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George Augustus Baker**

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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK POINT LACE AND DIAMONDS

POINT LACE

AND

DIAMONDS

BY

GEORGE A. BAKER, JR.

AUTHOR OF

"The Bad Habits of Good Society," "West Point," etc.

NEW AND REVISED EDITION
WITH NUMEROUS NEW POEMS



NEW YORK
FREDERICK A. STOKES COMPANY
MDCCCXCIII

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Transcriber's Note: Possible typos and irregularities in indentation and word usage have been left as found in the original. There are places where punctuation may not have been correctly picked up by the scanning software; please consult another source if you require complete accuracy.

RETROSPECTION.

I'd wandered, for a week or more,
Through hills, and dells, and doleful green'ry,
Lodging at any carnal door,
Sustaining life on pork, and scenery.
A weary scribe, I'd just let slip
My collar, for a short vacation,
And started on a walking trip,
That cheapest form of dissipation—

And vilest, Oh! confess my pen,
That I, prosaic, rather hate your
"Ode to a Sky-lark" sort of men;
I really am not fond of Nature.

Mad longing for a decent meal
And decent clothing overcame me;
There came a blister on my heel—
I gave it up; and who can blame me?

Then wrote my "Pulse of Nature's Heart,"
Which I procured some little cash on,
And quickly packed me to depart
In search of "gilded haunts" of fashion,
Which I might puff at column rates,
To please my host and meet my reckoning;
"Base is the slave who"—hesitates
When wealth, and pleasure both are beckoning.

I sought; I found. Among the swells
I had my share of small successes,
Made languid love to languid belles
And penn'd descriptions of their dresses.
Ah! Millionairess Millicent,
How fair you were! How you adored me!
How many tender hours we spent—
And, oh, beloved, how you bored me!

APRIL, 1871.

Is not that fragmentary bit
Of my young verse a perfect prism,
Where worldly knowledge, pleasant wit,
True humor, kindly cynicism,
Refracted by the frolic glass
Of Fancy, play with change incessant?

JUNE, 1874.

Great Cæsar! What a sweet young ass
I must have been, when adolescent!

AUGUST, 1886.

A ROSEBUD IN LENT.

You saw her last, the ball-room's belle,
A *soufflé*, lace and roses blent;
Your worldly worship moved her then;
She does not know you now, in Lent.

See her at prayer! Her pleading hands
Bear not one gem of all her store.
Her face is saint-like. Be rebuked
By those pure eyes, and gaze no more

Turn, turn away! But carry hence
The lesson she has dumbly taught—
That bright young creature kneeling there
With every feeling, every thought

Absorbed in high and holy dreams
Of—new Spring dresses truth to say,
To them the time is sanctified
From Shrove-tide until Easter day.



"SEE HER AT PRAYER! HER PLEADING HANDS
BEAR NOT ONE GEM OF ALL HER STORE." —Page 4.

A REFORMER.

You call me trifler, fainéant,
And bid me give my life an aim!—
You're most unjust, dear. Hear me out,
And own your hastiness to blame.
I live with but a single thought;
My inmost heart and soul are set
On one sole task—a mighty one—
To simplify our alphabet.

Five vowel sounds we use in speech;
They're A, and E, I, O, and U:
I mean to cut them down to four.
You "wonder what good *that* will do."
Why, this cold earth will bloom again,
Eden itself be half re-won,
When breaks the dawn of my success
And U and I at last are one.

IN THE RECORD ROOM, SURROGATE'S OFFICE.

A tomb where legal ghouls grow fat;
Where buried papers, fold on fold,
Crumble to dust, that 'thwart the sun
Floats dim, a pallid ghost of gold.
The day is dying. All about,
Dark, threat'ning shadows lurk; but still
I ponder o'er a dead girl's name
Fast fading from a dead man's will.

Katrina Harland, fair and sweet,

Sole heiress of your father's land,
Full many a gallant wooer rode
To snare your heart, to win your hand.
And one, perchance—who loved you best,
Feared men might sneer—"he sought her gold"—
And never spoke, but turned away
Stubborn and proud, to call you cold.

Cold? Would I knew! Perhaps you loved,
And mourned him all a virgin life.
Perhaps forgot his very name
As happy mother, happy wife.
Unanswered, sad, I turn away—
"You loved *her* first, then?" *First*—well—no—
You little goose, the Harland will
Was proved full sixty years ago.

But Katrine's lands to-day are known
To lawyers as the Glass House tract;
Who were her heirs, no record shows;
The title's bad, in point of fact,
If she left children, at her death,
I've been retained to clear the title;
And all the questions, raised above,
Are, you'll perceive, extremely vital.

DE LUNATICO.

The squadrons of the sun still hold
The western hills, their armor glances,
Their crimson banners wide unfold,
Low-levelled lie their golden lances.
The shadows lurk along the shore,
Where, as our row-boat lightly passes,
The ripples startled by our oar,
Hide murmuring 'neath the hanging grasses.

Your eyes are downcast, for the light
Is lingering on your lids—forgetting
How late it is—for one last sight
Of you the sun delays his setting.
One hand droops idly from the boat,
And round the white and swaying fingers,
Like half-blown lilies gone afloat,
The amorous water, toying, lingers.

I see you smile behind your book,
Your gentle eyes concealing, under
Their drooping lids a laughing look
That's partly fun, and partly wonder
That I, a man of presence grave,
Who fight for bread 'neath Themis' banner
Should all at once begin to rave
In this—I trust—Aldrichian manner.

They say our lake is—sad, but true—
The mill-pond of a Yankee village,
Its swelling shores devoted to
The various forms of kitchen tillage;
That you're no more a maiden fair,
And I no lover, young and glowing;
Just an old, sober, married pair,
Who, after tea, have gone out rowing

Ah, dear, when memories, old and sweet,
Have fooled my reason thus, believe me,
Your eyes can only help the cheat,
Your smile more thoroughly deceive me.
I think it well that men, dear wife,
Are sometimes with such madness smitten,
Else little joy would be in life,
And little poetry be written.

PRO PATRIA ET GLORIA.

The lights blaze high in our brilliant rooms;
Fair are the maidens who throng our halls;
Soft, through the warm and perfumed air,
The languid music swells and falls.
The "Seventh" dances and flirts to-night—
All we are fit for, so they say,
We fops and weaklings, who masquerade
As soldiers, sometimes, in black and gray.

We can manage to make a street parade,
But, in a fight, we'd be sure to run.
Defend you! pshaw, the thought's absurd!
How about April, sixty-one?
What was it made your dull blood thrill?
Why did you cheer, and weep, and pray?
Why did each pulse of your hearts mark time
To the tramp of the boys in black and gray?

You've not forgotten the nation's call
When down in the South the war-cloud burst;
"Troops for the front!" Do you ever think
Who answered, and marched, and got there *first*?
Whose bayonets first scared Maryland?
Whose were the colors that showed the way?
Who set the step for the marching North?
Some holiday soldiers in black and gray.

"Pretty boys in their pretty suits!"
"Too pretty by far to take under fire!"
A pretty boy in a pretty suit
Lay once in Bethel's bloody mire.
The first to fall in the war's first fight—
Raise him tenderly. Wash away
The blood and mire from the pretty suit;
For Winthrop died in the black and gray.

In the shameful days in sixty-three,
When the city fluttered in abject fear,
'Neath the mob's rude grasp, who ever thought—
"God! if the Seventh were only here!"
Our drums were heard—the ruffian crew
Grew tired of riot the self-same day—
By chance of course—you don't suppose
They feared the dandies in black and gray!

So we dance and flirt in our listless style
While the waltzes dream in the drill-room arch,
What would we do if the order came,
Sudden and sharp—"Let the Seventh march!"
Why, we'd faint, of course; our cheeks would pale;
Our knees would tremble, our fears—but stay,
That order I think has come ere this
To those holiday troops in black and gray.

"What would we do!" We'd drown our drums
In a storm of cheers, and the drill-room floor
Would ring with rifles. Why, you fools,
We'd do as we've always done before!
Do our duty! Take what comes
With laugh and jest, be it feast or fray—
But we're dandies—yes, for we'd rather die
Than sully the pride of our black and gray.

AFTER THE GERMAN.

A SOPHOMORE SOLILOQUY.

Blackboard, with ruler and rubber before me,

Chalk loosely held in my hand,
Sun-gilded motes in the air all around me,
Listlessly dreaming I stand.

What do I care for the problem I've written
In characters gracefully slight,
As the festal-robed beauties whose fairy feet flitted
Through the maze of the German last night!

What do I care for the lever of friction,
For sine, or co-ordinate plane,
When fairy musicians are playing the "Mabel,"
And waltzes each nerve in my brain!

On my coat's powdered chalk, not the dust of the diamond
That only last night sparkled there,
By the galop's wild whirl shower'd down on my shoulder
From turbulent tresses of hair.

In my ear is the clatter of chalk against blackboard,
Not music's voluptuous swell;
Alas! this is life,—so pass mortal pleasures,
And,—thank goodness, there goes the bell!

AN IDYL OF THE PERIOD.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART ONE.

