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VOL. IV. "Pro Bono Publico." No. 165

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Poetry.

TOUT OU RIEN.—(ALL OR NOTHING).

There are loves—and loves! and you say you love me,
And calmly ask me to be your wife;
And you promise by all the stars above me
To guide and cherish and guard my life,
But down in your heart is some old love lying
That shall make your promise a slow, dull task?
If so, in vain is your pleading and sighing—
Tout ou Rien is what I ask.

Do you love me better than all things human,
With that one worship that each life knows?
Or simply because I am a woman,
And can sew on buttons and mend your clothes?
Oh, woo me not in that business fashion:
I can not and will not give my hand
Unless you give me your heart's best passion,
Tout ou Rien is what I demand.

Her earthly life and her hopes of heaven
(Since he lifts up or drags her down)
Unto a husband is freely given,
When a woman accepts the wifely gown.
Youth and health and freedom and beauty
She gives to his babies, as mothers must,
And holds it all as a sacred duty,
Born of the holiest love and trust.
Let your love's measure be empty or heap it,
It is all or nothing between us two;
Give me the whole of your heart, or keep it—
Tout ou Rien—Rien ou Tout.

"Was He Guilty?"

—OR—

JESSIE GRAHAM,

A STORY OF LOVE AND PRIDE.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" cried Ellen, when it was settled, "for now there'll be somebody to play with when my head aches too hard to go to school. I hope she'll bring a lot of dolls; and, Walter, you won't ink their faces and break their legs as you did that cob baby Aunt Debby made for me?"

When thus appealed to, Walter was reading for himself the letter which had fallen at his grandfather's feet, and his clear eyes were moist with tears, as he read the postscript:

"I have as yet heard nothing from Seth, poor fellow! I hoped he would be back ere this. It may be I shall meet him in my travels."

"He isn't so bad a man after all," thought Walter, and with his feelings softened toward the father, he was more favorably disposed toward the daughter's dolls, and to Ellen's question he replied. "Of course I shan't bother her if she lets me alone and don't put on too many airs."

"I can't see to write as well as I used to," said the deacon, after everything had been arranged, "and Walter must answer the letter."

"Walter won't do any such thing," was the mental comment of the boy, whose animosity began to return toward one who he fancied had done his father a wrong.

After a little, however, he relented, and going to his room wasted several sheets of paper before he was at all satisfied with the few brief lines which were to tell Mr. Graham that his daughter Jessie would be welcome at Deerwood. Great pains he took to spell her name according to his views of orthography, making an extra flourish to the "y" with which he finished up the "Jessy."

"Now, that's sensible," he said. "I wonder Aunt Debby don't spell her name b i-e-by. She would, I dare say, if she lived in New York."

Walter's ideas of city people were formed entirely from the occasional glimpses he had received of his proud Boston relatives, who had been highly indignant at his mother's marriage with a country youth, the most of them resenting it so far as to absent themselves from her funeral. His lady grandmother, they told him, had been present, and had held him for a moment upon her rich black mourning dress, but from that day she had not looked upon his face. These things had tended to embitter Walter toward his mother's family, and judging all city people by them, it was hardly natural that he should be very favorably disposed toward little Jessie. Still, as the time for her arrival drew near, none watched for her more vigilantly or evinced a greater interest in her coming than himself, and on the day when she was expected, it was observed by his cousin Ellen that he took more than usual pains with his toilet, and even exchanged his cowhide boots for a lighter pair, which would make less noise in walking; then as he heard the whistle at the distance, he stationed himself by the gate, where he waited until the gray horses which drew the village omnibus appeared over the hill. The omnibus itself next came in sight, and the head of a little girl was thrust from the window, a profusion of curls falling from beneath her brown straw hat, and herself evidently on the lookout for her new home.

"Curls, of course," said Walter. "See if I don't cut some of 'em off" and he involuntarily felt for his jack-knife.

By this time the carriage was so near that he vacated his post, lest the strangers should think he was waiting for them and returning to the house, looked out of the west window, whistling indifferently, and was apparently quite oblivious of the people alighting at the gate, or of the chubby form tripping up the walk, and with sunny face and laughing round bright eyes, winning at once the hearts of the four who, unlike himself, had gone out to receive her.

CHAPTER II.

MR GRAHAM AND JESSIE.

She was a little fat black-eyed, black-haired girl, with waist and ankles of no Lilliputian size, and when at last Walter dared to steal a look at her, she had already divested herself of her travelling habiliments, and with the household cat in her arms, was looking about for a chair which suited her. She evidently did not fancy the high, old-fashioned ones which had belonged to Deacon Marshall's wife, for, spying the one which was never used, and into which even Ellen dared not climb, she unhesitatingly wheeled it from its place, and seated herself its capacious depths, quite as a matter of course.

A good deal shocked, and somewhat amused, Walter watched her proceedings, thinking to himself:

"By and by I'll tell her that is father's chair, and then she won't want to sit in it; but she's a stranger now, so I guess I'll let her alone."

By this time the cat, unaccustomed to quite so hard a squeeze as Jessie gave it, escaped from her lap, and jumping down, Jessie ran after it, exclaiming:

"Oh, boy, boy, stop her!"

A peculiar whistle from Walter sent the animal flying faster from her, and shaking back her curls, Jessie's black eyes flashed up into his face, as she said;

"You're the meanest boy, I don't like you a bit."

