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LITERATURE.

OMENS.

The cornstock tassels on the bridge
Are bronzing in the sun;
The elderberries by the bridge,
And all along the run,
Grow purple through the golden days;
Barberries by the wall
Glow crimson in the haze
That ushers in the fall.
Old ocean dreams in slumber deep
Of wintry storms to come;
In far off mountain caverns sleep
The winds; the brooks are dumb.
The partridge, in lone country lanes,
Whirls low a speckled wing;
Silence through all the woodland reigns,
The birds forget to sing.
From yellow cornfields slowly pass
The crows with clanging cry,
All day upon the orchard grass
Ripe apples fall. A sigh
Escapes the earth at thought of death,
For summer's life so brief,
And fluttering on that sigh's faith breath,
Falls down the first red leaf.

TRAVELLING COMPANIONS.

Mr. Augustus Wetherby walked up and down his apartment in an embroidered smoking cap and jacket, apparently absorbed in restless thought. Each time he passed the large dressing mirror he bestowed upon it a glance of criticising satisfaction, and now and then would pause to gaze admiringly into his own eyes, and with his elbows on a level with his shoulders, to gracefully twist the ends of his waxed moustache.

Finally he took up an open letter from the table, and for the third time perused its contents, which were as follows:

DEAR GUS: I drop you a hasty line to catch the 6 o'clock mail. Minna Gray is with us, and I want you to come up without delay and see what you can do in the way of winning an heiress. She is just from boarding school—a simple, unsophisticated girl of 18 and if you enter the field at once, I don't see why, with your advantages, you should not succeed in making an impression. If uncle can't spare you from the office before Saturday, at least come up then, and stay till Monday. In a quiet, country house a great deal can be done in that time. I've spoken of you to Minna—judiciously, of course—and am sure she is always interested in you. She will be with us but a week or so longer, and will then leave with her family for their western home; so you see there is no time to be lost. I shall certainly expect you on Saturday if not before. Don't disappoint. Your devoted sister,
AGNES MERROW.

Hum! Aw, well, I may as well go up and see what she's like! mused Mr. Augustus Wetherby, giving a doubtful shrug of his shoulders. Old man still living; but won't object to that, if he'd do the handsome thing by me that he did with his other daughter's husband. In fact it would be handy to have him go on making money for a few years longer. It isn't every day that a fellow can pick up an heiress—pretty, too, I think I've heard Merrow say. Cousin of his, eh? Convenient to have sisters

marry fellows with rich young cousins. Yes, I think I may as well try it on.

On the following Saturday, accordingly, a blonde young gentleman, faultlessly attired, and with a calmly satisfied and rather supercilious air, boarded the 5 o'clock train for a two hours' ride to Verdon station.

He found but two seats unoccupied—one next to a fat old lady with a ticket conspicuously secured on the front of her shawl by three pins, and the other adjoining that of a handsome, well-grown young lady, who was seated alone at a window with a satchel beside her.

Affecting not to observe the first seat, and even ignoring the friendly tug at his coat tail by the fat lady, Mr. Wetherby passed on, and paused with a half wistful, half apologetic glance at the second vacant seat.

The young lady observing this, promptly removed her shawl and satchel and made room for him.

Thank you. I hope I am not incommending you, said Mr. Wetherby, with most graceful and winning manner.

Not at all, she answered, raising a pair of bright, frank brown eyes to his face.

And then they sat for a few moments silent as the train started.

The breeze, with its inevitable cinders and dust, came in strongly at the window, and of course the young lady tried to close it, but could not, and equally of course, Mr. Wetherby offered to do it for her.

Then they naturally got to talking, the young lady manifesting no shyness nor stiffness, and as Mr. Wetherby looked at her smiling red lips and laughing eyes, noticed her easy, self-possessed manner, he congratulated himself upon having such a companion for the amusement of his brief journey.

She was alone, too, which encouraged him to assume a little protective gallantry.

Have you far to go? he inquired, when he had conveniently arranged his satchel and umbrella at his feet.

Would you call it far to Princeton? she returned innocently.

So she was going to Princeton, a ride of six hours—and as Mr. Wetherby looked at her bright, intelligent face and brilliant eyes, he almost regretted that his own journey would be so short.

He fancied, too, from an indefinable something in her look and manner, that he had made a mash, as he himself would have significantly expressed it, and with an inward gratification set himself to deepen the impression by most winning smiles and elegant and fastidious airs.

Besides his administration of the young lady, he would like to show the people around him that he was somebody.

Just in front of him sat a pale, delicate lady, who was nervously endeavoring to keep two little children quiet. The fidgeting and prattle rather interfered with Mr. Wetherby's conversation.

