

POETRY.

AFTER THE CURFEW.

The play is over. While the light
Yet lingers in the darkening hall,

We gathered once, a joyous throng;
The jovial toasts went gaily round;

We made the floor and walls resound.
Before the final exultant.

Alive! How living, too, are they
Whose memories it is ours to share!

Spread the long table's fall array;
There sits a ghost in every chair!

One breathing or no more, alas!
And our slender group we see;

With him we still remained "the class;"
Without his presence what are we?

The hand we ever loved to clasp,
That useless hand which knew no rest,

Loosed from affection's clinging grasp,
Lies nerveless on the peaceful breast.

The beaming eye, the cheering voice,
That lent to life a generous glow,

Whose every meaning said "Rejoice!"
We see, we hear, no more below.

The air seems darkened by his loss,
Earth's shadowed features look less fair,

And heavier weighs the daily cross
His willing shoulders helped us bear.

Why mourn that we, the favoured few,
Whom grasping time so long has spared

Life's sweet illusions to pursue,
The common lot of age have shared?

In every pulse of Friendship's heart
There breathes unfeigned a throb of pain;

One hour must rend its links apart,
Though years on years have forged the chain.

So ends "the boys," a lifelong play;
We, too, must hear the prompter's call

To fairer scenes and brighter day;
Farewell! I let the curtain fall!
—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

SELECT STORY.

THE HIDDEN HAND

BY MRS. SOUTHWORTH.

AUTHOR OF "THE CURFEW," "THE

CHANGING WINDS," ETC. ETC.

CONTINUED FROM THE CAPITAL.

CONCLUDED.

The young turnkey took up a lamp and

a great key and walked before, leading the

way down stairs to a cell in the interior of

the basement, occupied by Black Donald.

He unlocked the door, and, having looked

off to the extremity of the lobby as he was

ascended to do he when he let in the

preacher.

Capitola entered the cell. It was very

dimly lighted from the great lamp that

hung in the lobby nearly opposite the

cell door.

By its light she saw Black Donald, not

only doubly ironed but confined by a

chain and staple to the wall.

Cap's heart beat for the poor banished

and blighted outlaw, who had not a friend

in the world to speak a kind word to him

in his trouble.

He also recognized her, and rising and

coming to meet her as far as the length of

the chain would permit, he held out his

hand and said:

"I am very glad you have come, little

one it is very kind of you to come and see

a poor fellow in his extremity! I wanted

to see you, I wanted to say to yourself

again, that I never was guilty of murder,

and that I only seemed to consent to your

death to save your life! Do you believe

here to drive me home, for I cannot ride."

"Jem, who never questioned his imperious

little mistress's orders, rode off at once

to do her bidding.

Cap, immediately dismounted from her

pony, and led him under the deep shadows

of the elm tree, where she fastened him.

Presently the boy came back, bringing

the gig. Cap, once more hugged Gyp

about the neck pressed her cheek against

his mane, and with a whisper, "Good-bye,

dear Gyp," sprang into the gig, and ordered

the boy to drive home.

"An' lead the pony, Miss?"

"Oh yes, for the present, everybody

knows Gyp—no one will steal him. I

have left him length of line, enough to

move round the little and eat grass, drink

water from the brook, or lie down. You can

come after him early to-morrow morning."

The little groom thought this a queer

arrangement, but he was not in the habit

of criticising his young mistress's actions.

And he got home with a hot supper, and

to the anxious inquiries of her friends she

replied that she had been to the prison to

take leave of Black Donald, and begged

that they would not pursue so painful a

subject.

And, in respect to Cap's sympathies,

they changed the conversation.

That night the remnant of Black Donald's

band were assembled in their first

old haunt, the Old Road Inn. They had

met for a two-fold purpose—to bury their

old matron Mother Raven, who, since the

death of her patron and the apprehension

of her Captain, had returned to the inn to

die—and to bewail the fate of their leader,

whose execution was expected to come off

the next day.

Suddenly, in the midst of their heavy

grief and utter silence, a familiar sound

was heard—a ringing footstep upon the

back windows.

And the next instant the door was flung

wide open, and the outlaw chief stood

among them;

Hal leaped forward and flung himself

around Black Donald's neck, exclaiming—

"It's you! it's you! it's you! my dear!

my darling! my adored! my sweetheart!

my prince! my lord! my king! my dear,

dear Captain!"

Steve, the lazy mulatto, rolled down

upon the floor at his master's feet, and

embraced them in silence.

While Black Donald gazed forth—

"How the fool found did you get out?"

"Not by any help of yours, boys! But

don't think I reproach you, lads! Well! I

know that you could do nothing on earth

to save me! No one on earth could have

helped me except the one who really freed

me—Capitola!"

"That girl again!" exclaimed Hal, in

the extremity of wonder.

"It's to be hoped, then, you've got her

at last, Captain," said Black Donald.

"No—Heaven bless her!—she's in better

hands. Now listen, lads, for I must talk

very fast, for I have not a minute to lose

—for to-night we disband forever!"

