

THE GOLDEN SIDE.

BY CHARLES MACKAY.

There is many a rest in the road of life,
If we would only stop to take it;
And many a tone from the better land,
If the querulous heart would make it.
To the soul that is full of hope,
And whose beautiful trust ne'er falleth,
The grass is green and the flowers are bright,
Though the Winter's storm prevailleth.

Better to hope, though the clouds hang low,
And to keep the eyes still lifted;
For the sweet blue sky will soon peep through,
When the ominous clouds are rifted.
There was never a night without a day,
Or an evening without a morning;
And the darkest hour, as the proverb goes,
Is the hour before the dawning.

There is many a gem in the path of life,
Which we pass in our idle pleasure,
That is richer far than the jeweled crown
Or the miser's hoarded treasure;
It may be the love of a little child,
Or a mother's prayer to Heaven,
Or only a beggar's grateful thanks
For a cup of water given.

Better to weave in the web of life
A bright and golden filling,
And to do God's will with a cheerful heart
And hands that are ready and willing,
Than to snap the delicate, minute thread
Of our curious lives asunder,
And then blame Heaven for the tangled ends,
And sit and grieve and wonder.

AN ENGLISH NOBLEMAN FALLS
IN LOVE WITH HIS OWN
DAUGHTER.

A most extraordinary case has recently been heard in the court of divorce, in London, before Lord Penzance, the judge of the court. The Honorable Henry Loftus, nephew of the Marquis of Ely, has had his domestic circumstances revealed to the world, and it would have been well for him and for his own family if he had concealed his sorrows in his own breast.

In 1851 Henry Loftus held a commission as lieutenant in Her Majesty's Life Guards and was allowed by his uncle, the Marquis, £800 per annum. He was very handsome, about six feet high, large blue eyes, black eyebrows, and was an exceedingly well built man. At a ball given at Lady Palmerston's he became acquainted with a Miss Adeline Montgomery, whose father had been chief attaché to the British Embassy in Paris. After a few months acquaintance they were married, and Mr. Loftus sold his commission and went to reside in Brussels, his income being too small to enable him to live in England in the style to which he had been accustomed prior to his marriage.

About fourteen months after his marriage, his wife gave birth to a beautiful child, that was christened Emmeline Montgomery. They had a handsome house on the Rue Madeline, and mixed in the first circles of society. They often dined with the King and Queen of the Belgians at the palace of the king. They became acquainted with a Baron Steiner, a young and handsome Belgian, who wrote beautiful love sonnets, and was at the same time an accomplished musician. Mr. Loftus occasionally visited Paris, and sometimes made short visits to London.

Baron Steiner was like Dean Swift, a great admirer of female beauty; but only in the abstract. Mrs. Loftus was a handsome woman, a very fair representative of the highest style of English beauty, and in Baron Steiner's leisure hours, and they were many, he composed some very beautiful sonnets addressed to the beauty he so much admired. He wrote them partly for amusement, and partly to gratify the vanity of Mrs. Loftus.

In August, 1869, Mr. Loftus, after a short excursion to Paris, returned unexpectedly to Brussels, and he found the Baron Steiner in the drawing room with his wife. The baron was half intoxicated, and under the influence of the champagne he had been imbibing, he showed Mr. Loftus the last sonnet he had addressed to his wife. It was an impassioned sonnet, and Loftus tore it in pieces, and kicked Steiner out of the house. The baron, stung by the indignity, challenged Mr. Loftus to mortal combat. Mr. Loftus accepted the challenge—seconds were obtained, and they met in the suburbs of Malines, which is situated a few miles from Brussels. They used pistols. Steiner was shot through the brain, and lay dead on the floor.

Mr. Loftus returned with his seconds to Brussels. He informed his wife of the result of the duel. She heard of the baron's death apparently with composure, but she burst into a flood of tears. In a defiant tone she said to her husband, "It is better that we part."

A deed of separation was drawn up, and Mr. Loftus returned to London. Mrs. Loftus remarried in Brussels, giving up the house they had occupied, but hired a less expensive one, and her daughter Emmeline was her especial care. As the mother grew in years she became incapable of controlling her passions. On two occasions she hurled at her daughter a carving knife, which fortunately missed her.

When Emmeline Loftus arrived at eighteen years of age she left her house, and proceeded by train to Ostend, took the steamer for Dover and three hours subsequently was alone in the great city of London. Here she obtained a situation as a governess. In September, 1870, she was walking in the Regent's Park, London, where she made the acquaintance of a gentleman forty-four years of age, as she was seated on one of the iron seats in the park. It was an eventful day for her. She was absolutely tired of the situation she had taken. It was a very handsome man that accosted her, though not a young one. An acquaintance sprang up between them. He proposed marriage. But before the ceremony had been performed she was installed as his mistress in Hars place, Sloane street, London. During the time that she was confined to her bedroom by sickness, her lover, finding her keys, opened her writing desk and discovered some photographs. As he was examining them he discovered that one was unmistakably the photograph of his wife. He rushed into the bedroom with the photograph in his hand and frantically inquired who it represented. The girl, who was very low at the time, said it was the picture of her mother with whom she had quarrelled. "Then I am your father," he exclaimed. He had hitherto disguised his real name to her, living with her in the name of Henry Houghton.

