

## GIVE ME THE BABY.

BY JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

Give me the baby to hold, my dears!  
To hold and kiss, and love and kiss.  
Ah! he will come to me, never a fear—  
Come to the nest of a breast like this,  
As warm for him as his face with cheer.  
Give me the baby to hold, my dear!

Truly yield him to my care.  
"Mother," you say? what! "a mother to me?"  
To fill up my soul with such happiness  
As the love of a baby that laughs to be  
Snugled away where my heart can hear!  
Give me the baby to hold, my dear!

Ah, but his hands are so led, you say!  
And would dirty my laces and clutch my hair!  
Well, what would pleasure me more, I pray,  
Than the touch and tuck of the wee hands  
The wee hands there, and the warm face here—  
Give me the baby to hold, my dear!

Give me the baby! (Oh, won't you see?)  
Somewhere, out where the green of  
the hills—

Is turning to gray, and the maple trees  
Is weeping its leaves of gold upon  
A little mound, with a dead rose near \* \* \*.  
Give me the baby to hold, my dear!

## PEER AND PEASANT.

"And you must leave us?" There was a ring of despair in the voice of the woman who uttered these words, and she raised her large, mournful, dark eyes appealingly to the face of the handsome young man who stood beside, leaning against a giant forest tree.

"It is necessary, Victorine; and surely you would not have me stay forever in this little cabin, shut away from the world like a monk in a cloister?"

"You are not well yet," said the girl, in a low, hesitating voice.

"I am well enough to leave here, where I am only a burden," was the rejoinder.

The dark eyes filled with sudden tears.

"You are unknd to say that, Hugo. What we have done for you has been done cheerfully."

"But your father is a poor man, Victorine. He cannot but feel the support of a stranger very burdensome. And he refuses to accept any return."

"My father is proud," said Victorine, "and does not wish payment for the favors he bestows. And the pleasure of your society has been worth much to him. He has often said that but for you he would have been very lonely."

"What did he do for company before I came?" asked the young man. "He has lived ten years in this hut, he says."

"Ten very unhappy years, Hugo. The loneliness has seemed to him sometimes greater than he could bear."

"Well, certainly he has had no chance to be lonely lately," said Hugo, in a tone of significance.

Victorine's face paled suddenly.

"Tell me," she said, laying her hand on her companion's arm, "why do these strange men come here night after night? My father will answer no questions. He says women should not concern themselves with such things, and he sends me to bed that I may not hear what they say. But you know all, Hugo. He confides in you, and you will tell me, I am sure."

Hugo shook his head.

"I would willingly do so," he said, "but I promised your father that I would tell you nothing, and I cannot break my word."

"These are dangerous days," said Victorine, "and there is a constant dread at my heart that my father will join the insurgents. Ledru Rollin, who leads the Red Republicans, is always wanting more men, and the fact that these strangers come here so frequently fills me with alarm."

"Then your sympathies are with our— with the throne," said Hugo, eagerly. "Yes; and yet I know how much cause the people have to complain. They need help; but can help come to them only through blood and riot? Is there not some other way in which their condition could be improved?"

"They have taken matters into their own hands," said Hugo. "It is too late to help them now," and he sighed heavily.

A silence fell between them, broken only by the call of the night birds through the forest. All was strangely still. A few yards away stood the little cabin which had been Victorine's home for ten long years. Henri Bazi was absent, and therefore no light gleamed from the windows of his home. It stood dark and desolate beneath the tall forest trees which surrounded it.

Moved by a sudden impulse, Hugo put out his arm, and drew Victorine close to his side.

"The time has come for us to say good-bye," he murmured, brokenly. "Oh, do not forget me when I am far away, Victorine."

"You are not going now!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Hugo, it cannot be possible that you are to leave me so soon?"

"I dreaded telling you of my departure until I could delay no longer, Victorine. My heart aches at the thought of leaving you, but I must be in Paris to-morrow. Business of importance calls me there. Give me your good wishes before I go. I shall think of you as I journey forward to-night, and picture you sleeping here, undisturbed by battle and carnage."

She did not speak. With both hands clasped over her heart she stood like a beautiful statue before him, her eyes staring straight before her, and her breath coming in short, quick gasps.

"Must I leave you in silence then, Victorine? Will you not speak a single word of farewell?" asked Hugo, as he took in a warm, close clasp one of her cold nerveless hands.

Still she did not speak.

"You are angry, perhaps, and perhaps you have cause for anger," a quiet sigh escaping his lips.

"Good-bye," she said, hoarsely, her face averted from his earnest gaze.

"Only a single word, Victorine? Can you part with me so coldly after all these weeks we have been together? Ah, I see that you really care little whether I go or stay. And I—I shall never forget you, Victorine, or the tenderness with which you nursed me back to health again. I remember what a vision of loveliness you seemed to me when I opened my eyes and saw you bending over me. I blessed my good fortune in having been found, after my fall by your father. Surely no other father and daughter could have been so kind."

Nowhere else could I have been nursed so tenderly. And after ten weeks of intimate companionship you bid me good-bye as you would a stranger of yesterday."