"Was our intention, Captain," said Hal

in a melancholy voice,

to hang in a melancholy voice,

to hang in a melancholy voice,

to hang in a melancholy voice,

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THE YOUNGEST MISS LORNE

A Strong-Minded woman! Bah! I detest

the very name! I can see her before me

in my mind's eye, Horatio—tall, gaunt,

and spectacled, with—What are you

laughing at, Mark?"

Mark examined the girl's faculties with

an evident effort. They were standing in

a bow-window in Mrs. Clayton's drawing-

room, where a grand reception was taking

place. Herbert Lester—tall, dark-eyed,

extremely handsome, wealthy, courted,

fattered, in short, quite spoiled by addition;

and his Fidis Achates—Mark Laine.

"But how do you know that Miss Lorne

is all this, Bert?" Mark asked, when he

could command his voice sufficiently. "I

have merely told you that she is a young

lady with an independent mind of her own.

Believes in the equality of the sexes—

—in your secret heart, Bert Lester, you

believe it yourself—and that no woman

in full possession of her health and faculties

has any right to depend solely upon her

husband or father for support. In other

words, Miss Lorne thinks that women

should possess business educations; for

al-though the oak and the ivy, that time-

honoured simile, is very well in its place,

it sometimes transpires that the clinging

ivy finds no convenient oak upon which

to cling. And so—well, Hubert, you are

making a mountain out of a molehill. Miss

Lorne has only horrid ultrafashionable

learnings, that's all!"

"But, Mark"—in unfeigned surprise—"I

thought that the Lornes were wealthy."

"So they are—so they are! Mr. Lorne

is a millionaire twice over, a peerant

prince and all that; but I will leave you

in regard to a woman's education."

"Excuse me, Hubert, I don't care to

hear them. Miss Lorne may be all very

well in her way, but I detest strong-

minded women. By Jove! Mark, who is

the angle in white tulle over yonder waltzing

with Clavering?"

Mark Laine glanced across the drawing-

room to where the dancing-room beyond

opened, revealing a sea of changing color.

A slight, fairy-like young girl in fleecy

white tulle, with pink rosettes her only

decoration; a girl with pearly-blue eyes

and waves of shimmering golden hair, was

walking like a sylph with a tall, white,

his eyes upon the sweet, shy face with ad-

miration—and more—plainly expressed.

Mark Laine started as with an electric

shock; he suppressed a smile and turned

away.

"Would you like to be presented, Bert?"

he asked.

Hubert Lester's face was really enthusi-

astic.

"I would indeed! are you acquainted

with her, Mark? Lucky dog! You know

all the best people in the city. She is the

most beautiful woman in the room! Don't

talk to me of your strong-minded Miss

Lorne after looking upon that exquisite, womanly

face!"

"Strange as it may seem, Mark was shak-

ing with silent laughter, which he man-

agedly repressed. Just then the music

ceased in silence, and Clavering led his

partner to a seat, then hastened away to

procure her an air.

"Now is your time, Bert! Come!"

Two minutes later, Hubert Lester was

standing before the "angel in white tulle,"

bowing lowly, while Mark Laine presented

him.

"Miss Tiny Lorne—my dear friend,

Hubert Lester."

