The Chestertown Transcript.

VOL. XV. CHESTERTOWN, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 1876. NO. 26

From the Southern Churchman.

A LITTLE WHILE.

BY BISHOP PINKNEY, OF MARYLAND.

'Tis but a little while
I toil below;
The foam is on the sea,
Winds fiercely blow.
One star of silver sheen
Bedecks the sky;
It glimmers o'er the waste,
Afar and nigh,

It is the symbol of
Repose and peace;
It points me to the time,
When storm-winds cease.
I hail it in the dawn,
And dewy eve,
Sweet harbinger of hope,
The soul's reprieve.

For though that star may fade,
It is the sign
Of brighter joys in store,
A golden shrine,
Where hearts may breathe once more
Sweet incense there;
Or bathe in ocean depths,
Or lisp in prayer.

Oh! sweet and happy thought!
Oh! bliss complete!
'Mid smiles and tears to bow
At Jesus' feet;
Then soar on viewless wing
"'Mid worlds unknown,"
And gaze enwrapped upon
The great white throne.

And drink the limpid stream
That flows beside
The New Jerusalem,
The Lamb's pure Bride;
And walk the golden streets,
And ever sing
Hosannas to the Lord,
Our Priest and King.

Glide on ye languid hours,
Take swifter wing,
I count the moments o'er,
A weary thing,
To this poor, helpless thing,
That longs to see
The marvels of God's grace
Revealed in me;

As they will soon appear
The other side
Of life's deep mysteries,
And turbid tide,
When every deed is done,
And sorrow past,
I stand within my lot,
Complete at last.

A while to linger here,
To fast and pray,
A little while to sow,
Beside the way;
While tears my spirit feed,
And darkness lowers,
With here and there a ray
To kiss the flowers.

A little while, and then,
The palm in hand,
The river in its flow,
And golden strand,
The smile of God within,
The sweet repose,
The heart from sin set free,
'Tis free from woes.

Oh! sweet and happy day!
I wish thee near,
"No wrinkle on thy brow."
No briny tear.
All hail! a thrice all hail!
I sigh for rest;
I long to lay me down
Upon His breast.

Who died that we might live,
Forever more,
And sweep a golden harp,
On Beulah's s[hore].
He still in pity waits,
Looks wet with dew,
Each spot of sin to cleanse,
Each soul renew.

I do not dare repine
At His decree;
Who has ordained that I
Should roam a sea,
So swept by angry storms,
And tossed at will;
For I can see the bow
Bent o'er it still.

I do not ask to go
Before the time;
I only ask that I
May hear the chime
Of bells within the heart;
Sweet hope and love,
[Which] ever music wake,
[From] God above.

I [ask] for faith
To [trust] me pure—
To [strive] me for the gift
That I endure—
The [gift] of love to me
[Which] ever er,
[With] [illegible]
[illegible]

A WOMAN'S MERCY.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

A wonderously beautiful girl, with a sweet, statuesque face, that made one think almost enviously of the lover who in some blissful future-times would have the power to bring passion-lights to the shadowy, thoughtful eyes—who should, by virtue of the royal right of love, kiss those firm, exquisite lips, whose vivid glow of scarlet was the only color that relieved, or was needed to relieve, the ivory beauty of her face and the magnificent dusk of hair, brow and eyes.

A queenly girl was this Irene Conway, at whose disposal already a half-score of men's hearts had been placed, all aflame with the ardor she inspired, and so unconsciously. A quiet, dainty woman, who had walked unhatched through two gay seasons at fashionable seaside resorts through two fashionable winter dissipations, and through one year of travel on Continent, where the "beautiful American" received sufficient adulation to have turned any other girl's head.

And twenty-two found her as nineteen had left her, marvelously fair, bewitching attractive, and until the last seven weeks as heart-bear as adamant.

Until seven weeks ago—seven short weeks. And standing on the high bluff by the sea-side, the strong breeze frolicking among some loose, floss tresses of her hair, Irene asked herself if it were possible that so short a time could work such magic changes.

And by the wild pulsations of her heart she knew her life was changed from centre to circumference in those last glad weeks, counting from the day—nay, the hour, the minute—that had brought her and Rex Egerton face to face.

