The Easton Star.

T. K. ROBSON, Editor. Devoted to Politics, Literature, Agriculture, Foreign and Domestic News. $1.50 per Annum, in Advance.

NEW SERIES. EASTON, MD., TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1885. VOL. XX.—NO. 22.

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POETRY.

THINGS THAT NEVER DIE.

The pure, the bright, the beautiful,
That stirred our hearts in youth;
The impulse to a wordless prayer,
The dreams of love and truth—
The longing after something lost,
The spirit's yearning cry,
The striving after better hopes—
These things can never die.

The timid hand stretched forth to aid
A brother in his need,
The kindly word in grief's dark hour
That proves a friend indeed.—
The plea for mercy, softly breathed,
When justice threatened high,
The sorrow of a contrite heart—
These things shall never die.

The memory of a clasping hand,
The pressure of a kiss,
And all the trifles, sweet and frail,
That make up life's bliss;
If with a firm, unchanging faith,
And holy trust and high,
Those hands have clasp'd and lips have met,
These things shall never die.

The cruel and the bitter word
That wounded as it fell,
The chilling want of sympathy
We feel but never tell—
The hard repulse that chills the heart
Whose hopes were bounding high,
In an unfeeling record kept—
These things shall never die.

Let nothing pass for every hand
Must find some work to do;
Lose not a chance to waken Love—
Be firm and just and true.
So shall a light that cannot fade
Beam on thee from on high,
And angels' voices say to thee,
"These things shall never die."

Lines to Mab, on her Seventeenth Birthday.

Some would wish your life all gladness
With naught of sorrow nor of care;
Others, wish you fame and fortune,
And all in life that is most fair—
My wish for you, Mignonne, is better,
It has from their wishes stress:
God give you grace in time of trouble
To humbly say, "Thy will be done."

'Tis vain to wish your life all sunshine,
With ne'er a cloud to cast a pall;
"In every life some days are dreary,
Into each life some rain must fall—
But as the blackest hour of darkness
Fades at breaking of the day;"
So at times when hearts are lightest
Thoughts that cumber flee away.

Through life's journey God be with you—
May He be your strength and stay,
Many smiles will help and cheer you
Though some tears may dim the way;
May your every noblest work
Be dedicated to your Lord;
And at last may you in Heaven,
Receive a faithful soul's reward.

CARRIE.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A FADED LEAF.

I can hardly believe it even now. If there was one person in this world whom I should have thought safe from the remotest chance of matrimony, that person was Aunt Hetty—dear, placid, middle-aged Aunt Hetty. And yet I have just seen her drive away from the door, hand-in-hand with her handsome husband, and looking as sweet and bonny as any young bride of nineteen, notwithstanding her silver hair. It has all happened so quickly and in such wonderful fairy-tale kind of fashion, that I feel as if it had taken my breath away, and as if I must really sit down and rest a bit, and think the matter over.

I have lived with Aunt Hetty ever since mother died. When I came to her I was quite a little tot, and now I am six-and-twenty, so you may imagine it was a good many years ago. Auntie must have been a young woman then, but somehow she has always seemed middle-aged to me. She was always so calm and quietly, and did everything in such a quiet, quakerness-like way that I regarded her as a different kind of being from my restless, excitable self. I have had my little flirtations now and then, but Aunt Hetty seemed too grave, too wise, too good altogether ever to have been mixed up in anything so frivolous as a love affair. It only shows how we live with people in the same house, yet know little or nothing of their feelings.

I remember, almost as if it were yesterday, fancying one day, about a year ago, that auntie was dressed more carefully than usual. I don't know what the difference was—only an extra bit of lace or ribbon, or something of that sort—but I said to her in fun:

"Why auntie, dear, how smart you are! One would think that you were going to a wedding."

"No, dear," she said, "I am not going to a wedding, but this should have been my own silver-wedding day." And the dear lips quivered for a moment and tears came into the soft gray eyes.

"Your silver wedding, auntie! Forgive me, I didn't know—"

"No, dear," she said, "of course you could not. 'Tis a very old story now."

"But how was it, then, that you were not married after all, auntie?" I inquired. "But perhaps I ought not to ask. Don't tell me if it pains you."

