

The People's Pilot

RENSSELAER, INDIANA.

TO AN OLD GUITAR. 1892.

Her slender fingers, jewel-drest,
Stole softly to and fro,
And in and out among the strings,
To tunes of long ago.

The golden ribbon kissed her throat,
Where faint his lips would be,
But how he loved her very breath,
His sweet maid Majorie!

In velvet dress, with silken hose,
And jewels set a few,
Ah, what a cavalier was he,
In seventeen ninety-two!

My songs are not so quinny sweet
As those she sang to him,
My love and I no picture make
Like theirs, with time growing dim.

But music lingers still in these,
And love is just as strong,
As when sweet Majorie was young,
And tuned thee to her songs.

My love and I will pass away
Some day, and then will be
Another hand to touch thy strings,
And find thy melody.

Do you not wonder, old guitar,
Whose hand 'll be, and who
Will sing the sweet love songs to him
Of nineteen ninety-two?

I am not sad to think it true
(The present is so sweet),
That joy and sorrow must unite
To make thy chords complete.

For what is sorrow, pain, or death?
To us whose souls are strong!
Time cannot put an end to this,
Dear life, and love and song!

—Annie Louise Brackenridge, in *Century*.



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CHAPTER X.—CONTINUED.

Clarimond smiled very coldly. "If you had chosen to dwell here in peace, you would have had slight cause to complain of me. As it is, your continued sojourn is one of suffering alone."

"Sufferance!" gasped the princess.

"Precisely. You came here with two motives. The first was to pit yourself against faiths and principles of mine which are a part of my very life. The second was to try and force me into a marriage of the merest loveless convention. The weapons you have used in either case were the same that dealt my dead father the keenest grief, and perhaps drove him prematurely to his grave. Yours, madam, is a stormy and truculent spirit. I inherit nothing of it, but possibly I inherit from you along the strength of will which too long has clothed itself in forbearance. That strength of will you shall now have a chance to test. As I said, you will be watched. Being the lady highest of rank in my kingdom, I will accord you the right of receiving my guests on Thursday. But if the least sign of courtesy is shown by you toward any guest who crosses the threshold of my palace, on the morrow you shall be conducted where the turbulence and rebellion of your disposition may boil and foment to the discontent of others rather than my own. There, now, I think it is all quite plain between us."

"Quite plain!" muttered the princess. "Yes, I see—I see. You wish to crowd your rooms with vulgarians."

"You need not gaze upon those vulgarians unless you so desire. Certainly number of people whom yet will rate as vulgarians will present themselves. Among these will be a young lady—an American, or an Anglo-American, I might more truly call her—with whom I shall open the ball. Her name is Kathleen Kennaird, and I shall dance the first quadrille with her. She is the most beautiful woman I have ever seen, the most beautiful I would ever expect to see, though I should live two lives instead of one. But were she a hunchback negress, fresh from Africa in her beads and warpaint, it need matter nothing either to you or those assembled. I am master. I am king. For my actions I account to no one save myself."

He passed, with an air of unwonted but very distant pride, down along the waxed floor of the spacious saloon. But he, who had heard him with one or two convulsive shudders, now gave a kind of wrathful spring, both hands hanging clenched at her sides.

"You will account to your emperor?" she called. "You are not so great as you vaunt yourself, Clarimond of Saltravia! You—you are just mad enough to marry this creature. I recall now that one of your cousins, the king of Saxony's own nephew, too, disgraced himself by a low marriage. No doubt it is in your blood to do such horrible things. But I will prevent this." The princess' face glistened with little beads of sweat and her eyes were blazing. "I will go to the emperor at once, I will." She recoiled, for Clarimond hurried back toward where she had stood, half cowering in her frenzy. It seemed to the princess that perhaps he might actually mean her some personal violence, though if her mind had proved less clouded by anger and dismay she would have realized that from one of his usually gentle spirit such a course, in any circumstances, would have been unthinkable.

All that the king meant to do was to seize the bell-rope which a brief while ago he had desisted from seizing.

But now reaching the spot where it hung he gave it a strong pull, and almost immediately two footmen, in the royal drey, answered his summons.

"You shall go at once to the emperor," he said, in a low and very tranquil voice. "I will give these men orders for carriages and will see that a special train is prepared for you the instant you reach."

