A Glimpse of the World.

Did ever you stand in the crowded street,
In the glare of the city lamp,
And list to the tread of a million feet
In the quaintly musical tramp?
As the surging crowd goes to and fro,
'Tis a pleasant sight, I ween,
To mark the figures that come and go
In the ever-changing scene.

Here the publican walks with the sinner proud,
And the priest in his gloomy cowl,
And Dives walks in the motley crowd
With Lazarus, cheek by jowl,
And the daughter of toil, with her fresh young heart,
As pure as the spotless fame,
Keeps step with the woman who makes her mart
In the haunts of sin and shame.

How lightly trips the country lass
In the midst of the city's ills,
As freshly pure as the daisied grass
That grows on her native hills;
And the beggar, too, with his hungry eye,
And his lean, wan face and crutch,
Gives a blessing the same to the passer-by,
As he gives him little or much.

When time has beaten the world's tatoo,
And in dusky armor flight
Is treading with echoless footsteps through
The gloom of the silent night,
How many of those shall be daintily fed,
And shall sing to slumbers sweet,
While many will go to a sleepless bed
And never a crumb to eat!

COUSIN FELIX.

BY AUTHOR OF "MISS MOLLY," "DELICIA," ETC

It was only when she had poured all her story into his sympathetic ears, and listened to the various remarks with which it was received—remarks that coincided so exactly with her own view of the case, that dismay filled her, and wonder as to whether the story had been her own to tell.

But Mr. Weston soothed her fears. "I am glad you told me," he said in an odd, jerky manner. "I am sure it was best, so do not trouble about it. The secret is quite safe with me; I," with an uncomfortable little laugh, "am not the least likely to speak of it. But all the same it is preposterous, it ought not to be allowed. Why does she give in? If she had said no—even if she does say no, there is no power in the world that can force her against her inclination."

"You do not understand Charity," Pellie said, lifting rather a tearful face to the dark one bent upon her. "Why," with momentary enthusiasm, "she would marry *anybody* to please father! But," she added more quietly, "however much she may pretend when the time comes, I shall know it is only because she is so good, and would not vex or cross him for worlds. I shall remember how often she has cried at the thoughts of it."

Mr. Weston was pacing up and down the room now, Pollie's words apparently finding a ready echo in his heart.

"It must be prevented," at last he said as if to himself. "Why, Felix himself,"—and then stopped abruptly.

"Yes," said Pollie, raising her head, "there is just that one faint hope—he may not like her!"

"Not much fear of that."

"Not much *hope*, you mean. But, Mr. Weston," watching him anxiously as she spoke, to see what effect her words might have, "he *may* be a nice man"—evidently the possibility was a faint one—"and if he is——"

"Well?"

"I am going to ask him—to tell him I mean——"

"But what?"

"Why, how is it that Charity agreed, just for father's sake; and I have quite made up my mind," with quiet determination, "to try and save her, because I know she would not do it herself. So," with a long breath, "I am going to ask him to go away. Oh, Mr. Weston, do you think he will go?"

"Very little doubt of it, I should say. That is, of course, provided he believes you. Why, what on earth, under those circumstances, would make him wish to remain?"

"Why, the money of course!"

At those words her listener started, and seemed about to make a hasty remark, but after a second's pause, he said quietly, "No, no, Miss Pollie, you are hard on him. I don't think," with a smile, "that even Felix Warburton"—and then suddenly breaking off, "But don't let us talk about him yet. I expect we shall have quite enough of him by-and-by; let us strive to forget him for the present."

"And you won't forget," said Pollie, "if any idea comes to you that would set it right, to let me know. Don't you know anything bad about him that you could tell father?"

"I have no doubt I could rake up a good deal if I tried, but the question is, would your father believe me"

"I believe he would," said Pollie earnestly, "at any rate you could but try."

Soft-hearted, tender Pollie was becoming a perfect dragon in her attempts to guard the golden apples, which she felt would of a surety be stolen from under her watchful eyes, sooner or later. Perhaps Mr. Weston did think of a plan of help, for the next morning, when breakfast was over, and he heard Mr. Warburton ask for Pollie's presence in the library, where he wanted some one to read to him, and had watched Cousin Sarah preparing to slip away to her usual morning occupation of letter-writing, he asked Miss Warburton if she would play one game of billiards with him. Asked her boldly before them all, so that any excuse would have been difficult; and when she attempted a faltering remark about "many duties," he replied that he would wait till all the duties were over. "And it is raining hard, you see, so out-of-door amusement is impossible."

