

TO MY LANDLADY'S DAUGHTER.

Farewell, sweet maid whose dark fringed eyelids
Have raised in me such rueful rout;
Thou dwelt unspotted by thought of pie-lids,
Because, you know, I boarded out.

Farewell, thou fairy of the first floor—
Alack for me that I must go
And dwell apart on some accursed floor
That never leaps to Marie's toe!

Farewell, thou daisies whose light laughter
Has often cheered me through the wall;
Farewell, forever and for aye—
You never knew I heard at all!

Farewell—and since I go tomorrow
(Like good-byes, speed by Fate),
Think of me less in wrath than sorrow
That I have lain abed so late.

Farewell! forgive this idle rhyming—
A worthless lye you'll never lack
Than his who leans the midnight chiming—
Your most devoted one's part back.

A TENNIS STORY.

"Pretty girl, Bliss!" "Yes—rather."
"Well, she is, now. Jove, what eyes!"
and Fayette turned to look through the
buggy window.

"Don't stare her out of countenance, Fayette."
"No, that's so. What do you say, Bliss,
to turning back and asking her the road to
Parthee? No matter if we do know it.
We needn't tell her that."

"Well, you do the asking."

"Quite willingly, I assure you."

Whereupon Fayette Parthee turned his
horse's head and drove back to the gate
and shade where a young lady sat upon a
horse, perhaps waiting for some one. At
that moment she was blowing a shrill whistle
toward the house, and Fayette gave his
cousin an admiring nudge. The girl was
young, apparently about 17 years of age;
her habit fitted her to perfection, and she
sat her horse divinely. She had light wavy
hair done in a broad knot at the back of
head, and fair complexion. Fayette leaned
forward.

"I beg pardon," he said in most fascinat-
ing and deferential manner, "but could you
direct me to the road leading to Parthee—
Col. Parthee's place?"

She looked honestly into Fayette's eyes
as he spoke and made him feel very small
and very guilty.

"Certainly," she replied in a cool, calm,
even manner, which shook the last remain-
ing suspicion that she lived in the place—a
country town. "You turn to the right at
the first cross road, to the left at the next
one, and that leads into a private lane which
takes you to Col. Parthee's."

"Ah! thanks, awfully. Very much
obliged, I'm sure," said Fayette.

But he liked her voice so, seeming quite
anxious to have a correct idea of the route,
he asked her to repeat it.

"I think we may get there safely," put in
Blissden; then they lifted their hats and
drove away.

"Now isn't she a beauty?" cried Fayette,
who in spite of his 24 years was like a boy.
"Jove! what eyes!"

"You've said that before," remarked
Blissden.

"Yes, I believe I have said it before, but
then a good thing never becomes stale."

"Oh, bosh, Canning! You're always
too practical."

"Therefore perfect," very calmly.

"Perfect! Say, but, no trifling, now; she
was charming, wasn't she?"

"All women are," said Canning, in a
most chivalrous spirit.

"Why won't you admit that that girl
is pretty? You are so hard-headed."

"Oh, no, Fayette! Say hard-headed."

"Wonder where she came from?" con-
tinued Fayette, still harping.

"China, doubtless."

Fayette entirely disregarded this, and
rattled on.

"She can't live there. That's the Craw-
fords', you know, and they've lived there
for centuries. Here, open the paper, and
see who has come to visit them."

Blissden very leisurely opened the pages
of the *Blazefield Warder*, which they had
just received in town, and after much search
they found that a Miss Dorothea Downing
was spending the summer with her cousin,
Miss Stacia Crawford.

"That's who it is! Miss Dorothea Downing.
Why, don't you remember, Steve told us
last night that Stacia had a cousin visiting
her who was a perfect bore? Sat up and
looked at the moon when he called in the
evening, and was awfully athletic during
the day; an anomalous creature that had
read deep books, cultivated herself up to
the heights of too-muchness, but who
played tennis and pitched quoits with reck-
less abandon. Come, what do you say,
Let's have him take us to call this evening,
eh?"

"All right—anything to ease the perfect
peace of this country."

Fayette did not rest until his scheme was
completed, and Steve had promised to take
them to call in the evening. But Steve
said it was no go; that the fine city cousin
was only a stick compared to Stacia, and
that they wouldn't look at her.

"Well, we're city fellows," said Fayette.
"Perhaps we will know better how to in-
terest her."

This wasn't complimentary to Steve, so
he only said "may be," and departed.

Steve used bad English, and knew
nothing of his own narrow-minded
town, and even if he were rich, they knew
that a well-educated girl could not endure
ignorance, so they were hopeful of Miss
Downing's coming out.

