

ONLY.

BY "RELAINE."

Only some faded blossoms,
On which my tears had dawned;
Only a lock of softest hair,
Waving, and dusky brown,
Only a heart that is breaking,
Yes, breaking, day by day,
All for an old, sweet lesson,
Taught in a man's sweet way.

Only a heart, rebellious,
Struggling against God's will;
O, why should you longer murmur?—
Peace! Peace! my heart, be still!
You have had your dream of love—
Why murmur because it is done?—
Oh, hearts have been broken,
You're not the only one!

Only a life that is empty,
Devoid of pleasure or joy;
Full of wild, bitter longings,
And grief, without alloy,
Only some bitter memories
That will come surging back,
Along the hills and valleys
Of Time's relentless track.

Only a "bundle of letters,"
Tied with a ribbon, blue,
Letters that drifted into my life,
And caused me to think him true
Only a heart that is breaking,
That is, if hearts can break;
Only a life that is blighted,
All for a man's sweet sake!

A FAIR EXCHANGE.

"So your brother George and his bride have returned home from their honeymoon. How do you like her?"

"Like her?" I answered, crossly; "like my brother's wife? Not at all. Has she not robbed me of my brother—taken away all that made life precious, and left me homeless?"

"Homeless!" echoed Nellie, aghast. "Why, will she not allow you and Johnny to live here still? Where will you go? Arthur is going to Edinburgh, I hear?"

"Oh, yes, no doubt we may still live here," I answered. "My brother is our guardian. He must keep us here or find us somewhere else to live. But I don't call it home with that hateful woman in it. I shall be polite to her, of course, for George's sake, but she will always be my enemy."

"Is she so very horrid, then?" asked Nellie. "Don't the boys get on with her?"

"Oh, yes, very well indeed. That is partly what I have to complain of," I replied, with a bitter laugh. "She has evidently made up her mind to take everybody's love away from me. You know George always promised that I should keep house for him when I left school. I have looked forward to that ever since papa died and left us in his six years ago. Well, of course, it was a great blow to me his getting married, but I put up with that. I knew quite well that I should never have left him for any man, but still I was patient, and submitted. But I did not think it would be so dreadful. She has only been home a week. George seems to worship her, and the boys really like her better than me, and leave me for her."

"How unkind! I can hardly believe it!"

"It is true, nevertheless. Only this morning I asked them to go to the town with me, and they both refused. They had both promised to take their jolly new 'Siss,' as Arthur called her, for a row before luncheon. Of course she pretended to be very sorry, offering to give it up, asked me to go with them, and then tried to persuade one of them to go with me and one with her. But she only did that to make a show of self-sacrifice. I could see; so I cut short the argument and left them, saying I would go alone. And alone I am likely to be. She has usurped my place in their hearts," and I burst into passionate tears.

Nellie soothed me, and sympathized with me. I had represented myself as an ill-used martyr, and as such, in her faithful friendship, she regarded me.

"Poor Dorothy, I am so very sorry for you! I wish your brother had never seen her. Where did he first meet her?"

"At the Lyndons," I replied. "She was governess to Nellie and Flora Lyndon."

"Governess at the Lyndons!" answered Nellie, in a tone of great surprise.

"Why, I have always heard such a good account of her! They said she was exceedingly clever and nice and amiable."

"Oh, I dare say she was all that to them," I replied, angrily, "but that does not alter the case to me."

And I returned to my complaints and refused to be either comforted or refuted.

I did not want my *bete noire* to be white-washed by my favorite friend.

"Have you told Dorothy the news, Margaret?" asked my brother, a few weeks after at dinner.

"No, dear, I have not," answered my sister-in-law, with what I thought a rather nervous glance at me.

She had been growing in favor with my two younger brothers; they like George, now idolized her, as lads will do with a handsome, amiable young woman some years their senior, who pets and sympathizes with them. But in proportion as she gained their hearts, I resolutely shut her out of mine. I was scrupulously polite, but repelled all her advances at sisterly intimacy with freezing coldness.

"Well, you have been kept out at Eden unnecessarily for the last two or three hours," said my brother laughing.

"Now, Dorothy, listen: Your sister"—I frowned at this word—"has heard us say how fond you are of the sea, and, by some magic, has secured you an invitation to go down to Hastings with some relatives of hers next week."

"Mr. and Mrs. Shirley, with their two sons and daughters, Frank, Blanch and Sydney, my uncle and aunt of Belford Hall and their family. I think Dorothy, you have heard me speak of them," said my sister-in-law.

