

Recent Literature.

THE WAY TO RUN A FARM.

When I was young and at farming,
I'd watch the turnip tops,
And quickly go to wishing
For good, big, rousing crops.
I wished for mammoth pumpkins
And all others to outweigh;
In short, I took to nothing
But wishing all the day.

A solace sweet and a thing
In every wish would lurk,
Till dreaming speculation
Seemed surer than hard work.
I wished my cellar full of
Potatoes with a will;
I wished the granary groaning
With corn to go to mill.

While other farmers wished for
A good supply of rain,
I thought it as sound logic
To wish for fruit and grain.
And so I went on wishing,
Contented with my lot.

In autumn no potatoes
Were boiling in my pot.

I tell you I discovered
That wishing only breeds
Keen disappointment; wishing
Won't pull up chocking weeds;
It won't hoe corn in summer,
Or husk it in the fall;
I tell you, boys, that wishing
Won't run a farm at all.

That winter my potatoes
I had to go and buy
Right from my smiling neighbors,
Who had a good supply.
They'd slyly nudge their elbows,
And taught me with a laugh,
That labor's wheat that's golden,
And speculation chaff.

I learned this goodly lesson—
And in my heart it seems
One day of honest labor
Is worth ten years of dreams.
And now in idly wishing
My duty ne'er I shirk;
But just roll up my shirt sleeves,
And like a beaver work.

—R. K. Munkittrick.

PRINCESS BARNABAS.

The Princess Barnabas was in a state of the most profound perplexity. She could not, for the dainty little life of her make up her mind on the important question as to whether she should or should not commit suicide at the close of the season. It was not very easy for the princess's many admirers to understand why she should perturb her mind with such a problem at all, but perturb it she did with that very problem, whether wisely or unwisely.

The Princess Barnabas was a very remarkable little woman, who had proved the puzzle, the pride and passion of London society for three whole sensational seasons. She was not yet four-and-twenty. She bore the title of a great Russian prince who had married her just before she came of age, at a time when he himself was old enough to be her grandfather, and who had considerably died within two years of the ceremony, leaving her the absolute mistress of his fortune and his territories, as she had been during life the absolute mistress of his heart for the short time in which she swayed it. She was said to be fabulously wealthy. Her jewels were the wonder of the world, and she delighted in wearing them in season and out of season, with a semi-barbaric enjoyment of their glitter and splendor which was, like everything else about her, partly Oriental and partly childish. Some time after her husband's death she had come to Paris and got tired of it, and then she crossed the channel and conquered London. During one resplendent season little else was talked about but the Princess Barnabas. Society journals raved about her delicate beauty, which seemed to belong to the canvases of the last century, which ought to have been immortalized on patens and hymned in madrigals. Men adored her. Women envied her marvellous dress and her matchless jewels. The dying ashes of a season's scandal flared up into marvellous activity around her pretty personality. She was enormously "the thing." Enormously "the thing" she remained during a second season, after an interval of absolute disappearance into the dominions of the czar. Enormously "the thing" she still appeared to be now, in her third season, in spite of the rival attractions of an American actress who had not married and English duke and an American girl with millions who had married the bluest blood and the oldest name in Europe. It would have been absurd for any one to contest the point that the Princess Barnabas was the very most interesting figure of that phantasmal dance of shadows which is called London society.

Nevertheless the Princess Barnabas

was weary, positively bored. If she had been less of a success life might not have appeared so desolate. There would have been a piquancy in the possibility of rivalry which would have lent a new interest to the tasteless feast. As it was, however, London life at the height of its maddest activity appeared to her as drear and gray as those vast stretches of steppes which lay like a great sea around one of the Russian castles of the late Prince Barnabas. It was during this fit of depression, when the Princess Barnabas was graciously pleased to agree with the author of "Ecclesiastes," that life was vanity, that it occurred to her that in all her strange experiences she had never yet committed suicide. She immediately gave up her mind to the important problem, whether she should gain this ultimate human experience at once, or postpone it indefinitely.