Miss Crawford received them cordially,
Miss Downing with a quiet dignity and
self-possession that suited them to a nicety.
It fell to Blissden's lot to talk with her at
first, while Fayette was engaged with the
vivacious Miss Crawford.

"You do not deserve to be admitted,"
began Miss Downing.

"Oh?" asked Blissden.

"For what you did this morning," she
answered, smiling.

"For what we did this morning?" Can-
ning repeated, outwardly calm innocence,
inwardly all quaking.

"Yes. Do not be so wicked as to evade
this. You knew the way to Parthee better
than I did, and I knew that you knew it.
I shall not forgive you soon."

Canning looked at her for a moment, and
then burst into a low laugh that was one of
his greatest charms. Then he gravely
asked:

"What did you think of us?"

"It would not do to repeat. Finally, I
decided that you were either a trifle intoxi-
cated, or very anxious to speak to a young
lady, and knowing you were buried deep
in the country, I forgave you. You see,
Stacia had told me about you when I asked

who you were as I saw you driving in; she
took me for a ride past Parthee, and that
is how I was able to give the directions."
"What's that?" called out Fayette.
"Nothing," said Miss Dorsey. "Only that
I resent your imposition of this morning."
"What did you tell her for, Bliss?"
"You need not grow so excited, Mr.
Parthee. I knew it myself," she cried.
"What!" And then how he did laugh!
"So you have the start of us, haven't you?"
"I certainly have an advantage. I shall
watch you Mr. Parthee."

Gradually she and Fayette came to talk-
ing together, and their sharp wits clashed
until the old trees re-echoed with laughter,
and he went home quite stricken indeed.

Now I am sorry to say that Fayette,
with his handsome face and many excellent
qualities, was far from being the hero that
a lovable man should be. He was very
fond of women, of young women especially,
but he had none of the fine ideas about
them that his friend Canning had. They
were to amuse and be amused, and beyond
that could take care of themselves. He
made love to all of them indiscriminately,
and was fascinated by a great many himself.

He had a beautiful face, with rich color in
it, and brown hair with just the hint of curl
that young girls rave over. His manners
were most agreeable, and as he did not
stint either devotion or money, it was no
surprise to find him a great favorite. But
this night, as the three fellows walked home
together in the white moonlight, Fayette
showed one of his flaws.

"Jolly girl, Miss Downing. Thought
you said she was difficult, Steve?"

"I didn't say no such thing," said Steve
emphatically. "I said she was a stick; and
she was. At least she wouldn't have nothin'
to do with me."

"No wonder," mused Fayette; a man
who can't speak his own language correct-
ly." Aloud he said, "Well, I think she is
a perfect little love, and as bright as can
be. I never saw more bewitching blue
eyes in my life, and the dimple in her chin
is regularly fetching. Why, every feature
in her face is pretty; she has the dearest
mouth; the right sort to kiss. I will kiss
it too, before I leave."

"Shut up, Fayette!" growled Bliss, while
Steve laughed heartily.

"I won't. I'll bet you, Bliss, that I can
kiss her. She wouldn't care much; she's
young enough to be easily impressed, and
I'll bet she would kiss a fellow whom she
was smitten with."

"You do? I'll take the bet! She will
not kiss a man she is not truly and deeply
in love with—perhaps not unless she is en-
gaged to him. Don't deceive yourself. If
you mean to flirt and have her engage her-
self to you—meaning nothing—well and
good. But if you believe that she will
kiss you after simply having taken a fancy
to you, I'll take the bet and pledge that she
won't!"

That was a big long speech from old
Bliss, and Fayette laughed at its ardor. If
he had seen how white and determined
Canning's face was, I hardly think he would
have laughed. At any rate the bet was
made; Steve installed as witness, and
Dorsey was under trial.

And why? Merely because she had been
charming and attractive; because she had
laughed a great deal and thrown out spark-
ling bits of repartee and shown a friendly
spirit. If she had been quiet and rather
cold, Fayette would have declared her to
be the stick which Steve pronounced her.
She might have struck the threadbare
happy medium. Yes, but for her there
was no happy medium. She was either
cordial or cold, and supposed that a man to
whom she had shown courtesy and made to
feel "at home" would not betray her confi-
dence by misunderstanding and making
light of her actions. What a pity that she
could not have overheard Fayette going
home in the moonlight. And what a greater
one that she did not hear Blissden Can-
ning.