She remembered it so perfectly well—that windy, cool sunsetting—when she and Miss Pordenne had met Mr. Egerton coming up from the depot, valise in hand. She remembered his splendid bow when Miss Pordenne had presented him, and she actually laughed to herself now, as she recalled her mental astonishment that such an elegant looking gentleman should go afoot from the depot to the hotel.

Since then, however, she had learned the independence of the man who had come to be the master of her destiny—learned not only that one qualification, but his every other characteristic—his proud superiority, his grand nobility, his fordly supremacy over everything with which he came in contact—even herself.

She admitted it to herself, with little shivers of delight. Yes, he was her lord and master, who controlled her every thought, who held captive every emotion of her heart, that, sealed so long, only poured forth a greater torrent of adoring love at the touch of the master hand.—She knew it, felt it in every fibre of her being, that she loved him, and her heart sang glad jubilies; and with the next pulsation, the peans changed to strains as weird, sad minor keys, when it came home to her, in all its keen force, that Rex Egerton had never spoken or looked any love for her.

She turned away from the sparkling, joyous sea, with its white-sailed vessels, bearing many a lover to his sweetheart's arms, she thought, half enviously, half-bitterly, and walked slowly along the bluff, her glorious head drooped, her tender eyes bent to the damp sands below, where a few children, barefooted, chubby-ankled, disregardful that it was time to re-don dinner attire, which arduous task was already occupying nine-tenths of the hotel boarders, thus leaving the bluff, the sands, the sea, the summer-houses, and all the perfection of that August day, for Irene Conway and Rex Egerton.

She saw him coming, and her heart sprang to her white, round throat. She saw him coming, not leisurely, as she was going toward him, but walking at a pace that betokened earnestness, even urgency.

She glanced up, preparing to bow, but was petrified into forgetfulness at the sight of his deathly pale face and intensely bright eyes.

"Mr. Egerton, you almost terrify me! Is anything the matter?"

He laughed, and then wheeled beside her.

"Nothing is the matter that should terrify you—you of all women, since I was on my way to meet you."

"To meet me?"

She gave him a sudden questioning look.

"To meet you. Why not, when I have been waiting in your parlor this last hour for you?"

Somehow he startled her. His language conveyed a different meaning than the same words in any other man's mouth; and Irene Conway—this girl who had been wooded by other lovers, and who was so sure she perfectly understood men's hearts and men's ways—was confounded somehow by the vague impetuosity of this man's manner—confounded, half pleased and half piqued at the next words he said.

"Walk further this way, Irene. Yonder is a summer-house, and I want you a few minutes."

Irene [illegible] her shoulders with a [illegible] walked on, she thought what a grand man he was, how royally he would woo, how proudly wear the trophy when won—and how she loved him!

Then all her pride and anger flew to arms at his imperious demand, uttered in a low, intense tone:

"But I particularly request it, Irene. Come."

Her whole nature felt the womanliness the happiness of yielding to his will, and with a half-laugh, she stepped into the open, breezy structure, and sat carelessly down on the long wooden seat

"Now, Mr. Egerton?"

She looked up, entrancing lights in her eyes.

He was standing in front of her, looking eagerly at her, with an expression on his face that a man might wear who has deliberately come face to face with his destiny—such a look in his eyes, eager, determined, passionate, that a man might wear when he knew he was taking his fate in his own hands.

His low, eager words broke the silence of that second that was tinging Irene's cheeks with faint, unusual damask.

"Do you love me? That is what I want to know—that is what I waited to hear you say—what I came to you to have you tell me. Answer me—do you love me?"

It fairly took her breath, this fierce, passionate wooing from the man she had thought an iceberg—this lover, who never had hinted a word of more than friendly regard: took her breath, almost, and yet delighted her—this girl, whose heart and soul bowed in humble allegiance to him.

Yet something, away down in the lower part of her nature, arose in rebellion that any man—even Rex, her king—should demand a confession of love before he had given an avowal; and with that sudden uprising, all the latent coquetry in her nature, that is in every woman's nature, uprose with it. She raised her dark eyebrows surprisedly.

"As if I, for any other woman, would listen to such a question! The idea, Mr. Egerton, of asking if you are beloved by a woman to whom you never gave the first intimation of regard before!"

"But you know what I mean when I ask you. You know, as well as though I had been at your feet for a year, that you are the one woman in the world for me, and that I love you with a passion that is deathless as intense!"

