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THE BALANCE SHEET.

Life's Ledger opens and a strange new date
Is on the page that else were pure and white,
And we must cast our balance sheet of fate,
Sum up the columns of the past, and write
What we have gained from the great circling year;
What we have lost in hours swept idly by;
What we have spent in follies all too dear;
What we have saved in life's great treasury;

How much of worldly wisdom we have gained,
What dear illusions lost, like fleeting breath
And for our gold and pearl what poor exchange
In gaining knowledge and in losing faith.
What notes of promise written in our name
Have gone to be protested in life's bank;
What checks for charity and virtue drawn
Our souls have never signed but with a blank.

Alas! what *doubts* entries have we made!
The world on one side, on the other God;
Who holds the balance? can our debts be paid?
Where is our stock, and is its value good?
Have we placed all our winnings in the dust?
Put them on interest in some earthly mine?
Or are they high and safe from moth or rust,
In human sympathy, in love divine?

Rich, not in the abundance that we have,
The year's full horn is emptied at our door;
The soul hath other merchandise to save,
'Tis what we *are* that maketh rich or poor.
The deeds that we have done with vaulting pride,
Hoping that some large interest they would pay,
May count for nothing on that other side
Where angels keep the books a different way.

Our souls dream journeying wander down the past
To that forever that lies far behind,
The sum of shine and shadow that is cast
Counts more than all the present wealth we find.
Memory, the treasurer of our golden dreams,
At the old fireside ever keeps us room.
Tired of the tumult of life's busy schemes,
Our pilgrim hearts to-night are going home.

What muffled echoes fall across our path,
Footsteps of loved ones that are caught away,
What have we lost in this time circling tide?
What have they gained in that Eternity?
And do they give good gifts to those they love.
These angels overleaning from the skies?
Have they a New Year on the heights above?
What are they doing now in Paradise?

What have we gained by all that we have lost?
Patience and strength to bear anew the strife;
The soul climbs upward only by the cross,
And sorrow is the crowning crown of life.
Our future lies close folded in the now
Each precious moment that we throw away,
Like wanton spendthrifts of our golden sands
Is heavy with Eternal destiny.

In God's arithmetic no cipher's lost,
Each bears a stamp of value that's divine,
O may our souls at last be found at par
With earth's great duties and with heaven's design
And may the page of life whereon we write,
However blotted and with tears made dim,
Be 'lumined ever by the falling light
Reflected from the Star of Bethlehem.

SNIP-SNAP.

Cynthia Susan Simpson, age eighteen, with the pretty talent of pleasing men, was the acknowledged belle of the little Marrow-Squash Valley.

This little talent of pleasing men is sometimes given by nature as a compensation for the lack of every other accomplishment, or the means of procuring any; but this was not the case with Cynthia, who had good Yankee sense, and a vein of sprightliness in her composition, which latter, as I take it, requires several other talents for its support, otherwise it soon degenerates into silliness—whence it sours into vulgar ill-nature in the country girl—in the lady of society into sarcasm.

Cynthia was pretty, in the freshness of her age. American beauty comes forth like a flower, and is cut down. The loveliness of girlhood rarely ripens in the matron. And Cynthia was afraid to risk her loveliness, no doubt; for whilst she encouraged the attentions of many "beaux," who, in the language of her society, "went to see her" evening after evening, at the snug farm-house of her father, whenever any of these swains took the opportunity to press upon her notice the nature of his case, and urge the necessity of its speedy cure, she cut the matter short with him.

Truth must be said, that amongst all her admirers there was not one who was *a priori*—that is, before a reciprocation of his love took place—a very desirable match for her.

The richest was Seth Taggart, who paid his last visit to her one afternoon, in a brand new suit of glossy, fine, black broadcloth. Pretty Cynthia was alone, and prepared by previous experience to discern symptoms of an approaching assault upon the Malakoff of her affections. She pursed her pretty little mouth, and sewed, with nimble-glancing fingers, on the sleeve of one of the old squire's shirts, of unbleached cotton; and thought to herself what a fool Seth Taggart was, and wondered how he would get out of the fix in which he found himself, and how he could dare to think she had given him any encouragement—and looked—very bewitching. Poor Seth sat on the verge of his chair, and gazed through the window, which was open, into the woods, but his was a mind like that of Wordsworth's Peter,

> "A primrose, on the river's brim,
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And nothing more."

He did not find any inspiration in the woods, so he began to look into the ashes.

"Miss Cynthia," said he, at length, "did you ever see a crow?"

"Yes, Mr. Seth," said she, folding her gusset, and looking down at it demurely as a mouse.

'Black—ain't it?" said Seth.

"Very."