"No, no," broke hoarsely from the princess. "Send them away! I—I did not mean what I said." In a trice she had grown piteously humble. "I—I was more than half in joke, my dear Clarimond" and a little pathetic jet of

daughter broke from her lips, like an ethereal spirit from a ruined fountain.

The king looked at her with great steadiness for a second or two. "As you wish," he then said, and gave a sign of dismissal to the two servants, who promptly vanished.

The princess had indeed pulled in all. Her son had seemed to her, during the few past minutes, like a rock against which she would only waste her strength in vain. Besides, she was immeasurably proud of his kingship, and would have suffered untold regret if the emperor had presumed to attempt his deposition. It was all quite clear to her mind in this brief interval; she had gone too far. She might have known that the lion in him would suddenly turn on her like this. He would keep the very letter of his menace, too, unless her tactics were changed forthwith. Revolting in their democracy though she held his views to be, hereafter she must conform to them or leave these lovely Saltravian hills. And surely she was quartered here in a most magnificent way. Her two or three Italian palaces were nothing to this, in which so lordly a suite of chambers had been allowed her. And then this enchanting valley, so radiantly improved in spite of all her grumblyings to the contrary! And the waters, too; she had no idea of the wondrous good they would do her rheumatism. It might all get stupid in the winter, but the winter was still a good distance off. Time enough to slip off to Rome or Naples again by the end of November. And then there was Bianca d'Este. The girl's love for her son was now almost a madness. For that most seemly of unions there was yet a hope. Yes, a hope—why not? "School yourself," darted through the princess' mind, "to a self-effacement difficult yet impossible. In the end he may yield, and marry her. Then your turn will come in real earnest, for if once there is a queen, if once there are little princes and princesses, he will grow more conservative. Men always do. That possible horror of his, marrying the American girl (God knows there's nothing rash he would not do, just now) must be met by subtlety; since high-handed measures have become mere blows in the air."

Even roughly to put in words the lightning-like reflections of Clarimond's mother makes them seem deliberative, not intuitive, as they surely were. When she again confronted her son, after the departure of the footmen, it was to show, both in speech and mien, a meekness and complaisance that she had never remotely hinted until now.

"Henceforth you shall have no further cause for complaint," she said: "I shall abut you in all your plans and purposes. Try me, and you shall not be disappointed. I admit myself thoroughly vanquished. Your will is my law."

She bowed her head, and Clarimond, who knew her better than she knew herself, smelt deceit as if it were some odor that suddenly had freighted the air.

At the same time his native generosity and fair-mindedness made him hope this abrupt conversion meant more than its first blush would imply.

"Agreed, then," he said, with a reserve that expressed patience and sadness interlent. "But pray bear in mind one matter. If the emperor should have the presumption, which I greatly doubt, to concern himself in any of my personal affairs, however important or however trivial, I should as promptly resent such meddling as though it were the work of an officious subject.

Though my answer should cost me my scepter, slight a one as it is, be assured that I should not hesitate to make it, and make it firmly. I am not so enamored of reigning that the emperor's frowns or smiles can appeal to me as such mighty forces of my own destiny, nor shall you ever find me in the mood to regard him as if he were a schoolmaster with a birchen rod. And now, to send me the list of those whom you have already invited to the state ball. Such a course on your part will enable me to avoid errors which might otherwise occur, since I wish to make out a list of my own, and desire that it should not clash with yours."

"It shall be sent you to-night," was the reply, "or to-morrow, if you prefer."

"To-morrow will be quite early enough," answered Clarimond, and with a bow he quitted the great, bright-lit vacant apartment, ending an interview which was least agreeable of the many which he had held with his mother, and which had perhaps caused him more secret pain than any which he at all had held since his accession to the Saltravian throne.

CHAPTER XI.

The court was already furnished with rich material for busiest gossip; but few more morrows were destined to cast in shade even so pregnant a topic as Clarimond's cogent reprimand of Prince Philibert. The king had been seen publicly strolling through his own grounds with Kathleen; he now as publicly visited her at the hotel, spending hours each day in the pretty sitting-room which Mrs. Kennaird at once secured for his own and her daughter's comfort, as downstairs they would almost have been mobbed by gaping for eiders. The mental condition of Mrs. Kennaird, at this particular time, was one of hysteria, narrowly verging upon dementia. The king's open admiration for her child filled her with a feeling toward him which might have given her, if she could have looked upon herself just as she now was, and looked from normal eyes, many shivers of shame. She had impulses to fling herself on her knees before Clarimond, and press her lips to his hand, telling him that he was the most godlike being the world had ever seen, and that his goodness in giving heed to Kathleen roused her deathless maternal gratitude.

