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A MOTHER'S LOVE.

Where the Autumn sun is shining
Through a leafy maze of overhead,
There a lassie sits repining,
All the joy within her dead,
It is but the old, old story
Of a lover proved untrue,
Yet life seems to lose its glory—
All its hopeful roseate hue.

Then with patient sweet endeavor,
Lovingly her mother tries
To dismiss despair forever—
Chase the sorrow from her eyes.
And the tender words, revealing
All the unspoken love of years,
Wake a newer, holier feeling,
Bring the priceless gift of tears.

Well may hearts cease all repining,
In a mother's love secure;
Love that needs no fire's refining,
Ever watchful, ever sure!
Love that's like a pure stream welling
From a heaven-fad mountain crest!
Love all earthly love excelling—
Love the truest and the best!

LITERATURE.

THE DEACON'S DESIRE.

Dea. Bassatt's favorite quotation at prayer meeting was the well-remembered hymn:

"Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?"

In fact it was the only poetry in which he ever indulged. One look, however, at the stern, solemn face of the good, sincere, earnest, old man would have convinced any one present that not with his lips only did he utter these words, but with all the strength of his heart.

Dea. Bassatt kept the village store, as his father had done before him, but things were different now from then. There was no need for him to measure out sugar and molasses, as his parent had done. There were busy clerks to do it now, for the store had grown with the village, and with the exception of the squire there was not a richer man for miles around than Dea. Bassatt. His fortune had been honestly made, too, for the smallest child could be safely trusted in buying at his store. Yet with it all, a harder, sterner man could not be found. With him if a thing was not right, it was wrong. There were no half-way measures, as every man employed in his establishment distinctly understood.

Perhaps if his fair, gentle wife had lived it might have been different. She was the only one who ever understood his rugged nature. But early one March morning, when the snow was melting on the hills and the birds beginning to chirp a little, she laid her tiny girl in his arms and said, oh! so tenderly, and in such low, faint tones: Zadok, dear, take care of my little blossom. Keep her for me, unspotted from the world. She died that night.

Unspotted from the world. He never forgot those words. Over and over he said them to himself. How

was he to keep his little girl in the world and yet not of the world?

Everybody thought the deacon would marry again. That he would marry some good, sensible woman, perhaps, who would take care of his little motherless child; and there were some of the good sisters of his church that would gladly have consented to console him and at the same time take charge of the handsome house opposite the store.

But the deacon himself never dreamed of such a thing. How could he think of another wife when before his eyes always was that lonely little grave on the hillside, covered in springtime with violets as blue as her eyes? No one ever guessed that beneath that hard, stern exterior he carried a heart that was well-nigh broken when the great clouds of earth were thrown on the coffin of his loved one.

He sent for his sister, Miss Priscilla Bassatt, who certainly carried out his views regarding raising children. She dearly loved the little Prudence, but, like her brother, she never allowed her affection to show itself. Strict and stern had been the religious training of both the deacon and herself. There was no compromise with Satan in regard to either dress or deportment. Anything that savored of worldly desires or flesh vanities was stricken out of their lives.

Levity in manners leads to laxity in principles was a part of her creed. So she sternly glowered at the bad little boys who sat in the back benches. The possibility that there might be some good ones among them never entered her head. Of course they were all bad. How could they help it with such raising as they had!

Yet, when the fever raged in the village, and few were found willing to enter the infected homes, Miss Priscilla came to the front. From house to house she went, with nourishing food and medicine, and tenderly bathed the flushed, burning brows with her cool, steady hand.

Prudence Bassatt grew to womanhood pure and sweet, like a fair lonely little harebell, clinging with all its gentle might to the great stony rocks. A dainty little lady, with eyes as blue and soft as her dead mother's. She never had a companion except the squire's young daughter, and she had died when she was 15. So from that time Prudence had gone on her way, lonely and quiet, for the deacon was very careful of his daughter's friends.

Dea. Bassatt had one great desire. Until that was gratified, he could not he thought, devote his time to anything else. Years before he had made up his mind just how many thousands were necessary to make Prudence a rich woman before he would waste one moment in pleasure. So all his energies were directed to that end.

It came to pass one bright morning, that Zadok Bassatt was surprised by a visit from his cousin, Harriet Wentworth.

"I'm going to take your little girl home with me, Cousin Zadok, she said emphatically. Prudence does not look very strong, and certainly needs a change from the humdrum, life she has been leading.

Humdrum life! Dea. Bassatt started in amazement. It was the same life that he had always lived, and his father had lived before him, and therefore it was good enough for her.

