"Yes," of Yore.

A maid of yore had suitors seven,
Of low and high degree,
And of them all she loved but one;
This maid, oh! sly was she.

A task she set them all to do—
A garment each to frame
Of equal size and numbered seams,
To work they joyous came.

The flying needles she would thread,
Thus aid alike the band;
And whoso finished first his robe
Should claim by right her hand.

Thus in and out the fabric wove
The shining points of steel,
Each bearing well its linen load
As long as it could reel.

But one there was whose bodkin oft
She slyly filled the while
Of threads as long by only half
As were the rest in guile.

Thus soon triumphantly arose,
This youth, and proudly laid
The garment fashioned thus complete,
And won the wily maid.

So life continues to this day,
Men duped by woman's arts,
Ne'er dreamed that she herself, not they,
Finesse the trump of hearts.

SHIRLEY ROSS:

A Story of Woman's Faithfulness.

"Guy, who can think you so?" she asked, lifting her head, and looking at him proudly.

"Thousands," he answered. "My darling, think! You, in your faith and trust, have never doubted me for a minute—you bore noble witness to that effect to-day—but others will not believe in my innocence. My own, do you not see that to many the motive for such a crime is evident in my love for you? His life, poor fellow, was the only thing to stand between us—between you and me. Shirley, it would have been easier, Heaven knows, to me to die than to see you tried as you were tried to-day. My poor girl, if I could have spared it you!"

"And—and"—the lovely face was full of an unspeakable horror—"do they say—do they think you killed Hugh to—to—oh, Guy, I cannot say it!"

She sunk down in an agony of pain. Somehow this thought, so intensely horrible to them both, had never struck her; but now it filled her with an unutterable shame and anguish. Was this what they were saying of them? Was this what they believed? Oh, it was awful! No shame could equal this—no disgrace was ever so great!

Guy was grieved beyond measure at the effect of his words. She lay in his arms, trembling with an intense suffering which he was powerless to control; all the life seemed to have died out of her face as it rested against his breast; her breath came in quick faint gasps; for a moment he thought she was dying, and would have summoned assistance, but she stopped him.

"Call no one; let no one see," she said, with stiff white lips; and he waited anxiously until the terrible emotion had in some degree passed away and a faint shade of color had stolen back to her lips.

"I have startled you—forgive me," she said gently, disengaging herself from his arms; and moving a little way from him, she sat down in a low chair; and a silence fell between them—a silence of strange embarrassment; a silence so intense that one could have heard a pin drop in the room.

"Guy, is it true?" Shirley asked at length in a curious strained voice.

"That they will say so? I fear so indeed, love," he answered tenderly. "But"—he moved to her side and bent over her—"need we mind that Shirley?"

She looked up at him with a blind, bewildered expression in her hazel eyes, an expression which filled him with pain and fear for her.

"Darling," he said softly, kneeling down by her side and encircling the trembling form with his arms, "you will come to me now, will you not? Not quite directly perhaps—I would not ask that—but in a few months. Remember how long I have loved you, how much I have suffered from our long and cruel separation. There is nothing between us now. Forgive me for speaking of this, my darling—it is soon, I know, and selfish to urge my wishes on you; but, Shirley, all this time I have longed for you, and it has been very hard to bear."

"Very hard, Guy," she repeated, softly, looking into his face with earnest, tender, sorrowful eyes from which the horror had all departed now, leaving only intense sadness in its place.

"They have been such weary years, my own," he went on huskily—"those years of wandering and striving—how hard Heaven only knows!—to forget you; but your face was ever before my eyes, your voice always in my ears, the touch of your dear fingers always lingering in my hand. Once, when I was very near death—I had met with an accident and fever had ensued—I thought you were standing beside me, I thought that I prayed you to put your lips to mine once and kiss me before I died. Shirley, my own, would you have cared so much?"

"I wonder—I wonder if you can guess how much, Guy?"

"My darling!"