"No, dear, it was a a painful story once, but the pain has gone out of it now. And I think I should like to tell it to you. Perhaps some day it may save you from making such a mistake as I did. It is a very simple story—merely a lovers' quarrel, a few hasty words—all said and over in five minutes, but they have altered my whole life."

"A lovers' quarrel, auntie! Then I am sure the fault was not on your side."

"You are wrong—the fault was on my side. I was proud, angry and obstinate; a word would have given me back my lover; but I wouldn't say it. We parted in anger and never met again."

"You, auntie—the most patient of living being—you proud, angry and obstinate! I can't believe it."

"Yes, Ruth, it is true, nevertheless. Sit down on this hassock and I will tell you my story. It won't take long."

I sat down accordingly, and with her hand resting on my shoulder, and now and then wandering lovingly over my hair, she began:

"It happened when I was only eighteen—younger than you, Ruth, and full of life and spirit—very different from the faded old maid you have always known me. I was engaged to be married. My lover was four years older than myself, he was a mate of a ship, and a fine, dashing young fellow named Edward Blake.

"We had been engaged six months, and were to be married a month later. The day was fixed, and Edward had arranged to give up the sea and take a situation on land.

"We were as happy as any two young people could possibly be, but unluckily just a month before the time fixed for our wedding-day a picnic was gotten up by some of our young friend, and Edward and I were of the party. There was a handsome young fellow there named Percy Sandys, the son of a neighboring clergyman. He was fresh from college and full of fun and frolic. I chanced to be placed next to him at luncheon, and not knowing, as I afterwards discovered, that I was engaged, he was specially attentive to me. I did not care for his attentions in the least, but I was in high spirits and only bent on the enjoyment of the moment, and did not check him as, perhaps I ought to have done.

"Presently I caught sight of Edward's face, and saw that he was looking very cross and angry. Foolishly, I thought it rather good fun to make him jealous, and on purpose to tease him, I pretended to take all the more notice of Mr. Sandys.

"When we had finished luncheon the party scattered and strolled about the woods in various directions. I naturally expected Edward to accompany me, but he rather rudely, as I thought, held aloof, and to punish him I paired off with Mr. Sandys. When the party got together again Edward looked so savage that I thought it better not to provoke him any further.

"I shook off Mr. Sandys, and, walking away with Edward, began to scold him for his unreasonable jealousy. Of course I did not think I myself was in fault; nobody ever does. A loving word would have made me penitent directly. Unfortunately he was white-hot with anger and began to reproach me in a way that roused my temper, too, for I was quick enough to take offense in those days, Ruth, though I have learned better since.

"I can remember as if it were yesterday the nook in the woods where we stood, the sunshine glinting through the trees and lighting up Edward's flushed face and angry eyes. He reproached me bitterly—more bitterly, I think, than I deserved. He called me a heartless coquette, and I called him little-minded and told him he had made himself ridiculous by his unreasonable jealousy.

"We got hotter and hotter, and finally he declared that if I did not admit that I had been wrong, and promise to behave differently for the future, all must be over between us. I did not care a straw for Mr. Sandys, and would fifty times sooner have had Edward with me, but I would have died sooner than told him so then. So I gave him a bitter answer, and we both grew angrier still. His last words, uttered with all the intensity of passion, still ring in my ears:

"'Hetty, if you let me go now, understand clearly you will never see my face again.'

"I did not quite believe him. Perhaps, if I had I should still have let him go. At any rate. I was far too angry to give way then.

"'Go, by all means, if you wish it,' I said and in another moment he was gone. I had been tearing to pieces, in my passion, a little sprig of hawthorne he had given me earlier in the day. I had pulled off the leaves one by one, and when he left me the bare stem was left in my hand, with one leaf only remaining. See, here it is, the last relic of my first and last love. God grant that in your whole life, my Ruth, you may never weep such tears as I have wept over that one faded leaf."

Aunt Hetty took from her desk the little prayer-book she always carried, a quaint little red covered book with a gilt clasp, and showed just within it a tissue-paper pocket attached to the cover. This she opened and showed me the faded leaf.

