

FIRELIGHT FANCIES.

BY MARY HAW.

I gleam, I glow, I flash, I start
From under every cover;
I own as quick a changing heart
As any flicker lover.

I shimmer softly on the floor,
I gleam a glow unceasing;
I linger lovingly, and pour
Soft light in nook and cranny.

And ever, as I shine or fade,
I tell a true life-story;
A period in the depths of shade,
The next in heights of glory.

Give the fuel (my life) a stir,
Note the flames that follow oft;
Rouse, dreamers, then, do not demur;
Act wisely, and look aloft.

You'd scarcely deem my radiance sprung
From a smolder of cold wood,
Nor guess the power, its fibers 'mong,
For vast evil or great good.

Nor think, perhaps, some flower fair,
Sprung from earth mixed with ashes;
Nor that you breathe the same pure air
Which helps feed my bright flashes.

And when I die, as when I glow,
I tell a true life-story;
I fade, the ashes fall, and lo!
They live in a flower's glory!

SOUTH KAUKAUNA, WIS.

DO LISTEN TO REASON.

Smoking tranquilly in an easy-chair one evening in June, Major Hartwell was roused from the deep and painful reverie into which he had fallen by a step in the hall and a knock on his parlor door.

"Come!" he said, and a smile lighted up his grave, handsome face, for both step and knock were familiar to him, and if there was any man on earth whom he held near and dear, that man was he who now entered.

"I was beginning to wonder what had become of you, Arthur," stretching out a welcoming hand, which Arthur Hazard took in a warm grasp.

"I have been unusually busy," and Arthur threw himself into a chair. "I've been getting ready to leave town for a few weeks, and haven't had time to even think of my friends."

"Then you've come to say *au revoir*?" "Yes; I'm off to-morrow by the early train. I wish you were going with me, Cyril."

"I can't leave the city now. Besides, I shouldn't enjoy having nothing to do. I haven't taken a vacation since I let the army. Where are you going?"

"To a place called Westholt, down in Buckingham County."

The Major started, and a shadow crept over his face—the shadow of a past sorrow, the memory of which was very painful to him.

"I am going to visit the big man of the place—Squire Drayton," continued Arthur, carelessly. "I made his acquaintance a few months ago by the merest accident. He was pleased to take a fancy to me, and invited me to his place. Some one was telling me the other day that the Squire had one of the prettiest daughters imaginable. So you can prepare yourself for anything in the way of news when I come back."

He paused a moment, expecting some facetious reply; but Major Hartwell was silent. The shadow had deepened on his face into a look of pain.

"What's the matter, Hartwell? You look as if you had seen a ghost. Are you envying me my good luck?"

"No; I have no desire to go to Westholt. I shall never go there again."

"Ah! You have been there before me, then?"

"Yes; I was once engaged to be married to Lois Drayton."

"You were? Excuse me, Major, if I had known that I would never have spoken as I did; but no hint of anything of the sort had ever reached me. Are you willing to tell me about it?"

"Yes; had I not been, I would not have mentioned it at all. It isn't a very long story, but I think it a very unusual one. I met Lois Drayton when my regiment was stationed near Westholt, and we were engaged for a year. I know she loved me; I have never doubted that, though what followed would have led almost any man to believe her utterly wanting in anything approaching affection. We were to be married on the 10th of October, and the wedding was to be a grand affair. All the Drayton relatives far and near were invited, and the Squire had prepared for bonfires, fireworks and general enthusiasm. I went down to Westholt on the morning of the 9th and had no fault to find with the welcome I received from Lois. I thought I had never seen her in a happier mood, and we had a long talk about our future and made all sorts of plans, which I little thought were never to be realized. We spent a very happy afternoon in the great, dusky parlor, and after supper the Squire took me out for a long walk, wishing to show me some improvements he had made in drainage and parking. We left Lois in the hall, talking to an old woman who had come to get some medicine for a sick child. I remember that I looked back when I reached the yard and waved my hand to my little girl, thinking how sweet and fair and gentle she looked as she stood listening to the description of the child's illness! Ah, me! I did not dream that it was my last parting—that I was never to see her again!"

"Never to see her again?" echoed Arthur Hazard, as his friend paused.

"No; I have never seen her since that evening. When the Squire and I returned to the house, a couple of hours later, we found that she had gone to administer the medicine herself to the child, and on reaching home again had retired at once to her room, and had sent for her aunt, Mrs. Andrews, who had taken the place of a mother to her for many years. Mrs. Andrews found her prone on a rug, her left hand grasping it in her agony."

