

## A DEATH AND A LIFE.

BY LUCY LARCOM.

Fair young Hannah,  
Ben, the sunburn fisher, gayly weds;  
Hale and clever,  
For a willing heart and hand he sues.  
May-day skies are all aglow,  
And the waves are laughing so!  
For her wedding  
Hannah leaves her window and her shoes.

May is passing;  
'Mid the apple boughs a pigeon coos.  
Hannah shudders,  
For the mild southwester mischief brews.  
Round the rock of Marblehead,  
Outward bound, a schooner sped.  
Silent, lonesome,  
Hannah's at the window binding shoes.

Sailing away!  
Losing the breath of the showers in May,  
Dropping down from the beautiful bay,  
Over the sea slope vast and gray!  
And the skipper's eyes with a mist are blind,  
For a vision comes on the rising wind  
Of a gentle face that he leaves behind,  
And a heart that throbs through the fog bank  
dim,

Thinking of him.

Far into night  
He watches the gleam of the lessening light  
Fixed on the dangerous island height  
That bars the harbor he loves from sight,  
And he wishes, at dawn, he could tell the  
tale  
Of how they weathered the southwest gale,  
To brighten the cheek that had grown so  
pale  
With a wakful night among spectres grim—  
Terrors for him.

Yo-heave-yo!  
Here's the bank where the fisherman go.  
Over the schooner's side they throw  
Tackle and bait to the deeps below,  
And Skipper Ben in the water sees,  
When its ripples curl to the light land breeze,  
Something that stirs like his apple trees,  
And two soft eyes that beneath them swim,  
Lifted to him.

Hear the wind roar,  
And the rain through the slit sail tear and  
pour!  
"Steady! we'll send by the Cape Ann shore,  
Then hark to the Beverly bells once more!"  
And each man worked with the will of ten;  
While up in the rigging, now and then,  
The lightning glared in the face of Ben,  
Turned to the black horizon's rim,  
Scowling on him.

Into his brain  
Burned with the iron of hopeless pain,  
Into thoughts that grapple and eyes that  
strain—  
Pierces the memory, cruel and vain—  
Never again shall he walk at ease  
Under the blossoming apple trees  
That whisper and sway to the sunset breeze,  
While soft eyes float where the sea gulls  
skim,

Gazing with him.

How they went down  
Never was known in the still old town.  
Nobody guessed how the fisherman brown,  
With the look of despair that was half a  
frown,

Faced his fate in the furious night—  
Faced the mad billows with hunger white,  
Just within half of the beacon light  
That shone on a woman sweet and trim,

Waiting for him.

Beverly bells  
Ring to the tide as it ebbs and swells!  
His was the anguish a moment tells—  
The passionate sorrow death quickly knells.  
But the weeping wash of a lifelong woe  
Is left for the desolate heart to know,  
Whose tides with the dull years come and go,  
Till hope drifts dead to its stagnant brim,

Thinking of him.

Poor lone Hannah,  
Sitting at the window binding shoes,  
Faded, wrinkled,  
Sitting, stitching, in a mournful muse,  
Bright-eyed beauty once was she,  
When the bloom was on the tree;  
Spring and winter,  
Hannah's at the window binding shoes.

Not a neighbor  
Passing nod or answer will refuse  
To her whisper;  
"Is there from the fishers any news?"

Oh, her heart's a drift with one  
On an endless voyage gone!  
Night and morning,  
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

'Tis November,  
Now no tear her wasted cheek bedows,  
From Newfoundland  
Not a sail returning will she lose,

Whispering hoarsely, "Fishermen,  
Have you, have you heard of Ben?"

Old with watching,  
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

Twenty winters.  
Bleach and tear the ragged shoo she views,  
Twenty seasons—  
Never one has brought her any news.

Still her eyes silently smile  
Chase the whisps o'er the sea.  
Hopeless, faithful,  
Hannah's at the window, binding shoes.

## SHORTY LOCHINVAR.

I think it may be stated, without fear of successful contradiction, that at no period of a man's existence does Cupid strike so deeply and cause so much sleeplessness as at the age of one score or thereabout. I have known quite a number of young men of about that age to be deeply, passionately, desperately in love, and ultimately to recover and go through similar but less agonizing experiences several times thereafter.

The victim of this first attack is a pitiable creature, particularly when there are "obstacles," which is usually the case.

I always feel sorry for a chap in this sort of a pickle, and I felt particularly sorry for poor Shorty Fleming. I know I ought not to encourage him, but he was such a good little beggar, and so much in earnest, that I would have defied a far more severe man than his brother Jack for his sake. Besides, Shorty was not one of the chaps who get over anything easily, and I know failure would go hard with him. Moreover, Jack was not the only "obstacle." Sam Parker, Shorty's Nettie's papa, also objected.