The Crawfords set up a tennis court after
Miss Downing's advent, and our two friends,
accepting the invitations to play, saw the
young ladies very often. Fayette was in-
variably Dorothea's partner, and this
brought Miss Crawford and Bliss into a
friendly association which both seemed to
enjoy. Miss Downing was by far the best
player of the girls, but Canning could easily
vanquish Fayette, so that the sides were
about even. Thus there resulted some
hotly contested games, and the two sets of
partners began to look upon themselves as
bound by an unwritten contract to beat the
other.

One evening they had played until it was
quite too dark to see the balls. As usual
Blissden and Stacia had won most games.

"Never mind," said Dorothea. "Better
sight prevails today, Mr. Parthee. To-
morrow we will conquer in broad daylight."

"You had better try among yourselves,"
smiled Canning.

For answer Dorsey threw down her rac-
quet at Parthee's feet.

"I challenge you to single combat."

"I accept," said Fayette.

And so it happened, knowing the game
was to be played, quite a little crowd of
people gathered the next evening to witness
it; and Dorothea won. Fayette's dark
handsome face was flushed, and though he
smiled, it was hardly a pleasant smile.

"I shall kiss her this evening for that,"
he muttered to Bliss.

"No," said Blissden, "you cannot kiss
her unless you love her."

"By Heaven, I do love her, the little
witch!" he laughed.

"Look here, Miss Dorothea," called out
Bliss; "you are too exhausted to play
against me, or does a victory of six to one
lift you beyond my plane?"

"No," said the girl. "I am neither tired
or proud, but I am afraid of you. I could
not stand against you many strokes, I fear."

She looked, smiling, into his intelligent,
plain face. "I will play, Mr. Canning, but
I know you will win."

She had never looked prettier to them
than she did as she took her place opposite
Blissden. There was an exquisite tint in
her face, and her blond hair had loosened
into little wavy wisps beneath the light blue
Tam-o'-Shanter. Canning looked at her
and felt his pulses vibrate, and caught his
breath hard. It had not taken him two
months to learn that he was very much in-
terested in the lovely girl. But he had re-
solved to win the game despite love itself.
Perhaps he wanted to test his power, per-
haps decide a question. So he was very
calm outwardly as he replied "Ready!" to
her "Play!"

She served a good ball that he missed.

A cheer went up from the masculine throats,
and Canning smiled. That was the one
point she won in that game, and he beat

her a love set. It was foolish in Dorsey to
act so, but it angered her a bit, and she
treated him very unkindly that evening,
while being more gracious than ever to
Fayette.

"Well," Bliss asked as they went home,
"I noticed that you and Miss Downing were
very chary of your company to the rest of
us; did you try to carry out his threat?"

"Yes," said Fayette, in an assumed,
triumphant tone. Then he laughed, and
Blissden breathed a sharp, quick sigh. "I
did try but—got left."

Canning said nothing, but his eyes
sparkled. Fayette talked on.

"I did everything I could to make her
believe I loved her, and she would not even
so much as let me hold her hand. In fact
she was horribly cross. Say, did you know
she was 19 years old."

"No," said Bliss, quietly.

"Yes, and she is really a most innocent
creature to be so worldly."

"I know it," said Bliss, warmly.

"You do, eh?" said Fayette, much sur-
prised at the tone.

"Yes," said Blissden. "I could have
told you that from the first. There is some-
thing deep down in Dorothy's eyes that
tells one she is not the frivolous girl in her
heart that she is when she plays tennis.
No, because she chooses to be unconven-
tional in the tennis court is no reason that
she is a vulgar creature without principle—
as some people think her."

And all this from Bliss. Fayette was
perfectly silent, and the two men trudged
on in quiet for a few moments, and then
Bliss made a gentle remark about Jupiter
and Mars being in conjunction, and the
subject of Miss Downing was dropped.

The summer passed on. The four young
people had seen much of each other, and I
fear not to the complete peace of mind of
two of them. It was a bright moonlight
night. The two young men had come up
to retire; Fayette went to the window and
thrust his head out into the exquisite glory
that flooded the landscape.

"We go and leave all this a week from
today."

Blissden laughed.

"When we first came, you called it a
stuffy little country hole, and wished that
your grandfather lived in Guinea, so that
you could not be made to pay duty visits."

"Yes, but that was before I met—Dor-
othy."

"Exactly. But are you any happier now
that you have met her?"

Parthee's eyes glowed.

"There is a certain happiness in my mis-
ery," he said.

"Great heavens, man! Why don't you
be honest and tell her that you love her?
Propose in a decent fashion. By George,
if you don't do it, I will!"

Fayette was disposed to laugh, but he
became helplessly angry.

"You!" he cried; "You?"

