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A BALLAD OF KISSES.

There are three kisses that I call to mind,
And I will sing their secrets as I go.
The first, a kiss too rapturous to be kind,
Was such a kiss as lovers and maidens know—
As sharp as frost, as blunders as the moon.

The second kiss—ah, God! I feel it yet,
And overpowers my soul with its sweet sorrow
The eyes and joys of fate I may forget,
But not the touch of that divided chance;
It stays on my lips, it burns on my brow.

The third, the final kiss, is one I use
Morning and noon and night, and not unless
Sorrow be nigh it such I do refuse!
And when I die to have strange to kiss
Resurrected in heaven by such a kiss.
—Eric Mackay.

HER PROMISE.

Old Abner Marsden moved uneasily in his big armchair. "Seems to me Lucy is a mighty long time getting that water," he muttered as he rose and hobbled to the end of the cottage porch. He put aside the vines that screened the view and looked down toward the lower end of the garden, where a cool spring gurgled up from the ground. "Well, if she ain't talkin' agin with that pauper Ang Howland," growled the old man. "Lucy! Say, Lucy, I want you!" he called.

"I'll be there in a minute, father," called back a comely girl of eighteen who stood near the spring chatting with a plainly dressed youth of about the same age. She reached for the pail of water which Angus Howland still held in his hand and said, with a smile: "I must go, Ang. Father wants me."

"It seems to me, Lucy," said Angus as he gave her the pail, "that you father always wants you when he sees you around. He hasn't any use for some one else, but if it's all right with you I can stand it."

Lucia looked troubled as she said "Goodby, Ang," and turned toward the house.

Old Marsden was an extremely illiterate man, but in business ventures he had always been successful, and now, though a confirmed invalid, his head was full of schemes and devices, and he used to sit for hours at a time planning measures by which his hoard of wealth might be increased. Lucia took after her mother, who had been "a powerful good woman," as people said.

"Lucy," said the old man as she appeared at the door, "I want this to be the last of your talking with that good for nothing lout, Ang Howland. The idea of a likely girl like you talking friendly with such trash! I won't have it, and if he don't steer clear I'll give him something to remember me by, and they'll sum shock his cane vigor only.

"I do not see why you should dislike him so," said Lucia. "He has had a hard time getting along, but that isn't his fault."

"His father was cut out to die in the poorhouse," yelled the old man, "and why didn't he die there?"

"Because," Lucia answered, "Ang worked hard and took care of the old folks."

Her father growled. "Old Howland was intended for the poorhouse, and no good comes of fightin Providence. He died without a penny, and so will the young feller. But that ain't the point; there are plenty of fellers round here that has money, but there ain't many such gals as you be, I reckon. Why, Lucy, you have the choice of the lot, and it's your solemn duty not to be rash." The miserly features of the old man relaxed somewhat as he admired his daughter's comely face. He experienced a kind of fatherly affection for her, and was even willing to spend money freely that she might make a good appearance. Whenever he saw her dressed in some new article of apparel he would mutter to himself, "It's all right, it will all come back! I know a good investment, for I have made a good many—yes, a good many."

A few evenings after the event above mentioned Lucia was walking in the garden when she heard some one tap lightly at the gate, and in the moonlight saw Angus Howland. "He wants to see me," she thought as she hurried through the lilacs to the garden gate. "Father will miss me if I am gone long," said Lucia as approaching, "but we can visit for a minute."

"Lucy," said Angus, "I have come to say goodby. Your father says for me to keep away from you because I am poor and he doesn't want you to marry a pauper. Well, I am going away for five years, and when I come back I'll be rich—rich enough to suit your father," he exclaimed excitedly, striking the fence a heavy blow with his fist.

"I don't care about you being so rich," said Lucia. "I'll like you just as well if you are poor, but don't stay away so long," and she looked beseechingly into his face. "You may have bad luck, you know, and not earn very much money after all, but I'll think just as much of you. Are you going far?" she asked, looking down at the ground.

"To California," said Angus, "and I know just what I shall do when I get there too. Father often told me of a valley in California where all sorts of fruit will grow almost without cultivation. Father wandered down there when he was out among the mines, and being used to a fruit country he knew just what a wonderful place it was. He'd have gone there himself if his sickness hadn't come on, but he told me about it time and again, and he gave me this little map," and Howland took an old torn paper from his pocket, and carefully opening it pointed out by the bright moonlight which broke through the trees the eligible of his hopes and ambition. "That valley is mine," said he, "and I am going there and plant trees."

