

THE OLD MILL.

Here from the brow of the hill I look,
Through a lattice of boughs and leaves,
On the old mill with its gambrel roof,
And the mill race, and the mill race,
I hear the chatter that jars its walls,
And the rushing water's sound,
And I see the black foam rise and fall,
As the wheel goes slowly round.

I rode there often when I was young,
With my gun on the horse before,
And I walked with Nellie the miller's girl,
And I walked with Nellie the miller's girl,
And I walked with Nellie the miller's girl,
And I walked with Nellie the miller's girl,
And I walked with Nellie the miller's girl,
And I walked with Nellie the miller's girl.

'Tis twenty years since last I stood
On the spot where I stand to-day,
And Nellie is dead, and the miller is dead,
And the mill and I are dead,
But both, till we fall into ruin and wreck,
To our fortune of fall are bound,
And the man goes, and the stream flows,
And the wheel moves slowly round.

THAT LITTLE FRIGHT.

"For my part," said Harry Sinton, "I'm not particular; a good little heart, fair sense and a sweet temper; after that 'hair' she's got, I don't care for anything else. Not that I am afraid of beauty—I like a pretty girl as well as anyone—but I don't insist on it as something I am entitled to."

The elegant Bert Dean smiled a smile of contempt.
"My good fellow," said he, "your powers of comparison must be very limited if you propose exchanging your thousand bachelor privileges for such a trifling consideration."

"Well, what do you want? Let us hear."

"I don't know that I want anything; I am very well contented as I am."

"But what would induce you to become a Benedict?"

"Let me see; I don't wish to be unreasonable. Beauty is, of course, the first requisite, but I don't look at an heiress without it. Mere beauty, however, is a very slight matter. I must not be afraid of my wife's opening lips. Of course she must sing, speak several languages. Given all these, and a suitable income, I am ready to give up my thousand a year and I might think of it then."

"What, nothing more?" asked the other, ironically, "I am afraid you go too cheap."

"Bert Dean," said Harry, solemnly, "you are a conceited fool! A good looking one, I admit, and not originally destitute of brains; but eaten up, devoured by inordinate vanity, and I firmly expect to see you knocked down, some day, to a girl with red ringlets."

Bert Dean shrugged his shoulders.

"May I expect me early," he said, and retired to his dressing room.

He emerged from it an hour or so later, in the most scrupulously exquisite condition. He had some excuse for making extravagant demands about a wife. His Cousin May called him when all things were considered, the first young man in society, and was casting her eyes around for a suitable match for him. When he entered her well-lighted rooms, they were already quite full. He made a tour of the apartments, bestowing a little languid notice on two or three favored ones, and presently subsided into a chair with Mrs. Miller. This lady was neither very young nor particularly pretty, but he liked to talk to her, and so he remained at her side.

"Mr. Dean," she said, when half an hour or more had elapsed, "I am afraid the young ladies will hardly forgive me for absorbing your attention so long. See—there is a young lady quite alone; pray go and make yourself charming."

Bert turned his head.

"What?" he exclaimed, "That little fright? Mrs. Miller, do be merciful!"

But Mrs. Miller did not smile.

"I beg your pardon," he said, politely, "it was very wrong to speak as I did."

"It was indeed. I am afraid she heard you, too."

"That is not possible!" he said, with real mortification.

Mrs. Miller relented at the sight of his vexed countenance.

"The only statement you can offer," she said, "is to seek an introduction and make yourself as agreeable as you can. Perhaps she will forgive you, or think she did not hear aright."

"Must I? Will you pardon me on no other terms?"

"Certainly not. When I see the young lady smiling upon you she will be restored to my esteem, and not till then."

"Orrall! I am obedient." And he went in search of an introduction.

Mr. Sinton glanced at the clock at hand, and opened his eyes slightly when he learned his friend's desire.

"Know her?" he said. "Of course I do! Prophesied concerning her before we came, red ringlets and all. Didn't think, though, that your fate would be down on you so soon."

"Nonsense! Sinton, pray be serious."

"Because it is such a serious matter with you? Very thing I was saying; how unreasonable you are! But come on."

And Miss Pierce, who had been sitting presently exchanging opinions on the staple party-going topics.