And Charity, not knowing what else to say, answered "Yes."

On his way to the billiard-room he was waylaid by Pollie.

"Mr. Weston." He stopped, hearing the low voice in the passage.

"Mr. Weston, I forgot last night when I said that to you. Do you remember? About telling father something against Cousin Felix, I forgot I was breaking a promise. You must not do it indeed. Will you please forget all about it?"

"But what was the promise?"

"It was to Charity. I promised her that till I saw him," with a little stress on the words, "I would not think or say anything against him. You know, of course, as Charity says, he *may* be very nice. Will you remember?"

"Yes," he nodded, "I will say nothing at all; that will be the safest plan."

"Yes—I suppose so. Till we see him," with a faint gleam of hope.

Then Pollie sped back to the library, and Mr. Weston dawdled on to the billiard-room. A bright fire was burning there, and everything looked cheerful. He sauntered over to the rug, and stood leaning against the mantelpiece, with his eyes turned in the direction of the door. Would she come?

"Yes," he believed so, "but not yet perhaps," and his thoughts returned to his own affairs during this interval of waiting.

"I must be off," he said at length half aloud, and then lower still, "Poor Charity!"

But, however much deserving of pity, a brave Charity nevertheless, one deserving of respect as well. For the secret, whereof the first faint whisperings had been striving to make themselves heard of late, was gradually discovering itself, and the low voice, if she cared to listen to it, was ready to speak up boldly and plainly now.

But that was what she would not permit. It was a little aching spot at present, but if not regarded, it might cease to ache in time. These sort of wounds do not heal any the quicker for care and attention; far better to ignore them. But these pleasant past ten days, all this walking and skating, talking and billiard-playing, would not, she felt, in the future of her life, count quite for naught.

"You have been a long time," he said, and there was something in his tone which brought a delicate flush into Miss Warburton's cheek.

"I am sorry," she replied. "Have I really kept you waiting? Let us have our game at once, or Pollie will be wanting me to go and take her place in the library. I have promised to go at twelve."

"I do not want to play," he said slowly. I want to talk to you."

"Then you have lured me here under false pretences, I think," she made answer in a would-be playful manner; nevertheless she *did* move a few steps nearer the fireplace as she spoke, to hear what he had to say.

But before he had time to break the silence, the door was opened again to admit Pollie—an anxious, harrassed-looking Pollie.

"Charity dear, the second post is in, and"—with a sudden impetuous haste—"father wants you to come at once and answer Cousin Felix's letter."

"Cousin Felix," repeated Charity, faintly, the color slowly fading away; "oh, Pollie!"

"He is in London," went on Pollie excitedly; "he did not even come here *first*, but he has written, and father wants you to go and write to him."

"Oh, poor Charity," went on Pollie, taking the two slim white hands in hers, utterly heedless of the spectator of this little drama, who was leaning up against the mantelshelf. What possible interest could it have for him?

"Oh, poor Charity, I would have written, I offered to do so, but father said he would rather you did it."

"Of course," said Charity, very low. "Why, Pollie," with a faint attempt at speaking lightly, "*I* am the eldest, I cannot have you take all my duties from me! You two," but she did not give a glance towards the tall figure on the hearthrug, "must play together. You will have time for a good game before luncheon," and she turned away.

"Oh, Mr. Weston," cried Pollie, as the door closed behind the slight figure, "he is coming now. He is actually in England," with a little gasp.

"When is he coming?"

Mr. Weston was no longer a calm, disinterested spectator, there was something of fire and energy in his dark eyes.

"Wednesday next week, and to-day is Thursday."

"Wednesday," he repeated; "that is the day of Lady Burnett's fancy ball, is it not?"

"Yes, Charity is going, and you also, are you not?"

"I think not, I shall probably have left by then."

"Are you going away?" cried Pollie. "I am so sorry."

"That is very kind of you, Miss Pollie. The world is not so very wide; perhaps we may meet again."

But Pollie shook her head disconsolately.