Gently raising her, Mrs. Andrews endeavored to learn the cause of her pale and agitated condition, but she would explain nothing, simply stating that a great sorrow had come over her life. She simply wished, she said, to send a message to me. It was that she absolutely refused to marry me. Yes, on the very eve of our wedding she had changed her mind. And she would give no reason for the change, nor would she consent to see me. Her father and aunt reasoned and argued with her in vain. She simply wept and maintained her mysterious silence. And the end of it all was that I left Westholt the next day, together with my best man and the half-dozen bridesmaids. The affair created a great deal of gossip, but no one has ever been able to get to the bottom of it."

"Perhaps Miss Drayton heard something against you," suggested Hazard.

"No; that question was asked her, and she insisted that she had not."

"And you do not think her merely fickle?"

"I know her too well to think that."

"And there was no other lover?"

"No. She had other suitors, of course, but I was the only one for whom she had expressed any regard."

"And she has never given any explanation of her singular action?"

"Never. I see her father occasionally, and he has repeatedly assured me that she maintains her mysterious silence. They never mention my name to her now. She requested them not to do so."

"I wish, for your sake, I could get at the root of the matter, Major. Suppose I try. I will have a good opportunity, you see."

"You can try, of course. Thank you for your interest, but there is no reason to think you will succeed. No; I must bear

my sorrow as best I can. I must not hope for hope would end only in despair."

In the train the next day, on the way to Westholt, Arthur Hazard remembered the story he had heard, and he felt a great curiosity to see the heroine of so peculiar a tale.

Squire Drayton was the richest landed proprietor in the large and fertile county in which Westholt was situated. His house was a handsome, rambling building, surrounded by trees, and overlooking beautiful gardens, rich pastures, and well-tilled fields.

His family consisted of his daughter Lois, a widowed sister, and a nephew, the son of his only brother.

Arthur liked Lois at once. She was a refined-looking girl of about twenty-five years of age, with large, soft brown eyes, an olive complexion, an abundance of chestnut hair, and a lithe and graceful figure; but she was shy and reserved, and talked little, even to her father.

Arthur rather prided himself upon his ability to read character. He thought he understood that of Lois, and the fact that she had been able to keep secret for three years her reasons for refusing to marry the man she loved puzzled him very much.

"She does not look like a woman who could keep a secret," he thought. "I should say that she could be frightened into almost anything. She has a weak mouth, and is credulous and timid."

This opinion was strengthened as he became more acquainted with her, and he felt a greater desire than ever to penetrate the mystery which surrounded her broken engagement.

"Perhaps Henry Drayton can help me," he thought.

And, with this object in view, he cultivated that young man's acquaintance.

But the Squire's nephew proved of a surly, unsocial nature, and showed no disposition to meet Arthur's advances even half way.

Arthur at length concluded to let him severely alone, and turned his attention to Mrs. Andrews, who was a kind, motherly woman, fond of talking, and of a genial, confiding nature.

She had taken a great fancy to Arthur, and he found it easy to draw from her all that she knew or surmised concerning her niece's love affair.

But she could tell him very little, and it was substantially the same as he had heard from the Major.

"Is her cousin in love with her?" asked Arthur, with a start of surprise.

"Yes; he has been in love with her for years, and has asked her half a dozen times to marry him. He was keenly disappointed when she became engaged to Major Hartwell, but bore it much better than I had expected. His gift to her was as handsome as anything she received, and he could ill afford such a present, for his income is very small, and he is partially dependent on my brother. I think he is still bent on winning her, and probably thinks she will consent to marry him at last from sheer weariness at his persistence. But I think that scarcely possible."

The day following that on which he had had this conversation with Mrs. Andrews, Arthur was walking through a field with the Squire, who was explaining his method of fertilization, when all at once they were startled by a loud "Good-morning, Squire," uttered in a clear, feminine voice.

They turned, and saw a young woman standing on a low stile which separated the field from a tiny orchard, in the middle of which was a small cottage, overgrown with vines.

"Good-morning, Rose," said the Squire, coldly, and then continued his conversation with Arthur.

The young woman appeared a little piqued at being thus summarily disposed of, and tossed her head pettishly, her bold black eyes fixed on Arthur, whose young, athletic figure evidently took her fancy.

But she did not speak again, and the Squire soon moved away from the vicinity of the stile.

"I hear that Rose Ellis is back again," said Mrs. Andrews, at the dinner-table.

"Yes, I saw her this morning," said the Squire.

"I hoped when she went away that we were rid of her for ever," and Mrs. Andrews sighed. "Her grandmother told me that she had excellent wages and was getting along well. I wonder what has induced her to return."

