

LITERATURE.

[FOR THE CARLETON SENTINEL.]

HYMN

BY MINNA MAY.

It is not meet for man, O Lord,
To place his hopes on earth,
Or sacrifice his numbered days
To sin, or guilt, or mirth.

Or fix his heart's undying love
On objects made of clay,
For thou hast said that all things here
Shall surely pass away.

E'en earth's most lasting, sweetest joys
Are like the bubbling foam,—
As transient as the wayward wind,
Which here and there doth roam.

But far above the glittering stars
Our spirit's love should mount,
And draw eternal draughts of bliss
From Christ's unfailing fount.
March, 1852.

[From the Boston "Carpet Bag."]

THE BACHELOR OF HEARTS.

BY PAUL CREYTON.

(Concluded.)

"Why can't you try to break yourself of this abominable practice of joking?" asked Sophia, looking into his eyes, as they sat upon the sofa. "Really, when I came in, and saw you looking so terrific, I thought something had happened—I was actually frightened."

"Well, my Sunshine!" said Caleb, with a sigh—"something *has* happened."

"What?"

"My uncle—"

"Oh! I have completely won his affections!"

"Sophia!"

"Yes; and I can't tell you how much I like the good old soul. We are the greatest friends in the world. It did not require the hint contained in your note, for me to give him every attention."

"My note!"

"Certainly!"

And Sophia produced the one we have quoted.

"And in the name of common sense!" cried Caleb, regarding her with a strange look, "what do you—what *did* you—understand to be the meaning of this note?"

"The interpretation is quite simple. For example: 'Sunshine of my Soul' means 'credulous receiver of the flatteries of my tongue.'—By calling yourself *my humble planet*, you intimate that your love is *wondering*—or that you are trying to get around me—in more than one sense," said Sophia, cruelly moving Caleb's arm from her waist.

"What I said about my uncle—I meant that."

"Oh! I interpret these mysterious words thus: 'My uncle is rich; I am dependent on him; I am anxious that he should approve of my future wife; he is agreeable, easily pleased, fond of attentions; secure his good will and—'"

"Oh, Sophia!" groaned Caleb.

"Well, sir; what now?"

"You've ruined me!"

The fair Sophia, with a shake of her curls, turned suddenly, and fixed an earnest look on Caleb's face.

"I mean," he continued, forcing a smile, you have misunderstood the tenor of the note, and the misunderstanding has been fatal."

"Fatal!"

"That is, *rather* fatal. Do you know—do you suspect—can you for an instant believe that you have won my uncle's affections in a manner different from that intended—that he is, in short, dead in love with you?"

The walls of the room echoed the silver ringing of Sophia's laugh. Caleb's envious face wrought seriousness in her, however; and he candidly explained the state of the poor old bachelor's heart.

"Now," said he, ruefully, "since he is in love with you, how can I hope that he will ever give his consent to our marriage? And I know very well what the result would be, if I should marry without his consent."

"Well," said Sophia, archly, "I see but one course for me to pursue."

Caleb's earnest face was a whole volume of interrogations.

"Since I have been so unfortunate as to win the old fellow's heart, I think I should make the most of it, and marry him. I'll be a very affectionate aunt to you, Caleb!"

Before the young man could reply to this pleasantry, a domestic announced—

"Mr. Jasper Picton!"

"Angels and ministers of grace!" whispered Caleb, "what shall I do? There is an explosion, if he finds me here. In mercy, hide me!"

Sophia pointed to a door which conducted—Caleb knew not whither. But he disappeared behind it just as Jasper Picton entered the parlor.

"Ah! my charmer!" exclaimed the complacent bachelor, displaying a powerful imagination in the conception of bows and flourishes—"I am—ah—extremely happy to see you looking so—ah—beautifully well to day!"

Sophia received Mr. Picton with perfect politeness. Caleb, who had failed to close the door by which he had retired, heard their conversation in his place of concealment, and managed to see what passed between them through the same aperture which admitted the sounds of their voices.

After a labored introduction on the part of Uncle Jasper, he approached what appeared to be the object of his visit.

"My nephew—hem! fine young fellow—tolerably sensible—returned to town this morning—and having consulted him—as I thought it best to do in this matter—and received his earnest approval—I have resolved to delay no longer the step on which I decided long—that is three days—ago. That step," said Mr. Picton, fixing a most tender look on Sophia, "concerns yourself!"

"Me!"