"I shall go away," she said, "I cannot play. I can think of nothing but cousin Felix and poor Charity—I must go and see what she is doing. But," turning back and glancing up at the steady eyes, which looked so sympathetic, "all the same I thank you very much for having been so kind. I am sure if you *could* have thought of a plan, you would. I wish," a little wistfully, "that my plan had been a right one, because it might have done some good."

"Abusing Felix, eh, to your father?"

"Yes, but still it would have been mean, I know. Charity would not have done it, so," with a sigh—"but it does seem a pity that she did not have a chance!"

"She will have a chance," said Mr. Weston with a sudden determination, and drawing himself very upright as he spoke—spoke almost more to himself than to Pollie. "Such as it is she shall have it."

And then Pollie crept away sorrowful and heavy-hearted, for Mr. Weston's vague promises did not impress her with much hope or comfort.

CHAPTER III.

Rain, rain, still pouring hopelessly, steadily down, now at 4 o'clock just as it had done at 10 this morning.

Pollie, forgetting her sorrows for the moment, is deep in a story of such vivid interest, that she is lost to the whole outside world, as she follows the adventures of her heroine step by step, seated in the fire's glow, on a low stool at Mr. Weston's feet. He, Cousin Sarah, and Mr. Warburton have been discussing some question of America *versus* England; this has occupied them for the last hour, but now tea has been brought in, and the teamaker being absent, there have been sundry vain endeavors to attract the attention of Miss Pollie, and send her in search of her sister.

"Let me go," said Mr. Weston, speaking almost eagerly for him, rising as he spoke, as if to put no cut of the question. "I suppose I shall find her in the schoolroom," and he was gone before any one could prevent him.

Directly he opened the door, he saw his guess had been correct, for the girl he was in search of was seated in the shabby old armchair, drawn up close to the fire. Yes, of course it was Miss Warburton, though in a way, unlike her, for there was something in the attitude of the girl strongly suggestive of tears.

At the opening of the door, however, the head was raised a little, and a sufficiently steady voice asked: "Is that you, Pollie?" Then immediately added in rather a startled tone: "Mr. Weston!"

"Yes, it is I, Mr. Weston. You know you were called away out of the billiard-room this morning, before I had time to say what I wanted to say, so now I have followed you up here to go on with my story."

He had crossed the room whilst speaking, and was now standing in his accustomed attitude before her, one arm resting on the mantelshelf. He spoke quietly, very quietly, but there was something in his calm, determined tones that made Charity lift her head and say quickly, but very gently: "No, please do not go on with it. I think I would rather not hear it." But as she lifted her head to speak, the firelight shining across her face betrayed a gleam of tears on the dark eyelashes.

"But you *shall* hear it," he said with sudden determination, kneeling by her side and clasping her hands in his. "Charity, dear Charity, I love you! You know it, you must know it. Will you forget what a short time we have known each other, and promise to be my wife?"

"I cannot," in a soft, low voice, but with the words, splash fell a large tear on to the hand that held hers.

"What are you crying for?" without heeding her words. "You were crying when I came in; you have been unhappy all day. May I not even know what is the matter?"

But there was no reply.

"Charity!" she started at the word.

"You must not call me that," she said.

"You must give me a reason then. I cannot take your words yet as an answer to my question, for, Charity, I love you!"

"But you must!" she cried, drawing away her hands from his, and rising to her feet with sudden decision. "My answer to your question is 'No.'"

The tears were gone now; she was standing opposite him, the width of the fireplace between them—the stately Charity Warburton he had first known—and he felt very much further apart from her than he had done from the tearful girl seated in the old armchair.

Nevertheless he was in earnest, and no fancied separation should affect him. So he took a couple of steps nearer to her, till he stood by her side once more. She did not shrink away from him, but stood perfectly still, only she never raised her eyes. Then—"You do *not* love me?" That was what he said quite low, as he thus paused beside her. He waited what might have been a whole minute in perfect silence, the only sound the noisy ticking of the clock, and then with an impatient movement turned away.

"Silence means consent," then he said a little bitterly. "I will not bother you any more. Good bye, Miss Warburton!"

She had not looked up till then, but as he said those words, almost involuntarily she raised her eyes to his, and all their sad story was so easy to read. Even then she made no answer in words, made no attempt to prevent his departure.

But Mr. Weston turned back at once. "Charity," he said, in a troubled voice, "look up," and she obeyed.

