# AMERICAN SENTINEL.

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## Select Poetry.

### THE BOOK OF LIFE.

Our life's a book—a different page
Is turned each day;
The mysteries the next conceals
None dare to say.
The binding of Life's book is Hope,
With faith enwove!
The golden rim about its leaves
Is human love.

And each event, each deed of ours
Itself prints there—
In blurred type, Sin; while Virtue stamps
In letters clear.
Each noble act performed is marked
In blue and gold;
But all unjust or wicked deeds,
Black lines enfold.

A bright, illuminated scroll
Adorns each page
For each temptation we withstand
From youth to age.
Our days its numbered folios are,
And Death its clasp.
The power to make this volume fair
Is in our grasp.

So live that when all work is done
And laid aside,
Our children's eyes may look upon
The Book with pride.
Then, void of shame or haunting fear,
It may be read,
When, happily, we may rest among
The honored dead.

## Select Story.

### HER LOVER AND HER FATHER

"Why do you take away your hand, Gertrude?

Tom Faulkner put out his own hand and attempted to repossess himself of his companion's, but she drew farther away from him and quickened her pace. It was early spring-time, and they were walking under budding trees along a secluded Highgate lane. On either side of them hawthorn bushes were bursting into snow-white and roseate bloom, and across their faces and on the grass at their feet sunshine and shadow flickered and danced merrily.

Gertrude Garnett and Tom Faulkner had known each other for nearly two years, and Tom had met Gertrude that day for the purpose of coming to a definite understanding with her; but the definite understanding had not been easy to arrive at, and Tom was regretting that he had not allowed things to go on in the old pleasantly indefinite way. Gertrude seemed to think that he had let things go on too long in that way.

"How dare you ask such a thing of me?" she cried, as she drew herself away from Tom. "Why have you not let me know before that you would be ashamed to introduce me to your friends?"

"Not you, Gertrude, not you!" Tom interrupted hastily, a deep red spot appearing on each cheek.

"It is all the same!" cried Gertrude with impatient scorn. "If you are ashamed of my people you are ashamed of me! Why have you not been franker with me? I have been candid with you from the beginning; I have told you everything. You have always known what my surroundings were like; you have visited my home. I saw the difficulty long ago, and more clearly than you did. We talked it all over; you said that it made no difference to you—that you could brave the world's sneers for my sake. You talked grandly about the injustice of class distinctions and social inequalities; but, now that it comes to a decisive act, you shrink from it. You will marry me on condition that I separate myself from my people!"

"Not altogether, Gertie," pleaded Tom interrupting again.

"No—not altogether!" Gertrude, went on, her voice, though low and controlled, vibrating with passion. "I may visit them and they may visit me upon occasions when it is quite certain that they will not come into contact with any of your friends and associates! Do you know how you insult me by supposing me capable of doing such a thing? How dare you offer me marriage on conditions—and such conditions? We had better say good bye at once!"

The girl ended abruptly and, halting suddenly, faced her lover. He stopped, too, glancing at Gertrude for a moment, then looking away again, abashed and unable to bear her clear indignant gaze. Tom thought he had never loved Gertrude as well as at that moment. Her wrath made her charmingly beautiful; her tall figure was erect, a deeper flush than usual dyed her cheeks, and her eyes glowed with the intensity of her emotion.

Tom was almost persuaded to throw every worldly consideration to the winds, and tell her that he heartily repented of the proposal he had made; but he thought of poor Reuben Garnett, with his fierce, unbridled passions and loud, ignorant, atheistical talk, and then of his own proud old father, who held blue blood and gentle breeding in such high esteem—he thought of the second-hand furniture shop in the busy London thoroughfare, and then of his father's stately home in the North country—he thought of the family party in the back-parlor at Hampstead Road, and then of the cultured society in the dainty and aristocratic London drawing rooms which he was accustomed to frequent. Certainly he loved Gertrude well enough to marry her in spite of her plebeian origin; but he could not present her plebeian relatives to his aristocratic world. He imagined a hundred embarrassments and *contretemps* which would be likely to follow upon such a step, and winced under them in anticipation. No; he could not face such terrible odds. Gertrude must accede to his conditions.