Her heart was trobbing madly under that calm, smiling exterior. He loved her—he loved her, this splendid, strengthful man! And yet not even he should share her love, unless he sued more humbly than this.

"Oh, then, by the royal right, you are privileged to ask me what questions you please; only Mr. Egerton, don't be too certain."

"Certain that you love me? I know you do, as well as I do you, only you do not choose to say so—only you will not yield the loyalty your heart urges you to give. Irene, once again—do you love me?"

She knew, now, imperiousness and coquetry on her part would never conquer him—she knew, now, there was another way. Should she let him see, let him know, just a little of her heart?

So she tacked off, thoughtfully twisting her rings, while he waited in a gust of agony for her answer. Very soft, and sweet, and maddening, it came.

"Mr. Egerton, women do not care to confess all they feel when their suitors are eager to take so much for granted."

Surely now he would follow her lead—surely now he would lose that white, intense look, and smile at her, and call her darling, and—and kiss her.

She was deceived in her mental estimate of him—so ignorant of the depth of his capacity for worship—so unable to comprehend the fears of such a soul as his.

He did nothing she hoped he would. Instead, he only stepped nearer, and then he looked straight down into her eyes.

"Women cannot hide what they feel; nor am I taking anything for granted.—But you do love me! I dare you to deny it!"

She flirted her fan carelessly, as she smiled bewitchingly; then looked him bravely in the eyes.

"I have never allowed myself to be dared, Mr. Egerton. Come to me six months from to-day, and I'll answer you then."

"You mean you'll tell me then what you will not tell me now?"

She nodded, half-merrily, the lights in her eyes half-crazing him.

"I will come six months from to-day—six months of agony to win you—six months to be passed at a woman's mercy."

He went away abruptly. Not a kiss, not a touch of her hand, or a caress of her hair: and with eyes filled with tears at the sudden revulsion of feeling, she watched him go away, his firm tread, leisurely enough now, taking him surely, surely from her—to meet how, after the cruel edict that her foolishness had issued?

* * * * * * *

A wild, sobbing February day, with shrieking winds, that seemed howling a requiem; skies a leaden dun, through [illegible] gleams of sun [illegible]

enjoying the keen contrast between warmth, and light, and color within, and cold, and gloom, and darkness without.

Just as wonderously fair to-night, when the sentence of banishment to Rex Egerson ended, as on the day it began, in the sweet August days, beside the sea—only in Irene Conway's face had gathered and grown a new, rare sweetness, a tender patience, a womanly softness that was acquired through the ministry of suffering those weary six months of waiting had brought.

And to-night the time was up. Rex Egerton had earned his reward—the reward of her love—so cruelly long delayed.

She was rapturously happy. Her heart shone out of her beautiful eyes, and was mirrored in the smile of perfect faith, and trust, and content that curved her firm red lips—lips that were waiting Rex Egerton's first kiss.

There was not a shadow of a doubt in her heart, as she stood there in the dun gloom of that prophetic day—a day never dreamed was so typical. She was not surer of her existence than she was that he would come; and with rare, sweet patience, she waited for the hour, the moment, when he would take her in his arms forevermore.

She had dressed herself with jealous scrupulousness, wanting to enchant him anew, and it was not possible she could fail of enchanting any man, with her pale ivory beauty, glowing cherry lips, and rich duskness of eyes and hair, so well set off by the violet silk she wore, with cool, calmly-gleaming pearls clasping her throat, her perfect wrists, and threading her flossy hair.

She looked like some grand Greek princess, in her graceful flowing drapery, as she leaned against the window, hidden from the group in the room by the crimson velvet curtains that shut off this bay-window from the world—that made a trysting-place for the lovers who were so soon to come together.

Then, into all this rapturous anticipation—this overflowing measure of content—came the fateful finger that froze forever all smiles from her sweet, anxious lips, all semblance of aught but hopeless woe from her heart-strings vibrate with ecstasy—so strange, they thrilled her with vague terror, a voice—Rex Egerton's voice! The same, yet not the same.

"I tell you I will see her, for I've traveled thousands of miles on purpose!—Who dares to refuse me to see my promised bride?"

She stepped suddenly forth from between the curtains, perfectly radiant, just as Major Ernest interposed an arm in her path.