It was in this frame of mind that the princess went to the great ball at the Russian embassy. As she nestled among her furs in the dim, luxurious warmth of her carriage, her mind was running entirely upon the various forms of self destruction which had been made famous by celebrated persons at different stages in the world's history, and she could find none that were sufficiently attractive or remarkable to please her. "Good heavens!" she thought to herself, with a little shudder, which even the warmth of her surroundings could not repress, "is it impossible to be banal even in that?" and she gave a little groan as she stepped out of her carriage and up the embassy steps. The same thought was still on her mind and tracing the least suggestion of a frown upon her exquisite girlish face as she entered the great room and took the hand of the ambassadress. The thrill of interest, of excitement, of admiration, which as a matter of course attended upon her entrance, did not give her any answering thrill of gratification. She appeared to listen with the most gracious attention to the compliments of the ambassadress. She answered with the daintiest little air of infantile obeisance the old-world courtesy of a white-haired minister, who would have been as much at home as she herself in a salon of the regent of Orleans. She condescended to entangle in a network of fascination a particularly obdurate and impassive secretary of state. She patronized a prince of the blood royal, and was exceedingly frank and friendly with the young painter Lepell who knew exactly how much of her familiarity meant, but was at once amused and delighted by the envy it aroused in others. Yet all the while the Princess Barnabas was not devoting a single serious thought to one of her admirers, every idea in that vain and foolish head was centered upon the one query: "Shall I commit suicide, and if so, how?"

It was while in this frame of mind, talking to twenty people and thinking of none of them, that her bright eyes wandering lightly over the crowded room, chanced to fall upon a young man who was standing in a window recess, which was at least comparatively quiet—a tall, grave, self-possessed young man, sufficiently good-looking to be called handsome by an enthusiastic friend. When the Princess Barnabas looked at him, his eyes, which were bright, clever eyes, were fixed on her with a look of half-humorous contemplation. The moment, however, their eyes met, he turned his head slightly, and resumed a conversation with a gray-haired old man with a red ribbon at his buttonhole, whom she knew to be a foreign diplomatist. The young man's gaze had expressed an interest in the princess, but it seemed to be just as interested in the pale, wrinkled face of his companion. The Princess Barnabas seemed piqued. "Who is that young man?" she asked, half-freely, of the secretary of state.

"Which young man?" The secretary of state's stolid face gazed vaguely into the dense crowd of dress coats and white shoulders, of orders and stars and diamonds.

"The young man in the window talking to the gray-haired man."

The secretary put up his eye-glasses and considered the young man in question thoughtfully. He was never known to hurry in his judgments or his replies in parliament, and he did not hurry now, though it was the Princess Barnabas who was interrogating him, and not a member of the opposition. Then he answered her, weighing his words with more than judicial deliberation: "He is a young fellow named Sinclair. He is going out to the East or something. Why do you ask?"

"His face interests me," replied the princess. "I should like to know him. Bring him to me; or stay, I've my your arm, we will go to him."

She rose and dispersed her little knot of disconsolate courtiers. Taking the secretary's arm, she moved slowly toward the window where Sinclair was still standing. The secretary touched him on the arm. "Mr. Sinclair, the Princess Barnabas has expressed a desire to make your acquaintance. Allow me, Princess, to introduce you to Mr. Julian Sinclair."

The young man bowed. He seemed a little surprised, but not in the least embarrassed. The princess smiled brightly at him, and her eyes were brighter than her smile. "Thank you," she said to the secretary of State, with a pleasant little smile, which was meant to convey, and which did convey, that she had had enough of him. He promptly disappeared into the crowd with resigned good humor, bearing away with him in his wake the elderly red-ribboned diplomatist.

Princess Barnabas and Julian Sinclair were left alone. She sat down on the couch in the recess of the window, slightly motioned to him with her hand to take his place by her side. He obeyed silently. The recess of the window was deep. For the moment they were almost entirely isolated from the shifting, glittering throng that seethed and drifted around them. Sinclair kept quiet, looking into the face of the princess with an air of half-amused inquiry. There were a few seconds of silence, and then the woman spoke, beginning, womanlike, with a question.

"Have you forgotten me, Mr. Sinclair?" The young man shook his head, gravely.

"No, I have not forgotten you Princess." Her eyes were fixed on his face, but he returned her gaze quite steadily. "Yet it must be two years since we met," she replied; "and two years is a long time."

"Yes, two years is a very long time," he said, half sadly, half scornfully.

There was another pause. Neither seemed embarrassed, and yet the interval was enough to be embarrassing. Then she spoke again.