Then came a pause. "Darn it—I wish she'd help me out," said Seth in his own thought. "The little minx knows what I want to say, and she *might* help me to say it."

What man has not thought this before now, at courting time—and wished to borrow feminine tact, and the larger experience of women, to help him out of the slough of despond he is beginning to sink into? What man would not give the world to know how the last man, who offered himself to her, got through with it?

"Ever see an owl?" said Seth, at length, falling back upon his own resources.

"Often, Mr. Seth," lisped pretty Cynthia.

"It's got big eyes—ain't it, now?"

"Very big eyes," said she.

Seth grew angry. Angry with himself, no doubt: but anger, like Phœbus Apollo at sunset, glows brightest in reflection. He thought it a "mean shame," she wouldn't "help him out," while she sat there, looking "good enough to eat," and laughing at him, as even his blunt perception told him, whilst her attention was apparently bestowed upon the shirt-sleeve. He wished it were *his* shirt she was stitching so assiduously. He stirred up the ashes on the hearth, and almost made up his mind that "he warn't going to give her another chance at him;" but Cynthia dropped her cotton-ball, and Seth, not rising from his chair, stretched out his long, lank arm, and picked it up. He touched her hand, as she took it back, and an electric shock thrilled through his veins, and made him feel "all over—ever so," as he some time afterwards expressed the sensation to me.

"Miss Cynthia, may be you are fond of maple candy?"

"Very, said she.

"Well, now," said Seth, rising, "the next time I come, I'll try and bring you a great gob."

But as he rode home, behind his old farm mare, he said to himself, "I reckon I ain't going back to court a gal who sees a feller in a fix, and never helps him." And sure enough, he never did return. Miss Cynthia lost her richest lover, and many folks, even to this day, believed she wished him back again. It is the way of women to want the thing that can't be had. At least, so men say (if not in practice, in theory), and Cynthia's mouth watered, I dare say, for many a week after, for that gob of maple candy.

THE MORAL.—Let every man, oh! pretty girl, pay court to you in his own way, and not in your way, and help him out at that, being sure, however, that you are in harmony with his mode of procedure. Never disturb ice-cream when it is going to freeze; nor lift the pot as it begins to boil; nor make a false step and get out of time, when your partner is meditating a *revers* in the *deux temps*, or the polka. Many a declaration of affection has been frightened off by some wrong note sung in the treble of the duet, which put it out of harmony.

Cynthia, though so pretty a girl, and so experienced in the art of saying "no," to an offer of marriage, had yet a good deal to learn in her own craft; and, indeed, no experience ever primes a woman for the decisive moment. Each case must be met on principle, and not on precedent. It is our business to discover, in this story of "Snip Snap" how far pretty Cynthia profited by the experience she prided her self upon in the rejection of her lovers.

It was a mellow autumn morning, and a russet glow had tinged the woods at the back of Squire Simpson's homestead. It was Seth Taggart's wedding-day. He was to marry, that evening, Susie Chase—a smiling little rose-bud of a wife, to whom he found plenty of things to say, as sweet to Susie's ears as to her lips his maple candy. Cynthia, as one of her best friends, was to be bridesmaid; and as she wished to shine that night, in all her bravery, and wanted some new ribbons for her head-dress, this want tempted her abroad, a little after noon, when the harvest-fields were quiet and the yoked oxen stood relieved from labor, leisurely chewing the sweet morsel reserved for that soft, sunny hour of rest, as men of business use to do the thought of the last letter written by the hand they love, till the burden of the day is laid aside, putting it apart (with all its woman's nonsense, and half unreasonable fancies), pure from the contact of the pile of yellow letters lying on their desk—offerings upon the shrine of Jupiter Mammon.

Our pretty Cynthia tripped along her path, scattering a cloud of grasshoppers and crickets, as she stepped; and in her silly little pride of bellehood her heart held, though she would not have confessed the thought, that her relative value to her crowd of beaux was in the same proportion as that of one woman to many grasshoppers.

At a turn in the path she came suddenly on one of these admirers—Frank Handy. Frank's face flushed. He had been thinking of her when she surprised him—thinking of her all that day and through a sleepless night; and in those hours the Cynthia of his fancy had smiled on him, and laid her gentle hand in his, and had been gathered to his heart—it was a shock to come thus suddenly upon so different a reality. At the moment he encountered her, he was indulging himself in an imaginary love scene, in which he was calling her, in heart, "My Cynthia, my love," and at the sudden sight of her, all such presumptuous fancies fled in haste, and hid themselves, shrinking like variegated coral polypes when danger approaches—each into the recesses of its cell.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Cynthia," he said, stammering before he gathered self-possession, and accustomed himself to her presence. "I was on my way to make you a call. If you will allow me, I will turn round and walk with you."

