

## MIRAGE.

BY EUGENE FIELD.

We'll read that book, we'll sing that song,  
But not on when the days are long;  
When thoughts are free, and voices clear;  
The days trop by with noiseless tread,  
The song unsung; the book unread.

We'll see that friend and make him feel  
The weight of friendship, true as steel,  
Some flower of sympathy bestow—  
But time sweeps on with steady flow,  
Until, with quick, reproachful tear,  
We lay our flowers upon his bier.

And still we walk the desert sands,  
And still with trifles fill our hands,  
While ever, just beyond our reach,  
A fairer purpose shows to each  
The deeds we have not done, but will,  
Remain to haunt us—untilfulfilled.

*Chicago News.*

## "THE WEB OF OUR LIFE IS OF TANGLED YARN."

BY ANNABEL B. WHITE (BUST BEE).

The old house seemed to sleep in the golden sunshine of a royal August afternoon. It was judiciously shaded by large oaks.

Lest the reader should pronounce this a paradox, let me hasten to add that these trees, although they attract every wanton breeze, and imparted a grateful shade to yard, lawn, and the deep piazzas, yet they were so far from the house itself that there was no danger of their boughs tapping like ghostly fingers against the windows, nor yet that far more disagreeable sound of the scraping of tree branches across the roof and eaves.

So the golden sunshine streamed clearly down on the old weather-beaten building. But in spite of this fact the house was a notably cool one on the hottest summer day.

Col. Lester loved trees, but he had a horror of the unwholesome damp and destructive mildew they caused if they grew caressingly near his dwelling.

On this particular afternoon every door and window was open, but the shutters were closed to keep out the sun and to let in the air. The large hall-door stood wide open it seemed itself gasping for air, while the two doors on the left and right of the breezy hall also stood ajar.

It was two o'clock—two o'clock in the sunny South, at which hour all nature and all humanity seem to seek repose from the toil and heat of the day in this *dolce far niente* land.

The negro laborers slumbered peacefully under trees; the mules rolled and wallowed luxuriously in the dust, or nodded sleepily over the feed troughs; the turkeys and chickens stood lazily about on one leg under the houses; the servants and inmates of the mansion slept. There was no sound in all the air except the drowsy hum of insects, the shrill chirp of the crickets in the grass, and the fretful, peevish cry of those speckled Arabs of the poultry-yard—Guineas.

Inez Lester had gone into the library to renew the water in the stand of flowers she every day placed on her father's desk. After her task was finished the soft coolness of the red and white striped lounge cover wood her to slumber. Her father snoozed comfortably in his wicker easy-chair, placed on the east end of the north piazza, with a large newspaper spread over his rubicund visage.

No one in his sense ever expects or dresses for visitors on these hot summer days in Southland, till the fiery red orb of day marks 3 or 4 o'clock p.m. So Inez made a lovely picture, as she lay asleep on the comfortable lounge, with her lovely flowing sheer white wrapper draping her exquisite limbs.

Well, it was 2 o'clock when the sound of leisurely footsteps could have been heard on the front walk—could have been heard had any one been awake to hear them, we must add.

But the house slept on like an enchanted castle, and even the lazy hounds scattered over yard and piazzas did not so much as open their sleepy eyes when a muscular masculine hand struck the hall-door with vigorous knuckles.

The knock was repeated, but elicited no response. Noting the hospitably open doors, the stranger boldly entered, and unfortunately walked into the room on his left. Had he gone into the room on his right, he would have done the correct thing. It certainly looked invitingly cool, with its furniture upholstered in cretonne—a creamy ground, lightly sprinkled with moss rosebuds and delicate green leaves—and was most evidently the parlor.

But chance led him to the library where Inez was sleeping on the broad red and white stripes which covered her resting place, and which corresponded with curtains and chairs. He paused on the threshold, discreetly, and in his embarrassment coughed slightly. Immediately, Inez opened her heavy-lidded eyes, and at the sight of that unknown figure framed in the doorway, she started up, every faculty alert.

