

BALLADE OF THE PUG-DOG.

BY NEILL BOOTH SIMMONS.



DIGNIFIED pug on the cushioned seat
Of Mr. Du Plethoric's grand coupe
Just chanced to observe in the crowded street
A poor little desolate girl one day;
And he cocked his eye in a scornful way
From the perturbed depths of his braided rug.

And she almost fancied she heard him say:
"Ah, ha! don't you wish you were born a pug?"

"I'm stuffed," he continued, "with things to eat,
And coddled and pampered the livelong day,
And I'm bathed and combed by a maid so neat,
Who brushes my coat in the nicest way;
And when I'm too weary to walk or play
My mistress is ready for me to lie—
She's always so frightened lest I should stray—
Ah, ha! don't you wish you were born a pug?"

"You wander about with your naked feet,
And pick up a morsel just where you may,
And I am regaled on the whitest meat,
And daintily wrapped in a blanket gay;
And, while no one questions where you can stay,
My bed is downy and soft and snug—
They never neglect me, you know, not they—
Ah, ha! don't you wish you were born a pug?"

"Yes, if you could only, without delay,
Turn into a dog with a crumpled mug,
You'd soon comprehend why I laugh and say:
Ah, ha! don't you wish you were born a pug?"

A TALE OF TWO WOMEN

"Come to me. I am dying. JUNE."
Don Eastern's brow was knit, and he muttered a very impatient imprecation under his breath, as he stood studying the telegram which had just been put in his hand.

"I thought that was all over and done with. Must we go through with it again, I wonder?"

And then he took up a time-table and studied it attentively for a moment. "Of course a thousand miles in this beastly cold is a mere nothing for a busy man! That's understood. A woman's caprice must be gratified at all hazards. My arch enchantress isn't jiving any more than I am, but I suppose I must go."

Glancing hurriedly through the mail on his desk, he then picked up, from the midst of commonplace, practical, business-like looking letters, a slim, satiny envelope of palest pink, with a faint perfume clinging to it. His whole face softened, and his hand shook for a moment as he eagerly opened and read the few lines.

"My little Mignon," he said, gently. But his little Mignon did not keep him from taking a journey of a thousand miles to see June Heatherton, to whom he had been engaged a year ago; with whom he had quarreled fiercely over some palpable flirtation on her part; from whom he had parted in bitterness and pain, and yet with a half-relieved feeling in a corner of his heart.

Six months he had been reckless, as a man sometimes will when a woman has been false and untrue in any particular; and then she had written him, proudly, tenderly, saying that, as she had sinned, so she must be the supplicant—in her anger she had said she did not love him, but now she knew better; she would never love any one else—would he not come back to her?

But this, he had declined, politely and firmly. Now that it was all over, he knew that he had never loved her, and that it was a most fortunate thing he had found it out in time.

Her grace, her beauty, her wonderful fascination, had thrilled his blood with a rapture that he thought then was love, but it was only her false twin-sister. Love had come to him, indeed, but it was a later guest, and then a sweet false friend in him through the shadows, and its purity and tenderness blotted out the warm summer beauty of June Heatherton from his vision.

Yet a week later he was in her presence. "She evidently still lives!" he murmured, sardonically, as he entered the magnificent hall of Heatherton, pale, in which no signs of mourning fluttered.

A moment later June entered the drawing-room, where he waited.

Ah, yes, she could stir even his unbelieving, cold heart.

"My love! my love!" she murmured, softly.

And certainly Don Eastern was not the kind of a man to let the memory of little Mignon prevent him from holding a beautiful, yielding form closely in his arms, and returning clinging kisses with interest, when such a rare opportunity offered.

But for all this propitious beginning, Don Eastern went back to his own home, a week later, as free as when he left it. He alone knew the full power of June Heatherton's siren charms, for he was the only man she had ever loved. He alone knew that she had thrown herself at his feet in all her exquisite, gleaming beauty, and begged him to take her back to his heart, with all the despairing passion that a woman like her can feel when she sees the man that was once her abject slave beyond her reach.