"I am not going far, Mr. Frank, only into the village, for some ribbon for my hair, and gentlemen dislike shopping." (knowing perfectly well that he would go with her).

"I know where a wild hop-vine grows," said he, "it would make a much prettier ornament for your hair than any ribbons you could buy in the village."

"And will you get me some?"

"Turn this way into the woods, and spare me half an hour while I twist it into a wreath. I am going away from here to-morrow, perhaps. I have been offered a professorship in a school of agriculture."

"Indeed, Mr. Handy."

There was a pause, and Cynthia resumed, a little hurriedly: "I should think you would like going away from here There is nothing to tempt a young gentleman to remain among us."

"I shall like it, in some respects, better than my present life," said Handy. "This farmer's life, where there are no higher interests to accompany it, does not draw out the best energies of a man. His nature, like his thoughts, goes round and round in the routine, like a squirrel in its cage, and makes no progress.

"This man thinks higher things than I think," was Cynthia's thought as he said this, and, for a moment, she felt humbled in his presence; but she rallied her pretensions, remembered her bellehood and her conquests, and the light in which she always had been looked upon by all her lovers, and was almost disposed to revenge upon Frank Handy the passing feeling of inferiority. Frank stood in silence, twining the hop-wreath for her head. He did not speak. His thoughts were buisied with the words that he would say to her when he broke silence. He was satisfied to have her waiting at his side—waiting for the hop-wreath, with its pale green bells, that he was twining leisurely; and Cynthia grew impatient as she found he did not speak to her. She addressed him several questions, which he answered with an air of preoccupation. She wandered from his side a few yards among the rocks, turning over with her foot some pebbles covered with gray and orange moss, and disturbing all the swarm of busy insect life, which made its home there. The influences of the day stole into her heart, and made her answers more soft and natural.

At last Handy broke silence, calling her to him, as she stood watching the stir which the point of her foot had produced in an ant-hill.

"Miss Cynthia."

"Is it finished?" she said, quickly.

"Not the garland—but the struggle in my breast is finished. I have been questioning with myself whether I should say to you what I am about to say."

Cynthia gathered a leaf, and began slowly to tear apart its delicate veins and fibres.

"Miss Cynthia, is it pleasant to you to have a man say he loves you?"

"I don't know, Mr. Handy. I suppose so. That is, I think it is very embarrassing sometimes."

"Why embarrassing, Miss Cynthia?"

He was taking her on a new tack. It was different from anything she had ever before experienced. She did not like this way of having his offer.

"It is embarrassing when I know that my only answer can be No," she said, looking him in the face a moment, and then casting her eyes upon the lime leaf she was dissecting.

"It would be more embarrassing, I think, if you were not so sure," he said, "and if you took the matter into consideration."

"It never wants any consideration with me," she answered.

"What! did you never place before your mind the subject of marriage? Have you been satisfied with the vain triumphs of a belle? And did you never look beyond, to see what the happy duties of a wife and the sweet ties of home might be?

Cynthia laughed, but the laugh was affected and constrained. "What nonsense, Mr. Handy!"

"It is not nonsense," he replied; "such thoughts are fit for maiden meditation—they are womanly—and *womanly*, above everything else, I should wish my wife to be."

"I hope she may be all you wish her, Mr. Handy. We will go now, if you please, if you have finished my garland."

"It is not ready for you yet," said Handy, passing it over one arm while he took her hand. "Cynthia, beloved! you must listen to me."

She drew her hand away, but he took it again, and resumed. "You must let me feel its pulses beat against my hand, while I tell you the secret of my life—of my life, for I have always loved you. I loved you when you were a blooming little girl, and we both went to school to Ezekias Reed, dear Cynthia. I have loved you against hope—at times against my better reason. I have hesitated to tell you this, because encumbrances on my farm made my position less than that which I thought ought to be offered to you. I have watched you with your other admirers; and, in some moments, have not thought that any other had your preference, so that other men have taken their chance before me. This offer of a professorship, which adds a thousand dollars to my income, makes it possible for me to address you. Cynthia! there are depths of tenderness which no human eye has ever fathomed, in many a strong man's heart—depths which, perhaps, are never, by the shallower nature of your sex, entirely reciprocated or understood. It is not alone my heart, it is my very nature—heart and soul, mind and strength—that I offer to you. The love of you, like things which plants absorb and assimilate into their own growth, has become part of me. This is a tried and true affection, Cynthia. It has waited patiently until the moment came when it might be offered to your acceptance. Cynthia, if you will lay this little hand in mine" (and he let it fall, but stretched out his hand towards her), "I will strengthen you, and elevate you, and guide you. You shall be a woman of higher rank (as God ranks woman), for your union with a man's stronger, steadier, and more single-minded nature; and, Cynthia, your influence for good on me will be incalculable. Who can estimate what a man owes to the affection of a woman? All that I have in me that is good will be doubled by your influence. You must draw forth—perhaps create—the gentleness, delicacies, and the tendernesses that complete the manly character."

