FACT AND FANCY
BY ELLA HIGGINSON.

BE CAREFUL.

Be careful, dear, lest you sigh too oft,
Or gather your brows in a frown;
For, before you know, the wrinkles will grow,
And every one curve straight down.

Be careful, dear, lest you weep too much,
Or yield to each foolish whim;
Though your eyes are clear, every fretful tear
Will help to make them grow dim.

Be careful, dear, lest your idle feet
Wander just one inch astray;
They may never turn back to the one true track—
It's so easy to lose your way.

Some dance until their feet refuse to longer "twinkle," and then they watch the other dancers and say, "What fools these mortals be!"

When you say that you have "the blues," either you are trying to imagine you have a trouble, else you have a trouble which you do not care to mention.

The famous poem by General Lytle, beginning "I am dying, Egypt, dying," was written one night when the author of it was under the influence of liquor. But, pray, my young readers, do not think such a condition is all that is necessary to inspire a poem that is destined to live.

Some men say: "I want a wife. I am getting along in years, so I want a young wife; I can not cook, but I love good food, so I want a wife who can cook; I am fond of spending my own money myself, so I want a wife who will cheerfully submit to my doling out a dollar at a time to her, explaining what she wishes to spend it for; I like to run about and have a great time generally in places where women can not go, so I want a wife who will stay at home and be a model housekeeper; as I have very strong and correct opinions upon all subjects, I want a wife who either has no opinions or who, if she has, will early learn that they are not to be compared to mine; most of all, as I have not been a virtuous man, I want an exceptionally virtuous woman for a wife." He usually wins just the kind of woman he is looking for; and as she retains her youth, cooks, spends a dollar as carefully as he would spend twenty, cheerfully keeps house and asks no questions, lets her opinions flee at approach of his own, and is duly virtuous, he entertains for her a feeling which he is pleased to call love.

Some women say: "I must get married, I suppose. I am poor, and poverty is abominable, so I want a rich husband; I am young, and must have a gay life, so I want a husband who will let me do as I like and not be jealous—perhaps an old one would be best; I love jewels, fine gowns, carriages, servants, so I want a husband who will give me all these; I like to sleep late, so I want a husband who will humor me and breakfast down town; I like to flirt, so I want a husband who is at his club a good deal and who asks no questions." She usually finds the husband she seeks, and as long as he gives her jewels, carriages, servants and plenty of money, humors her whims, smiles at her caprices, stays down town a good deal and asks no questions, and makes it a part of his religion to believe that her flirtations are harmless, she calls him the best of husbands and herself the "luckiest" of wives. "Are such marriages failures?" Why, how can you ask? Does not the man in the one case, and the woman in the other, have all that he and she desired? "But the *other* man and the *other* woman?" Dear me! How you weary me with so many questions! How am I to know what they think about marriage? We ask only successful people for their experience, so I didn't think it worth while to ask them.

It was midnight. Outside, there was a distant murmur of frogs, and the white rose bush brushed back and forth against the window. These were the only noises, and they were lullabies of themselves. There was a sweet fragrance of early spring heavy on the languorous air. The moonlight trembled in a broad stream across his bed, and he lay with wide open eyes—not asleep, but dreaming. Presently some one came quite softly and stood beside him. He noticed that she was young and very beautiful. Her raiment was of wild-rose petals, that trembled even when she was still; about her waist was a zone of violets, deep blue and softer than velvet, and a cream azalea was set, like a petaled star, in the center of her white brow; her hair, finer than spun gold and more golden, rippled away from it and fell to her waist, clinging there. In her hands was one pure lily, white as snow in the sunlight, white as the morning mist ere the sun touches it. She reached her hands—still holding the lily—to him, and looked into his eyes, smiling, and said, "Come with me." But he trembled and shrank before that clear look, unworthy and ashamed; and he covered his eyes and would neither see nor hear; so, presently, she stole away, gently, as she had come. And when he turned his head, lo! he found a crimson poppy lying upon his pillow, and he seemed, all in a moment, to realize that it had always been there although it had never before been visible, and he slept not that night. On the following midnight she came again; the azalea was still shining upon her brow and the lily lay in her hands. And she looked with infinite tenderness into his eyes, and said, "Come with me." But he covered his face again, moaning. "I am not worthy," he said; and when he dared to look again he saw that she was still standing there. Her face had grown white as the lily, which was now falling, unnoticed, from her hand; and her eyes, very sad—whereas before they had been so happy—were fixed upon the red poppy upon his pillow, "I am not worthy," he murmured again, unable to bear that look. "No," she said, stooping to pick up

the lily; "you are not," and she turned away, grieving. He sprang to her then and plead, "Stay! Until you came I did not know that red flower was there, and even then I did not hide it from you." But she drew her raiment from his clasp, gently, and, without looking, went from him. And he hated the crimson poppy, and cursed it, but still it lay there; and again he slept not. Once more, on the following midnight, she came. Still shone the azalea upon her brow, and still lay the lily in her hands. She was smiling, and her eyes were happy again—happy and trustful and tender; it seemed to him there was a golden radiance all about her. And once more he was afraid. But she reached out her hands to him, and said, "Come with me." And he arose and went to her, trembling. She looked, then, at the red poppy, without shrinking, and put her hand upon it; and, lo! whereas he had been unable to tear it from his pillow, it yielded readily to her touch, and she cast it upon the floor and pressed her foot upon it, and crushed it until only a faint, crimson stain remained. "One can not crush out the stain," she said, with an instant's regret; then she smiled resolutely, and turned her face from it, and not once again did she allow her eyes to turn back to it. With ineffable tenderness and an expression of purest, noblest passion, she went to him and laid the lily against his lips, and her own sweet lips beside it. "Henceforth," she whispered, very low—not another word; but he understood. And they passed out together; and, lo! he found that it was dawn. Wild birds were laving in the blue river that fled past, laughing, and a primrose sky bent above. And his heart swelled, glad and free, for he knew now that it had only seemed to be midnight before because she had not walked with him.