

Literature.

ONE YEAR.

BY ETTA W. PIERCE.

The lights of Lynn and Swampscott blinked redly through the storm. Out on the brown Nahant cliffs the wind was blowing a gale, and the tide tearing through the great gashes in the rocks. Gusts of rain hurtled by the window. My husband's hand moved on the lace counterpane—his dull eyes opened.

"Don't cry, Gladys," he said, and feebly stroked my bowed head.

"We have had six months of happiness together—not every one has as much—eh, Venn?" looking up in his old, bright, boyish way, to the man who leaned against the carved head of the bed.

"It is a longer period of happiness than I have ever known!" Chesney Venn answered bitterly.

The night lamp made strange shadows in the room. The carved oak furniture, the tall chimney piece, whereon a clock in tortoise-shell and brass was ticking away the last moments of a precious life—even Chesney Venn's blonde face—took grotesque form before my distracted eyes. I had never liked the man—my husband's own familiar friend—and I was madly jealous that Sydney should think of him now.

"Put your face closer to mine, Gladys," entreated my husband. "Poor little love! You do not know how to bear sorrow."

He drew my loose hair across his breast in great smothering billows of darkness.

"I want you to make me a promise before I go, Gladys."

"Oh, Sydney, how can you go?" I wailed. "How can you leave me? I will promise anything—yes, anything—to please you! Is not your word my law?"

His pale, boyish face remained preternaturally calm. He looked around the room, as though seeking some other person.

"Has Colonel Thorpe come?" he asked.

"No, dear boy. The carriage went over to Lynn more than an hour ago. It is storming furiously outside—doubtless the train is delayed," Venn answered.

Sydney's dying eyes came back to me.

"I wish Thorpe was here," he muttered. "You must give him a message from me. Do not move, Gladys—let me look at you while I may. You have promised to do the thing I wished, you know. It is this—forget me! You are but eighteen—it is easy to forget at that age—and one year from this night you must marry again!"

I could not speak I could only stare in horrified amazement, and on the other side of the bed Chesney Venn's eyes were shining balefully down upon us both.

"Before I married you, Gladys," Sydney went on, his voice growing weaker with each word, "I learned by accident that another—and a far better man, God knows—loved you better than I did. For months, perhaps years, he has suffered like a hero and made no sign." He drew a sealed letter from beneath his pillow. "You will find his name written here, pet. After my burial, read it. I charge you with my last breath, to marry that man without any unnecessary delay. We both owe him recompense for the wrong I did in taking you from him. He will make you happy—far happier than I have made you, poor little girl! I am but a weak, shallow fellow and my love is like myself—"

Was I dreaming, or did I actually hear Venn, on the other side of the bed, mutter:

"True, by heaven!"

My husband suddenly threw his arms around me.

"I give you up to him!" he gasped.

"Say that you forgive me for snatching you from the man who should have been your husband. A year mind—forget me in a year! You have promised—"

He thrust the letter into my hand.

It remained flattened betwixt our two clasping palms. "I have never loved you half enough, Gladys. Why doesn't Thorpe come? Tell him—I am sorry, pet—in a year—in a year—marry the other—"

"Sydney!" I moaned—"oh Sydney, how can you ask this of me?"

But his head, with its bright curls, had fallen back on the pillow. The doctor, the nurse and Chesley Venn all rushed to my aid.

"For God's sake, don't prolong this agony, Gladys," cried Venn, hoarsely. "It kills me to look at you!"

I saw the physician feel for the pulse that had ceased to beat—saw him lay Sydney's hand solemnly down on the lace counterpane. I understood the significance of the action, and with a shriek I fell, widowed and unconscious, across my husband's dead body. I awoke in another room. Through tattered clouds the pink dawn was breaking; white sails of coasters flecked the vast green sea. A dark man of soldiery bearing, with the scar of an old sabre cut across his forehead, stood at the foot of the sofa on which I lay. I watched him through half-closed lids before I spoke. He had stately, distingue air, but he looked haggard and care-worn.

"You did not want me to marry Sydney," I said; "you thought us both too young; and now it is all over! I am barely eighteen, guardy, and my life is done."

"Life is never done till we have ceased

to suffer," answered Colonel Thorpe.

