

## The Crocodile and the Papyrus.

A crocodile along the Nile  
Swam down one pleasant morn,  
And marked the tall papyrus sit  
All silent, sad and lorn.  
"Thank Isis, I am not a reed,"  
Said he with lengthened smile;  
But if I were I'd really try  
To have some kind of style.  
Why don't you grow a set of teeth,  
Or cultivate your tails?  
It's just such shiftlessness as yours  
That populates our jails!  
You think, because the sage and priest  
For writing scrolls have tried you,  
That Egypt's biggest pyramid  
Looks very small beside you.  
And then you say you'll live for aye,  
I'd like to see your mummies.  
What kind of wrapping do they give  
Invertebrate dummies?  
Now, listen. All the good in life  
Is done by folks like me.  
Without us, what I'd like to know,  
Would Nile or Egypt be?  
Our swimming puts the river waves  
In constant circulation;  
Our gobbling up the careless folks  
Keeps down the population.  
That we are fat is not a fact.  
That's germane to discussion;  
But windy argument like that  
Is what you grow to lush on.  
Does writing pay? That's what I ask  
If not why live to aid it?  
Since yonder pyramid is there,  
Who cares what monarch made it?  
Who wants to know what other folks  
Have suffered, been, or done,  
Or that a certain Pharaoh was  
Another Pharaoh's son?  
What Egypt wants is common sense  
And earnest, steady workers,  
And you who idle on the bank  
Are simply useless shirkers,  
And all the writing, painting crew  
Are lazy skinkers like you.  
I do not see why from the world  
Osiris does not strike you.  
Why don't you try to be like me?—  
A Young Egyptian sinner  
Swims down this way. *Excuses moi,*  
I'm going for my dinner."

The crocodile is dead and gone,  
The pyramids are plundered,  
Between the world they knew and this  
All ligaments were sundered,  
Had not the brush and pen combined—  
To tell old Egypt's story.  
And show to us poor modern folk  
Her learning and her glory.  
But there are modern crocodiles:  
And oft you hear them teaching  
The uselessness of pen and brush,  
The foolishness of preaching.

## Tired.

We are so tired, my heart and I,  
Sweet is the swell of the poet's sigh;  
Sweet is the ring of the minor chords,  
Sweet is the chime of the measured words  
But, oh! when life is so hard and dull,  
We miss the joy of the beautiful,  
And echo it back like a bitter cry—  
"We are so tired, my heart and I."

Tired of sowing the barren grains,  
Tired of taking the useless pains  
Of the futile faith, the unheeded word,  
And the weary sickness of hope deferred;  
While the counted sands drop fast away,  
Through the feverish night and the rest-  
less day,  
And the reeds we lean on break, one by  
one,  
And the sad, ungranted prayers go on.

The wind sweeps over the cowering plain,  
Through the creeping mists sobs the  
ceaseless rain,  
The chill and heaviness all around  
Like a chain the aching temples bound;  
Dream, fancy, sacrifice—what is it all?  
Climbing, struggling, slip and fall,  
O'er the dull, gray sea, stoops the dull,  
gray sky;

We are tired, my heart and I.  
Break through the clouds, oh, Easter  
light!

Wake up, brave sense of truth and right,  
Lay on the shrine of our risen Lord  
The useless talent, the broken sword,  
Lay their doubts, griefs, and wants and  
cares,  
And the erring darling of many prayers,  
From the cross on earth to the crown on  
high,  
Let us look together, my heart and I.

—All the Year Round.

## Grapes or Thorns.

We must not hope to be mowers  
And to gather the ripe gold ears,  
Until we have first been sowers,  
And watered the furrows with tears.  
Is it not just as we take it—  
This mystical world of ours?  
Life's field will yield, as we make it,  
A harvest of thorns or flowers!

—Alice Cary.

## A Lover's Quarrel.

BY SARAH WINTER KELLOGG.

