

LINES TO MY BED.

I am not fickle, good old bed of mine; I am not changeable in my honest love; Absent from thee, for thy embrace I pine;

BARKER'S BORROWED BABY.

"Well, this is a dull town!" soliloquized Dick Barker, advance agent, as he gazed lazily about the dingy reading room of the Grand Continental Hotel.

"A telegram for you, sir. The messenger's waiting to see if there is an answer."

"More orders I suppose," said the agent, as he tore open the brown envelope.

"Well, it's something to occupy my time, anyhow. That's a consolation," remarked Barker, as he put on his overcoat and started off on his errand.

Naturally he sought the local manager, and asked that functionary for the address of the youngster who, in emergencies, essayed infantile roles.

"There's a little lady," he thought, "who would look the part, even if she could not remember a line. If I could only secure her I'd be satisfied. I wonder if they'd let her go? Well there's no harm trying, so here goes."

His knock upon the immaculate white door was answered by a vinegary visaged woman, whose expression betokened a chronic readiness for a passage at arms.

"Madame," he began, "I've just been admiring your child—for the moment I saw you I knew—"

"She's not my child," interrupted the woman with an emphatic compression of her lips.

"Really, you surprise me!" said Dick. "The resemblance is so striking that, as I was about to remark as you spoke, I would have sworn you were her mother."

"This was so palpably a complimentary lie that even the advance agent blushed as he gave it utterance; but it was partially effective, for she of the vinegary visage replied, in a mollified mood:

"She is my niece, and is here on a visit."

"Ah, then I would like you to consider a proposition. I am the agent of the company which is to play at the Opera House during the latter half of this week. We desire a pretty little girl to play a child's part. Your niece would fill the bill exactly. Would you do us the favor of permitting her to appear? She will be well paid."

"How dare you insult me?" almost shrieked the woman. "My niece appear upon the stage? My niece take part in such an abomination as a theatrical performance, and associate with play actors? Ah, the impudence of such people to—"

"Do not excite yourself, madam," begged the thoroughly disconcerted visitor. "I meant no offense, believe me. I beg your pardon, and will seek a child elsewhere."

"Yes, you better seek elsewhere," scornfully rejoined the vixen. "Perhaps the play actress down at the other end of the street would loan you her brat. She's one of your kind."

With this parting shot the door was violently banged, and Barker, who had reached the sidewalk in his retreat, drew a long sigh of relief.

"Whew! But she was a Tartar," he exclaimed. "I thought she was going to stab me with that nose of hers. It's as sharp as her tongue, and that's saying a good deal."

Being of a philosophical turn, however, the child seeker comforted himself with the reflection that the information concerning the material "play actress down the street" was worth such a tongue lashing, and he set out at once to locate the actress. After some difficulty he found her in a small cottage, the entire aspect of which was eloquent of poverty, and of that most distress-

ful form of poverty which seeks to hide its terrible extent even from the eyes of those who might lend a helping hand. Although the mother had been attempting to do some work, she had been compelled to cast it aside. Disease had stamped its impress upon her so plainly that even the most casual observer could see that she was a very sick woman. As for the child, a bright girl of five, her face showed that peculiar precocity born of privation.

Despite the want, evident in all the surroundings, the poor woman hesitated to grant Barker's request for the loan of the child.

"She is my only comfort," she said, sadly, "and I can't bear to part with her even for a couple of hours. It would break my heart if she were not here when I should—should—should need her most."

"We would require her for only a half hour," urged the agent, "and, if you wish, we would have somebody remain with you in the meantime. If you could let her appear, I will guarantee that the little one will earn sufficient to buy a fine new dress, and, what's more, you will place us under obligations that we will not readily forget."

At the mention of the remuneration, the subject of the conversation opened wide her big brown eyes in pleasurable anticipation, and exclaimed:

"Oh, do let me go, Mama! I won't be long. I'll come back just as soon as I get the money."

"Are you so anxious for the new dress, dear?" asked the mother, with a troubled look. "Would you leave mama alone for the sake of a dress?"

The child hung her head, and her little lip quivered as she replied:

"Oh, it's not the dress I want. It's the money. You know you ought to have wine, an' beef tea, an' medicine and—things, and you can't get 'em without money."

Thus delivering herself, the devoted youngster ran toward her mother, and buried her face in her skirts, to hide the moisture that was fast dimming the brightness of her eyes. The poor woman's face became radiant as she clasped the girl hysterically to her bosom, and kissed her until she was forced by sheer exhaustion to desist.