He paused, and Cynthia stood with her hand hidden in the folds of her mantle.

"No," she said slowly; "I am sorry, Mr. Handy, but I cannot be what you wish to you."

There was an embarrassed silence between them for a few moments, and then Cynthia, gathering courage with her rising pride, continued:

"I am not good enough to answer your expectations, Mr. Handy. You must look elsewhere for the kind of woman who will satisfy you."

Handy started, and his face flushed eagerly. He was about to speak. Cynthia caught the lighting of his eyes; but when they rested on her face, he said that her words were not wholly sincere, and the look faded.

"You are not dealing fairly with me, Miss Cynthia, nor yet with your own heart," he said, a little bitterly. "You are not convinced of what you said this moment. You think in your heart I am a foolish fellow, and that I ask too much. You do *not* think that Cynthia Simpson falls short of the reasonable ideal of any man."

"I don't know why you should say such things," said Cynthia, growing angry and nearly ready to cry. It was the first time any offer had been made to her which had not left behind it a self-satisfied feeling of triumph; and yet here was Frank Handy, as incomparably superior to any other suitor she had ever had as .... Well, no matter.

"Miss Cynthia," said Frank, "when a man loves a woman, as I have long loved you, he singles her out from the whole world as his representative of womanhood; and there is that in her before which he bows down, doing homage to the woman's nature within her. But this does not imply unconsciousness of her faults. He may see where she comes short of her own capability. And that marriage is true union in which the husband, up to whom she looks, and on whom she should lean strengthens her better in its struggle against her worser nature.

They were walking towards the homestead, and walking fast. Cynthia was angry, disturbed, and mortified. Was this a time to dwell upon her faults? She admitted that she had some. Vague confession! by no means implying that Cynthia knew that, at that moment, she was proud, vain, insincere, and petulant, and that she was crushing down the better feelings of her heart, to give the victory within her to the worst. If Handy wanted her, she thought, he might woo her with more respect to her pretensions. And he *should* woo her. If he loved her as he said he did, she knew her power was great. He should bring his homage not coldly to the womanhood within her, but to herself—to Cynthia Susan Simpson, in spite of the full display of all her faults, and even in opposition to his better reason. She was not to be defrauded of her triumph, and it would be a great one, indeed, if she forced him, by her faults themselves, to surrender at discretion.

They reached the steps over the stone fence which led on to the highway. In their path lay a disabled grasshopper. Frank set his foot on it and crushed it firmly. "Miss Cynthia," said he, "few women have the courage to treat rejected suitors thus. It is the true humanity."

He helped her over the steps, and paused. He took the hop-wreath carefully from his arm, and gave it into her hands. She took it with an indifferent air, and, as she took it, crushed some of the green blossoms. She would have treated him with more courtesy (had Frank but known it), if she had been entirely indifferent to his admiration.

"Miss Cynthia," said he, now in a grave and measured tone, which, in spite of herself, impressed her with a sense of the powerlessness of her little arts when brought into conflict with his self-possession and sincerity, "I know very well how you have dealt by many men, and I am not disposed to fall into the ranks, and take my chance among your many other patient suitors. It is true, that the wound that you inflict on me will leave its scar for life; but I cannot make my self-respect an offering even to you. And if you have the feelings of true nobleness, which I have always fancied I discerned in you, you would respect me, esteem me, love me less, for such a sacrifice. I shall never offer myself again to you." Cynthia started. Slight and rapid as her movement was, he saw it, and repeated, "I shall never offer myself again to you. And I leave this place to-morrow, never to return to it, till I have subdued this love for you. To-night I shall be at the wedding. I am groomsman to Seth Taggart, and shall stand up with you. I am going home to consider fully what has passed, to convince myself (if I can) calmly, whether my love for you has been an error in my life, for which my judgment is responsible, or only its misfortune; whether the Cynthia I have loved is really capable, as I have dreamed, of scattering the clouds that dim her beauty, and shining forth in her sweet queenliness upon the lonely darkness of the man who can teach her what it is to love. I do not know what I shall think. To-day has shaken my confidence in you. As I said before, I shall make you no further offer; but, if I make up my mind to renew the one I have just made you, I shall say Snip! during the evening; and if you answer Snap! I shall understand it is favorably received by you. Mind," he added, "I think it doubtful whether, notwithstanding my love for you, I shall think it right to say it. I am going into the fields to 'meditate till eventide' upon my course, and I may bring back the conviction, that for the present rejection of my suit I ought to be much obliged to you. Nor shall I say Snip! more than once. In this uncertainty I leave the matter to your consideration."