But for Margaret Van Vechten's persistence, there would not have been any quarrel. She forced it one day—the 31st of March—while at the academy; for these young lovers were not yet out of school. But then, their parents knew that they were in love. Edith's mother perceived, without protest, that every morning her daughter's lover escorted her to school. There was scarcely an afternoon that the young people were not together—scarcely an evening.

Edith's lover was tall and lithe, with a bearing so noticeable that people asked who that graceful girl was. Yes, this was a girl, with peachy-pink cheeks, and long blonde braids, that hung below her belt, and were always tied with delicate blue ribbon. Her eyes were blue and dreamy, and she had that soft, befitting name, Maud.

There was but a day's difference in the ages of these lovers. They had always been friends, as their mothers were friends before them. Together the children had learned to creep, to sit alone, to walk. Together they had gone through doll world, had learned the A, B, C's, had mounted the rounds of the text-books, until now they were in their last school-year.

"When we graduate," Maud said, that 31st of March, to a group of girls "Edith and I are going to marry,—to marry each other, I mean."

"We've been engaged these many years," Edith added, her eyes sparkling, as they always did when she had speaking and was happy.

Did I tell you that Edith's eyes were brown, and that her lips and cheeks were bright, and that she was a large heart?

"When we were twelve years old, we exchanged S. F. rings,—*Semper Fidelis* rings. It was at our house that we plighted our troth," Maud explained. "We always keep out two birthdays together—one at Edith's and one at my home."

"Are you going to housekeeping when you get married?" laughingly asked one of the group.

"Of course," Edith answered. "I'm not certain about that," Maud amended. "I believe I had rather board. I'm afraid Edy would make me do all the work."

"The idea of my making Maud do anything!" Edith laughed. "Do you know there's no yield to that young mortal? There isn't; those soft, dreamy eyes to the contrary notwithstanding. You might fancy, as you gaze into their liquid depths,—here all the girls burst into a laugh—"that she had no more will than a wax-doll!" Edith continued; "but I who brought her up, and her mother, who helped me—we know her tricks and manners."

"When Maud takes a stand, she does it with her toes turned out and then nobody can budge her. She'll just stand there, smiling, smiling, making soft replies to your coaxing and to your wild entreaties, but with no more thought of yielding than a bronze statue would have."

"That's the provoking thing about Maud's setness—her 'sweet eyes and low replies' keep you from the relief of getting angry at her. Her will is of the bland variety. I've always had to give up to her."

"When we were babies, if she wanted to play rattle, I had to rattle and my dolls always had to behave according to Maud's programme. If she said they were at church, I had to preach, if they were senators, I had to make speeches; if she announced they were at a ball, I had to hum all the dancing-tunes; and if the plague broke out among them, she'd make me do all the weeping and wailing. She always has imposed on me."

"I believe that, all joking aside," Margaret Van Vechten interposed. "I believe that in all your comradeship, Edith has had the drudgery to

do."

"Perhaps I do not understand you," said Maud, placidly. "I am not aware that I have ever imposed any drudgery on Edith."

There was only one indication that Maud was displeased. She had designated her friend as 'Edith, instead of using the pet diminutive, Edy.

"Any way," persisted the plain speaking Margaret, "Edith always carries your books and lunch-basket, and your extra wraps when it comes off warm at noon; and she always looks up the references in the lesson, and looks out the words in the dictionary, and all such things; and she copies your compositions for filing."

Edith began to redden with vexation, but she entered no disclaimer.

"Am I such a burden to you Edith?" Maud asked with a little coldness, perhaps, but yet in a very serene tone.

Deeper grew the crimson in Edith's face. "You a burden!" she said laughing, "you're the buoy of my life."

"That's not denying that you do Maud's drudgery; that you do all the things I said," Margaret persisted. She was never known to yield a point without a struggle.

"Say, Edith, do I make you do drudgery for me?" said Maud, yet placid.

