

## Poetry.

## "Jack's Holiday."

The fleet was anchored taut and trim,  
Beneath the Russian forts so grim,  
When on the "Aggy's" gun-deck dim,  
Says Jack the topman unto Jim,  
Says he "Let's go a shootin';  
Blest if I couldn't pipe my eye,  
To think like lubbers here we be  
While them there sojers high and dry,  
Ashore, gets all the shootin'."

Says Jim to Jack—"I'm blest," says he,  
"If with that" ere I don't agree;  
But then the skipper wexed might be,  
If when all hands was piped, d'ye see,  
He found we'd gone a shootin'.  
Sir Edmund he is fond o' game,  
And tho' we topmen is the same,  
Blow'd if it wouldn't be ashame,  
To spoil the skipper's shootin'."

"Avast!" says Jack, "do you suppose  
I aint a man my dooty knows?  
For liberty afore we goes,  
To ax the skipper I propose,  
Bein' he's fond o' shootin'."  
There's you and me and all our mess,  
In our shore-going toga we'll dress—  
Blest if the skippers can do less  
Than give us a day's shootin'."

"With cutlasses well ground and filed,  
And our ship's pistols cleaned and 'iled,  
And lest our day's sport should be spoiled  
(Them Russian conveys bein' wild,  
And very hard o' shootin').  
Suppose we ask the skipper straight,  
To let us take our sixty-eight—  
The poor dear gun's been kept of late  
So weiry short o' shootin'."

"We'll have the old girl's breeching struck;  
Bouse her up handsome on a truck;  
If we don't bag a Rooshian duck,  
When once we get ashore—worse luck;  
Say I aint up to shootin';  
Blow your grasshopper nines and twelves!  
Them sojers, they enjoy themselves,  
And leaves us sailors on the shelves,  
Never to get no shootin'."

Next day, the holystoning done,  
Jack and his messmates every one,  
All from the captain of the gun,  
Down to the powder-monkey, run  
To ask for their day's shooting.  
"No," says Sir Edmund, with a grin,  
"For liberty the crew's too thin;  
But here's the ship, let's take her in,  
And all have a day's shooting."

So said, so done; the anchors weighed;  
All said the saucy "Aggy" made;  
'Longside Fort-Constantine she's laid,  
And there her big broadsides she played,  
As cool as if saluting,  
Says Jack, as his gun's breech, all hot,  
He slapped after a well-armed shot,  
That sent ten Russians all to pot,  
"My eyes, Jim aint this shootin'!"

London Punch.

## Select Story.

From Arthur's Home Magazine.

## BITTER AND SWEET.

BY MRS. MARY A DENISON.

"Haden't you better lie down now, John? It's getting very late; you will be worse to-morrow." Her eyes, sad, faded and tearful, sought the little mantel clock, and then resting anxiously again upon the face of her husband.

"No, dear," replied the sick man, shaking his head, while the rich wavy curls danced upon his pallid cheek, and a singular expression crossed his countenance. "I think I'll sit a little longer yet. Put one stick on the fire, dear; my feet are very cold, and it's a cold, too, that somehow chills to my heart."

Quickly and quietly the poor woman took from her little closet the last and most coveted store of dry wood, and while she bent over the broken coals, adjusting it to the ill-looking fireplace, the sick man held his hand, with a curious look, to his eyes, examined the finger-nails, heavily pressed his damp forehead, and groaned.

"What is it, dear?"

"Nothing that alarms me," he replied, quietly, "but, at that moment, it flashed across my memory, among other things, that to-night we have mourned just five years for the death of our poor boy."

"Yes, so it is the night," said the wife, thoughtfully. "It was just such a night, too, when the old sexton brought the news. But we were better off then, and didn't mind if the snow blew in, for there was such a fire in the grate—a living coal fire such as we haven't seen for months; and you were so healthy then. I rather think, John, that was what broke you down."

"Yes, yes!" replied the other, hastily; "I haven't been the same man since; but we must not complain; Providence is always good, though it may seem ever so dark. Wallace was a noble fellow, and I have never forgiven myself, that by forcing upon him a trade with which he was disgusted, I drove him to sea. Oh! if parents only knew just what to do!—if only they were not so willful!"

He clasped his hands as he spoke, and gazed fixedly at the fire that threw forth now a steady blaze. "If only they were not so willful," he added, with a softer voice.

In a few moments he looked up again, and smiling placidly, said, "It seems to me, Mary, I don't feel so bad about leaving you, to-night, as I have before."

"Don't, John;—oh! let us talk of something else! If you are to die, John! I don't want to know—think of it—till it is all over. I thought I heard a groan," she added, moving a little ways from the fire; "I get so nervous when you talk so."

"It was the wind, dear. Hear how it beats that broken blind; I wish I was strong enough to mend it. Hark! it hails heavily; God pity the mariner; his voice trembled and sank. In a moment he added, "It seems to be a good fire, too, but somehow it don't warm my feet; thank you, Mary, that will be better; thank you, dear."

