

## FAITH.

She sat where daisy blossoms tossed Their heads beneath an elm tree's shade; Her hands upon her knees were crossed— My bonny, laughing, gold-haired maid. In lover's tone of fond command, I said, while sketching at her feet, "Pray take a daisy in your hand And make yourself a Marguerite."

"These foolish flowers have taught tell." She answered, blushing winsomely, "Your lips have said, 'I love thee well, And that's the oracle for me.'"

—Kate Field's Washington.

## A BUNCH OF VIOLETS.

BY V. ETYNGE MITCHELL.

Fast golden fields of yellow buttercups and open-eyed daisies over hills on which the lights and shadows of a summer morning were playing hide and seek, through valleys where drowsy cattle were grazing by the side of idle brooks, rushed the express train known as "The Wild Irishman," running between London and Holyhead.

Seated in one of the center carriages, which had no other occupant than herself, was a young girl whose face had the exquisite coloring of a portrait by Titian. Large brown eyes shaded by curling lashes were in strange yet pleasing contrast to the golden hair which fell in wavy little curls about her forehead.

As they neared Chester, the only station at which the train stopped on its long journey, the young lady leaned forward and watched with slight interest, the eager crowd of men and women who awaited the arrival of the cars.

"I wonder what fate has in store for me in the way of a traveling companion," she murmured, and the answer to her thoughts came almost immediately, as a gentleman wearing the costume of a traveler, and with a much bronzed face, entered the compartment.

Selishly regretting the disturbance of her solitude, the young woman opened a book, which she had drawn from her traveling bag, and appeared to be entirely absorbed in its perusal.

The newcomer at once proceeded to make himself comfortable, stowing away parcels and umbrella, and finally taking possession of a seat at the opposite end of the car, facing his fellow-traveler, but barely glancing at her.

Only the sound of the busy wheels or the whir of a passing train disturbed the quiet of the journey. The stranger had followed the example of his vis-a-vis, and having taken out a newspaper, was soon lost in its contents.

By and by a mischievous south wind, blowing with impudent familiarity through the open window, disarranged the fluffy curls peeping from under the girl's hat. She rose impatiently to shut out the offender, but fate ordained that the window should stick, whereupon she glanced with feminine helplessness at the man who had dropped his paper and was looking full at her.

For the first time their eyes met, and a bow of coldly formal recognition passed between them.

"Miss St. John," he murmured, "I hardly expected to meet you here. Allow me—." And, closing the window, he quietly returned to his former position, while she, having expressed her thanks by an inclination of the head, resumed her novel. The constraint of their position was uncomfortable to the couple, who had evidently met and parted on some occasion which had either left them unfriendly or almost as strangers.

From under his heavy eyebrows the young man covertly watched his companion. She was holding her book upside down. A smile broke upon his lips as he observed this, and rattling his newspaper noisily to attract her attention he leaned forward impulsively determined to break the silence by addressing her.

"May I inquire how your sister, Mrs. Arlington, is? She raised her head, but not looking at him replied with freezing discouragement of tone.

"Thank you; Mrs. Arlington is quite well."

"Ah, and your mother (with quiet persistence), I hope she is better, Miss St. John. Am I correct in addressing you by the old name? You may have changed it."

"You are quite correct," she returned icily.

Through the window nearest to Mr. Dennison a saucy bee, giddy with clover, bounded with a noisy jocular; then, regretting his imprisonment, strove to escape from it by flying with spiteful buzzing against the face of the young lady, who gave vent to a little scream which she instantly suppressed.

"I see that you retain your antipathy to bees," remarked the young man, placidly folding his arms and smiling; "some things are unchanged."

"Among them your disagreeable habit of teasing," replied Miss St. John, and turned her attention to some russet-colored cattle that lifted their heads from the tall reed grasses to gaze in open-eyed wonder at the passing train.

"Don't you think," suggested Mr. Dennison, when the silence again became oppressive, "that, as we are likely to be shut up together in this compartment for two full hours, it might be more philosophical—not to say agreeable—if we raise a flag of truce? We can confine ourselves to commonplaces—the weather, catching bees, or other harmless topics."

"Oh! confine yourself to catching bees, by all means," she cried nervously, as the insect in question reminded them of his presence by bouncing against the ear of the young lady.

"I have no objection to an occasional interchange of remarks about the weather," she added more genially as she watched Dr. Dennison chase the offender through the window.