"This little book," she said, "was Edward's first gift to me; and this old dry leaf is my only relic of the day when we parted in anger in the wood, never to meet again in this world. Stay, I have one more treasure—see!"

She drew from her bosom a quaint old locket and put it in my hand. It was a miniature painting representing a young man in an old-fashioned naval costume. It was a handsome face, but stern and proud-looking; and I could well believe that the original would have behaved as Aunt Hetty had described.

"But did you really part like that, auntie?" I said. "Did you never see him again?"

"Never. He did not go back to the picnic party, but joined an outward-bound ship the very next day, leaving a brief note for my mother, stating that we had fortunately found out in time that we were unsuited to each other, and had, therefore by mutual consent, put an end to our engagement."

"But that was so cruel, auntie."

"I thought so then. Perhaps it was a little; but afterward I blamed myself far more than him. I had given the provocation, and I knew in my heart of hearts that one word of regret on my part would have made all right between us. But I was too proud to say it. I let him go with my eyes open and I have been justly punished."

"But have you never heard of him, since, auntie?"

"Once or twice in early years, but only indirectly. He had no relatives in our part of the country. I know that he gave up the sea and obtained a commission in some Indian regiment. When I last heard of him he was a captain, but that was many years ago, and I do not know whether he is alive or dead. So ends my poor little romance. There is one thing I should like to ask, Ruth, and that is partly why I have told you my story. You have seen my relics. They have been my greatest treasures in life, and I should like them put in my coffin when I die. Will you remember this, dear."

I could not answer for tears, but I kissed her hand and she was content.

Two months ago, tired of our humdrum country life, auntie and I resolved for once to visit foreign parts. Accordingly we went to Boulogne and took up our abode in a quiet boarding-house in the Rue des Vielliards.

Our domicile was a quaint old house, said to have been originally a nunnery, and afterward to have been occupied for a short time by the great Napoleon when meditating a descent upon England. A broad gateway, flanked on either side by disused field guns, planted upright in the ground by way of gate posts, led into a pleasant courtyard, with seats under the shade of a spreading tree and made musical by the plash of a modest fountain.

There were a good many visitors staying in the house, but they were mostly in families or parties, and we did not amalgamate much with them. Our vis-a-vis at table was a tall, elderly gentleman of soldierly appearance, who was always spoken of as the Major. He had evidently been a very handsome man—indeed, he was handsome still. His hair and mustache were perfectly white, forming a marked contrast to his complexion, which was extremely dark, as if tanned by long residence under a tropical sun.

I think I was first attracted to him by noticing that his French was even worse than our own. When he ventured, as he occasionally did, to address an order to the white-capped waiting maids in their own language the difficulties he got into were dreadful, and he generally ended by getting rather angry with himself and them. Once or twice I ventured, very timidly, to help him out of a difficulty of this kind, and in this manner a slight acquaintance had sprung up between us. It had, however, proceeded no further than a friendly good morning or a casual remark across the dinner table. With other visitors he fraternized even less.

After breakfast he regularly smoked one cigar under the tree in the court-yard; after which he started off for a solitary ramble, and did not reappear till dinner time.

So matters stood until the first Sunday evening after our arrival, when we went, as in duty bound, to the little English church in an adjoining street. We were ushered into one of the pews appropriated for strangers, and a minute or two later the Major was shown into the same pew, and sat down beside us.

The service proceeded in the usual course and the sermon was nearly over when the Major by an accidental movement of his elbow knocked down Auntie's little red prayer-book, which was on the sloping ledge before her. He stooped to pick it up, and was about to replace it, but as it came to view in the full glare of the gaslight his eye chanced to fall upon it, and he started as if he had seen a ghost. He laid the book down on the desk before him, but it seemed to fascinate him. He looked from the book to Aunt Hetty and from Aunt Hetty to the book, as if trying to satisfy himself on some point, but without success.

