A Runaway.

Two trotters, small and restless, cantered off
one summer day,
And with them, all unwittingly, they took the
baby May;
O'er meads and meadows fresh and green, with
morning dews yet damp,
They galloped far away from town, these
ponies Trot and Tramp.

As on they sped new sights and sounds did all
their thoughts beguile,
Till weary quite, said Trot to Tramp, "Let's
stop and rest a while;"
And dropping down on velvet sward they in
their harness lay,
Nor ever gave a thought to her whom they
had borne away.

But baby May was well content, and midst the
grasses sat
And gathered starry daisies white, with
dimpled fingers fat,
And curls of dandelion stems she in her
tresses hung,
And to the winds the golden wealth of blos-
soms gaily flung.

Refreshed and rested, Trot and Tramp once
more went on their way,
And with them, still bedecked with flowers,
was merry baby May;
With spirits high, they galloped on by rill and
running brook,
And in and out, by crooked paths, their wind-
ing way they took.

But ere the noontide hour had come, said
Trot, in doleful mood,
"I would I could but lay me down, 'tis naught
I care for food."
Said Tramp to Trot, "In all my life I've ne'er
so weary been;
Perhaps to do as we have done is something of
a sin!"

Meanwhile reigned fear and anxious thought
o'er loss of baby May,
For none could guess the manner strange in
which she went away,
Nor ever dreamed that ponies small, like tiny
Tramp and Trot,
Could bear away a little girl to such a far-off
spot.

* * * * * *

But while the sun was yet on high, unharmed
in wooded glade,
Was found asleep by mossy log, a dainty
little maid,
And dangling from her shapely head, with
hair of golden sheen,
Were dahlias white, and wilted curls of dande-
lion green,
And with no room at all to spare (the oddest
place to choose)
Were Trot and Tramp, all safe and sound, with-
in the maiden's shoes.

—Good Housekeeping.

ALL DOUBTS DISPELLED.

"Come to me, Robert, if you ever loved me in the old days, when we were so happy together in the quiet home that I shall never see again! Ah, if I had never left it—or you! You loved me best, after all; but, then I did not believe it!

"And the child, Robert. He bears your name, and he has your eyes, your smile! For the sake of the child, at least, come to me, for I am dying, and I must leave him in your care.

"Your unhappy
"ELOISE."

This was the note, written in a faint and faltering hand—a woman's hand, mind you!—the note that pretty little Mrs. Robert Strong picked up off the carpet of her drawing-room, where it had been dropped by her husband, in his hasty passage toward the hall and front door.

She picked it up, carelessly enough, at first. She was an honorable little lady, and would never have dreamed of ransacking her husband's private papers, or desk, or diary, as so many women would not scruple to do, if the occasion offered. Even this letter would have been laid aside till her husband's return, unread, had it not chanced to open in her hand, as she lifted it from the floor.

Her eyes fell upon the first line, and the red blood rushed instantly to her face. What woman was this, who asked Robert Strong to come to her, by the love he had once borne her years before, in the happy home she had left forever with another?

Little Mrs. Strong had a long, hard battle with herself before she could make up her mind to read that note.

But she did read it at last, and having "eaten of the apple," like her golden-haired ancestress in the garden of Eden, she instantly became as unhappy as she deserved to be.

She had been a governess in a family where Mr. Strong visited. Rich, influential, and still wondrously handsome, though he confessed to fifty-seven years of age, the stately bachelor, the great "catch" of the season passed by all the fashionable belles of his acquaintance, and actually offered his hand, his heart, and his fortune, for the acceptance of the little grey-eyed governess whom he had seen now and then at odd moments only, as she passed with her pupils up and down the grand staircase, or through the hall of his friend's house in —— street.

Of course she took him, and became Mrs. Robert Strong as soon as possible.

Yes, Mrs. Grundy was right there. Within a month of the millionaire's offer came his wedding-day; and then, after a short trip to the continent, the happy pair established themselves in Belgravia under the full glare of Mrs. Grundy's sharp and stony eye.

But one thing Mrs. Grundy never knew, and would never have believed, had you told her till you were gray.

Of course the bridegroom was desperately in love with the pretty little bride. That Mrs. Grundy was quite willing to allow.

But it also happened that the bride was even more desperately in love with the bridegroom, strange as it may seem. She was twenty, and he was fifty-seven; and every one would have it that she had married him for his money and his luxurious home. In reality, she thought him the handsomest, stateliest, and most agreeable man on earth. But the severely classic style of his really beautiful face; his stately form; his dignified manner; even the calm firm glance of his deep blue eyes, frightened and awed her, she knew not why. She dared not show her love for him, even when she was his wife. And so he fancied, at times that Mrs. Grundy was in the right. That his money had purchased for him a graceful and lovely woman to sit at the head of his table, and to take his arm in all places of public amusement; a woman in whose care his honor was safe; but in whose heart he had no share.

It was a sad and terrible mistake, and but for the coming of this mysterious *billet-doux* it might have lasted during both their lives.

Mrs. Strong, hiding that tell-tale note away, sat rocking to and fro in her own easy-chair, crying as if her heart would break.