"Very well," remarked the young man, resuming his seat and scraping his throat a little nervously, "it is a charming day."

"Very, but rather cool for the season."

"Ah, yes; perhaps we may have rain, which was slow in coming."

"Possibly—or rather it does not look probable to me."

Having delivered herself of this brilliant speech, she arched her neck with extravagant courtesy to examine the clouds.

"We had thunder last week," continued the young man, desperately.

"It is necessary," retorted Miss St. John, "that you should turn yourself into a weather bureau and give me reports of what has been? I suppose that we should confine ourselves to the present or future."

"There is no future for me," said her companion, sadly. Then she flippantly, as if anxious to recall his words, he added:

"Don't you think there is a limit to the weather for a topic? Suppose we try something else."

"We have talked long enough," returned the young woman, severely, "I prefer to read." And she reluctantly opened the novel.

"It is interesting," he persisted, after a pause.

"Intensely."

"It must be rather difficult to read upside down. Is that an acrobatic feat you have learned to accomplish in the four years of my absence?"

"It goes without saying that the same length of time has not improved your manners," said Miss St. John.

Mr. Dennison accepted in silence the reproof of his companion, but after a moment of hesitation he left his seat and ensconced himself in the one directly facing her.

"In a little while," he whispered, disregarding her glance of angry toleration, "the train will reach Holyhead, and like thistle-downs we shall be blown apart, perhaps never to meet again. We were very good friends—once—but, of course that is all over, and you cordially detest me. Just at this moment you are wishing me away."

"I did not say so," exclaimed the girl, with flashing eyes.

"I thought," he continued, "that to pass away the time and enable you to forget your antagonism to my presence you might like to hear the plot of one of my stories. Possibly you remember that I wrote a book—occasionally."

"Yes," she seemed to force the words from her lips—"I remember that. It is very obliging in you to entertain me. What is your plot?"

Mr. Dennison began to count off on his fingers his dramatic countenance.

"There is Miss Maude Vivian—heiress.

"Mr. Henry Dubois—a poverty-stricken artist.

"Mr. John Halifax—very handsome, very rich and nothing in particular.

"Scene—Central Africa."

"Your scene is preposterous and your combination of characters improbable," complained Miss St. John.

"Truth is not necessary in fiction," responded the story teller.

"Oblige me, then, by not romancing any more than is absolutely necessary."

"Miss Vivian was fair and lovable. Consequently when she met Mr. Dubois at a lawn party he fell in love with her and she reciprocated his affection.

"A lawn party in Central Africa!" expostulated the young lady. "Pray are you telling me a romance among the Manyemans?"

"The color of the skin is immaterial," replied Mr. Dennison, "but as you object to Africa I will call it Europe—England will do. All went well with the lovers until, like the snake in the Garden of Eden, a third person stepped in, Mr. John Halifax. Well, one cannot blame Miss Vivian if she preferred the corn and wine of Egypt to love in a cottage with poverty."

There was a pause, which Miss St. John broke by exclaiming irritably: "You are not entertaining at all. Your story is not worth writing. No publisher would accept it."

"Why not?" (politely). "Have you never known of a similar case?"

"No, never, except in some absurd story."

"By and by," continued the young man, "Mr. Dubois decided to 'win or lose it all.' He asks Miss Vivian to marry him at once and share his modest income, which is, however, a sure one. He—made a fool of himself."

"Most men do," murmured the girl.

"That is true, otherwise women would not care for them; but in this case the lady shared his folly."

"In what way?"

"She threw aside a loyal heart."

"Probably she had good reason for doing so."

"It occurs to me that you espouse her cause very warmly."

"Possibly the young man was overbearing and impudent. She very properly declined to be a slave. It is a Briton's privilege."

"I grant it. But suppose that Dubois loved her deeply and truly; that realizing that he had spoken hastily and regretted it, and wrote her a letter full of entreaties for pardon which he sent by mail with a bunch of Parma violets."

"Well?" whispered Miss St. John, "well?" It was easy to see that she was at last deeply interested.

"Mr. Dubois asked her in this letter if she still loved him to wear his flowers the next evening at a dance where they would meet. He called her his 'little queen'—he was madly in love with her."

"And then?" the girl's voice sounded as if she were crying.

"Oh, then, he went to the dance. She was there, radiant, smiling, beautiful. But she did not wear his violets. Her gown was white, but upon her bosom nestled a bunch of crimson roses—which had been given to her by John Halifax."