"What impertinence!" thought Cynthia. "I never heard of such a thing!" And she began to cry, standing alone upon the highway, holding her hop-wreath in her hand.

"I don't know what I had better do. I wish he had taken some other way of speaking to me. Oh! why should he be so very unkind? I don't care. It is his loss a great deal more than mine, if he is really in love with me."

The evil spirit was coming back, and it whispered, "He will certainly say Snip! but you had better not say Snap! too readily."

She walked on thinking, imagining a triumph, when suddenly the thought came to her that she was confessing to herself she wanted to say Snap!—and why? It was not possible that the tables of her pride were turned upon her; that she was in Frank Handy's power, to refuse or to take: that she loved him! "I don't care for him at all," was the suggestion of the bad angel. "I only want to teach him for the future to behave. He is a presuming, exacting, self-conceited fellow."

"Have you ever, in the course of your experience," said the good angel, "seen any other man like Frank? Has not the conversation of this very day raised him to a height in your esteem .... which is .... which must be .... almost .... That is, he stands before you in a light in which no other man has ever stood before?"

"I don't believe he loves me," said her perverse heart, "or else he would have taken a great deal more pains to win me."

"Ah!" said the good angel, "what better love can a man give than that which sees your faults and strengthens you against them? True, he has set his ideal of womanhood so high that you do not come up to it; but he sees in you capabilities for good, beyond those of other women, though to the height of your capabilities you have never attained."

"Oh! I shall be a worse woman and an unhappy woman, if I do not love Frank Handy, and if Frank Handy does not love me," said her heart, now turning to its better instincts, as she threw herself upon her little, white, dimity-covered bed, in her own chamber, and, shutting out the light from her eyes, thought what life would be if Frank never said Snip!—Frank, who was even then walking in the fields, trying to think all the harm he could of her.

Here she lay, and cried, and disquieted herself in vain. And she thought over all the good she had ever heard of Frank Handy, and—strange!—that though it seemed to her he had the good word and good opinion of every man who knew him, no one had ever quite seemed to appreciate him to his full value. Perhaps he had never shown his inmost heart to other people as he had to her. Her wounded feeling seized upon the balm she found in such a thought. Frank was not a man to put forth his pretensions. She had wronged him very much in calling him conceited and presuming. He had spoken only what he had a right to think about his own sincerity; and oh; how she wished he could think a great deal better of *her*.

During the burst of tears that followed this reflection, the great farm tea-bell rang. Cynthia sprang from her bed and wiped her eyes. If she looked as if she had been crying, might not some one say she was fretted to lose Seth Taggart? Seth Taggart, indeed! She wasn't going to cry for losing any man. And the evil spirits resumed their sway.

So Cynthia went down stairs towering in pride and wrath. She had half a mind not to go to the wedding. No, she could not do that. People would certainly say things she would not like about her and Seth Targgart, if she staid away. It was delicate ground with her, this matter of Seth Taggart's, because he had never made her any offer. "I think men treat women shamefully," said Cynthia in her thoughts, summing up all her wrongs at once, as she sat at the tea-table, priming herself with pride against the weakness before which she felt her courage giving away.

"Cynthia, I reckon you'd best go and dress you," said her mother, as she was clearing away the table after tea; "you leave the things, and I'll wash up and put away. It will take you some time to fix yourself, and you ought to be there early, if you are going to stand up with Sue."

"Who's the groomsman, Miss Bridesmaid?" said her father.

"Frank Handy, sir," said Cynthia, with a toss of her head.

"Ha! Handy?" said her father, "a right clever fellow is Frank. It'll be a lucky woman he stands up with to be married to."

Cynthia escaped to her own room, and she began to cry again. There! her father spoke well of Frank; but nobody could know him as well as she knew him. Oh! if he only would come back. Why hadn't she known the state of her own heart that morning? But he took her so by surprise, and all her evil feelings had got uppermost at the moment. It would be very cruel of him—very—not to try her again.

Thus she thought, until she was sufficiently advanced in her toilet to put her wreath on. Should she wear it? Would it not be confessing too much, if he were to see it in her hair? She looked for some ribbons in her drawer, but at this moment her father called her, and said, if she came quick he would drive her over to Susie's before he unharnessed his old mare. So she put on the hop-wreath in a hurry, giving it the benefit of her doubt, and its trembling green bells mixed with the light curls of her pretty sunny hair.