The service came to an end at last, and the benediction followed, but I fear the Major had little share in it. He took advantage of the moment when all heads were bowed to do a very unmannerly thing. He slyly put up his eyeglasses, and, opening auntie's prayer-book, took a rapid peep at the name inside. It was very quickly done and might have escaped notice, but I was watching him closely. I could even read the name myself. It was in a bold, manly handwriting:

"To Hester, June 28, 18—"

I stared aghast at such an act of impertinence, and glanced at Aunt Hetty to see whether she would resist it, but she had probably not noticed the offense, for she made no sign.

The congregation began to disperse, and we passed out in our turn, the Major close behind us. We were scarcely in the street when he spoke to auntie.

"Madam, I am going to ask you a very singular question, but let me assure you that I have a deep personal interest in asking it. Will you tell me how you came by that red prayer-book that you use?"

I shall never forget auntie's answer, given as quickly as if it were the most commonplace matter, though I could tell by the faint flush on her usually pale cheek how deeply she was moved:

"You gave it to me yourself, Major Blake, six-and-twenty years ago."

The Major's face was a study. Surprise, delight and incredulity seemed struggling for the mastery. He took off his hat and stood bare-headed. I hardly know why, but that one little gesture seemed to tell me better than the most passionate protestations would have done, that the old love had been kept a treasured and a sacred thing. And I think, from the faint, sweet smile that gathered round her mouth as she looked up at him, that the same thought came to auntie.

"And you are Hetty!" he said. "Yes, I know you now."

"You had forgotten the six and thenty years, Major Blake. I knew you form the first."

"And would you really have let me gone without a word or a sign?" he asked.

"Why not?" she replied. "How could I know you would wish to be reminded of old times?"

"Reminded! I have never forgotten. I tried my hardest to forget and couldn't. Although you preferred another."

"Another! What other?"

"Young Sandys. Did you not marry him?"

"I have never seen him since."

At this stage of the conversation it struck me that I was decidedly de trop. Major Blake had replaced his hat, and, side by side with auntie, was walking slowly homeward. I had hitherto been following behind; but reaching a convenient street corner, I let them proceed alone and went off, without beat of drum, for a stroll in an opposite direction.

I reached the boarding-house, half an hour later, I found auntie and the Major sitting in the courtyard under the shade of the great tree. The Major courteously lifted his hat at my approach and said:

"Miss Danvers, your aunt and I are very old friends; indeed, many years ago we were engaged to be married, but an unfortunate misunderstanding separated us. We have lost many happy years of life together, but I hope some may still remain to us. I trust we shall have your good wishes."

I looked from one to the other.

"You dear, darling auntie, then you really are going to be married, after all! Of course I wish you joy, and Major Blake, too, from the bottom of my heart."

"I don't know" said auntie, shaking her head doubtfully. "I'm a little afraid we are two old fools."

"My dear," said the Major, raising her hand gallantly to his lips. "Perhaps we were two young fools; but that is 24 or 25 years ago. Let us hope we have learned true wisdom now."

I don't know how the secret oozed out, but before twenty-four hours were over every one in the boarding-house, even to the white-capped aides and her assistant maidens, knew that the handsome English Major had met an old love in the gentle little lady with the sweet smile and soft grey hair, and that after a separation of six-and-twenty years they were again engaged to be married; and they were promoted to the rights and privileges of engaged lovers accordingly.

Lovers they unmistakably were, though in a very quiet way. No lover of twenty could have been more devoted than this weather-beaten warrior to his faded bride; no girl of seventeen more proud and happy in her lover's devotion than dear old auntie. They ought by every rule, to have been ridiculous, but somehow nobody seemed to think them so; and I really believe they had the heartiest sympathy of every one in the house.

I must pass over the homeward journey, and the astonishment of our friends at Fairfield, when auntie returned engaged to be married. Some few of them had known Major Blake as a young man, but to most of them he was a stranger. Many were the questions, and long the explanations, before everything was accounted for to everybody's satisfaction; but it was done at last.

Then came the preparation of the trousseau, and at last, this very morning, the happy pair have been made one, and auntie is off to the Isle of Wight to spend her honeymoon. And last night, just before we went to bed, she called me into her own room, and, taking out the little red prayer book, she said:

"Ruth, dear, I am going to give you this little book as a parting remembrance. You know how I have treasured it, and you won't value it less, I am sure, for having been so dear to me. And if, when Mr. Right comes, Ruth, you are ever tempted to be wilful or wayward, or pain a heart that loves you truly, think of your old Aunt Hetty, and dont forget the moral of the faded leaf."