"Yes, I have heard of them, and I am much obliged for the invitation, but I do not wish to go. I thank you," was my ungracious answer. "She wants to get rid of me now," I thought.

"Not wish to go? Why, Dorothy, what an absurd, changeable girl you are!" said George. "Last year you were awfully disappointed because I could not take you, and because we could not find any one else that was going. I thought you would have been overjoyed at this prospect."

"I do not wish to go away with strangers," I answered, pettishly.

And George got almost angry because I so persistently refused the invitation, and for the first time in his life, spoke hastily to me. After dinner I went to my room, that I might be alone with my own melancholy feelings.

"It is quite plain to me George, too, wants me to go away. He has a wife whom he loves. He is happy with her, and I am in the way. Well, I will grant their wish. I will go to these people; I can't be more unhappy than I am here, and when my visit to the seaside is ended, I will go away altogether. I will not live where my presence is only a restraint upon the happiness of others."

With these resolutions, I returned to my brother and Margaret, and coldly informed them that I would accept the invitation.

"Why, what a book-worm you are, little cousin. Always reading—reading. I see you are resolved to be one of the shining lights of the age. But may I suggest a change just now? Will you come with me for a walk?"

And before I could object, with one hand Frank Shirley had taken my book, and with the other he had raised me from my favorite nook, the shade of a large, disused fishing vessel on the beach.

I had now been with the Shirleys a week, and I could not help liking them all, though I had arrived at Hastings with the full determination that, as relatives of my hated sister-in-law, though they might be ever so gracious, I should never feel anything but cold indifference towards the whole family.

But that was impossible. I was naturally of an affectionate disposition, and could not keep up the role I had proposed. They received me with a warm welcome, and tried to make me feel at home, and I soon thawed under their genial influence.

"Cousin Margaret told us all about you—how fond you were of books, and how you had carried off all the prizes at Queen's college," said Frank as we walked along.

"Margaret told you that?" I answered, surprised.

"Yes; she gave us such an account of your talents, your good housekeeping, and your love for your brothers, that I can assure you we were almost alarmed at the thought of entertaining so talented and charming a lady. Blanché was quite afraid of you at first."

I looked up at Frank Shirley as he spoke; I felt sure he must be joking; but no, his face was serious as his tone. I felt humiliated.

"You must have been dreadfully disappointed when I arrived." I managed to say, coloring to the roots of my hair, as I thought how different had been my description of his cousin to my friends.

We walked along almost without a word from me after that. I allowed Frank to do all the talking until we arrived at the Lover's seat.

Here we found Blanché and Sidney, and an old college friend of Frank's, Norman Montrose, who had just met them—accidentally, of course, we were told, though Blanché's happy face refuted the idea—on the beach.

I was introduced to the new arrival, we all found seats, and commenced that desultory chatter about nothing in particular which a company of young people bent on enjoyment generally indulged in.

"By the way," exclaimed Norman, suddenly, "where is cousin Margaret? Isn't she spending her holidays with you this year?"

I started at this question, and Blanché answered:

"Why, didn't you know she is married?"

"Married? No, I have not heard of it before. Where is her husband, that I may shoot him? I always meant to marry her myself!"

"Coxcomb! she would have scorned you," said Frank, dramatically, with an amused smile at me.

"You great stupid, do hold your tongues," exclaimed Blanché, laughing. "She is married to Doctor George Vernon, and this young lady"—indicating me—"is his sister. We have not our cousin Margaret with us this year, but we have our cousin Dorothy instead. I call that a fair exchange."

How I thanked Blanché for that kind, graceful speech! And how mean my own conduct to Margaret seemed now!

"But we have been shamefully robbed, none the less," grumbled Sidney, who was lying at full length on the ground at Blanché's feet, and throwing stones into the sea.

"No one else is so jolly as cousin Margaret; she was the kindest, cheerfulest girl that ever lived; she could make the time fly, I warrant you. Coming to the seaside is awfully duffing without her."

"Syd, do you want to be pitched after those pebbles?" whispered Frank, stooping over him.

He had seen the vexed flush that rose on my face, and with that quick sympathy which already made me half in love with him, he divined the unpleasant feeling of being depreciated, which the boy's hearty praise of his cousin awoke in my mind.