"Why did you not come sooner?" I groaned. "Sydney had some message for you, and he died with it unspoken."

"My poor child! I tried to reach him in time, but there was an accident on the road."

I started up with a cry.

"The letter! where is the letter that Sydney gave me as he died?"

The nurse, who had been applying restoratives to me, answered:

"I am sure Mr. Venn has it. I saw it in his hand. He left the house when Colonel Thorpe arrived."

"What letter is she talking about?" said the colonel to the nurse. In a panic I ran to him, and clung about his neck. He had been my guardian for years and years.

"Sydney wrote the name of some man in a letter—I gasped—"some man that he wanted me to marry in a year's time; and I promised—oh, I promised guardy! He must have been delirious—save me, help me! I am afraid of that letter!"

His arm closed about me like steel.

"Be calm, Gladys; no harm shall come to you while you are under my protection. Just heaven! was it necessary for that boy to play fool in death as in life!"

Then he gave me abruptly to the nurse.

"Take care of her!" he said, in a shaken voice. "At another time I will talk further of this matter."

I remember little of the next few days. My boy husband was laid in the grave, and I went back to the Nahant Villa, on the grooved and gashed rocks, my slight figure draped in blackest crape, my heart as sombre as my dress.

The house was the property of Colonel Thorpe, who had placed it at Sydney's disposal for the short, sweet half-year that was like the beginning and end of our married life. The splendid rooms, with their luxurious appointments, and deep porches ablaze with rare flowers in foreign jars, the lawns like emerald velvet, the walks under the copper beech trees—the brown rocks, forever spattered with wind-blown brine—all these things teemed with memories of Sydney.

"You must go abroad," Colonel Thorpe said, knitting his black brows at me; "you will never recover health or spirits here, Gladys."

"If you take me from this place," I answered, "you will kill me! Surely you cannot begrudge me the poor pleasure of remaining where I have been so happy with Sydney!"

"I begrudge you nothing," he answered, quickly; "nor do I wish to force your inclination in any way. Stay, if you like, poor child!"

Two weeks passed. I had seen nothing of Chesley Venn nor the letter which he had appropriated, and in the apathy of despair that possessed me I gave no thought to either.

One day, when an east wind was blowing through the black rents in the cliffs, and the livid-green harbor writhed in torments of foam, I wandered out into the great garden, and down to the entrance gate of the villa.

This was an imposing brick arch, matted in ivy. I had almost reached it when something darted under the gate and bounced into a blazing bed of geraniums by my side.

A child—a mere baby, ragged, unwashed, with yellow, tousled curls and saucy blue eyes. He stretched out his dimpled lawless hands to clutch the flowers.

"Wait," said I, softly. "What are you doing?"

The young marauder gave me a long, unwinking glare.

"Gimme some!" he commanded, stamping his tiny foot.

"With pleasure," I replied, smiling in spite of myself. "What is your name?"

He lisped something, out of which I, unfamiliar with baby lore, could make but one syllable—"Nee"—then gathered up the corners of his torn pinafore to receive my gift.

As I began to break the geraniums I was aware that a woman had appeared in the brick gate-way—a wild, dark, handsome creature, with the look of an untamed leopardess. She gave me one scathing glance, and pouncing on the child, tossed him upon her shoulder.

"What devil's whim led you into this gate?" she cried, savagely.

"Pray let him take the flowers, since I have gathered them for him," I entreated.

The wild-eyed mother stopped, scowling on me darkly. I filled her child's hands, and as I did so, kissed his rose-leaf cheek. Instantly her face changed.

"Thank you, ma'am," she said, hoarsely. "You're the young lady that has just been widowed? Not everyone in your station would condescend to kiss my child. Do you know who I am?"

"No," I answered; "but perhaps you, too, have known sorrow."

"As God hears us, yes! but not of your kind. I'm the daughter of old Jack Fergus, the fisherman who lives down on the rocks."

And she turned and disappeared with her baby through the gate.

"Hagar and young Ishmael," I thought, and went slowly back to the villa.

In the oak drawing-room, hung with Eastern stuffs, and scented with tea-roses in red porcelain jars, Chesney Venn was waiting for me. Blonde, elegant, eager-eyed, he arose as I entered.