"Pure deviltry, of course," said the Squire. "She'll have the whole neighborhood by the ears in a week's time. Rose isn't happy unless she is the central figure of a perpetual broil."

"She is a very handsome girl," said Arthur, "but of a very coarse style."

"Her beauty has been her bane," said Mrs. Andrews.

"Her grandmother used to be housekeeper here a great many years ago, but lately she has lived in a little cottage the Squire gave her about a mile away. Rose has broken the poor old woman's heart; she has an idea that her beauty will pave her way into a higher sphere than that in which she was born, and in some way she manages to make the acquaintance of nearly every gentleman who comes into the neighborhood. Then a fuss of some kind is always sure to follow."

"I believe she would stoop to anything to gain her end," said the Squire. "She is unscrupulous to the last degree, and utterly without delicacy or refinement. I beg you to avoid her, Hazard, or you may have a noose about your neck before you know it. She is extremely artful, and her beauty and audacity make her dangerous."

Neither Lois nor Henry made any remark on the subject; but, glancing at the latter, Arthur saw that his face was scarlet, and that his hands shook as he took a cup of coffee, a servant handed him.

"Evidently he has had some experiences of the wiles of the fair Rose," thought Arthur, and felt very sorry for him.

But, a little later, pity was changed to a very different emotion.

The Squire's household retired early, as is customary in the country, and at ten o'clock that night Arthur was on his way to his room.

As he was about to enter it, he saw a scrap of paper folded like a note lying just outside his door. He picked it up, and, opening it, read as follows:

"Meet me to-night at the big oak tree near the pasture-gate. I will be there at eleven, and you must not fail to come. I must and will see you."

Arthur could scarcely believe that the note was intended for himself, and yet his curiosity was excited, and at eleven o'clock, feeling restless and unable to sleep, he concluded to investigate the vicinity of that old oak tree if only to kill time. As he neared the oak tree he heard voices raised in angry dispute.

He crept closer, and could distinguish the forms of a man and a woman standing facing each other. The woman was speaking now, and Arthur paused.

"I tell you once for all that I won't wait any longer," she was saying, in a fierce, sullen tone. "I've waited long enough. I've come back to make you keep your promise, and you can't put me off again with excuses. If you don't look out you'll get yourself into trouble."

"Hush! you can't be too careful what you say," and Arthur, to his amazement, recognized the low, cautious voice as that of his host's nephew.

I tell you it will come all right if you only have a little patience. Every one says she can't live long, and when I have a little money to bless myself with you'll see that I won't forget you. If you'll only keep quiet I'll have matters settled in six months' time."

"That's just what you said last year, and the year before, and the year before that. While I'm having a little patience you'll be getting married to Lois Drayton. Oh, I've had things told me! There's them who

watches out for me. No, you'll marry me now and we'll wait together for your cousin's money."

"I tell you it would be madness for me to take such a step, I see, do listen to reason. I wouldn't come in for a cent if you were my wife. Wait a while, and do make up your mind to go away for a few months."

"No, you can't throw no more dust in my eyes. If you'd been honest and meant what you said, you wouldn't have put me off so long. And if I had known you as well three years ago as I do now, I wouldn't have taken any part in cheating your cousin. I'd have let her marry her own man."

"Hush, hush, Rose, for Heaven's sake! It would ruin us both if you should be overheard."

"Who's to overhear me? I rather guess there ain't many folks hereabouts out of their beds at this hour."

"Still, you can't be too careful. Come, let's walk toward the cottage; we can talk as we go along."

They moved away, and Arthur heard no more.

But he had heard enough to fill him with the keenest suspicion and distrust.

Was it possible that at last he had stumbled on a clue to the mystery that had baffled him ever since his arrival at Westholt?

"She must have told Lois some big yarn against the Major," thought Arthur.

But then he remembered that Lois had declared positively that she had heard nothing against the character of her betrothed.

He lay awake until daylight, cogitating over the matter, and when at last he fell asleep it was with the determination to unravel the mystery at any cost.

After breakfast he drew Lois aside, and asked if he could see her alone in the library. She answered in the affirmative, looking a little surprised at so strange a request, and led the way to the room at once.

Arthur closed the door and motioned to her to take a seat on the sofa. She did so, and he sat down by her side, a little puzzled how best to begin his task. The light fell full on her face. He could see every change in its expression, which was exactly what he desired.

"Miss Lois," Arthur began, "I have not told you, I think, that the best friend I have on earth is Cyril Hartwell."

Every particle of color forsook her face, a nervous trembling seized her, and she put out her hand imploringly toward him.

"Do not speak of him," she said, in a low, shaken voice. "I—I cannot—bear it; and—and it is useless. What I said three years ago I must say now."