"Where did you get that thing from?" said her father. "It's mighty tasty, I declare. Give me a kiss, Cynthia. I hope your beaux will think you look half as pretty as I do. And it's better, my child to be admired by your old father, who loves you, than by a crowd of foolish fellows, half of whom get round a pretty girl just like my flock of sheep out yonder, one following because another is making up to her."

"Foolish fellows!" they *were* "foolish fellows." But Frank Handy was not one of them. Frank had never followed in her train sufficiently to be accounted one of her suitors. It was this very "foolish" flock, whose ranks he scorned to enter. All that her father said, seemed to justify her nascent feeling. She kissed the old man's ruddy cheek, and felt as if the callow love, that fluttered at her heart, had almost been made welcome by his approbation.

"What time shall I come for you, Cynthia?" said he, as she alighted at Susy's door.

"Oh! not till late, father," she said, hurriedly. "Stay—not at all. Some of the young men will walk home with me; or, if they don't, I'll come with Tommy Chase. He's only eleven, but he's tall of his age."

And now Cynthia found herself in the bride's chamber. The pretty little rose bud, blushing in her wedding muslin, and going to be very happy, because .... well, it takes a good deal more sense than Susie had to be unhappy in life when one is blessed with a sweet temper and a good digestion. A superadded power of suffering is a proof of an advance in organization, and we submit the argument to the skeptic; whether this truth does not imply the necessity of some power or influence which shall counterbalance and adjust this sensitiveness to suffering in the highest natures?

Cynthia was waited for to put the finishing touches to the bridal toilet, for Cynthia had taste, and Cynthia among her "girls" had a reputation for good-nature. Her fingers failed her as she pinned the wedding wreath, and she trembled more than the bride did when the buggy that had been sent for the minister stopped at the end of the brick path which led up to the homestead. She saw Frank Handy in his bridal suit going down to receive the minister.

"Cynthia, you go and tell the gentlemen they may come in."

Cynthia shrank back. But as bridesmaid it was her office, and the others pushed her to the door.

"She didn't want to see Seth Taggart, I reckon," said one of the girls in a half whisper. "Don't you see how pale she has grown?"

Cynthia falsified this speech by looking scarlet before the girl addressed could turn her head; and she opened the door of the room, where the bridegroom and his men were caged, with an air in which assumed indifference was strongly marked, and said, "Gentlemen, we are ready," with a toss that sent the hop-bells dancing in her head.

Seth, long and lean, and shiny, in his wedding suit as a snake in a new skin, took little Susie on his awkward arm; Frank Handy, quite collected, and self-possessed, offered his to the bridesmaid, and they followed the bride and bridegroom into the best parlor. Cynthia and Frank were parted, when they took their places for the ceremony. It was only a moment that she leaned upon his arm; but that moment gave her a new sensation. It was a pride, such as no woman need be ashamed of, in resting upon manly strength. His arm did not tremble, though all her nerves seemed twittering like wires stretched, and suddenly let loose. He seemed so strong, so calm, so self-collected, and so dignified, that she began to feel her own unworthiness, and to mistrust her power.

She cast her eyes down during the service, tried to bring her rebel nerves under control—she heard nothing, and saw no one. The minister had blessed them both, and kissed the bride. Everybody came round the pair with salutations. The kissing was rather indiscriminate. Seth claimed the privilege of kissing all the girls, and of course he kissed the bridesmaid. His former sensation of "all over—ever so" transferred itself to her in a different way. She would as soon have kissed a clam.

"Cynthia, you and Frank bring in the cake. You seem to forget all you have got to do," said one of the young girls of the party.

"Frank! Here! Your bridesmaid's waiting, and I declare, I don't believe you have taken the privilege of the kiss you are entitled to."

Frank was called away from the side of a lady in blue, a stranger from the city, who had been brought by some of the guests. She had no other acquaintances, and Frank seemed to be attentive to her.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Cynthia," said he, turning from the lady, and taking no notice of the latter part of the speech that was addressed to him, "let us do all that is expected of us."

They went together into the pantry, and were there alone Cynthia thought, 'if he intends to say Snip! now is the moment." But Frank was intent on arranging the cake on plates, and disposing them on a large waiter. Cynthia felt ready to cry. She took refuge in silence, and the cake. It may have been the sweet, unwholesome smell of wedding cake which made her head ache violently.

"It is a foolish custom," said Frank, as they arranged the cake. "Foolish, that persons, because they are happy, should want to make other folks sick. But there is a great deal of selfishness in the display of newly-married happiness, as that essay by Elia tells us."

Frank sighed, and that sigh revived the courage of Cynthia. Now she thought he will say "Snip!" Can I say "Snap?" Oh! no.