He clasped her to him with sudden passion; but she disengaged herself gently but firmly from the tender arms, having her hands in his as her eyes rested upon him with an intense love and sadness, an agony of renunciation and woe which he would not, he dared not, understand.

"Oh, Guy, poor fellow!" she murmured softly; and the tears gathered slowly in her eyes.

How changed he was—how terribly changed—and how greatly he had suffered! It broke Shirley's heart to add to that suffering; and yet how could she go to him, bringing with her a confirmation of the horrible suspicion which people had entertained? How could she marry him when the marriage would but confirm his guilt and shame? Yet, reading the agony on his face and feeling the acute pain of her own aching heart, how could she send him away? He had left her when his love might have brought with it shame and disgrace. Did she love him well enough to ask him to leave her?

Oh, the weary struggle which ensued in the sorely tried heart—oh, the agony of conflicting doubts and fears! Had she any right to send him away when she loved him so passionately, and when she was free to return his love? Had she any right to add to the unhappy, solitary, loveless years he had already spent? Had she any right to make him suffer further torture and agony? And yet to add to that unmerited shame which had already fallen upon him! Could she do it—she who loved him?

"My darling"—how tender his voice was now in the new dread which had come upon him, and which he would not let her see!—"you must not let the past trouble you any longer. It is all over, and together we will forget it. You look so frail and white, Shirley, that I can not be happy until I see some roses in your cheeks, and until these little hands"—kissing them softly as he spoke—"have a little more flesh upon them. You have been very ill, they tell me."

"Yes; but I am quite well now, Guy," she answered tremulously, and hid her face upon his shoulder, as he knelt by her side, to shut out his pleading face, so worn and haggard, yet so full of tenderness and love; and he folded his arms round her so gently that the pain at her heart deepened, and she dreaded with a yet more earnest dread what was to come.

"Do you remember, Shirley, one night long ago at Fairholme Court, that some one—I forget who now—sung some lines about the 'radiant grace of to-day,' begging the present to remain, and asking—

What future can restore, when thou art flown
All that I hold from thee and call my own?

I remember so well thinking that, happy as the present was, it was the eve of the day which was to give you to me, my darling—that the future would be yet happier, that it could hold no great grief for us since we were to share it together. But the great grief which came to us ere twenty-four hours had elapsed we could not bear together; we had to bear it apart. Now, my dearest, there is nothing to separate us. Looking far into the future, I can see no shadow of another parting from you, my own."

"Can you not, Guy?" she whispered softly, still with her eyes hidden.

"I cannot, darling, save for the few months which must elapse before I come to you and ask you to put your hands in mine and come to me, my darling, my wife! But this will not be like a parting; it will be but for a short time, and we shall be able to see each other often, dear."

"Guy"—she spoke still with her face hidden against him, but now she lifted her hand and rested it fondly and caressingly on his shoulder—"Guy, could anything make you doubt my love for you?"

"I think not, love," he answered softly, drawing her closer to him.

"Even if I were to hurt you?"

"Even then, Shirley."

"You would know—ah, you would be sure, would you not, that I did so only out of love to you, and because I knew it was best for you?"

"I would try to think so, my darling," he answered softly, a sudden dread chilling him as he listened to the words which seemed so difficult to utter, spoken as they were so slowly and brokenly, with the fair head bowed upon his breast.

"You would try? Thank you, Guy. Oh, my darling, my darling!"—she clung to him now with sudden passion, her head pressed against him with a convulsive strength—"won't you help me? I cannot say the words, but—but—you can guess them without my saying them."

"What words, Shirley?" His voice was very low, as he bowed his head over her; and, rising to his feet, he lifted her and supported the beautiful head resting heavily against his shoulder, as she stood trembling in every limb, prevented from falling only by the strong arms which enfolded her.

"That—oh, Guy, I cannot tell you—do not ask me! Help me—help me!"

There was a moment's silence. Guy Stuart had no need to hear the words to know her meaning, and yet he could not, he would not, understand.

"What is it, Shirley? Tell me, dear. You are breaking my heart with this suspense," he whispered huskily. "What can it be that you find so difficult to tell me?"