"Why did you leave St. Petersburg? Where have you been all this time?"

He answered the second part of her question: "I have been in Constantinople most of the time. I only returned to London a few days ago, and I am going away almost immediately to the East again, to Persia this time."

"For how long?"

There was a faint tone of weariness in his reply, though he strove to make his voice purposely steady. "Oh! forever, I suppose; or, at least, until I am an old man, and of no further use. Then perhaps I may come back on a pension, and write dreary letters to the Times about the errors of my successors." And he laughed to prevent himself from sighing.

"You have not answered my question," said the princess. "Why did you leave St. Petersburg so suddenly? We were such very good friends, and I assure you I quite missed you."

Sinclair got up and looked down into her laughing eyes. "I left St. Petersburg," he said, because I was afraid to stay."

Her eyes were laughing still, but there was an unwonted softness in her voice as she asked him: "Why were you afraid to stay? Surely you were not a nihilist?"

He began to speak, and paused; then, with a determined effort to keep his voice under control, he said: "I left St. Petersburg because I was fool enough to fall in love with you."

"Thank you for the compliment. Was that so very foolish?"

"Not for others, perhaps. For me, folly, and worse than folly—madness. I never thought I should ever see you again; I did not dream we should meet to fight. But since chance has thrown us together for the last time, as I leave England in a few days for the rest of my life, I may as well tell you, for the first and for the last time, that I love you."

Her eyes were laughing still; those wonderful gray-blue northern eyes which so many capitals raved about; but her lips were firmly, almost sternly, set. Still she said nothing, and he went on: "I know it was folly when I first found that I loved you, over there in St. Petersburg. I was a poor English gentleman, and you were the Princess Barnabas. I might as well have fallen in love with a star. So I came away." He said the words simply, with quiet conviction, and held out his hand. "Good-by princess, and forgive my folly."

She rose and faced him. Anyone of the hundreds in the great room beyond who chanced to look at the couple half-hidden by the curtains of the deep window would only have seen a man and woman talking lightly of light things.

"And you have not forgotten me yet?" she said.

"I never shall forget you," he answered. "I cannot love more than once, and I love you with all my soul. Do you remember one day, when we drove together in the Neva perspective, how you stopped to give some money to an old beggar? I envied the beggar for getting a gift from you, and you in jest dropped a coin into my outstretched hand." He took out his watch-chain and showed her the tiny gold coin with the Russian eagle on it. "I have kept it ever since," he said. "It is the only thing I care for in the world. I have lived, and shall live, so much in the East that I am somewhat superstitious, and I think it is my talisman. Good-by." He held out his hand again. She shook it.

"Will you come and see me before you leave?" she asked, almost appealingly. He shook his head. "Better not he said."

For a moment she was silent; she seemed to be reflecting. Then she said, with a sudden vehemence, "Promise me that if I write and ask you to come you will obey me. Promise me that for the sake of our old friendship."

He bowed his head. "I promise," he said.

"And now give me your arm and take me to my carriage," said the Princess Barnabas. "I want to go home to bed."

The next day Julian heard nothing from the princess. "Of course not," he said to himself, shrugging his shoulders at the fantastic hopes which had besieged his brain since that strange meeting, and he doggedly faced his approaching exile. But on the afternoon of the second day after meeting at the embassy Julian Sinclair, coming to his hotel after a day spent in busy preparations for departure, found a tiny note awaiting him. It was from the princess, and had only these words: "Come this evening, I shall be alone." And he went.

This was a part of a conversation which Princess Barnabas happened to overhear at a reception at the foreign office, on the eve of her departure for the East. The speakers were Harry Kingscourt and Ferdinand Lepell. Said the painter: "Have you heard the news about the Princess Barnabas? She is going to marry a fellow named Sinclair, and is going to live in the East—Persia, or some place of the kind. The fellow hasn't a penny in the world, and won't have from her, for I believe that by her husband's will she loses almost all her fortune if she marries below her own rank." "How very romantic," yawned Kingscourt. "Romantic," replied Lepell "it is absurd! Have you not heard? the woman has committed suicide." And the speakers moved away. "Suicide," said the princess to herself, smiling. "No, no; I was going to commit suicide once, but I have changed my mind."

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