"You need not be alarmed, Miss Irene. This fellow seems to have an idea he knows you, and—"

A gray, awful pallor spread its banner of sickening pain over her face.

"It—it is—Rex—Rex! is it you, my darling?"

She would have flown to meet him even then, but was petrified in her step by the absent stare of his eyes, the vacant smile on his lips—ah, these perfect lips!

"She was fair and young, like you, and she bade me come in six months. I am here. I demand my bride!".

"Poor fellow! he's as crazy as a loon! Has he escaped from an asylum? or what can be the matter? Titus"—to the footman—"assist the man out, and see that the doors are secured. Irene—Irene, child!"

For she had fallen prone on the carpet senseless as a statue, as the awful truth came to her, goaded by conscience and outraged love, that in his overwhelming love for her, reason had refused to endure her cruel edict, and hat the mental wreck before her, as well as the hopeless woe of despair that settled over her, that wild winter night, were the just fruits of a woman's mercy!

A SOFT ANSWER.

The husband was quick of temper, and often inconsiderate. They had not been married not yet a year when, one day, in a fit of hasty wrath, he said to his wife,—

"I want no correction from you. If you are not satisfied with my conduct, you can return to your own home whence I took you, and find happiness with your kind!"

"If I leave you," returned the unhappy wife, "will you give me back that which I brought to you?"

"Every dollar. I covet not your wealth. You shall have it all back"

"Ah," she answered, "I meant not the wealth of gold. I thought not of dross. I meant my maiden heart—my first and only love—my buoyant hopes, and the promised blessing of my womanhood. Can you give these back to me?" she inquired.

A moment of thought—of convulsion—and then, taking her to his arms.—

"No, no, my wife, I cannot do that, but I will do more; I will keep them henceforth unsullied and unstained. I will cherish your blessing as my own; and never again, God helping me, will I forget the pledge I gave at the holy altar when you gave your peace and happiness into my keeping."

How the Gobbler Played the Balloon.

'I wonder what all this fuss is about,' said Mother Blackleg one morning as she started out of the barn and saw Farmer Merry's children all dressed up in red, white, and blue, just starting off in the big wagon.

The gobbler shaded his eyes with one claw, and looked for a long time—so long, in fact, that the children disappeared over the top of the hill before he stirred.

By this time Chicken Plump, who had been washing her face and hands in the trough, came up.

'Do you know,' said the gobbler, 'why all those children have rainbows over their shoulders and those striped things on sticks in their hands?'

'Striped things on sticks!' said Chicken Plump, scornfully; 'doesn't your heart tell you what they are?'

The gobbler put his ear to his heart and couldn't hear a word, so he told Chicken Plump that it didn't.

The whole farm-yard now came up and crowded around.

'Gobbler you're a goose,' said Chicken Plump, 'this is the Fourth of July, and they've gone to celebrate.' She said it in such a solemn voice that the little chickens thought it must be something awful, and began to cry.

'Our country calls upon us to join in this celebration,' then continued Chicken Plump.

They all stood very still and listened, but they couldn't hear anything except Farmer Maple's old rooster.

'My friends,' said Chicken Plump, 'you are mistaken; the call is here,' and she struck herself such a blow on the heart that it knocked her over backward.

'Now,' said Chicken Plump, 'we've got to have two things any way, or else we can't celebrate. We *must* have a Goddess of Liberty and a balloon.'

'How would I do for the Goddess,' asked the gobbler, modestly.

'Are you serious?' said Chicken Plump.

'Yes, I am,' said the gobbler, who did not begin to know what "serious" meant.

'Well,' said Chicken Plump, trying to speak calmly, 'I think I express the sentiments of those present when I say that as a first class goddess you would be a failure.'

The gobbler turned away to hide his emotion. 'Perhaps,' he said, recklessly, 'I could be a balloon.

He didn't know what a balloon was, but as Chicken Plump said they must have it, he thought it must be something pretty nice.

'Gobbler, you've hit it just right this time; you shall be the balloon,' said Chicken Plump, and the gobbler was obliged to give himself for ten minutes into the hands of his friends to receive their congratulations.

'The next thing,' said Chicken Plump, 'is to choose the poet.'

'O, couldn't I swap off being a balloon for a poet,' cried the gobbler. 'I know a piece already.