"Come right in. How are you, Fred?
Find a chair, and get a light."
"Well, old man, recovered yet
From the Mather's jam last night?"
"Didn't dance. The German's old."
"Didn't you? I had to lead—
Awful bore! Did you go home?"
"No. Sat out with Molly Meade.
Jolly little girl she is—
Said she didn't care to dance,
'D rather sit and talk to me—
Then she gave me such a glance!
So, when you had cleared the room,
And impounded all the chairs,
Having nowhere else, we two
Took possession of the stairs.
I was on the lower step,
Molly, on the next above,
Gave me her bouquet to hold,
Asked me to undo her glove.
Then, of course, I squeezed her hand,
Talked about my wasted life;
'Ah! if I could only win
Some true woman for my wife,
How I'd love her—work for her!
Hand in hand through life we'd walk—
No one ever cared for me—'
Takes a girl—that kind of talk.
Then, you know, I used my eyes—
She believed me, every word—
Said I 'mustn't talk so'—Jove!
Such a voice you never heard.
Gave me some symbolic flower,—
'Had a meaning, oh, *so* sweet,'—
Don't know where it is, I'm sure;
Must have dropped it in the street.
How I spooned!—And she—ha! ha!—
Well, I know it wasn't right—
But she pitied me so much
That I—kissed her—pass a light."



"WE TWO TOOK POSSESSION OF THE STAIRS." —Page 18.

PART TWO.

"Molly Meade, well, I declare!
Who'd have thought of seeing you,
After what occurred last night,
Out here on the Avenue!
Oh, you awful! awful girl!
There, don't blush, I saw it all."
"Saw all what?" "Ahem! last night—
At the Mather's—in the hall."
"Oh, you horrid—where were you?
Wasn't he the biggest goose!
Most men must be caught, but he
Ran his own neck in the noose.
I was almost dead to dance,
I'd have done it if I could,
But old Grey said I must stop,
And I promised Ma I would.
So I looked up sweet, and said
That I'd rather talk to him;
Hope he didn't see me laugh,
Luckily the lights were dim.
My, how he *did* squeeze my hand!
And he looked up in my face
With his lovely big brown eyes—
Really it's a dreadful case.
'Earnest!'—I should think he was!
Why, I thought I'd have to laugh
When he kissed a flower he took,
Looking, oh! like such a calf.
I suppose he's got it now,
In a wine-glass on his shelves;
It's a mystery to me
Why men *will* deceive themselves.
'Saw him kiss me!'—Oh, you wretch;
Well, he begged so hard for one—
And I thought there'd no one know—
So I—let him, just for fun.

I know it really wasn't right
To trifle with his feelings, dear,
But men *are* such stuck-up things;
He'll recover—never fear."

CHIVALRIE.

Under the maple boughs we sat,
Annie Leslie and I together;
She was trimming her sea-side hat
With leaves—we talked about the weather.

The sun-beams lit her gleaming hair
With rippling waves of golden glory,
And eyes of blue, and ringlets fair,
Suggested many an ancient story

Of fair-haired, blue-eyed maids of old,
In durance held by grim magicians,
Of knights in armor rough with gold,
Who rescued them from such positions.

Above, the heavens aglow with light,
Beneath our feet the sleeping ocean,
E'en as the sky my hope was bright,
Deep as the sea was my devotion.

Her father's voice came through the wood,
He'd made a fortune tanning leather;
I was his clerk; I thought it good
To keep on talking about the weather.



"THE SUNBEAMS LIT HER GLEAMING HAIR
WITH RIPPLING WAVES OF GOLDEN GLORY." —Page 22.

A PIECE OF ADVICE.

So you're going to give up flirtation, my dear,
And lead a life sober and quiet?
There, there, I don't doubt the intention's sincere.
But wait till occasion shall try it.—
Is Ramsay engaged?
Now, don't look enraged!
You like him, I know—don't deny it!

What! Give up flirtation? Change dimples for frowns
Why, Nell, what's the use? You're so pretty,
That your beauty all sense of your wickedness drowns
When, some time, in country or city,
Your fate comes at last.
We'll forgive all the past,
And think of you only with pity.

Indeed!—so "you feel for the woes of my sex!"
"The legions of hearts you've been breaking
Your conscience affright, and your reckoning perplex,
Whene'er an account you've been taking!"
"I'd scarcely believe
How deeply you grieve
At the mischief your eyes have been making!"

Now, Nellie!—Flirtation's the leaven of life;
It lightens its doughy compactness.
Don't always—the world with deception is rife—
Construe what men say with exactness!
I pity the girl,
In society's whirl,
Who's troubled with matter-of-factness.

A pink is a beautiful flower in its way,
But rosebuds and violets are charming,
Men don't wear the same *bouttonnière* every day.
Taste changes.—Flirtation alarming!
If e'er we complain,
You then may refrain,
Your eyes of their arrows disarming.

Ah, Nellie, be sensible; Pr'ythee, give heed
To counsel a victim advances;
Your eyes, I acknowledge, will make our hearts bleed,
Pierced through by love's magical lances.
But better that fate
Than in darkness to wait;
Unsought by your mischievous glances.



"WHAT! GIVE UP FLIRTATION? CHANGE DIMPLES FOR FROWNS?" — *Page 24.*

ZWEI KONIGE AUF ORKADAL.

FROM THE GERMAN.

There sat two kings upon Orkadal,
The torches flamed in the pillared hall.

The minstrel sings, the red wine glows,
The two kings drink with gloomy brows.

Out spake the one,— "Give me this girl,
With her sea-blue eyes, and brow of pearl."

The other answered in gloomy scorn,
"She's mine, oh brother!—my oath is sworn."

No other word spake either king—
In their golden sheaths the keen swords ring.

Together they pass from the lighted hall—
Deep lies the snow by the castle-wall.

Steel-sparks and torch-sparks in showers fall.
Two kings lie dead upon Orkadal.

A SONG.

I shouldn't like to say, I'm sure,
I shouldn't like to say,
Why I think of you more, and more, and more
As day flits after day.
Nor why I see in the Summer skies
Only the beauty of your sweet eyes,

The power by which you sway
A kingdom of hearts, that little you prize—
I shouldn't like to say.

I shouldn't like to say, I'm sure,
I shouldn't like to say
Why I hear your voice, so fresh and pure,
In the dash of the laughing spray.
Nor why the wavelets that all the while,
In many a diamond-glittering file,
With truant sunbeams play,
Should make me remember your rippling smile—
I shouldn't like to say.

I shouldn't like to say, I'm sure,
I shouldn't like to say,
Why all the birds should chirp of you,
Who live so far away.
Robin and oriole sing to me
From the leafy depths of our apple-tree,
With trunk so gnarled and gray—
But why your name should their burden be
I shouldn't like to say.

MAKING NEW YEAR'S CALLS.

Shining patent-leather,
Tie of spotless white;
Through the muddy weather
Rushing 'round till night.
Gutters all o'erflowing,
Like Niagara Falls;
Bless me! this is pleasant,
Making New Year's calls.

Rushing up the door-step,
Ringing at the bell—
"Mrs. Jones receive to-day?"
"Yes, sir." "Very well."
Sending in your pasteboard,
Waiting in the halls,
Bless me! this is pleasant,
Making New Year's calls.

Skipping in the parlour,
Bowing to the floor,
Lady of the house there,
Half a dozen more;
Ladies' dresses gorgeous,
Paniers, waterfalls,—
Bless me! this is pleasant,
Making New Year's calls.

"Wish you Happy New Year"—
"Many thanks, I'm sure."
"Many calls, as usual?"
"No; I think they're fewer."
Staring at the carpet,
Gazing at the walls;
Bless me! this is pleasant,
Making New Year's calls.

"Really, I must go now,
Wish I had more leisure."
"Wont you have a glass of wine?"
"Ah, thanks!—greatest pleasure."
Try to come the graceful,
Till your wine-glass falls;
Bless me! this is pleasant,
Making New Year's calls.

Hostess looks delighted—
Out of doors you rush;

Sit down at the crossing,
In a sea of slush.
Job here for your tailor—
Herr Von Schneiderthals—
Bless me! this is pleasant,
Making New Year's calls.

Pick yourself up slowly
Heart with anguish torn.
Sunday-go-to-meetings
In a state forlorn.
Kick a gibing boot-black,
Gibing boot-black bawls,
Bless me! this is pleasant,
Making New Year's calls.

Home, and woo the downy,
But your soul doth quake,
At most fearful night-mares—
Turkey, oysters, cake.
While each leaden horror
That your rest appalls,
Cries, "Dear heart! how pleasant;
Making New Year's calls."

JACK AND ME.

Shine!—All right; here y'are, boss!
Do it for jest five cents.
Get 'em fixed in a minute,—
That is, 'f nothing perwents.
Set your foot right there, sir.
Mornin's kinder cold,—
Goes right through a feller,
When his coat's a gittin' old.
Well, yes,—call it a coat, sir,
Though 't aint much more 'n a tear.
Git another!—I can't, boss;
Ain't got the stamps to spare.
"Make as much as most on 'em!"
Yes; but then, yer see,
They've only got one to do for,—
There's two on us, Jack and me.
Him?—Why, that little feller
With a curus lookin' back,
Sittin' there on the gratin',
Warmin' hisself,—that's Jack.
Used to go round sellin' papers,
The cars there was his lay;
But he got shoved off of the platform
Under the wheels one day.
Fact,—the conductor did it,—
Gin him a reg'lar throw,—
He didn't care if he killed him;
Some on 'em is just so.
He's never been all right since, sir,
Sorter quiet and queer;
Him and me goes together,
He's what they call cashier.
Style, that 'ere, for a boot-black,—
Made the fellers laugh;
Jack and me had to take it,
But we don't mind no chaff.
Trouble!—not much, you bet, boss!
Sometimes, when biz is slack,
I don't know how I'd manage
If 't wa'n't for little Jack.
You jest once orter hear him:
He says we needn't care
How rough luck is down here, sir,
If some day we git up there.
All done now,—how's that, sir?

