

## Poetry.

### The Model Subscriber.

Good morning, sir, Mr. Editor, how are the folks today?  
I owe you for next year's paper—I thought I'd come and pay.  
And Jones again to take it, and this is his money here.  
I shut down lending it to him, and then coaxed him to try it a year.

"You're doing the politics badly, as all our family agree;  
Just keep your old goose-quill a dappin' and give them a good one for me.  
And now you are clockwork of business, and won't be taking your time,  
I've things of my own I must tend—good day sir; I believe I will climb."

The editor sat in his sanctum, and brought down his fist with a thump;  
"God bless that old farmer," he muttered, "he's a regular old tramp."  
And this with our noble profession, and thus it will be ever still.  
There are some who appreciate his labor, and some who perhaps never will;  
But in the great time that is coming, when Gabriel's trumpet shall sound,  
And they who have labored and rested shall come from the quivering ground;  
When they have striven and suffered to teach and convince the nation,  
Shall march at the head of the column, each one in his God given place;  
As they have hither through the gates of the city with proud and victorious tread,  
The editor and his assistants will travel not far from the head.

## Literature.

### RETRIBUTION.

#### CHAPTER XXX.

##### "IT CANNOT BE."

"You said your love was eternal, my lord," he heard her say, after what seemed to him a long silence; but her voice sounded as if off and below.

He removed his hand from his eyes and looked over at her.

Was she grieving for him, or was this agitation caused by having painful memories of her own life revived?

"Yes, in a certain sense it is—it was too deep and true ever to sever from its allegiance; but it was for the real woman—my ideal," he said, mournfully.

"But, my lord, if this said thing could be explained—this girl, who is your wife, could prove herself true, what then?" pleaded the nun, her head still bowed low.

"I shall never give her the opportunity, there can be but one way to explain it, and the matter must rest where it is. The past is past, and nothing can recall it," he said, firmly.

"You are doing wrong, my lord," the nun replied, with as much firmness as he had displayed; "it is right that all should have the opportunity to speak in their own defense. If you have denied this to the young girl whom you have wedded, you are guilty of great injustice toward her. Go back to her, I pray, and let her explain if she can, and then judge her."

"I want no explanations, I tell you; they would only serve to stir up the bitterness of the past. I saw with my own eyes her perfidy, and I will never return to her again; I will never look upon her face again. I have said it," he returned, stubbornly.

But he really believed what he said—that there could be no explanation, and that Nina was indeed as false as she appeared.

Oh, if he had only known the truth, how much after suffering he might have saved!

"Nay, do not leave me, Sister Agnes," he said; "your presence soothes me, and I do not enjoy Sister Rachel's. I think you for your sympathy, though I know it may be beyond the pale of your duties to listen to the confessions of your patients."

She came close to his bedside now, but the light was so dim that he could not distinguish her features at all.

She stood before him with her hands crossed upon her breast and her head bowed, and spoke in the saddest tones he had ever heard.

"My lord," she said, "it is impossible for me to tell you how deeply your story has moved me; you have my sympathy, and my prayers. I trust your life is not entirely ruined, as you fear—I hope the future may have much of peace for you; but let me plead with you, as one who has also suffered much, and with cruel injustice—let me plead with you, I say, to go back to your forsaken bride, and give her one opportunity to defend herself if she can, and something tells me that she can."

She paused a moment, as if it was difficult to go on; and then resumed:

"You were wrong, all wrong, to judge her so rashly—you were jealous and passionate, doubtless, in your first wild grief upon discovering what you did. Oh! go back to her, listen to her calmly and patiently, and do not judge her by your own truth from her own lips."

"That I have already refused to do—she said she could make everything plain in five minutes, but I do not believe it," he said, coldly, and he saw that his words made her shudder.

"How she feels for me!" he thought, never dreaming the cause of her suffering.

But he did not like to be blamed—he had suffered enough from his own conscience for having been so rash and angry; but it was not pleasant to have it put into words by another.

