

BUTTERCUP, POPPY, FORGET ME NOT.

Buttercup, poppy, forget me not— These three blooming in a garden spot. And once, all merry with song and play. A little one heard three voices say:

Buttercup gambled all day long, Sharing the little one's mirth and song; Then, stealing along on misty gleams, Poppy came, bringing the sweetest dreams.

Buttercup shared the joy of day, Glistening with gold the hours of play; Bringeth the poppy sweet repose, When the hands would fold and the eyes would close.

THE DOWNWARD STEP.

Some for miles from the center of the busy manufacturing town of B— there is a row of small cottages, very simple in construction, and having little attraction, excepting the low rent demanded for them.

But each house has a little garden attached to it, with hedges between, and some of these were domains were bright with flowers. One day, two children sat under one of the hedges, busy in building a house of chips.

And, indeed, there was a strong contrast between the few poor plants in Mrs. Grey's garden and those that met the eye in the next one. The old man who lived there alone, ragged and forlorn, seemed to have but one pleasure, and that was working in the tiny garden, making every foot of it beautiful with choicest flowers.

He had been three months in the poor house, and listened eagerly to any scrap of gossip about Mrs. Grey. He heard the servants pitying her "come down" when her husband's failure in business was followed by his death.

But on this day he went from bush to bush of his rarest flowers, until he had his hands filled, when he tossed the whole fragrant mass over the hedge into the laps of the astonished children.

This was the beginning of their friendship, and every day saw it grow stronger. Evening found Mrs. Grey at home, and at bedtime there was always some new story of baby prattle, telling how Mr. Bates had let the children wander about in his house and garden, in perfect freedom.

It was in September that for the first time she, too, crossed the boundary of his garden, timidly, for she was a shy, little woman. Only twenty-five years old, she looked, in spite of her heavy mourning and pale, sorrowful face, even younger.

It was nothing," he told her, gruffly, as she entered the bare, mean sitting-room, where he lay upon a sofa, but he let her bring him some dinner and wait upon him, owing that the pain of a bad sprain had prevented his cooking for himself.

"What did you call the boy?" he asked, sharply. Lady Godiva must have had exceptionally long hair since it completely concealed her lovely person. Since Ayer's Hair Vigor came into use such examples are not so rare as formerly. It not only promotes the growth of the hair, but gives it a rich, silken texture.—Advt.

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"Cyril. Oh, you have only heard his pet name, 'Birdie.' Birdie, come here and tell Mr. Bates your name."

"I knew a man of that name once." Every shadow of color left the widow's face, and she looked for a moment as if she would faint. Then, conquering this weakness by a violent effort, she said:

"I knew no good of him," was the quick reply. "He was a thief!" She tried to speak, but her white lips made no sound.

"The man I mean," continued Mr. Bates, "was a defaulter from the B— Bank. He had been cashier there, and he stole money."

"The blood rushed back to the widow's face, and her voice trembled with anger, as she said: "Since you know that, you should also know that Cyril Preston repaid every dollar, principal and interest, to the bank, five years ago."

"You are a harsh judge. If he sinned, he atoned. He has repaid everything."

"Not so. If they sorrowed for his sin, they rejoiced in his repentance. His name was never harshly mentioned in his home, and earnest prayers were daily offered for him. Where is he? Tell me all you know of him."

"And then, with a sudden movement, Mrs. Grey bent her head and broke into a passion of tears, sobbing: "My brother! My brother!"

"She had wept violently, but when her sobs grew more quiet, a gentle hand was put upon her bowed head, and a low, tender voice said: "Anna!"

"She looked up. A gray wig lay on the floor, and on that a pair of green spectacles, but the face bending over her was that of a man of thirty-five or six, with brown hair and soft, dark eyes. It was ten long years since she had seen that face, and sorrow had made it far older than the years would have done, but she knew that once."

"Cyril! Cyril!" she cried, kneeling beside him, with her arms around his neck. "Oh, my dear, dear brother!"

"You are glad," he said, in a low voice of amazement. "Glad to see me!" "Glad, for I love you! Who was always the kindest brother to his little sister? Cyril, could you ever think I did not love you?"

"A thief! A forger!" he said, bitterly. "I have no excuse for my sin, Anna, save that mean one only too often pleaded, that I meant to replace the money. It was lost in gambling! My feet were on the highway to ruin, when I saw that discovery of my theft was inevitable, and I fled. But my punishment began at once, and never was remorse more gnawing, penitence more sincere."

"You were never out of our prayers, Cyril."

"Darling, that was as the bitterness of death, that certainty that I had brought disgrace upon my home—made my father's name a reproach."

"But you did all you could to atone."

"You can never know, dear, through what privation and toil I earned the money to pay the bank. I went hungry, half clothed and half frozen, working early and late, saving every dollar. But when the debt was paid, fortune smiled on me. My employers were kind men, and they gave me an opening in their factory. Do you remember, Anna, how I was laughed at

because I thought I could invent? I think, even now, if father had let me have my dearest wish and study machinery, I might never have fallen. But I hated the bank, and any temptation is doubled to escape from drudgery. My love of machinery was laughed out of me at home, but it became my friend when I needed one. In the short intervals of leisure I had at the factory I perfected a patent that my employers adopted and helped me to introduce into other factories. It has made me a rich man, Anna. But I craved a sight of my home, and the dear faces there, and so I came to B—. My parents were dead, and you a widow and poor. Dearest, do you guess how I have longed to help you since I came to be your neighbor, and yet feared you would curse me if I spoke?"

