

A TOUCH OF PITY.

BY E. CORDEY GRAY.

For they sat at early morn,
Happy in the quiet room,
Downs the path and through the corn,
And by a grassy slope.

Then over a stretch of clean sea-sand,
And reached a slippery pier
That led to the shore of his land.
And said, "We'll rest here."

And, oh, the tremor of her heart!
As tackle straight he set
She deemed her brother had more art
Than she.

And at such time she felt a glow
Of pride that made her speak.
In louder tones; there came a flow
Of blood from each cheek.

At last a catch! the silvery sides
Of the fish were all the texture.
She shrieked with joy when the tide
Of joy was changed to fear.

A full she looked upon the thing
That writhed before her eyes,
The fish, the fish, the fish!
She burst in tears and sighs!

And all her day was clouded dim
With thoughts she could not speak;
The voice was low; she staid by him,
But pale was now her cheek.

Her first gladness of the day of pain
That day, the day that disturbed her heart, and ne'er again
Will she so gladly play.

Ab, little maid! that mystery
Of veritable love, that mystery,
That mystery, to see in her,
Has turned the bright to dark.

SWEET BELLS JANGLED.

The firm of Shiel & MacNeil is pretty well known in the printing line; but, when this began, they do not seem to have been there.

"Then began, they do not seem to have been there.

"Nonsense, man," said Shiel. "Call you that journalism? Listen here, sir, to the talk of the town of the world that moves the world." And he read forth to the desponding partner a little paragraph from a prominent newspaper, stating the deep regret with which they learned that the recent domestic troubles of the eminent musical critic, Mr. MacNeil, had not only prostrated him upon a bed of illness, when he was now lying in a critical condition, but that his business affairs had become hopelessly entangled, and there was a probability of an early and unhappy termination of his life, through his creditors.

Among these articles were some musical curiosities, information of which could be obtained of Mr. Shiel, Printing-House Square, No. —.

"And now I must go to No. — at once," said Shiel; "for, if I'm not mistaken, this will fetch her within the hour."

Shiel had no sooner got seated at his desk than there was a timid knock at the door, and he sprang up, dropping a pen.

"It is Mrs. Jenny Burke, the partner of my business, and she has come to see you."

"Perhaps she's in the kitchen," said the other. "I have heard that is where Mr. MacNeil first found her."

Then up sprang the good-natured-looking gentleman, and said that if she could make a good ragout there her husband ought to rise up and call her blessed, for it was a finer accomplishment than any he could remember; and one thing was certain, she was a far prettier woman than most of them there that night.

"But Jenny did not hear this; and, if she had, it would not have comforted her."

A little later, one of their old friends, the wife of a journeyman printer, in the dear old neighborhood of the forsaken past, was startled by the apparition of a comely face, dear to the olden time of merriment and song, but now blushed with tears, and the tale she told Mrs. McShane anticipated every word of.

"My poor bairn," said she, "I knew it would be when I saw Mac's way of going to see his work, and his talk about strophes and symphonies and outlandish heathenisms boded no good."

"But so long as I have a roof you shall have it," said MacNeil, joined him. Shiel was indeed again, but there was something in his face that led MacNeil to ask him what was the matter. "He had lost anything?"

"No—yes," stammered poor Shiel; "then added, piteously: "Why didn't you tell me, Mac, that you had kept on with Jenny? I thought it was a bargain we shouldn't think of marrying till the business was well paid off."

"So it was, Shiel," said Mac; "but you know what a sweet voice she's got. Denice take me, if it didn't haunt me night and day. You don't know what it is to have a musical ear, and there's no harm in being cheered by a song or two."

"Tush, man!" broke in Shiel. "Do you think I'm a fool?"

"Then the sooner she's out of that nasty press-room the better."

"If you'd board with us, Shiel, I believe we could save money by going to housekeeping; and think how nice it would be to have a snug ingleside of our own!"

Shiel winced a little from this proposal, but couldn't find courage to reject it; so they took rooms near their place of business, and for the first twelve months or so Mac's name was well known in the neighborhood.

The boys dropped in for a chorus three nights in a row, and all went merriment as a marriage bell.

The feeble pipe of an infant was added to the refrain, which suddenly subdued all other music in its vicinity, to the infinite delight of Shiel, who, not being able to run, noted himself, was somewhat of the melodious conceits of others. He did not know that the child's squeak was singularly low and also acquired melody. Shiel was disappointed to find the fates had willed she should share his weakness for music. He declared it was the monkey that amused her, whereas the baby's soul was given to the hurdy-gurdy.

"I take this premature and strikingly misfortunate. Infant prodigies are always more or less of a nuisance, and little Miss Mac's precoocuity grew to an alarming extent the year she was born. The firm of Shiel & MacNeil flourished. Jenny saved the pennies and the only extravagances were in behalf of little Miss Jean, whose waxen face could only be coaxed into a glow by the aid of some sort of melody. And often she grew the wider her taste expanded, until after a while a new piano was purchased and engineered up the stairs, and almost filled Jenny's little parlour. My, a familiar knock had to go to the room or be taken out of sight to make room for this mountain of mahogany.

"It's a burnin' shame," said one of the boys, "to give up the dear old dad for the jinglin' of them ivy pipes."

Every new piece of Miss Jean's sets a smile on Jenny's edge. One can't have any more fun at Mac's; he's hung up his fiddle and his bow; and for my part I'm sick to death of the infant phenomenon."

So were the rest of the cronies—they fell off one by one, and in a few years none were left but Shiel; he, poor fellow, sat night after night with his head up against the wall, the musi going in and out and out of the other, till it seemed he had become simply a sort of hollow melancholy tube for the accommodation of echoes.

What could Mac do, but, had alone kept pace with his daughter, and appreciated to the full her remarkable precocity—what could he do but long for a larger, fuller, prouder scope for her? The ceilings were low in their humble abode; the acoustic properties were evidently wanting in that cramped but cozy vicinity. Alas! alas! the nest was all too small for its full-fledged inmates, and the neighborhood was not what it had been. Mac's business increased day by day. He was willing to be quite a moneyed man, and really a man in music. Busts of Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, and all the rest stared poor Shiel in the face. Look which way he would, the sightless balls of those old eyes, the dimples of Jenny, finding that the very walls of their nest were almost bursting asunder, contented at last to move into a fine new house, a new neighborhood, and have new furniture and new clothes, a new church and minister, a new butcher and baker, and a new all, some very superior and excellent servants, who took the whole establishment out of her hands, and left her high and dry upon the banks of prosperity, with nothing to do but enjoy herself. And all at once she began to be most miserable. Mr. MacNeil and his remarkable daughter stepped out of their nest as the sun, the finest, most sagacious of suns, left the horizon, and reached a slippery pier.

"I'll answer for that with my life, I know how foolishly faithful she is—her eye an eye or an ear for any body else. I know that by experience. Many's the time I've tried to console her myself for your indifference."

"My what?" roared poor Mac.

"Your indifference and neglect, sir!" cried Shiel, now aroused to the pitch of recklessness. "She was a pearl of purity and sweet simplicity, but she was cast before me, sir."

"She's always more or less of a foot," groaned Mac, "and now your clean draft." But he listened to Shiel as he went on to give him a piece of his mind, and took heart as he gathered in the evidence of Jenny's wounded love. "She'll be back before twenty-four hours," said Mac, "and we'll be the happier for this little bout."

"Shiel had read the note for the sixth time, his face growing more and more distracted and imbecile, and had begun to read it over again, when Mac cried out, in a broken voice, "Could any villain be at the bottom of this, Shiel?—could any one have tampered with her love?"

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