

POETRY.

THE DAY'S GOSSIP.

An old and crippled gate am I,
And twenty years have passed
Since I was swung up high and dry
Betwixt those posts so fast;

'Twas twenty years ago, I say,
When Mr. Enos White
Came kind of haunting 'round my way
'Most every other night.

I groaned intensely when I heard —
Despite I am no churl —
My doom breathed on a single word:

A doctor with a knowing smile,
A nurse with face serene,
A bustle in the house the while —
Great Scott! What does it mean?

SELECT STORY.

BERYL BRENTANO

THE SAPPHIRE OF THE SOUTH.

CHAPTER I.

A DIVINE REQUEST.

"You are obstinate and ungrateful.
You would rather see me suffer and die,
Than bend your stubborn pride in the effort
To obtain relief for me. You will not try to save me."

"The thin, hysterically wretched voice
Ended in a sob, and the frail, wasted form
Of the speaker leaned forward, as if by the issue
Of life or death hung upon an answer."

"Mother, try to be just to me. My pride
Is for you, not for myself. I shrink
From seeing my mother crawl to the feet
Of a man who has discarded and spurned her."

"Your proud sensitiveness runs in a strange groove,
And it seems you would prefer to see me a pauper in a hospital
Rather than go to your grandfather and ask for help."

"Yes, I will do all I can. We poor folks who have none of this sympathy
Ought to be rich at least in sympathy
And pity for each other's suffering."

"It was a long walk to the building,
Whither Beryl directed her footsteps,
And as she passed through the rear entrance
Of a large and fashionable photographing establishment,
She was surprised to find that it was half-past two o'clock."

"Beryl's time to submit these types for inspection,
And have them packed for the express going East.
They are birthday gifts, and birthdays have an awkward habit of arriving rightly on time."

"Beautifully done. The face on that child's dress would bear even a stronger lens than my glass. Here pattern, take this box and letter to Mr. Endicott,
and let him carry them to the packing company. Shipping address is in the letter. Hurry up, my lad. Sit down, Miss Brentano."

"Thank you, I am not tired. Mr. Mansfield, have you any good news for me?"

"You mean those etchings; or the designs for the Christmas cards? Have not heard a word, pro or con. Guess no news is good news; for I fancy 'rejoiced work' generally travels fast, to rest at home."

"I thought the awards were made last week, and that to-day you could tell me the result."

"The awards have been made I presume, but who owns the lucky cards is the secret that has not yet transpired. You young people have no respect for red tape, and methodical business routine. You want to clap spurs on fate, and make her lower her own last record? 'Bide a-wee. Bide a-wee.'"

"Winning this prize means so much to me, that I confess I find it very hard to be patient. Success would save me from a painful and expensive journey, upon which I must start to-night; and therefore I hoped so earnestly that I might receive good tidings to-day. I am obliged to go South on an errand, which will necessitate an absence of several days, and if you should have any news for me, keep it until I call again. If unfavorable it would depress my mother, and therefore I prefer you should not write, as of course she will open any letters addressed to me. Please save all the work you can for me. I will come here as soon as I get back home."

"Mrs. Brentano laid her thin hot fingers on her daughter's hands, drawing her down to the edge of the bed, and Beryl saw her quivering with nervous excitement. 'Come, my dear, for you will be so ill that I shall have to see you, Dr. Grantlin impressed upon us the necessity of keeping your nervous system quiet. Take your medicine now, and try to sleep until I come back from Stephen & Endicott's.'"

"Do not go to-day." "I must. Those porcelain types were promised for a certain day, and they ought to be packed in time for the afternoon express, going to Boston."

"Beryl, mother?" "Come nearer to me. Give me your hand. My heart is so oppressed by dread, that I want you to promise me something, which I fancy will lighten my burden. Life is very uncertain, and if I should die, what would become of my Beryl? Oh, my boy! my darling, my first-born! He is so impulsive, so headstrong; and no one but his mother could ever excuse or forgive his waywardness. Although younger, you are in some respects the strongest; and I want your promise that you will always be patient and tender with the frailty of your mother. Women generally have to supply conscientious scruples for men, and you can take care of your brother, if you will. You are unusually brave and strong, Beryl, and when I am gone, you must stand between him and trouble. My good little girl, will you?"