"Then you can never hope for peace," she said, with infinite sadness, "and you have also barred the way for her. My lord, heed my warning. I pray—I beseech you, if you would not make your future a blank, if you would not have the sin on your conscience of ruining the life of another, if you would not entail upon yourself a life of ceaseless remorse and pain, when you shall discover, all too late, that you have been in the wrong, go back to your wife and listen to what she may have to tell you."

Pen cannot portray the pathos of her pleading.

Her earnestness thrilled him, and for the moment he was almost tempted to believe that her woman's intuition had shown her the truth; that he had been all wrong.

But he felt so sure of his own position—that blighting picture was so fresh in his mind; those wild ravings of the sick soldier were still ringing in his ears—that he could only feel that the hope she held out to him was a mockery, and he steered his heart against her prayer.

"Go back to have her mock me and cheat me again? Never!" he cried, the hot blood rushing over his white face.

"She has not—she could not," he said, the stricken girl.

"How do you know?" he demanded, fiercely, and raising himself on his elbow to peer into her face.

Something in her tones, something in her manner, made him quiver with strange emotion.

Who was she—what was she to be moved thus by a stranger's history?

Why did she thrill him so whenever she came near? What was there about her that affected him so strangely?

For a moment he held his breath as he strove to read the downcast face in the gathering gloom.

But the slender figure stood motionless as a statue; the little hands, all thumbs, clung to the nails were livid, seemed only calmly clasped upon the quiet breast.

"He caught the sound of a quickly suppressed sob, as she answered, in strain, suffering tones:

"My own heart tells me I have suffered, oh, so cruelly, that I feel it must be so. Will you not be merciful?"

"Who are you?" he cried hoarsely.

He reached out and grasped one of her little white hands.

His icy chill made him shiver, and he felt the frail form tremble and shrink beneath his touch.

A low moan escaped her lips, and in another moment he would have torn the ugly cap and bandages from her head.

But releasing herself from his grasp, she asked, almost sternly:

"Will you go back to your wife? Will you conquer your pride, for it is half that which keeps you from her, and be just and kind to her?"

"I cannot; let her explain things how she will, the fact remains that she has deceived me," he replied, gloomily, and fell back upon his pillow with a deep sigh.

"If I were," he said, "I would see you on our wedding day, and pretending she had gone for another purpose."

"It must have been some innocent secret, which she could not reveal just then," pleaded the nun, brokenly.

"She had no right to have any secret from me, her husband!" he cried, indignantly.

"You are resolved, then, never to be reconciled with her—never to listen to her defense?" was the mournful, almost breathless query.

"Why should you care so much?" he again demanded, curiously.

"Why should I care? Ah, I would see you happy. I have nursed you back to life from death's door; you have, as it were, a new lease of life, and I would not have you mar all your future, and besides what?"

"I feel for the poor crushed wife whom you have forsaken, and whose life you have forever sealed by refusing to go to her and listen to her defense. Her maiden's heart—her sense of delicacy, will never allow her to force any explanations upon you after your past injustice to her. Will you not restore happiness to her?"

Her first words were like a prophecy to him—her last like the cry of a despairing heart.

For a moment he longed to yield the assent she desired—he was almost won.

He felt that much that she had said was true; he knew that he had been unjust in refusing to go to Nina as she had requested.

He should have gone to listen to her, even though he felt that he could never be convinced of her innocence.

But having once refused, could he now humble himself enough to seek her and crave an explanation?

Could he run the risk of going to find her happy in the love of another?

Again that maddening picture came up before him; again he heard that yearning cry:

"Nina, darling come to me—I love you so so!" and with a groan, he turned away from that pale pleader—and from happiness.

It cannot be, he said; I thank you for your sympathy and advice, but I never wish to behold again the face of the woman whom I believe to be so false. Doubtless before I rise from this couch the tie which unites us will be severed, and of what use then would explanations be? I trust, when all is over, I shall find something of that peace of which you have spoken."

