

LOVE THYSELF LAST.

Love thyself last. Look near, behold thy duty
To those who walk beside thee down life's road:
Make glad their days by little acts of beauty,
And help them bear the burden of earth's load.

Love thyself last. Look far and find the stranger,
Who staggers 'neath his sin and his despair,
Go lend a hand, and lead him out of danger,
To heights where he may see the world is fair.

Love thyself last. The vastnesses above thee
Are filled with Spirit Forces, strong and pure,
And fervently, these faithful friends shall love thee,
Keep thou thy watch o'er others, and endure.

Love thyself last; and oh, such joy shall thrill thee,

As never yet to selfish souls was given.

What's thy lot, a perfect peace will fill thee:

And earth shall seem the anteroom of Heaven.

Love thyself last; and thou shalt grow in spirit

To see, to hear, to know, and understand.

The message of the stars, lo, thou shall hear it,

And all God's joys shall be at thy command.

Love thyself last. The world shall be made better

By thee, if this brief motto forms thy creed.

Go follow it in spirit and in letter,

This is the true religion which men need.

—Elia Wheeler Wilcox, in *Independent*.

A BROKEN ENGAGEMENT.

When I first started in life it was as salesman in the very small establishment of Mr. Brusle, stationer. It was not a very remunerative situation, but old Mr. Brusle was kind old man, Mrs. Brusle a nice, talkative old lady, and Dolly Brusle often came into the store on busy days and stood behind the counter beside me, and just for this last reason I would not have taken double wages with Mr. Throgmorton, the only other stationer of the town.

Dear little Dolly! she had brown eyes and a dimple in her chin, and sang like a prima donna. She had lessons from a German Fraulein and from an Italian Signor, and the old man quite forgot Throgmorton and his gilt window when he sat with his handkerchief over his head of an evening and listened to her. The piano was old and tinkling, but none of us ever thought of that. Old Mr. Brusle and my father had been friends, and I was not a clerk only, but a privileged friend as well, and all the excuse I needed for coming every night was given in the words, "I want to hear the singing." Well, any one might have wanted to hear it, for that matter—not merely a boy who was in love.

Things went on in this way for three years, when one afternoon old Mr. Brusle, shutting the drawer of his desk with a bang, said:

"It's no use, Tom, I may as well give in. Throgmorton has beaten me. I'm not making a cent, and I shall break up. The old woman and I can manage on what I have, with only one child, and I can rest and stop fidgeting. I suppose Dolly can teach little, too. There's no other music teacher in Hamilton. But the old shop is a mockery, and I've known it a good while."

So that was the end of Arcadia. The stock and fixtures were sold out, Throgmorton bought the stock, and the shop was altered into a parlor; and I wrote to my uncle in New York who had promised to take me into his business if I wished it, and he telegraphed, "Come next week." And then one day I asked Dolly to walk down into the meadows and see if the blackberries were ripe. Before we picked one, I drew her to a quiet place under a great maple and put my arm about her waist, and said:

"Dolly, you know just how I feel toward you, don't you?"

She nestled up to me a little closer, and I took both her plump brown hands in mine.

"Will you wait for me a little while, Dolly? Will you think that I am doing my best all the time to bring the day nearer when I can ask your father to give you to me?"

She said nothing for a while, and the song passed. Then came her voice:

"Yes, Tom, I'll wait."

And we picked the blackberries, and went home again through the meadows.

"We'll not speak of it yet, Tom," said Dolly. "At home I mean; they think me such a child yet. I don't want to break the charm. In time they'll guess that I'm a woman; and they like you, Tom."

For a while I was bewildered in the city, then very busy, then flushed with the prospect of being rapidly advanced, and of being able to ask Dolly to be my wife sooner than I expected. I wrote her joyous letters. She wrote pleasant ones back to me. We did not make them open love letters, but both understood the love at the bottom of them. And so the months glided by. For six I had no holiday. Then grudgingly given week was given me, and I hurried down to Hamilton. I visited my old friends, and had a glorious time. Dolly was lovelier than ever. She walked over to the depot with me when I left, leaning on my arm. The train had not come in yet—the one for New York; but the other had set down some passengers from the city. One, a stout gentleman of 35, dressed in fine style, having given his portmanteau to a porter, ad- vanced to Dolly.

"How do you do, Miss Brusle?" said he.

She held out her hand shyly.

"How do you do Mr. Holly? Tom, this is Mr. Holly. Mr. Holly, Mr. Holly."

He bowed; so did I. But the tail had such an air with him that I

hated him. How did she know him? I had never seen him before.

"Who is he?" asked I, in a whisper, as the porter called Mr. Holly back for directions.

"He has something to do with the opera, I think," said Dolly.

Then came the shriek of the whistle.

"All aboard!" yelled a voice,

"Good-by, Tom," said Dolly.

"Good-by," said I, and hurried away.

I thrust my head out of the window. Dolly was walking away on Mr. Holly's arm.