"We were all very fond of cousin Margaret. Will you make my compliments to her and tell her it is like her kind thoughtfulness, being unable to cheer us with the light of her countenance, to provide us with so bright a substitute?" said Norman, with a profound obeisance to me.

I blushed, and the others all laughed at his florid compliment. We were soon engaged in merry banter, and the golden hours passed away only too swiftly.

From that day I altered my conduct. I exerted myself to please my friends who had been so kind to me, and soon won the good opinion even of Sydney. I wrote long letters to Margaret, describing my happy visit, and received answers from her, full of sisterly affection. And a sweeter happiness soon became my mine. Frank Shirley loved me; I read it in every glance and tone, and in every pressure of his hand.

And then a new fear arose—would not Blanché be jealous? She was very fond of Frank; they had been inseparable companions. Would she not resent another girl taking her place, and absorbing his attention? True, there was Norman, who was unmistakably in love with her, but he was very busy in London; and could only come down for a day at a time now and then.

But I need not have feared. Blanché seemed pleased rather than annoyed at her brother's preference, and went off contentedly with her father and mother or Syd to leave us together.

"So you are going to be my cousin as well as sister," exclaimed Margaret, coming into the room where I was sitting a few days after my return, with an open letter from Frank to my brother in her hand. "Naughty girl, why didn't you tell me all about it?"

"Oh, Margaret," I answered, "I was so ashamed of my own cruel conduct to you. Will you forgive me?"

"Willingly, my dear little sis. I know you were jealous, but it was only excess of love for the best brother that ever lived. Well, I took your pot brother, and now you take my favorite cousin so we will consider it, as Blanché says, a fair exchange."

Mark Twain on the Gold-Bearing Water.

I have just seen your dispatch from San Francisco, in Saturday's *Evening Post*, about "Gold in Solution" in the Calistoga Springs, and about the proprietor's having "extracted \$1000 in gold of the utmost fineness from ten barrels of the water" during the past fortnight, by a process known only to himself. This will surprise many of your readers, but it does not surprise me, for I once owned those springs myself. What does surprise me, however, is the falling off in the richness of the water. In my time the yield was a dollar a dipperful. I am not saying this to injure the property, in case a sale is contemplated; I am only saying it in the interest of history. It may be that this hotel proprietor's process is an inferior one—that may be the fault. Mine was to take my uncle—I had an extra uncle at that time, on account of his parents dying and leaving him on my hands—and fill him up, and let him stand fifteen minutes to give the water a chance to settle well, then insert him in an exhausting receiver, which had the effect of sucking the gold out through his pores. I have taken more than \$11,000 out of that old man in a day and a half. I should have held on to those springs but for the badness of the roads and the difficulty of getting the gold to market.

I consider that gold-yielding water in many respects remarkable; and yet not more remarkable than the gold-bearing of Catgut Canyon, up there toward the head of the auriferous range. The air—or this wind—for it is a kind of a trade wind which blows steadily down through six hundred miles of rich quartz croppings during an hour and a quarter every day except Sundays, is heavily charged with existively fine and impalpable gold. Nothing precipitates and solidifies this gold so readily as contact with human flesh heated by passion. The time that William Abrahams was disappointed in love, he used to step out doors when that wind was blowing, and come in again and begin to sigh, and his brother Andover J. would extract over a dollar and a half out of every sigh he sighed, right along. And the time that John Harbison and Aleck Norton quarreled about Harbison's dog, they stood there swearing at each other all they knew how—and what they didn't know about swearing they couldn't learn from you and me, not by a good deal—and at the end of every three or four minutes they had to stop and make a dividend—if they didn't their jaws would clog up so that they couldn't get the big nine syllabled ones out at all—and when the wind was done blowing they cleaned up just a little over sixteen hundred dollars apiece. I know these facts to be absolutely true, because I got them from a man whose mother I knew personally. I do not suppose a person could buy a water privilege at Calistoga now at any price; but several good locations along the course of the Catgut Canyon Gold-Bearing Trade-Wind are for sale. They are going to be stocked for the New York market. They will sell, too; the people will swarm for them as thick as Hancock veterans—in the South.

MARK TWAIN.

Dresses are now made so short that the crossings are seldom clean.

The Autumn Woods.

Ferns become every year more popular for purposes of household decoration. Growing or cut, freshly gathered or pressed, the uses to which they are applied are numberless. It is a safe plan to gather them whenever you can get them, but those who can choose their time to do so usually prefer August or early September, since at this time the ferns are in full maturity and have not yet begun to fade.