"Hush!" she said, softly. "I am almost sorry you are rich, Cyril. I was thinking of the joy it would be to me to work for you."

"You will go with me, Anna, to my own home. I cannot stay here. Every day in B— would seem to reproach me. But I have a home where you and your children can be happy, and where you can fold your hands in idleness, if that will please you. It is a lonely, desolate home now, Anna, but you will brighten it for me?"

"Gladly." He held her in a close embrace for a few minutes; then he said, whispering: "Anna, tell me where Lena is?"

"She shivered a moment, and her voice was full of sorrow, as she said: "Lena is in Boston."

"Married?" "Yes." "She did not forgive me?" "No; she was very bitter."

"I deserved it. I had no right to risk her happiness as well as my own name. How could I ask her to marry me after I became a shame to all who loved me? Yet I loved her, Anna."

"I know, dear; but Lena was proud." "She was right to forget me. I sinned and was justly punished. But, oh! if I could make all young men, all boys realize the importance of that first step in dishonesty, I would gladly give my life. Only a five-dollar bill, Anna, at first, but the temptation was repeated, the strength to resist grew weaker, until the end. Can you—dare you trust me, dear, with those young lives so dear to you?"

"Yes; more willingly than I would to one who did not know the bitterness of sin and penitence."

So two cottages were vacated, and in her brother's beautiful home Anna Grey tries to make the life of a repentant sinner one of peace and usefulness. Cyril Preston, humble and penitent, thanks God daily for the love that could not die, even when bitter shame came to crush it. He is a prosperous, envied man, but ever in his heart is the sorrow and shame that will follow sin, no matter how deep the repentance. And ever his prayer is that Cyril, his nephew, may learn from him to avoid that first downward step that leads to sin.—Ex.

The Two Bells. A wag writes to us as follows:—"Having seen quite recently a church bell with the very odd stanza: I toll the funeral knell; I hail the festal day; The fleeting hour I tell; I summon all to pray."

"I came to the conclusion, that every parish in Canada would be benefited if a bell were put up with this inscription referring to Diamond Dyes, in which the people around us take a great interest: I toll, but toll to dye; I dye, but dye to live; When tolling this my cry, 'I'll ease and pleasure give.'"

We are pleased to hear from our correspondent and note with pleasure the interest he takes in Diamond Dyes, but can assure him, that Diamond Dyes, do not require the aid so kindly suggested as the Canadian people from North to South, and from East to West, know sufficiently about them already.—Advt.

Mrs. Dobbins (reading)—Countess Maria von Kinsky of Bohemia has bagged 138 hares in a day. Dobbins—Her husband will soon be bald-headed at that rate.—Epoch.

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"I am authorized," said Bismarck to him, with that liking of playing jokes which has been so strong throughout his career—"I am authorized to offer you a hundred thalers instead of the cross."

"How much is the cross worth?" asked the soldier. "Three thalers." "Very well, then, highness; I'll take the cross and ninety-seven thalers."

Bismarck was so surprised and pleased by the ready shrewdness of the reply that he gave the man both the cross and the money.—London Tid Bits.

A Man of Nerve. Lionel—I say, Algy, wobbers bwoke into Argy Fitzwilkin's house last night, but owing to Argy's presence of mind, don't you know, they didn't molest a thing in the house.

Algy—Aw—how did he get wid of them? Lionel—He gave them an order on the Safety Company for the plate and jewelry—aw—wasn't it splendid?—Epoch.

Once. Col. Bangs.—"Been up in the north woods for two weeks with a hunting party. Lots of sports, I tell you." Maj. Bangs.—"See any big game." Col. Bangs. (confidentially)—"Ten dollars limit, last Saturday."—Detroit Free Press.

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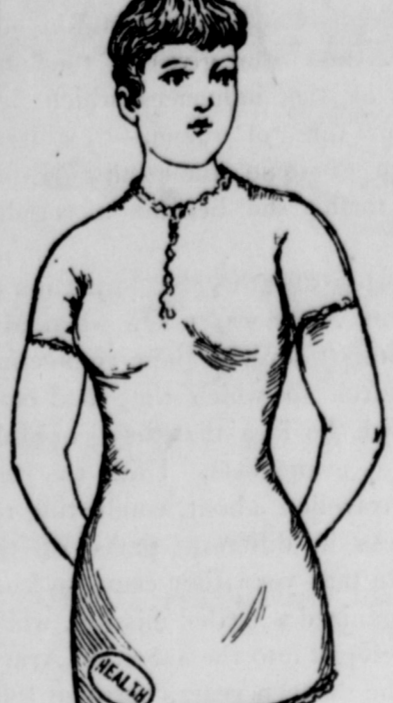
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