Shines like a pair of lamps.
Mornin'!—Give it to Jack, sir,
He looks after the stamps.

LES ENFANTS PERDUS.

What has become of the children all?
How have the darlings vanished?
Fashion's pied piper, with magical air,
Has wooed them away, with their flaxen hair
And laughing eyes, we don't know where,
And no one can tell where they're banished.

"Where are the children?" cries Madam Haut-ton,
"Allow me, my sons and daughters,—
Fetch them, Annette!" What, madam, those?
Children! such exquisite belles and beaux:—
True, they're in somewhat shorter clothes
Than the most of Dame Fashion's supporters.

Good day, Master Eddy! Young man about town,—
A merchant down in the swamp's son;
In a neat little book he makes neat little bets:
He doesn't believe in the shop cigarettes,
But does his own rolling,—and has for his pets
Miss Markham and Lydia Thompson.

He and his comrades can drink champagne
Like so many juvenile Comuses;
If you want to insult him, just talk of boys' play,—
Why, even on billiards he's almost *blasé*,
Drops in at Delmonico's three times a day,
And is known at Jerry Thomas's.

And here comes Miss Agnes. Good morning! "*Bon jour!*"
Now, isn't that vision alarming?
Silk with panier, and puffs, and lace
Decking a figure of corsetted grace;
Her words are minced, and her spoiled young face
Wears a simper far from charming.

Thirteen only a month ago,—
Notice her conversation:
Fashion—that bonnet of Nellie Perroy's—
And now, in a low, confidential voice,
Of Helena's treatment of Tommy Joyce,—
Aged twelve,—that's the last flirtation.

What has become of the children, then?
How can an answer be given?
Folly filling each curly head,
Premature vices, childhood dead,
Blighted blossoms—can it be said
"Of *such* is the kingdom of heaven?"

CHINESE LANTERNS.

Through the windows on the park
Float the waltzes, weirdly sweet;
In the light, and in the dark,
Rings the chime of dancing feet.
Mid the branches, all a-row, Fiery jewels gleam and glow;
Dreamingly we walk beneath,—
Ah, so slow!

All the air is full of love;
Misty shadows wrap us round;
Light below and dark above,
Filled with softly-surgingsound.
See the forehead of the Night Garlanded with flowers of light,

And her goblet crowned with wine,
Golden bright.

Ah! those deep, alluring eyes,
Quiet as a haunted lake;
In their depths the passion lies
Half in slumber, half awake.
Lay thy warm, white hand in mine Let the fingers clasp and twine,
While my eager, panting heart
Beats 'gainst thine.

Bring thy velvet lips a-near,
Mine are hungry for a kiss,
Gladly will I sate them, dear;
Closer, closer,—this,—and this.
On thy lips love's seal I lay, Nevermore to pass away;—
That was all last night, you know,
But to-day—

Chinese lanterns hung in strings,
Painted paper, penny dips,—
Filled with roasted moths and things
Greasy with the tallow drips;
Wet and torn, with rusty wire, Blackened by the dying fire;
Withered flowers, trampled deep
In the mire.

Chinese lanterns, Bernstein's band,
Belladonna, lily white,
These made up the fairy-land
Where I wandered all last night;
Ruled in all its rosy glow By a merry Queen, you know
Jolly, dancing, laughing, witching,
Veuve Cliquot.

THOUGHTS ON THE COMMANDMENTS.

"Love your neighbor as yourself,"—
So the parson preaches;
That's one-half the Decalogue.—
So the Prayer-book teaches.
Half my duty I can do
With but little labor,
For with all my heart and soul
I do love my neighbor.

Mighty little credit, that,
To my self-denial;
Not to love her, though, might be
Something of a trial,
Why, the rosy light, that peeps
Through the glass above her,
Lingers round her lips:—you see
E'en the sunbeams love her.

So to make my merit more,
I'll go beyond the letter;
Love my neighbor as myself?
Yes, and ten times better.
For she's sweeter than the breath
Of the Spring, that passes
Through the fragrant, budding woods,
O'er the meadow-grasses.

And I've preached the word I know,
For it was my duty
To convert the stubborn heart
Of the little beauty.
Once again success has crowned
Missionary labor,
For her sweet eyes own that she
Also loves her neighbor.

MARRIAGE A LA MODE.

A Trilogy.

I.

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM.

A.D. 1880.

"Thank you—much obliged, old boy,
Yes, it's so; report says true.
I'm engaged to Nell Latine—
What else could a fellow do?
Governor was getting fierce;
Asked me, with paternal frown,
When I meant to go to work,
Take a wife, and settle down.
Stormed at my extravagance,
Talked of cutting off supplies—
Fairly bullied me, you know—
Sort of thing that I despise.
Well, you see, I lost worst way
At the races—Governor raged—
So, to try and smooth him down,
I went off, and got engaged.
Sort of put-up job, you know—
All arranged with old Latine—
Nellie raved about it first,
Said her 'pa was awful mean!
Now it's done we don't much mind—
Tell the truth, I'm rather glad;
Looking at it every way,
One must own it isn't bad.
She's good-looking, rather rich,—
Mother left her quite a pile;
Dances, goes out everywhere;
Fine old family, real good style.
Then she's good, as girls go now,
Some idea of wrong and right,
Don't let every man she meets
Kiss her, on the self-same night.
We don't do affection much,
Nell and I are real good friends,
Call there often, sit and chat,
Take her 'round, and there it ends.
Spooning! Well, I tried it once—
Acted like an awful calf—
Said I really loved her. Gad!
You should just have heard her laugh.
Why, she ran me for a month,
Teased me till she made me wince;
'Mustn't flirt with her,' she said,
So I haven't tried it since.
'Twould be pleasant to be loved
Like you read about in books—
Mingling souls, and tender eyes—
Love, and that, in all their looks;
Thoughts of you, and no one else;
Voice that has a tender ring,
Sacrifices made, and—well—
You know—all that sort of thing.
That's all worn-out talk, they say,
Don't see any of it now—
Spooning on your *fiancée*
Isn't good style, anyhow.
Just suppose that one of us,—
Nell and me, you know—some day
Got like that on some one else—
Might be rather awkward—eh!
All in earnest, like the books—

Wouldn't it be awful rough!
Jove! if I—but pshaw, what bosh!
Nell and I are safe enough.—
Some time in the Spring, I think;
Be on hand to wish us joy?
Be a groomsman, if you like—
Lots of wine—good-bye, old boy."

II.

UP THE AISLE.

A.D. 1881.

Take my cloak—and now fix my veil, Jenny;—
How silly to cover one's face!
I might as well be an old woman,
But then there's one comfort—it's lace.
Well, what has become of those ushers?—
Oh, Pa, have you got my bouquet?
I'll freeze standing here in the lobby,
Why doesn't the organist play?
They've started at last—what a bustle!
Stop, Pa!—they're not far enough—wait!
One minute more—now! Do keep step, Pa!
There, drop my trail, Jane!—is it straight?
I hope I look timid, and shrinking!
The church must be perfectly full—
Good gracious, please don't walk so fast, Pa!
He don't seem to think that trains pull.
The chancel at last—mind the step, Pa!—
I don't feel embarrassed at all—
But, my! What's the minister saying?
Oh, I know, that part 'bout Saint Paul.
I hope my position is graceful—
How awkwardly Nelly Dane stood!
"Not lawfully be joined together,
Now speak"—as if any one would.
Oh, dear, now it's my turn to answer—
I do wish that Pa would stand still.
"Serve him, love, honor, and keep him"—
How sweetly he says it—I will.
Where's Pa?—there, I knew he'd forget it
When the time came to give me away—
"I, Helena, take thee—love—cherish—
And"—well, I can't help it,—"obey."
Here, Maud, take my bouquet—don't drop it—
I hope Charley's not lost the ring!
Just like him!—no—goodness, how heavy!
It's really an elegant thing.
It's a shame to kneel down in white satin—
And the flounce real old lace—but I must—
I hope that they've got a clean cushion,
They're usually covered with dust.
All over—ah, thanks!—now, don't fuss, Pa!—
Just throw back my veil, Charley—there!
Oh, bother! Why couldn't he kiss me
Without mussing up all my hair!
Your arm, Charley, there goes the organ—
Who'd think there would be such a crowd!
Oh, I mustn't look round, I'd forgotten,
See, Charley, who was it that bowed?
Why—it's Nellie Allaire, with her husband—
She's awfully jealous, I know,
Most all of my things were imported,
And she had a home-made *trousseau*.
And there's Annie Wheeler—Kate Hermon—
I didn't expect her at all—
If she's not in that same old blue satin
She wore at the Charity Ball!
Is that Fanny Wade?—Edith Pometton—
And Emma, and Jo—all the girls!
I knew they'd not miss my wedding—
I hope they'll all notice my pearls.

