

HER LETTER.

BY BETTY HART.

I'm sitting alone by the fire. Dressed just as I came from the dance. In a robe even you would admire. It's a robe of silk and satin. French; I'm being diamonded out of all reason; My hair is done up in a curl. And the sun is turning your nose up. Is wasting an hour on you.

A dozen engagements I've broken; I left in the midst of a set. Likewise a promise, half-spoken. The time is past when I stay for me yet. They say he'll be rich—when he grows up. And when you are turning your nose up, And you sit, are turning your nose up. Three thousand miles off, as you read.

"And how do I like my position?" "And what do I think of New York?" "And who do I talk with?" "With whom do I walk, sit or talk?" "And isn't it nice to have riches?" "And when you are turning your nose up, And aren't it a change to the ditches?" "And tunnels of Poverty Flat?"

Well, you know it's not driving. Each day in the park, four-in-hand— You're not going to be supernal—To look supernaturally grand— If you saw my picture, as take it. It's not driving. You'd never suppose the bald bacon And float at Poverty Flat.

And yet, just this moment, I'm sitting in the hall, with the candlestick. In the house, a glistering testifying. "The finest scents of the year," And the perfume, the sense of talk— Somehow, Joe, I thought of the "Ferry" And the dance that we had! "The Ferry."

Of course, I'm still with its mother. On the hill where the trees went to. Of the few who had the pleasure. Of that ride that we were given. Of the something you said at the gate; And the something you said at the gate.

"To the best-paying road in the State," Well, well, it's all past; yet it's funny To think, as I stood in the glare Of fashion, and beauty and money, That I was the only one who knew. Of some one who had broken high water. And swam the North Fork, and all that. Just to show that I was a good daughter, The Lily of Poverty Flat.

But goodness! what nonsense I'm writing! (Mamma says my taste is still raw,) Instead of what I used to go. Your sun's climbing over the trees. I'm speaking on—just—here—ho! And I'm to be finished" by travel— What's the use? Oh, why did papa strike pay grade? In drifting on Poverty Flat?

"HITTY THORNE'S DUTY.

"We might mortgage the place," said Miss Hitty, sighing.

"And retire to the almshouse, eh?"

referred to the almshouse.

"But what alternative is open to us?"

"Shall we allow Tom to come to grief?"

"Tom richly deserves all the grief that will fall to his share, poor fellow. Such a schemer! Expected to make a fortune for us all, scroosht, that we might flounce in our velvets, drive our span, and fawn sumptuously every day! One dollar for us and \$2 for himself, I reckon. What should such a boy know about speculation? It's the old story of Tom's life, and it's the same with other people's money is a little indiscreet, to say the least. I should have chosen sackcloth and ashes rather than velvets by such means."

"Certainly. But, now that Tom is involved, nothing but money will extricate him. There's my watch, the heirloom from Grandma Penteo; there are fifty diamonds bedded in the case, if that's one—"

"Rose diamonds, every spark of them."

"Not to mention the pearls and emeralds."

"Doubtless and split pearls, I dare say."

"You are so discouraging, Liddy! We must have the money. I don't suppose that the watch would bring a tenth of the sum, but it would help. Dear! dear! there's Hannah de Rothschild with \$2,000,000,000, while you and I can raise \$5,000,000. We should break our hearts—not even to save an old and honorable name from contempt and a foolish young fellow from ruin! Alas! alas!"

"You know, Hitty, it might have been different," suggested Liddy, her eyes wandering toward the old-fashioned square mansion crowning the hill within sight, its fringe of elms and oaks, its spire, octagonal tower, and the steeple of Hitty's church. "You might have had enough time to spare, Hitty—enough to keep Tom out to sea."

"And it was a temptation to poor Tom, no doubt," returned Hitty, ignoring the allusion, "seeing so much money lying idle, and such a chance for doubling it over and over, as he fondly believed."

"Pshaw! A Thorne had no business to be tempted. Was our grandfather tempted at the time of the false papers made out, as every body was? and saved his fortune, and left us all indifferent? If we mortgage the place, it won't bring \$5,000; and who could we call upon to take the mortgage, and what should we do afterward—till in a tent, gypsy style?"

"Oh, Hitty, if only you hadn't been strong about Scarle, all this would have been spared us!"

"D'ye see it's all the fault of Liddy; it hurt me still. I can't tell you what would be best!" and Miss Hitty bent over the long room with head bent, pausing at the easement, and saw the sunset reddening upon Scarle hill, and touching the windowpanes into jewelry. The twenty years of happiness which might have fallen to her share up yonder had proved to be years of silent endurance merely. She had not enjoyed the seasons as they passed over the hill with an interest which she had hoped to find, and which had only strengthened with the years—the lovely dallying of the springtime, the summer's overflow of bloom, the splendor that autumn wears, the white magnificence borrowed from winter. For twenty years ago, Hitty had loved Andrew Scarle well enough to die for him; if not for him, she had loved little Tom well enough to rest content with him and love him for his sake, and to live on through the barren, hopeless days without a murmur. Tom had come to her arms a forlorn and helpless 2-year-old baby, without father or mother, when Hitty was 18, and her love had grown with her growth and strengthened with her strength. Tom's mother had died with her father's heart; and, when the old gentleman died, he left a respectable fortune, though not so large as that of his two living daughters, the principal failing to their children; and only in case Eddy Hitty and Hitty died without leaving direct heirs, could anything more than the merest trifles revert to poor little Tom. Hitty had been engaged to Andrew Scarle, a year when old Mr. Tom had come to her with his wife, and this year he will be 20, and Hitty and Scarle himself was at that time only a young lawyer, wrestling with circumstances, with no great amount of funds at his command.

"And nothing for little Tom but this pauper hundred dollars!" groaned Hitty, when the will had been read and the estate administered.

"Of course I shall never marry," said Liddy, who was plain and old-fashioned for years, and whose one love in life, her years ago, when the bloom of youth, at least, had been hers. There wasn't the smallest danger that Liddy would threaten Tom's interests by marrying.

"No, you may never marry, Liddy," signed her sister; "but I—love An-

ton, and oh! I love little Tom, too—my

little, motherless Tom! I cannot rob him of his patrimony, and I cannot live without Anson. How can I wrong Tom to pleasure myself? What will he have to go out into this hard world with, if—I—"

"Hush, you silly girl; he will have his head and hands, like other men; and you may never have any children to stand in his way."

"But how unhappy it would make me to see him enriched at his expense; to see him earning his bread by the sweat of his brow, while I fare like the lilies of the field; to have Tom envy and perhaps have them, and feel bitter that life had been rendered so much easier for them by injustice!"

"Perhaps they would share with Tom."

"Ah, it wouldn't be quite safe to trust to that pleasant 'perhaps'."

"You ought not to suspect your children of being less generous than yourself."

"I don't; but the will has made it impossible for me to marry Anson with a clear conscience—to marry him and be happy. If we could make amends to little Tom, it would be different. But I cannot count upon such an improbable chance."

"I should like to will him his head and hands to push his way, but the best head and the busiest hands do not always compel fortune; and if any harm should come to him from want of capital—if he should be tempted to sin from lack of money, I—should have to answer for it; it would be my guilt."

"Nonsense, Hitty; your conscience is too tender. Mary Anson and trust to fate, that's my advice. You refuse, and I suppose somebody else, and how I once went down the middle with the man that shot Sandy McFee."

Of course, I'm still with its mother. On the hill where the trees went to. Of the candles that shed their soft light. And tallow on head-boards and shawl; Of the dress of my queer vis-a-vis; And how I once went down the middle with the man that shot Sandy McFee."

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