"Won't you think it over, Gertie?" he said, looking wistfully at the angry, flushed face and brilliant eyes of his love.

"It wants no thinking over!" Gertrude returned, with passionate decision. "Good-bye, Tom—for ever!"

The girl could not trust herself to linger longer—pain was getting the better of indignation—and she turned and walked away quickly.

For a few moments Tom remained standing exactly on the spot were Gertrude had left him, looking blankly and forlornly after her as long as she was within sight. He felt himself to be a mean fellow. At last he turned on his heel and walked home to his chambers, humiliated, perplexed, hesitating, and more deeply in love than ever.

On the way he mentally reviewed the events of the past two years, and he could not but confess to himself that he had acted towards Gertrude in a somewhat cowardly and undeniably selfish way. His thoughts traveled back to two summers before, when, after an illness, he had gone to a quiet little seaside town to seek health and strength. In a few weeks the sea breezes had restored him to himself, and he was about to return to London, to his chambers in the Temple, to the dilatory reading which he called studying for the bar, and to his gay social life, when something occurred which kept him loitering at the seaside town nearly a month longer. On the evening before his proposed return to London he was out rowing on the calmly ebbing tide. There was only one other boat beside his own out on the sunny waters. It passed him, and he was immediately struck by the bright and beautiful face of the young girl who sat in it plying the sculls while the old boatman folded his arms and talked. The girl seemed to be enjoying intensely the exertion of rowing and the smooth swift motion of the boat. She was laughing merrily too at some story of the loquacious boatman's, and at the same time her hazel eyes were taking in the beauty of the calm sky and placid sea. The next moment Tom Faulkner saw the boat overturned and the old man and the girl struggling in the water. Tom rowed hastily towards them, and succeeded in saving both. Gertrude Garnett and her rescuer met again on the day after the accident, and Tom deferred returning to London until the morrow. When the morrow came, he still lingered; days slipped into weeks, and the magnetism of Gertrude's presence still kept him a willing prisoner in the dull little town.

Gertrude's educated speech and refinement of manner had left Tom quite unprepared for the discovery that she was not of his own social sphere. It was true that during their first conversation on the day after the boat accident Gertrude had shown an ignorance of society ways and doings which had rather puzzled him; but he had concluded that for some reason or other she had been obliged to lead a very quiet and secluded life. It was perhaps on account of poverty. He thought she must be poor, because she and her mother were living in a very cheap and unfashionable part of the town, and he saw that, although the girl's dress was always graceful and becoming, there was a suspicion of shabbiness about it. His first meeting with her mother—the timid, down-cast-looking little woman who seemed almost afraid to open her lips in his presence, and whose language, when she did speak, grated upon his ears—gave him the idea that it was a case of *mesalliance*. Gertrude's father might be poor, but he must, at any rate, be an educated gentleman. When, a few days later, Tom was introduced to Reuben Garnett, who came to spend a Sunday with his wife and daughter, it was a shock to him to see what manner of man Gertrude's father was, and to learn that he kept a second-hand furniture shop in Hampstead Road.

"I am a blundering fool and a selfish coward," he said to himself savagely, as he strode along the Strand towards the entrance to the temple. "I love her better than ever, and now I have hopelessly alienated her from me! Yet—yet that dreadful father, and that poor woe-begone mother, and that morbid-minded, clownish young brother! Poor girl! And she has to live with them! She does not pity herself for it either. She is ashamed of any thought or feeling which seems to her disloyal, as she calls it in her sweet quixotic way. She has all the generous and noble instincts of a true lady innate in her. With a little teaching and experience she would learn to hold her own in social grace with any lady I know. As it is, she is superior in education and refinement to a good many of them. By Jove, how did I dare to insult her like that? I would marry her in spite of twenty such fathers and a shoal of vulgar relatives. I've a good mind to go back and tell her to forget and forgive what I said. No; I'll write a letter?"