The Milwaukee Bad Boy.

"Hello!" said the groceryman to the bad boy, as he came in looking cross.

"Don't hello to me," said the boy, as he took up the store cat and went to the sausage machine on the counter and began to turn the handle. "I am no telephone."

"Well, you are a transmitter all the same," said the groceryman, laughing at his attempt at a joke, "but drop that cat. What you want to hurt a cat for, putting her in a sausage grinder?"

"O, I ain't a going to hurt your cat, but I wish every cat was dead. Our cat got me into a nawful scrape last night, and I was no more to blame than the man in the moon," said the boy, as he sat down on a box. "Everything that goes wrong is laid to me, 'cause I used to be a little tuff in my youth. That shows that a boy ought never to be tuff, 'cause it sticks to him as long as he lives."

"Give us the cat story," said the groceryman as he sat down by the boy and tried to raise his drooping spirits with a glass of rotten apple cidar.

"O, I wish I had never been born, or that I had been born twice, or triplets, so there would have been more of me to stand the racket. Last night I went to bed at nine o'clock, and left pa and ma up playing youcur. I don't know how long I had been asleep when I heard a rattling down in pa and ma's room, and pa yelled murder, and ma yelled police, and a window was smashed, and I heard a cat squalling, and I opened my window and yelled fire, and then I grabbed my pants and went down stairs to see what the row was, and help put out the fire. I rushed into the room, and there was the offulest smell of burnt hair I ever smelled. Ma was up on a chair in her night clothes yelling, and pa was standing looking out of the broken window, the top was off the coal stove, the stove-door open, and the coal-hod and the coal scattered all around the carpet, and pa was all mussed up, with blood all on the front of his nightshirt, and a scratch on his leg. When I came in pa grabbed me by the neck, and said he would learn me to fill the coal-hod with block cats, and I thought pa was crazy. Ma grabbed pa and told him I was not to blame, and about that time a policeman pounded at the door and wanted to know what the riot was about, and pa told him everything was all right, and the policeman told the driver of the chemical fire extinguisher he could go home, and then pa told me what was the row. It seems our old black cat had no more sense than to go to sleep in the coal-hod, on top of the coal, and just before pa got ready to get into bed he went to fill up the stove, and poured the cat right into the fire. Well, I spose you would have died to see pa. As quick as the cat struck the fire she woke up, or maybe she woke up going down the reservoir, but anyway there was a m-e-o-u-w in the stove, and then the cat came right through one of the mica doors and struck pa with her toe nails, and began to walk on him, and howl. Pa was so scared that he dropped the coal-hod and grabbed the cat by one leg and threw her through the window, and then he began to dance around. I guess at first he didn't know whether it was a for-sure cat, or only imagination, 'cause pa has got to taking a little Tom and Jerry during the holidays, and his nerves are a little unstrung. I expressed my sorrow that the cat should have been scorched, and that made pa mad, 'cause he said we all thought more of the injuries the cat received than we did for his being scratched from Genesis to Revelations, and he said what I ought to have done was to go around the last thing before I went to bed and see that there was no cat in the coal scuttle. He said I owed that, at least, to my family. Pa is the unreasonablest man I ever saw. Who would ever think of looking for a cat in a coal scuttle? After pa had given me fits about it, he began to jaw ma, and told her she ought to know better than to yell so."

"Say," said the groceryman, stopping the boy, "I want you to tell me the truth. Did you have anything to do with putting that cat in the coal scuttle? For if you did, that settles it with me."

"No, sir, I hope to die if I did," said the boy. "Did I ever do anything to cause you to think I was a cold-blooded heartless villain? Have I ever harmed a dumb animal? I have saved lots of dumb animals from harm, but I have never injured one in the least. No, it was just an accident, such as might occur in any family, but I bet you pa never empties a coal scuttle again without analyzing it for traces of cat," and the bad boy went out feeling hurt that not only his pa but his old friend the groceryman should take him to be a boy who would scorch a cat.

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