



THE WEST WINTER.

There's a touch of rose at the mountain line  
There's a touch of rose, sweetheart,  
And a sweep of gold where the purple mists  
Have rolled for a space apart.

There's a flight of birds on the frosted lawn,  
There's a flight of snow birds, sweet,  
With their little, tremulous, fluttering wings,  
And their twinkling, glancing feet.

There's a breath of winter across the air,  
The faintest of breaths, my own,  
But what care we for the cold and snow,  
Or the west wind's lonely moan?

There's a softer touch of rose on your throat,  
On cheek and on brow so fair,  
And your ear burns warm as a crimson shell  
In the soft dusk of your hair.

Your feet are lighter than snow birds' are,  
And your heart is the sun's own gold,  
And your soul is whiter than snow flowers are,  
Whiter, but never so cold.

She had dragged a plow through the hot field the whole forenoon, and she now stood resting a few moments while her master refreshed himself at the cool spring beneath the maples. A beautiful, silken-coated thoroughbred came prancing down the adjoining pasture, and paused to look at her with cool, inquisitive eyes. There was only a fence between them—only a fence.

"Why, what is that dreadful thing tied to you?" asked the thoroughbred, in seeming amazement.

"Oh, that," said the old plow mare, wearily, "that is a plow. I drag it behind me from sunrise until sunset, and I am so tired when night comes that I stumble in every step, and groan when I lie down in the stable. Now, you," she added, wistfully, "you have nothing to do but look beautiful and enjoy yourself. How happy you must be!"

"Why, now, when you speak of it," replied the thoroughbred, thoughtfully, "I can not say that I am happier, really, than you, although you do have to work so hard. You see I have a reputation for beauty, for form, for carriage, for style, and most of all, for winning races; and I tell you what"—here she sighed heavily—"it is no easy matter to keep up such a reputation. I must be always on my guard and observant of appearances, for one false step, one lost race, one look of weariness, one faintest blemish of my beauty, would lose me everything. And oh!" she added, with earnestness and passion, "there is nothing on earth so sad as for one who has been a leader to have to fall back and see another take her place! So I have to conceal all real feeling, and nothing wears out one's heart and strength like that. You," she continued gently, "you work hard, and all the world knows it and pities you. There is always a sigh for the workers, you know, but who ever heard of anyone pitying a thoroughbred?"—and she laughed rather bitterly at the mere suggestion. "Besides," she continued, "one who is a faithful worker need never be afraid for the future; but for me—why, what would become of me if I lost a few races, or if I should have a touch of spavin and lose my elegant step? No one would want me; I would be turned out to die. Now, there comes my trainer, and I shall have to go. And although my station does not permit of my talking with plow horses, somehow it has done me good to say a few words to you who look so tired and worn out. Good-bye! And remember that this world is not a path of roses for any one."

"Now, who would have guessed," thought the old plow mare, as she plodded homeward that night, "that a lovely thoroughbred could have anything to worry her? Seems to me it would make work easier for us plow horses if they'd say a kind word like that to us oftener, and not pretend to be so much happier than we!"

Then she rubbed her nose contentedly against her master's arm; and her supper seemed sweeter that night than it had seemed for a long time.

I am almost sure that I have never preached a temperance sermon; but I am now going to give you one, so brief that you will not become weary, and so truthful that you will not forget it. We will take it for granted that you are a woman, that you do not believe in "drinking occasionally," and that you love some man whose whole soul is yours, and who yet tries to reason you out of your "ideas" on this subject because he considers them peculiar and—hum—er—exaggerated. I believe that there is only one per-

son in the world who can thoroughly reform a man, through and through, and that is the woman he loves. You can not scare a man into anything, you can not drive him, nor can you weep him into your way of thinking. But if he has habits of which you do not approve, you certainly can say to him: "When you have lived the life that pleases me for one year"—two years, by-the-by, is better—"then, and not before, you may come to me and I will let you love me. I will wait faithfully, but until then you may not come near me." In this way, I promise you that you will find out whom he loves best—himself or you; and it is better to find it out before you marry him than afterward. You say, "Why, now, you can not expect to find a perfect man, can you?" And I reply, with lively emphasis—for the mere suggestion makes one rather aghast—no, my dear, no; of all things, that you certainly can not expect. But you can demand with reason that, whatever his past life has been, if he desires the keeping of a good woman's heart now, he shall hereafter lead as clean a life as your own. You can not reasonably expect him to be faultless; but you can with a clear conscience demand that he be viceless—I never heard the word before, but it is a good one. Be strong. When clinging to your own convictions of right causes you most unhappiness, be sure that you are in the right. Only the weak yield to escape mental suffering. And it may be something, dear, when you stand trembling at the gate of death to be able to say: "Father: I had no talents; but through my love, my tenderness, my never-failing strength and patience, and my prayers, one man has led a better, truer life than he would have led without me."

The sun lay at the mountain line, and looking across to the land over the glorious sea, he set every window to flaming with gold, while every red chimney looked like a pillar of flame. I stood in the full glory of the sunset, and I said: "Is there a soul so dead that it would not be glad in such beauty? Is there a heart so dumb that it would not sing? An ear so deaf that it would not hear? An eye so blind that it would not see? Is there within reach of that beautiful sun a care so heavy, a sorrow so crushing, a sin so black, that it would not be lightened for a moment if it turned its sad eyes westward?" I turned, and lo! I heard the clanking of chains. And I saw three men, in charge of their keeper, go slouching by to their prison, after a day's hard toil in the streets. The sun set the shovels on their shoulders a gleam, and he made every link of their chain a link of gold, and he cast cheerful flames in the walls of their jail—but they saw not, heard not, felt not. The iron doors opened and closed behind them, and they cared not for the gold that flickered upon them, for they knew that the iron was underneath. And I thought: "Ah! care may be lifted, and sorrow healed; but sin chains us down and makes us deaf and dumb and blind forever."

The dream of most men's lives is to have a wife and a home; but how many of them make personal sacrifices for the happiness of those wives, and how many of them help to make of those homes anything higher or better than places in which to eat and to sleep? I heard a man say the other day to the woman who loved him when she remonstrated with him for being away from home: "That is as it should be, my dear. Man's place is out in the world; it is where he belongs. And when I come home, be it day or night, I want to find my little wife here—here where she belongs." Whereupon the little wife, not being one of the too credulous ones, laughed irreverently. "Home is the place for a wife," she said, nodding her pretty head, sagely; "and it is the place in which a husband should spend his leisure time."

There come times in the life of each of us when some one we cared for and trusted hurts us deeply, deals us a blow that blinds for a moment—so keen and unexpected and cruel it is—to sense and reason and generosity. It may be that the power of retaliation is ours; and in the first passionate smarting of that hurt, we may reach out an eager, cruel hand to return blow for blow. But wait, I tell you there will be more pleasure to you in the simple blue of the sky and the peaceful chanting of the sea, if you let each hurt, each unkind word, pass by in grieved silence than if you bitterly resent. Dear heart—wait.

How many, many hearts beat faster in hushed pity while the word flashed over the world that Emma Abbott was dying! And later, even eyes that had never seen her grew dim, and hearts that had never loved her gave a sigh to one who was not only a sweet singer but a lovable woman as well!

To live to understand that all your life teaching has been wrong, and to know that it is too late to unlearn the lesson—is there anything sadder than that?

Imaginary troubles are the hardest ones to bear.