"Lucy!" called old Marsden from the house, "where be you?"

"Here I am, father," Lucia replied.

"Well, it seems to me that you are a mighty long time gone," cried the old man, "but come to the house, for young Hinton is here and wants to see you."

Lucia saw the troubled look that custom had blotted from her lover's face, and hastily murmured: "Father wants me to marry him, but I won't! I'll marry you. Remember and wait—I'll be true!" Then she was alone and could only hear the voice of her lover as he called her name for a farewell kiss.

The next morning old Marsden said to his daughter with an imperative look, "Young Hinton didn't stay long last night, did he?"

"No," answered Lucia, "not very long."

"Did he ask you to have him?" asked the old man.

"Yes, father, he did," answered Lucia, "but I told him I couldn't."

"Tell him yer couldn't," screamed the old man. "Why couldn't yer?"

"Because I don't love him," said the daughter, looking her father steadily in the eyes.

"Love him, Lucy! I tell ye people don't marry for love. They marry to make a good thing. When they get the worst of it it's like any other bad bargain but young Hinton has money and, Lucy, you'd better change your mind and send him word that you love him well enough. I'll give you a good start, and you'll find out that you have a pretty good old dad after all."

Lucia looked her father, but replied: "Not him. I can never marry him."

The years crept slowly by and brought their usual round of bright and cloudy days. Lucia had grown taller and more beautiful. Her father was still a hopeless invalid. "I agree with you, Lucy," he used to say, "there's no special hurry; but you drop them almost too quick sometimes, it seems to me." One day he handed her the room where Lucia sat, dozing, and said in a querulous tone: "I hear that you get letters from that Ang Howland. Is it true?"

"I have received letters from him," Lucia replied, "and he is doing very well, I understand."

"I don't care how he is doing. That fellow'll die poor," growled the old man. He went outside and sat down on the garden bench. "I'll see Cicely," said he, with a cruel look on his face. Cicely was the girl he secretly loved but put the mail at the village postoffice. Not long after this Lucia found everything letters with a California postmark.

Time passed and it was now nearly ten years since Lucia and Angus had stood at the garden gate and said goodby. Old Marsden had fallen into a state of despondency or utterly abject that Lucia was sometimes on the point of pitying. In his relapses, but she thought, "I'll wait awhile longer; something will happen or he'll never have broken his word."

One day her father called her to him. He was unable to get about the house now, but he propped up his chair all day with his eyes fixed on a very unhappy old man. "Lucy," said he, "I'll make short work of it. The last investment I made I called all and I lost. It was the first time. Lucy, and your father has had many a bargain in his day, but this time has outdone them all. In a month from now we won't have a house to cover our heads. I hoped this sickness might hurry me off, but I see it's going to give me a long time, and I'll have to die poor. Lucy, Lucy, miles," and the old man looked at her pitifully, "miles you have your old dad."

"I'll work for you!" cried Lucia. "You shall never go to the poorhouse." And she was more tender in the care of her father after that.

One day or she stood near her favorite bed of flowers sadly thinking how soon she would have to leave them, a voice broke the silence of her meditations. "I beg your pardon, but your flowers look very pretty and I had to stop to admire them," and looking up Lucia saw a tall, well dressed gentleman standing at the garden gate. "I raise a great many flowers myself," said the gentleman, "and I always take an interest in them, but I live in a flower country where they grow much more luxuriantly than here."

Lucia gave a startled look—but no, how foolish, it couldn't be so. Angus Howard could never have developed into such a handsome man.

"I believe, Lucy, you don't know me," said the gentleman with a smile.

"Oh, Ang! I know you now, for you speak with your old voice, but you have been away a long time."

"You stopped writing, and I read to a California paper that you were married," said Angus; "but recently I learned that it was a false report, and I am here once more to ask you to be mine."

"Father, the gentleman whom he saw you," said Lucia, as she ushered Howland into her father's room. The old man opened his eyes and murmured: "Well, have a chair."

"I understand that you have suffered a misfortune," said the gentleman kindly.

The old man groaned. "I'll have to die in the poorhouse; there's no help for it."

"It may not be so bad as that," said the gentleman.

The old man turned on him fiercely.

"What do you want with me, I'd like to know? Ain't it bad enough to be ruined, but a lot of vultures have got to come and hover around me before I'm dead?"

"I have been investigating the matter," said the gentleman, "and I am sure that it is not so bad as you think, and there is evidence that you will not be turned out of your home at any rate," and he opened before the old man's eyes the canceled mortgage. "The place is yours," said the gentleman, "and all your other property is safe, for I have been making investments."