"But I have something to tell you—something you must hear," said Arthur.

"It can make no difference in—in anything," she said, still in the same low, hesitating voice.

"I must insist, however, that you listen to what I have to tell you, Arthur. I assure you that you will regret having done so. I did not know until just before I came down here what it was that had so saddened Cyril Hartwell's life. I have known him only a little more than two years, and he is not one to carry his heart on his sleeve. But he told me the story of his acquaintance with you the night before I left town; but he could not tell me why it was that you refused to marry him the very day before the one set for the wedding."

"I have never told any one that. I never shall. It is useless to ask me to do so. I would die sooner."

"Will you not let me tell him?" asked Arthur. "Will you not let me explain to him that it was through the machinations of an artful woman that he was robbed of his bride, and that you were cruelly cheated? Miss Lois, did you not know enough of the character of Rose Ellis to make you doubt—"

Lois started up, her eyes glittering, a deadly pallor on her lovely face.

"Rose! Was it Rose?" she cried. "I never knew that—I never even suspected it. Mr. Hazard, how did you discover this? For Heaven's sake, tell me! Do not keep me in suspense!"

She sank back, trembling, on the sofa, her delicate hands clasped in piteous appeal.

For a moment Arthur was silent. He scarcely knew how to proceed.

"Did you never suspect, then, that your cousin Henry was attached to this girl, and that it was through his influence that you were made so wretched?" he asked at length.

"Henry attached to Rose!" said Lois, slightly. "Why Henry?"

She paused, blushing painfully.

"Henry has repeatedly assured you of his attachment to yourself, you would say," suggested Arthur.

"Yes. He has long desired to marry me, even before my engagement to—to Major Hartwell."

"And yet, three years ago, he promised to marry Rose Ellis. She has returned home now, determined to make him fulfil that promise. He has put her off from time to time with the excuse that he was poor, and has told her that at your death he would inherit your money, and could then marry her. He tells her that you cannot live long, but that if he married her now you would not leave him a penny, and that she must therefore have patience."

Lois' pale cheeks had flushed. The color was again upon her in the soft, dark eyes raised to Arthur's face.

"How have you learned all this, Mr. Hazard?" she asked.

"Will you not tell me first how Rose Ellis managed to deceive you?"

"If I only dared!" murmured the poor girl, sighing. "I have kept silent so long that now—"

"For your own sake—for Cyril's!"

She did not speak for a moment. Her face was hidden in her hands, and a nervous tremor shook her from head to foot.

"It must have been from some powerful motive that you have kept silent so long," said Arthur, looking at her pityingly.

"It was for his sake, for his alone," she burst out, almost wildly. "I did not think of myself at all. But, oh, I could not have his blood upon my hands. Mr. Hazard, you will think me foolish, even worse than that, I fear; but I was always a coward and easily frightened. The evening before I was to be married, I went with old Mrs. Hinds to see a sick child, to whom I was much attached. It was dusk before I started for home, and I took a path through the wood, which was shorter than going around by the road. All at once a heavy cloak was thrown over my head, and I was forced to my knees. Then the cloak was torn aside, and looking up I saw a woman standing over me. Her face was concealed by a hideous black mask, and I did not recognize her voice. She told me that she loved Cyril, and had sworn to kill him sooner than see any other woman than herself become his wife. She said that if I dared marry him she would shoot him through the heart within an hour after the ceremony. She swore this, calling on heaven to witness her vow, and so solemn was her manner that I did not doubt or for an instant that she would carry out her threat if I fulfilled my engagement to Cyril. I had heard frequently of just such desperate deeds committed by jealous and revengeful women. On my knees, I promised her that I would give Cyril up, and would refuse any explanation of the act. She told me that if I married him his blood would be upon my head. This was my reason for breaking my engagement, and I dared not see Cyril for fear he would win my secret from me, and then persist in running after me from danger, and insist on running to shield him from danger, and matter what cost to myself. If I married him it was at the risk of his life. I could not thus put it in jeopardy!"

"How cruelly you have suffered!" said

Arthur. And then he told her of the conversation he had overheard the night before.

"Your cousin's motive in preventing your marriage is very plain," he said, in conclusion. "He hoped to win you for himself, while he led Rose to believe that it was simply that he might come into possession of your money in case you died unmarried."

"I would not have believed Henry so base, so cruel!" said Lois.

"Suppose we send for Rose and ask her a few plain questions?" suggested Arthur.

"Do just what you think right," said Lois; "I do not fear her now."

A servant was dispatched to the cottage at once, and soon returned accompanied by Rose, who had not imagined for a moment the real reason why her presence was desired.