The American snob, who is apt to be the most mettlesome and affirmative of all snobs yet recorded, had risen rampant in Kathleen's mother. She could not sleep; she could scarcely eat a morsel, and then did not know of what food she partook. At first she had ideas of sending to Paris for a robe in which to array her child at the state ball.

Then, after this plan had been stated by Kathleen, she grew reconciled to the idea that the girl might create a more striking effect if clad with the utmost simplicity. After all, let her be attired in the plainest of white frocks. What other beauty in all Saltravia could stand so trying a test?

"Yes, it is wiser," she said, excitedly to Kathleen. (Of late she had done and said everything excitedly, yet with her effort to appear self-repressed hardly better concealed than that of the fugitive ostrich.) "My dear, you are quite right. People will look at you more, and in so doing they will see you as you really are. Besides, it's in far nicer taste."

"Oh," said Kathleen, shrugging her shoulders, "I should like a handsome gown; what girl in the circumstances wouldn't? But to telegraph to Worth or Felix, and to send either of them money we could so ill afford—why, the very thought of it is pure nonsense, mamma, as you must be aware."

"I wasn't thinking of the expense," replied Mrs. Kennaird, with a little irrepressible catching of the breath. "There are certain things one always can afford."

Kathleen laughed and shrugged her shoulders. "You mean, I suppose, that we could go back to Dresden and economize more severely than we've yet done."

"Oh, no; I didn't mean that. I—I didn't mean that in the least," said her mother.

Kathleen gave no answer, divining what had really been meant. If her mother only knew the actual substance of her late conversations with the king! They had principally talked of her past engagement to Alonzo Lisenpennard. She had been very frank; she had told Clarimond everything and had found in him a most gracious and friendly listener. He had asked her many questions, all of which she had replied with thorough candor. As regarded the impression that she had made upon him, she could not doubt that it had been one of strong fascination. This in itself was nothing new; most men, under a certain age, had shown her but one sort of homage. To have a king show it was entirely novel, and not a little dizzying. Moreover such a king as he, filled to his finger-tips with all the graces that please women, handsome, courtly, amusing, in countless ways, the choicest of male companions!

For three afternoons he dropped in upon her, and in each time her mother received him in her bluest fashion, contriving soon to slip from the apartment and leave them together. Mrs. Kennaird had no fear of the faintest imprudence on Kathleen's part. If she had thought at all on this subject it would have been to decide that her daughter's American blood would save her from even a dream of folly. Besides had she not already learned that Clarimond was the most honorable man in his own kingdom? Let people chatter, as they undoubtedly were chattering. Among the hotel-residents it was jealousy, pure and simple. What chiefly concerned this very agitated lady was the question of how Alonzo had thus far acted and of how at any moment he might take it into his head to act. Here he was, returned to Saltravia, the bosom friend of the king's bosom friend. He must have heard that Clarimond was intensely captivated with Kathleen. Everybody was talking of the affair. Stories had got about that the princess of Brindisi had already pleaded by letter the intervention of the emperor.

"You are so reticent, my dear," she said to Kathleen one evening at the end of the king's third visit. "You never tell me what he says about Alonzo to you. Does he not mention him?"

"Kindness, m—yes." Mrs. Kennaird pursed her lips a little. "They're still friends, then?"

"Friends? Oh, yes."

"I suppose Alonzo hasn't dared to say a word against you, Kathleen. Otherwise he'd certainly have relieved himself of untold spleen, my dear."

"He never carried grudges," the girl said, as if her own thought was her sole auditor.

"Well, even if he didn't! Heaven knows he had a monopoly of most other faults!" At this particular time any praise of Alonzo was for some reason specially nauseous to Mrs. Kennaird.

"And as for keeping silent about us to the king, why, there isn't the least doubt that he'll do so. How would he dare otherwise, now that Clarimond has become your actual slave?"

"Mamma! Mamma!" exclaimed Kathleen. "You will make me so ridiculous if anyone by chance overhears you in these moods."

"Moods?" bristled her mother. "What moods? I'm excessively reticent! You are so droll at times, Kathleen! As if any mother could bear more calmly than I do the splendid, the unparalleled honor which overhangs you."

