

OUR OWN.

If I had known in the morning
How weary all the day,
The words unkind would trouble my mind
That I said when you went away,
I had been more careful, darling,
Not given you needless pain;
But we vex our own with look and tone
We might never take back again.

For though in the quiet evening
You may give me the kiss of peace,
Yet it well might be that never for me
The pain of the heart should cease!
How many go forth at morning
Who never come home at night!
And hearts have broken for harsh words
spoken,
That sorrow can ne'er set right.

We have careful thought for the stranger;
And smiles for the sometime guest;
But oft for our own the bitter tone,
Though we love our own the best.
Ah! lips with the curve impatient,
Ah! brow with the shade of scorn,
'Twere a cruel fate, were the night too late,
To undo the work of morn!

WON AND LOST.

"Those that will not when they may,
When they will they shall have nay."

A garden-party on the banks of the Thames: croquet and stawberries the excuse; flirtation and matrimony the object. But in all the glory of a June sunlight, the bright river glittering as it runs on to the sea, roses flinging their rich perfumes on the air, soft music blending with the song of birds, the excuse and the object are sometimes forgotten, and a delicious sense of purposeless idleness and inexplicable enjoyment alone remains.

At least such was the case with Philip Kerr, captain in the Royal Rifles, as, leaning against a tree, he looked at the scene around him.

What to him was the remembrance that two brothers stood between him and a title? What the apparently certain fact that his father's broad woodlands and the halls where he was born were not for him? that his only home was the headquarters of his regiment in a garrison town, or the dining-room of the Rag and Famish? It was nothing to him at that instant that his pockets were empty, and his banking account overdrawn. Had he not irreproachable lavender kids on his hands, and, as far as he was concerned, priceless boots on his aristocratically small feet? Above all, was there not smiling on him, between her turns at croquet, the only unmarried daughter of the great city firm of Richley, Alpaca & Co.? Not very young, and not very handsome, to be sure, but then there was a dowry of \$30,000 down, and \$70,000 to come when the senior partner should take his flight to a better world, and that surely would balance thirty years of age and a remarkably plain face.

Besides she was well inclined to regild with her wealth some worn out coronet, or, failing that, to attach herself as a branch grafted on to some long descended family tree, and so enter "society" in her own right, as fourteenth cousin by marriage to a peer of the realm, rather than be admitted by sufferance of dowagers on the lookout for heiresses.

Whilst awaiting this desirable event, she kept her hand in by a series of unlimited and sentimental flirtations with every agreeable and intellectual man she met with; for Theodosia Richley went in for intellect—high art, broad church notions and women's rights—and Phillip being particularly agreeable and passably intellectual, and, above all, the third son of a Scotch Baron, Theodosia had selected him as her present aid-de-camp and attache. She had always the alternative, in cases when intellect asserted its superiority and became too troublesome, of referring it to the senior partner, without whose consent, as she plaintively remarked, "I should but inflict on you a penniless wife, my dearest Henry," or Robert, or whatever might be the Christian name of the present aspirant; and this reference generally terminated in the dismissal of the agreeable and intellectual being, no particular reason being given, and the fair Theodosia gently hoping "That though things were not propitious, still friendship need not be broken." Then, by way of consolation, would arrive anonymous presents, and a sentimental correspondence would be kept up with the family; but to this stage Philip had not yet arrived.

He was content to be smiled upon, to disregard the warnings of wiser men than himself, and drift down the stream, careless whether it stranded him on the sunny shore of a home,

paid for by his heiress-love, or dashed him on the barren rocks of foreign service.

There were just two or three things that Philip could not do. With all his many fascinations, his perfect mustache, his talent for soothing irate tailors, his seat on horseback, and his step in the valse, he could not be angry or stern with a woman, or indeed with any one. He could not take anything deeply to heart, and he could not fret or fume as to what might or might not be his destiny; and he leaned lazily against the tree and thought of nothing. The game was ended at last, and Miss Richley came towards him.

"I am tired, Captain Kerr," she remarked; and the seats here are all in the sun."

It was a fair challenge, and Philip accepted it. He was an habitue of the house, and he knew of a shady walk; he could do no less than offer his arm to the heiress, and take her to it. And there they sat, the sunlight just playing through the branches, and the river rippling by. There was a certain luxury and ease in all this which struck Philip.

A vision came across him of the dull garrison town, and the troop-ship, and the foreign station; and then the contrast, a home in England, hunting and shooting, London in the season and the moors in August; and the thought shot across him, "One word and this may be mine." Then came a flitting thought of a fair young face, with its rosebud blushes and its trusting look. He put it away as too costly a bargain, and turned to the woman at his side.