"There," she said, soothingly, when she had regained her composure, "don't cry, Allie, and forgive mama for thinking that the fatal failing—vanity—which has made us both so wretched, had been transmitted to you. Oh, you have made me very happy, dearest! and you shall go with the gentleman where he wants you."

Dick, who had a heart as big as his own estimate of his abilities, was thoroughly unnerved by the scene. The lump in his throat permitted him barely to gulp out a fervent "thank you," and then he bolted out of the house, vigorously using his handkerchief as he went.

A couple of hours later found him again at the house, however, and in the greatest good humor. He carried a number of mysterious looking bundles, which he carefully deposited outside the door before knocking. His knock was answered by Allie, who seemed to be alone, and this fact apparently pleased the visitor.

"Where's mamma?" he asked.

"She's in the next room, asleep for the first time in ever so long. Oh, she was awful sick after you left, and I had to go for the doctor, and she scolded me for not coming to him before, and he gave her something to make her sleep, and he's coming back again, and—"

Dick seemed to have some difficulty in preserving his cheerful look but he did it. Collecting his parcels, he entered on tiptoe and in whispers addressed the juvenile nurse thus:

"Now, Allie, I've come to teach you a part which you might have to play. You see, you are a little girl that comes to see her aunt. Your aunt has not been feeling well and the servant goes out and leaves her all alone. So, you think it will be good fun to play the part of servant, and prepare a nice meal for your aunt, an' give her a pleasant surprise when she wakes up from her nap. Consequently, you go to the pantry, and you take out a jar of beef extract, like that. Then you fine a broiled chicken which only needs to be heated, like this. And then you rummage around and discover a bottle of wine, of that sort. After a while you run across a lot of little delicacies and fruit like these, and you arrange them on the table so they'll look inviting—so."

As he spoke, the good Samaritan suited the action to the words, and produced the very articles that he had mentioned.

"There you are," he continued, as he finished his task. "Of course, when your aunt in the play comes out, you must help her eat the things and you must press her to eat a great deal. Now, to do all that on the stage, you'll have to practice it beforehand, so I'll leave those things here and you can practice with your mama when she gets up. If all those things are not eaten when I come again tomorrow morning, then I'll know you haven't rehearsed well. Do you understand?"

"Oh, yes, sir, I'll practice good."

"That's a good girl. Remember you must be dead letter perfect in that scene and rehearse the business particularly."

This parting admonition was naturally not altogether intelligible to the child, but she promised to obey it just the same, and Dick took his leave.

Next day the company arrived, and Barker was ordered to produce the juvenile substitute. Instead of doing so, he prevailed upon Mrs. Sanford, the manager's wife, and, if the truth must be told, the manager's manager as well, to go with him to the cottage. Now, Mrs. Sanford was a bustling, consequential sort of person, who was a terror to delinquent members of the company, but who was a kindly creature withal. Her word was law in the organization, and the agent knew that if her sympathies were enlisted, the sick actress would find in her a friend worthy the name. His expectations were realized. Mrs. Sanford was not in the cottage ten minutes before she was performing tender womanly duties for the invalid, and within a half hour the two were on confidential terms. The actress was still confined to her bed, which the doctor had imperatively ordered her to keep.

"Her condition is serious," explained the physician to the voluntary nurse, "although it is not hopeless. She is suffering mentally as well as physically, and she has been so long without proper care and nourishment that we will have no easy task to

pull her through. Perhaps, if you could induce her to relieve her mind by talking of her troubles, her chances could be improved."

Good natured Mrs. Sanford soon acted on the suggestion, and so delicately and yet so effectively did she perform the task that the sick woman was induced to speak unreservedly of her misfortunes. Hers was the old, old story of an actress being captivated by a worthless rascal who had married her to secure the means of leading an idle life. She had worked for him cheerfully until their baby came, and a protracted illness ensued, which exhausted her savings. She had been a singing soubrette, but when she recovered she found that her voice, and consequently her occupation, was gone. Being no longer able to support her precious husband, that worthy deserted her in a strange town, leaving her and her baby to exist as best they could. They had managed to live for five years, through the untiring toil of the mother, who managed, by working from fourteen to sixteen hours a day with her needle, to earn barely sufficient to purchase the merest necessities of life.