Well, at first Hubert could not believe

his eyes. He seemed to credit the fact that

the fair, delicate girl before him, who danced

like a sylph, believed in a woman's right

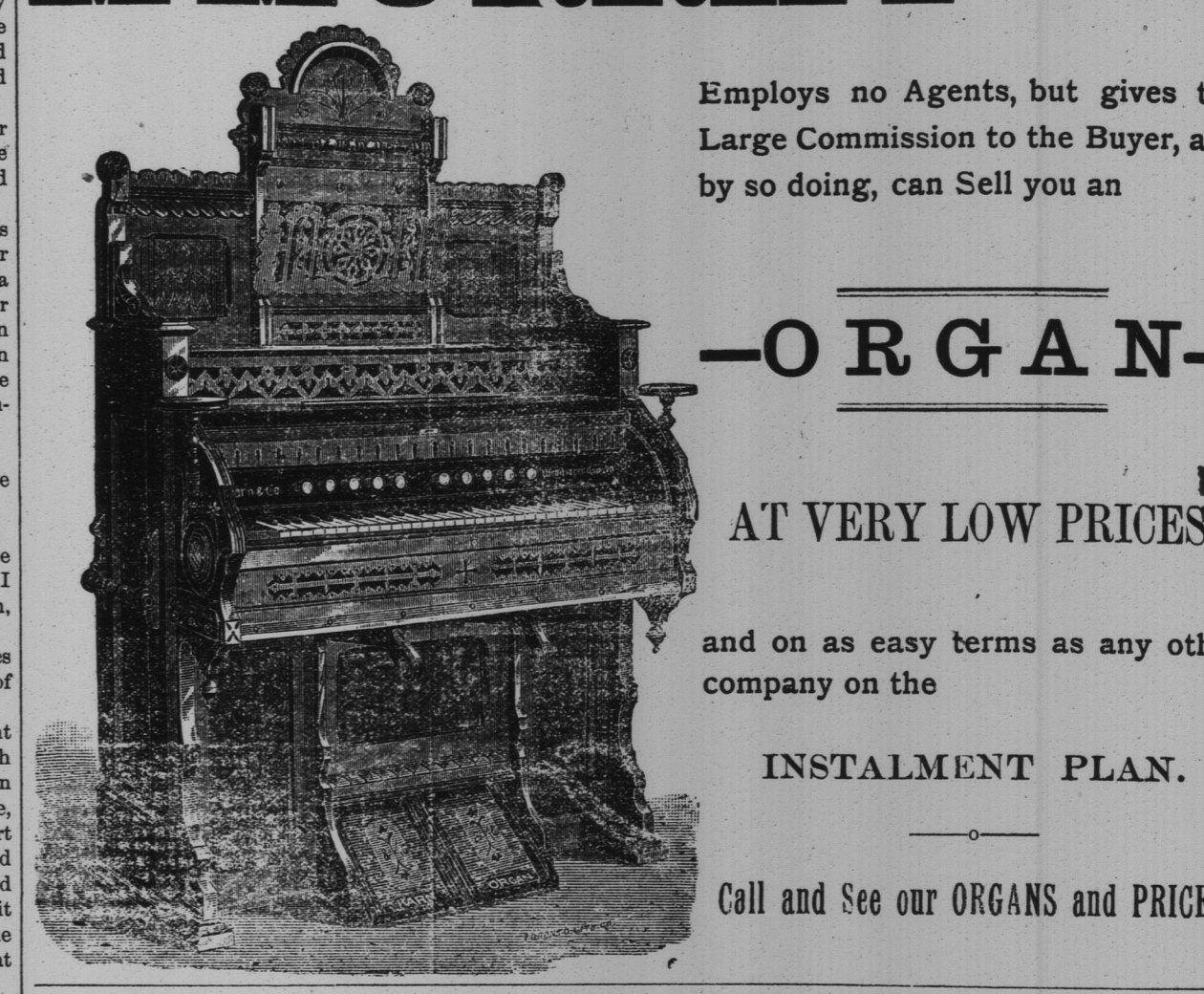
to help herself in the battle of life—to

work, like a man. He had never seen a

girl so young, so beautiful, and so

strong-minded.

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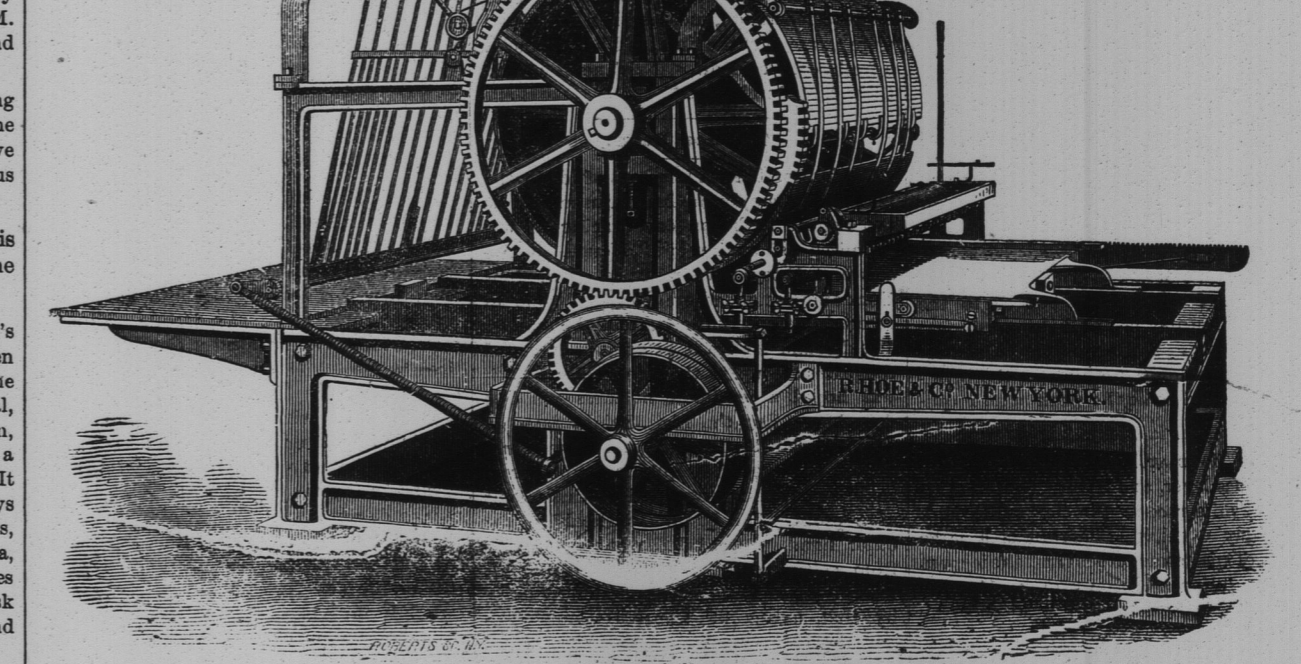
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