Now, he had certainly paid great attention to Miss Richley. They had been much thrown together, and prudent relatives had implored him not to neglect so golden an opportunity, and here it was at once. He had but to speak, and dare his fate. As well finish the matter now. Poor little Louie! Well, no doubt she would find a better fellow than he was; and so his resolution was taken.

Truth to tell, Theodosia was expecting an offer from him every moment. It was no new position to her, and her heart was too well arranged to indulge in tightly-laced silk bodices to indulge in fluttering. She had gone through the same thing fifty-one times before; yet today she is puzzled. "Philip, dear," is the handsomest darling she has ever seen, except those Italian loves, the *guardia nobile*, and they are useless; and then his father is a baron, who married a Lady Alice Somebody, and his second brother is a clergyman, who married the widow of a dean, who was the daughter of an archbishop. Yes, dear Philip is on all sides so well connected; yet Theodosia was puzzled. A friend had that day spoken to her of a Scotch baronet who desired an introduction, and then she would be a lady, if not in her own right, at least in that of her husband.

Yet the friend had said Sir M'Gregor M'Gregor had red hair, splay feet, and an irritable temper; and dear Philip was so good-looking, and with such a sweet disposition; so that between Philip's charms and her own indecision, she listened when he spoke of his "devoted love" with a pleased smile, and he felt that the day was won, and that they were engaged.

No, not engaged.

She was too good a daughter for that—not engaged till she had spoken to her dear papa, and smoothed the way for Philip to appeal to him for his paternal blessing. Phil would have dispensed with the blessing if the settlements had been all right without it, but he had no choice; he tried to throw a love-like ardor into his voice as he said, "Do not keep me too long in the agonies of suspense, dearest!" but he felt a certain sense of relief in the fact that, not being formally accepted, he could not be expected to imprint a kiss on his fair one's cheek. There was not much of a rose-bud blush, and a good deal of *poudre de riz* there, and it looked dusty, to say the least.

Miss Richley had a strict sense of propriety, or rather a desire to avoid its being known to the world at large how far matters had gone in any little affair of this kind, therefore Phil was not called upon for any display of devotion; and when he put his heiress in the carriage which was to convey her back to the mansion in Marquis square, where the family resided during the season, the farewell on either side was so studiously courteous and commonplace, that the acutest of chaperons could not have detected anything particular.

Phil chartered a hansom, lighted a cigar, and drove back to London, pondering on his present position, and wondering lazily how it would all turn out; but as he dismissed his vehicle at the club door, a woman offered him roses for sale. He stopped, and a shade came over his handsome insouciant face as he gave her a sixpence and took a pale tea-rose from her stock.

"I wish I was a rich man for your sake, darling," was the thought that flashed across his mind; but the Rosebud to whom that thought was dedicated was far away across the seas; and Phil dismissed the passing cloud, and went up the steps humming a gay air.

Next morning, however, his courage slightly failed him, when he went to his necessary interview with the senior partner. If he did not succeed, he would probably have the pleasure of making the acquaintance of the commissioners in bankruptcy, and if he did—but the life that such success entailed offered a prospect not too agreeable to the well-born thoroughbred Philip Kerr.

Apparently, the visions of the night had not presented the Scotch baronet, red hair, splay feet and all, in too delightful a view to Miss Theodosia Richley; "besides," as she mentally observed, "after all, dearest Philip was an honorable." So, dressed in a most elaborate morning costume, all white furbelows and blue ribbon, she welcomed the handsome rifleman with one of her most fascinating smiles.

Mr. Richley, though only a shopkeeper, was at heart a true gentleman; his daughter's welfare and happiness were his first consideration.

"Let her future husband," he often said, "be a gentleman, and, above all, a good man, and I'll find the money for a house and home, such as she has always been accustomed to."

Under these circumstances, Phil's honest acknowledgment that he had nothing to offer in the way of settlement was no bar to his prospects. His handsome face, his kindly genial manner, won Mr. Richley's heart, and the acute old tradesman read his character truly. If he had no very strong points about it, at least he had no very weak ones. His virtues and vices were all of the negative order, except that he possessed a splendid temper.

The paternal consent and blessing were soon given, and then appeared on the scene Mrs. Richley, who, duly prompted by her daughter, added her blessings and congratulations, till Phil felt he could do no less than kiss his bride-elect, in a most calm and decorous way, in full view (as was proper) of her loving parents.

Moreover, he was invited to take up his abode there for the remaining fortnight of his leave; and in a good or evil hour, as it may seem to each individual reader, he accepted. The luxurious establishment in Marquis square suited not only Phil's notions of comfort better than his three floor bed-room and his club dinner, but also the state of his pockets. Rooms and dinner were gratis in Marquis square; there was a great point. All went well for a few days, till the arrival of some country cousins, who, being newly married, expected to see every couple of lovers as demonstrative as they were themselves; Phil did not do enough kissing to please them; he did not squeeze his fair one's hand in corners; and he made himself generally agreeable without seeking perpetual tete-a-tetes with his fiancée.