"I love you—I love you!" she moaned feebly.

"Is that so hard to say, Shirley" he said, a faint smile parting his lips for a moment.

"Not that, not that, but—"

Her head sunk yet more heavily against him, the breath came from her lips in heavy gasps, but her brow was damp and cold: she was physically unable to tell him, she had strength only to suffer and to cling to him with trembling weak little hands, as she rested against him. But in all her misery she was conscious of the loud throbbing of his heart, of the unsteadiness of his hands, and she felt with a strange intuition the look in his eyes which she could not meet.

"Well, dear?" Guy said softly, although her evident agitation cut him to the heart.

"Guy, you must—"

"What must I, my dearest?"

"You must—oh, Heaven, this is horrible!" she moaned in her misery, suffering too greatly now even to think of his pain. "You must go away and—never—see—me—again!"

The words came as if each required an effort, and, low as her voice was, each syllable was distinct and clear.

"I must go away and never see you again!" he echoed, forcing a smile. "What folly is this, my little one?"

"It is not folly," she said faintly. "It is the truth, Guy."

"That I am to go away," he questioned, trying to lift her head and look into her face, "and never see you again, Shirley? Let me look at your face and see if your eyes tell me the same foolish thing which your lips utter."

She lifted her face and looked at him, and Guy knew then her determination, and felt that she would hold to it if it cost her her life. Her face was ghastly pale and drawn with suffering; but in the dim eyes which met his for a moment there was an expression of agony, renunciation and anguish which he never forgot.

"I do not understand you, Shirley," he said gently. "Why must I go?"

"Guy, dearest, do not make it so hard for me," she answered pitifully. "Can I—can I add shame to your name?"

"My name! It is dishonored already," he said passionately. "For Heaven's sake, Shirley, let there be entire frankness between us now. Is it that you no longer love me?"

"Ah, how soon you doubt me!" she rejoined, with a smile sadder to see than any tears. "And only a few moments ago you said that nothing could make you do so."

"But, my darling, what am I to think?" he said hoarsely.

"You must think"—the sweet voice was low and broken and faint, but so full of music in its tenderness—"that I love you too well to bring disgrace upon you. Oh, my love, my love, think! Could we—could we give the world what they would call a certain proof of—of our—guilt?"

"What does it mater?" he asked, bitterly. "They will think me guilty. Shirley, if you love me, you will not send me away."

"Ah, my dearest, it is because I love you that I send you away!" she murmured faintly; and, with a sudden anger flashing into his gray eyes, he removed his arms from around her and half turned away.

A little cry of pain broke from her, and she slipped down upon her knees at his feet, bowing her head upon her arms in an agony of grief and shame. Guy stood looking at her for a moment in silence; then, turning away from her, he threw himself into a chair and covered his face.

After all he had suffered, after years of desolation and loneliness, after shame and disgrace and misery, this was the end! A foolish scruple, a regard for the opinion of the world, was to come between him and happiness.

An intense stillness reigned in the little room; the fire was dying out, and it was beginning to feel chilly and cold. As she crouched on the rug, the steps of the passers-by in the street beyond the little garden reached Shirley's ears and seemed to fall upon her heart; and, when a coal fell from the grate near her, she started and trembled. It seemed as if death were in the room, the silence was so heavy and oppressive; and it appeared to Shirley as if death indeed were there—the death of her hope and of Guy's love, which were to be buried with all the bitter past.

Was he very angry with her—very grieved? Did he think she did not love him! Ah! how could she hurt him so when he had suffered so much through his love for her already, and yet he had so much to suffer? How her heart ached for him.

She dragged herself across the room, on her knees, to his side and lifted her little fingers and tried to remove his hands from his face.

"Guy?" she moaned pitifully. "Guy, won't you speak to me—only one word, my darling—only one word."