"The large luminous eyes that rested upon the flushed face of the invalid, filled with a mist of yearning compassionate tenderness, and taking her mother's hands, Beryl laid the palms together, then stooping nearer, kissed her softly."

"I think I have never lacked love for Beryl, though I may not always have given expression to my feelings. If at times I have deplored his reckless waywardness, and expostulated with him, genuine affection prompted me; but I promise you now, that I will do all I can for you as for a brother. Trust me, mother; and rest in the assurance that his welfare shall be more to me than my own; that should the necessity arise, I will stand between him and trouble. Banish all depressing forebodings. When you are great and well, and when I paint my great picture, will you buy a pretty thing among the lilies and roses, where birds sing all day long, where cattle pasture in the clover nooks; and then Beryl, your darling, shall never leave you again."

"I do trust you, for your promise means more than oaths and vows from other people, and if occasion demand, I know you will guard my Beryl, my high-strung, passionate, beautiful boy! My pretty cottage? Ah, child! when shall we dwell in Spain?"

"Some day, some day; only be hopeful, and let me find you better when I return. Sleep, my dream of our pretty cottages. I must hurry away with my pictures, for this is my day."

"Very well. Any message, Patterson?"

"Mr. Endicott said 'All right; first-rate;' and ordered them shipped."

"Here is your money, Miss Brentano. Better call as early as you can, as I guess there will be a lot of photographs ready in a few days. Good afternoon."

"Thank you. Good-bye, sir."

"From the handful of small change, she selected some pennies which she slipped inside of her glove, and dropping the remainder into her pocket, left the building, and walked on toward Union square."

Absorbed in grave reflections, and oppressed by some vague foreboding of impending ill, dim, intangible and uncolored—she moved slowly along the crowded sidewalk—unconscious of the curious glances directed toward her superb form, and scented Brazilian juncos, which more than one person turned and looked back to admire, wondering when she had stepped down from some sacred Pantheistic frieze."

Near Madison square, she paused before the window of a florist's, and raising her veil, gazed longingly at the brilliant mass of blossoms, which nineteenth century skill and wealth in defiance of ionic lines, and climate limitations forced into perfection, in and out of season. The violet eyes and crocus fingers of spring smiled and glistened, at sight of the crimson rose heart, and flaming peony cheeks of royal summer; and creamy and purple chrysanthemums that quill their leaves over the russet robes of autumn, here stared in indignant amazement, at the premature presumption of snowy regal camellias, audaciously advancing to crown the icy brows of winter. All lattitudes, all seasons have become bound vessels to the great God; and with his necromancy furnishes with equal facility the dewy wreaths of orange flowers that perfume the filmy veils of December brides—in and the blue bells of spicy hyacinths which ring "Rejoice" over the joy pillows, set as tribute on the graves of babies, who will under August suns."

From early childhood, an ardent love of beauty had characterized this girl, whose covetous gaze wandered from a gorgeous sardel and gold orchid nodding in dreams of its habitat, in some volcanic island, to a bed of vivid green moss, where skillful hands had grouped great drooping sprays of waxen begonias, coral, faint pink, and ivory, all powdered with gold dust like that which gilds the heart of water lilies."

Such treasures were reserved for the family of Dives; and counting her pennies, Beryl entered the store, where she instantaneously the blended treads of heliotrope, tabacco and magnonette wafted her across the ocean, to a white-walled fishing village on the Cornice, whose gray rocks were kissed by the lips of the Med. It was the price of that cluster of Niphetos buds?"

"One dollar."

"And that Auratum—with a few rose geranium leaves added?"

"Seventy-five cents. You see it is wonderfully large, and the gold bands are so very deep."