She is just the age of my Alice, continued Mrs. Wentworth, and I am sure they will both enjoy the visit.

At first the deacon was strenuously opposed to the unheard-of proceeding. He thanked his cousin very stiffly, but said he preferred to keep his daughter at home, and away from the follies of city life. But Mrs. Wentworth was not to be balked.

Let her come with me, Zadok, she pleaded. Indeed, it is for her good. She grows more like her mother every day.

That last suggestion made him falter. He remembered how her mother, with the same sweet disposition and gentle way, had faded before his eyes.

So, after a little more persuasion, it was decided, and when Cousin Harriet went back to town, Prudence went with her; but not without many a silent prayer in her father's heart that she might not be led away by the pomps and vanities of this wicked world.

At first, the bustle of city life confused the quiet shy maiden. Many a time she wished herself back with her silent father, and precise Aunt Priscilla. But as days wore away things altered.

One afternoon her cousin Alice came bustling into the room, exclaiming: Oh Prue, Tom is waiting down stairs with a

friend of his, Owen Rainsford, who is going to try our new organ in the church and Tom says he will take us, if we hurry.

In the confusion, Prue hardly noticed the dark-eyed stranger who was introduced to her; and in a few minutes, under her cousin Tom's quick escort, the party reached the church.

Let me stay down here, pleaded Prudence, as they prepared to go up to the organ loft. I will wait in one of the pews for you; indeed, I would much rather.

Why, you bashful little Prue, laughed Alice. But they let her have her wish.

With hands clasped tightly together, Prudence Bassatt looked with awe around the beautiful church, so different from any with which she had been accustomed. Down through the great stained windows the sun fell in a mellow light at her feet and glittered on the chancel railing.

Suddenly there fell upon her ear such a burst of music that he fairly held her breath. Louder and grander the notes of the organ pealed forth, and then sank to low sweet tones, and finally died away into silence.

The pink on her cheeks deepened to a carmine as she listened, breathlessly.

Was it possible there could be sounds like that on earth?

When the music ceased, the merry party came down stairs. But Prudence still sat silent in the pew.

Well, Prue, said Alice, have you fallen asleep? How did you like Mr Rainsford's playing?

Prudence did not answer, but there was a quiver about the sensitive mouth and the blue eyes had grown dark with emotion.

With ready tact Owen Rainsford said, Suppose we go and ask the sexton for a glass of water. The church is too hot. Something in the look of those sweet eyes raised to his and brimming with tears made his heart beat as it never had done before.

That was the beginning of it. From that time scarcely a day passed but Owen Rainsford found his way to the Wentworths. Cousin Harriet noticed it. How could she help it? But then, he was her son Tom's most intimate friend, and a talented young man of spotless reputation, so he was perfectly welcome.

The days and weeks went by, and Prue's visit grew to an end. With a pang she acknowledged to herself that she was not half so eager as she ought to be, when she recollected how patiently her father and lonely Aunt Priscilla awaited her return.

I am going away tomorrow, she said to Owen Rainsford as they stood before the open gate one morning. Going away! he repeated it blankly. Then he turned suddenly to her and said:

Dear little Prue, day by day your face has grown into my heart until every note I play is for you. Only promise some day to love me as dearly as I love you.

A great wave of wonder and happiness swept over the girl, as she listened to these words, so different from any thing she had ever heard.

Prue, he said, looking down into the beautiful eyes. I am going to ask your father if he will some day let me have you. If he says yes, will you say it too?

Such a low, faint reply came from Prue! But it satisfied him.

Dea. Bassatt was dumb with astonishment when Owen Rainsford asked to marry his daughter. It could not be possible! Why, Prue had scarcely been way three months. In vain the young man pleaded that he was willing to wait for years, if only he might be permitted to see her in the meantime. The deacon bitterly reproached himself for having permitted his daughter to fall into the hands of the Philistines, the latter being represented by this scheming fortune-hunter. Of course it was her money the young fellow wanted. The possibility that Rainsford might really be in love did enter her father's head. How could he in that short time? Why, he himself had gone to see her mother for years before he had asked her to marry him.

It did not matter to him how much his cousin Harriet thought of the young man. She was a woman and easily deceived. Nothing she could say on the subject would have any effect. In the most decisive and sweeping terms, therefore, he let Owen Rainsford know that never again, by word or deed, was he to attempt to address his daughter.

But the young man was not one to be so easily disposed of. Until he heard his fate from Prue's own lips he would not consider it decided, he said. Perhaps

if Prue had told her father that with all her heart she loved Rainsford, things might have been different. But she was too timid to acknowledge it in the face of his stern indignation. So with trembling lips she said 'good-bye.' Her lover took the little hand in his for the last time and said: I will never forget you and if ever you send for me, I will come to you, though it should be to the ends of the earth. Then he went away.