Is the carriage there?—give me my cloak, Jane,
Don't get it all over my veil—
No! you take the other seat, Charley—
I need all of this for my trail.

III.

DIVORCE.

A.D., 1886.

The Club Window.

"Yes, I saw her pass with 'that scoundrel'—
For heaven's sake, old man, keep cool!
No end of the fellows are watching—
Go easy, don't act like a fool!
'Parading *your* shame!'—I don't see it.
It's *hers* now, alone; for at last
You drove her to give you good reason,
Divorced her, and so it's all passed.
For *you*, I mean; she has to bear it—
Poor child—the reproach and the shame;
I'm your friend—but come, hang it, old fellow,
I swear you were somewhat to blame.
'What the deuce do I mean?' Well, I'll tell you,
Though it's none of my business. Here!
Just light a cigar, and keep quiet—
You *started* wrong, Charley Leclear.
You weren't in love when you married—
'Nor she!'—well, I know, but she tried
To keep it dark. You wouldn't let her,
But laughed at her for it. Her pride
Wouldn't stand that, you know. Did you ever
See a spirited girl in your life,
Who would patiently pose to be pitied
As a 'patient Griselda'-like wife
When her husband neglects her so plainly
As you did?—although, on the whole,
When the wife is the culprit, I've noticed
It's rather the favorite rôle.
So she flirted a little—in public—
She'd chances enough and to spare,
Ah, *then* if you'd only turned jealous—
But you didn't notice nor care.
Then her sickness came—even we fellows
All thought you behaved like a scrub,
Leaving her for the nurse to take care of,
While you spent your time at the club.
She never forgave you. How could she?
If I'd been in her place myself,
By Jove, I'd have *left* you. She didn't,
But told all her woes to Jack Guelph.
When a girl's lost all love for her husband,
And is cursed with a masculine friend
To confide in, and he is a blackguard,
She isn't far off from the end.
Oh, I'm through—of *course* nobody blamed you
In the end, when you got your divorce—
You were right enough there—she'd levanted
With Guelph, and you'd no other course.
What I mean is, if you'd acted squarely,
The row would have never occurred,
And for *you* to be doing the tragic,
Strikes me as a little absurd.
As it stands, you've the best of the bargain,
And she's got a good deal the worst,
Leave it there, and—just touch the bell, will you?
You're nearest, I'm dying of thirst."

IV.

AT AFTERNOON TEA.

"In New York!' Yes, I met her this morning.
 I knew her in spite of her paint;
 And Guelph, too, poor fellow, was with her;
 I felt really nervous, and faint,
 When he bowed to me, looking *so* pleading—
 I cut him, of course. Wouldn't you?
 If I meet him alone, I'll explain it;
 But knowing *her*, what could I do?
 Poor fellow! He looks sadly altered—
 I think it a sin, and a shame,
 The way he was wrecked by that *creature*!
 I *know* he was never to blame.
 He never suspected. He liked her—
 He'd known her for most of his life—
 And of course, it *was* quite a temptation
 To run off with another man's wife.
 At his age, you know—barely thirty—
 So romantic, and makes such a noise
 In one's club—why, one *can't* but excuse him,
 Now *can* one, dear? Boys will be boys.
 I've known him so long—why, he'd come here
 And talk to me just like a son.
 It's my duty—I feel as a mother—
 To save him; the thing can be done
 Very easily. First, I must show him
 How grossly the woman deceived
 And entrapped him.—It made such a scandal
 You know, that he *can't* be received
 At all, any more, till he drops her—
 He'll certainly not be so mad
 As to hold to her still. Oh, I know him
 So well—I'm quite sure he'll be glad
 On *any* excuse, to oblige me
 In a matter so trifling indeed.
 Then the way will be clear. *We'll* receive him,
 And the rest will soon follow our lead.
 We must keep our eyes on him more closely
 Hereafter; young men of his wealth
 And position are so sorely tempted
 To waste time, and fortune, and health
 In frivolous pleasures and pastimes,
 That there's but one safe-guard in life
 For them and their money—we've seen it—
 A really nice girl for a wife.
 Too bad you've no daughter! My Mamie
 Had influence with him for good
 Before this affair—when he comes here
 She'll meet him, I'm sure, as she should—
 That is, as if nothing had happened—
 And greet him with sisterly joy;
 Between us I know we can *save* him.
 I'll write him to-morrow, poor boy."

THE "STAY-AT-HOME'S" PLAINT.

The Spring has grown to Summer;
 The sun is fierce and high;
 The city shrinks, and withers
 Beneath the burning sky.
 Ailantus trees are fragrant,
 And thicker shadows cast,
 Where berry-girls, with voices shrill,
 And watering carts go past.

In offices like ovens
 We sit without our coats;
 Our cuffs are moist and shapeless,
 No collars binds our throats.
 We carry huge umbrellas
 On Broad Street and on Wall,
 Oh, how thermometers go up!
 And, oh, how stocks *do* fall!

The nights are full of music,
Melodious Teuton troops
Beguile us, calmly smoking,
On balconies and stoops.
With eyes half-shut, and dreamy,
We watch the fire-flies' spark,
And image far-off faces,
As day dies into dark.

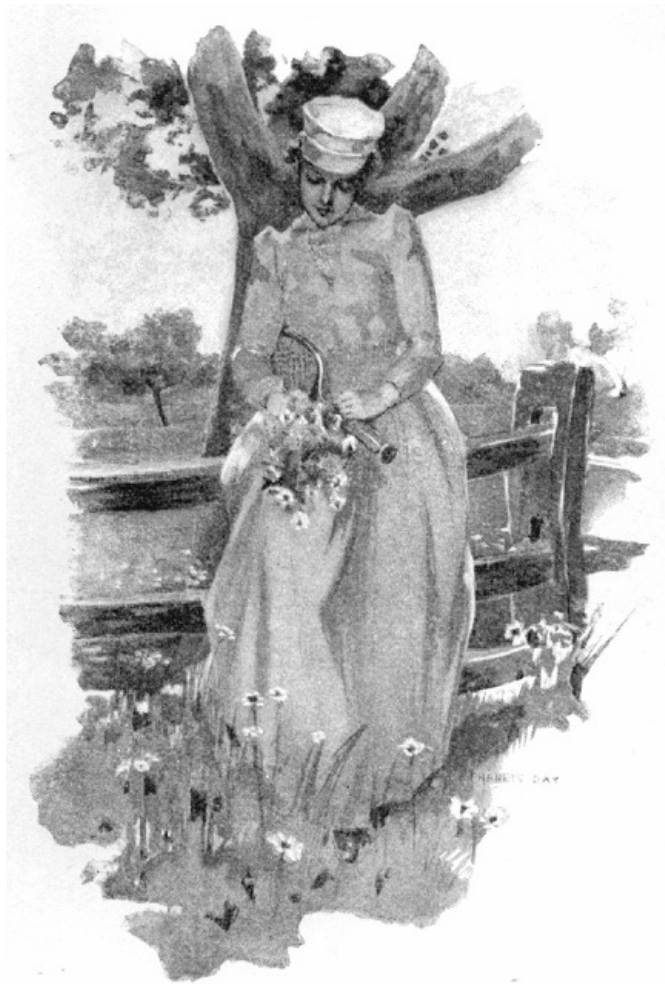
The avenue is lonely,
The houses choked with dust;
The shutters, barred and bolted,
The bell-knobs all a-rust.
No blossom-like spring dresses,
No faces young and fair,
From "Dickel's" to "The Brunswick,"
No promenader there.

The girls we used to walk with
Are far away, alas!
The feet that kissed its pavement
Are deep in country grass.
Along the scented hedge-rows,
Among the green old trees,
Are blooming city faces
'Neath rosy-lined pongees.

They're cottaging at Newport;
They're bathing at Cape May;
In Saratoga's ball-rooms
They dance the hours away.
Their voices through the quiet
Of haunted Catskill break;
Or rouse those dreamy dryads,
The nymphs of Echo Lake.

The hands we've led through Germans,
And squeezed, perchance, of yore,
Now deftly grasp the bridle,
The mallet, and the oar.
The eyes that wrought our ruin
On other men look down;
We're but the broken play-things
They've left behind in town.

Oh, happy Gran'dame Nature,
Whose wandering children come
To light with happy faces
The dear old mother-home,
Be tender with our darlings,
Each merry maiden bears
Such love and longing with her—
Men's lives are wrapped in theirs.



"THE FEET THAT KISSED ITS PAVEMENT
ARE DEEP IN COUNTRY GRASS." —Page 59.

THE "STAY-AT-HOME'S" PÆAN.

The evenings are damper and colder;
The maples and sumacs are red,
The wild Equinoctial is coming,
The flowers in the garden are dead.
The steamers are all overflowing,
The railroads are all loaded down,
And the beauties we've sighed for all Summer
Are hurrying back into town.

They come from the banks of the Hudson,
From the sands of the Branch, and Cape May,
From the parlors of bright Saratoga,
From the dash of Niagara's spray.
From misty, sea-salt Narragansett,
From Mahopac's magical lake.
They come on their way to new conquests,
They're longing for more hearts to break.