"Charity," he went on, a red flush for a moment appearing on his dark cheek, "I believe," with a momentary hesitation, "that you *do* like me."

"Mr. Weston," she replied, clasping her two hands tightly together, and her low voice grew lower still as she spoke, "if I tell you one thing you will understand why you must go away at once, and never speak to me any more. I am to marry Cousin Felix."

"Yes," he said, "so I have been told." He did not mention Pollie's name, and Charity never thought of her.

Her father was the person she did think of; but what did it matter after all? In a little while every one would know it, only—"Mr Weston, then *if* you knew it—"

"You think I should not have spoken. But I do not see that. You are not engaged to him. It is only fair I should take my chance, and I have taken it. And I believe," with sudden vehemence, "that if there was no Cousin Felix in the case, I should have won you. Is it not so? Say yes, Charity."

"It is very hard!" she cried, not answering his words. "I have caused you trouble, and yet I have tried so hard to do right, and everything seems wrong."

"Don't look like that, Charity. You shall do right, or rather what you think right. I shall not try to prevent you! I will go away to-night, or to-morrow morning, and you shall never see me again, and you shall sacrifice yourself as you see fit, or rather as your father sees fit, for it is for his sake, I suppose, you are doing it. But first of all dry your tears, forget all I have said to you, remember only what friends we have been these last three weeks, and tell me the whole story. Perhaps a door of escape may yet open!"

But though Charity shook her head at that, she allowed herself to be calmed by his friendly words, and to be enticed back to her favorite seat.

And then she poured forth the whole story, as she had learned to know it so well of late, and almost unknowingly to herself, contrived at the same time to let the secret of her own young heart be clear y seen by the dark, watchful eyes.

"Now I have told you everything," she said, "as you asked me, and," hesitating, "of course it is fair you should know,—as" and here she paused, but the wistful looks in the pretty eyes said the rest.

"Yes," said her listener, "I have heard it all, and my opinion is that you are wrong. No, you must listen to me now." Perhaps Mr. Weston had been a little deceived by Charity's girlish, shrinking manner; had not quite realized the strong, powerful will that lay beneath it.

"No," she said, in those soft, firm tones he had learned to know. "You mean well, but I do not want to hear the other side of it. There may be one, of course, but it does not affect me. Father wishes it, and that is all I care to know."

"But, Charity"—Mr. Weston was firing his last shots now, in the intervals of pacing up and down the room, and Charity was seated very still and upright, with folded hands, to receive them. "But, Charity, if *he* knew—your father, I mean—that you did not want it——"

"He will never know."

"He should know; things are different now even to what they were three weeks ago, when you first promised him."

"Things are just the same as far as Felix and I are concerned," she answered, though her cheeks grew a shade whiter. "Father is old and blind, and trusts me; he shall never know that," her voice faltered, "I was tempted to break my trust."

Mr. Weston turned away in silence, and took another turn the whole length of the room ere speaking.

"And Felix?" then he questioned When he comes, he," with a sort of triumph in his tones, "may not like you."

"Then I shall be free. My pride," with a half laugh, "will not be much hurt."

"And supposing," he was standing still now, looking down with tender, pitiful eyes on her slight, upright figure, "supposing he should wish to marry you for—for the sake of other things, although—"

"Although he did not like me?" Her voice trembled a little then, but she went on quite firmly, "You must not say that. We have agreed, Pollie and I, not to believe anything against him until we see him. You must not let me break that promise." Mr. Weston turned abruptly away.

"You have conquered," then he said. "I shall go; I do not care to stay in this happy home any longer. But tell me first, did you write to Warburton to-day?"

"Yes; he wants to come next Wednesday or Thursday."

"And what did you say to him?"

"Just what my father told me: that we should be glad to see him."

"Nothing else?" There was a shadow of anxiety in his tone.

"Nothing," lifting her sweet eyes to his, but a shade of color swept over her face as she spoke.

He noted it, though he made no further remark—perhaps noted it with a half doubt, but she had spoken the truth. Was there any necessity to own to the great tear that had fallen right in the centre of the neat "Charity Warburton"—a tear, which would, if the postboy had not been waiting for the letters, have necessitated a fresh sheet of paper, but under the circumstances was quite impossible? So she had folded it up, and posted it, with a momentary passing thought—would he care?—even if he had known. Her tears and her smiles were alike immaterial to him, and she had only recalled it at the sound of Edward Weston's pitying voice.