Tom had now arrived at his door, and he sped upstairs to his chambers, his mind full of eager purpose, his heart as hot with love as it had been during the first few months of his acquaintance with Gertrude. Going straight to his desk, he found upon it a telegram summoning him home immediately as his father was dying. A little later Tom was in the train on his way to the North, and Gertrude's letter was not written.

When Gertrude left Tom she felt it to be impossible to go straight home. She tried to work off some of her agitation by taking a long, swift walk. After traversing Hampstead Heath from end to end, she sank down to rest under a group of pine trees, with eyes that saw nothing across the gorse-covered heath towards the vague horizon.

At last she rose and made her way home. There was no one in the dingy shop as Gertrude passed through it to the little back parlor. Her mother met her at the parlor door. She was deathly pale, her eyes were wide with fear and her thin hands shook in a way that was pitiful to see.

"What is it, mother?" cried Gertrude, her own trouble forgotten for the moment. "What has happened?"

"Robert! Robert!" moaned the poor woman, trembling in every limb.

"Tell me quickly!" cried Gertrude imploringly, a hundred conjectures of trouble and disaster passing through her mind in rapid succession.

But it was not until Gertrude had led her mother to the couch and soothed her tenderly that the unhappy woman was able to tell her story. Briefly it was this: Early in the afternoon Robert Garnett and his father had had a desperate quarrel which had ended in blows; and about an hour later Reuben Garnett found his cash box robbed of £20, Robert having disappeared with the money.

"Your father says he shall be found and sent to prison, Gertie," sobbed Mrs. Garnett, tears streaming down her faded cheeks. "Think of that, Gertie? Think of my boy going to prison!"

Gertrude was stunned by this second blow. It was no surprise to her that Robert, in a fit of anger and desperation, should at last have run away from his tyrannical father and miserable home; but that he should have robbed his father—turned thief—there was the horror, the shame!

"He'll send him to prison, Gertie—he'll send him to prison!" moaned the mother again and again, her mind dwelling more upon the disgrace of imprisonment than upon that of the crime itself.

"Where is father?" asked Gertrude.

"Gone to the police station," answered the mother, breaking out into a fresh burst of sobbing.

Gertrude made her mother lie on the couch, and sat beside her, passing a soothing hand over the wrinkled brow, until at last Mrs. Garnett fell asleep.

In sickening suspense Gertrude awaited her father's return. It was quite dark when he came home. He was beside himself with rage, and as soon as his eyes fell upon Gertrude he accused her of being an accomplice of her brother. The girl had learned never to show a sign of fear during her father's paroxysms of passion. She faced him steadily, and replied quietly—

"I know nothing whatever about it, father."

Reuben Garnett forbore to press the charge, but savagely ordered his daughter to keep out of his sight. At the usual time he shut up his shop and went out again. In the early hours of the morning he returned to find the house lighted up and a doctor in attendance on his wife. She had been stricken with paralysis.

Three dreary weeks passed away. Gertrude was absorbed in the task of nursing her mother, who had at last sunk into merciful unconsciousness and lay almost as one dead. Nothing had been heard of Robert. Reuben Garnett, his rage for the time subdued, stole upstairs as often as he could leave the shop to sit by his wife's bedside.

Gertrude and he were sitting, mute and miserable, by the sick-bed this evening. The girl was absorbed in sad and bitter thoughts of her lost love and happiness, and her father glanced at her furtively now and then with an expression in his eyes which was curiously compounded of triumph, cunning, and wistfulness. Suddenly there was a noise and clamor in the street, caused by the clattering of a runaway horse. It roused the paralyzed woman into momentary consciousness. She started up in bed and, fixing her eyes on her husband, cried wildly—

"Don't send him to prison, Reuben—don't send him to prison!"

Then strength left her as suddenly as it had come; she fell back on her pillow, and the next moment the meek, tired, sorrow-laden woman was dead.

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Five years passed in sad monotony. Gertrude taught, read, and studied, and kept house for her father. In his intense egotism Reuben Garnett would have liked his daughter to give up the intellectual pursuits upon which he himself could not enter; but Gertrude resolutely refused to starve half her faculties. There were limits to self-sacrifice.