E'en Newport is dull and deserted—
Its billowy beaches no more
Made bright with sweet, ocean-kissed faces,
Love's beacon lights set on the shore.
The rugged White Hills of New Hampshire,
The last of their lovers have seen,
The echoes are left to their slumbers,
No dainty feet thread the ravine.

On West Point's delightful parade ground
Sighs many a hapless cadet,
Who's basked through the long days of Summer
In the smiles of a city coquette;
And now the incipient hero
Beholds his enchantress depart,

With the spoils of her lightly-won triumph,
His buttons, as well as his heart.

Come, dry your eyes, Grandmother Nature,
They care not a whit for your woe;
The city is calling her daughters—
We can't spare them longer, they know—
Our beautiful, tender-voiced darlings,
With the blue of the deep Summer skies,
And the glow of the bright Summer sunshine,
Entrapped in their mischievous eyes.

We know their expenses are awful,
That horror unspeakable fills
The souls of unfortunate fathers
Who foot up their dressmaker's bills.
That they'd barter their souls for French candy;
That diamonds ruin their peace;
That they rave over middle-aged actors,
And in other respects are—well, geese.

We laugh at them, boys, but we love them,
For under their nonsense we know
They've hearts that are honest and loving,
And souls that are whiter than snow.
So out with that bottle of Roederer!
Large glasses, boys! Up goes the cork!
All charged? To the belles of creation,
The glorious girls of New York.



"AND THE BEAUTIES WE'VE SIGHED FOR ALL SUMMER
ARE HURRYING BACK TO TOWN." — *Page 62.*

EIGHT HOURS.

"Sign the petition!" "Write my name!"
"She said, ask me!"—oh, she's fooling;
Where do you think a girl like me

Could find the time for so much schooling?
 Why, I've been here since I was eight or so—
 That's ten years now—and it seems like longer;
 The hours are from eight till six—you see
 It wears one out—I once was stronger.
 "A bad cough!" oh, that's nothing, sir;
 It comes from the dust, and bending over.
 It hurts me sometimes—no, not now.
 "This!" why, a flower, a bit of clover.
 I picked it up as I came to work—
 It grew in the grass in some one's airy,
 Where it stood, and nodded all alone
 Like a little green-cloaked, white-capped fairy.
 "Fond of flowers!" I like them—yes—
 Though, goodness knows, I don't see many—
 I'd have to buy them—they cost so much—
 And I never can spare a single penny.
 "Go to the park!"—how can I, sir?
 The only day that I have is Sunday;
 And then there's always so much to do
 That before I know it, almost, it's Monday.
 Like it sir, like it!—why, when I think
 Of the woods, and the brook with the cattle drinking—
 I was country-bred, sir—my heart swells so
 That I—there, there, what's the use of thinking!
 If I could write, sir—"make a cross,
 And let you write my name below it"—
 No, please; I'm ashamed I can't, sometimes,—
 I don't want all the girls to know it.
 And what's the use of it, anyway?
 They'll just say shortly, with careless faces,
 "If you're not suited, you'd better leave"—
 There's plenty of girls to fill our places.
 They're kind enough to their own, no doubt—
 Our head just worships his own young daughter,
 Just my age, sir—she's gone away
 To spend the Summer across the water.
 But *us*—oh, well, we're only "hands,"
 Do you think to please us they'll bear losses?
 No, not a cent's worth—ah, you'll see—
 I'm a working girl, sir, and I know bosses.

SLEEPING BEAUTY.

A PARABLE.

You remember the nursery legend—
 We heard in the early days,
 Ere we knew of the world's deception
 Or walked in its dusty ways,
 And dwelt in a land of the fairies
 Where the air was golden haze—

 Of the maid, o'er whom the Summers
 Of youth passed, like a swell
 Of melody all unbroken,
 Till evil wrought its spell,
 And dream-embroidered curtains
 Of slumber round her fell.

 The wood grew up round her castle,
 The centuries o'er it rolled,
 Wrapping its slumb'rous turrets
 In clinging robes of mould,
 And her name became a legend
 By Winter fire-sides told.

 Till the Prince came over the mountains
 In the morning-glow of youth;
 The forest sank before him
 Like wrong before the truth,
 And he passed the dim old portal,

With its warders so uncouth,
Woke with a kiss the Princess,
And broke enchantment's chain,
The sleepy old castle wondered,
In its cobweb-cumbered brain,
At the tide of life and pleasure
That poured through each stony vein.

And so love conquered an evil
Centuries old in might,
Scattering drowsy glamour,
Piercing the murky night,
Leading from thrall and darkness
Beauty, and joy, and light.

EASTER MORNING.

Too early, of course! How provoking!
I told Ma just how it would be.
I might as well have on a wrapper,
For there isn't a soul here to see.
There! Sue Delaplaine's pew is empty,—
I declare if it isn't too bad!
I know my suit cost more than hers did,
And I wanted to see her look mad.
I do think that sexton's too stupid—
He's put some one else in our pew—
And the girl's dress just kills mine completely;
Now what am I going to do?
The psalter, and Sue isn't here yet!
I don't care, I think it's a sin
For people to get late to service,
Just to make a great show coming in.
Perhaps she is sick, and can't get here—
She said she'd a headache last night.
How mad she'll be after her fussing!
I declare, it would serve her just right.
Oh, you've got here at last, my dear, have you?
Well, I don't think you need be so proud
Of that bonnet, if Virot did make it,
It's horrid fast-looking and loud.
What a dress!—for a girl in her senses
To go on the street in light blue!—
And those coat-sleeves—they wore them last Summer—
Don't doubt, though, that she thinks they're new.
Mrs. Gray's polonaise was imported—
So dreadful!—a minister's wife,
And thinking so much about fashion!—
A pretty example of life!
The altar's dressed sweetly. I wonder
Who sent those white flowers for the font!—
Some girl who's gone on the assistant—
Don't doubt it was Bessie Lamont.
Just look at her now, little humbug!—
So devout—I suppose she don't know
That she's bending her head too far over,
And the ends of her switches all show.
What a sight Mrs. Ward is this morning!
That woman will kill me some day.
With her horrible lilacs and crimsons;
Why will these old things dress so gay?
And there's Jenny Welles with Fred. Tracy—
She's engaged to him now—horrid thing!
Dear me! I'd keep on my glove sometimes,
If I did have a solitaire ring!
How can this girl next to me act so—
The way that she turns round and stares,
And then makes remarks about people;
She'd better be saying her prayers.
Oh dear, what a dreadful long sermon!
He must love to hear himself talk!

And it's after twelve now,—how provoking!
I wanted to have a nice walk.
Through at last. Well it isn't so dreadful
After all, for we don't dine till one;
How can people say church is poky!—
So wicked!—I think it's real fun.

A LEGEND OF ST. VALENTINE.

Come! Why, halloo, that you, Jack?
How's the world been using you?
Want your pipe? it's in the jar—
Think I might be looking blue.
Maud's been breaking off with me,
Fact—see here—I've got the ring.
That's the note she sent it in;
Read it—soothing sort of thing.
Jack, you know I write sometimes—
Must have read some things of mine.
Well, I thought I'd just send Maud
Something for a valentine.
So I ground some verses out
In the softest kind of style,
Full of love, and that, you know—
Bothered me an awful while;
Quite a heavy piece of work.
So when I had got them done—
Why, I thought them much too good
Just to waste that way on one.
Jack, I told you, didn't I,
All about that black-eyed girl
Up in Stratford—last July—
Oh! you know; you saw her curl?
Well, old fellow, she's the one
That this row is all about,
For I sent her—who'd have thought
Maud would ever find it out—
Those same verses, word for word—
Hang it, man! you needn't roar—
"Splendid joke!" well, so I thought—
No, don't think so any more.
Yesterday, you know it rained,
I'd been up late—at a ball—
Didn't know what else to do—
Went up and made Maud a call,
Found some other girl there, too,
They were playing a duet.
"Fred, my cousin, Nelly Deane,"—
Yes, Jack, there was my brunette;
You should just have seen me, Jack—
Now, old fellow, please don't laugh,
I feel bad about it—fact—
And I really can't stand chaff.
Well, I tried to talk to Maud,
There was Nell, though, sitting by;
Every now and then she'd laugh,
Sure I can't imagine why.
Maud would read that beastly poem,
Nell's eyes said in just one glance,
"Wont I make you pay for this,
If I ever get the chance!"
Some one came and rang the bell,
Just a note for Nell, by post.
Jack, I saw my monogram—
I'd have rather seen a ghost.
Yes—her verses—I suppose
That her folks had sent them down—
Couldn't get up there, you know—
Till she'd left and come to town.
Nelly looked them quickly through—
Laughed—by Jove, I thought she'd choke.
"Maud—he'll kill me—dear! oh, dear!—"

Read that; isn't it a joke?"
 Maud glanced through them—sank right down
 On the sofa—hid her face—
 "Crying!"—not much—laughing, Jack—
 Don't think she's a hopeless case.
 I just grabbed my hat and left—
 Only wish I'd gone before.
 How they laughed!—I heard them, Jack—
 Till I got outside the door.
 There, confession's done me good,
 I can never win her back,
 So I'll calmly let her slide—
 Pass the ash-cup, will you, Jack.