"Jessie," said the stern voice of her father, and for the first time since his entrance, Walter turned to look at him, and as he looked he felt the bitterness gradually giving way, for the expression of Mr. Graham's face was not proud and overbearing as he had fancied it to be.

On the contrary, it was mild and gentle as a woman's, while there was something in his pleasant blue eyes which would prompt an entire stranger to trust him at once.

He had seen much of the world, and of what is called best society, and his manners were polished and pleasing. Still there was nothing ostentatious about him, no consciousness of superiority, and when Deacon Marshall, pointing to Walter, said to him, "This is Seth's child," he took the boy's hand in his own, and for a moment, stood gazing down into the frank, open face, then pushing the brown hair from off the forehead, he said:

'You look as your father did, when we were boys together, and he was the dearest friend I knew.'

'What made you turn against him then?' trembled on Walter's lips, but the words were not uttered, for Mr. Graham's manner had disarmed him of all animosity, and he said instead:

'I hope I may be as good and true a man as I believe him to have been.'

For a moment longer Mr. Graham held the hand in his, while he looked admiringly at the boy, who had paid this tribute to one whom the world considered an outcast, then releasing it, he turned away, and Walter was sure that his eyes were moist with something which looked like tears.

'I like him for that,' was his mental comment, as he watched Mr. Graham talking with his aunt of little Jessie, who, when he bade her farewell,—for he went back that night,—clung sobbing to his neck, refusing to be comforted, until Walter whispered to her of a bright-eyed squirrel playing in its cage up in the maple tree.

Then her arms relaxed their grasp, and she went with Ellen to see the sight, while Walter accompanied Mr. Graham to the depot. There was a bond of sympathy between the man and boy, and they grew to liking each other very fast during the few moments they talked together upon the platform of the Deerwood station. Numerous were the charges Mr. Graham gave Walter concerning his little girl, bidding him care for her as if she were a sister, and Walter felt a boyish pride in thinking how well he would fulfil his trust.

Mr. Graham could never tell what prompted him to say it, but as his mind went forward to the future, when Jessie would be grown, he said:

'She will make a beautiful woman, I think, and I hope she will be as good and pure as beautiful, so that her future husband, should she ever have one, will not look to her in vain for happiness.'

It might have been that Mr. Graham was thinking of his own wife, and the little congeniality there had been between them. If so, he hastened to thrust such thoughts aside by adding, laughingly:

'Her grandmother is a remarkably scheming old lady, and has already set her heart on William Bellenger, or rather on his family, but I would rather see her buried than the wife of any of that race.'

Unconsciously Mr. Graham had wounded Walter deeply, for in his veins the blood of the Bellengers was flowing, and he did not care to hear another speak thus disparagingly of a race from which his gentle mother sprung, though he had no love for it himself. William Bellenger was his cousin, and even now he felt his finger tips tingle as he recalled the only time they had met. It was on the occasion of that first visit to Boston, to which Ellen had alluded. His uncle's family were then boarding at the Tremont and William was making a constrained effort to entertain him in the public parlor, when he became so frightened with the gong, mistaking it for a roaring lion, and taking refuge behind the door as Ellen had said. With explosive shouts of laughter William repeated the story to all whose ear he could gain, and Walter had never forgotten the sneering tone of his voice as he called after him at parting:

'The lion's out! the lion's out!'

They had not seen each other since,—he hoped they never should see each other again,—and though sure that he disliked Jessie very much, he shrank even from the thought of associating her with William Bellenger, though he did not like to have Mr. Graham speak so slightingly of him. Something like this must have shown upon his face, for Mr. Graham saw the shadow resting there and quickly divining the cause, hastened to say:

'Forgive me, Walter, for speaking thus thoughtlessly of your mother's family. I did not think of the relationship. You are not like them in the least, I am sure, for you remind me each moment of your father.'

Around the curve the train appeared in view, but Walter must ask one question of his companion, and as the latter sprang upon the forward car, he held his arm, and said to him entreatingly, as it were:

'Do you think my father guilty?'

Oh, how Mr. Graham longed to say no to the impulsive boy, whose handsome face looked up to him so wistfully. But he could not, and he answered sadly:

'I did think so, years ago.'

'Yes, yes; but now? Do you think so now?' and Walter held fast to the arm, even though the train was moving slowly on.

The ringing of the bell, the creaking of the machinery, and the puffing of the engine increased each moment; but above the din of them all Walter caught the reply:

'I have had no reason to change my mind,' and releasing Mr. Graham, he sprang to the ground and walked slowly back to the farm-house, his bosom swelling with resentment, and his eyes filling with tears, for upon no subject was the high-spirited boy so sensitive as the subject of his father's honor.

'I'll never believe it till he himself tells me it is true,' he said, and then, as he had often done before, he began to wonder if his father ever thought of the child he had never seen, and if in this world they would ever meet.

While thus meditating, he reached home, where he found the entire family assembled around little Jessie, who, with flushed cheeks and angry eyes, was stamping her fat feet furiously, and, by way of variety, occasionally bumping her hard head against the harder door.

'What is it?' he asked, pressing forward until he caught sight of the little tempest.

The matter was soon explained. Always accustomed to her own way with her indulgent grandmother, Jessie had insisted upon opening the cage and taking the squirrel in her hands, and when her request was refused she had flown into a most violent passion, screaming for her father to come and take her away from such dirty, ugly people. It was in vain that they tried by turns to soothe her. Her spirit was the ruling one as yet, and she raved on till Walter came and learned the cause of her wrath.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]