile, you must cultivate this great garden, you know, and it'll supply you with vegetables all summer, and you can dispose of enough to pay for the girls' schooling."

A ray of hope sprang into his pale face. "That's a lucky thought, Mary; and look here, I'll sell my watch (see if I don't), and buy the cow and the chickens at once; and, before the year's out, we'll have a little farm and you back too!"

How eager were his tones—how radiant was his face. Ah! he too had his father's soul, and I would not damp his spirits by telling him of the years of patience and toil it would require to accomplish all this.

Well, reader, to make a sad story a brief one, I combated and overcame all obstacles—my mother's tears and prejudices, my sister's entreaties that I would not leave them, and my brother's vehement objections.

But I suffered—going out thus from my home with unshod feet, into the thorns and among the stony places. Oh! too sharp even now is the memory that strikes through my soul with the very memory of that dark time. I know not how I lived through it; I only know God in his mercy tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.

It was just in the April sunset that I reached the city. Mr. Mason met me. His warm grasp of my hand, and the look of sympathy in his honest, manly countenance, shook up the tears into my eyes. I had been in a strangely apathetic state since I left my home in the early morning, hardly realizing what I was doing—hardly recognizing my own identity. Well, we drove through street after street.

At last we drew up before a neat looking house in a private street. Before I had alighted, my nurse was at the door. Oh! it gave me new strength to find the arms that had sheltered my infancy once more about me; and the tones that had sung me to slumber when I lay under the lace canopy of my crib, calling me brokenly "their poor darling little Mary."

Well, it was an humble one, but in the broadest, fullest sense of the blessed word, it was home to me. My heart felt this as soon as I crossed the threshold, and it felt it during all the long dreary two years that I was there.

There next morning I entered upon my new duties. Every moment of that day is burned into my memory, but I can only turn back to that dark page of my life-book, and glance hurriedly over it.

Many times, when my head grew dizzy, and my limbs ached with their new toil, I thought of the millionaire and his palace home, and glancing up and down the broad shelves, heaped with goods, I said to myself, "It is better to be his wife than to be here. To-morrow I will write to him and tell him the hand he sought shall be given to him."

But I did not, and every day the heavy burden grew lighter, and new strength came to bear it. Then the blessed consciousness that I was doing good to others, supported me more than all else. Of course, with my small salary, the strictest economy was necessary to meet our expenses. But with Fred's exertions, who cultivated the garden, and procured the cow and the chickens, and made them remunerative too, the dear ones at home were secured from want, and I had my reward.

Two years had gone by. It was one of those bright May mornings that are the songs and poems of the year. It softened and brightened even the long bare streets, as a smile that breaks up from the heart does a cold, care-worn face, and it dashed through the windows, and sprinkled the long counters, and sparkled over the piles of tumbled silks and satins, of muslins and mantles, that overstrewed them.

Everybody was out that morning. We were very busy, for it was one of the merchant's "harvest days." I was unusually so, for two of the clerks were ill, and part of their duties devolved upon me; I paused a moment, and the rich lace I was measuring half fell from my hands in my astonishment, as my old nurse entered the shop.

She was quite infirm, and I feared the exertion would injure her. "How could you venture so far?" was my remonstrative ejaculations as I grasped her hand.

"I wanted to see you once, darling, at your work, and the morning was so pleasant I couldn't resist the temptation to keep on down here, after I had ventured out."

"Well, just walk up stairs, sit down, and rest yourself until—"

A glance down the shop arrested the words on my lips, for at that moment a lady and gentleman advanced to the counter. They stood but a few feet from me. I gazed full into the faces of both. No, I could not be mistaken—there was the same portly figure, and pompous carriage, the same obtrusive, self-conscious air and bearing of the proud millionaire. The lady who stood by his side was young and very beautiful. Her rich crape shawl hung in graceful folds about her tall, symmetrical figure. Her face was very sweet, very fair. Long golden lashes shaded the eyes, blue as the sky outside; and her deep brown hair lay in ripply folds over her lofty smooth forehead. The mouth, that sweet index of a woman's emotional nature, was full and sweet, but there was pride in the curving of the red lips, and haughtiness in carriage of the small finely shaped head.

And she was the wife of that old man! She had given her spring-time to his autumn, she had sold herself for his gold! Did it pay? I looked down on the two years of toil and privation which had followed me from the night on which I had stood before the millionaire, and in my heart I blessed God that I had "resisted the temptation."

"Look here, dear; won't that be pretty trimming for my evening barge? The colors will blend charmingly." And the young wife held up admirably the dainty but elaborate French trimming.

Mr. Stowell was always a connoisseur in dress, and he had just acquiesced in his wife's remark when I noticed that her eyes wandered in our direction. There was a quick start, then the warm blood dashed into her cheeks, her blue eyes dropped, and a quick shiver crossed her red lips.

"Who is that gentleman and lady, and why are you staring at them so?" asked Nurse White, in a loud whisper.

"It is Mr. Stowell, nurse, and that lady is his wife!"

"Mr. Stowell! that rich old man that wanted to marry

you just after your father died?" And the old woman peered at the gentleman eagerly through her spectacles.

"Hush, hush, nurse! they'll overhear you."