"Yes, I!"

"What right have you, pray?"

"The right of loving her; for I love her
better than you could ever dream of loving."

The two men stood and faced each other
in the uncertain reflection from the moon-
light. Fayette looked at Blissden in won-
dering admiration. For the moment Can-
ning's face possessed an unwanted beauty,
and he certainly had a figure beyond the
least reproach.

"Well, this is a pretty kettle of fish!"
said Fayette. He leaned against the win-
dow-sill and folded his arms. "But if I do
tell her that I love her—if I propose and am
accepted, what then?"

"I can trust you to keep my secret."

"Well, say, old man—if I am rejected?"

"Then I shall tell her of mine."

"You will perhaps offer yourself, any-
way?"

"I shall."

"Then who will go first? Great Caesar,
Blissden, I'm a coward in this, but I'm
jealous of your going first!"

"Toss for it," said Bliss, settling back
into his old laconic self.

"No."

"Tennis, then."

"What! Why, you would surely win."

"Maybe not," said Canning.

"Do you know, I'll take it," said
Parthee, "for tomorrow morning."

"Agreed."

"With her for umpire?"

"Willingly, if she be ignorant of the ob-
ject of our game; not a hint."

"Of course," said Fayette.

"Then it is settled. No! Say, Fayette,
did she—did you ever get that kiss?"

"No, and I was made to feel very cheap
over it, too."

"Thank Heaven!" said Bliss.

Fayette smiled.

It is presumed that they slept but little
that night, and as the morning was to par-
tly decide their future respective courses,
they rose early and made their rather silent
way the Crawfords' tennis court. There
they found the two girls idly pretending to
play; Dorothy, all innocent of their plots
and dissensions, looking like a dainty
morning glory in a tennis gown of blue and
white. She umpired the game that was to
have such an influence upon her life, per-
haps; she was to have a voice in the mat-
ter later.

Canning was nervously excited, much
more so than befitted the occasion, Dorsey
thought, and she had always believed him
so firm and steady. He was serving.

"Love—fifteen," called out the pretty
umpire.

One game was to decide it, and Bliss
had obtained the serve by the usual method
of tossing a racquet, but slowly it mounted
until—

"Love—game! Why, Mr. Canning, what
is the matter? You have never played
so wretchedly, and on your serve, too!"

He set his teeth hard together, and tried
not to see the unbounded delight in
Fayette's eyes. As for that worthy, he
pleaded with Miss Dorsey to get him a drink
of water, and then followed her into the
house.

The beads of perspiration stood
upon Blissden's forehead as he let Miss
Crawford talk to him. At length, saying
he would not wait—he had an engagement—
he mounted his horse and rode away.

He rode until late afternoon, then went
home and up to his room; there, with his
face bowed upon his arms, sat Fayette, and
at the sight of his apparent misery Mr.
Canning became almost happy.

"Did she reject you?" asked Bliss,
lingering in the doorway.

Fayette did not raise his head. What
would it profit Bliss to see that he had been
hard enough hit to show it in his face?

"I was a fool!" he cried. "Of course
she refused me! She is a beautiful little
devil!"

"Hush!" said Bliss; then in a weaker

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voice: "But—I say, Fayette—is there any
hope for—"

"There's hope for no one! She hasn't a
piece of a heart! There!"

Bliss went gently out and closed the door
after him. When he returned to the house
that evening Fayette had made his adieu
and departed.

But Canning made no excuses for any
conduct whatever. He tried not to think
of Dorsey, and in spite of the slight encour-
agement Fayette had given, rode as fast as
his animal would go to her.

She sat in the hammock, reading. The
autumn sun was very low, and cast long,
mellow lanes of light through the trees.
Miss Crawford was still upstairs dressing.
Fate had at least helped him to a tete-a-tete.
He made the bride very fast indeed to the
hitching post, though his fingers were quite
weak. Then, carelessly beating his whip
against his trousers, he advanced toward
her as she stood waiting for him.

Her face was a trifle pale he thought, as
he looked up, and in some way his eyes
were twisted and tangled in her clear,
steady gaze. But any girl would be pale
knowing that the man coming toward her
came with the full intent of asking her to
be his wife, for Fayette had told her all
about the morning's game. And any
woman would be grave when Blissden was
in earnest.

"My lady—my love," he said brokenly,
"is it to be 'game—love' between you and
me too?"

In some way he had clasped her hands
and stood looking down at her fair face into
which the blood had rushed again.

"I think it is," she said gravely.

"With 'game' in your favor?" he asked.

"Yes, with game for me—and—ah!
won't you understand? Love for you!"

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