What was her pride compared to the desolation that swept over her when she realized that the heart she had trifled with was hers no longer, when she had learned to prize it most? And so he went back to his little Mignon, whose calm, pure face was continually before him through all his journey in the bitter winter cold.

A dainty little missive would be awaiting him—the last week or two would drop away from him then. But to his intense disappointment, no letter was there; he only waited to grasp this fact fully, and to freshen up after his tiresome trip, when once more he started out.

It was a very different woman from June Heatherton that greeted him at the end of his journey. Not tall, nor voluptuous, nor passionate; but flower-sweet and fragile, with dreaming eyes, a sad mouth, and a radiant smile.

A faint flush stole into her cheeks as she came quietly to him and laid her hands in his outstretched ones for a brief moment—she did not even see the love and longing in his eyes—and then he took her in his arms.

"Mignon, I can wait no longer. Say you love me."

She looked up into his face, a little startled, and trembled like a bud the wind has shaken too roughly; but she did not strive to leave her prison, and, after a pause which was breathless and terrible to Don Eastern, she said, gravely and sweetly: "I love you."

"My angel!" he said, passionately. "I am not worthy of you—not worthy to touch your hand; but I love you so, little Mignon, I shall make you happy."

And she laid her cheek against his, perfectly happy and trusting and content.

Scarcely enough, he told her all about June Heatherton. He had nothing—not even his long journey last week—and Mignon's face was shadowed for a moment. "Did you ever love her?"

"No, my darling; I thought I did, but I know better now."
"She is very beautiful?"
"Yes."
"And she loves you?"
He bent down and kissed her, but did not answer.
"Are you sure—quite sure—that you love me?"

"My blossom!" he murmured, with infinite tenderness. "If you are not the other half of my soul, I pray God I may go to my grave bereft."

"But you would have married her," she said, after a little.

"I don't think fate would have been so cruel, knowing my little unknown Mignon was my rightful portion. Remember, dear, I did not know you then."

Three months later Don brought her June's wedding-cards.

"You see, dear," he said, "that she did not love me."

But in a day or two came a mad letter to him, written by June on her wedding-day. And Don Eastern was sorry, indeed; for June Heatherton, despite her coquetry, was a girl with a really fine nature. She was good and noble in most things, but this unreasoning love seemed to have overwhelmed her and swept her off her feet.

He said nothing to Mignon. He destroyed the letter and did not answer it.

He was beginning to hope she found a new love to fill her heart, when another letter came. She had tried to love her husband; she had imagined, if she were married to some good man, she could forget her wild love for him. But it was in vain, and she was the most miserable woman on the face of the earth.

He said nothing to Mignon. It would only grieve her, and she was too white and innocent to know anything of such stormy passions.

A third letter came, and a fourth, and he began to be seriously annoyed, when one day a little note came from June—Mrs. Langdon—saying she was to be in town visiting her sister; would he not call?

In his perplexity (men are such stupid!) he went to Mignon.

He told her Mrs. Langdon was in town; that she had written to him to call. Should he do so? And then to her questions: No, she was not happy, and she had not yet learned to love her husband, whom she had married in one of her freaks, but in time, perhaps—

And poor little Mignon, with a very sore heart and a calm face, told him to go if he wished. It would only be courtesy.

She had seen June's picture, and the beautiful sorceress face was something to remember—the sweet, smiling lips, the languid, dark eyes, the pearl softness and fullness. Often, when she was nestled in her lover's arms, the thought would steal to her that that beautiful head had lain where hers was now; that his kisses had been pressed upon other, redder lips, and she felt a little pang, as a loving, jealous heart will, for there is little love in this world that does not walk hand in hand with jealousy. It is all very well to talk about a perfect trust, a noble confidence, but this is the nineteenth century, and she must be vain, and arrogant, and self-sufficient, when no doubt, ever creeps in of one's own power and fascination when pitted against another's.

June Langdon had wealth, beauty, and passion. Mignon had twice her intellect, and tenderness, and capacity for pain, and self-sacrifice and love. June was a magnificent cactus-blossom, scarlet and gold, and subtle; Mignon was a fair day-lily, pallid and frazzled and pensive.