"YES, JACK, THERE WAS MY BRUNETTE." —*Page 77.*

FROST-BITTEN.

We were driving home from the "Patriarchs"—
 Molly Lefèvre and I, you know;
 The white flakes fluttered about our lamps;
 Our wheels were hushed in the sleeping snow.

Her white arms nestled amid her furs;
 Her hands half-held, with languid grace,
 Her fading roses; fair to see
 Was the dreamy look in her sweet, young face.

I watched her, saying never a word,
 For I would not waken those dreaming eyes.
 The breath of the roses filled the air,
 And my thoughts were many, and far from wise.

At last I said to her, bending near,
 "Ah, Molly Lefèvre, how sweet 'twould be,
 To ride on dreaming, all our lives,
 Alone with the roses—you and me."

Her sweet lips faltered, her sweet eyes fell,
And, low as the voice of a Summer rill,
Her answer came. It was—"Yes, perhaps—
But who would settle our carriage bill?"

The dying roses breathed their last,
Our wheels rolled loud on the stones just then,
Where the snow had drifted; the subject dropped.
It has never been taken up again.

A SONG.

Spring-time is coming again, my dear;
Sunshine and violets blue, you know;
Crocuses lifting their sleepy heads
Out of their sheets of snow.
And I know a blossom sweeter by far
That violets blue, or crocuses are,
And bright as the sunbeam's glow.
But how can I dare to look in her eyes,
Colored with heaven's own hue?
That wouldn't do at all, my dear,
It really wouldn't do.

Her hair is a rippling, tossing sea;
In its golden depths the fairies play,
Beckoning, dancing, mocking there,
Luring my heart away.
And her merry lips are the ripest red
That ever addled a poor man's head,
Or led his wits astray.
What wouldn't I give to taste the sweets
Of those rose-leaves wet with dew!
But that wouldn't do at all, my dear,
It really wouldn't do.

Her voice is gentle, and clear and pure;
It rings like the chime of a silver bell,
And the thought it wakes in my foolish head,
I'm really afraid to tell.
Her little feet kiss the ground below,
And her hand is white as the whitest snow
That e'er from heaven fell.
But I wouldn't dare to take that hand,
Reward for my love to sue;
That wouldn't do at all, my dear,
It really wouldn't do.

OLD PHOTOGRAPHS.

Old lady, put your glasses on,
With polished lenses, mounting golden,
And once again look slowly through
The album olden.

How the old portraits take you back
To friends who once would 'round you gather—
All scattered now, like frosted leaves
In blustering weather.

Why, who is this, the bright coquette?
Her eyes with Love's bright arrows laden—
"Poor Nell, she's living single yet,
An ancient maiden."

And this, the fragile poetess?
Whose high soul-yearnings nought can smother—
"She's stouter far than I am now,
A kind grandmother."

Who is this girl with flowing curls,
Who on the golden future muses?
"What splendid hair she had!—and now
A 'front' she uses."

And this? "Why, if it's not my own;
And did I really e'er resemble
That bright young creature? Take the book—
My old hands tremble.

"It seems that only yesterday
We all were young; ah, how time passes!"
Old lady, put the album down,
And wipe your glasses.



"HOW THE OLD PORTRAITS TAKE YOU BACK." —Page 83.

"LE DERNIER JOUR D'UN CONDAMNÉ."

Old coat, for some three or four seasons
We've been jolly comrades, but now
We part, old companion, forever;
To fate, and the fashion, I bow.
You'd look well enough at a dinner,
I'd wear you with pride at a ball;
But I'm dressing to-night for a wedding—
My own—and you'd not do at all.

You've too many wine-stains about you,
You're scented too much with cigars,
When the gas-light shines full on your collar,
It glitters with myriad stars,
That wouldn't look well at my wedding;
They'd seem inappropriate there—
Nell doesn't use diamond powder,
She tells me it ruins the hair.

You've been out on Cozzens' piazza

Too late, when the evenings were damp,
When the moon-beams were silvering Cro'nest,
And the lights were all out in the camp.
You've rested on highly-oiled stairways
Too often, when sweet eyes were bright,
And somebody's ball dress—not Nellie's—
Flowed 'round you in rivers of white.

There's a reprobate looseness about you;
Should I wear you to-night, I believe,
As I come with my bride from the altar,
You'd laugh in your wicked old sleeve,
When you felt there the tremulous pressure
Of her hand, in its delicate glove,
That is telling me shyly, but proudly,
Her trust is as deep as her love.

So, go to your grave in the wardrobe,
And furnish a feast for the moth,
Nell's glove shall betray its sweet secrets
To younger, more innocent cloth.
'Tis time to put on your successor—
It's made in a fashion that's new;
Old coat, I'm afraid it will never
Sit as easily on me as you.

CHRISTMAS GREENS.

Oh, Lowbury pastor is fair and young,
By far too good for a single life,
And many a maiden, saith gossip's tongue,
Would fain be Lowbury pastor's wife:
So his book-marks are 'broidered in crimson and gold,
And his slippers are, really, a "sight to behold."

That's Lowbury pastor, sitting there
On the cedar boughs by the chancel rails;
His face is clouded with carking care,
For it's nearly five, the daylight fails—
The church is silent,—the girls all gone,
And the Christmas wreaths not nearly done.

Two tiny boots crunch-crunch the snow,
They saucily stamp at the transept door,
And then up to the pillared aisle they go
Pit-pat, click-clack, on the marble floor—
A lady fair doth that pastor see,
And he saith, "Oh, bother, it isn't she!"

A lady in seal-skin—eyes of blue,
And tangled tresses of snow-flecked gold—
She speaks, "Good gracious! can this be you,
Sitting alone in the dark and cold?
The rest all gone! Why it wasn't right;
These texts will never be done to-night."

She sits her down at her pastor's feet,
And, wreathing evergreen, weaves her wiles,
Heart-piercing glances bright and fleet,
Soft little sighs, and shy little smiles;
But the pastor is solemnly sulky and glum,
And thinketh it strange that "she" doesn't come.

Then she tells him earnestly, soft and low,
How she'd do her part in this world of strife,
And humbly look to him to know
The path that her feet should tread through life—
Her pastor yawneeth behind his hat,
And wondereth what she is driving at.

Crunch-crunch again on the snow outside,
The pastor riseth unto his feet,
The vestry door is opened wide,

A dark-eyed maid doth the pastor greet,
And that lady fair can see and hear,
Her pastor kiss her, and call her "dear."

"Why, Maud!" "Why, Nelly!" those damsels cry;
But lo, what troubles that lady fair?
On Nelly's finger there meets her eye
The glow of a diamond solitaire,
And she thinks, as she sees the glittering ring,
"And so she's got him—the hateful thing!"

There sit they all 'neath the Christmas tree,
For Maud is determined that she wont go
The pastor is cross as a man can be,
And Nelly would like to pinch her so,
And they go on wreathing the text again—
It is "Peace on earth and good-will towards men."



"A LADY IN SEALSKIN—EYES OF BLUE,
AND TANGLED TRESSES OF SNOW-FLECKED GOLD." —*Page 89.*

LAKE MAHOPAC—SATURDAY NIGHT.

"Yes, I'm here, I suppose you're delighted:
You'd heard I was not coming down!
Why I've been here a week!—'rather early'—
I know, but it's horrid in town

A Boston? Most certainly, thank you.
This music is perfectly sweet;
Of course I like dancing in summer;
It's warm, but I don't mind the heat.

The clumsy thing! Oh! how he hurt me!
I really can't dance any more—
Let's walk—see, they're forming a Lancers;
These square dances are such a bore.

My cloak—oh! I really don't need it—
Well, carry it,—so, in the folds—
I hate it, but Ma made me bring it;
She's frightened to death about colds.

This *is* rather cooler than dancing.
They're lovely piazzas up here;
Those lanterns look sweet in the bushes,
It's lucky the night is so clear.

I *am* rather tired—in this corner?—
Very well, if you like—I don't care—
But you'll have to sit on the railing—
You see there is only one chair.

'So long since you've seen me'—oh, ages!—
Let's see, why it's ten days ago—
'Seems years'—oh! of course—don't look spooney—
It isn't becoming, you know.

How bright the stars seem to-night, don't they?
What was it you said about eyes?
How sweet!—why you must be a poet—
One never can tell till he tries.

Why can't you be sensible, Harry!
I don't like men's arms on my chair.
Be still! if you don't stop this nonsense
I'll get up and leave you;—so there!

Oh! please don't—I don't want to hear it—
A boy like you talking of love.
'My answer!'—Well, sir, you shall have it—
Just wait till I get off my glove.

See that?—Well, you needn't look tragic,
It's only a solitaire ring,—
Of course I am 'proud of it'—very—
It's rather an elegant thing.

Engaged!—yes—why, didn't you know it?
I thought the news must have reached here—
Why, the wedding will be in October—
The 'happy man'—Charley Leclear.

Now don't blame me—I tried to stop you—
But you *would* go on like a goose;
I'm sorry it happened—forget it—
Don't think of it—don't—what's the use?

There's somebody coming—don't look so—
Get up on the railing again—
Can't you seem as if nothing had happened?
I never saw such geese as men!