Sophia increased the distance between them, by three graceful steps backwards. Impelled by the impulsiveness of love, the old bachelor, smiling blandly, followed, and insinuated his arm around her waist.

"Yes, charmer! I—I love you!—and—" half playfully, half seriously, he attempted to steal a kiss.

"Ah! be careful!" cried Sophia, punishing his lips with her pretty finger.

"Charming!" said Jasper, with an amorous leer. "But—though I admire—your coyness—hem! my intentions are honorable!"

"Indeed!"

Caleb could scarce refrain from giving a shout of laughter at the manner in which his uncle spoke of his honorable intentions, and the gravity of Sophia's "indeed!"

"Yes, Miss Carey! I have been looking several years for a wife—"

"Dear me! how patient you must be to look so long!"

"And now tell me that my patience is rewarded—for I have found at last the perfection I desired, in you! Don't be surprised! Our acquaintance has been brief, but I cannot be called rash, for I have had experience in society, and I know that in offering you my hand I have taken the only step to insure my happiness—Mistress of my fate, I kneel!"

Jasper suited the action to the word, dropping upon a rug, which, with tender consideration for his knees, he had approached for the purpose.

This was too much for Sophia's gravity. She laughed in spite of all her efforts to preserve seriousness. Caleb saw her curls shake tempestuously with mirth, and the humor proved contagious. He leaned against the ceiling for support. The ceiling was treacherous. It allowed his hand to slip—he fell against the door—the door flew open—

Sophia heard a crash. Looking quickly around, she saw her lover sprawling upon the carpet. Frightened, she turned to observe the effect of the catastrophe on Uncle Jasper. In his efforts to rise suddenly from his kneeling posture, he too had fallen; and Sophia had the gratification of seeing two lovers literally at her feet!

Reader, if you could have resisted the bubbling up of mirth, at such a time, you can blame her, for the indulgence to which she gave way; for, throwing herself upon the sofa, speechless, in a paroxysm of merriment, she covered her face with her curls, which were agitated as if by a mighty wind!

Caleb, however, who thought it no laughing

matter, hastily got up, looking very sheepish.—At the same time, Jasper, livid with wrath, regained his feet. Uncle and nephew confronted each other.

"You rascal! you traitor! you—you spy! you—you—you—ungrateful scapgrace!" sputtered Jasper, quite beside himself with anger and confusion. "I demand—I command—what is the meaning of this?"

Caleb, very pale, but calm and firm, after the first shock was passed, stood erect, eyeing his uncle fixedly.

"I am ready to explain," he said, unhesitatingly. "Have a little patience with me, and you shall have a full confession."

"This intrusion! this playing the spy!"—thundered the bachelor, too much excited to hear anything, or conceive of such a quality as patience—"You are a knave!"

"At all events," replied Caleb, this house is no place to settle our difficulties."

Jasper glanced at Sophia, whose face was still hidden, although she had ceased to laugh. His natural sense of propriety seemed to come forcibly upon him, even in the midst of his anger.

"You are right," said he. "And I don't know as any settlement is necessary. I hope I may never meet you again. Good day!"

The old bachelor turned indignantly upon his heel, and strode from the room.

Caleb, who knew well that, good natured as his uncle was on most occasions, he was capable of stern and cruel decision, approached Sophia with a rueful countenance.

"It's all up!" said he.

"O, Caleb! why *did* you fall?" exclaimed Sophia.

"He looked so awfully ridiculous," replied Caleb, smiling at the recollection. "But you heard his last words?"

"Yes, and what will you do?"

"Take up my lodgings, temporarily, at a hotel; write a frank, apologetic, manly letter to my offended kinsman; and await the result. I don't know what more I can do."

Sophia approved of the proposed course, and Caleb lost no time in carrying his design into execution.

The only reply he received to his candid confession of the truth, was an intimation that his wardrobe, books, and other personal property, were all packed, and awaited his disposal.

Caleb was plunged into despondency. Peniless, in love, feeling that Sophia could not be his for years, perhaps, if ever, he saw the future before him, like the abyss of Night, starless, rayless, full of desolation.

"Well, well!" said Sophia, into whose heart he poured his sorrows, "be a good boy, and perhaps things will look brighter soon."

"Oh! if you love me—"

"Hush! there's a dear!" said Sophia, playfully, patting his cheek, as if he had been about four years old, instead of four and twenty.

"Tell me something! do!" pleaded Caleb, feeling her smiles warm a hope in his breast.

"Then I'll tell my poor boy that I am not sure but this catastrophe is the best thing that could have happened."