It was all dark now in that chamber, or he might have seen that pale face convulsed with his heart-breaking agony.

As it was, the livid lips parted with a faint cry, which the tortured soul could not restrain.

"Pardon me," Kenneth said, in plying tones, "I should not have troubled you, and aroused painful memories perhaps by my sad story. I would that your life kind sister, had less of sorrow in it."

She stretched out her clasped hands toward him, as if to plead with him yet further.

For an instant her eyelids quivered, and her breast heaved as if the breaking heart must burst its prison house; then the white hands dropped nerveless at her side, a long, shuddering sigh shook the slight frame from head to foot, making it sway like a broken reed.

"My lord," she said, and her voice was full of tearful anguish that almost made him weep; "I must leave you now, I have other duties, and now that you are so far recovered, I cannot come again. You may have thought it strange that I should speak so freely and plainly to you regarding what you have told me, but in my heart there is only tenderest pity and sympathy for you. Remember this, if, in after years, any one should tell you more concerning the history of Sister Agnes."

"You will soon rise from this bed and go back to your own country; and, pardon me, but if you have decided that it is best for all things which bind you to be severed, you must not forget—Oh! the sad faltering of the sweet voice as she uttered these words: 'You must not forget,' she repeated, in a way that he never forgot, 'that in the future there will be duties which you owe to your proud name and position—do not judge all women by what you believe of one, and may you yet know much of happiness in your own home and at your own fire-side. And—' and a quivering sob burst forth now, 'try to think as kindly as you can of the poor maiden who was your happy wife for one short half-hour, and if you cannot believe her guiltless, strive, as One has commanded, to forgive, and may you find that peace which a loving Father willingly gives to all the children which His hand has stricken, and in the great future, when we shall see as we are seen, and know as we are known, God grant that the hearts so cruelly severed here may be re-united for eternity there. Fare well!"

She turned and had glided from the room before he could command his voice to speak.

For Kenneth Malcolm to weep was like breaking up the waters of the mighty deep.

But he had never listened to words so sad, so hopeless before—he had never in his life been so moved as now.

He felt that this gentle, unknown girl's life was hopeless; he knew that his own was, and the dark future seemed so dreary, so desolate, that he turned his face to the wall and great sobs shook his frame, and the tears poured over his face like rain.

He almost wished now that he had given her the comfort of the promise she had craved—his own heart cried out constantly for Nina, with a stronger and

mightier love than ever before, and he was utterly wretched and miserable.

With tottering steps, the aged woman went forth into the long corridor, closed the door noiselessly after her, then lifting her hands toward Heaven with a gesture of wildest despair, she murmured:

"Lost! lost! Heaven help me to bear the dread future!"

Then groping her way like a blind person, she passed on, and entered a room some distance beyond.

#### CHAPTER XXXI.

##### "I CAN NEVER FORGET."

A few moments later Madam Leicester passed through the same corridor and entered the same room. It was large, airy, and exquisitely neat.

Its floor of white wood was spotless, and shone as if polished. The dainty bed was covered and draped in white.

White curtains hung at the windows, and the furniture, consisting of a couch and three inviting chairs, was all also draped in white.

Madam glanced anxiously around as she noisily closed the door after entering. She saw nothing, but started, and an expression of pain swept over her features, as a low moan fell on her ears.

Going around to the side of the bed, she saw the figure in grey serge kneeling there in an abandonment of grief.

The head, from which the ugly black cap had been hastily torn, was not shorn, but covered with shining chestnut hair; but the face was bowed and hidden among the curtains of the darning.

"My darling! my darling! what is it?" cried madam, a sharp pain in her voice.

"Oh! Kenneth, my husband—my king—lost! lost!" was the incoherent response.

"Kenneth! is he worse?"

"No, better; but I have failed in my mission here."

"Failed?"