To do Bert justice, he sincerely regretted his thoughtless exclamation. He was ungentlemanly, he knew, and he had, besides, so great a horror of female ugliness as to regard the subject with a painful compassion. The dread that Miss Pierce had overheard his remark gave him just that sting of self reproach that one would feel had he alluded to the infirmity of a deformed person in his presence. He determined to be so agreeable and deferential that she should imagine that her ears had deceived her.

Conversation progressed very pleasantly between the two.

"Nice girl to talk to," Mr. Dean decided. "Sweet voice, no giggle, no affectation."

Just as he made this reflection, he encountered the eyes of Harry Sinton, and fancied he saw them in satirical amusement. Awakened by the glance to the subject of mirth, he sought the side of an acknowledged belle, and saw no more of Irene Pierce until dancing began.

She was standing opposite him, in a set where the fashionable Miss Bentley was seated a very elegant personage. She wore a Paris dress, and the costliest ornaments of any one in the room. Bert Dean's glance rested with satisfaction on Irene Pierce. Her face, undeniably pretty, her dress was a stranger to Paris; and had, perhaps, been made at home, but it was accompanied by a smooth, white neck and a pair of rounded arms. As Bert made these comments, and listened dissatisfied to his companion's

common-place remarks, he decided to engage his *vis-a-vis* for the next set. He found himself repaid for his daring, for Irene Pierce could speak of her own sex without malice. Her conversation was intelligent, which assured him she was familiar with the best books, and her choice language pleased him. All this he discovered in the pauses of the dance, and she pleased him so well that he lingered at her side rather longer than mere politeness demanded when the set was over. On his homeward way, in company with his friend Sinton, he had encountered some railway. He announced himself to have found Miss Pierce the most agreeable girl he had found in a long time, truly lady-like and intelligent.

"You can't deny that her hair is red," laughed Harry.

"Certainly not; but it was tastefully arranged."

CHAPTER II.

The next day, in the afternoon, found Bert Dean standing on the steps of the house, which belonged to Miss Pierce's father. He did not tell his friend that he had asked permission to call, but he did.

He found Mrs. Pierce and her daughter sitting together in the back parlor, with their work. Irene was holding a saucer for her little sister, and her mother employed on something more practical. She had not been well schooled, as the idea that she was to leave the room did not occur to her. Irene did not look as plain as she had done last night, as her animated conversation dazzled him. There was an affectionate confidence between mother and daughter that he had not met in the best society, and he found it, or something else, so pleasant that he largely overcame the limits of a fashionable call.

"I had better not call again," he thought as he went home; "but what a delightful companion she would be!"

A week or two went by, and Bert adhered to his new resolution of not calling, but was unable to prevent himself from watching for her.

"May," he asked carelessly of his cousin one evening, "who are these Pierces?"

"Old friends of mine," she answered; "excellent, substantial people; but why do you ask?"

"I have met them here, and that is the last time I have heard of them," he said.

"Mrs. Pierce thinks home is the best place for girls, so she does not go out much."

If Irene Pierce went out so little, there was scarcely a chance that they should meet except at her own house. And did he really care enough about the acquaintance as it was valuable enough—for him to take trouble to find it?

Probably these questions were answered in the affirmative, as the next day brought him to Miss Pierce's door. Nor was his first impression of her, for her neighbors opposite had the privilege of seeing him. Again and again he came, but as time was going on, he grew stronger and more diffident. Drawn day by day by Irene's side, happy nowhere else, he could affirm even to himself that she was more than a friend to him. There had been a time that, to declare himself a lover, involved some sacrifices on his part; it seemed strange now that he should be anxious to make such sacrifice, yet doubt, with anxiety whether Irene would care to accept him.

Some weeks of suspense went by, and he could wait no longer. One bright day, when favoring fate had left them a little while alone, he spoke—not very eloquently, but still sufficiently coherently to make his meaning plain.

"I have come here, and refused him. At this he gave a little more self possessed, and begged to know her reasons."

She declined to state them. He persisted; was there a previous attachment. She blushed more vividly, and said no such thing existed.

"Then he has not some hope for him, then? Might not her resolution be overcome? Might not these reasons cease to exist?"

Oh, no! Her resolution was unalterable.

Then he urged an explanation, and insisted on it as his right. His suit was pushed with ardor, and Irene's agitation proved that she was not insensible. But with a great effort she commanded her self.

"I should be most unjust to you and to myself," said she, "could I allow a transient feeling to set aside my judgment."

"Transient! O Irene!"

But she silenced him.