And men have such an unfortunate weakness for tropical flowers, they cannot pass them by carelessly or unconsciously, even though they have already plucked the lily and laid the frail petals over their hearts. The white flower brought out all the beauty of Don Eastern's soul, its chivalry and tenderness, its belief in the good and true, its higher impulses and aspirations; but he could not ignore the brilliant cactus-bud; it caused his blood to flow faster, it gave a new zest to living—for an hour.

Mignon was his saint, his nun, his good angel, and he loved her truly, with all the high love a man of the world can ever know. He revered her for her womanly goodness and truth; he trusted her as he never supposed he could trust any one. She rested him and soothed him unspeakably.

And little Mignon loved him with a strange power and intensity that was the very breath of her life to her.

But he went to see Mrs. Langdon all the same.

She came to him more royally beautiful than ever, with eyes more lustrous and filled with a starker dusk, with redder lips and a deeper flush on her delicate cheeks; her garments clung about her lissom form, a faint, mystic perfume rose from her laces—Circé, indeed.

He stood up silently and gravely, but she laid her hand on his shoulder and drew his lips down to hers. She had once been delicately reserved, and high and proud, but a mad, unthinking love had changed her strangely. And, married though she was, this man, Don Eastern, held all her soul in his keeping, and, with a tropical nature like hers, love is everything.

She would have preferred heaven and the "lilies and languors of virtue"; debarred from that, she would take hell and the "rapture and roses" of a love to which she had no shadow of right. By-and-by she said: "Don, you love some one."

He bowed, with a deep look into her face. "Not me—you do not love me!" she said, impatiently. "It is some one else, some one I don't know—tell me about her!"

"My dear June, could a man ever find room for two women in his heart, when one of them was you?"

"Tell me about her," she said, steadily. "I have not loved you all these years, Don Eastern, without learning every phase of your mood. Does she live here?"

No, but she is visiting here at present."

"Is she beautiful?"

"No."

"Brilliant?"

"No."

"Wealthy?"

"No."

"What is she, then?"

"An angel, whose garments it is a profanation to touch."

She looked at him wonderingly and sighed heavily.

"Can I see her?"

"I am sure I do not know. You may possibly meet her at some party or something."

"Are you going to hear Modjeska to-morrow night?"

"Yes."

"With her?"

"I believe so."

"Then I shall see her—Oh, my God!"

She caught her breath sharply, and fell down at his feet in all her exquisite beauty.

"Can you never, never love me again, Don? My life, my soul, it is all yours! Can you not give me a little love in return?"

He lifted her up gently.

"It is too late to ask that now, June. Try and forget you ever loved any one but your husband. Believe me, you will be happier. No one can more bitterly regret than I the misery of our past. Let us begin anew."

But she thrust him away from her wildly, and bade him to go, if he did not wish her to fall dead at his feet.

So he went away sadly.

Mignon was visiting a school friend, Mrs. Barrymore, and the next night they all sat listening to the heart-breaking story of "Camille"—Mrs. Barrymore piquant and gypsy-like; Mrs. Barrymore blonde and languid, but very devoted to his pretty, dashing wife; Mignon and Don Eastern.

Mignon was listening earnestly to Modjeska, who interpreted so well a passionate, loving, erring, noble woman's heart. The high-bred grace, the dainty foreign accent, the naturalness of this actress, held her in thrall, and she never took her eyes from the stage; but, as the curtain went down on the second act, she lifted her glass and slowly scanned the house. Suddenly she paused with a heart that throbbed strangely. Directly across from her sat a woman whom

surely she had seen somewhere—a woman with dark, fiery eyes and golden hair, and a brilliant scarlet on her lips, and a flit of flush on her cheeks—a woman in gold satin that fell away from the snowy neck and arm on which opals gleamed ominously, with a knot of crimson in her hand.

"Don," she said, tremulously, "is not that an old friend of yours in the box opposite?"

He lifted his glass.