She had stooped down, and was now holding those thin feet in her hands, chafing them briskly and tenderly. The half-wield light of the fire, as it sunk at times, left strange brown hollows in that careworn face. It struck out the shadows of the tall, high-post bedstead, whose tattered curtain had been gathered around to the side where the sick man laid. The high-backed chairs threw out shapes like coffins on the uncarpeted floor, and the little octagonal table made ghastly show of itself along the unpapered wall.

"It did sound something like a groan," said John, returning his wife's fearful glance; "but it must be the wind moaning up-stairs. Those rooms are old and crazy, and not rented; they are full of erevices for the wind to rush through, and I dare say the noise might be accounted for in a dozen ways. There, precious wife, you are wearying yourself. I feel better already; so sit here by my side, and let us talk together of olden times."

Shutting the tears back, Mrs. Leslie wrapped her husband's feet in well worn flannel, and drew a chair close beside him. The clock struck that moment—it was eleven.

She looked at him, as he took her hand in his, now emaciated with long sickness; "it's a good clock, Mary, and what furniture we have is pretty decent. When I am—"

She stopped him with a kiss, but the tears rained down her cheeks, and the wild storm outside grew wilder.

"You have not altered much, Mary, in the twenty years of our marriage. Let me see; you were eighteen. How modest and blooming you were, seated in your little school-room, on the first day of our meeting. Roses hung from your curls then, placed there by innocent fingers, and I was strong and full of high hopes; hopes, alas! that have not been realized."

"But will be in Heaven, John," said Mary, lifting her dark eyes.

"I believe it; I have never doubted that; the future is all my hope now. The seed I have sown here has taken unseen root, doubtless, and blossomed up to Heaven. There I shall eat of the ripened fruit. Oh! I never doubted for a moment the immortal destiny of man."

"How your face shines, John!"

"I am very happy, Mary; I don't know as I ever felt happier. I know there is not a crust of bread in the house, and this is the last of our poor little wood pile; and yet I feel as certain that God will provide—some way. I am only sorry that you have had so much care with me, but I know love sweetened it all."

"Oh! yes John; yes, all my care has been pleasure; and if it is God's will that you should go, I shall not stay long. I'd have nothing to live for, John."

"You were right, I do believe, Mary; the sound came again apparently beneath our window," cried John, holding his head in the attitude of a listener.

"Yes, and there are voices outside; I'll just go to the door a minute; maybe we can do some good," and, throwing on what had once been a comfortable woolen shawl, she hurried into the dark entry.

"I feel just so," muttered John, letting his head drop on his hand; "I feel as if I'd like to know what it is; another time in our unprotected situation, and this out of the way place, I should be a little fearful; but"—he shook his head and resumed his mournful look in the fire, as he added—"I

am afraid that Mary isn't prepared for what will happen before morning. This fire is hot; I feel the glow on my cheek, but my feet, my feet, they are icy cold, nor can I move them. God help thee, Mary."

"Oh! yes; bring him in; we'll keep him here while you get a carriage. Poor youth—I hope he isn't dangerously wounded."

It was Mary's voice, and John looked languidly round, as two men came in, bearing a body between them.

He was a young man, tall and elegantly attired. His face was handsome, but his thick silken curls were stained with blood. He did not open his eyes though he seemed sensible of the change from a driving storm to comparative warmth; he only moaned faintly, as the compassionate woman placed pillows under his head. A cloak richly trimmed hung on the arm of one of the men; he had been shaking the wet and frost from it in the old entry. He now laid it over the little octagonal table, saying at the same time, "I guess by these trappings he's a rich one; same time I wouldn't like to pay the expense of a carriage on risk this time of night; wonder if he's got any money about him?"

Mary was on her knees, busily cutting away the rich hair that fell in glossy bunches over the carpetless floor. She paused a moment, and inserted her fingers in the pocket of his satin vest.—Fortunately there was loose change enough there to pay for a carriage, and, taking it, the men hurried out.

Suddenly Mary uttered a low cry. She looked up helplessly in the face of her husband; her lips white and parted; her cheeks ashy; but, as he cried, stretching forth his weak arms and weaker body, "what is it, Mary?—for Heaven's sake, tell me, Mary!"—she conquered the impulse to fly and weep upon his bosom, and only said, as she bent once more to her task, or rather sobbed than said, "The wound; it's made me feel sick and faint for a moment, yet I do not think it is dangerous," and she circled the neck of the stranger with her loving arms, and looked down in his face, while a strange expression brightened her own.

At that moment his full dark eyes opened; his lips parted; he said but one word—yet John heard it, and fell back weakly in his chair—that word was "mother."

"John, John—be calm—oh! it will kill you, do be calm, dearest husband—yes, it is him, our own Henry—our boy. My heart will burst with joy!—but you—oh! be calmer, John—don't look so steadily at me; for isn't it good news—holy tidings!—our child is found; he knows us."

"God be praised," was all the poor man could murmur.

"And now I am going to lay him on our bed, John, and you shall sleep beside him; beside our own lost boy. Think of it, John; it will give you new life and strength, and who knows but you may get entirely well! Oh! John, I can't realize it—I can't."

