

Locks and Keys.

Locks are as plenty as grains of sand
Under the sea and over the land,
Locks that are strong as a strong can be—
But what is a lock without a key,

We hunt and hunt the whole house o'er
For the missing key that was in the door,
And no peace or comfort I'll be found,
Will come 'til the truant key is found.

This piece of steel with its curious make
We prize for the hidden treasure's sake,
And guard it well with a ring or clasp
To keep it out of the vandal's grasp.

Do you never think, oh neighbor mine,
That our hearts have locks both strong and fine
To guard the wealth that therein may be,
And that some dear hand must hold the key?

A tender word in the hour of pain
Will bring forth tears like the summer rain;
Tears long pent up, like jewels bright,
Long hid from the glorious morning light.

And after the tears will come the calm,
The blessed rest, the healing balm;
And less and less will seem the woe
That other souls our sorrows know.

A loving kiss will prove a key
To the old man's heart as sweet and free,
And kind words scattered here and there
Are keys to the holy gate of prayer.

NO. 10 BLANK STREET.

A GENTLEMAN CAN BE ACCOMMODATED with a pleasant suite of rooms, at No 10 Blank street. The house contains all the modern improvements. References required.

The advertisement seemed to me to promise well. I was tired of my pleasant home. For five years I had occupied the same rooms, and sat in the same seat at table. The penny postman was not better known on his beat than I on my way to dinner. I did not object to boarding houses. I was willing to eat baked beans of a Sunday morning, but I wished to partake of them in a new locality. Blank street led out of Beacon, therefore it must be genteel. Probably a suite of rooms there would be expensive, but I could afford to indulge myself a little. I was thirty-five, alone in the world, very well off, and doing a business which promised a speedy fortune. It was time I should begin to take life a little more on the sunny side.

I went to No 10 Blank street on my way down town. The landlady, Mrs. Lee, was a widow; handsome, stylish, apparently not more than thirty. I heard, afterward, that she would never see forty again; but as my informant was a boarder to whom she was under the frequent necessity of sending her "small bill" a second time, it was doubtless a malicious slander. She was a very attractive looking person, and I was at home with her at once. I had no sooner told her my name and my business than she seemed to feel well acquainted with me. She bowed and smiled.

"I shall be most happy to accommodate you, Mr. Prescott. This way, if you please."

Her black silk rustled before me up two flights of stairs. Her full, light curls shook with a coquettish grace as she turned her head. The rooms were delightful—spacious and handsomely furnished. The terms were a little exorbitant—at least I should have thought so had I been dealing with a man of business; but surely one would willingly pay a trifle extra to sit at the same table with Mrs. Lee. Her family, she assured me, was of the most select description; some three or four single gentlemen of high standing, and as many gentlemen with their wives. To be sure, she was obliged to fill her attics with cheap boarders, as she couldn't afford to keep any vacant room; but they were very quiet, and she trusted, no annoyance to any one.

I went there, bag and baggage, the next morning. I moved my pictures; I loved Art in a modest, half diffident fashion, and I had some fine prints and a few choice oils. When I had hung them to my satisfaction and put the bust of Clytie, the dreamy face I loved so well, on my mantle, I looked about my parlor with self-satisfaction.

I met Mrs. Lee's family at dinner. Some of the gentlemen were business acquaintances of mine. The ladies seemed pleasant and companionable and "all went merry as a marriage bell." Mrs. Lee did the honors of her establishment so gracefully that I was more charmed with her than ever. I pitied the dead Thaddeus—I had seen his name in the family Bible—because he had been obliged to resign so much youth and beauty, for she was but a young thing, she told me, when she was left to depend upon herself. The very words, she said, had never been allowed to touch her roughly. Mr. Lee had worshipped her as the Hindoo does his idol—I thought it an idolatry at once pardonable and pleasant—but he died suddenly, and in some way she was defrauded of all her property, and had been obliged to take care of herself ever since. But then, she said, smiling with the tears still in her eyes, every one had been so kind to her—she had found friends everywhere. Who could help being ready to befriend one so lovely and so winning, I thought, as I listened to her.