"Who are you, sir?" she demanded, haughtily.

"Carl Vogel, at your service," the gentleman bowed.

"Sir, you are no gentleman to thus intrude into a lady's presence."

"My dear young lady, I thought I was expected. I am the artist whom you, I rather invited from the city of New York to paint your lovely portrait."

He did not really know if she were the one whose portrait he was to paint; but, astute man, he had long ago learned that delicate flattery is never wasted on "fair women."

Inez graciously unbent and accepted his card.

"I beg your pardon, and will call you at once. But we were mistaken in the day and hour. Papa said you would come to-morrow at 10 o'clock."

"Which I intended, but finishing a picture sooner than I anticipated, I ran away from all other engagements, for the need of the recreation of country life."

"If you will be so kind as to sit down, and—excuse me, and deeply embarrassed, but not revealing it by walk or manner, Inez left the room in quest of her father. "That he should see me in this wrapper," was her mortified thought, quite unconscious that Carl, an artist, must certainly admire her more in that garb than if she were hab-

ited in "full dress." But being a woman, she could not, or would not, lay the balm of this soothing knowledge to her harrowed soul.

When Col. Lester entered a few moments after, Carl Vogel was welcomed in a more hospitable manner than Inez had accorded him.

"Everybody and everything goes to sleep in the South after our early dinner, and no doubt after you become accustomed to us you will easily fall into our indolent ways. You mention the 'city' as if it were but a step away, but you will speedily discover that New York and its customs are further away than you seem to think. Yes, I had taken a fancy to have Inez' portrait painted, and as you mentioned your intention of taking a leisurely tour through the South when I was in your studio last spring, I was quite determined to have you stop with us several weeks. I regret that our welcome has seemed so churlish, but we did not expect you till to-morrow."

"The fault is mine. I was longing to get away from New York—in fact, I have painted later in the summer than is my habit; but I was ill in the early spring, and so was longer in finishing Mr. Weller's pictures than I thought I should be."

"Yes? Well, now you are here you must rest, and take your time over Inez' picture. You will find her a trifle willful, but a little judicious flatness always brings a woman round;" and Col. Lester's mellow laugh seemed to set all the slight ornaments in the room to jingling.

"That is a very good painting," observed the artist walking up to a cool landscape piece.

"Yes," and a father's pride spoke out in the voice: "my daughter's."

"Indeed!" and the young man turned quickly about and gazed at Col. Lester as if he did not more than half believe this statement.

"Yes, poor girl, it was once her greatest joy."

Carl Vogel was all attention. Happy-faced Inez did not seem to be one with unsolved griefs, as her father's words seemed to suggest. But Col. Lester pursued the subject no further, hastily adding:

"Excuse me for forgetting that you must be hot, tired and dusty, and allow me to show you to your room at once."

And he preceded his guest out of the library, who obediently followed till they came to a door lower down in the hall which led to a room directly behind the parlor.

A girlish figure, clad in fresh flowing muslin, and with some folded towels over her arm came out of the door as they reached it. She nodded brightly to her father, but would have passed on without notice of the stranger had not Col. Lester stopped her and said, "My daughter Inez, Mr. Vogel," and then Inez put out a thin soft hand with a welcoming look and smile. Then she vanished into a room across the hall.

The furniture was of China wood, beautifully carved, and with that lovely mingling of colors only found in this peculiar wood. The matting in the floor was white, the chairs covered with cool gray Holland.

"These Southerners certainly understand the art of furnishing rooms for their climate," he murmured, pushing back a lace curtain, and opening the blinds of a window.

A knock at his door announced his luggage, also the advent of a respectful servant.

"Please, sah, Mahser says will your come inter dey dinin'-room soon's ye dress?"

"Certainly; but how am I to find the dining-room?" Carl pleasantly asked.

"I gwine show ye dey way?" the man affirmed, and in a few moments Carl ventured out, freed from the dust of travel, and attired in fresh linen.