Dea. Bassatt congratulated himself that he had saved his daughter so promptly, and inwardly resolved that never again should she leave his sight.

The winter was a hard one that year and it seemed to tell on Prue's delicate constitution. When the spring would come, she would be better, she said. But the spring came and still she seemed to droop.

Dea. Bassatt's desire, meantime, had been granted. With a great sigh of relief he closed the account book, tilted back his chair and looked around the room with gratified pride. At last he had achieved the great wish of his existence: Prudence Bassatt was a rich woman.

At the end of the year he would leave the store forever and devote all his time to her for the remainder of his life. He was not a miserly man; it was not for the mere money alone that he had toiled all these weary years, early and late; it was all for her. And now he had accomplished what he had undertaken. Prue need never have a wish ungratified for the want of money.

So with a sense of ease he leaned back and indulged himself in dreams of the future. They were quickly brought to an end by the entrance of Mrs. Wentworth. Why, Cousin Harriet, he exclaimed, when did you come? Have you been over to the house?

Cousin Harriet shook hands with him and answered in the affirmative. Then, having seated herself in one of the wooden chairs, she began abruptly:

Cousin Zadok, what have you been doing with Prue? She looks as if she would not live a year, and I believe it will be your fault.

The deacon sprang to his feet, his face ashen with terror, and caught her convulsively by the arm.

Harriet Wentworth, he gasped, what do you mean?

She was startled by the effect of her words, and answered soothingly, It is very likely I am mistaken. She may be only a little lonely. But I believe in my heart she is pining for Owen Rainsford.

She has never mentioned his name once since he went away, said the deacon, eagerly. I think she has almost forgotten him.

Mrs. Wentworth shook her head. Prue is such a shy little thing, and believes so implicitly in you, that I do not wonder she does not speak of him. But she will never forget him.

Dea. Bassatt hurried across the road. Was it possible that for this he had toiled all his life long? Could it be true that his little blossom would never use the money which he had spent all his time in making?

With trembling hands he pushed back the half-opened door and entered the room where Prudence was sitting. With a pang he noticed how very pale and fragile she looked.

Little Prue, he said, as he bent low over the pretty brown hair, did you love Owen Rainsford?

A crimson blush swept over her face. Oh, father, she answered softly, I could not help it.

For a moment the stern old man was silent. Then he took her hand in his and tried to smile as he said huskily: I have changed my mind and am going back to the city to tell him to come and see us. Cousin Harriet tells me he is a very worthy y

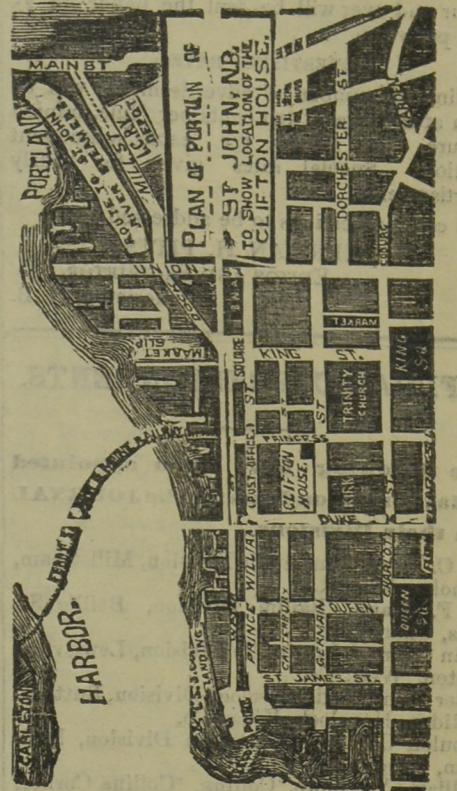
A surprised, happy look came into her eyes. She laid her cheek down on his great rough hand, as she said, You are the dearest father in all the world.

Dea. Bassatt's visit to the city, however, was all in vain. Owen Rainsford could not be found. He had gone to Europe, his friends said, and they could not give his address just then. But the deacon did not abandon his quest. He would have given his life to save that little face at home. So, week after week, he went to the city, till at last Prue's letter went across the ocean.

Back over the great waters came a clicking message: Will return in the next steamer.

With a pleased smile the deacon laid the words in the little blue-veined hand. I am so glad, she said simply, I wanted to see him once again.

Eagerly the anxious father watched for the coming of the vessel, hoping by some



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