"The best thing!"

"The truth is, you were getting decidedly lazy, Caleb. Nay, don't look angry. It's the truth. Living on your uncle, who, like half the stupid people in this world, happens to be rich, you have done nothing for the past year but pore over some old books, and flirt with the ladies. Now there is an opening for you.—You know what I mean?"

Caleb held her to his heart. He understood her. He left her presence, another being.

All the energies of his soul were roused.—Two years before, he was admitted to the bar; and, although he had never practised, he was now firmly resolved to unite himself with some member of the profession, and distinguish himself as a lawyer.

As Sophia intimated, the catastrophe I have described was probably the best thing that could have happened to Caleb. It developed his mind; it gave tone to his character; it revealed his manliness and strength.

Being favorably known in society, he experienced little difficulty in forming a professional connection to advantage, and in less than a year he realized an income, such as, in his most sanguine moments, he had not dared to expect.

Uncle Jasper, meanwhile, with renewed energy, pursued his search for a wife. Among the hundreds of known and unknown beauties, who, he imagined, were aiming at his heart and hand, he resolved to choose one, to effectually disappoint Caleb's expectations as an heir to his property. I am sorry to say, the old bachelor met with six decided refusals in the course of as many months. Afterwards he was despondent and unhappy. He remembered Caleb, "who was a good fellow, after all." He thought of Sophia, "who might be very agreeable as a niece," although averse to a closer relationship with him. Then, his anger having had time to cool, Uncle Jasper became as good natured and benevolent in his feelings as ever.

Just at the favorable moment, the old bachelor received an invitation, couched in very respectful terms, to attend a wedding. It was the wedding of Caleb and Sophia.

Uncle Jasper's face brightened. His heart warmed. Glowing with affection for the happy pair, he invested untold sums of gold in wedding gifts, donned his gayest suit, and most cheerful countenance, and went to the wedding.

It was a very happy wedding. Every body was happy—bridegroom, bride, relatives, friends—even Uncle Jasper—although he was troubled with some pleasant pangs of remorse, touching the heart of an old maid, which he had good reason to suppose he had won by his gallantry and good looks.

Uncle Jasper was very kind towards his nephew, and very attentive to the bride, whom he kissed, and who did not snap his lips, as on a certain previous occasion he very well remembered!

And nothing then would satisfy the old bachelor, but a promise from nephew and niece that they would take up their abode under his roof; and, having compassion upon his loneliness, which he vividly described, and consideration for the fortunes of certain contingent heirs and heiresses, to whom he delicately alluded, the happy couple agreed to the proposition.

Well! my story must have an end; and I don't know how I can bring it to a more dramatic and affecting conclusion than by stating that Mr. Picton—the Bachelor of Hearts—the kind relative—the honorable citizen—the affectionate uncle—died, at half past eleven o'clock, on Tuesday morning of last week, his hair and whiskers—to please a certain little Jasper, who is the brother of Hettie, who is the daughter of Sophia, who is the wife of Caleb, who is the nephew of his uncle.

A KNOTTY CASE.—Mr. Henson, a shoemaker, who resided at Woodend, near where the village house is now kept, was not remarkable for the acuteness of his mental preceptions. He kept for sale, in the front of his shop, a few little matters most called for by the neighbors; such as beer, candles, fruit, bread, &c. One morning a wag stepped in, and purchased a bottle of beer. He stood talking a few minutes, and finally said he was sorry he had purchased the beer, and requested Mr. Henson to exchange it for a loaf of bread, as the price was the same. To this the worthy cordwainer readily assented: the wag took the loaf and ate it while in the shop. As he was going out the vender hesitatingly reminded him that he had not paid for the bread.

Certainly I have paid for the bread, I gave you the beer for it."

But, then, you haven't paid me for the beer."

"I didn't take the beer. It is before you at this moment."

The worthy Crispian was astounded. He looked sedately, and rubbed his forehead; but all to no purpose; the case was still a mystery.

"True," said he, "you gave me the bottle of beer for the bread, and I still have the bottle of beer; I can't demand pay for *that*; but I *had* both; one is now gone, and I have received no money." Then he again gravely considered the matter, and finally, abruptly broke out with this conclusion: "Sdeath, take it, neighbor, it is just as you say, but I'll be darn'd if I can see into it."

"Have you any traveling inkstands?" asked a lady of a clerk at one of our stationery stores the other day. "No, ma'am, we have them with feet and legs, but they are not old enough to travel yet," was the pert reply.