"Here is Sydney's letter," he began, holding out the sealed envelope. "Of course, you knew that I had it. I ought

to have brought it before, for your husband, in my presence, asked you to open it after his burial; but I dared not approach you sooner, knowing well that I could not control myself. Great God! staring at me in shocked amaze; "how pale you look!—how changed! Don't, Gladys! You must not go on like this—Sydney was not worth it!"

I tried to draw myself up.

"Mr. Venn—"

He interrupted me, hotly.

"He was your husband just six months and in that time he managed to squander your entire fortune, so that you are now left penniless on Colonel Thorpe's hands."

"It cannot be!" I cried, indignantly.

"I cannot believe it!"

"Ask Thorpe," sneered Venn, "he knows! Sydney gambled in stocks, or something of that sort. On his deathbed he confessed to me that he had lost every dollar of your inheritance. Oh, Gladys, why did you marry that young idiot? And why do you mourn for him now?"

Chesney Venn stalked up to me with mad riot in his eyes—with a dark flush creeping up to his blonde temples. "It was sickening to watch you, wasting your heart on that boy," he hissed. "God only knows how I endured it so long! There were times when I longed to strike him dead. He knew that I loved you madly—he guessed my secret if you did not. His eyes looked into my heart, though yours were stone blind. It is time to throw off the mask. Gladys—I have lived a lie before you long enough. Your husband has been in his grave but two weeks, yet I must and will speak. I love you, and now that he is dead I claim you by right of that love. Here—take his letter? If any sense of justice was left in his heart, I know what name he has written there."

Overwhelmed by a sinister fear, I tore open the envelope, and in Sydney's handwriting read these words:

My Darling: If you loved me living, then listen to me dead. From the grave I charge you to show pity to the man whose whole earthly happiness has been wrecked by your marriage with me—the man whom I love as a brother—Chesney Venn. Become his wife, Gladys. I resign you to him with the full assurance that I could not leave your future in better hands."

With a cry I flew toward the door, and almost into the arms of Colonel Thorpe, who was just entering.

"Read it!" I said, holding out the dreadful letter. "He has given me to this dreadful man, like a bale of merchandise! Is it true that Sydney squandered my fortune? Is it true that I am a beggar?"

The blood flew into the colonel's dark, scarred face. He turned on Venn—I thought he was about to knock him down.

"You dared tell her that?" he shouted.

"Meddlesome interloper—"

Then he checked himself, and with knitted brows read the letter.

"Venn, how did you induce Sydney to write these lines?" he sneered.

"You wrong me," answered Venn, stiffly; "but I cannot expect you to be just in this matter, sir. I know that even a man of steel may have some secret weakness—"

Colonel Thorpe pointed to the library.

"Be so good as to step into that room, Venn. I must speak to my ward alone."

With the tread of a victor, Venn obeyed. My guardian turned to me.

"Gladys, my poor child—" he began, in a softened voice, but I interrupted impatiently:

"Is it true, Colonel Thorpe—is it true?"

"It is true," he admitted, reluctantly, "that Sydney was unfortunate in business—that he lost money in rash speculation; but if Venn ever mentions the matter again, I shall be tempted to murder him! As for this letter; let us try to think of it fairly, impartially, Gladys. First of all, it seems to displease—yes, horrify you."

He turned my face to the light, searching it with a keen but kindly gaze.

(To Be Continued.)

A Ship's Rudder.

The rudder of a wooden ship is composed of the stalk and the backing, which are so joined together as to form in effect a single piece. The complete rudder is coppered, to protect it from worms, and then, besides being practically all in one piece, it has that appearance also.

The stalk is the part to which are attached the pintles, or pivots, by which the rudder is suspended and held in place these going through eyes set in the ship's sternpost. The stalk runs up through the stern of the ship, and to its head is bolted a cap to which are attached the ropes by means of which the rudder is controlled. The backing is the blade part of the rudder.

Supplies For Cuba.