Still she did not move or speak, and the hand he held remained unresponsive to his clasp.

"You may never see me again, Victorine," he continued. "Our paths lie far apart. Let me hear you say that you do not regret having known me."

"Why should I regret it?" she asked, turning suddenly and facing him. "You have been here ten weeks, but in that time you have told us nothing of your self save that your name is Hugo Lascelles. You say we have been kind to you, but you have not rewarded our kindness by giving us your confidence. Do you think I owe you lasting remembrance? Do you think that you deserve that I should carry your image here?" laying her hand on her heart.

The young man appeared to hesitate; then he said slowly:

"It is as well, perhaps, that you should forget me. Forgive me if my reticence has wounded you. I dare not attempt any justification. But it grows late. Farewell, Victorine. When the sun rises to-morrow I shall be far on my road to Paris."

"Farewell," she said, coldly.

She heard him turn and walk away, but made no effort to recall him. She stood where he had left her, silent, motionless, her head bent forward on her breast, the long, silken fringes of her eyelids resting on her pale cheeks.

It was only when the sound of his footsteps had died away that she raised her head and looked about her.

"Hugo! Hugo!" She breathed the words rather than spoke them. "Gone! gone! Never in this life shall we meet again!"

She went into the cabin and lighted a candle. As she did so she perceived a sheet of paper lying open on the table. She picked it up and found upon it a few lines from her father:

"I have gone away, and cannot tell you when I may return. You are safe in the cabin. Remain there until your provisions give out. Then raise the fifth board in the floor, counting from the fireplace, and take the bag you will find there. It contains sufficient money to last you several years."

"While I talked with Hugo, he came and left this," she murmured. "His daughter is as nothing to him compared with his desire for power. He has left me alone to live or die, as the good God may see fit. And, had I only dared to speak, I might have won both love and station. One word would have bridged the gulf between Hugo and me. Oh, father! father! your spirit has proved my doom!"

"What did he do for company before I came?" asked the young man. "He has lived ten years in this hut, he says."

"Ten very unhappy years, Hugo. The loneliness has seemed to him sometimes greater than he could bear."

"Well, certainly he has had no chance to be lonely lately," said Hugo, in a tone of significance.

Victorine's face paled suddenly.

"Tell me," she said, laying her hand on her companion's arm, "why do these strange men come here night after night? My father will answer no questions. He says women should not concern themselves with such things, and he sends me to bed that I may not hear what they say. But you know all, Hugo. He confides in you, and you will tell me, I am sure."

Hugo shook his head.

"I would willingly do so," he said, "but I promised your father that I would tell you nothing, and I cannot break my word."

"These are dangerous days," said Victorine, "and there is a constant dread at my heart that my father will join the insurgents. Ledru Rollin, who leads the Red Republicans, is always wanting more men, and the fact that these strangers come here so frequently fills me with alarm."

"Then your sympathies are with our— with the throne," said Hugo, eagerly.

"Yes; and yet I know how much cause the people have to complain. They need help; but can help come to them only through blood and riot? Is there not some other way in which their condition could be improved?"

"They have taken matters into their own hands," said Hugo. "It is too late to help them now," and he sighed heavily.

A silence fell between them, broken only by the call of the night birds through the forest. All was strangely still. A few yards away stood the little cabin which had been Victorine's home for ten long years. Henri Bazi was absent, and therefore no light gleamed from the windows of his home. It stood dark and desolate beneath the tall forest trees which surrounded it.

Moved by a sudden impulse, Hugo put out his arm, and drew Victorine close to his side.

"The time has come for us to say good-bye," he murmured, brokenly. "Oh, do not forget me when I am far away, Victorine."

"You are not going now!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Hugo, it cannot be possible that you are to leave me so soon?"

"I dreaded telling you of my departure until I could delay no longer, Victorine. My heart aches at the thought of leaving you, but I must be in Paris to-morrow. Business of importance calls me there. Give me your good wishes before I go. I shall think of you as I journey forward to-night, and picture you sleeping here, undisturbed by battle and carnage."

She did not speak. With both hands clasped over her heart she stood like a beautiful statue before him, her eyes staring straight before her, and her breath coming in short, quick gasps.

"Must I leave you in silence then, Victorine? Will you not speak a single word of farewell?" asked Hugo, as he took in a warm, close clasp one of her cold nerveless hands.

Still she did not speak.

"You are angry, perhaps, and perhaps you have cause for anger," a quiet sigh escaping his lips.

"Good-bye," she said, hoarsely, her face averted from his earnest gaze.

"Only a single word, Victorine? Can you part with me so coldly after all these weeks we have been together? Ah, I see that you really care little whether I go or stay. And I—I shall never forget you, Victorine, or the tenderness with which you nursed me back to health again. I remember what a vision of loveliness you seemed to me when I opened my eyes and saw you bending over me. I blessed my good fortune in having been found, after my fall by your father. Surely no other father and daughter could have been so kind."

Nowhere else could I have been nursed so tenderly. And after ten weeks of intimate companionship you bid me good-bye as you would a stranger of yesterday."

Still she did not move or speak, and the hand he held remained unresponsive to his clasp.