The voice of the narrator trembled but he did not glance at his companion.

Already they were approaching a tunnel which heralded the end of their journey. Miss St. John realized it and was thankful, for she hoped the semi-darkness might hide her falling tears.

"That night," continued Mr. Dennison, when the silence again became oppressive, "that, as we are likely to be shut up together in this compartment for two full hours, it might be more philosophical—not to say agreeable—if we raise a flag of truce? We can confine ourselves to commonplaces—the weather, catching bees, or other harmless topics."

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go with him. He was away four years."

"Did it occur to him," whispered the young girl, reaching a satchel, out of which she drew a small jeweled box and laid it on her knee, "that Miss Vivian might not have received the letter until after the hot-headed and impetuous lover was beyond recall. Besides, she might have been too much hurt to evidence her desire for his return. With such men 'love flows like Solway, but ebbs like it."

Having delivered herself of this brilliant speech, she arched her neck with extravagant courtesy to examine the clouds.

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"Have you never heard of the laurels I have won?" he asked. "I am no longer poor, Madeline. Fortune has smiled upon me. My last story was an *El Dorado*."

"Oh, how sorry I am," exclaimed the girl naïvely. "Now it will not be possible to prove my love for you."

Dennison picked up the bunch of flowers which had fallen from her lap and as the train shot like an arrow into the glad light of the May afternoon, he whispered:

"Darling, these violets are proof enough. I can never doubt your loyalty again."—[Globe-Democrat.

## A QUEER CHARACTER.

Incidents in the Career of the "Most Eccentric Man in Portugal."

It was in the House of Deputies at Lisbon, many years ago. There had been a debate on the budget, and in the excitement, many bitter words had been spoken. Among the speakers in opposition to the Ministry was Vicompte Antonio de Soto Major, known at the time as the most eccentric man in Portugal, and one of the cleverest.

In the course of his speech he had attacked the Ministry so severely that the President of the House called him to order several times, and at last withdrew from him the privilege of the floor.

The Vicompte left the chamber for a few minutes, and then returned to his seat. Rising to his feet, he drew two pistols from his pocket, placed them on the desk in front of him, and then demanded recognition.

"The first pistol here," he began, "is for you, Mr. President. If you dare to call me to order again. The second is for that colleague who dares to interrupt me."

He was known to be a man of his word, and the astonished House listened to him in silence.

The Vicompte died a few days ago in Stockholm, where he had been Portuguese Minister for many years. He was born in 1832, and was a member of one of the wealthiest and most aristocratic families in Portugal. He became active life as a cavalry officer, but resigned from the army after marrying a Spanish woman as wealthy as himself. They took up their residence in Paris, but lived in such a manner that their fortunes were soon gone. In the fifties the Vicompte was at the head of the House of Deputies.

On one occasion he publicly called the Minister of Finance a spendthrift. His Excellency replied that such an accusation was hardly in place from a man who had wasted a whole fortune.

"That is not true," quickly replied Soto Major. "I have spent not only one fortune, but three. The great difference between us, however, is that I spent my own money, while he is a man of means."

Naturally enough the Government wished to get such an opponent out of the way. To make him as harmless as possible the authorities offered him the mission to Sweden, which he accepted.

He soon became one of the most popular figures in Stockholm. Every child in the city knew the small, white-bearded diplomat, whose wit was as much admired as his collection of jewels and cravats. Even in his old age he was unable to overcome the wasteful habits of his youth. Many are the stories told of him in Stockholm. Once, in one of the best houses of the capital, a young woman happened to drop a small coin, worth not more than five cents. The Vicompte opened his pocketbook, took from it a hundred-crown note, and lighted it to aid the young woman in her search.—[New York Tribune.

## Nickel and Silver.

Some authorities say that the prices of nickel and silver will eventually cross each other. They argue that nickel is more useful, is scarcer, and is not so readily produced, and that as silver is used more as a symbol of wealth its value in that direction will gradually depreciate. In such an event there is a long road, because silver has in it the tradition of ages, and the poorer classes of the world would be actuated in its use as the rich have been, and for a long time the downward course would be stayed by this sentiment alone.—[Hardware.

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## THE JOKER'S BUDGET.

JESTS AND YARNS BY FUNNY MEN OF THE PRESS.

Ready to