Edith's face was now as red as it could get. "Whatever I may do," she said to Maud, "its no drudgery; its pleasure to serve you."

"That's no denial yet," Margaret said with a tone of triumph.

"Answer her clearly," Maud said. "Do you have to copy my compositions, and do my dictionary-hunting, and carry my superfluous wraps?"

Edith hesitated, and then said, "Of course I don't have to do any of those things."

Margaret waited a brief moment and when Maud did not press the matter, continued the cross-questioning, bent on winning the case. "Of course we understand there is no law compelling you to do these things, but you do them nevertheless, now don't you?"

Edith did not answer.

"Don't you?" Margaret said, pushing her advantage.

"Well, suppose I do?" said Edith, with some petulance.

"She doesn't deny it!" said Margaret, with the tone of a victor.

"I shall try not to make a drudge of you any further, Edith."

As Maud said this, she still maintained her unruffled exterior, but Edith had a feeling that true love's proverbial unsmoothness had set in.

This was at the afternoon recess. At the bell-ringing, the lovers went to recitation, and then to another. The last was a French recitation, and Edith whispered to Maud, thus violating a class-room regulation.

As a punishment, she was required to remain after school and write the French verb *etre*, negatively and interrogatively.

When she had served out her sentence, she went into the academy yard. On the green bench, under the horse-chestnut, she expected to find Maud, for there was where she always waited till her lover came out.

When Edith perceived that the green bench was unoccupied, her heart leaped into her throat with sudden fear. Yet it couldn't be that Maud was offended; there must be some other reason why she had not waited.

But even while Edith was thus arguing, she walked homeward crying under her brown veil, and with a feeling in her heart that something was lost.

When she reached her gate, she stood there for some moments, pondering the question. Should she go on to Maud's home, and if her lover was offended try for a reconciliation? At length she opened the gate and passed it.

"No," she thought, "I haven't done

anything or said anything that she has a right to be offended at. If she isn't offended, she will be around here this evening, and if she is, she'll have to get over it. For once, I mean to stand on my dignity."

But in spite of all resolution, Edith was restless, and so absent-minded that everybody in the family noticed it. As the evening wore on, and Maud did not come, lower and lower went Edy's heart, until she thought no mortal had ever been so unhappy as she was. In her chamber, she locked the door and dropped on her knees by the bedside in utter abandon sobbing in a heart-breaking way.

"She blames me! I know she does. Oh, if I should lose her, it would spoil all the world for me! I could never, never be happy again. What have I done to deserve this terrible sorrow?"

She lay there until the violence of her grief was spent. Then, mechanically, she put off her dress and went to bed. She was facing the window. The shutters were thrown back, and the stars looked into her eyes. How unwept they were! how divinely serene! The vivid contrast with her heart set her to crying again.

She heard the clock strike eleven. "I shall hear it strike twelve, one, two, three, four, five,—up to the rising bell. It seems to me that I can never sleep any more," thought Edith: but before twelve, she was dreaming.

When she woke the next morning, it was almost with a scream of terror. To the troubled heart, the first moment of waking is the most terrible. One seems, from sweet rest, suddenly jerked to his feet, and planted face to face with a horror.

In that first moment of terror and irresolution, the burden which we must again take up looms through the mists; enlarged, as does the newly risen moon.

Edith had a cry before leaving her bed; she cried through all the operation of dressing. Standing before the glass, combing her hair, she saw a fearful, contorted face, and swollen eyes gazing at her.

This diverted her. She suddenly ceased crying, washed her eyes and wiped them on a red bordered towel, on which she saw in the mirror, her name worked in turkey red. The hair having been dressed, she was about to turn from the glass, when her attention was again arrested by the sad face.

It looked so piteous, she felt so sorry for herself, that down went the face on the bureau, and there was another flood of tears, in the middle of which the breakfast-bell rang. The breakfast almost choked her.

She waited after the academy bell had rang, till the last moment, hoping that Maud would call for her. That's what Maud had been doing through eleven school years.