But my caution was too late. I felt it the moment my up glancing eyes met those of a gentleman who stood on my right. He was young. Thirty summers could scarcely have crossed that pale forehead, crowned with its heavy mass of brown hair. He was not symmetrically handsome, but there was an expression of scholarly refinement in his face, a gentlemanly air in his whole bearing, that could not be mistaken. I can scarcely analyze the expression of those half hazel eyes, as they met my own. It was one of mingled curiosity, surprise, and admiration, and the glance swept my face and figure before my own had turned from his, while I felt the quick, conscious blood staining my cheeks.

A moment later, however, the young gentleman advanced and confronted Mrs. Stowell. I cannot define his manner. It was calm, calm as his face was, and yet you should have seen the look of intense scorn that curled his proud lips, as they said, low and musically, "Good morning, Mrs. Stowell. I am most happy to meet you, and at last to have an opportunity of offering you my congratulations."

"And I am happy that my husband is here to accept them with me, Mr. Mills," answered the lady, but the quiver of her tones, and the sudden pallor of her cheek, told me she was equivocating.

"Mr. Alcott Mills? An old friend of my wife's, of whom I have heard her speak. I am most happy to meet you, sir." And the millionaire lifted his hat, and looked down proudly on his wife, and patronisingly on the gentleman.

"When did you return from abroad?" constrainedly asked Mrs. Stowell.

"Last month. I should have done myself the honor to call on you before, but I only reached town yesterday."

"I hope your meeting this morning will not prevent your fulfilling your previous intentions, sir," graciously responded Mr. Stowell.

"Thank you. It will certainly afford me much pleasure to meet Mrs. Stowell in the new home, where they tell me her smile is even more captivating than it was in the old one—though, I suppose, all its sweetness is reserved, as a loving wife's should be, for yourself, sir."

It was spoken with a graceful inclination of the fine head, which made the gallant speech more effective; but oh! what bitter irony lay under the light words which only the lady could interpret.

Then the adieux were exchanged, the French trimming ordered for the dressmaker, and Mr. and Mrs. Stowell passed from the shop. But I did not envy her as I stood behind the counter, while the white gloved groom handed her to her elegant carriage that morning.

Once again the young stranger turned, and bent on me one of those inexplicable glances as he left the shop. It was strange, but that look haunted me all the day.

It was a day, too, of great happiness, of great thankfulness, to the Good Father. I looked back on the past two years, and though I could not deny I had endured much, still I had given great measure of happiness unto others.

My daily toil had kept off poverty's gaunt clutch from the little white cottage under whose roof beat securely the hearts whose "peace" was dearer than my own. They had, of course, never become reconciled to my absence, but they had prospered in all things, and in his last letter my brother had written:—

"Next autumn you must come home to us, most precious sister. We have secured fifteen scholars for the new school you are to establish. Besides this, I have bought another cow, and we have fifty chickens. Annie can make butter and cheese already, and our old gardener always finds a market for it. We are going into the gardening business extensively next spring. And now don't give yourself a single anxious thought about my neglect of my studies. I devote every evening, and all my odd moments to my books, and, after all, this new work and harsh discipline is making a man of me, physically and mentally, which the luxurious enervating life that preceded it never would have done."

"We would be very happy if you were with us. Oh, next autumn we shall look into your mellow brown eyes; we shall drop kisses and blessings on your sweet lips, and putting our arms about you we shall say, 'You shall go no more out for ever.'"

Much beloved brother! Would the autumn make thy golden poet dream a reality! I looked across the bright summer, and dared to hope it. Oh! God help those who help themselves.

Three weeks had passed. June had placed her green coronet on the mountains, and even in the bare, hot city, we caught occasional trailings of her robes of gold. The day's wearisome work came at last to its close, as—blessed be God!—all the earth days must, and with a half smothered sigh of relief and thankfulness, I hurried from the shop.

I had not proceeded far when a sudden raindrop plashing on my cheek, lifted my gaze to the sky. A heavy black cloud was hanging its folds over the tops of the houses, with a certain promise of deluging the streets in less than five minutes.

I had nearly a mile to achieve before I reached home, but, of course, walking this was now quite out of the question.

"I must jump into the omnibus at the next crossing, and that will take me within a short distance of home, I mentally concluded, and hurried on.

But I was too late. Far up the street I caught the dim outline of the vehicle hastening on rapidly. I could not dream of reaching it.

"What shall I do?" The words trembled up from a very weary heart, for the sultry day's toil had reduced me to a state of complete physical exhaustion, and at such times we all know how readily the spirits yield to circumstances: if at that moment an angel's white hand had lifted aside the cloud, and called out to me my last hour, I believe I should have clasped my hands calmly and thanked him.

Faster and faster plashed the heavy drops on my bonnet. Far up the street a slight shop front projection seemed to offer some protection from the shower. I hurried towards it.

"Pardon me, Miss, for presuming to address you, but will you not accept the shelter of my umbrella?"

I turned hastily round to meet a face that, once seen, could easily be forgotten. It was that of the young man whose brief interview with Mr. and Mrs. Stowell had so interested me.

I hesitated but a moment. It might have been the increasing rain, it might have been the frankly respectful tones and manner, which first decided me; but at all events, a moment later I had accepted his arm, and the rain was dashing down angrily on the great umbrella that was our only protection.

For the first half hour we only exchanged an occasional remark, for the rapid shower would have drowned our voices.