Do not imagine all this confidence was bestowed on me at our first meeting. It came out gradually, when I got in the habit of lounging for half an hour after dinner, or an hour in the evening, in the "family parlor," of which she and I were often the sole occupants. I certainly had no matrimonial intentions toward Mrs. Lee. I liked my freedom and I intended to remain a bachelor; still, I was interested in my landlady, and congratulated myself daily on having found a home where my buckwheats were always hot, and my cup of happiness and of tea alike sweet and full.

"What a happy man your husband should have been!" I said to Mrs. Lee, as I watched, admiringly, her nimble fingers—she had insisted on mending my gloves. I was but expressing a frequent thought of mine. I saw no call for my landlady to blush, though it was not unbecoming. I had surely meant nothing sentimental, but she received my remark with a flutter of pretty, playful embarrassment.

"I hope he was," she sighed; "I trust I made him so, and yet I did not love him as he loved me. He was a great deal older than I, and I think I was too young then to know what love was. I believe our affection is truer and fonder when we have seen more of life and learned what a precious thing it really is to have some one to care for and protect us. But what am I saying? I am confiding in you strangely. Your gloves are done."

And his love, had been too much for her. I felt uncomfortable, and I betook myself to my own room. I always left my door open; it was one of my old bachelor ways, it seemed more social. As I went up stairs I saw a girl standing before it, looking, apparently with absorbed attention, at my Clytie. Her form was slight and girlish. I could not see her face, but her dress was of a cheap material, and simply fashioned.

"One of the attic boarders," I thought; "or perhaps a seamstress bringing home some work."

When I approached her she turned and glanced at me with a confused and distressed air.

"Forgive me, sir," she faltered. "I was taking a liberty, I know; but that face is so beautiful."

"So are you," I longed to retort, but I did not. I had had enough of complimenting for one day. Her face was singularly lovely. She had a low, broad forehead—the very forehead of the immortal Clytie. Her eyes were large and blue, but full of the saddest, most wistful expression I ever met. Her face was very youthful—she couldn't have been more than sixteen—and her full, red lips had something of the look of a grieving child. I had seen, and felt all this in the instant my eyes met hers. I bowed courteously.

"Not at all a liberty! I am rewarded for leaving my door open if it has afforded you any pleasure. I wish you would step in a moment, and look at my pictures. If you fancy the Clytie, I am sure you would like some of them."

There was a singular absence of all prudery or affectation about the child. I suppose she saw in me simply a middle-aged man—for so I must have seemed to her youth—of honest face; and she bestowed on me at once a trust that was the most delicate of flattery. She came in, unhesitatingly, and lingered for a few moments, while I told her about the pictures. I could see the fibre of her mind by the expression of her countenance and the tone of her remarks as she looked at them. She had large idealism, strong love of beauty, which had probably been starved all her life. It was such a pleasure to see the light grow and deepen in her great eyes, as she stood with that wistful face, those parted lips, that I wished the resources of the Louvre had been at my command. When she had seen them all, she thanked me in that simple, child-like way of hers.

"You have given me a great pleasure, sir. I must go now; but I shall have something to think of which will make many a day's work easier."

"Do you live here, Miss—?"

"Hastings," she replied. "My name is Nora Hastings. Yes, sir, I live here—up stairs. I breakfast and dine earlier than you do, and I sit at the corner table; so it is not strange you have not seen me, though of course I had seen Mr. Prescott, the new boarder. Good evening, sir."

She moved from me up stairs as she spoke. It was not quite sunset, in the long summer's day, and, as she went up, the rays struck through a side window and kindled some golden lights in her brown, wavy hair; and somehow my boyish fancies of Jacob's ladder, and the angels going up and down it, came into my mind, and I went into my room, saying to myself, "Heaven bless the child!"