'What is it?' said Chicken Plump.

'I don't want to say it, if I'm going to be poet, 'cause I want to surprise you,' answered the gobbler, 'but it begins like this:

'You'd scarce expect one *of* my age
To speak in public *on* the stage.'

And if that won't do, I'm learning

'Little grains of water,
Little drops of sand,
Make the—make the—make the——'

'Well, never mind now,' said Chicken Plump, 'just take a day off some time and tell us all about it.'

At last they got it all settled, but they had a great deal of trouble with the gobbler, who wanted to swap off being a balloon for every thing else in the celebration.

They got together a splendid choir, which was given just an hour in which to learn the Star Spangled Banner. As the gobbler was told that the balloon would not come off until the very last thing, he insisted upon being a 'spangled banner' too, as he called it. So the choir went down behind the pig pen to practice. They sat down in three rows, and Chicken Plump conducted. They had only sung the first line when the conductor stopped them.

'Something wrong,' he said, 'the first row will please rise and sing it alone.'

'That's all right. Now the next row try it.'

The next row was all right too.

'The trouble must be in the last row,' said Chicken Plump, and as the towering form of the gobbler arose the question seemed pretty nearly settled.

'The first chicken in the row will please to sing alone.' Then each of the others was asked, and by and by it came to the gobbler's turn. The minute he opened his mouth any one could tell where the trouble was, and although the gobbler said he had lost his place in the music, and all that, he was told to go and practice by himself.

'What have I got to do?' said the gobbler.

'Just sing the star spangled banner,' said Chicken Plump, 'and then you will be a balloon.'

The gobbler shaded his eyes with one claw, and looked for a long time—so long, in fact, that the children disappeared over the top of the hill before he stirred.

By this time Chicken Plump, who had been washing her face and hands in the trough, came up.

'Do you know,' said the gobbler, 'why all those children have rainbows over their shoulders and those striped things on sticks in their hands?'

'Striped things on sticks!' said Chicken Plump, scornfully; 'doesn't your heart tell you what they are?'

The gobbler put his ear to his heart and couldn't hear a word, so he told Chicken Plump that it didn't.

The whole farm-yard now came up and crowded around.

'Gobbler you're a goose,' said Chicken Plump, 'this is the Fourth of July, and they've gone to celebrate.' She said it in such a solemn voice that the little chickens thought it must be something awful, and began to cry.

'Our country calls upon us to join in this celebration,' then continued Chicken Plump.

They all stood very still and listened, but they couldn't hear anything except Farmer Maple's old rooster.

'My friends,' said Chicken Plump, 'you are mistaken; the call is here,' and she struck herself such a blow on the heart that it knocked her over backward.

'Now,' said Chicken Plump, 'we've got to have two things any way, or else we can't celebrate. We *must* have a Goddess of Liberty and a balloon.'

'How would I do for the Goddess,' asked the gobbler, modestly.

'Are you serious?' said Chicken Plump.

'Yes, I am,' said the gobbler, who did not begin to know what "serious" meant.

'Well,' said Chicken Plump, trying to speak calmly, 'I think I express the sentiments of those present when I say that as a first class goddess you would be a failure.'

The gobbler turned away to hide his emotion. 'Perhaps,' he said, recklessly, 'I could be a balloon.

He didn't know what a balloon was, but as Chicken Plump said they must have it, he thought it must be something pretty nice.

'Gobbler, you've hit it just right this time; you shall be the balloon,' said Chicken Plump, and the gobbler was obliged to give himself for ten minutes into the hands of his friends to receive their congratulations.

'The next thing,' said Chicken Plump, 'is to choose the poet.'

'O, couldn't I swap off being a balloon for a poet,' cried the gobbler. 'I know a piece already.

'What is it?' said Chicken Plump.

'I don't want to say it, if I'm going to be poet, 'cause I want to surprise you,' answered the gobbler, 'but it begins like this:

'You'd scarce expect one *of* my age
To speak in public *on* the stage.'

And if that won't do, I'm learning

'Little grains of water,
Little drops of sand,
Make the—make the—make the——'

'Well, never mind now,' said Chicken Plump, 'just take a day off some time and tell us all about it.'

At last they got it all settled, but they had a great deal of trouble with the gobbler, who wanted to swap off being a balloon for every thing else in the celebration.