Parker was a shrewd Maine Yankee, with a total disbelief in the ability of womankind to use reason and a record of some sixty years of devotion to an earnest hustle for the fascinating but elusive American dollar. Nettie was the only daughter and the youngest child in a family of seven, and the old man, close-fisted as he was, had spared no expense in educating her liberally. It

was only natural, therefore, for him to object, especially as Nettie was barely eighteen and had only been out of school a few months.

He called on Jack one afternoon, not casually, as he usually called on his way to or from town, but with a direct purpose. Jack was under the weather, and lay on the sofa. I was reading to him when Parker walked in.

"Howdy, Flemin', laid up, air ye? Howdy, Faber; purty warm, ain't it? Thanks, I will set a spell." And he sat down on the edge of a chair and began tracing figures on the floor with his big spur. He seemed nervous, and I rose to leave the room, but he waved his hand and said: "Set down, Faber. Set still. Guess I ain't got nothin' to say but what ye mout ez well hear."

Here the old man stiffened up in his seat and stated the object of his mission in a good-natured but thoroughly decided way, closing with:

"Now, Fleming, I ain't no 'object' on t' th' little feller—not a mite, he's a tip-top good boy, an' all that. But tain't in reason thit I'm goin' t' spend mornin' \$3,000 edicating a young 'un, an' then let 'em go an' marry 'nother young 'un' that's arid red. An' that's what it'll come tew, fust thing we know."

Now, Parker's remarks were in the nature of a revelation to us. Of course we knew that Shorty had put in a good many evenings at the Parker ranch, but we had never guessed that his visits thereto had any significance. A courtship, too, with six big brothers loafing around is a difficult matter. It is easy enough to fall—just fall—in love with a girl if there is no one to hinder. But with six young men, with whom one is on good terms, sitting around and occupying a large portion of one's attention, it is a matter of getting in love, which, accomplished, is rather more serious than mere fall into the same.

Fleming sat up and ran his fingers through his hair gravely. Then: "I quite agree with you, Mr. Parker. I don't know what to say to Percy, but I will try a little strategy and see if he can't be kept at home. I soon caught up with Shorty, and we hurried on. Shorty showed me a letter signed 'Nettie,' and proceeded to unfold a plan he had in mind, which, for the quality of pure 'nerve,' I had never heard surpassed.

"Right now."

"Bully! Faber, go and borrow a horse until to-morrow—tell 'em yours is lame, and you'll have to lead him. Nobody has recognized me back of this overcoat collar, and the hirsute adornment, and I don't want 'em to. I'll walk out and head up the road. Hurry up with the horses!"

In about twenty minutes I was following him, riding a horse I had borrowed from my friend, the doctor, and leading my own. I soon caught up with Shorty, and we hurried on. Shorty showed me a letter signed 'Nettie,' and proceeded to unfold a plan he had in mind, which, for the quality of pure 'nerve,' I had never heard surpassed.

There was nobody at the house but Manuel, the cook, and Shorty soon had him sworn to silence, after which he proceeded to camp in the cold, little upstairs storeroom off my den, where nobody could find him. Jack was not to know of his presence, he said, because "Jack is so thundering honest and pernickety, and would squeal or spoil the pressure of the strata of rock above."

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The half-hundred guests at Parker's had been enjoying Thanksgiving Day to the full. All of Mrs. Parker's good things had been stored away where they would do the most good. The minister from town was getting ready for the ceremony, and the guests were busting about, amid some confusion, trying to find the best points for observation. Nettie Parker, pale for once, stood near the front door, pulling her fingers nervously, waiting, supposedly, for her father.

Some one knocked at the door. Nettie pulled it open, gave a little cry, grabbed a man's hat from the back of a chair and an overcoat from a peg near by and rushed out, slamming the door. Everybody who saw the performance stood still, dazed. Then, as we heard horses hoofs clattering up the road there was a rush for the outside. Up the road, disappearing fast, were two horses, whose riders were evidently in a hurry. There was another rush—this time for the stables—led by old Sam Parker. But, somehow, the doors would not open. They had been nailed up very securely by a person who was at that moment making hypocritical efforts to get one of them open.

At the Aquaria in Berlin there is a big gorilla whose habits are about as correct as those of most of his distant relatives. He gets up at 8 in the morning, takes a bath, and uses soap without hesitation. When his toilet is completed he takes a cup of milk, after which he eats two loaves of bread, with Frankfort sausages and smoked Hamburg beef, all of which he molts with a glass of Weiss beer. At 1 P.M. he takes a bowl of soup, with rice and potatoes, and a wing of a chicken. He uses his knife and fork and his napkin like one of our own Four Hundred; but when he thinks that his keepers are not observing him he discards the impediments of civilization and plunges his muzzle into the bowl, as if to give evidence of the melancholy fact that even a gorilla can be a hog.

"The old man started. "By gory, Morris, mebbe that's cre'et. No use yowlin' over spilt milk. Come on, boys!" And they rode off, but not very rapidly.