In going fern hunting it is wise to take a large book, such as an atlas or a music portfolio along in which to lay the more delicate specimens as soon as they are gathered; the commoner varieties—such as the ordinary bracken bush, the evergreen fern—may be easily taken home to be pressed, by wrapping them in newspaper with a wet fold around the stems to keep them from wilting. Those which are to be dug up, roots and all, for transplanting should be placed as carefully as possible in a basket.

At the close of every excursion the ferns which are to be pressed should without loss of time be transferred to the drying paper. Seated at a convenient table the collector begins her work, her pile of ferns at one side of her and her paper at another. Plenty of paper and two flat, smooth boards are the materials required. Books on the subject advise stout blotting paper, but strong, soft newspapers, such as the *Times* for instance, make an excellent substitute at far less cost. Number one board is laid down; on this several sheets of paper—the more the better if paper is plentiful—and on them the fern is laid out as nearly as possible in the natural position, any twisting into shape which the fronds would not have assumed in life being avoided. Over it a single sheet of paper is laid, and while with the right hand the plant is being spread out, with the left the paper is being simultaneously smoothed over it. Immediately a few more sheets are laid over it, and the process repeated with additional specimens until the pile is sufficiently high; then it is topped with the second board and the bundle deposited with a forty or fifty pound weight on the top of it. Bricks make good weights, and they can be so distributed as to make the pressure bear equally on all parts at once; but any weight—a large stone, for instance—will do very well; or you may put the boards under your trunk. If a great many ferns are to be dried, another set of boards and papers may be used, but one is sufficient for quite a number. Next day the collector must change her papers. The pile is reversed, and the top board laid down on the table, with a sheet or two of dry paper on the top of it. Then the half-limp flattened fern is carefully transferred to it, and the process repeated until the whole of yesterday's gatherings are once more in dry sheets, and the weight on top of them again. The damp paper is then laid out in the sun or suspended on a cord in the kitchen or other warm place to dry, and in a short time is ready for use. How often the changing of papers must be repeated, depends on the number of sheets that are interposed between each plant, the state of the weather, the dryness of the room or the thickness of the fern leaves themselves; but, as a rule, half a dozen times are sufficient, and, if need be, the last two or three times may have an interval of two or even three days between them. If the plants make the paper bulge out, a sheet or two of stout pasteboard interposed here and there will smother down their asperities and secure better dried specimens. In any case, a little patience and neat-handedness are necessary to secure choice specimens, and the ferns should not be taken out of the press until sure they are well dried. The best test of their being thoroughly dry is to gently bend back a little bit of the frond. If it is flexible, then it is better to give it another turn of the drying press. If, on the contrary, it breaks, all the sap has been extracted from it by the combined pressure of the stones and the absorbing power of the paper on either side of the specimen. Then transfer them to a large book and keep them there until ready to use them. Small ferns may be pressed between the leaves of a book by tying a string around the volume to keep it tightly shut, but it is important in such case that the ferns should be dry, and the book must be opened and examined from day to day to avoid injury both to the volume and to the ferns.

As already intimated, anyone with a large supply of pressed ferns has an almost limitless fund upon which to draw for household decoration. Window transparencies and fire screens are made by framing the ferns, artistically grouped between two sheets of plate-glass. The side-lights to a hall door may be prettily ornamented in the same way, only for this purpose, in order to obstruct the view, it is well to fasten the fern on fine white net. Bright hued flowers, such as pansies, morning glories, scarlet sage, etc., add much to the beauty of such transparencies and may be successfully dried between sheets of cotton wadding placed between wooden boards.

A cluster of ferns pinned on a lace curtain where it falls apart has a very happy effect, and we have seen pretty window cornices made of a garland of ferns and autumn leaves. The maiden-hair fern looks extremely well arranged in a small basket, with a few dried bits of crimson coxcomb or bachelor's buttons. Indeed, the uses to which they may be applied is limited only by the taste and skill of the decorator.

When a fernery is contemplated the ferns should be carefully dug up and transplanted in soil as nearly as possible like that in which they originally grew.

As a rule, ferns require abundant moisture and cool shade, and the exercise of a little ingenuity will soon provide these requirements for even a varied collection. With the help of a few pieces of furnace slag or other fantastic material, a rockery can be erected in the dreariest city back yard. Sand—not sea, but river sand—should be first strewn over this, and then woods earth should be packed into every crevice where the ferns are to grow.