Great nuisance, children on the cars, he observed, fastidiously, to his fair companion.

I don't object to them. It is amusing to observe their funny little ways, she replied good humoredly.

When they are good and pretty; but children like these little scamps ought to have a special car provided—a sort of cattle box.

He ended abruptly, as the lady in front turned her head, and with a sudden flush bestowed upon him a glance of which only an outraged and insulted mother is capable.

Good gracious! I hope—I did not intend that she should hear me? said Mr. Wetherby. However, if persons choose to listen to private remarks, it makes no difference.

Then he lay back in his seat, and while his fair companion looked from the window, revenged himself for the mother's indignant look by secretly making faces at the baby which was staring at him over the back of the seat, making ineffectual efforts to grab hold of his gold-headed cane.

The sweet infant first stared in round-eyed wonder at the unaccustomed facial expressions; but as they became more ogre-like, its moon face worked, and it burst into a terrified shriek which startled half the sleepers in the cars.

You will excuse my little son, sir, said a voice behind Mr. Wetherby. He is not accustomed to the interesting performance with which you have been kindly endeavoring to entertain him.

And a tall, stalwart gentleman leaned forward and took the terrified infant from its mother's arms.

I think we've intruded ourselves into a family group here, Mr. Augustus Wetherby observed, as he looked uneasily around. You will be more comfortable on the other side, and able to keep the windows open—it being leeward, as sailors say.

The young lady hesitated a moment, but then gathered up her shawl and satchel, and crossed over to the opposite side of the car, where were a couple of seats left vacant by passengers who alighted at the last station.

It was immediately in the rear of a plainly-dressed old gentleman, who was fast asleep and slightly snoring, with his feet conspicuously elevated.

He had removed his boots and incased his large feet in embroidered cloth slippers, which left exposed an ample space of gray stocking yarn, evidently of domestic manufacture.

Really, exclaimed Mr. Wetherby, we seem destined to be unfortunate in our immediate surroundings; but then, one cannot always choose one's traveling companions, unless one engages a special car.

There was a gleam of amusement in the young lady's eyes as she glanced from him to the unconscious object of his scorn. He caught it, and was thereby encouraged to go on.

I really believe the old fellow imagines this to be a sleeping car, or at least that he can indulge in the privileges of one, regardless of the feelings of his fellow passengers. People of his class generally imagine that they can shirk the expense of a sleeping car by making a dressing room of the public cars. I've a great mind to fire one of those boots out of the window with my cane.

That would be too bad. You wouldn't do it, really, would you?

Not if you object. That old fellow certainly don't look as if he could well afford the loss. But I'd give something for those slippers to deposit in a museum for future antiquarians, as a specimen of pre-historic art, and a proof that there were giants in these days. He, he!

They certainly are extraordinary specimens of needlework, the young lady observed, eyeing the slippers with grave attention.

And the stockings! I had imagined that sort of pedal covering to belong to the lost arts.

They look warm and comfortable, though; and I dare say that is all he cares for.

Wonder where he got those marvelous slippers? Dare say they are the effort of some red-handed, apple-faced daughter who probably exhibited them at the country church fair as a creditable specimen of high art. Is that red blotch in the middle a rose or a hollyhock! And the blue dots—what botanical products do they represent?

I should think the first is intended for a bleeding heart, said Mr. Wetherby's fair companion, criticizingly examining the slippers of the unconscious sleeper; and the blue would suggest forget-me-nots.

Bleeding hearts and forget-me-nots. He, he! Who would have expected so much sentiment in a rough old fellow like that? But, perhaps, after all, the slippers are the tender gift of a sweetheart—some sallow, sold milking maid, probably—and he stuck them on his delicate feet in order to have her image perpetually present with him. No doubt he fell asleep contemplating them, and is at this moment lost in dreams of his loved one.

This flight of fancy so amused the young lady that Mr. Wetherby was thereby encouraged to proceed with his brilliant remarks.

There are initials on them. I see—P. G.—Peter Grubbs, perhaps. The name would correspond with his appearance—don't you agree with me?

I am sure it is very kind in you to take so much interest in that old gentleman and his affairs, the young lady returned, in a cool, quiet way, with her dark eyes looking full in his face. Fortunately, I can gratify your curiosity. His name is not Peter Grubbs, but Peyton Gray—not very unlike, don't you think?

Wh-what, gasped Mr. Wetherby, starting; Not surely Mr. Peyton Gray, of Chesterton?

The same. I am his daughter, Minna, and I must confess that I worked those absurd slippers when I was about 12 years old. They were my first attempt at embroidery, as one can see. Father never wore them until lately, when, being a little lame, he found them convenient. Mother knit the stockings, he will wear no others.