"I told the old gentleman," remarked Cottrell to me; as we turned towards the house, "that it was no use trying to head them off. They'll be married inside of an hour." Then, in a tone that betrayed him, "It is far better to have happened now than—than later. And—as it is—I think maybe there will be only one unhappy person, instead of three. That was Morris Cottrell—philosopher and man.

Mr. and Mrs. Percival Fleming were met at the Justice's office by old Sam Parker, who remarked: "We—ah, I swo! Yew air a norvy boy! Ain't ye both ashamed on't?"

For two or three months Shorty continued his calls at Parker's, growing more and more gloomy and savage as the days went by. For old Sam Parker was something of a strategist and managed to keep the poor lad from getting a single private interview with Nettie thereby giving Cottrell a clear field, which was evidently satisfactory to the latter, although he did not seem to make much progress.

One evening Shorty came to my room in a state of mind. He had seen Sam Parker that day, and the latter had told him, as gently as possible, some galling truths about his age and his helpless condition, concluding with the cheerful information that he "reckoned Net had 'bout d'lected t' take up with Cottrell, anyhow."

Of course Shorty was despondent, but he was none the less determined. "Faber, I'm going to see her to-morrow afternoon—and ask her."

The time and the hour favored Shorty, but I hardly think Nettie knew her own mind. The boy who came riding slowly home through the shadows next evening was a very much downcast boy, indeed. He told me all about it later; how Nettie had wavered and finally told him that she could give him no answer. She cared a great deal for him, she said, but she was not sure she cared enough for him. Besides, her father objected to her, and she could never cross her father's wishes when he had done so much for her.

Sam Parker must have heard of this interview, and made up his mind to something. Although he was usually so good natured, he was as determined as a bulldog, and I think he used some influence in deciding matters, for, two weeks later, he "dropped in" to tell Jack that Nettie and Cottrell would be married on Thanksgiving Day, two months later.

Shorty must have seen the news in my face, for after supper he drew me aside and asked me what I knew. I hated to tell him, but did so, the best way I could. The poor lad stood still as stone for several seconds. Then, with a shuddering sob, he turned away. In the morning he was gone with his horse and clothes, leaving no word.

Jack and Joe, the other brother, were much worried, but, as Jack for the first time acknowledged, "the boy could take care of himself."

Jack and I talked it over during the day, and he expressed a great deal of regret, thinking, however, that Nettie had decided for herself, and that Shorty had no one to blame for his failure. "If it had been different," he went on, "and Percy had persevered and won, I would have given in, and I think Parker would, too, for next year Percy will come into about fifteen thousand."

"You see, I've never told him of it because I wanted him to grow up on his own merits and be self-reliant. I think it has been for the best. Joe never knew, until he was of age, that he had anything, and we didn't tell Percy of it then, because he was only seventeen. Joe put his money into the ranch here and kept quiet about it.

He sat silent for a minute, then continued, "Of course, this is between our selves. But do you know, I wish the boy had won. He's a good deal of a man, and now I come to think of it, the boy has hit him hard. They could have waited a couple of years, to see what there must have been about twenty tons to the acre."

And Jack walked off slowly, taking long whiffs at his pipe.

Several weeks passed, during which I saw Nettie Parker several times. She seemed different. Her laugh was not the jolly laugh I had been accustomed to hear, and she seemed pensive at times. Was it her approaching wedding, or—Shorty? I hoped it was Shorty. But somehow when people pine they seem to lose color and get thin, and Nettie Parker did neither. And still no word from Shorty, and the day for the wedding only a week away.

It was Wednesday of Thanksgiving week and there had been great preparations at Parker's. The people for miles around were invited to the wedding, which old Sam "lowed" would be "th' high-uppest thing they ever had in th' kenfry?" I rode to town on behalf of Jack and myself for something to present to the bride-elect. In the post office some one tapped me on the shoulder. I turned. It was Shorty Fleming—Shorty, with a handsome moustache and smiling quite happily.

"How long before you're going out?" he said.

"Right now."

"Bully! Faber, go and borrow a horse until to-morrow—tell 'em yours is lame, and you'll have to lead him. Nobody has recognized me back of this overcoat collar, and the hirsute adornment, and I don't want 'em to. I'll walk out and head up the road. Hurry up with the horses!"

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Finally I told him about the conversation between his brother and Parker. He sat silent for a few minutes. I could see his face twitch. Then he turned his eyes to my face and said, slowly: "Faber, I know I'm young and all that, but—I know my own mind. Jack's a good brother and feels in duty bound to take care of me, but I guess I can't tend to that myself. I—I've made up my mind to marry that girl, if she'll have me, and all the Jacks and Sam Parkers in the world can't stop me." And, Mr. Percival Fleming set his mouth hard and walked on. He called at Parker's the next evening, in the person of Morris Cottrell, a wealthy rancher from up the Five-Mile." Shorty, when he got home, mentioned this fact to me, with some feeling in his tones. Cottrell was no old duffer. He was a man of thirty, and well-read, and a gentleman and prospect of having him for a rival would have sent despair to the heart of any young man less determined than Shorty Fleming.

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