"My dear Theodosia," observed Mrs. Russell one evening, on their return from the opera, whither Phil had escorted them, "I suppose it is not the fashion; but really, now, if my William in our courting days had not put his arm round my waist as we drove in the carriage, and in the dark, too, I should have been seriously uneasy."

Another time it was, "Dearest, how very odd that Captain Kerr never seems to care to be alone with you. My William could not bear a third person in the room!"

Theodosia might have disregarded this, but her own sense told her that Phil was not a devoted lover; and though the congratulations of the Kerr family had been most enthusiastic, though they had mentally adopted Theodosia and her thirty thousand as a daughter and sister, dear to their aristocratic hearts, yet there were sundry outlying members who preserved the right to opinions of their own, and would have preferred Phil's bride being considerably younger and very much prettier, even if her pockets were not so well lined.

Now this heresy against the right divine of gold Theodosia secretly resented, and again she had visions of the baronet, and thought that "Lady M'Gregor" sounded quite as well as, or

better than, the "Hon. Mrs. Kerr." In short, having landed her fish Theodosia was getting weary of it.

The pleasure to her was in the catching, not the keeping, and Phil was far too secure and careless to please her.

Courteous and gentlemanly he could not fail to be, but he was no actor. He could not assume a virtue he had not; and he could not look impassioned, and he could not speak poetically, when he was feeling peculiarly cool and indifferent.

So the time went on, till, on the morning that he was to leave, it was Mrs., not Miss Richley, who greeted him on his entrance to the library.

"It is a very painful task, Captain Kerr, that is imposed upon me, but I have no alternative," were her opening words. "I cannot control my daughter's feelings; indeed, in this instance, I coincide in them; so does her father. We all feel that there does not exist between you the love which alone can render marriage a state of blessing, and it is better at once to end this hastily formed engagement."

Phil stared, but said nothing.

Mrs. Richley, having applied a filmy pocket-handkerchief to her eyes, went on:

"Do not answer me, Captain Kerr," (Phil, by the way, had not attempted it); "this decision is final; yet, as an interview with my daughter would be very painful to her, and useless to yourself, I must beg you will at once leave the house without urging it."

What could Phil say? A certain sense of relief, too, flashed over his mind. He simply bowed, expressed his thanks for the hospitality he had received, his regret at the sudden and, he must observe, unexplained termination of his engagement, and requested that a cab might be called to transport himself and his portmanteau to the club.

So ended Phil's dream of an heiress. Yet that heartless young man was actually heard to whistle "A te o cara!" as he drove away from Marquis square; and Mrs. Richley would have felt herself more than ever justified had she read his thoughts: "Free, even if a beggar. Rosebud, I may think of you lovingly now."

Phil did not lament when he found next morning that sudden orders had come for the regiment to sail for Canada.

One week later and he was on board the troop-ship as it steamed down the Mersey, and the band struck up "The Girl I left behind me." A dear, sweet face seemed to hover before him with bright, soft eyes, not cast up and down sideways like Theodosia's pale, gray orbs, but yet which spoke of a bashful affection as pure and true as ever throbbed in the heart of a gently born English maiden.

Yes, the hackneyed old tune carried his thoughts away to a bygone time and a southern land, and Phil Kerr came to the conclusion that he was, as he himself would have expressed it, a "brute," and that he had been "a big fool."

Phil was the only patient passenger on board; for, strange to say, he had begun to think, and seriously, too. Perhaps the bracing sea air affected his very easy-going ideas on many subjects; perhaps it was that he had nothing to do but to smoke, play whist, and think; but certain it is, that the gallant, self-satisfied and careless Phil began to think his honorable self but doubtfully worthy of that true love.

It might be, too, that the last month had shown him more of his better nature than he ever knew before; that love was as necessary to his happiness as gold; and that a future yet lay before him, far holier and truer than a wealthy marriage could give. Phil Kerr was a changed and better man.

A year had passed before we see him again, and now it is in the capital of the world—Rome; a salon in the Hotel Costanzi, a scent of orange-blossoms, and a lady and gentleman breaking the seals of their English letters—Philip and his bride the Rosebud.

A sad and fatal boat accident had ended the lives of his two elder brothers, his father had died of a broken heart for the loss of "his bonny boys," and Lord Philip Kerr had resigned his commission and hastened to Florence, where Rosie Amherst lived with her brave old soldier-father and her gentle mother.

He wooed and won the Rosebud of his dreams, and there was no complaint this time of a want of a love-like ardor; and now they sat side by side, in an attitude good Mrs. Russell would have highly approved of, reading their letters.