"You recognize her from her picture, I see. She is looking remarkably well, is she not?" nonchalantly.

"She is glorious!" but the tender heart contracted.

The dusky eyes across were looking in her direction with a restless, smoldering fire in their depths that pained her to see.

June Langdon had glanced over with a hungry intensity that seemed to search her. She passed over Mrs. Barrymore's bright, dark beauty, and settled directly on Mignon's face, studying it intently. The dark eyes, the wistful mouth, the dreaming, calm, sweet face.

"Not beautiful? No; but a face that any man would shine in his heart and love more recklessly than any mere beauty of form and coloring," she murmured. "Yet she dresses like an actress. There is not another woman so sweet red lips. She is odd and picturesque. She is like a strain to Mozart, a spray of lilies, a cool pool in the heart of a desert. My God! how he looks at her—he never looked at me like that! He respects her, he worships her!"

She sank back, breathless with misery, and yet again and again she found herself gazing intently at Mignon.

In a long, black velvet gown, cut after the fashion of old pictures, she wore lace throat and elbow, with long black gloves and a black fan, and a large bouquet of creamy, odorless jasmine in her hand, she was a contrast indeed to most women there.

Mrs. Barrymore was more of a gypsy than ever in pale amber and dark ruby; all about her was color and glow and shimmer, but from the rich darkness, Mignon's clear pallor, like the leaf of one of her jasmine buds, the sweet red lips, the dreaming eyes, shone out and attracted a thousand eyes. She was like a picture of repose.

She was like the twilight, tender and pensive, after the hot, tumultuous day. And Don Eastern, looking across at the beautiful enchantress in her gold-satin draperies without a thrill, knew that for one touch of the small gloved hand at his side he would brave death.

As Camille was parting with Armand after her interview with his father, looking so sadly changed from the light-hearted, joyous girl, in her pretty pink dress and garden hat, from an hour before, laughing and sobbing in a breath, kissing him in despairing, sobbing love, smiling in a grand self-renunciation, weeping over her dead and broken hopes altogether, June Langdon, glancing over, saw that the sorrowful blossom-face had grown strangely white, and that Don Eastern was fanning her anxiously, and that he had drawn a massive black, Spanish drapery about her slim to m.

She saw Mignon look up with such devotion and love and faith in them; she saw him look down eagerly, with truest, tenderest love and anxiety; and then she waited no longer, but rose impatiently, with rage and hatred in her heart.

She paused for one last look. Mrs. Barrymore had leaned forward to speak to Mignon, and as June's eyes fell on her face she started.

"Why, it is Blythe Hart! I knew she had married, but I did not know what had become of her. Ah, everything is easy now."

The next day Mrs. Langdon's carriage dashed up to the Barrymore mansion, and a moment afterward Mrs. Langdon was announced.

Mrs. Barrymore and Mignon were seated together in the drawing-room. Mignon nestled in a great chair, but the grate, Mrs. Barrymore lying luxuriously on a low Turkish divan.

Mrs. Barrymore stood up with a very faint surprise in her face, that changed to delight as she recognized an almost forgotten friend.

"Why, June, are you Mrs. Langdon? Three years in Europe have set me quite outside the pale of all my old friends. This is my dear friend, Mignon 'Trevor.' Little Mignon, you have often heard me speak of June Heatherton?"

And Mignon, with a faint color in her cheeks, bowed quietly, but did not speak, and relapsed into her reverie, gazing with dark, dreaming eyes into the flames.

How did it happen? Circé alone knew. But after that these two were often together.

"Such a lovely morning, little Mignon. You must come for a drive with me." Or, "I shall be alone to-day; you must come and make the most of the night for me."

And although Mignon felt a vague dread and dislike, it was so intangible, and the beautiful voice and face and manner so enchanting, that she could not resist, and felt ashamed of her distrust and fears.