"She put one hand in her pocket and fingered a silver coin, but poverty is a grim, tyrannous stepmother to tender aestheticism, and prudential consideration prevailed."

"Give me twenty-five cents worth of those pale blue double violets, with a sprig of lemon verbena, and a fringe of geranium leaves."

"She laid the money on the counter, and while the florist selected and bound the blossoms into a bunch, she arrested his finishing touch."

"Wait a moment. How much more for one Grand Duke Jasmine in the centre?"

"Ten cents, Miss."

"She added the dime to the pennies she could ill afford to spend from her small hoard, and said:

"Will you be so kind as to sprinkle it? I wish it kept fresh for a sick lady."

Dusky shadows were gathering in the gloomy hall of the old tenement house, when Beryl opened the door of the comfortable attic room, where for many months she had struggled bravely to shield her mother from the world that she so often snarled across the threshold."

Mrs. Brentano was sitting in a low chair, with her elbows on her knees, her face hidden in her palms, and in her lap lay paper and pencil, while a sealed letter had fallen on the floor beside her. At the sound of the opening door she looked up, and her head, and then dropped upon the paper. In her faded flannel dressing-gown, with tresses of black hair straggling across her shoulders, she presented a picture of helpless mental and physical woe, which painted itself indelibly on the hands of her daughter's heart."

"Why did you not wait until I came home? The exertion of getting up always fatigues you."

"You stayed so long—and I am so uncomfortable in that wretchedly hard bed. What detained you?"

"I want to see a doctor, because I am unwilling to start away without having asked his advice; and he has prescribed some new medicine which you will find in this bottle. The directions are marked on the label. Now I will put things in order, and try my hands on that refractory bed."

"What did the doctor say about me?"

"Nothing new; but he is confident that you can be cured in time, if we will only be patient and obedient. He promised to see you in the morning."

"She stripped the bed of its covering, shook bolster and pillows; turned over the mattress, and beat it vigorously; then put on fresh sheets, and adjusted the covers comfortably."

"Now mother, turn your head, and let me comb and brush and braid all this glossy black satin, to keep it from tangling while I am away. What a pity you did not lower your daughter with part of it, instead of this wretched mane of mine, which is a constant affront to my fastidious artistic instincts. Please keep such a moment."

"She unwrapped the tissue paper that covered her flowers, and holding her hands behind her, stepped in front of the invalid."

"Dear mother, shut your eyes. There! of what does that remind you? The pearls, with great amber grape clusters, and white stars of jasmine shining through the leaves? All the fragrance of Italy sleeps in the tangle of this Grand-Duke!"

"How delicious! Ah, my extravagant child, we cannot afford such luxuries now. The perfume recalls so vividly the time when Beryl—"

"A sob cut short the sentence. Beryl pinned the flowers at her mother's throat, kissed her cheek, and kneeling before her, crossed her arms on the invalid's lap, resting there the noble head, with its burnished crown of reddish bronze braids."

"Mother dear, humour my childish whim. In defiance of my wishes and judgment, and solely in obedience to your command, I am leaving you for the first time, on a bitterly painful and humiliating mission. To-night, let me be in your little girl once more. My heart brings me to your knees, to say my prayers as of yore, and now while I pray, lay your dear pretty hands on my head, and I will seem like a parting benediction—a veritable Nunc dimittite."

PICKPOCKETS ARE BORN.

CHAPTER II.

ELM BLUFF.

"I do not want a carriage. If the distance is only a mile and a half, I can easily walk. After leaving town, is there a straight road?"

"Straight as the crow flies, when you have passed the factory, and cemetery, and turned to the left. There is a little branch running at the foot of the hill, and just across it you will see the white palings, and the best gate with stone pillars, and two tremendous brass dogs on top, showing their teeth and ready to spring. There's no mistaking the place, because it is the only one left in the country that looks like the good old times before the war; and fortable bombproof headquarters for their officers. It's our show place now, and General Darrington keeps it in better style than any other estate I know."