"What can I say?" he said huskily, removing his hands and looking at her with eager, passionate, sorrowful eyes. "What can I say, my poor child? Perhaps you are right. But, Shirley, let people say what they will; if we are happy—you and I together, my own—we can give the world the go-by. We can go abroad, you and I, where no one will know us; in happier climes we will forget all this misery, and we will not mind that here in England they say that you have married the man who murdered your—oh, great Heaven, it is too horrible—it will drive me mad!"

"Guy—oh, Guy, my dearest, hush!" she implored, seeing how agitated he was. "Oh, my poor darling, I wish—I wish we had never met!"

The words were wrung from her breaking heart as she stood, trembling and pale, watching the strong man's agony. What after all was her suffering to his? What could her pain be to that which brought such a ghastly pallor to his face and such drops of agony to his brow, which made him stagger as he crossed the room to open the window and lean out into the cold night-air, for he felt stifled and choking in the little room? After a few minutes he came back to where she stood and took her once more into his arms.

"Shirley," he said very tenderly, and with the weariness of a great suffering on his face, "we will not discuss this any more now; we are both unfit for any further agitation, and we cannot talk this over dispassionately and calmly to-night. Besides, it is getting late, and you want rest, my poor wounded bird. But at another time, my own, you must let me persuade you that you are wrong, that there is no trouble, no disgrace, no shame that cannot be lessened if you share them with me. And I do not think it selfish in me to urge you, dear, because, even if you share the disgrace and the name I offer you is a dishonored one, I think my love is great enough to make up for it all. And now"—his voice, grave and weakened by suffering, faltered a little here—"I will say good-night, my own love, and leave you to your rest."

He stooped over her with a tenderness which almost broke down the composure she had striven so hard to attain; and, lifting her hands, she clasped them about his neck.

"Guy," she whispered, "you will do something to please me, will you not?"

"What is there I would not do, my own?" he questioned gently, smoothing the soft hair on her brow, and looking down with intense love into the sweet, changed, lovely face.

"This will not be difficult," she answered, smiling faintly. "It is only—Do you sleep well at night, Guy? Your eyes look so tired and worn. Are your nights bad now?"

"I have been rather restless lately, dear; but of course that was only natural."

"And to-night you will go straight to bed and try to sleep?"

"Are those my darling's orders?"

"They are my entreaties, Guy. I cannot bear that look of unrest and suffering on your face."

"It will not be there long, Shirley. Do you ever think of the sadness on your own, dear? It is the saddest, loveliest little face in all the world! And now"—he drew her closely to his breast, and, as she stood, she could feel his heart throbbing against her shoulder—"I must say good-night, my darling."

"Good-night, Guy. You have not given me your promise yet."

"What promise, sweet?" he said, his eyes lingering over the earnest face as if they could not tear themselves from it.

"That you will have a good night's rest."

"That I will do my best to obtain one?" he corrected, smiling. "Yes."

"And that you will try to forget all the trouble of the past, Guy, and to think only of the mercy which has been over us all through it all."

"'Our darkness but the shadow of His wings,'" he quoted softly. "Ah, darling child, how often that line helped me through all this troubled time!"

His face was beautiful now with the sudden light which came into his deep gray eyes as they looked into hers, and Shirley's sweet pale lips parted into a little smile.

"I often forgot it," she whispered. "But I know you never did, Guy. And now good-night."

She unclasped her hands suddenly and released him; but Guy held her firmly and tenderly.

"Are you sending me away thus?" he said, with a smile. "Do you think I will submit to such treatment, my own? Have you no other good-night for me, Shirley?"

She hesitated for a moment; then she lifted her hands again and clasped them about his neck, and drew the tall head down to hers with a sudden passionate tenderness. Their lips met in one long kiss, then she gently disengaged herself, and, without a word, he passed out, leaving her alone with the memory of that close kiss upon her lips as she sunk down upon her knees by the table and hid her face upon her arms. And thus Lucie found her half an hour later when she came in gently to tell her that it was almost mid-night, and that they were waiting to go to bed. And the face Shirley raised when the gentle hand touched her chestnut hair shocked and pained Lucie more than it had ever done in all that time of misery, and it haunted her often afterward.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

The promise Guy had given was hard to keep, for he felt anything but inclined to rest when he and Oswald left Mrs. Jackson's cottage and walked toward the hotel where they had put up. The streets of the old-fashioned town were perfectly quiet then; for all the crowds which had thronged them during the earlier part of the day had dispersed homeward.

