

Current Literature.

MY VISION.

The fire and flesh of my mortal being
Slip from my spirit, and lo! I seem
Facing the whole vast universe—seeing,
Feeling and knowing I do not dream.

Troop before me the grand, pure, glorious
Friends who have fled through time and
tomb
Into a sphere where they shine victorious
O'er the spectres of Dust and Doom.

One beloved in my far, free boyhood
Comes in his glad, bright grace once more.
Crowned with the crown of a perfect joy-
hood,
And kisses me as he kissed of yore.

"Comrade!" he cries, in his old, blithe
fashion,
Taking my hand in his old, fond way.
"Though I have passed through the pain and
passion
Of death, I am deathless here to-day.

"Though in the grave is the garment mortal
In which I was manifest unto thee,
Never in through that pale, chill portal
Passed the part of me that is me.

"God is the glory that sleeps with splendor
The infinite universe through and through.
The love that is passionate, sweet and tender,
And all that is noble, and brave and true.

"The thought, the speech, and the rapt
desire,
The miracle beauty of sea and sod,
The longings higher and ever higher,
Are God—and we all are a part of God!

"Here is the Aiden, but Aiden is only
The soul of the earth, of its evils free—
Not a sphere that is strange or lonely,
Or far from the planet where mortals be.

"Here is our valley; the roses drifting
In golden garlands from rock to rock—
The sun through the oleanders sifting
Its beams on our old familiar walk.

"The walk that leads to the headlands olden,
Fronting the vague, blue void of sea,
Where we talked in the twilight golden,
And dreamed of the victor days to be.

"Thus, oh, comrade! the trysting places
And tender faces we knew in time,
Gladden us still with their spirit graces,
When we have passed to the sphere
sublime.

"Farewell!"—a flash of his wings uplifting,
And left once more on the mortal side,
I hear the desolate, lost winds drifting
Over the prairies wild and wide,

And see the lights of the village burning
Red through the sheeted mists, and see
The tollers home to their hearths returning,
And hateful and harsh is the world to me.

Hateful and harsh—but the rare, rapt vision
Hath left a hope in my heart that I
Will live transfused in lands elysian
With all that I love, in the bye-and-bye.

—New York Mercury.

The Partner.

Mr. Thomas Mathers was only a ledger clerk in the banking firm of Hodgson, Dunford, and Parr, St. Swinth's Lane, Lombard street. It was neither a very responsible nor a very lucrative position, and Tommy, as all his friends called him, longed, as perhaps fifty thousand young men in a similar situation in London are longing at this moment, for a chance of turning his brains to better account than adding up columns of figures, and copying entries from one big book into another. The chance did not come, but Tommy did not despair; and there was this difference between him and the great majority of his fellow-prisoners of the desk—he had the pluck to work away manfully at whatever he thought might possibly some day help him to better his position, even though he could not exactly see how it was to be done. With this end in view he studied French, German, and Italian; and he did everything he could to pick up information as to the financial circumstances of the customers of the bank. He scraped acquaintance with every clerk employed by those who had accounts at the bank, as far as he possibly could, and picked up in time an idea, more or less accurate, as to the commercial status of most of them.

One day he happened to be at lunch in his favorite restaurant, when an acquaintance named Darling came in and sat down beside him. After a little casual conversation, Darling asked him to let him know of any vacant clerkship he might hear of.

"I will, certainly, old fellow," returned Tommy; but I hope you haven't got into a row with Appleton." (Frederick Appleton was Darling's brother-in-law, and he was also the Secretary of the Mudford County Chemical Company in whose county-house young Darling had a subordinate post.)

"Oh, no, nothing of the kind," returned Darling; and then he changed the subject.

On his way back to the bank after lunch, Mathers asked himself why Dar-

ing should leave his present situation. He had a capital prospect there—his brother-in-law being the Secretary; and there was no disagreement between him and his influential relative. Could it be that Darling had had a hint from his brother-in-law that the Chemical Company was getting into shallow water, and that it behoved him to look out for another situation? It seemed more than likely; and young Mathers determined to act at once. He slipped into the bank parlor that afternoon, hoping to find the junior partner, Mr. Parr, a good-natured sort of a man, who was not likely to snub him for volunteering information. To his disappointment, he found only Mr. Hodgson, a sour-tempered old man, who was struggling into his overcoat, preparatory to leaving the office for the day.

"Well," growled the banker, "what do you want?"

Tommy was on the point of saying that he had come to speak to Mr. Parr, but in a moment he changed his mind. "I heard something to-day, sir, he replied, "that made me think that the Mudford Company are not in a very good way."

"Well, what of that? What's that to me?"

"Nothing, sir; only I thought there was no harm in letting you know."