The days had flown swiftly, and they had been days of rapture for Mignon; the gaiety and life and bustle were quite new to her. Every day Don was with her, morning and evening; he watched over her with a jealous care and loving care, he was a marvel to himself. He took her for drives, and accompanied her to the opera; he sent her rare flowers from his own green-houses; he brought her his favorite books and music, and late in the evenings he lingered beside her, parting from her reluctantly, and thinking of her every moment he was away from her. He realized that this pure, gentle, loving girl was the one supreme love of his life—her white hand could lead him unshaken over every sin and temptation, her sweet, dark eyes draw him to the uttermost ends of the earth. He was proud of her intellect and culture, he worshipped her for her innocence and trust, and for the first time in his life the restless, cynical man of the world was happy.

June Langdon was less than nothing to him. He had never been near her since that day. He had never even thought of her.

But to-day he held an ivory sheet of paper in his hand, with a monogram embazoned in violet and gold upon it. And a line in the elegant running hand he knew so well.

"I am going away to-morrow. Come just once more, for the sake of the old days, when no other woman was dearer than I. I am going to Paris to live, and may never see you again."

And he went. Reluctantly and distastefully, but he went. He was ushered into a dainty little boudoir, maize and poppy, musk-scented and flower-filled.

Mrs. Langdon came forward from the library to meet him, in a creamy, clinging robe, with a scarlet poppy on her bosom that gleamed out white and satiny from the yellow enshrouding laces.

She did not give him unasked kisses this time; she did not even offer him her hand, but threw herself down in a great chair, with a sad languor that would have touched any heart but his. They talked a little indifferently, and then he arose to go.

"Good-by, Mrs. Langdon. I hope you will enjoy Paris, and not quite forget all your old friends."

But with a low and exceeding bitter cry she stood up.

"Must we part like this? Oh, my God! I cannot bear it! Have you no mercy, no pity?"

The tears streamed down her cheeks, and she held out her hand imploringly.

With the deepest pity and sympathy, he took her hand in his.

"June, you will forget. Believe me, you will forget all this in a very little while. What good would my love do you now? It could bring you nothing but sorrow. We must never meet again. I hope—I know you

will be very happy yet. Good-by. God be with you, dear."

He bent down and touched the trembling hands with his lips, feeling wretchedly sorry for this beautiful, undisciplined woman in her misery.

But she flung her arms about his throat, and clung to him in a very abandonment of grief, sobbing hysterically, with low, sharp moans that cut him to the heart.

"June, dear child, do not weep so. You will be ill. It is torture to hear you." She faltered and shivered, and he put his arms around her, and kissed her on the fair brow, once, twice.

Her arms were about him, and the beautiful, quivering, wet face pressed close against him.

A deep sigh startled him. He lifted his head. Standing in the door, pallid as a ghost, with frightened, woe-filled eyes and despair in every feature, stood Mignon.

With a loud exclamation, with rage and impatience and disgust, he shook the exquisite form from his bosom and strode across the room.

But the portiere had fallen back into its place and Mignon had vanished.

He called a servant and gave him a message for Miss Trevor, but the man returned with word that she had just gone out.

He left the house without another look at the woman who had brought that despairing look to his sweet love's face, and rushed to Mrs. Barrymore's. But the servant, with no expression at all in his well-trained and very expansive face, informed him that the ladies were not at home.

Perforce he was obliged to wait until night, and then he found himself once more at the Barrymore mansion.

Mrs. Barrymore received him coldly. Mignon had gone home; she would write to him from there, probably.

He waited two days, and then the little rosy missive reached him. He kissed it passionately again and again before he opened it.

"Never wish to see you again. My one prayer now is that I may forget you utterly. Good-by for all time."

With a mad and bitter wrath he cursed June Langdon—cursed her fiercely and cruelly—and then he closed for Mignon's home, only to find it deserted and empty, and then he despaired overtook him, too.

Everything, every one was repulsive to him. He went to California, and from one end of the Pacific coast to the other. He speculated wildly. He was insanely reckless.

One day, six months after he had first gone through the Golden Gate, he saw a notice in a paper that made June Langdon a widow. He tore the paper in two, and trampled upon it.