"You may never see me again, Victorine," he continued. "Our paths lie far apart. Let me hear you say that you do not regret having known me."

"Why should I regret it?" she asked, turning suddenly and facing him. "You have been here ten weeks, but in that time you have told us nothing of your self save that your name is Hugo Lascelles. You say we have been kind to you, but you have not rewarded our kindness by giving us your confidence. Do you think I owe you lasting remembrance? Do you think that you deserve that I should carry your image here?" laying her hand on her heart.

The young man appeared to hesitate; then he said slowly:

"It is as well, perhaps, that you should forget me. Forgive me if my reticence has wounded you. I dare not attempt any justification. But it grows late. Farewell, Victorine. When the sun rises to-morrow I shall be far on my road to Paris."

"Farewell," she said, coldly.

She heard him turn and walk away, but made no effort to recall him. She stood where he had left her, silent, motionless, her head bent forward on her breast, the long, silken fringes of her eyelids resting on her pale cheeks.

It was only when the sound of his footsteps had died away that she raised her head and looked about her.

"Hugo! Hugo!" She breathed the words rather than spoke them. "Gone! gone! Never in this life shall we meet again!"

She went into the cabin and lighted a candle. As she did so she perceived a sheet of paper lying open on the table. She picked it up and found upon it a few lines from her father:

"I have gone away, and cannot tell you when I may return. You are safe in the cabin. Remain there until your provisions give out. Then raise the fifth board in the floor, counting from the fireplace, and take the bag you will find there. It contains sufficient money to last you several years."

"While I talked with Hugo, he came and left this," she murmured. "His daughter is as nothing to him compared with his desire for power. He has left me alone to live or die, as the good God may see fit. And, had I only dared to speak, I might have won both love and station. One word would have bridged the gulf between Hugo and me. Oh, father! father! your spirit has proved my doom!"

"What did he do for company before I came?" asked the young man. "He has lived ten years in this hut, he says."

"Ten very unhappy years, Hugo. The loneliness has seemed to him sometimes greater than he could bear."

"Well, certainly he has had no chance to be lonely lately," said Hugo, in a tone of significance.

Victorine's face paled suddenly.

"Tell me," she said, laying her hand on her companion's arm, "why do these strange men come here night after night? My father will answer no questions. He says women should not concern themselves with such things, and he sends me to bed that I may not hear what they say. But you know all, Hugo. He confides in you, and you will tell me, I am sure."

Hugo shook his head.

"I would willingly do so," he said, "but I promised your father that I would tell you nothing, and I cannot break my word."

"These are dangerous days," said Victorine, "and there is a constant dread at my heart that my father will join the insurgents. Ledru Rollin, who leads the Red Republicans, is always wanting more men, and the fact that these strangers come here so frequently fills me with alarm."

"Then your sympathies are with our— with the throne," said Hugo, eagerly.

"Yes; and yet I know how much cause the people have to complain. They need help; but can help come to them only through blood and riot? Is there not some other way in which their condition could be improved?"

"They have taken matters into their own hands," said Hugo. "It is too late to help them now," and he sighed heavily.

A silence fell between them, broken only by the call of the night birds through the forest. All was strangely still. A few yards away stood the little cabin which had been Victorine's home for ten long years. Henri Bazi was absent, and therefore no light gleamed from the windows of his home. It stood dark and desolate beneath the tall forest trees which surrounded it.

Moved by a sudden impulse, Hugo put out his arm, and drew Victorine close to his side.

"The time has come for us to say good-bye," he murmured, brokenly. "Oh, do not forget me when I am far away, Victorine."

"You are not going now!" she exclaimed. "Oh, Hugo, it cannot be possible that you are to leave me so soon?"

"I dreaded telling you of my departure until I could delay no longer, Victorine. My heart aches at the thought of leaving you, but I must be in Paris to-morrow. Business of importance calls me there. Give me your good wishes before I go. I shall think of you as I journey forward to-night, and picture you sleeping here, undisturbed by battle and carnage."

She did not speak. With both hands clasped over her heart she stood like a beautiful statue before him, her eyes staring straight before her, and her breath coming in short, quick gasps.

"Must I leave you in silence then, Victorine? Will you not speak a single word of farewell?" asked Hugo, as he took in a warm, close clasp one of her cold nerveless hands.

Still she did not speak.

"You are angry, perhaps, and perhaps you have cause for anger," a quiet sigh escaping his lips.

"Good-bye," she said, hoarsely, her face averted from his earnest gaze.

"Only a single word, Victorine? Can you part with me so coldly after all these weeks we have been together? Ah, I see that you really care little whether I go or stay. And I—I shall never forget you, Victorine, or the tenderness with which you nursed me back to health again. I remember what a vision of loveliness you seemed to me when I opened my eyes and saw you bending over me. I blessed my good fortune in having been found, after my fall by your father. Surely no other father and daughter could have been so kind."

Nowhere else could I have been nursed so tenderly. And after ten weeks of intimate companionship you bid me good-bye as you would a stranger of yesterday."

Still she did not move or speak, and the hand he held remained unresponsive to his clasp.

&lt;