I flatter myself that I made use of a degree of diplomacy which would have done credit to the Chevalier Wyckoff in questioning the chambermaid next morning. I had her in to dust my books, under my personal supervision, and I drew her into conversation about several of the boarders. At length I asked, "Was there any one in the house I could get to do some sewing for me, did she think? Had I not heard of a Miss Hastings, who was a seamstress?"

"Perhaps so, but Miss Hastings did not do such work as gentlemen wanted"—with a hearty Irish laugh. "She finished off dresses and trimmed them, and made mantillas. Most likely this was not what I wished to have done!"

than like a landlady's simple courtesy towards her inmate.

"I am not sure that I had better stay here with you," she began. "You do beguile me, as you did last night, into saying such unwarrentable things, revealing all my heart to you."

I was utterly confounded. What had I been doing? I bethought myself of Mrs. Bardell's suit against the respected President of the Pickwick Club, and trembled in my patent leathers. Mr. Weller's advice to Samivel came into my mind, and I answered, a little stiffly:

"I had not meant to force your confidence, dear madam, and I did not know that you had ever said anything to me which the whole world might not properly hear."

Perhaps she thought she had been progressing too fast. She smiled, shook her long, fair curls, and rustled the folds of her black silk. She said I was "a naughty man, a very naughty man, to take up things so. Of course she had not said anything to me of consequence; only it was just possible some people might think it a little queer that she had confessed not to have loved Mr. Lee quite so ardently as he had loved her. But why need she trouble herself when she knew it would go no farther?"

"Of course it would not," I answered. "Anything that she did me the honor to confide to me was sacred."

Then there was a pause and I felt very awkward. It would be difficult to say anything more, I thought, but Mrs. Lee did not find it so. Verily, the tact of woman is wonderful! In five minutes we had gone back two days and were talking together on our old terms of pleasant, easy familiarity. I was somewhat more absent-minded than formerly, perhaps, for many of my thoughts were with the little girl in the attic.

It was three days after I had sent her the Clytie before I saw her again. Then I met her on the stairs. It was eight o'clock, or past, in the evening. I was going out after my customary chat with Mrs. Lee in the parlor and I met her coming in. Her face was very pale and she stepped wearily. She smiled a little when she saw me and, stopping, held out her hand.

"You were very kind, Mr. Prescott, and I am more grateful than I can say."

"I only wish," I responded, eagerly, "that I could, that you would let me contribute to your pleasures now and then. You look tired, and I can't bear to see a young girl like you wearing herself out."

"It can't be helped, sir. I'm only too thankful that I have something to do. I need nothing; all my wants are supplied. It is pleasant to feel that I have a friend; and I look on you as one, though I have no claim on you."

"Would to heaven you had a claim on me!" I thought, as I watched her toiling up stairs. Would that she were my sister, my niece, anything that would give me a right to take her work out of her hands, and prescribe for her change of air and scene, rest and a little pleasure! Then I fell to thinking as I strolled across the common, what a sad, strange tyrant Custom is. Society would let me do what I pleased for my second cousins would smile on me if I sent clothes to the Sandwich Islanders or arithmetical to the Hottentots—but would by no means let me lift the burdens of this poor girl, who was my neighbor, with one of my fingers! I cried out against the absurdity of such a decree. Why must I pile up useless wealth and suffer? But for her sake I must submit to laws I could not change; for her own sake I must not seek to help her.

As I came home, though, I did indulge myself so far as to buy a tea rose in full bloom and a pot of heliotrope. They stood in my room over night, and the next morning I sent Ellen to her with them and the request that she would take care of them for me. I had taken it on trust that she loved flowers, and I was not disappointed when Ellen came back and told me Miss Nora was so overjoyed to get them that she almost cried.

I happened to meet her that day as I went up from dinner.

"I have to thank you again," she said, earnestly. "I am grateful. The flowers will be such company for me."

I asked her then if she would find time, the next afternoon, to go and see some pictures with me. It was when the English collection was at the Athenaeum, and there was one painting of "Hinds" which I longed to have her see. It was the face of one who waited and watched, and somehow I had associated it with hers. She could not refuse, she said; it would be such a rare pleasure she must make time somehow. While we were talking, Mrs. Lee came through the hall. She nodded to me, but she cast on my companion a look of singular distrust and dislike. I noticed it then, and remembered it afterward.