At length she cleared up her face and went to school, humming as she walked to keep up courage, but her singing every now and then trembling quavering, breaking, with a sudden thought of Maud, estranged, lost.

At the school-room door, her eager eye sought her beloved. She was there, serene as the serene stars which had looked in the window at Edith's wet face.

Edith passed to her desk and sat down beside Maud her heart fluttering. All day long it kept fluttering, for in every class the two sat side by side.

But never once, during all the nearness, was Maud's serene face turned to Edith's—hot and trembling; not once did the sweet blue eyes look into the dark, kindled ones.

It was a wonder that the fire in these did not melt, that the yearning did not draw. It was a wonder, the easy unconsciousness of the averted eyes, as if no living troubled soul was near. Maud seemed as unrecking of the girl aching by her side, whose garments were touching hers, whose breath was mingling with hers

whose hand now and then met hers as though the throbbing spirit was only thin air.

Edith could not study, could not recite, could not think, could hardly breathe—could only keep on aching and longing. She was so ineffably wretched that she remained out of school that afternoon, and devoted it to writing Maud a letter. This was a nervous ordeal, as is usual with the writing of important letters.

Edith had written Maud hundred's of notes—had used scratch-paper, the blank leaves of school books, the backs of advertising cards, the margins of newspapers, old envelopes—anything that would take a pen scratch or a pencil mark. She had sent, in her missives to her lover, all sorts of grammatical errors, measureless varieties in misspelling, and enough ink blotches to blot out forever if carefully applied all the grammatical errors and all the misspelled words.

But now she looked her portfolio over before she could decide on the paper to be used. Then she spoiled the average number of sheets before she had formulated to her satisfaction the yearning and despair of her heart.

"If you refused to be reconciled, my beloved," the passionate appeal continued, "then I beg you to let me know, that I may reconstruct my shattered world, and adjust myself to the strange loveless atmosphere in which my life shall be. At six o'clock I shall call at your home. I ask that you will meet me at the door. If you are determined to persist in the estrangement, please hand me a written explanation of your conduct, for I could never endure to hear from your smiling lips the cruel words of separation; and with the letter give me back the S. F. ring, that it may cease to bear false witness to a love whose loss will continue through all time to be the heaviest which my poor heart can ever know."

When Edith had dispatched this to Maud, she wet a little linen pad for each eye to cool the heated lids, and to soothe out the swelling and redness that her appearance might at least be dimmed when she should present herself before Maud. Then she lay down to rest off the headache, a pad on each eye.

At length the fatal hour arrived, and Edith in carefully studied dress, stood at Maud's door, putting out a cold, trembling hand to ring the door-bell.

As she had requested, Maud opened the door. Edith sent a quick, eager glance into the soft blue eyes. There was no welcome in them, no melting; they were coldly placid.

In Maud's pretty hand, Edith saw, with a despairing throb, the fatal letter. Without a word Maud held it out.

Edith never could tell why she did not fall down then and there at her lover's feet, and cry out in passionate protest. She put out an unsteady hand, received the letter, and turned her eyes on the little hillock in the envelop made by the ring.

She hurried along the street to her home, and up to her room. There she locked herself in.

"Maud! Maud! my darling! my beloved! I must always love you," said Edith's heart, as her cold fingers opened the letter. The ring fell on her lap, not her *Semper Fidelis* ring. It was a new, lustrous one, whose face was a diamond, shining like Aldebaran. With wonder-wide eyes, she turned to the letter, and read,—

"APRIL 1."  
"You dear little April fool, wash your weeping face, and come back to school, and wear this second *Semper Fidelis* ring, as a pledge that no amount of drudgery which you may do for me shall ever separate you from my love."  
MAUD.

People said that after this lover's quarrel, the drudgery was more equally divided between the two friends. Perhaps it was; but like most lovers' quarrels, does not this seem a rather amusing "much ado about nothing?"  
—Youth's Companion.