She had thought Mrs. Andrews wanted to send some special message to her grandmother which could not be entrusted to a servant, and when she was ushered into the library and saw the Squire, Mrs. Andrews, Lois and Arthur Hazard in council, she was thoroughly frightened for once in her bold, reckless life.

At first she denied flatly having played any such part as that ascribed to her; but when she saw that the story was known in all its details, she broke down and confessed.

She had been induced, she said, by Henry to intercept Lois in the wood, and to frighten her as she had done; for Henry was poor and needed his cousin's money, which would, of course, come to him at her death if she died unmarried.

"And he promised to make me his wife inside of six months; but he put it off, saying he was too poor. I'm sorry now that I ever lent my hand to deceiving Miss Lois, Squire."

It was too bad to cheat her for nothing.

"You ought to be sorry," said the Squire, sternly. "No punishment would be too severe for you. At present, however, I cannot determine what steps to take. You may go, and I hope never to see your face again!"

Rose quailed under the looks leveled upon her, and shrunk from the room, unable to make any reply.

The Squire then sent for his nephew, and a stormy interview ensued. Henry Drayton had no excuse to offer for his treachery save his love for Lois, and this his uncle refused to accept.

"Go," he said. "You are the son of my only brother, and I loved him well, but I hope heaven will spare me the pain of ever hearing your name again."

An hour later Henry Drayton had left his uncle's house for ever, and a few days later sailed for Australia, accompanied by Rose Ellis, the guilty partner of his villainy.

Arthur Hazard was eager to inform Major Hartwell of the happy turn affairs had taken, and rode into Westholt at once to dispatch a telegram to him.

"Come at once," he said. "I have fathomed the mystery, and your presence is earnestly desired."

At noon the next day the Major was at Westholt, where Arthur met him with a carriage, and gave him a full and complete history of all that had occurred.

The Major listened in silence, too deeply moved to speak, as he realized all that Lois had suffered for his sake.

"She is in the parlor waiting for you," said Arthur, as they drove up the broad carriage road.

The Major entered the house with hurried, anxious tread, put his hand on the knob of the parlor door, hesitated a moment as if struggling for self-control, and then pushed it open.

There was a cry.

"Cyril! Oh, Cyril! Cyril!"

"Lois! Oh, my poor darling! my poor little girl!"

Then the door closed, and Arthur heard no more.

Some Other Game.

A man with his left arm in a sling was telling a passenger on a Fort street car what ailed him and how it happened. Said he:

"My boy Henry likes to go hunting, and so last Sunday I takes my gun and goes out by der Norris road mit him to kill some squirrels. Pooty soon we vhas separated, and I goes along by a thicket, and Henry shoots me mit his shotgun."

"Accidentally, of course?"

"Of course. He sees me creeping along, and takes me for a wolf."

"A wolf! Why, there isn't a wolf within 500 miles of Detroit."

"Dot vhas so, but Henry doan' know it until we comes back home. He feels verry bad about it. Henry vhas a good boy, and next time he doan' make sooch a mistake—he shoots me for a woodchuck."—*Detroit Free Press.*

What Mine Host Says.

It is a mistake to suppose that our register books are open to the public as a right. It is simply as a matter of courtesy that we permit any one to look at them, as we are not obliged to show them. If a person calls at the house in order to see a friend or find out if he is stopping there, it is his place to inquire at the office; that is the only proper way. Our books are always destroyed now as soon as they are full. Hotel-keepers have been subjected to much annoyance by being frequently ordered to produce them in court as evidence in complicated lawsuits. In order to avoid so doing we always destroy our books, and can say to the court that we have no record of any such parties as the ones in question having been at our house at any time.

What's in a Word?

A New York pastor, who, though a Scotchman, had lived in America for over forty years, was one day taken to task by his daughter for the broadness of his accent in the pronunciation of the word difference.

"How do I pronounce it?" he asked.

"You say 'difference.'"

"And what do you say?"

"Difference."

Looking at her for a moment, and getting her to repeat, he continued, "Well, M—, will you just be so kind as to tell me the difference between difference and difference?"

The daughter gave up her hopeless scholar to "gang his ain gait" in pronunciation henceforth.—*Harper's Magazine.*

THERE may not be any such thing as the elixir of life, but the youth thinks he has found something very near it when he kisses the girl he loves for the first time.

LIVE by the day, even though you work by the month. There are no to-morrows that you know of.

THE LITTLE FOLKS.

Don't Wan'er Go to S'leep.

At night when sleep has hovered 'round the little, sleepy bed,
Above the clouds and far away to that funny land of dreams—