Shortly after her recovery it was agreed that a divorce suit should be immediately sought for, and Lord Penzance being acquainted with the facts granted one. Mr. Loftus having obtained a large accession to his fortune, provided handsomely for his daughter. But the end was not yet. He resolved to have an interview with his wife, who was still living in Brussels, and to whom through his bankers he regularly forwarded the amount agreed on in the deed of separation. By the death of the Marquis of Ely and his grandmother he had become worth £15,000 a year, but his wife was living in Brussels on what she considered a miserable allowance of £400 a year.

On his arrival in Brussels he staid at the Hotel Bellevue, the best hotel in Brussels, and addressed a letter to his wife, who was living in Rue de Waterloo, asking her to consent to an interview. It was impossible that, as an English member of the aristocracy, she could object to grant an interview to her husband, although they had been separated for so many years. He told her the sequel of his life after he had separated from her. Mr. Loftus' wife listened to the history with patience as it was told to her by her husband.

As Loftus was leaving, having stated that this unfortunate daughter was well provided for, and drawing in strong language a picture of his misery, his wife asked him if he would live again with her as her husband. Mr. Loftus told her it was impossible under the circumstances. There was no possibility of bridging over the chasm, and their misery they must both carry to the grave. Mrs. Loftus did not believe in this, and as Mr. Loftus had no evidence against his wife in reference to any improper intrigues with the Baron Steiner, she commenced a suit against the Hon. Mr. Loftus for a restitution of conjugal rights; and under the peculiar circumstances of the case, seeing that Mrs. Loftus had committed no crime of which the Divorce Court takes cognizance, Baron Penzance had no alternative but to reinstate Mrs. Loftus in her original marriage rights.

There may be woes worse than those of poverty. An English editor recounts his visit to a clerical friend, who feeds and clothes his family of ten on an income of £140 a year. He found husband and wife in tears, and the children crying in chorus. Visions of want flashed, of course, over the visitor's mind, but his ready proffer of aid was declined. "It is not that, not that," sobbed the poor preacher, "but I see that the Athanasian Creed—the bulwark of our faith—will probably be rejected by the Church. This is the first step towards infidelity. For such grief there was no consolation. Father, mother and eight children were weeping together over the possible loss of the dogma of eternal damnation."

A MINE ON FIRE.

I was twenty-five years old, and was working as a regular pitman on the day and night shift, when I fell in love with Mary Andrews, the daughter of one of our head pitmen.

Not that I had dared to have told her so, I thought; but somehow the influence of Mary used to lift me up more and more, till I should have thought no more of going to join the other pitmen in a public house than of trying to fly.

It was about this time that I got talking to a young fellow about my age, who worked in my shift. John Kelsey his name was, and I used to think it a pity that a fine clever fellow like he was, handsome, stout, and strong, should be so fond of low habits, dogfighting and wrestling, so popular among our men.

I was going alone one evening past old Andrews' house, when the door opened for a moment as if some one was coming out, but, as if I had been seen, it was closed directly. In that short moment, though, I heard a laugh, and that laugh I was sure was John Kelsey's.

Time slipped on, and I could plainly see one thing that troubled me sorely—John was evidently making an outward show of being a hard working fellow, striving hard for improvement, so as to stand well in old Andrews' eyes, while I knew for a fact that he was as drunken and dissipated as any young fellow that worked in the pit.

I could not tell Andrews this, nor could I tell Mary. If she loved him it would grieve her terribly, and be dishonorable as well and perhaps he might improve. I can tell him, though, I thought, and made up my mind that I would; and, meeting him one night, evidently hot and excited with liquor, I spoke to him about it.

"If you really love that girl, John," I said, "you'll give up this sort of thing."

He called me a meddling fool; said he had watched me; that he knew I had a hankering after her myself, but she only laughed at me; and one way and another so galled me that we fought. I went home that night, bruised, sore, and ashamed of my passion; while he went to Andrews' and said that he had to thrash me for speaking insultingly about Mary.

I heard this afterwards, and I don't know how it was, but I wrote to her, telling her that it was false, and that I loved her too well to act so.

Six months passed over my head—six weary, wretched months—till Christmas came on, but not so cold and bitter as my heart.

It was Christmas Eve, and in a dreamy, listless way I was sitting over my breakfast before starting for work, when I heard a sound, and knew what it meant before there were shrieks in the village, and women running out and making for the pit's mouth, a quarter of a mile away. I tell you I turned sick with horror, for I knew that twenty men would go down on the night shift; and though it was close upon their leaving time, they could not have come up yet.