They got together a splendid choir, which was given just an hour in which to learn the Star Spangled Banner. As the gobbler was told that the balloon would not come off until the very last thing, he insisted upon being a 'spangled banner' too, as he called it. So the choir went down behind the pig pen to practice. They sat down in three rows, and Chicken Plump conducted. They had only sung the first line when the conductor stopped them.

'Something wrong,' he said, 'the first row will please rise and sing it alone.'

'That's all right. Now the next row try it.'

The next row was all right too.

'The trouble must be in the last row,' said Chicken Plump, and as the towering form of the gobbler arose the question seemed pretty nearly settled.

'The first chicken in the row will please to sing alone.' Then each of the others was asked, and by and by it came to the gobbler's turn. The minute he opened his mouth any one could tell where the trouble was, and although the gobbler said he had lost his place in the music, and all that, he was told to go and practice by himself.

'What have I got to do?' said the gobbler.

'Just sing the star spangled banner,' said Chicken Plump, 'and then you will be a balloon.'

The barn and sat there so very quietly that Chicken Plump said he was the best balloon, as far as he went, that she ever saw.

The ceremonies down in the barn yard were very impressive. The poem, delivered by Mother Blackleg, was encored five or six times, while the oration, by Chicken Plump herself (who was also the Goddess of Liberty), was crowded with hits. I don't mean the hits that were necessary to keep the audience awake, although I must confess that the orator was obliged to appoint three or four aids to go about punching the sleepy ones around the yard until they were fairly awake again.

The Star Spangled Banner went off splendidly, and the gobbler received special permission to join in the chorus if he would sing to himself. As the strains died away, Chicken Plump addressed the assemblage.

'Fellow-citizens, the time has come when I must announce the last act in this glorious celebration. There sits the balloon anxious to take his flight among the clouds.

They all looked up, and there, sure enough, was the gobbler right on the very end of the ridgepole, as Chicken Plump had directed.

'What do you mean by clouds?' shouted the balloon.

'Now,' said Chicken Plump, without answering the question, 'the minute you see the balloon go up, you must all say 'hurrah' three times, and clap your wings just as hard as you can. Then she called to the balloon and told him to open his wings.

'Is there a good breeze?' called Chicken Plump.

'First-rate,' screamed the balloon.

'Then jump with all your might,' shouted Chicken Plump.

Well, you ought to have seen that gobbler, that's all. If it hadn't been for the name, you'd never have thought him a balloon in this world; for instead of going up, he went down, down, fluttering and tumbling and gobbling, while every one in the yard held up his claws with horror. The balloon struck first on the clothes line and then on the pig pen, and when it reached the ground it lay all mussed up so that you never would have known it. Chicken Plump was the first to reach the spot.

'Perhaps I was hasty in this balloon business,' she said, almost choking with emotion, as she tenderly stroked the gobbler's head.

The injured balloon was carefully carried to the barn and placed on the hay. They rubbed the invalid all over, and by and by the gobbler's eye opened (he had only one).

Motioning to Chicken Plump, the gobbler said, wearily,

'Has there been a fight?'

'No.'

'Who knocked me down, then?'

'Nobody, you came down yourself,' said Chicken Plump. 'Don't you remember, you were the Fourth of July balloon.

The gobbler raised himself on his elbow. 'Did I do pretty well for the first time?' he asked, looking appealingly around, and they all said that if ever they had another Fourth of July celebration and wanted some sort of a balloon, no matter how poor it might be, that they should certainly call upon him again; and then the gobbler went off to sleep, with a smile on his face, and slept so long that Chicken Plump said it was better than all the medicine in the world.

"AS THE TWIG IS BENT."

"Well, I declare! I don't see where that child gets his disposition from," I heard a mother exclaim, not long since to her husband.

O, how easily any impartial observer could have told her; but she could not see; and she would not have believed had she been told.

An incident, comical in some respects, but yet seriously suggestive, came under my observation within that mother's door yard, the relation of which will help to solve her moral problem.

"Jack!" screamed a bright-eyed, golden-haired, fair-faced little girl, of not more than six summers, to her younger brother, who had plumped himself under the wall, where he was digging sand with a strip of shingle,—"Jack,—you good-for-nothing little scamp!—you are the torment of my life! Come right into the house this minute, or I'll take the very hide off'm you!—Come in, I say!"