"Could I allow myself to give you a wife whom everybody—yes, most of all—must regard as disagreeable?"

She hesitated a moment.

"What do you mean?" cried Bert, in amazement.

"You cannot have forgotten our first meeting," she said, more composedly; "do not oblige me to repeat your words that evening."

"The room swam around Bert Dean. 'That little fright!' Oh! the sacrilege, the horror, of that speech! Could he have made it—and about that angel? Overwhelmed with mortification, he sought to explain, to say how entirely his feelings were altered."

"Enough, sir," said Miss Pierce, with dignity. "Spare yourself the trouble of apologizing; it is quite unnecessary, and altogether useless." And so she left him.

Surely this was an awkward situation for a lover, particularly for Bert, who had contemplated arranging matrimonial affairs in such a quiet, well-bred way. He went home in despair. Could any woman—even Irene, gentlest, dearest of women—forgive such an insult to her person? If she could only see his heart, and know how long he had ceased to regard her as plain, in how many ways she was even beautiful to him! But to explain this to her—it was impossible! He could never obtain her pardon. And her love? That was too far and dear to dream of.

Private life has its Napoleons, however. They rout impossibilities, and prove them to be the merest shams. A week from this dreadful day, Bert was sitting very much at home—in the same parlor whence he had withdrawn so ignominiously, and Irene looked at him in a way that clearly showed that she had relinquished her "resolution and sacrifice her judgment."

A Vermont hunter refrained from firing at six rabbits and two foxes that he saw, because he wanted to have his gun all ready when that deer, which his dogs were running, came up, and when the animal did appear, and proved to be a heifer from a neighboring pasture, he sprained his knee kicking the bound that ran it.

The Oil City Derrick very truthfully remarks that many a young girl's life has been wrecked on the waves of her handkerchief.

TRIED AND TRUE.

In the midst of a pleasant conversation with his hostess, Harold Arleigh abruptly paused, a sudden flash on his face, a strange, startled look in his hand-some dark eyes.

What he had been about to say he never knew; of his ungraciousness he was not conscious until he saw Mrs. Goldsby's glance of politely surprised inquiry.

"Pardon me," he said, turning toward her with a winning and apologetic smile.

"I saw a lady among your guests just now so like a dear friend I knew and lost long ago, that the resemblance quite excited me."

"You mean the young lady in white silk and opal ornaments, with yellow curly hair and cheeks like peach-blossoms. She is very beautiful—there is none like her. She is Ermengarde Burroughs, a dear friend, who is staying with me for a few weeks. Shall I introduce you?" returned the lady.

"If you wish—if you will be so kind as to honor me," faltered the young man, visibly embarrassed.

His hostess gave him one keen but covert look.

"Ermengarde has made another conquest," she thought. "If I dared I should warn him. I should tell him that this fair woman, with her alluring, smiling eyes, her sweet voice and her exquisite grace, has no heart to be won."

Five minutes later her two friends were whirling through a waltz together, and she wondered somewhat why Harold seemed so happy and content.

"One would think they were lovers who quarreled," was her mental criticism.

She was not wrong, for years before these two had loved each other dearly. They had been betrothed, and the marriage day fixed, when the trial came that parted them. Harold Arleigh suddenly found himself fatherless and utterly penniless; but illness and luxury had not spoiled his high and noble spirit. He could cheerfully accept years of toil and study and struggling, but he felt that he could not happily and conscientiously live his wealthy Ermengarde until he might regain his worldly equality with her.

"The world says unpleasant things of poor men who marry rich women," he had told her.

"What should we care for what the world has said or may say?" the girl returned impatiently. "All I have belongs to you, Harold. Do not leave me."

Even in that trying moment, with her dear hands clinging on his arm, her pleading eyes upon him, he never wavered.

"I must, my darling," he had answered her firmly, though his heart was heavy with regret and pain. "And remember, though I leave you free, I shall remain loyal to you in heart and deed as long as I can ever make my wife."

"I am not selfish enough to ask you to wait for me for years, my Ermengarde."

What the girl replied she could never distinctly remember, but she knew her words were cruelly reproachful, and she was half mad with the agony of losing him for even a few brief years.

And he left her with a look on his white, beloved face which would never forget until her dying day.