Such was her story. The rest was too apparent. She had broken down under the terrible strain, and, although she had battled courageously against the terrible onslaughts of disease, her system was not strong enough to withstand the attacks. She had wasted away to a mere suggestion of her former self, and an insidious malady had gained so firm a foothold that nature had to succumb.

"I think we can get along without Allie," remarked Mrs. Sanford to the sufferer, after a long silence. "You would feel lonesome without her, and I'd rather cut out the part."

"Oh, you must let her appear," was the answer. "The child is bent upon earning the money which Mr. Barker has practically paid her already. It would make her so happy to think that she could be of some material service to me, that I would not deprive her of the pleasure. Besides it is the only return we can make you for your kindness, and God knows it is a small service for so great a favor you have rendered."

So Allie was coached for her debut, and much to her surprise she was not required to eat delicacies herself, or induce her aunt in the play to eat them. She didn't even have an aunt in the play, and she suspected for the first time that Mr. Barker had been deceiving her. However, she acquitted herself creditably enough for so young a novice, and she was the happiest child in town when she received a crisp five dollar note for services that were worth about one tenth of that sum.

Mrs. Sanford had remained with the mother while Allie was gone, for the good woman played a part which only required her appearance in the last act, while Allie appeared in the prologue. On the second night the sick woman seemed improved, and all were overjoyed. That is, all except the physician who was thoughtful and non-committal. The crisis came on Saturday evening. Allie, with her third crisp bank note in her little fist, was running gleefully into the house when, child as she was, she had a premonition that all was not right.

"Quick, little one," said the grave physician, "mama wants to see you."

And he carried the wondering child to the sick bed.

"Speak to her," whispered the doctor. "Mama!" cried Allie.

The heavy eyelids opened, the lack-lustre pupils turned, a sad smile passed over the wan face, and the colorless lips were held out for a kiss.

"Ah, my darling!" gasped the dying woman "I was afraid you would not come in time, but you are here, when—when I needed you most. Good night, good night!"

With the last word, the final flicker of consciousness died out, and within the hour the troubled spirit of the singing soubrette had made its final exit from this world, and its debut in the next.

A Heartbreaking Discovery. Sweet Girl—Please look at this ring and tell me whether the diamonds are paste or not.

Jeweller—Those are genuine diamonds. "Really?" "Yes, indeed, Miss, and very rare ones. They cost a great deal of money."

"Oh, dear! And I wouldn't promise to be anything but a sister to him, and now, boo! hoo! he's gone."

The Haughty Housewife. "Do you see how proudly that woman walks?" "I do. Is she a millionaire?" "Oh, no. It would bother her husband to raise \$500 in cash."

"But she can't be proud of her beauty?" "No." "Then what is it?" "She has made thirty tumbler of jelly this fall, and none of her neighbors has made over fifteen. She has a right to hold up her nose.—Detroit Free Press.

A Difficult Literary Performance. Young Author (to friend)—I say, Fred, did you read my last article in the Every Other Monthly?

Friend (enthusiastically)—Yes, indeed, old boy; I read it through twice!

Young Author—Oh, then you must have found it very interesting?

Friend—Well—er—no, not so much that but Fred Smith bet me \$10 that I couldn't read it through twice, and I bet him \$10 that I could.—Life.

She Won and Yet Lost by It. "I wish my wife would buy or sell some oil," said an Oil City man who had tried in vain to make a good turn in the market.

"Why?" asked a friend. "Because I think she would hit it right; she's lucky."

"How do you know she is?" "Because she once took a chance in a lottery and drew a fine prize."

"What?" "Me." "Tell her never to speculate."—Oil City Blizzard.

Her Usefulness Past. Blinks—Hold on! What's your hurry? Jinks—Nearly driven to death. Half a bushel of letters to answer this morning and no one to help do it.

"What has become of that pretty girl type-writer you had?" "She's no use any more. She went and got married!"

"You don't say so. Whom did she marry?" "Me."



"A BIG OFFER."

Two Hundred Dollars in Gold.