She spoke to me that evening about Nora Hastings. She had observed me talking with her, she said, and would I tell her if I was going to marry her? I might think it a very strange question, one which she had no right to ask, but, if I chose to answer it, she would convince me that she had good reasons.

I had no cause for hesitation. The thought of marrying Nora Hastings had never occurred to me, and told her so frankly. I related to her the beginning of our acquaintance and its slight progress, including my invitation for the next day. Then I waited for her reply.

"I hardly know what to say, Mr. Prescott," she began, in her soft, insinuating voice, shaking gently her head, with its long, fair curls.

"I am sure it would be kinder to say nothing, and it's not at all necessary, since you do not think of making her Mrs. Prescott."

"But what if I had been intending to marry her, madame?" I spoke a little sternly, perhaps, for I had satisfied her curiosity, and I was determined she should make the explanations at which she had hinted. I think she was unwilling to refuse me, still she spoke with hesitation.

"It is nothing; at least if any other gentleman in my family had been going to marry her, I should have said it was nothing and kept silence; but I have looked on you as my personal friend, and I should have told you that I considered her an artful designing girl, who had tried to entrap several of my best boarders into marrying her, and had failed hitherto."

I half wonder that this did not shake my confidence in Nora, but it did not for an instant. Her face, her pure, noble face, was her best advocate. It rose before me then, and I replied, unflinchingly:

"I am sure, Mrs. Lee, that you must be mistaken. As little as I know Miss Hastings, I would be ready to answer for every act of her life; though she has a frankness and simplicity of manner which might possibly mislead some. I am certain that you do her injustice."

"Let us hope that I do," she said, with a smile. "It has ceased to be of interest to me, now that I know she is not likely to affect the happiness of one whom I consider my friend."

She diverted the conversation into other channels; but I believe I had been a little vexed by her pertinacity in reminding me that I had assured her I was not going to marry Nora Hastings. I had told her the simple truth when I said that the idea of such a marriage had never occurred to me. But now that she had put it into my head, it did occur to me again and again. I took such an interest in Nora as I had never taken in any one before. Perhaps I could not win her; but if I could—I paused, and strange, sweet thoughts drifted through my mind, of what it would be to be loved and watched and waited for by such youth and beauty; to have her altogether my own. How she would love her husband, I mused—she with no other tie in the world! My dreams that night were rosier than any of the hopes of my by-gone youth.

We had a couple of pleasant hours the next afternoon, looking together at the pictures. Now that I had begun to think of Nora as one who might some day make my world, I saw new charms in every hour. It was a pleasure to show her works of art. She had seen so few, and she enjoyed them so intensely, and appreciated them with such a fine, inborn taste.

Any one visiting Ottawa cannot fail to be favorably impressed with the really beautiful grounds which surround the departmental and parliamentary buildings. The numerous flower beds, the Lover's Walk below the upper ledge of the cliff, all bear the impress of artistic taste of a high order. The Public Works Department exercises a careful surveillance over these grounds. Woe to the incautious dog that ventures to trespass upon them in defiance of the numerous notices which forbid canine intrusion. There are also notices to the public asking them to "keep off the grass," and here and there a policeman loiters about all the while keeping an eye to the safety of the general surroundings. Of course so charming a lounge and promenade is greedily seized upon by those unfortunate people who find themselves obliged to spend the hot summer days in the warmest city of the Dominion, and nightly crowds of respectable people throng the grounds, which for their convenience are kept open until half past nine o'clock. I am sorry to notice one eye-sore in this otherwise pleasant place. I mean the fountain which was built some years ago directly in front of, and much too close to, the main entrance to the Parliament Building. This fountain has never been put in working order, and as its location is unfortunate, it is to be hoped that some day it may be entirely removed, being certainly in its present state and position conspicuous as a failure.—Exchange.

German Proverbs.