Ah, Charley, you've found me! A galop?
The 'Bahn frei?' Yes; take my bouquet—
And my fan, if you will—now I'm ready—
You'll excuse me, of course, Mr. Gray."



"BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO SIT ON THE RAILING—
YOU SEE THERE IS ONLY ONE CHAIR." —Page 92.

MATINAL MUSINGS.

Ten o'clock! Well, I'm sure I can't help it!
I'm up—go away from the door!
Now, children, I'll speak to your mother
If you pound there like that any more.

How tired I do feel?—Where's that cushion?—
I don't want to move from this chair;
I wish Marie'd make her appearance!
I really *can't* do my own hair.

I wish I'd not danced quite so often—
I knew I'd feel tired! but it's hard
To refuse a magnificent dancer
If you have a place left on your card.

I was silly to wear that green satin,
It's a shame that I've spotted it so—
All down the front breadth—it's just ruined—
No trimming will hide that, I know.

That's me! Have a costume imported,
And spoil it the very first night!—
I might make an overskirt of it,
That shade looks so lovely with white.

How horrid my eyes look! Good gracious!
I hope that I didn't catch cold
Sitting out on the stairs with Will Stacy;
If Ma knew that, wouldn't she scold!

She says he's so fast—well, who isn't?—
Dear! where is Marie?—how it rains!—
I don't care; he's real nice and handsome.

And his talk sounds as if he'd some brains.

I do wonder what *is* the reason,
That good men are all like Joe Price,
So poky, and stiff, and conceited,
And fast ones are always so nice.—

Just see how Joe acted last evening!
He didn't come near me at all,
Because I danced twice with Will Stacy
That night at the Charity ball.

I didn't care two pins to do it;
But Joe said I mustn't,—and so—
I just did—he isn't my master,
Nor sha'n't be, I'd like him to know.

I don't think he looked at me even,
Though just to please him I wore green,—
And I'd saved him three elegant dances,—
I wouldn't have acted so mean.

The way he went on with Nell Hadley;
Dear me! just as if I would care!
I'd like to see those two get married,
They'd make a congenial pair!

I'm getting disgusted with parties;—
I think I shall stop going out;
What's the use of this fussing for people
I don't care the least bit about.

I *did* think that Joe had some sense once;
But, my, he's just like all the men!
And the way that I've gone on about him,—
Just see if I do it again!

Only wait till the next time I see him,
I'll pay him back; wont I be cool!
I've a good mind to drop him completely—
I'll—yes I will—go back to school.

The bell!—who can that be, I wonder!—
Let's see—I declare! why, it's Joe!—
How long they are keeping him waiting!
Good gracious! why don't the girl go!—

Yes—say I'll be down in a minute—
Quick, Marie, and do up my hair!—
Not that bow—the green one—Joe likes it—
How slow you are!—I'll pin it—there!

A ROMANCE OF THE SAW-DUST.

Suthin' to put in a story!
I couldn't think of a thing,
'N' it's nigh unto thirty year now
Since fust I went in the ring.
"The life excitin'?" Thunder!
"Variety," did you say?
You must have cur'us notions
'Bout circuses, anyway.
The things that look so risky
Aint nothin' to us but biz.
"Accidents"—falls and sich like?
Sometimes, in course, there is.
But it's only a slip, or a stumble,
Some feller laid out flat,
It don't take more'n a second;
There aint no story in that.
'N' like as not, the tumble
Don't do no harm at all:
There's one gal here—I tell yer,

She got an awful fall.
You know her—Ma'am'selle Ida—
She's Jimmy Barnet's wife,
The prettiest little woman
You ever see in your life.
They was lovers when they was young uns,
No more'n two hands high.
She nussed Jim through a fever once,
When the doctors swore he'd die.
I taught 'em both the motions;
She never know'd no fear,
And they've done the trapeze together
For more'n a couple o' year.
Last Summer we took on a Spaniard,
A mis'erable kind of cuss,
Spry feller—but awful tempered,
Always a-makin' a fuss.
He wanted to marry Ida—
His chance was pretty slim,
He did his best, but bless yer,
She'd never go back on Jim.
He acted up so foolish,
That Jim, one day, got riled
'N' guv him a reg'lar whalin';
That druv the Spaniard wild.
He talked like he was crazy,
'N' raved around, and swore
He'd kill 'em both; but Jim just laughed—
He'd heer'd such talk before.
One day, when we was showin'
In a little country town,
Jim mashed his hand with a hatchet,
Drivin' a tent stake down.
He couldn't work that night, nohow,
But the "trap" hed got to be done.
The Spaniard said he'd try it—
'N' they had to take him or none.
I knew Jim didn't like it,
'N' Ide looked scared and white—
"Look out for me, boys," she whispered,
"I'm goin' to fall to-night;"
Then she looked up with a shiver,
At the trapeze swingin' there,
A couple of bars and a rope or two
Forty feet up in the air.
But up she clumb—he arter—
Stood up, but how Ide shook,
Then the Spaniard yelled like a devil,
"Now look, Jim Barnet!—look!"—
With that he jumped 'n' gripped her;
She fought, but he broke her hold,
Grabbed at the rope, 'n' missed it—
Off of the bar they rolled,
Clinched, 'n' Ide a screamin';
Thud!—they struck the ground;
I turned all sick and dizzy,
'N' everything went round.
How still it were for a second!—
It seemed like an hour—'n' then
The women was all a screechin',
'N' the ring was full of men.
Poor Jim was stoopin' to lift her,
But flopped right down, 'n' said,
Sez he, "Her lips is movin'!
She's breathin'!—She isn't dead!"
For sure!—he'd fallen under;
It kinder broke her fall;
Except the scare and a broken arm,
She wasn't hurt at all.
"The Spaniard?" Oh, it killed him;
It broke his cussed neck.
But nobody cried their eyes out,
As near as I reckeleck.
She married Jim soon arter,
They're doin' the trapeze still;

So, yer see, as I was sayin',
These falls don't always kill.
'N' as for things excitin'
To put in a story,—well,
I'd really like to oblige yer,
But then there aint nothin' to tell.

PYROTECHNIC POLYGLOT.

(MADISON SQUARE, JULY 4.)

"Hey, Johnny McGinnis, where are yez?
I've got a place! Arrah, be quick!"
Whiz! Boom! "Hooray, there goes a rocket;
Hi, Johnny, look out for the shtick!"
"Confound it, sir! Those are my feet, sir!"
"Oh, pa, lift me up, I can't see."
"Come down out o' that, yez young blackguards!
Div yez want to be killin' the tree?"
"Hooray! look at that?" "Aint it bully!"
"It's stuck!" "No, it aint." "There she goes!"
"I wish that you'd speak to this man, Fred,
He's standing all over my toes."
"Take down that umbrella in front there!"
"My! aint we afraid of our hat!"
"Me heart's fairly broke wid yez shovin'—
Have done now—what would yez be at?"
"Jehiel, neow haint this jest orful!
I 'most wish I hedn't a come;
Such actions I never—one would think
Folks left their perliteness to hum."
"Look here, now, you schoost stop dose schovin'."
"By gar, den, get out from ze vay,
You stupide Dootschmans, villain cochon"—
"Kreuz!"—"Peste!"—"Donnerwetter!"—"Sac-r-re!"
"Oh, isn't that cross just too lovely!
So bright, why the light makes me wink!"
"Your eyes, dear, are"—"don't be a goose, Fred;
What do you suppose folks will think?"
Crash! Screech! "Och I'm kilt!"—"Fred, what is it?"
"Branch broken—small boy come to grief."
"Boo, hoo, hoo, hoo! I wants mine muzzer!"
"Look out there!" "Police!" "Hi, stop thief!"
"Well, father, I guess it's all over;
Just help Nelly down off the stool."

MORAL.

SUNG:—"Mellican piecee fire bully!"
CHING:—"Mellican man piecee fool."

FISHING.

"Harry, where have you been all morning?"
"Down at the pool in the meadow-brook."
"Fishing?" "Yes, but the trout were wary,
Couldn't induce them to take a hook."
"Why, look at your coat! You must have fallen,
Your back's just covered with leaves and moss."
How he laughs! Good-natured fellow!
Fisherman's luck makes most men cross.

"Nellie, the Wrights have called. Where were you?"
"Under the tree, by the meadow-brook
Reading, and oh, it was too lovely;
I never saw such a charming book."
The charming book must have pleased her, truly,
There's a happy light in her bright young eyes

And she hugs the cat with unusual fervor,
To staid old Tabby's intense surprise.

Reading? yes, but not from a novel.
Fishing! truly, but not with a rod.
The line is idle, the book neglected—
The water-grasses whisper and nod.
The fisherman bold and the earnest reader
Sit talking—of what? Perhaps the weather.
Perhaps—no matter—whate'er the subject,
It brings them remarkably close together.

It causes his words to be softly spoken,
With many a lingering pause between,
The while the sunbeams chase the shadows
Over the mosses, gray and green.
Blushes are needful for its discussion,
And soft, shy glances from downcast eyes,
In whose blue depths are lying hidden
Loving gladness, and sweet surprise.

Trinity Chapel is gay this evening,
Filled with beauty, and flowers, and light,
A captive fisherman stands at the altar,
With Nellie beside him all in white.

The ring is on, the vows are spoken,
And smiling friends, good fortune wishing,
Tell him his is the fairest prize
Ever brought from a morning's fishing.