Mr. Wetherby, pale and red by turns, listened in silence.

To add to his dismay, Mr. Gray, at the end of his daughter's speech, quietly turned his head and fixed his keen gray eyes upon him.

Yes, young man, he remarked coolly, I find both the slippers and socks very comfortable—not but what I should have been sorry to have lost one of my boots.

And without further notice he deliberately proceeded to don the latter articles of dress.

Mr. Wetherby sat in dazed silence, feeling excessively small but seeking to comfort himself with the thought that he might possibly disguise himself so as not to be recognized by Mr. Gray and his daughter when he should present himself at Verdon.

Would it not be well to give them a false name at present, and delay his visit for some days?

But while he thus mused, in dire confusion of spirit, Miss Minna Gray turning to him, said, blandly:

Do you stop at Verdon, Mr. Wetherby?

Eh?—aw—you take me for—

For Mrs. Merrow's brother, of course. She told me yesterday she expected you. You see, father and I have only run down this morning to meet sister and her family, who were to join us at Cousin Merrow's and all return home together. Let me introduce you to my sister and my brother-in-law, Colonel Steel—turning to the tall gentleman and pale lady, who had been spectators of the whole scene.

I—I shall be most happy when—when we arrive at the station. At present I must positively look after my valise, as I think we are approaching the station and will only have a minute for alighting.

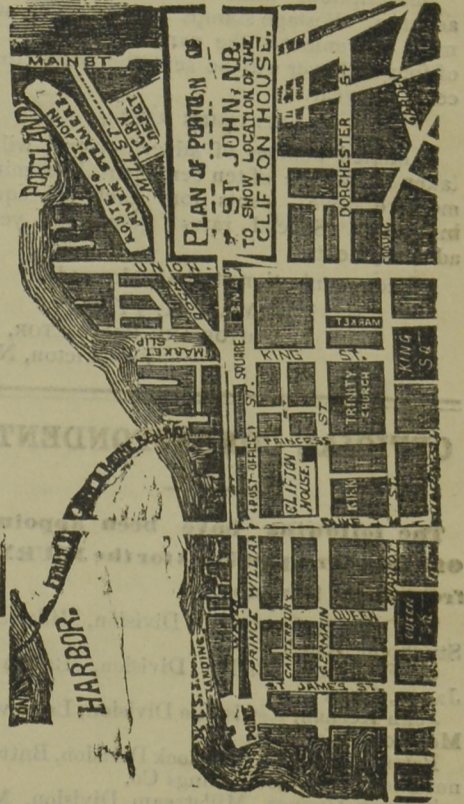
Your valise? Here it is under the seat! You see—with a charming smile—we could all read the name on it, and that is how we came to know who you were.

The next station was Verdon; nevertheless, Mr. Wetherby with his baggage alighted there and took the next train homeward.

To the inquiries of a friend to whom he confidentially communicated his intention of marrying an heiress, he briefly replied that he had seen the girl and did not quite fancy her. And it is observable that on all his traveling trips he is strangely silent and uncommunicative with his fellow passengers.

"THE GOOD OLD TIMES."—In olden times many pious individuals considered it a good work to set apart part of their worldly wealth for keeping the members of the congregation from sleeping during divine service. On the seventeenth of April, 1726, John Rudze bequeathed to the parish of Trysull, in Shropshire, twenty shillings a year, that a door man might be employed to go about the church during the sermon and keep the people awake. A bequest of Richard Doyery, of Farmcote, dated 1659, had in view the payment of eight shillings in the church at Claverly, Shropshire, for a similar purpose. At Acton church, in Cheshire, about thirty years ago, one of the churchwardens used to go round in the church, during service, with a huge wand in his hand, and if any of the congregation were asleep, they were instantly awakened by a tap on the head. At Dunchurch, in Warwickshire, a similar custom existed. A person bearing a stout wand, shaped like a hay-fork at the end, stepped stealthily up and down the aisles, and whenever he saw an individual asleep, he touched him so effectually that the spell was broken—this, being sometimes done by fitting the fork to the nape of the neck. A more playful method is said to have been used in another church, where the beadle went round the edifice during service carrying a long staff, at one end of which was a fox's brush, and at the other end a knob. With the former he gently tickled the faces of the female sleepers, while on the head of their male compeers he bestowed with the knob a sensible rap.

The scene is a young ladies' seminary. Ah, said one young pupil to another in triumph, my mamma gives me a penny every morning for taking a spoonful of cod liver oil! And what do you buy with the penny? eagerly returned the second girl in a tone not devoid of envy. Oh, returned the former speaker, I do not spend it at all; mamma puts it away every day to buy more cod liver oil with!



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