"Why, Totty!" exclaimed her father, who chanced to come up at that moment, "what in the world are you saying? Is that the way you talk to your brother?"

"O, no, [illegible] promptly and [illegible]

"We are [illegible]

[illegible] (seriously)—"Tom-[illegible] in you don't take off [illegible] you must me?"

[illegible] dearest, if I take off my [illegible] to I to do when I want [illegible]

A SHORT RULE FOR FRETTERS.

A young friend has been visiting me who was a fretter. She fretted when it rained, and fretted when it shone. She fretted when others came to see her, and fretted when they did not. It is dreadful to be a fretter. A fretter is troublesome to herself and troublesome to her friends. We, to be sure, have our trials, but fretting does not help us to bear or get rid of them.

I have lately come across a short rule for fretters, which they shall have. Here it is: Never fret about what you can't help, because it won't do any good.—Never fret about what you can help; because, if you can help it, do so. Say this when you get up in the morning, say it at noon, and say it at night; and not only say, but do, and that will be, do not fret at all—a fine doing.

'But we have our trials,' my young readers say. Yes, you have; and your little trials are as hard to bear as our big ones. But fretting doesn't help them, nor wishing we were somebody else, or dwelling upon them until they look a great deal bigger than they really are. Did you ever see that fable about the toad and the plantain leaf?

A toad used to live under a stone beside the brook. He was a pretty fat toad, and got along in the world as well as toads generally do. One day he went out to find something to eat, and hopping out among the green leaves by the brook side, he heard a rustle among the leaves. He said to himself, 'There's a beetle. I like beetles. I'll be quiet and catch him.' So he crept along till he got to it, and stuck out his tongue to get him; but it happened to be a bumble-bee! He dropped it like a hot coal, and had to cry out in the way toads cry, and hop back to his hole under the stone. He suffered with the pain, and his tongue swelled up, and he was obliged to lie by for two or three days. Hopping out he plucked a leaf of the plantain, and took it home for his medicine, and put it in his mouth to cure the sting of the bee. He stayed at home for two or three days, and began to get hungry, and poor, and lean. As he hopped along, he came under the leaf of a plantain, and being very tired and hungry, he stopped under the leaf, and looking up, said, 'Oh, what a nice time you plantains have! I should like to change places. Toads have a hard life.'

The plantain said, 'Friend toad, I should like to change too. I don't see what toads have to complain of. I think they must have a fine time of it.'

'Let me tell you,' said the toad. 'In the first place, we have to work for our living, and find all we get to eat; and sometimes, when we think we are going to get a beetle, we get a bumble-bee.—Then, again, in winter time we get frozen up, and when we come out the boys come along and stone us, and the crows pick us up; isn't that trouble? while you plantains have just to [illegible] by the brook, and don't have to work. I should just like to change places with you.'

'Stop! let me tell you my side,' cried the plantain. We cannot hop about as you can, but have to stop where we are put. If we want a drink of water, we can't go to the brook and get it. We can't move an inch to go and see the world and visit our next neighbor. Then the sun shines hot all day, and we have to bear it, and can't hop under a cool leaf as you do. Then, by and by, comes along a cow and nips off our head, or a little worm eats into our heart, and we have no power to shake him off. I should like to change places with you. You take mine and I will take yours. I am so anxious to hop down [illegible] and get a drink.'

'Stay, stay!' [illegible] 'I hear a cricket. Let me [illegible] off he went after the cricket, and [illegible] back.

So it appears everybody does have trials and the only right way of getting along is not to wish ourselves somebody else, and fret ourselves because we are not, but contentedly bear [illegible] be satisfied with what God [illegible].—*The Day of Days.*

☞ A soldier [illegible] for habitual drunkenness was addressed by the president of the court-martial: "Prisoner, you have heard the [illegible] for habitual drunkenness; what have you to say in your [illegible]

"[illegible], but bub-[illegible]

[illegible] a man ransacks the [illegible] house for a pin, and, not being able to find one, drops into a chair with disgust, and is immediately rewarded for the search.

☞ Passed to a third reading—love letters.

☞ The iron horse has but one gait—the engine.

©Maryland State Archives msa_sc3326_scm8204-0198