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"I should like to know who she is. No ordinary person, that is clear. Such a grand figure and walk, and such a steady look in her big solemn eyes, as if she saw straight through a person, clothes, flesh and all. Wonder what her business can be with the old General?"

From early childhood Beryl had listened so intently to her mother's glowing descriptions of the beauty and elegance of her old home, "Elm Bluff," that she soon began to identify the landmarks along the road, after passing the cemetery, where so many generations of Darrington slept in one corner, enclosed by a lofty iron railing; exclusive in death as in life; jealously guarded and locked from contact with the surrounding dwellers in God's Acre."

The October day had begun quite cold and with a hint of frost in its dewy sparkle, but as though vanquished summer had suddenly fled about, and charged furiously to cover her retreat, the south wind came heavily laden with hot vapour from equatorial oceanic chaldrons; and now the afternoon sun, glowing in a cloudless sky, shed a ruddy glare that burned and tingled like the breath of a furnace; while along the horizon, a dim dull haze seemed blotting out the boundary of earth and sky."

A portion of the principal pine forest having been preserved, the trees had attained gigantic height, thrusting their plummy heads heavenward, as their lower limbs died; and year after year the mellow brown carpet of reddish straw deepened, forming a soft safe nidus for the seeds that sprang up, and now gradually encroached on the pine woods. A golden rod, stary white aster, and all feathery spikes of some velvety purple bloom, which looked royal by the side of a cluster of belated yellow primroses."

Passing on the small but pretty rustic bridge, Beryl walked against the inter-lacing cedar bought twisted into a balustrade, and looked down at the winding stream, where the clear water showed amber hues, flecked with glinting foam bubbles, as it lapped and gurgled, eddied and sang over its bed of yellow gravel. Unconscious of the "pink-wood" branches, she was charmed by the novel golden brown wavelets that frothed against the pillars of the bridge, and curled caressingly about the broad emerald fronds of luxuriant ferns, which hung Narcissus-like over their own graceful quivering images. The quiet brood in the warm hazey air, burdened with balsamic odours; but once a pine burr full of rich nutty crushed down through dead twigs, brushing the satin petals of a primrose; and ever an anon the ooze notes of the shy, deep throated hermit ravines—the rapt, speckled-breasted lark—thrilled through some vast, cool, columned cloister."

The perfect tranquility of the scene soothed the travel-wearied woman, as though nestling so close to the great heart of nature had stilled the fever throbbing, and banished the gloomy forebodings of her own; as she walked on, through the iron gate, where the bronze mastiffs gazed warningly from their granite pedestal—on into the large undulating park, which stretched away to meet the line of primitive pines. There was no straight avenue, but a broad smooth carriage road curved gently up a hill side, and on both margins of the gravelly way ancient elm trees stood at regular intervals, throwing their boughs across, to unite in lifting the superb groined arches, whose line tracery of sinuous lines was here and there concealed by clustering mistletoe—and gray lichen masses—and ornamented with bosses of velvet moss; while the venerable columned trunks were now and then wreathed with poison oak vines, where red trumpet flowers insolently blared defiance to the waxen pearls of encroaching mistletoe."

On either side, the grounds were studied with native growth, as though protective forestry statutes had crossed the ocean with the colonists, and on this low sea of varied foliage autumn had set her illuminated autograph, in the vivid scarlet of sumach and black gum, the delicate lemon of wild cherry—the deep ochre, all sprinkled and splashed with intense crimson, of the giant oaks, the orange glow of ancestral hickory, and the golden glory of maples, on which the hectic fever of the dying year kindled gleams of fiery red; over all, a gorgeous blazony of riotous colour, toned down by the silver-gray shadows of mossy tree-trunks, and the rich, dark, restful green of polished magnolias."

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"August Flower"

For Dyspepsia.

A. Bellanger, Propr., Stove Foundry, Montigny, Quebec, writes: "I have used August Flower with the best possible results for Dyspepsia."

E. Bergeron, General Dealer, Lauzon,