This woman, this wretched woman! Her husband had gone to her, was with her even then. How dared he leave his wife like that. And the child! What child? whose child?

Again the red blood dyed her lovely face. They had no child. Perhaps him now and know the worst. "Mrs. Grundy," since their marriage, had often whispered tales to her husband's discredit, which she had refused to hear: now she would see and judge for herself.

Going up into her own room, she summoned her maid, and confided a part of the miserable story to her, not implicating her husband in any way; but inducing the girl to provide for her the disguise of a servant's dress, and to accompany her in a cab, to the address named in the note.

Leaving the girl at the foot of the stairs the unhappy little wife stole up one flight, and listened.

A tall, bony-looking woman came out of a room opposite, with her apron to her eyes. It was the landlady of the house, who had been bidding her dying lodger a last farewell, and who failed to see the intruder as she passed, weeping to her own room.

The door of the sick-room being left ajar, Mrs. Strong saw and heard without any difficulty.

On the bed lay a wasted yet beautiful woman, young and still attractive, but dying—dying fast. Beside the bed sat her husband, holding the sufferer in his arms, wiping the cold drops from her forehead with a gentle hand, and talking to her in a low tone.

"Eloise, be at rest, be at peace!" he was saying. "For our dead mother's sake I forgive you, even as she would have forgiven you, if she had lived."

"You swore that you would not, Robert!" gasped the dying woman, with a look of pain.

"Hush, dear! Forget it, as I do. I was hard, and cold, and proud in those days, and I thought I could never see you as you are now without forgiving you. But, Eloise, since then, I, too have learned to love, and I know better how to pity you. The man you married was unworthy of you, but you loved him, and for years you have suffered for his sake. I honor you for it now. Eloise, as much as I blamed you once. I only wish I had found you sooner. So much suffering, of body and of mind, might have been spared if you had only written to me before."

"I was proud, too, my brother," she said, faintly. "But, Robert, what has changed you so? You are as gentle as a woman. I hardly know you now."

"I tell you that I, too, know what it is to love, Eloise," he said sadly. "I have a dear young wife, whom I treasure like the apple of my eye. She does not love me yet; she feels only gratitude towards the man who rescued her from poverty. But, one day, I hope to win her heart. Eloise, if you live——"

"I shall not live. I shall never see your wife Robert. But, my boy——"

"She shall be a mother to him, dear. She will love the child, even if she cannot love me, and he will be a link——"

Touched to the heart with contrition, the little wife retraced her steps, and summoned her servant, and drove towards home.

On the last moments of the dying she felt that she had no right to intrude.

But for the living—for the living who loved her—surely she might be taking thought and care.

Two hours later, Robert Strong opened the door of his own house with a latchkey, and crossed the hall noiselessly towards his study. In his arms he bore a heavy-looking bundle. His face was pale, his manner anxious, and he looked round once or twice, as if dreading the presence of some unseen watcher, though the house was still, and all the servants had gone to bed.

Turning up the gas in his study, he laid his bundle down on the sofa, and, throwing back the heavy cloak, disclosed the pretty face of a sleeping child some three or four years old. He stood looking down upon the infant for some time, with a thoughtful air.

"What will she say?" he exclaimed, at last, aloud.

And suddenly he became aware of the presence of his wife, who stood just within the study door, looking at him with a tearful, tender gaze, such as she had never dared bestow on him before.

"Say! Oh, Robert, what can she say, except that she loves you, and wishes to do, in all things, exactly as you think best," she murmured, coming nearer, with a look of timid love not to be mistaken, even by his long-blinded eyes.

His pale, calm face flushed suddenly; his deep blue eyes grew bright and full of tenderness.

"My darling, do you mean what you say?" he asked, holding her a little way from him. "Think. I have long fancied that you could not and did not love me. I am so many years older than you."

"And so many years wiser, better, dearer," she whispered. "Oh, Robert, if you had been a poor day laborer I would have married you all the same. I never loved anyone else! Is that enough?"

He opened his arms. Blushing and smiling, she flung herself upon his breast, and their lips met in a kiss such as during all the months of their marriage they had never exchanged before.

"This child is the son of my only sister, who after my mother's death, made a secret marriage that nearly broke my heart," he said, after a long pause. "Poor Eloise died, an hour ago, in my arms, forgiven and at rest. My darling, will you love the child for her sake, and for mine? I promised her that you would be a mother to the boy."

"I will be all that you ask or wish," said the happy wife, kneeling beside her husband's chair, and laying her bright head upon his knee. "But now, I, too, have something for you to forgive."

And she told him the story of the strange letter; the story of her jealousy, and of its sudden and final cure. He heard her in silence to the end, and then he raised her from the ground, and held her to his heart once more.

"You will go with me to see poor Eloise buried, my love," he said, with a gentle kiss.

And nestling quietly in his arms, with her white hand playing with his still soft curling hair, the young wife knew that she was forgiven, and that her husband's heart was all her own.

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Albany.....	5:00 a. m.	Portland.....	9:00 a. m

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2:36 p m...	Lv...	Albany....	Ar...	9:25 p m
3:25 p m..	Ar...	Lebanon...	Lv...	8:40 p m
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