"Utterly. Oh, my mother, take me to your heart and comfort me, for I never needed it more than now," and Nina lifted her pale, pinched face from her bed, and stretched out her hands as if in supplication.

Madam gathered her close to her bosom and wept bitterly, and the two women clung to each other in a common cry.

After a few moments, madam raised the stricken girl, and leading her to the white draped couch, made her lie down, and then gradually drew from her the sad circumstances of her recent interview with Kenneth.

Doubtless it has been surmised, long before this, who the pale nun was who had watched and nursed Lord Malcolm so untiringly.

To his own wife's ceaseless vigils and tender care Kenneth owed his life; and when, in after months he discovered it, who can describe the remorse which stung him and the reproaches and regrets which haunted him night and day?

Sir Horace Vere, with Madam Leicester and Nina, had arrived at Little Lake on the third night after leaving their home, on the banks of the river Leam.

They proceeded directly to St. Philip's convent, where the ladies, upon Sir Horace's introduction, were most cordially welcomed by the Mother Superior.

Sir Horace left them in her charge and sought his hotel, while Nina and her mother, after partaking of some simple refreshment, retired for a rest, which they so much needed.

During the journey the former had been comparatively cheerful, declaring again and again that she knew Kenneth would not die; she would nurse him back to life and health, and when he was able to hear it, she would tell him all, and he would joyfully take her back into his heart again.

This sickness, she believed, had been sent upon him that they might be reunited and this hope seemed to restore strength and vitality to her.

But alas! for human hopes and plans! How sadly were they doomed to be disappointed.

Madam had expected that Nina, in her weak state, would be ill from her journey; and unable to arise the following morning, but what was her surprise, on waking to see her standing by her bedside, clad in the habiliments of the sisterhood of St. Philip's.

She was so changed by the ugly dress and ghastly bandages, that at first she did not recognize her, but supposed her to be some sister sent to awaken them for the morning meal.

But a closer glance into the lovely eyes, which were already brightening with the dawn of a new hope, and into the sweet face, which for the first time in months had a trace of color in it, revealed the truth.

"What does this mean, Nina?" madam asked, regarding her curiously.

"It means, mamma, that I have been talking with the kind Mother Superior, and we have both concluded it best for me to nurse Kenneth in disguise for awhile."

"But he would not know you now any way."

"I know," Nina replied, with a quivering lip, "but consciousness may return at any moment, and the sight of me might do him injury. I shall wait until he is well enough to converse with me before I reveal my identity."

"You are very hopeful, my dear," said madam, sorrowfully.

She had been told by the Mother Superior that there was not a hope of recovery.

"Yes, mamma, I do. You know that we often are impressed regarding the sick, and something tells me that Kenneth will get well; and, oh, will it not be joyful, if we can go back to England happy once more?" she breathed earnestly.

"God grant your prayer, my child; but I fear you are not strong enough to undertake your task to-day. Kenneth will have good care; rest for one day, my dear," pleaded her mother, anxiously.

"Not an hour, mamma—I am eager now to be at his side. You are sure he will now recognize me, if he should have a lucid interval?"

"No, there is no danger, especially in a darkened chamber; you are entirely changed."

"I had planned it all before we arrived, for I cannot feel quite sure how he will receive me, and I do not wish to make myself known until I feel confident that he desires to be reconciled with me. If I find that he still loves me, and I can remove all his doubts, then how gladly will I tell him who I am; until then I am to be simply Sister Agnes."

Yet she was so hopeful—she felt that she should have no difficulty in re-establishing his faith in her, he must listen to her, and when once she had told him all, all would be well.

How dreadful then was the death of all her hopes, when she found that Kenneth was determined never to listen to any explanations—when he refused to believe her, even if she should speak when he had told her that there was no room in his heart for her ever again, and that he never loved her but for her face.

How eternally had she shut her off from revealing who she was! how utterly, as she had told him, had he sealed her lips, and that their life must be a blank until he sought her to learn the truth.