She felt that he had wronged her generations, affected her pride, and left her with pitiless indifference to be scorned and mocked as a bride deserted by her bridegroom. She had heard of sweethearts who had waited for lovers who had never come; of women who had waited the best years of their lives upon lovers that were false; and her whole soul cried out in bitter, unforgiving anger against him. Neither pardon nor trust would she give him. And yet she accepted the freedom he had given her with that sort of dejection that never time nor anguish nor humiliation, nor inhuman cruelty even, can ever lessen.

And that night at Mrs. Goldsby's soiree they had met again—met after long years as strangers.

And during those years Harold Arleigh had won that for which he had toiled so faithfully. He had won an honorable position among the most honorable men; he was esteemed as one of the most brilliant members of the legal fraternity; he was a man of great social distinction, and he was a man of great social distinction.

But for him the wide world held only one woman, sweet and dear, and she, it seemed, was no longer attainable.

Is this the Ermengarde I have loved all my life? he asked himself, as he gazed upon her fair, passionate face; the Ermengarde in whose affection and faithfulness I trusted despite her unreasonable anger against me?

And he sighed heavily as he led her to a seat after the waltz was over.

"I did not think to meet you here," he faltered, as the gay groups swept by, leaving them alone.

"We meet many people unexpectedly," Mr. Arleigh, she answered in a cold, serene voice.

Her cool tranquility almost maddened him. The years that had passed seemed to him but the dreary dream of an hour, and the sorrowful parting but of yesterday.

He bent over her until his hot breath burned her cheek.

"Ermengarde," he whispered in hoarse, agitated tones, "are you changed? Have you really forgotten, or do you quite ignore what we were once to each other? I have been faithful. I have made myself worthy to ask you to be my wife. Give me to know you, Ermengarde, one word to send me from you again, or to keep me by your side for the remainder of our lives."

Her stony calmness was all gone now. She trembled perceptibly and arose before him pale as death.

Her lips moved with a little gasp, but what she meant to say she did not utter, for at that moment a gentleman came to her side, and with a word of apology to Harold claimed her for the next dance.

And just then his hostess touched his arm with her fan.

"My husband is asking for you, Mr. Arleigh," she said, adding lightly, "Did you not find my dear Ermengarde charming? She is a lovely creature. Just the least bit of a coquette, perhaps. I believe she is engaged to the gentleman who is dancing the German waltz."

Harold Arleigh despised gossip and regarded all rumors as unreliable, but in his present mood of suspense the words of his hostess grieved him as the most bitter proven truth could do.

Ermengarde had pledged herself to another, and this was the end of his dreams and hopes. All that was left for him to do was to bravely bear his disappointment. But how could he meet her day after day and look upon her fair, dear face, listen to her sweet, beloved voice, and not betray the pain of his cruel loss?

Many things puzzled Harold during the weeks that followed. Often he thought of her regarding him with a singularly thoughtful, half resentful look in her earnest blue eyes. Once, coming in the unlighted parlor at twilight, he saw her sitting before the piano, her golden head bowed low, her lovely form shaking with silent sobs. And once, when they were quite alone, she spoke kindly and gently of the evening they met.

"You asked me a question that night," she said, with a quiet dignity and delicate reluctance of manner, "it was scarcely my fault that it was not answered then."

"I know what you would have said, Miss Burroughs," he returned, gravely; "I am sorry for having so startled and offended you. I was wrong and inconsiderate, and I can only acknowledge my fault and ask pardon for it."

She regarded him for a minute with a wonder, and then turned away haughtily, her fair face scarlet, and an unmistakable expression of scorn and resentment in her blue beautiful eyes.

"I fear I am hopelessly stupid," resumed Arleigh, in pained, perplexed tones. "I am sure I have displeased you again, but I cannot conjecture how. O Ermengarde, will you never understand that I would not willingly give you one moment of disquiet?"

She regarded him for a minute with a wonder, and then turned away haughtily, her fair face scarlet, and an unmistakable expression of scorn and resentment in her blue beautiful eyes.

"I do not profess to understand you at all," she said, with a quiet dignity and delicate reluctance of manner, "it was scarcely my fault that it was not answered then."

"She denies me even her friendship," he thought sorrowfully.

A long time after she had gone he stood by the parlor window, gazing out into the night—a black, dreary night, with the rain dashing on the roof in sheets, and the wild wind roaring up from the river.

"Just the evening for a cosy chat before a comfortable fire," observed Mrs. Goldsby, coming in, and after ringing for lights, drawing the heavy curtains aside, and lighting the gas.

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