She put on a little coquetry. "You will not have any cake at your wedding, Mr. Frank," she said. "Everything about that will be the perfection of good sense and reason."

She had not intended to be sarcastic, but as the speech fell from her lips, it sounded so. It was trifling—unworthy. She wished she had not said it. Its tone was out of harmony with what she felt.

"Come," said Frank, "let us feed them." He took one of the handles of the tray, and the bridesmaid took the other. The room was very merry. The cake was served with plenty of noise, and the wine after it. Frank seemed to be quite self-possessed, and attentive to everybody. Cynthia's beaux could make nothing of her. She answered their questions wrong. A rumor ran that she was wearing the willow for Seth Taggart. She declined to dance, on the plea that she must keep herself disengaged for her duties as a bridesmaid, and, indeed, her head ached so she feared the motion. Agonized by her self consciousness, and with too little spirit left to make head against the reports that were going about, she could not but perceive that Frank seemed not to remember her.

"Who is that lady in blue, Mr. Handy is so taken up with?" she said to one of the party. Cynthia had always called him "Frank" before, but consciousness made her now reject the old familiarity.

"Oh! that is somebody very wonderful Everybody else is afraid to speak to her. She has written a book. Frank seems to be right down flirting with her—doesn't he? I declare, now, he always wanted somebody out of the way. Nobody here was good enough for Frank. Have you heard he has been offered a professorship, and is going away? He is going to live in the same place she does. I shouldn't wonder at his courting her—should you?"

"I don't care," said Cynthia in her heart, "I don't care. Oh! yes I do I care that he should have weighed me in the balances so calmly this afternoon, and found me so unworthy, that he takes back the love he has offered me. Has he judged me very cruelly? Or am I quite unworthy of his attachment? Oh! think that this morning I had it in my power to be happy all my life, when I refused him! Oh! how can any one compare any other man with him? And he loved me only to-day—and now, to-night, his reason says I am not good enough to be his wife; and he is afraid of being unhappy with me. Indeed, I am not good enough—but I would try to be."

".... If you would snip it."

It was Frank Handy's voice. She caught the word, and looked up eagerly. Frank saw her, and stopped embarrassed. He was holding up a torn fold in the dress of his partner in blue.

"If I knew where to find a needle and thread," said the authoress, with a half look at the bridesmaid.

"I know. Let me sew it up for you," said Cynthia.

Her pride had left her. She felt humbled to the dust. It would be a relief to do something for this woman—better than herself—whom Frank preferred to her.

"Let me do it," she said earnestly.

"Mr. Handy, I shall depend upon your escort."

Frank Handy bowed, and the girls went together into a bed-room.

Escort?—was it his escort to the city? He had told her he should go there. Cynthia sewed up the hole in the blue dress, very sadly and quietly.

The animation faded from the young authoress's face, as she looked down on Cynthia's quivering lip, and saw a big tear fall upon her sewing. She had heard some one say, she had been the victim of false hopes raised by Seth Taggart; and had in her heart despised her for it; but now she felt as if the sad, heart-broken love bestowed on him endorsed him as far better than he looked. It was a woe, however, to which she could not openly allude. But, as Cynthia set the last stitch in her dress, she stooped down and kissed her. "Every sorrow has its lesson," she said, "as every weed has a drop of honey in its cup. Blessed are they who suck that drop, and store it for good uses."

She had gone, and Cynthia was left alone. Yes, she had much to learn. This night's experience had taught her that her reign was over, and her career of bellehood run. She, who was not good enough to keep a good man's heart when she had won it, would set herself to her new task of self-improvement. She would have her dear old father's love, and live at home, and little children, too, should learn to love her. And then, perhaps, some day, when they both grew old, Frank Handy might, perhaps, see that he had judged her hastily, and not be glad, as he was now, that she had rejected him. At least, every improvement in her would be due to his influence, though unseen; and so, even in her lonely life, he would not be altogether dissociated from her. She sat in the dark, with her hands clasped tightly over her burning forehead.

She heard voices in the passages. The party was breaking up. People were beginning to go. Oh! why had she stayed alone so long! Perhaps during that hour Frank might have changed his mind. She had deprived herself of the opportunity.

She started up and hurried out amongst the company. They were all getting their cloaks and shawls on. Frank, in his great coat, was standing impatiently at the house-door.

"Please to tell her that my buggy has come up first," he said to some one, as Cynthia presented herself in the passage.

"I am ready," said the lady in blue, presenting herself.

Frank raised his hat to the company; and took her on his arm.

"Shut up that door," said somebody; "and don't let the night air into the house."