I made a fool of myself next day. I wrote Dolly an indignant letter. She wrote me a spirited answer. I demanded an explanation as to how she came to know Holly, in the next; and before any answer came to this old Mrs. Brusle walked into our place with her shopping bag in her hand one morning.

"I want you to take me to some nice store, Tom," she said, "if you can spare an hour or so. I'm going to buy a silk dress for Dolly, and she told me to tell you all about it, as you seemed to be upset."

I asked the permission necessary and called a carriage. Once within the old lady began:

"You see, Dolly will need to be dressed handsomely. She starts next month."

"Starts for where?" said I.

"All over, mostly," said the old lady. "It's all settled, you know, between her and Mr. Holly."

"Settled!" cried I.

"Yes," said the old lady. "I knew you'd be pleased with the good news. She was singing in the choir, and he happened to go to church, and he asked an introduction and got it, and called next day. It's very sudden, very; but she wouldn't engage herself to him without our consent; and it's such a fine thing, that we can't refuse; so we've consented. She'll feel homesick, no doubt, away from us; but we mustn't think of that. I try not to," and then the old lady put her handkerchief to her eyes.

"She told you tell me?" I said.

"Oh, yes," said the old lady.

My heart was on fire, my blood was boiling, but I made no sign.

"You stay in the city all night, don't you?" I asked.

She said she would, and gave me the number of her stopping place.

After the shopping was over I went home and took from my trunk a little parcel of letters, a lock of hair, a ribbon—Heaven knows what trashy bits of treasure—put them in a large business envelope, and walked over to the old lady's boarding house with them.

"Tell Dolly that I sent her that, and wish her all the happiness that she deserves," said I.

The old lady heard no sarcasm in my voice.

"I will, Tom," she said; "and do come to see us soon. We'll be lonely without Dolly."

So it was over; and the thing that was most terrible to dream of had fallen on me, and I lived.

Of course I made no confidence, and I worked as hard as ever. The work of a wholesale woolen house does not slacken because a clerk is crossed in love. Bales and boxes and bundles went out and came in all the same; and what did it matter if I looked pale and lost my appetite, so that I did my figuring and all the rest of it correctly?

But one day, as I looked up from a boy I had been marking, I saw a sight that made me sick with rage. Holly, and no one else, with his side whiskers and his glossy hat and marvelously square shoulders. He was talking to my uncle, and appeared to be on intimate terms with him. I stood still and stared at him. In a few moments he saw me, and putting up his eyeglasses, bowed. I made no bow in return. Then he came across the room.

"I don't think it's a mistake," said he. "I met you at the depot at Hamilton, with Miss Brusle."

"I remember," I said.

"She's very well, and in a little flutter, of course," said he. "I suppose you've had letters?"

"Excuse me, I'm needed elsewhere," I said, and dashed away.

An hour after, my uncle coming across me, said:

"So you know Holly, Tom? He's not a bad fellow, though a bit of a playboy. He's made a good deal of money in the theatrical line; manager and all that, you know. Married a sort of cousin of my wife's two years ago."

"Is he a married man?"

"Oh, yes; why not?"

"Uncle Harold," said I, "you must let me run up to Hampton to-night. I must go."

"What is the matter, Tom?" said my uncle.

"I can't tell you," said I, "but I must go."

"Then you must," said my uncle; "but if it wasn't you, you'd never come back. Don't be longer than you can help, as it is."

I traveled on the night train, and reached the dear little brown cottage when its windows were golden in the sunrise. The old lady was getting breakfast. Dolly was milking; her father at work in the garden. It was a sweet picture, and I had come to turn its joy into sorrow; but bitter that than to let worse sorrow come.

"You, Tom!" cried Mrs. Brusle.

"Why, Tom!" cried the old lady;

"so you thought you'd see our girl off after all? You know she starts to-morrow?"

Dolly did not look at me, but I saw her face flush crimson.

"I'm sorry to say that I have come down to bring bad news," said I.

"Bad news!" said Mr. Brusle.

"I'm sorry for that, my boy. What is it?"

"It affects you, sir," said I; "not me. I come only because worse would happen if I were silent, and I beg you to believe that I am actuated by no spirit of revenge. You may not credit me, but I wish that any other man had this to do. Mr. Holly is, and has been for two years, a married man."

I turned my face away from Dolly as I uttered these words, and dropped it upon the hand that rested on the vine branch. I expected to hear her scream, but my news did not seem to produce as great an effect as I expected. I looked up again; all eyes were fixed upon me.

"Ah!" said the old man.

"Well?" said the old lady.

"Go on, Tom," said Dolly.

"His wife is a cousin of the lady my uncle married," said I. "If you don't believe me, I can offer proof of the fact. He is married."

"Of course I knew that," said Dolly. "His wife is quite a celebrated contralto."

"Knew that he was married?" said I.

"I don't understand you."

"It's a great deal nicer for Dolly," said Mrs. Brusle. "Mrs. Holly and she will travel together. But, O, dear! perhaps Mrs. Holly isn't nice."

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