For three long weeks she had watched by his bedside, this one hope and this one prayer, and now it was all over, and she was left as before.

Madam was astonished on beholding her strength.

She seemed suddenly to have overcome all her own bodily weakness, and to have risen above all her own trouble, while she served so faithfully at her husband's bedside.

Her husband's great physician's admiration and entire confidence, by her deft ways, her judicious management of the sick man and his strange fancies, and by her rare executive ability as a nurse.

She only sought rest when he slept, the sleep caused by opiates, and would yield her post to no one.

Madam Leicester only entered the sick-room to relieve her when she sought her much-needed rest, or partook of her meals.

She, too, believed with Nina, that Nina said, that the mother's heart, consciousness would be only too glad to listen to reason, and would gladly accept the explanations regarding that sad drama which had so nearly ruined their lives.

She was bitterly disappointed when she learned from Nina his decided refusal to even listen to her, and she was again, or even yield her the privilege of self-defense.

Her pride too, rose in arms at the injustice of it all.

"My dear," she said, "if he will be so wilful and stubborn, he is unworthy of so much love as you have lavished upon him. I gave him credit for a large heart, and a generous nature, but I am deeply disappointed in him."

"He is noble—he is grand, mamma; but this sorrow has made him distrustful of everything and everybody."

She said, laying her hand on her forehead, "But, oh!" she added, wildly, "the worst of it is, that, some day, when it is too late, he will wake up, and know that I was true, and his cruel and unjust! What will become of him then?"

"It will be but a just punishment for his obstinacy," madam said, indignantly, then added, tenderly: "But let us go away at once, where we can be quiet, and rest, and forget, if possible, all association connected with those dreadful events."

"I can never forget," Nina said, with sharp despairing cry.

"I know you cannot, dear; but let us try to be submissive beneath this stroke, and there may be something of comfort left for us yet."

"Oh, mamma, I look so long to me!" she said, the stricken girl.

"My child, I will give you this to your grief. Remember that I am on the shady side of life—and of a life that has known even more of sorrow than you have ever dared to dream of," madam said bitterly.

"Is that so, mamma? Why have you never told me this before?" asked Nina, in surprise.

"Because I did not wish to sadden your young life; and I should not have spoken of it now—it escaped me unawares. But do not forget, dear, that I need you, while I live, to comfort me; remember, also, that Louis needs your love and influence; remember that you have duties in life, Nina, if you cannot have joy—there will come hereafter, in a better world."

Madam spoke earnestly and impressively, and the young girl started.

Had she not spoken almost the same words to Kenneth less than an hour ago? and should she refuse to put in practice the sentiments which she had preached?

No; she would seek to rise above the pain which so crushed her now, and which life must ever hold for her.

She would try to forget self in ministering to others, and perchance the might come to her in the future some moments of blessed forgetfulness, and she might even feel a passing joy in making others happy.

"You are right, mamma," she said, after deep thought. "I will not give way selfishly to my own grief, although life looks now like a burden too heavy to be borne. I will strive to be a comfort to you, and to Louis, and to the poor, and to the suffering, instead of a source of trouble and anxiety. You shall tell me your sorrow, and together we will bear our duties yet."

"Some other time—not to-day, dear; you have had enough to bear for the present," replied her mother, sadly.

"I believed, that night when we were talking these things over before," Nina resumed, "that I had not long to live; but I found that just as soon as I had an object in life, my strength began to return. Kenneth was ill, I forgot self, and selfishness, and began to mend. The more I thought of his grief until I understood my own grief, and I found that I was not patient enough to go to God's way, and perhaps the dreared future may have less bitter lessons than I think."

Bless you, my darling, you cannot know what a comfort your words are to me," murmured madam, tearfully, as she clasped her closer.

Then she added:

"Your words remind me of those beautiful lines which I have always loved so well:

"I see not a step before me, as I tread the days of the year,  
But the past is still in my hand,  
And what looks dark in the distance may brighten as I draw near."