New York June 15.—The Evening Telegram has a dispatch from Kingston, J.A., which says: Much suspicion has been aroused here by the character of the cargo of the City of Kingston, which has arrived from New York. The cargo consists of 400 cases of pork, 125 bags of corn and 57 bales of tobacco, 1,000 bags of rice, 1,200 barrels and 1,800 bags of flour shipped by J. Lera and Roa & Co., of New York, Consigned to Solomon Ashenheim & Co. at Kingston. The cargo seems much too large for a firm to handle in ordinary trade and it is believed to be destined for transhipment to Cuba for

Spanish troops. Supplies in small quantities are reaching Havana across the island from Batabano and apparently from Jamaica from which to provision the Spanish troops. Unless immediate action is taken by the American government the blockade will be practically nullified by supplies reaching the blockaded towns from Jamaica. Merchants here are looking for Spanish purchasers at famine prices and are speculating heavily in food stuffs.

Consul General made a strong pretext to the local government against this island being made a base of supplies for the Spanish army and asserting that giving cargoes of provisions to ships of this character with Spanish officers known to be on board is a breach of neutrality.

The Purisima Conception changed Saturday to the English flag and completed her cargo of 8,000 packages of flour, rice and corn. She will sail for Cuba. She endeavored to obtain an English captain.

Indian Magic.

One need not go to the realms of space, or time, or figures to meet with the incomprehensible. Despite modern science and ingenuity this word still remains the only applicable epithet for some of the achievements of Indian conjurers. We can smile at the luminous appearance of the beautiful face before which as the revelation of Osiris the old Egyptians prostrated themselves in awe—for the marvels of the magic lantern are familiar to us, the early existence of gunpowder gives an easy explanation of the oracle's lightning and thunder, the weird harmony of Memnon was merely the result of an ingenious mechanical contrivance—but shrewd travellers of later date, whose veracity is beyond dispute, tell of much more inexplicable things than these. One of the best known writers on occultism, Jacoliot, has left an account of certain things he saw during his official sojourn in India which, as they seem to defy explanation, may fairly be classed among things incomprehensible. The performer was one whom he accidentally met and who required some persuasion before he would exhibit feats which, he continually affirmed, were the work of other intelligences.

On some sticks fixed upright in flowerpots were placed some leaves from a tree, with holes in each sufficiently large to make them fall to the level of the mold. Standing at a considerable distance, the fakir made a gesture with his hands. A slight breeze seemed to pervade the room, then the leaves quivered and gradually worked upward on the sticks. Jacoliot placed himself between the flowerpots and the operator, placed the sticks in the flooring and adopted every means he could imagine to frustrate any trickery, but nothing he did made any difference to the movement of the leaves.

The more familiar feat of the seemingly supernatural growth of flowers was utterly eclipsed by another instance vouchered for by the same narrator. His own servant brought him a score or so of seeds, from which he selected and marked one. The fakir planted it in a pot of earth, muttered some words over it and fell into a sort of trance, which lasted about thirty minutes. He then awoke, uncovered the pot and discovered a seedling two or three inches high. Jacoliot examined it and found it had sprung from the seed which he had marked.

With a touch of a peacock's feather, the fakir depressed a balance of a common weighing machine in daily use in the household, though in the other was a weight of twelve stones, and with a distant motion of his hand he made shavings of wood to sink or move in water. Still more marvellous is the description of the manner in which this veritable eastern wizard was able to set at defiance the laws of gravity. On this occasion, when leaving the room, he paused on the threshold folded his arms, and, by a simple act of volition, raised himself from the floor and remained poised in the air for some minutes.—London Standard.

Pain, Pin or Passion.

"When a baby screams at night," says an authority on the subject, "you may be sure that one of three things is the matter with him—a pain, a pin or a passion. If it is the former, put a teaspoonful of lime water in a little milk and give it to him; then hunt for the pin. But if he has been peacefully and properly fed at his usual mealtime don't be troubled about his being hungry. Put down the howling to natural or inherited or acquired habit and get through the night as best you can.

Cheese for Home Use.

It is surprising that farmers do not use more cheese. It is a healthy and nutritious article of food, and can be made far more cheaply than nitrogenous nutrition can be supplied in any other form. Another reason why farmers should use more cheese is that it will prevent the glut in prices of milk which every year causes so many farmers to sell milk at a loss. Such farmers do, we think, get in the habit of making more or less cheese, and their tables are well supplied. It is the farmer with only one or two cows who uses least cheese. We used to make cheese on a farm when we had only two cows, putting night and morning's milk together in a single cheese.

Teacher—John, of course you had rather be right than be President. John (guardedly)—Well, I'd rather be right than be Vice President.

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