So the door closed with a jar that went to Cynthia's very heart. She turned aside and tried to help some of the girls to find their shawls and hoods. "Every lassie had her laddie," Cynthia only had no one to take her home. She asked Tommy Chase to walk home with her, and he said he would as soon as he had some more cake and some more supper.

Cynthia went back into the empty parlor, and sat down by an open window looking on the yard. She hid her face in her hands. All sorts of thoughts went singing through her brain; but the one that presented itself oftenest, was an humble resolution that she would try to be such a woman as Frank Handy wisely might have loved.

There was a stir among the vines that draped the window-frame. She did not look up. It was the wind. She heard it sigh. She felt its warm breath near her cheek—warmer, surely, than the night wind. She lifted her head quickly.

"Snip!" said Frank's voice at her side. It trembled; and he trembled as he stood with a great hope and a great fear contending in his breast. His self-possession was all gone. The struggle had unnerved him.

"Oh! Snap!" cried Cynthia suddenly. And then, drooping her head, crowned with the hop bells, lower and lower—more and more humbly, till it rested on the window sill,—she said in a broken voice: "I know I am not worthy, Frank; but you must teach me."

Varieties.

—After all, a man never fully appreciates those voluminous doimas of the ladies until he takes a moonlight promenade with the wearer and notices how effectually it conceals, from those behind, the exact whereabouts of his arm.

—Electric carriage lamps a French inventor proposes to produce, so that ordinary carriages drawn by horses will be illuminated by electricity supplied by the rotary motion of their wheels; locomotives, while in motion, will light up the trains they draw, and steamships supply themselves with powerful lights.

—Russian ladies are often inveterate smokers of cigarettes, and, at railway stations and other points of transit, scratch their matches on walls and posts, like men. They frequently ask men for a light from their cigars, and are asked in return. But it is said they smoke so gracefully as to take away its supposed disgustingness.

—The hymns sung by the Huguenots in the face of the gravest dangers that surrounded that people, are soon to be published in Paris in a two-volume work with the title, "Clement Marot and the Huguenot Psalm Book." The editor of it has been engaged for eight years in collecting every fact which could in any way illustrate the history of these hymns.

—The eruption of mud at the foot of Mount Ætna continues, and a smoking lake of steadily increasing dimensions has been formed. Professor Silvestri says there are two kinds of craters—one in constant activity, emitting muddy and oily water, with exhalations of carbonic acid; the other intermittent, emitting with subterranean noises volumes of thicker mud.

—A farmer at Arnold, England, being enraged at the presence of skaters on his pond, conceived the brilliant idea of breaking up the ice by harnessing a horse to a heavy iron roller and driving over it. The experiment was eminently successful, and but for the assistance of the skaters he and the horse would have remained at the bottom along with the roller.

—The *Continental Gazette*, published in Paris, says: "There are 1542 theatres in Europe, divided as follows among the different countries: Italy, 348; France, 337; Spain, 168; England, 150; Austria, 152; Germany, 191; Russia, 44; Belgium, 34; Holland, 23; Switzerland, 20; Sweden, 10; Norway, 8; Portugal, 16; Denmark, 10; Greece, 4; Turkey, 4; Roumania, 9; Servia, 1; Egypt, 3.

—The son of King Theodore, of Abyssinia, who was taken to England after the fall of Magdala, is being educated for the British army. He is a slender and dusky youth, and haughty and shrewd as becomes a descendant of the Queen of Sheba. He likes his English life, admitting that a spring mattress and ulster in London are preferable to a mat and bare legs and a blanket in Abyssinia.

—Preparations for opening a new gateway through the walls of Rome have led to the discovery of the pavement of the old Via Tiburtina, lined with tombs of the first century, and even earlier. Only one of them has escaped destruction. It contained a coffin with the skeleton of a lady, with gold earrings, necklace and signet ring, who belonged to the Statair family. In destroying a wall many ancient works of art were discovered, though broken into numerous pieces and forming part of the wall.

—A lady will sometimes accomplish what is impossible to the professional diplomatist. A good example of this, and at the same time of American assurance and persistency in foreign lands is afforded by the success of a party from New York in obtaining admission to funeral ceremonies of Victor Emanuel in the Pantheon at Rome.—The party consisted of a lady and two daughters, and arrived at Rome two days before the funeral. Application for tickets of admission was made to the American Consul, who replied that he was unable to procure them even for himself and wife. Nothing daunted, a note was written to the Italian Minister of the Interior by the matron, expressing a strong desire, as Americans, to witness the ceremony. Time passed by without bringing the tickets, and at last all hope of getting them was given up. But about two hours before the services begun a messenger arrived bringing five of the best reserved seats in the church and a letter expressing in the most polite terms the pleasure it gave the Minister to accommodate American ladies. The extra seats were given to the Consul and his wife.

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