"READING? YES, BUT NOT FROM A NOVEL;
FISHING! TRULY, BUT NOT WITH A ROD." —*Page 109.*

NOCTURNE.

Summer is over, and the leaves are falling,
Gold, fire-enamelled in the glowing sun;

The sobbing pinetop, the cicada calling
Chime men to vesper-musing, day is done.

The fresh, green sod, in dead, dry leaves is hidden;
They rustle very sadly in the breeze;
Some breathing from the past comes, all unbidden,
And in my heart stir withered memories.

Day fades away; the stars show in the azure,
Bright with the glow of eyes that know not tears,
Unchanged, unchangeable, like God's good pleasure,
They smile and reck not of the weary years.

Men tell us that the stars it knows are leaving
Our onward rolling globe, and in their place
New constellations rise—is death bereaving
The old earth, too, of each familiar face?

Our loved ones leave us; so we all grow fonder
Of their world than of ours; for here we seem
Alone in haunted houses, and we wonder
Which is the waking life, and which the dream.

AUTO-DA-FÉ

(HE EXPLAINS.)

Oh, just burning up some old papers,
They do make a good deal of smoke:
That's right, Dolly, open the window;
They'll blaze if you give them a poke.
I've got a lot more in the closet;
Just look at the dust! What a mess!
Why, read it, of course, if you want to,
It's only a letter, I guess.

(SHE READS.)

Just me, and my pipe, and the fire-light,
Whose mystical circles of red
Protect me alone with the shadows;
The smoke-wreaths engarland my head;
And the strains of a waltz, half forgotten,
The favorite waltz of the year,
Played softly by fairy musicians,
Chime sweetly and low on my ear.

The smoke-cloud floats thickly around me,
All perfumed and white, till it seems
A bride-veil magicians have woven
To honor the bride of my dreams.
Float on, dreamy waltz, through my fancies,
My thoughts in your harmony twine!
Draw near, phantom face, in your beauty,
Look deep, phantom eyes, into mine.

Sweet lips—crimson buds half unfolded—
Give breath to the exquisite voice,
That, waking the strands of my being
To melody, bids me rejoice.
Dream, soul, till the world's dream is ended!
Dream, heart, of your beautiful past!
For dreaming is better than weeping,
And all things but dreams at the last.

Change rules in the world of the waking—
Its laughter eye ends in a sigh;
Dreams only are changeless—immortal:
A love-dream alone cannot die.
Toil, fools! Sow your hopes in the furrows,
Rich harvest of failure you'll reap;
Life's riddle is read the most truly

By men who but talk in their sleep.

(HE REMONSTRATES.)

There, stop! That'll do—yes, I own it—
But, dear, I was young then, you know.
I wrote that before we were married;
Let's see—why, it's ten years ago!
You remember that night, at Drake's party,
When you flirted with Dick all the time?
I left in a state quite pathetic,
And went home to scribble that rhyme.

What a boy I was then with my dreaming,
And reading the riddle of life!
You gave a good guess at its meaning
The night you said "Yes," little wife.
One kiss for old times' sake, my Dolly—
That didn't seem much like a dream.
Holloa! something's wrong with the children!
Those young ones do nothing but scream.

AN AFTERTHOUGHT.

Vine leaves rustled, moonbeams shone,
Summer breezes softly sighed;
You and I were all alone
In a kingdom fair and wide
You, a Queen, in all your pride,
I, a vassal, by your side.

Fairy voices in the leaves
Ceaselessly were whispering:
"Tis the time to garner sheaves—
Let your heart its longing sing;
Place upon her hand a ring;
Then our Queen shall know her King."

E'en the moonbeams seemed to learn
Speech when they had kissed your face,
Passing fair—my lips did yearn
To be moonbeams for a space—
"Lo, 'tis fitting time and place!
Speak, and courage will find grace."

But the night wind murmured low,
Softly brushing back your hair,
"Look into her face, and know
That she is a jewel rare,
Worthy of a monarch's heir;
Who are you that you should dare!"

Hope died like a frost-touched flower;
But through all the coming years,
In that quiet evening hour,
When the flowers are all in tears,
When the heart hath hopes and fears,
When the day-world disappears.

If the vine leaves rustle low,
If the moon shine on the sea,
If the night wind softly blow,—
Dreaming of what may not be,—
Well I know that I shall see
Your sweet eyes look down on me.

REDUCTIO AD ABSURDUM.

I had come from the city early

That Saturday afternoon;
I sat with Beatrix under the trees
In the mossy orchard; the golden bees
Buzzed over clover-tops, pink and pearly;
I was at peace, and inclined to spoon.

We were stopping awhile with mother,
At the quiet country place
Where first we'd met, one blossomy May,
And fallen in love—so the dreamy day
Brought to my memory many another
In the happy time when I won her grace.

Days in the bright Spring weather,
When the twisted, rough old tree
Showered down apple-blooms, dainty and sweet,
That swung in her hair, and blushed at her feet;
Sweet was her face as we lingered together,
And dainty the kisses my love gave me.

"Dear love, are you recalling
The old days, too?" I said.
Her sweet eyes filled, and with tender grace
She turned and rested her blushing face
Against my shoulder; a sunbeam falling
Through the leaves above us crowned her head.

And so I held her, trusting
That none was by to see;
A sad mistake—for low, but clear,
This feminine comment reached my ear:
"Married for ages—it's just disgusting—
Such actions—and, Fred, they've got our tree!"

THE MOTHERS OF THE SIRENS.

The débutantes are in force to-night,
Sweet as their roses, pure as truth;
Dreams of beauty in clouds of tulle;
Blushing, fair in their guileless youth.
Flashing bright glances carelessly—
Carelessly, think you! Wait and see
How their sweetest smile is kept for him
Whom "mother" considers a good *parti*.

For the matrons watch and guard them well—
Little for youth or love care they;
The man they seek is the man with gold,
Though his heart be black, and his hair be gray.
"Nellie, how *could* you treat *him* so!
You know very well he is Goldmore's heir,"
"Jennie, look modest! Glance down and blush,—
Here comes papa with young Millionaire."

On a cold, gray rock, in Grecian seas,
The sirens sit, and *their* glamour try—
Warm white bosoms press harps of gold,
The while Ulysses' ship sails by.
Fair are the forms the sailors see,
Sweet are the songs the sailors hear
And—cool and wary, shrewd and old,
The sirens' mothers are watching near,

Whispering counsel—"Fling back your hair,
It hides your shoulder." "Don't sing so fast!"
"Darling, *don't* look at that fair young man,
Try that old fellow there by the mast,
His arms are jewelled"—let it go!
Too bitter all this for an idle rhyme;
But sirens are kin of the gods, be sure,
And change but little with lapse of time.



"THE DÉBUTANTES ARE IN FORCE TO-NIGHT,
SWEET AS THEIR ROSES, PURE AS TRUTH." — *Page 122.*

PER ASPERA AD ASTRA.

A canvas-back duck, rarely roasted, between us,
A bottle of Chambertin, worthy of praise—
Less noble a wine at our *age* would bemean us—
A salad of celery *en mayonnaise*,
With the oysters we've eaten, fresh, plump, and delicious,
Naught left of them now but a dream and the shells;
No better *souper* e'en Lucullus could wish us—
Why, even our waiter regards us as swells.

Your dress is a marvel, your jewels show finely,
Your friends in the circle all envied your box;
You say Lilli Lehman sang quite too divinely—
I know I can't lose on that last deal in stocks.
Without waits our footman to call for our carriage—
Gad, how he must hate us, out there in the cold!—
We rode in a hack on the day of our marriage,
Number two forty-six—I was rolling in gold,

For I'd quite fifty dollars; and don't you remember
We drove down to Taylor's, a long cherished dream:
How grandly I ordered—just think, in December!—
Some cake, and two plates of vanilla ice-cream.
And how we enjoyed it! Your glance was the proudest
Among the proud beauties, your face the most fair;
I'm rather afraid, too, your laugh was the loudest;
I know we shocked every one—we didn't care.

Now we'd care a great deal—with two sons at college,
And daughters just out, whose sneers make you wince,
We've tasted the fruit of Society's knowledge—
I don't think we've quite enjoyed anything since.
All through, dear? Now, *don't* wipe your mouth with the doily!
They're really not careful at all with their wine;

It wasn't half warmed—the salad was oily—
And I don't think the duck was remarkably fine.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE.

Oh! he was a student of mystic lore;
And she was a soulful girl
All nerves and mind, of the cultured kind
The paragon, pride, and pearl.
They loved with a neo-Concordic love,
Woofed weirdly with wistful woe.
They sat in a glen, remote from men,
Their converse was high and low.
"What marvellous words of marvellous love,
Speak marvellous souls like these?"
I drew me nigh till their faintest sigh
Was heard with the greatest ease.
"Oo's 'ittle white lammy is 'oo?" breathed he;
"Oors. 'Oo's lovey-dovey is 'oo?"
"Oors! Oors! Would 'oo k'y if dovey should die?"
"No'p!—tause 'ittle lammy'd die too."
How truthful we poets! The "language of Love"
Is a phrase we employ full oft;
But whenever we do, we prefix thereto,
You've noticed, the adjective "soft."

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