"Anything of that kind you can say to Mr. Parkinson," answered the old gentleman, as he seized his umbrella and waddled down the passage.

Tommy felt snubbed; but he did not mind that much. He had done what he wanted, brought himself under the personal notice of one of the partners. If he had given the hint to Parkinson, the head cashier, Parkinson, not he, would have had all the credit of it. He retired to his place among the other clerks, a little sore at the rebuff, yet not entirely dissatisfied.

On his way home Mr. Hodgson remembered that the bank held some shares of the Mudford Chemical Company as security for the balance of the account of one of their customers who was deemed rather shaky. Next morning, accordingly, he called Tommy into his room and questioned him as to the nature of his information.

"Perhaps you will excuse my entering into that sir," said Tommy, with the utmost coolness.

Mr. Hodgson dismissed Mathers to his work with a dissatisfied grunt and a wave of his hand, and immediately set to work to have the shares of the Mudford Company exchanged for other securities.

Tommy, who managed to know most of what happened at the bank, noted the fact and rejoiced.

Within six weeks the shareholders of the Mudford Chemical Company met and resolved to go into liquidation; and, though Mr. Hodgson did not think it worth while to thank the junior clerk for the information he had given, Tommy was perfectly satisfied. He knew that people do not forget things which save their pockets.

It happened that, some months after the incident of the Mudford Chemical Company, Messrs. Hodgson & Co. had important business to transact in Turin, and it was thought advisable that the senior partner should proceed to that city to look after it. There was some idea, if the prospect seemed favorable, of starting a branch house there. The question then arose, which of the clerks should accompany the head of the firm as his secretary; and Mr. Hodgson, mindful of the service which Mathers had rendered him, consulted the head cashier on the propriety of the selection. Parkinson, it happened, had a favorite of his own, and Tommy would have lost his opportunity if he had not remembered that at one time, when he was bent on acquiring foreign tongues, he had spent his evenings for a few months over an Italian grammar. He contrived to let this fact be known, and in due time Mr. Parr informed his senior partner that "it seemed that young Mathers knew something of the language."

This decided the point. Tommy received his orders, and in three days more found himself on board the Dover and Calais packet, in charge of a large dispatch box and Mr. Hodgson's bulky portmanteaus. The journey was by no means a comfortable one, for the young man found that he was expected to travel second class, and generally act as courier to his employer. When at last Turin was reached, things were no better. Mathers found that his Italian went but a little way; and, besides he had to do the work of three clerks. Sometimes he was tempted to regret that he had left his comfortable rooms in Torrington Square, Bloomsbury; but in his calmer moments he reflected that at least he was occupying a dif-

ferent position from that of the rest of his fellow-clerks.

The chief man in Turin, so far as Hodgson, Dunford and Parr were concerned, was a certain Count Marsoni. The Count's nobility did not prevent his being the principal member of a large firm of merchants and ship-owners. To cultivate this man was, indeed, the chief reason of Mr. Hodgson's visit to Turin; and, as the old banker knew very well how to lay aside his crusty and pompous manner when it suited his book to do so, he soon came to be a not unfrquent guest at the Villa Marsoni.

Mr. Hodgson began to see that there was a very fair opening for an English bank at Turin, and he was still engaged in pushing his way here and there, when he received news that his wife was seriously ill. This made him hurry off to England, leaving Mathers behind to complete a transaction which he had already practically arranged.

Delighted at being left to represent the firm, for ever so short a time, and ever so formal a matter, Mathers was pacing one day down the principal street of the city with a look of considerable importance on his face when he met Count Marsoni. The Count stopped and asked about the old banker, when Tommy proudly informed him that he had returned to England, leaving him in charge of the firm.

"Ah, indeed! Well there's a little matter I wanted to speak of to him."

"I shall be happy to serve you, Count," said Tommy in his very best Italian.

"Well suppose you dine with us to-night, and we can talk it over after dinner," returned the Count, who thought he ought to show a little attention to the lonely Englishman.

Of course the invitation was accepted, and Tommy had no sooner entered the drawing-room at the Villa Marsoni than he lost his heart at once, irrevocably and forever. Maria Marsoni was indeed beautiful and vivacious enough to have turned the head of a wiser and colder-blooded man than Tommy Mathers; and so ready was he to amuse her by efforts to speak a language that he partially knew, that he won more favor in the maiden's eyes than many a more brilliant talker would have done. Such an impression, indeed, did the signorina's bright eyes make upon Tommy's susceptible heart that he was barely able to give due attention to the Count, when, after dinner, he began to talk of bills, discount, mortgages and debentures.