"Pit's fired! pit's fired!" I heard people shrieking; not that there was any need, for there was not a soul that did not know it, for the pit had spoken for itself. As I hurried out I thought all in a flash like of what a Christmas it would be for some families there, and I seemed to see a long procession of rough coffins going to the churchyard, and to hear the wailing of the widow and the fatherless.

I didn't lose any time, as you may suppose, in running to the pit's mouth; but those who lived nearer were long before me, and by the time I got there I found that the cage had brought up part of the men, and three who were insensible, and it was just going down again.

I went down directly, and just as it disappeared who should come running up, pale and scared, but Mary Andrews. "There's no one belonging to you down, is there?"

"Oh, yes—yes! my father was down and John Kelsey."

"Now, then, who's going down?" I shouted.

"You can't go down," shouted half a dozen voices, "the choke got most the better of us."

"But there are two men down?" I cried, savagely. "You're not all cowards, are you?"

Two men stepped forward, and we got in the cage.

"Who knows where Andrews was?" I cried, and a faint voice from one of the injured men told me. Then I gave the warning, and we were lowered down, it having been understood that at the first

signal we made we were to be drawn up sharply.

We reached the bottom, and I found no difficulty in breathing, and, shouting to the men to come on, I ran in the direction where I had been told we should find Andrews; but it was terrible work, for I expected each moment to encounter the deadly gas that had robbed so many of their lives. But I kept on shouting to those behind me, till at once I tripped and fell over some one; and as soon as I could get myself together I lowered the lamp I carried, and to my great delight I found it was Andrews.

Whether dead or alive I could not tell then; but we soon lifted him among us, and none too soon, for as I took my first step back I reeled, from a curious giddy feeling which came over me.

"Run, if you can," I said faintly; for my legs seemed to be sinking under me. I managed to keep on though, and at our next turn we were in purer air; but we knew it was a race for life, for the heavy gas was rolling after us, ready to quench out our lives if we slackened speed for an instant. We pressed on, though, till we reached the cage, rolled into it, more than climbed, and were drawn up to be received with a burst of cheers, Mary throwing her arms around her father's neck, and sobbing bitterly.

"I'm not much hurt," he said feebly, the fresh air reviving him, as he was laid gently down. "God bless those brave lads who brought me up! But there's another man down—John Kelsey."

No one spoke, no one moved; for all knew of the peril we had escaped from.

"My lads," he said feebly, "can't you do something to save your mate?" and as he looked wildly from one to the other I felt my heart like in my mouth.

"Do you all hear?" said a loud voice, and I started as I saw Mary Andrews rise from where she had knelt, holding her father's hand. "Do you all hear? John Kelsey is down in the pit. Are you not men enough to go?"

"Men cannot go," said one of the day shift, gruffly; "no one could live there."

"You have not tried," again she cried passionately. "Richard Oldshaw," she said, turning to me with a red glow upon her face. "John Kelsey is down there dying and asking for help. Will not you go?"

"And you wish me to go then?" I said bitterly.

"Yes," said she. "Would you have a fellow creature lie there and die when God has given you the power, and strength and knowledge, to save him?"

The next minute I stepped up toward the pit's mouth, when there was a dead silence, for no one would volunteer, and, in a half blustering way I said:

"I'll go down."

There was a regular cheer rose up as I said these words; but I had hardly heeded it, for I was looking at Mary, and my heart sank as I saw her standing there smiling with joy.

The next minute I had stepped into the cage, and it began to move, when a voice called out:

"Blow it all! Dick Oldshaw shan't go alone!" and a young pitman sprang in by my side.

Then we began to descend, and through an opening I just caught sight of Mary Andrews falling back senseless in the arms of the women. Then all was dark, and I was nerving myself for what I had to do.

To go the way by which I had helped to save Andrews, was, I knew, impossible; but I had hopes by going round by one of the old workings we might reach him, and I told my companion what I thought.

Turning short off as soon as we were at the bottom, I led the way, holding my lamp high, and climbing and stumbling over the pieces of broken slate that had fallen from the roof, for this part of the mine had not been worked for years. By pressing on, I found that we were right, and gradually nearing the point at which the accident occurred.

As we got nearer, I became aware of the air setting in in a strong draught in the direction in which we were going, and soon after we could make out a dull glow, and then there was a deep roar. The pit was indeed on fire, and blazing furiously, so that as we got nearer, trembling—I am not ashamed to own it, for it was an awful sight—there was the coal glowing of a fierce red heat; but fortunately, the draught set toward an old shaft fully a quarter of a mile further on, and we were able to approach till, with a cry of horror, I leapt over heap after heap of coal, torn from the roof and wall by the explosion, to where, close to the fire, lay the body of John Kelsey—so close that his clothes were already smouldering, and the fire scorched my face. I laid hold of him and dragged him away.