"I am going then, Charity," he went on, "so this is good-bye, for even if I see you again, it will not be alone. But remember I shall watch and wait. "If Warburton comes, and you do not marry him, I shall come back. Do you understand?"

"Yes." The tears were gathering thickly now, but she brushed them away, and raised her head. "Yes, but I would rather that you did not think of it. I know myself that I shall marry Cousin Felix."

"So be it. Whatever happens, I shall never forget that I have known you. I think, Charity"—his voice falling—"you are the sweetest, bravest woman I ever met. Such a daughter would make a good wife to any one!"

Courage, Charity, it is nearly over now.

These fights are very hard, and a woman's weapons are so few, and her buckler so easily pierced, but then every victory gained is fresh strength for what follows. "Good-bye, Mr. Weston," laying a small hand in his, and for the last time lifting her eyes to those dark ones she had learned to love. "I shall not go down again to-night, so this is, in truth, good-bye. I, also," with a momentary pause, "shall always remember with pleasure that you are my friend."

He said nothing more. For a second he laid his other hand over the little one that rested in his, and then without one backward glance he went.

"Good-bye, Miss Pollie," as, his farewells all said, Mr. Weston stood in the hall preparatory to driving to the station.

"Good-bye, Mr. Weston; Charity is not down yet. She had a headache last night, and that has made her lazy this morning. I must say good-bye for both of us. Have you," coming a step nearer, "thought of *anything* yet?"

"I gave her a chance, Miss Pollie, as I told you I would," buttoning himself into his ulster as he spoke, "but she would not take it."

"Thank you, Mr. Weston," said Pollie gravely, "I knew you would try. But, you see, Charity is not like us. She would think things mean that we might think quite fair."

"No, she is not like us," was all Mr. Weston said, as he got up into the dog-cart, and kissed his hand to Pollie, who stood on the doorstep to watch him out of sight.

Once more Charity and her sister are seated over the bedroom fire, discussing dress and similar frivolities, for this is Wednesday, and the night of Lady Burnett's fancy ball.

This has been a long week, Charity thinks; it seems a great deal more than a few days since Mr. Weston said good-bye to her in the darkening schoolroom. But one thing there remains to be thankful for. The last train is in from London, and Cousin Felix has not arrived, so she is at liberty to go to her ball, undisturbed by any ideas of the coming shadow until to-morrow. So she strives to forget the dark eyes that spoke of love to her, and to interest herself, as Pollie is doing, in the powdering of her hair, the arrangement of the white lace cap and muslin fichu, which are to mark her out, in her plain black dress, as a Royalist of republican France.

"Mrs. Sayer will be here directly, Charity," for Cousin Sarah's ball-going days were over, and Miss Warburton was to have the benefit of Mrs. Sayer's matronly wing to protect her. "Where are your mittens? Now here is your fan. Do open it, and let me see how you look. Oh, beautiful! Dear Charity, how I wish I were going with you!"

"In two years, Pollie; only two years."

"In two years; why then, Charity, you will——"

But Miss Warburton did not wait to hear what would have become of her in two years. "My cloak, Pollie. Come, I hear the carriage." And with a kiss, Charity hastened away.

Once in the ballroom, amidst the lights and music, for the moment Charity forgot all her troubles. She tried so hard *not* to remember, that perhaps that partly helped her, so she danced and enjoyed herself, and the color heightened in her cheeks, until sorrowful past and uncertain future were alike merged in the present.

"I thought Mr. Weston had gone," Mrs. Sayer once remarked to Charity, meeting her.

"Yes," said Charity quickly, "he has gone—left us, I mean."

"But he is here," said Mrs. Sayer; "I have just met him. I suppose," not wishing to detain the girl from the waltz just beginning, "that he is staying somewhere else in the neighborhood."

Charity supposed so also, as there seemed nothing else to say, and turned away with her partner. She must be mistaken, was her own thought.

But after this dance fresh agitation was in store for her.

"Miss Warburton," said Lady Burnett, stopping her, "there is a gentleman here who wishes to be introduced to you. I think he came with Mr. Weston; his name is the same as yours, so perhaps he may turn out to be an unknown relation. May I bring him in?"