"Blessed be God," murmured the dying man, folding his thin palms together, and a rapt smile spread like light over his face.

"Here they come, but he can't go; they must help me place him on the bed, and fly for a doctor. See, he is looking at us; Henry, can't you speak, my own love?"

"Money—plenty—round my waist," he articulated with difficulty.

"Not to the hospital, hey?"

"Not to the hospital," returned Mary; "he is our child, man; you would not have us send our son to the hospital, would you?"

"Precious need of it," muttered one glancing about the room.

"Look here!—what does this 'ere mean?" blustered the other. "Here's a young man we find, half dead, out in the cold; bring him in the house; woman don't know him; come back from doing a deed of charity, and woman has been a finding out that he's her son. Take that and the clothes into connection, and I should say there was a base attempt at kidnapping, or some such humbug."

The young man, however, settled the question. Weakly lifting his hand, he beckoned Mary to him, and taking her pale fingers, held them to his lips, and kissed them.

"That does look like it," said the man, more softly; "but I can't make it out, either."

"We haven't seen him for five years," cried Mary, "oh! do help him to the bed, and go for the doctor; we'll pay you well; indeed we will."

The doctor came. The wound he said was not dangerous, but, without medical aid, might become so. He dressed the young man's head, and prepared to go. Pausing before John, who lifted

his lustrous eyes, and smiling face to the doctor, he said, "You seem very well pleased, sir—I wish you joy."

Mary had told him all. The sick man only bowed his head, and then, as he languidly laid it back again, the doctor gazed compassionately upon him.

"I thought my Heaven Father would never forsake us," he murmured feebly; "and so I told Mary. Thank God! when I am gone, she will have a son—oh! God be praised!"

"You are cold and exhausted," said the doctor, laying his hand gently on the dying man's brow—"how long have you felt thus?"

"My feet became very stiff before dark, and since then I have been failing fast,—his voice had grown husky.

"Be careful," whispered the doctor, as Mary uttered an exclamation of alarm, and he pointed to the young man whose pale cheek seemed stamped with the hue of death—the least excitement, and I cannot save him. You must perceive that your husband is nearly gone—be thankful that he seems so well prepared—let your grief be quiet as possible."

"How can I?" sobbed Mary, with a stifled voice. "Dear John, won't you rest your head on my bosom? Oh! how can I, how can I give you up?" He turned his dying eyes upon her with unutterable love; he leaned towards her, and his long, curling hair fell on her bosom; his lips moved—the doctor bent down—"For this my son was lost and is found," issued therefrom; "it is something of the joy we shall all feel when we meet in Heaven, isn't it?"

"Have you any neighbors?" asked the kind physician, as wailing sobs seemed rending the heart of the poor mourner.

"No! Then I will send you somebody. He looks very peaceful and happy—you should be more than thankful for his slight suffering; I assure you he breathed at the last like an infant—he will never feel a pain any more."

Mary told him she was not afraid to stay with her dead; and the doctor sprang into the carriage that had been waiting at the door, and hurried away for assistance.

The next morning frost had gathered upon the crazy windows of Mary's habitation, but the bright fire sent out heat and light into every crevice. Her husband, sheeted for his last home, lay with a happy smile, making death beautiful, on his wan features. The son, still very faint and weak, had been able to tell his story of wreck, poverty, want and, lastly, good fortune. Adopted by the rich citizen of a foreign land, he became a thriving merchant, and his only grief was the silence of his parents. For he had written them letter after letter, and as yet received no reply, they having frequently changed their residence into neighboring towns and cities. At last he set forth, leaving the maiden he loved, and to whom he was betrothed, his prosperous business, and severing all the new but closely knit ties of friendship, to seek his parents. From place to place he had followed them, grieved to behold in the gradual decline of comfort in each successive dwelling they had occupied, sure evidence of their decaying prospects. Incautiously, while stopping at an eating house, in the vicinity of the alley where he had learned his parents lived, he had displayed gold, and, tempted by the sight, a villain followed him and felled him to the ground, where he must soon have perished. Fortunately, the bulk of what money he had was dexterously concealed in a belt around his person, the rest the thief had taken. Thus he had the means to bring to the home of poverty, luxuries that had not gladdened it for many a day.

Poor Mary could not eat. The thought that if he could only be sharing with her these simple delicacies, if it were but for once, shut out the faith that should have seen him feasting on the fruit of Heaven, renewed in beautiful and perpetual youth—never to wipe a tear away, never to breathe a sigh again.

Even so doth grief for a time cloud even the glory of revelation.

"Mother," said Henry, after the coffin had been lowered to its last resting-place, and the few mourners had come back, "I will try to be what he was to you, dear mother. You shall never know want—above all, while I live, the want of love." They told me in the land of the orange and the palm, to bring my father and my mother back with me. I will tell them to give to you the double tenderness that they would have cherished for you both."

"I have been ungrateful," murmured Mary, as she stood leaning on the arm of her manly son, on the deck of an outward-bound steamer; "suppose I had been left alone in my sorrow, with no eye to weep for me, no hand to aid me. God forgive me."

And Mary is the loved inmate of a sunny Indian home, to-day.