Down the inevitable hall, across a breezy passage, and Sam opened another door. Col. Lester turned away from a window and came to meet his guest.

This was the dining-room. The floor was stained a rich walnut, and rose-colored shades at the windows gave the walls a delightful glow, and made the snowy damask, white chintz and cut glass beam and sparkle a welcome as cordial as the owner's.

A pale, quiet-looking lady rose from a chair and Col. Lester introduced, "My wife." Mrs. Lester retained her guest's hand and led him to the table. Inez came in just then with a bunch of white roses which she arranged on the table—after which Carl made a satisfying lunch—a repast satisfactory to his taste and to his artist's eye.

Inez' portrait did not progress very rapidly, owing to that erratic young lady's different moods and tenses, and so one day, a week after Carl's arrival, Mrs. Lester entered the library where he painted, with a dainty lunch basket on her arm. "Inez, dear, Mary tells me Francia is not well. If Mr. Vogel can dispense with you for a few hours, I should like for you to go over and see her. Here are some grapes and other things for the poor girl, and do try to persuade her to come back with you."

Mr. Vogel glanced up interestedly, then going on with mixing some paint, he said: "I have no doubt Miss Inez is tired and will be glad for a walk."

"But sister lives five miles away, and I am no champion Englishwoman. I don't propose to walk that distance," Inez retorted, saucily.

"There is no need," reassured Mrs. Lester; "Tom has the phaeton and pony at the door."

"And can't I take Tom's place as driver?" anxiously demanded Carl, springing up, for he had learned that Tom was Inez' Liliyntian groom and driver.

"Can you drive?" questioned Inez, gazing at him doubtfully.

"Only try me," he confidently retorted.

"Oh, well, if you can't, I can; so run away and wash your hands," Inez laughingly commanded.

He did drive admirably, Inez discovered, and so at last she settled back in her seat with a feeling of safety she had not felt on leaving home. But

Carl also drove leisurely, so that it was an hour and a half before they reached a low rambling building set in a wilderness of clambering vines and closely crowded trees.

The house was not carefully kept—the man's part of keeping house in repair, I should explain—but the cotton fields bore evidence of careful tillage.

The dwelling had five or six rooms, evidently, and all somewhat disconnected, for all had doors opening into a wide entrance-way, left uninclosed at either end.

A lady—plainly a lady, in spite of her faded calico dress—came out into the entrance to meet Carl and Inez.

"My sister, Mrs. Strathmore—Mr. Vogel, from New York."

It was the first time Inez had mentioned her sister's name, and Carl, to conceal his astonishment, bowed low over the slender hand held out to him.

Neither the Colonel, Mrs. Lester, nor Inez had ever before mentioned the existence of this daughter and sister.

They went into a room devoid of carpet or luxurious furniture—only a few good paintings on the wall indicated taste or wealth.

He walks angrily across the floor, and picks up his reproachful hat.

"Good-by, Francia," he says, not coming near her, and not offering his hand.

She stands up.

"Good-by," she says, with that habit of self-reproach which the years have taught her.

"No, no!" he cries wildly, swiftly approaching her still form. "I cannot part from you so—"

And then he takes the trembling woman in his arms, strains her madly to his aching heart, kisses her a dozen times, seats her gently in her chair, then rushes away.

She does not weep, she does not even cover her blanched face with her thin brown hands, but gazes after that fleeing horseman with a strained, mournful gaze, as if she would photograph him upon her heart.

That image never leaves her.

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Three years pass away.

One day Fred in his haste to have a certain field gleaned properly, remained there till 2 o'clock under a hot summer sun, dinnerless and hungry. He went home with a terrible pain in his head. "It is nothing," he told his anxious wife; "a mere headache. I shall get up in the morning."

But in the morning he was raving with delirium, and in a week he was dead; and then Francia rested once more in her father's house.

Poor woman! How poor? Fred had left all to her, for there were no children, but mountains of gold could never efface those ten years passed with him from her crushed heart and drowsy mind.