A very pretty fernery may be made of an old tin tray. Paint it first with waterproof paint, then make a foundation of gravel, charcoal and cinders and some sand—not too much, however. Over this put your woods earth and plant the ferns with sheets of moss, carefully transplanted from the place where the ferns grew, covering the roots. Keep well watered, and you will have a thing of beauty all winter, constantly developing new beauties as tiny ferns and wood plants spring up on the moss.

For decorative purposes moss is scarcely second to ferns, or even flowers. In England it is much used for table decoration, and is gathered in summer and dried for winter use. It is a mistake to think that because moss is green it is of one color; you will find it of every hue—bronze and emerald shining, golden and dark purple-green. The best way to collect it for decoration is to pull it in large tufts, which should be well shaken after reaching home and spread lightly on newspapers for a day or two, and then again thoroughly shaken, to free them from loose bits and from insects. To keep it for the winter the sprays should be dipped in water, dabbed dry on a cloth, laid flat between two sheets of brown paper and immediately ironed until quite dry. The irons should be of the heat required to smooth linen; but do not prolong the process too much or the moss will become brittle. This process answers for the coarser mosses; more delicate ones should not be ironed, and the "maiden-hair" moss should not be placed in water, or the golden extinguishers may wash off. Small, naturally mossy twigs—ivy, oak leaves, acorns, lichens—by occasionally being put out to be refreshed by rain, can be made to last for some time. The last need an occasional rain soaking, as they become brittle and powdery when too dry. The little gypsy kettles that were so fashionable some years ago may be made into pretty centre-pieces by covering sticks and kettle alike with moss, as follows: Hold one of the sticks in the left hand, take a turf of moss sufficiently large to wrap around it in the right hand and fold the moss around and over the end of the stick; pass a long piece of fine gardening wire round it, securing the end firmly and pulling it tight, so that the moss conceals it; wind it round once more and then take a second turf; let the end neatly overlap the first, and secure it in the same way; continue until the stick is covered, keeping the moss as evenly and tightly rolled as possible. If too shaggy, trim it with the scissors. Secure the end of the wire when finished, and if tightly done all will remain firm. The handle of the kettle should be done the same way before doing the kettle. In covering the latter the upper edge of the tufts should be turned inside, under the tin for holding the flowers, and the first wire tied around close under the top. A very few flowers, arranged in wet sand, will answer for filling the tin. Flower pots may be covered in the same way; and flat strawberry baskets, thus concealed, and lined with white paper, make very pretty fruit dishes. A plateau of moss for holding dessert dishes is also pretty. A board of the desired size and shape is requisite; the edges may be cut out for the dishes to fit into, or they may stand on it. The moss should be made as smooth and even as possible, and may be of only one or of various kinds. The common feather moss is perhaps the best. If liked, a border of gray lichen can surround it, and outside of this a second of small leaves, trailing or ground ivy. Borders of leaves and ferns can be made for dishes, and wreaths of periwinkle runners, ivy, holly or bright autumn leaves. Ferns can be ironed like the moss, and will preserve their color, but the safest plan is to dry them as directed. Circles or strips of thin cardboard can be covered with leaves and ferns for surrounding dishes, and single ferns arranged in a pattern of the cloth. Infinite variety can be made by giving time and thought to the matter.—*Philadelphia Times*.

LIEUT. SCHWATKA'S DISCOVERIES.—NEW YORK, Sept. 29.—The *Herald's* London special says: Schwatka's discoveries and Polar matters generally continue to be the leading topics of discussion in the English journals. Among the latest contributions to the literature on this subject is a letter from Commander Cheyne in reply to an article in the *Standard*. "It was not the Arctic regions," says Commander Cheyne, "that sent Franklin's men to the next world. They were murdered by the contractor who supplied the expedition with preserved meats. The same contractor furnished Sir James Ross' expedition, to which I belonged, and the tins labelled 'Beef' and 'Mutton' contained nothing but offal. Some of the tins when opened contained nothing but big knuckles of bone. Everything belonging to the animals was put into the tins, except the horns, hoofs and hides. The very entrails were there, and when they ate them, having nothing else, they had to hold their noses so offensive was the stench. If Sir James Ross and his party had been out another winter, they would have starved. I have repeatedly, in my lectures throughout England, denounced this contractor as a murderer, and dared him bring an action for libel. I should be glad to have him do so, for I could establish the truth of what I say."

A good whiskey sling—Sling the bottle out of the window—after it is empty.