We are authorized by advice received from I. S. Johnson and Co., Boston, to say that they have for three years offered poultry raisers, premiums payable in gold coin, for the best results obtained from using Sheridan's Powder to make hens lay. Their object has been to satisfy themselves beyond a shadow of a doubt, that the claim made by them that "Nothing on earth will make hens lay like Sheridan's Powder," was positively true. The hundreds of testimonials sent them from people who have used the Powder, prove the statement; so that it seems folly to again offer premiums; but so many persons, especially women who kept a few hens, have made such good showing in former trials, and been beaten by some one else by a slight fraction in average, that in justice they ought to have another trial. Johnson and Co. have devised a plan this year, to overcome that trouble in a measure, by offering twice as much cash and six times as many Gold Coin Premiums as last year. The larger premium is \$50.00. It is well worth trying for. If you miss that there are twenty-three more chances for some other premium. But supposing a competitor did not get any premium, they would still have the satisfaction of getting a lot of eggs to sell at a good round price. The retail price for eggs in Boston and New York last year reached as high as 50 to 60 cents per dozen. It pays to use Sheridan's Powder when eggs sell for even 10 cents. One of the competitors last year wrote as follows: "I am well paid in eggs without a premium. I will cheerfully recommend Sheridan's Condition Powder to poultry raisers generally for egg production and all diseases of hens. I can now say confidently that it will beat anything I ever tried to make hens lay. I was surprised at the end of eight weeks' trial." He was evidently satisfied, and well might he have been; for during eight weeks he got from 30 hens, 1429 eggs, which at the averages of prices above would amount to \$85.08.

Any person can compete. Johnson & Co. will send full particulars free to anyone, whether they order powder or not.

For 50 cents in stamps, I. S. Johnson & Co., 22 Custom House Street, Boston, Mass., will send to any P. O. address two 25 packs, five packs for \$1.00; or for \$1.20, a 2 1/2 pound can of Powder sent postpaid; six cans for \$5.00, express prepaid. Send for full particulars.—Advt.

Regard for Appearances. Mrs. Bliffers—An agent for a new burglar alarm was here today and I told him to call again when you were at home.

Mr. Bliffers—Huh! Burglar alarm! There is nothing in this house to steal.

"No, but when the neighbors hear we have fitted up our house with burglar alarms they will think we have something to steal my dear."—Philadelphia Record.

Gibbon Explains. Tom Bigbee (ferociously)—Hang it, Gibbon, I can't see why you have adopted that idiotic way of carrying your umbrella! You're jabbing everybody, back and front.

Howell Gibbon—You can't see, eh? Why, its absolutely necessary. I'd get the blawsted thing tangled in the skirts of my new English trousers if I didn't carry it in a horizontal position.—Puck.

Havana and Domestic CIGARS. I have a complete assortment now in stock, in boxes and half-boxes: 200,000 HAVANA and DOMESTICS.

THOS. L. BOURKE, 11 and 12 Water Street.

THE Equitable Life Assurance Society.

Condensed Statement, January 1, 1888. ASSETS, \$84,378,904 85 LIABILITIES, 4 per cent. 66,274,650 00

SURPLUS, \$18,104,254 85 New Assurance, \$138,928,105 00 Outstanding Assurance, 483,929,562 00 Paid Policy Holders in 1887, 10,062,509 00 Paid Policy Holders since organization, 106,610,293 00

Total Income, 23,240,849 20 Premium Income, 19,115,775 47 Increase in Assets, 8,868,432 09 Assets to Liabilities, 127 1-2 per cent.

On the less rigorous standard adopted by the Canadian companies (which assumes that four and one-half per cent. will be realized on investments) the surplus of the Equitable is as follows: ASSETS, \$84,378,904 85 ESTIMATED LIABILITIES (4 1-2 per cent.), 61,582,000 00 ESTIMATED SURPLUS (41-2 p.c.) \$22,796,904 85

Percentage of Assets to Liabilities, 137.

THE VIGOROUS EQUITABLE.—Every year when The Equitable Life Assurance Society presents its big figures in the shape of a report, the remark is made that it will be impossible to repeat the success—and then the Equitable proceeds not only to repeat but to excel it. The results of the business of 1887 are simply enormous. The pivotal fact is that the Equitable has the largest surplus of any of the leading life assurance companies in the world, when gauged by percentage to liabilities or by the number of dollars and cents. Over eighteen millions are surplus, out of eighty-four millions of assets. This, too, is on the basis of measuring liabilities on the severest standard; that which assumes that no more than 4 per cent. will be obtained as interest on investments throughout the future. Every bit of income in excess of 4 per cent. will be clear gain to the policy-holder, over and above the assumptions. If interest on prime investments should fall to 3 1-2, The Equitable with its big surplus can stand it, when companies with relatively less would be embarrassed.

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