As soon as she became strong enough to travel, the family went to Europe—and there they ran across Carl Vogel. "Yes, I have been in Italy three years, he told them, looking understandingly, and with a secret, guilty joy at Francia's widow's weeds. "You know I was born and reared in New York, but I was educated at German universities, and then spent three years in Italy studying art—my last three I have spent the same way."

They had met in a public garden, and Carl maneuvered so successfully he soon had Francia to himself.

"Francia, you are free—and I love no woman but you. Can you not say you love me?"

Francia hung her head like a shy young girl, and not like a woman of twenty-nine.

"And you loved me in the old days, too!" he cried, exultantly.

"I cannot say—I pitied you, but myself worst of all."

"Well, pity is akin to love," he comforted himself and her.

In a year they were wed, and at 30 Francia realized her girlish dream of a good husband's love and appreciation.

Mr. Emerson's Appearance.

His head was long and narrow, but lofty, almost symmetrical, and of more nearly equal breadth in its anterior and posterior regions than many or most heads. His shoulders sloped so much as to be commented upon for this peculiarity by Mr. Gilfillan, and, like "Amon's great son," he carried one shoulder a little higher than the other. His face was thin, his nose somewhat accipitine, casting a broad shadow; his mouth rather wide, well formed, and well closed, carrying a question and an assertion in its finely finished curves; the lower lip a little prominent, the chin stately and firm, as becomes the corner-stone of the countenance.

His expression was calm, sedate, kindly, with that look of refinement centering about the lips which is rarely found among the New Englander, unless the family features have been for two or three cultivated generations the battlefield and the playground of varied thoughts and complex emotions as well as the sensuous and nutritive port of entry. His whole look was irradiated by an ever-active, inquiring intelligence. His manner was noble and gracious.

—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Dress Not Sinful Vanity.

Ruskin is not the first great writer who has treated the subject of dress with due gravity. He has shown us that a serious study thereof is a needful virtue, instead of a sinful vanity, and that a harmonious and well-constructed gown is as much a work of art as a picture or a statue. Neither can it be argued that the work is mean, since it is to adorn human beings, who are after all, nature's masterpiece.

His words are but the expression of an opinion held by all artists, from time immemorial, and indirectly expressed by most of them. For there is neither drama nor painting in which costume, both as to color and drapery, does not form an all-important element, and there are few impressive scenes in our works of fiction in which the dress is not mentioned. The unconscious tribute to its influence is not only due to the realistic force of such descriptions, but also to their power in expressing character.—*American Queen*.

Injudicious Inez!

It is weeks after—eight weeks, and a horse is fastened near the Strathmore gate, while the rider thereof stands moodily and with folded arms in the wide entrance close to the chair in which sad-faced Francia sits.

His hat has fallen to the floor and rolled unheeded by both across the passage, and now lies mutely against the wall as if imploring its heedless master to pick it up and go.

ENERGY will do anything that can be done in this world; and no talents, no circumstances, no opportunities will make a man without it.—*Goethe*.

Mrs. Strathmore is speaking—head bent and hands folded tightly in her lap. She is audibly telling Carl Vogel the same thing his hat so mutely protests.

"I do not at all understand how we came to this dreadful pass," she says, in a pitiful voice, not lifting the bent head. "You must go away at once. It is dishonorable for me to listen to you and worse than dishonorable for you to utter such mad words."

"You doom me to an uncertain, wretched future. I shall love no woman as I have loved you since the first day I saw you, and it maddens me to see you drag out your days in the miserable existence you lead now—your life is wasted—and you could be free."

"Free! How?" and then she looks up with a gleam in her eyes that would seem like hope in another woman's eyes—but for her hope is for ever dead!

"Divorce!" he answers, sententiously. She starts, and draws away from him. "You do not understand," she answers, coldly. "There is but one divorce for Southrons—death!"

He walks angrily across the floor, and picks up his reproachful hat.

"Good-by, Francia," he says, not coming near her, and not offering his hand.

She stands up.

"Good-by," she says, with that habit of self-reproach which the years