Time went on; Mr. Hodgson did not return to Turin, Mr. Mathers paid several visits to the Count's residence, coming away more in love every time. Meanwhile, by dint of going about continually among the citizens, the young man was able to send home so good a list of prospective customers that the partners determined to establish a branch office at Turin, and offer young Mathers a subordinate post in it.

Nothing definite, however, had been fixed, when one day Tommy finding Maria Marsoni alone when he called at the villa, lost his head completely, and was making love as well as his imperfect knowledge of Italian permitted, when the Count, suddenly coming in, caught him in the act of kissing his daughter's hand.

Maria fled like a hare disturbed on her form, and the Count advanced with a heavy frown on his aristocratic brow.

More is a matter of form than anything else, for he knew his case was hopeless, Mathers formally asked the hand of his signorina in marriage, laying the blame of his irregular declaration on the strength of his passion and his ignorance of Italian etiquette.

The Count heard him to the end, and then surveyed him from head to foot with a look of contempt.

"It is a piece of gross presumption in you—a mere clerk, a nobody—to address my daughter," said the Count at last in English, with his chin in the air.

"Of course," said Tommy bitterly, stung by the Count's look. "If I were a partner in Hodgson's, though, you would give me a different answer."

"If you were a partner in Messrs. Hodgson, Dunford and Parr's said the Count, with an altered expression, that would make a difference, of course, but as I do not understand that you have any prospect of entering that firm, I don't see how that affects you."

Tommy sighed, and made his escape as soon as possible. He knew that he might as well ask for the Lord of Chancellorship as ask for a partnership.

For two days he remained in a state of collapse and then he received advices from London informing him of the decision to which the firm had come with respect to the new branch. A few months before Mathers would have

been transported with delight at the proposal which the firm had made him; but now he considered that he was getting barely his due, and, besides, he was cut up with respect to the beautiful Maria that mere commercial matters did not possess their usual interest for him.

Suddenly as he sat with the open letter bearing the well-known signature before him, Tommy conceived an idea.

Without a moment's delay he called for his bill at the hotel, sent a waiter for a cab, and took the first train northward.

He arrived at Victoria early in the morning, went to a hotel washed and dressed himself, and purposely delaying until the partners should have reached the office in St. Swinth's Lane, he presented himself before his employers as they were engaged in discussing the morning's letters.

"Hello, sir!" cried Mr. Hodgson, as he caught sight of the young man. "What are you doing here? Anything wrong?"

"Nothing is wrong that I know of, sir," said the young man coolly.

Then why are you here without leave?" asked the junior partner. "Didn't you get our letter informing you of our new arrangements?"

"I did, Mr. Parr. It is in consequence of that letter that I am here." This was said with considerable gravity, and Tommy helped himself to a chair as he spoke. "I am afraid, sir," he continued, "that I cannot accept the situation you were good enough to offer me in Turin."

"Don't then," burst out old Mr. Hodgson, in great wrath at the tone in which the young man was assuming. "We'll find fifty clerks ready to jump at it—five hundred, for that matter."

"You forget, sir," said Tommy, respectfully but firmly, "that I have been at Turin for some time. I know the business there, and what I came here to propose was that I should have a small share in the firm—"

Mr. Parr stared and ejaculated, "what, sir?"

Mr. Dunford laughed aloud and then swore.

Mr. Hodgson choked and gasped for breath. If a shell had burst in the room it could not have occasioned more surprise than Tommy's modest request. If the sweeper at the next crossing had demanded to be allowed to help himself from the drawers under the counter, it would not have seemed so absurd as this demand of the junior clerk.

"Of course, having no capital, I expect only a very small share in the business," continued Tommy; "but you will see that as Count Marsoni's son in law—"

"What! What? What do you say?" echoed the partners in various inflections.

"As Count Marsoni's son-in-law I should be able to influence a large amount of business, and it would be more fitting if my name appeared in the name of the branch firm."

"Do you mean to say that you are going to marry that young lady, Count Marsoni's daughter?" said Mr. Hodgson, with wonder, incredulity, and a tinge of a new-born respect for his clerk mingling in his countenance.

"It is as good as settled, sir, said Tommy modestly. "Of course this is a private matter, but it is one that would naturally be taken into account." This was quite evident, and Tommy, having made his shot, rose, bowed and withdrew.

Before half an hour had passed the firm had taken their resolution. The share which Tommy was given represented little more than a somewhat liberal salary, but he was included as a partner in the branch firm of Hodgson, Dunford, Mathers & Co. of Turin. As soon as the partnership deed was drawn up and executed, Tommy returned to Italy, and had another interview with the Count, who, imagining that he had misconceived the young man's true position all along was politeness itself. The young partner in the wealthy house of English bankers was one who might, without any impropriety, be presented to society as his daughter's husband. Within three months the marriage was celebrated. Tommy had done the trick.

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