Nina lifted her arms and wound them round her mother's neck.

Drawing the silver head down upon her breast, she pressed a loving kiss upon her fair cheek, saying:

"Take me home, mamma; I do not feel that I can remain here longer."

"Well, then, dear, we will have to wait until to-morrow, for I have important work to do to-day."

"Important work? Of what nature?" asked Nina, much surprised by this communication.

"I have property near there, which is my duty now to claim."

"Properly! Why what do you mean? I never heard you say anything about it before," Nina said, more and more surprised.

"That is part of the story which I have to tell you by and by; there is much in my history of which you know very little," returned madam, with a weary sigh.

"I have often wondered, mamma, why you were so reticent regarding your early life; you always have appeared pained whenever I have mentioned it. Do you think it is time I shared your confidence?"

"It is, my darling, and I shall shortly confide to you everything; but now we must prepare for our return," and madam, with a stern look upon her handsome face, arose to set about the task.

What shall we say to the Mother Superior, mamma, regarding our sudden departure?" asked Nina, with a sad and troubled face.

"I have been debating that question in my own mind; I see no other way out of the confining prison to a certain extent," was the reply.

"How can I go? Oh, mamma, it is like turning away from a new-made grave, where one has laid their all," cried the young wife, in sudden agony.

as the memory of all she was leaving rushed over her.

In going, she renounced all hope of ever being reconciled to her husband, and she believed she would never behold him again on earth.

It was too dreadful, and for awhile she was again entirely overcome with her mighty grief.

"Courage, my poor child," whispered her mother, whose own heart was nearly broken by the sight of her weeping, "we still have each other, and Louis; let us, at least, be patient."

"I will, I will; but give me a little time. Mamma, go away and leave me alone for awhile, until I fight my battle out," Nina pleaded, her sweet, white face so tortured and drawn that her mother nearly wept aloud at sight of it.

She wisely went away, however, and sought an interview with the Mother Superior, to acquaint her with the every day of her fight.

The good woman appeared somewhat surprised but asked no questions, and made the interview as easy as possible for madam.

She had mistrusted from the first that there was something mysterious connected with her illustrious guest, from the fact of Nina's being desired to assume the disguise of a nun.

Like a veritable woman, she would have enjoyed reading out the little romance, but being a true lady, she restrained her curiosity, and waited, hoping that the future might disclose more.

Nina, left alone, fought out her battle with her rebellious soul, and then tried to think calmly of the future and what it held for her.

It was not an easy thing to bury all her hopes, and shut out of her every ray of light, but the strength of a grand character soon began to shine forth, and when after more than an hour, madam returned to her, she found her clad for her journey, very sad, but calm and resolute, a look of resignation on her fair face, and the gleam of a purpose shining from her ardent eyes.

Sister Agnes returned with them to Lorraine, thoughtful and attentive for their every comfort.

He became a constant visitor at the little vice clod cottage, and the long and repeated private discussions between him and madam now became a matter of wonder and perplexity to Nina, who never had heard of the existence of such a person as Sir Horace until that dark and stormy night when he had so unexpectedly brought them the news of Kenneth's illness.

#### (To be continued.)

Come cause intolerable pain. Hol-loway's Corn Cure removes the trouble. Try it and see what an amount of pain is saved.

The most popular "tenner" is the ten dollar gold piece.

Prohibition and Politics.

The anti liquor question is a strong plank in the political platform, and one safe to lay hold of. All intoxicating beverages are safest when taken alone, even in medicine. Burdock Blood Bitters is not a bar beverage, but a strictly pure medicine, reliable for diseases of the stomach, liver, bowels, kidneys and blood, and will not aid in making drunks.

"Bessie, I hear your sister is sick. What ails her?" "I don't know, ma'am. Maybe it's the diploma."

"The what, child?" "The diploma. I heard mother say she took it at school."