A year went by, and then he grew calm. He would go home and seek Mignon. He would make her believe in him; life was not worth the living without her. For one touch of her cool hand, one glance of the calm, dark eyes, one smile of the sweet, wistful lips, he would barter wealth and fame, and all the world had to offer—aye, life itself!

One night, not long after he had started, he awoke in the night, and he had reached the pretty little rustic town that held his pearl of price, his snow-white lily, his dove of peace.

And then a great fear fell upon him, undefined and foreboding. He wandered up the wide, irregular street with a beating heart and feverish pulses. In a few minutes she would be beside him, gentle, loving, forgiving. The tears came into his eyes, and he muttered a wordless prayer, sneering, cold man of the world that he was.

He drew his hat over his eyes, and wandered off across a wide, daisied field that opened from the street until he had shaken off his unwelcome emotion.

The little grave-yard nestled close beside the field; it looked cool, and shady and restful, and unconsciously he stepped into it.

Suddenly, with a great cry, he stood still before a fair, slender marble shaft.

MIGNON, AGED 19.

"Blessed are the pure in heart."

There was only one Mignon in the world. He fell down with his face upon her grave. She had died in Rome of the fever.

Two years later June Langdon was Mrs. Don Eastern.

The Judge's Little Game.

Judge Bricker, one of the oldest Representatives of the Pennsylvania Legislature from Clarion County, has a novel way of entertaining his friends on Sundays at Harrisburg. The Judge's apartments are modest, and the first man to arrive there gets the chair. The rest that come sit on the bed and the wood-box. Then the Judge reaches under the bed and drags out a home-made hunk of smoked beef, opens his buckhorn jackknife and chips off a sliver of the beef. Then he passes the beef and the knife to the guest next to him, and the guest chips a piece off the hunk and passes it and the knife along until all are served. By the time the hunk has gone the rounds of the guests two or three times the guests are ready for the Judge to skirmish under the bed again and come out with a curious-looking bit of earthenware with a small neck. This contains what the Judge declares is Clarion County cider. To show that it is safe he takes a drink from the jug and passes it to the guest nearest him, as he did the beef. The jug goes the rounds a couple of times, and then the party rests a few minutes while the Judge tells a hunting story. After that the beef, the knife and the jug are passed again. The Judge has a chalk-mark around the hunk of beef, and when it has been chipped down to that mark he puts the hunk back under the bed for the next Sunday. Then the meeting adjourns.—Washington letter.

Animal Locomotion.

Since 1872 instantaneous photography has given more accurate ideas of animal locomotion than were held previously. In a lecture on this subject at the Royal Institution, London, Mr. E. Muybridge illustrated by moving pictures the interesting fact that all quadrupeds except the camel walk in the same manner. They support themselves first on two feet and then on three. The two may be either both on the same side or one on each side.

When the former, the legs are widely extended, the fore-foot being thrown forward and the hind-foot stretched backward; and when the latter, the legs are both under the belly of the animal, the fore-foot being in a backward position and the hind-foot thrown forward.

A CRITIC thinks the "art of writing poetry is in decay." If he means modern poetry is mostly rot we vote aye.

HUMOROUS AND BRIGHT.

In modern parlance, when a man puts up his umbrella he doesn't put it up.

CHARGED with electricity—The subscribers to the Bell telephone.

DENTISTS make more money out of "draw" games than anybody we know of.

It is the experience of all conductors that strange things come to pass on railroads.

The original Jacobs. "Brown is collector, isn't he?" "Yes. He is the original Don Brown."

She hit the nail a fearful whack—I meant to say, she tried; She lashed her thumb with arnica, And then sat down and cried.

PARTIAL payments seem hard enough to the schoolboy, but he finds them harder still when he grows up.

RUSSIAN fashion note: "The Czar has returned to St. Petersburg and changed his winter suit of boiler iron for a light spring suit of cast steel."

TEACHER—You should take a lesson from your sisters, you naughty boy. Girls don't fight. Little Johnnie—They does when they gets as old as ma.

JUDGE—At first you stole \$60, and afterwards \$40. Are you never going to do better? Criminal—Why, your Honor, I did better that time by \$20.

"I LIKE Italian music." "I don