One has only to die to be erased.
Handsome apples are sometimes sour.
Little and often make a heap in time.
It is easier to blame than to do better.
It is not enough to aim, you must hit.
To change and to be better are two different things.
Everybody knows good counsel except him that hath need of it.
Better free in a foreign land than a slave at home.
Better go supperless to bed than run in debt.
There is no good preaching to the hungry.
Charity gives itself rich, but covetousness hoards itself poor.
Speak little, speak truth; spend little, pay cash.

BRITISH TRADE FOR JUNE.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* calls attention to the fact that "the increase in the value of the exports noted in May was not sustained last month. Compared with June twelve months, there was, on the contrary, a falling off of about half a million, or 3½ per cent. For the six months the decrease was nearly six millions, or six per cent. But in both cases the decrease is largely due, as it has all along been, to lower prices, not to diminished quantities. The actual volume of our trade continues as large as it was, practically; it is the return for it which is less. That may mean, of course, disappearance of profits, but not necessarily so; for the cost of production has been cut down, as well as everything else, by the reduction of wages and the diminished price of the raw materials. But, however that may be, the figures of the return which was issued prove that the improvement in May was a mere spurt and that no real revival of trade has yet set in. Even the fall of prices would almost seem not to have yet reached its utmost limit."

An Italian official report lately published gives a summary of the criminal statistics of the first four months of this year. During the time there were 545 murders, 406 attempts to murder, 1,409 assaults with serious bodily injury, 7,015 assaults with slight injury. This gives a daily average of 93 armed attacks against persons. There were, besides, 473 robberies effected without employing arms, 11,325 thefts, and 1,052 attempts to steal. Very remarkable is the different proportion in which these crimes fall to the share of the several provinces. Foremost stands Sicily, in which during those four months there was a murder for every 12,000 inhabitants; next comes the Province of Rome, with a murder for every 13,000. In the Neapolitan district the ratio was a murder to every 16,000; in Sardinia, one to every 26,000; in Tuscany, one to every 56,000; in Piedmont, one to every 87,000.

Just as a clergyman said "I pronounce you man and wife" to a couple in a Mamphus church two years ago a terrific clap of thunder so shocked the bride that she fainted. She regarded this as an evil omen, and from that moment was downhearted, although she had previously been of a notably joyous disposition. Nothing could drive from her mind a foreboding of disaster, and a few days ago she tried to kill herself.

At the Court of England it is no longer a secret that the Prince Imperial was in love with the Princess Beatrice, Queen Victoria's youngest and only unmarried daughter. He hoped that by going to Zululand and winning the Victoria cross by some act of valor the many difficulties in the way of an alliance might be overcome; but it would have required an act of Parliament to permit the girl to marry a Catholic.—Exchange.

THE FORTUNE HE EXPECTED.—"What are you worth?" asked a rich old miser of a young man who was courting his only daughter. "Not much now, but I'm coming into a large fortune in a few years," was the reply. The marriage took place and then the old miser learned that the large fortune which the young man was coming into was his father in law's.—Exchange.

Schweitzer, a member of the Austrian Imperial Council, has been put on trial for selling orders and other favors from the Austrian Emperor. He used his influence at Court, and a partner in the business attended to the sales. The ordinary price for a decoration was \$6,500, while a brevet certifying that the holder was a Court tradesman, brought \$1,250.

The following recipe for home-made guano is given: Collect a barrel of bones, crush them, mix with a barrel of oak or hickory ashes; moisten with soap suds; apply a quart or two as a special fertilizer on melons, squashes, early corn and cucumbers, allowing a gill to the hill.

It appears from statistics drawn up at the Prefecture of Police that the number of cases of dog madness certified last year in Paris was 502. They were distributed through the four seasons as follows: First quarter, 141; second quarter, 175; third quarter, 133; fourth quarter, 53. To judge by these figures, there are fewer cases in the summer and autumn than in the winter and spring.

A Maine political speaker mentioned somebody as a Shylack, and an auditor asked who Shylack was. "If you don't know," the orator scornfully replied, "you'd better go home and read your Bible."