"Yes, I should be glad," said Charity, with whitening cheeks.

Then he had come at last, and Mr. Weston had brought him, so that he might see for himself the effect that Cousin Felix would have upon her. "But I shall not flinch now," she thought, "the worst was over long ago." And for one second only her memory wavered back to the schoolroom in the twilight, and to the dark eyes that had there looked into hers.

"Come, Miss Warburton, shall we explore this conservatory? It looks cool and pleasant."

It did indeed; and Miss Warburton, with willing feet, turned in amongst the flowers, where the softened light of the Chinese lanterns was more merciful; not quite so demonstrative of paling cheeks as the glare of the ballroom.

"A capital 'get up,'" remarked her partner by-and-by, looking in the direction of the doorway.

And Charity, looking too, saw enter a tall figure clad in black armor from head to foot; but only one part of the knight's dress, that was so perfect as to have called forth the admiration of her companion, arrested her attention. His right arm was in a sling.

"Cousin Felix, Cousin Felix!" Her quick-beating heart seemed saying his name aloud, as he advanced slowly to her, Lady Burnett by his side.

"I do not understand," Miss Warburton heard her say, as they approached; "but never mind, I shall be sure to see you again by-and-by."

Then they drew nearer yet.

"Mr. Warburton, Charity wants to be introduced to you."

And Charity bowed a little wonderingly towards the mail clad figure.

"Mr. Paget," went on Lady Burnett, turning towards Charity's companion, "will you kindly take me back to the ballroom?"

And Mr. Paget rising, he and lady Burnett departed together.

A great desire came over Charity to rise and hasten after them; but it was not to be. The moment had come to put her resolution to the test; she would not fail now, so she brought her eyes back from their long look after Lady Burnett's form to the man beside her, and, gazing straight before her, addressed him.

"I suppose you are Cousin Felix," she said gently. "Then you must have come this afternoon after all?"

"Yes, I was at the inn, and as I knew you were to be here, I thought I would come."

"How did you know it?" she asked, still trying to quiet her beating pulses, and all intent on speaking calmly.

"From Weston. He met me, and told me you were coming, so we agreed to drive over together. I have just been explaining it to Lady Burnett. When I got your letter," after a few minutes' pause, "I determined to come at once."

"Why?"

Out of his glove he took a letter that Charity recognized at once, and reddened when she saw. She watched it nervously as he opened it, and showed her her own handwriting.

"When I saw *that*," he said, pointing to the great telltale teardrop across the signature, "I made up my mind to come *at once*."

"Why?" again asked Charity.

"Because," speaking in a lower tone, "I knew you were unhappy."

At those words Charity raised her eyes for the first time, and then quickly and impetuously rising to her feet—

"I wish I could see your face," she said hesitatingly.

Without a word he took off the disguising helmet, and disclosed a smooth, dark head, and a pair of dark eyes that Charity Warburton knew only too well.

"I thought it was you," she said, with almost a sob, "when first I heard your voice, and of course I knew you when I looked up. But why did you do it—why? You promised, you know," taking a step away from him as she spoke. "Don't you remember, that"—a little disjointedly—"that you promised?"

But before she could escape, a hand on her arm detained her.

"You promised too, Charity. You promised that you would listen to Cousin Felix, though you would not to Mr. Weston, so you must stay now."

"But," cried Charity, despair in her tone at the thought that the battle was not over even yet, "you are not Cousin Felix—you are——"

"But I *am* Cousin Felix. How else could I have received this?" raising the tear-stained letter to his lips as he spoke. "I *am* Cousin Felix," drawing her closer to him, and looking down into the wondering, upraised eyes, "and over and over again you have told me that you will marry him and no other. And remember I have been hardly dealt with hitherto. I have heard nothing but evil of myself. I have even been asked to strive to blacken my own character! But to-day, Charity," with sweet, tender emphasis, "that is all altered, and I am not going to let you escape me. With your own lips you told me long ago, that whenever *I* came to claim you, you were mine—and now the hour has come!"

And at last Charity understood. Understood that there was no more need to veil her eyes from the loving fire in his; understood that hand and heart might go together; that there was no one in the wide, wide world she would choose, if she could, to take the place of Cousin Felix.

THE END.

Nothing is so credulous as vanity, or so ignorant of what becomes itself.