Kathleen looked fixedly at the speaker, with her eyes moistening a little and her under-lip trembling. "I—I wish you would not speak like this," she faltered.

"It distressed me so."

Her mother took care of her at first and, then, at her mother's death, a sister took the task upon herself. Now the sister is dead and she is left to the care of more distant relatives. She is very cheerful and seemingly contented, and is always glad to have the neighbors drop in to chat with her. She is quite talkative until the subject of her keeping her bed is broached, and then she has nothing whatever to say.

Her hair is gray and her skin very sallow, but one can easily see that in her youth she must have been an extremely pretty girl. Her room is on the ground floor and in summer her bed is drawn up under the open window, on the outside of which has been built for her a wide ledge or shelf. Her head and shoulders are well wrapped up and she rests them out on this ledge.

She will lie there by the hour looking up the street and holding in her hand a small mirror, held so she can see what is coming behind her. She is very fond of children and they play under her window, and seem to quite like the decidedly queer-looking object on the window ledge.—N. Y. Recorder

If action should indeed be required of her? No, no; the need of such action would not, could not, come. He, a king! It was fatuity to dream of what her mother had so boldly prophesied. Her hands were at intervals very tremulous while she dealt with her toilet; and once or twice she felt as if she must desist from it and seek the one sort of aid that just then would have been least to her taste.

But when the king came she received him with much composure. Her mother was to-day in visible throes. To Kathleen her distress was pathetic. The perturbed lady gave one or two spasmodic outbursts which were a mournful travesty of her usual serene equipoise. She was so drunk with the heady wine furnished by the fact of this fourth royal visit that exhaustion made her almost staggering. Clarimond, calm and gentlemanlike as usual, appeared to notice nothing. "Perhaps," thought Kathleen, "he is used to such groveling servility. Poor mamma, will she ever get out of the room with a decent grace, she who has prided herself for years on doing nothing awfully?"

But at last the door closed on Mrs. Kennaird's ducking and cringing figure.

At this happened Kathleen breathed an audible sigh of relief. The sigh ended in a feverish laugh, and she said, with sudden candor, to her guest:

"It's dreadful how you've demoralized my mother. You must see, so I mention it."

"Demoralized her? I?"

"Oh! then you don't see, monsieur, mamma isn't accustomed to kings; that is all."

"And are you?" he said with his sweet, kind smile. They were now seated opposite one another, and near a large window that gave one a fine view of the mountains and a still finer view of his white, many-turreted palace.

"No," she answered. "But mamma—Oh! you must have noticed. You're a royal, as they call it, and you've turned her head. It's odd, too, for she has met all sorts of great people—prime ministers, dukes, even the English prince himself. . . . I seem so vulgar when I talk like this! I do hope you'll excuse me. No doubt, you are used to embarrassing people, especially Americans."

He shook his head, smiling. "I have always thought it rather hard to embarrass Americans," he replied. "One in particular," he added; and then his smile deepened, as he watched her with a glance full of drollery both frank and sly.

"If you mean me, monsieur," she returned, with a slight shrug, "I am somehow proof against all surprises. It's very scandalous, no doubt, to acknowledge as much at my age."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THIRTY YEARS IN BED.

A Woman Who Keeps the Vow Made When She Was a Bells.

In the village of Mattuck, L. I., lives a woman who has not been out of bed for thirty years. She remains in her bed, not from any infirmity, but from choice.

Thirty years ago, when a very pretty, attractive girl of eighteen, she was the belle of the village, a leader at all dances, picnics and social gatherings.

She had many number of beaux, but, strange to say, had never received a proposal of marriage. This she felt very keenly, particularly as her girl friends were one by one marrying. Two or three months before her nineteenth birthday she told her mother that if she did not receive an offer of marriage before her birthday she would go to bed and remain there as long as she lived. Her mother treated it as a joke, and thought no more of it.

The girl was doomed to disappointment, and on retiring the night of her nineteenth birthday said: "It's no use and I'll never get up again." She has kept her word all of these years. Threats and persuasions had not the slightest effect upon her.

Her mother took care of her at first and, then, at her mother's death, a sister took the task upon herself. Now the sister is dead and she is left to the care of more distant relatives. She is very cheerful and seemingly contented, and is always glad to have the neighbors drop in to chat with her. She is quite talkative until the subject of her keeping her bed is broached, and then she has nothing whatever to say.

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