"Who are you," cried old Marsden, "that comes at such a time and saves me from the poorhouse?"

"It is not so bad as that," said the gentleman, smiling, "but my name is Angus Howland."

The remaining few months of the old man's life worked a great change in his character. One day after the autumn leaves were turning he called his child from his side. "Goodby," said he. "I am going to rest. You are a good boy, Ang, and will make her happy," and he closed his eyes forever.—Chicago News.

A learned editor gives considerable space to discussing the reason for the decay of nations. The reason probably is that nations decay when their time comes, like everything else.

A COMEDY IN FLYTIME.

A Bald-headed Old Gentleman and Young Woman the one actors.

A girl about sixteen years old sat with the window in the rear seat of an elevated railroad car. In spite of the stinging weather she wore a light dress, and from her table hung a bunch fresh, sweet, large blue eyed wild asters. In her cable hung a bunch fresh, sweet, large blue eyed wild asters. In her cable hung a bird cage, and in it a lively little bird, with a bright red cap on, was a hot and restless generation. Upon her head she wore a big wavy hat of white Leghorn straw, around the crown of which was a garland of great flaming poppies which dangled heavily from their rubber stems.

The day was cold and one, and there was no little fuss to separate the person sitting in the side seat next to the cross section. The girl sat well into the corner and behind her in the side seat sat an old gentleman who had taken off his hat, and whose large bald spot was turned toward the girl.

Neither dreamed of interfering with the other, but the motion of the train set the poppies on the girl's hat nodding and they tickled the old gentleman on his bald spot. He was reading his newspaper and made an absent-minded pass at the troublesome fly, with the result of giving the big hat a smart slap. The girl half looked around to see who was jostling her, but the old gentleman did not notice her. She settled back in her seat again, and again her poppies scratched the gleaming spheroid behind her.

Again the man slapped at the fly, with much energy this time, and either his hand or his shoulder touched the girl's shoulder. She was startled and looked ready to run away, but there were strength and sour lip and she hesitated. The old gentleman, on his part, turned around and regarded her with a look of momentary surprise which changed to puzzled surprise.

By this time several persons sitting near the unconscious combatants were indulging in broad grins, which did not add to the peace of mind either of man or girl, but they gradually resumed their former attitudes, and again the poppies dangled against the skull of the unfortunate old gentleman, who turned around sharply when the trailing flower brushed against his nose. With a look of mingled disgust and relief—seemed he understood at last—he turned his bald spot toward the window, while his neighbors settled at the close of the comedy, and the girl continued to rock out of her big blue eyes as a world wherein was much that she didn't know about.—New York Times.

The Time of Secret Stories.

A misguided person recently, who was desirous of being cheerful, and seeking something that would raise his spirits, and who had perhaps in his soul a hankering after beauty, said that he could not find in any book shop or newsstand a novel or short story of recent date that was not unpleasant in subject, and did not end either in despair or degradation. Even in the railway trains the same discouraging and altogether dyspeptic pandemic was offered to him; the train seemed to be run by Schopenhauer. Every day a shoal of fiction is issued, and it is nearly all of this character. All the young writers catch this note. We cannot deny their sincerity.

They do not yet know by experience that it is not a cheerful world they have fallen into, but their outlook in life is that of sadness, investigating sadness aided by a microscope. The story is laid upon them of studying life as it really is of exposing its weakness and imperfection; its evil and its sickness. This study is usually made without hope. And the steady being always downward, it comes to be felt that one cannot be altogether sincere without being sad and too often coarse.—Charles Dudley Warner in Harper's.

Date of His Demise.

Anxious Wife—I am appalled at my dear husband's growing disregard for the truth.

Sympathetic Visitor—And he was always so truthful! When did this terrible change take place?

Anxious Wife—Since he spent two weeks fishing for tarpon.—Pittsburg Bulletin.

Highly Improbable.

Judge Dolly—You say you are in trouble. What then, were you doing with the watch if you didn't intend to steal it?

Sam Johnson—I just wanted to wind it up for him. But de notion troof. I can't tell a lie of I was to try for a week.—Texas Siftings.

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3.—It is devoted to the interests of the Latter-day Saints, and has, from its inception, valiantly defended their rights and advocated the principles in which they believe, and every Latter-day Saint should therefore feel under obligations to do his utmost to make its mission a success.

4.—It is not published for speculation, and never has been, but for the good which it is capable of accomplishing the people, if any more be derived from it, being devoted to extending the sphere of usefulness and benefiting the community.

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