During the first year letters c[illegible] now and then from Robert, gener[illegible] begging for money. After the [illegible] year, they ceased, and no tiding[illegible] him ever reached father or sis[illegible] Was he living an honest life, or a [illegible] of degradation? Gertrude often w[illegible] dered sadly. Perhaps he had c[illegible] among strangers in a foreign la[illegible] Perhaps it was best to think of [illegible] as dead, safe from a wicked manh[illegible] His father never mentioned his na[illegible] and refused to look at the let[illegible] which he wrote to his sister.

At the end of the five years R[illegible] ben Garnett fell ill and died. [illegible] before his death he said to his dau[illegible] ter, who had nursed him devote[illegible] through his illness:

"I have been a bad man, but [illegible] should have become a worse on[illegible] you had not come back to me [illegible] night." Then, after a pause, [illegible] failing breath, he added: "You h[illegible] been a good daughter to me." A[illegible] another pause he continued slo[illegible] and painfully: "I have not been [illegible] good father. I want to tell [illegible] something that——"

But death came, and what Reuben Garnett had to tell his daughter was never told. It was not long, however, before she found out what it was. Looking through her father's papers one day, she came across two unopened black-bordered letters. They were letters from Tom Faulkner to herself—one dated a week after the day of their last meeting, the other the day of Mrs. Garnett's death.

"Oh, father, what monstrous thing have you done?" cried Gertrude as with wild eyes she read her lover's letters.

She plainly understood it all. After Robert had run away from home, the miserable father had jealously watched his daughter, suspicious that she too might leave him. The letters had come while Gertrude was up stairs in her mother's sick room, and Reuben Garnett had hidden them in the hope of causing a separation between the lovers.

His cruel and selfish hope had been realized, and he had wrecked two lives. This was the explanation of much in her father's manner which Gertrude had never been able to understand during the five years they had passed in loneliness together; this was what had been on his mind on his death bed. It was an almost inconceivable thing, such relentless selfishness springing out of a boundless jealousy.

As she read the letters, Gertrude's feelings were strangely complex. Sometimes, as she contrasted what her life might have been with what it had been and apparently must continue to be, she sobbed with the hopeless pain of it; sometimes, as she realized what, after all, the strength and ardor of Tom's love for her had been and how severe a test it had stood, her face flushed into its old girlish brilliancy again, and she smiled through her tears and pain.

Not a word concerning Tom had come to her through these five years of lonely endurance. He was the youngest of many sons; his father's death would have made no sensible difference to him in wealth or social rank. Gertrude wondered if he was still living his old careless life, sunny and happy, and if he still skimmed law-books under the pretense of studying them, or if he had seriously taken up a profession. The letter slipped from her knee to the ground, and she sat dreaming through her two years of happiness again.

When her dreaming was over, a look of purpose stole over her grave pale face, and she went to her desk and wrote these few words.

"I never received your last two letters. I have just found them.

"GERTRUDE GARNETT."

"Perhaps it is a bold thing to do," she said to herself, as she sealed and directed the note to the old address in the Temple—"perhaps it is a vain imagining, a forlorn hope, tha[illegible] may care for me still. But let th[illegible] chances be ever so infinitely small, why should I hesitate to do what may bring joy to us both?"

Not many hours after the posting of the note Tom Faulkner stood before Gertrude. He saw a woman still young, still beautiful, with a grave and noble beauty, who turned pr[illegible] clear, questioning eyes on him [illegible] came quietly forward to give him [illegible] hand.

Gertrude saw a great change in [illegible] lover's face. The boyish look a[illegible] good deal of the sunniness had [illegible] out of it; he looked earnest, purp[illegible] ful, and older than his years. [illegible] the old impulsiveness of manner, h[illegible] ever, he crossed the little room [illegible] took his love in his arms. Their lips met in a kiss which left their faces glowing with the youthfulness and passion of five years before.

For a long while neither spoke al[illegible] [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

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