Oswald glanced at Stuart more than once with an earnest pity and sympathy on his face.

"You found her changed, Stuart?" he asked, as they walked on.

"Terribly changed, poor child!"

"Ah, but she has been ill! She will soon look like herself again."

"Heaven grant it!" Guy said earnestly; but the dark shadow was not lifted from his face, and the yearning sorrow in his eyes only deepened; and, when they entered the sitting-room together, the langour of his movements rather startled his friend.

"Do you feel ill, old fellow," he asked gently; "or are you only very tired?"

"Only very tired," Guy answered, forcing a smile—"so tired that I feel as if I could willingly lie down and sleep the rest of my life away if I could. But I do not feel at all sleepy; my brain is on fire, I think; it burns and throbs incessantly."

"It is from want of rest and from anxiety," Oswald answered gently; but in his eyes there was a pity and fear he did not dare to put into words. "And you have had—perhaps it was impossible but that you should have had—a painful interview with Shirley. Do you know, these last days seem to me to have passed like a dream. I have been speaking and walking and writing in a kind of mechanical manner; but I have not realized yet, I think, that poor Glynn is gone. Stuart who could have done that evil thing?"

"How do you know but that I am the guilty one?" Guy said, restlessly pacing up and down the room, pushing back his thick dark hair from his brow, with a feverish gesture of pain as his troubled shining eyes met Oswald's. "How can you tell? I hardly know myself sometimes! It is all so strange and unreal! How was it they acquitted me to-day, Fairholme? How was it? I don't know!"

"There was no proof against you, old fellow. Don't talk of it, Guy," Oswald answered gently and gravely. "How could they bring you in guilty of a crime that you never committed?"

"They acquitted me because there was not sufficient proof against me," Guy answered, with a deepening of the pain and shadow in his eyes, "not because they did not think me guilty—I saw and felt that. In the eyes of hundreds there is no more guilty man in England than myself."

"All those who know you, Guy, have not doubted you for a moment. You have not forgotten the testimony your friend and brother-officers bore for you to-day."

"That was more *esprit de corps* than real belief in my innocence," Guy said earnestly and passionately. "They were concerned about the disgrace which would fall upon the regiment if I were convicted."

"You no longer belong to it."

"Ah, but I did belong to it!" Guy said quickly. "Fairholme, I tell you my life is blighted and dishonored. Never more can I walk among my fellow-men save with the brand of a cowardly murderer, one who decoyed a defenceless man to take a lonely walk and murdered him in revenge for a wrong done years ago. Ah, if I had killed him then in my first passion, they would have excused it. But to wait—to feign friendship and—"

"Stuart, for Heaven's sake, cease! You are feverish and excited and overdone. In he morning," Oswald added earnestly, "you will see all this in a different and truer light."

"Shall I?" Guy said wearily. "Ah, no, old friend! My eyes are open now. That poor child saw it too. She understood that I— But I promised her to try to sleep," he added. "And you are tired, Oswald. I was not to keep you up."

"You promised Shirley?" Captain Fairholme said gladly. "That is good news, Guy, because you will keep your word."

"If I can," Guy answered, smiling faintly. "What a trouble I have been to you, Oswald—almost ever since we met! Good-night, dear fellow."

Their hands met in a long clasp expressive of earnest friendship and good-will and kindness; and Oswald left Guy at the door of his room to go to his own, almost too anxious to sleep, fatigued and worn out though he was.

And, in his own room, lighted by fire and lamp, Guy Stuart threw himself into an arm-chair and bowed his head upon his hands, and sat there while the hours passed and the night wore on, sleepless, restless, fevered; anon rising and pacing the room with quick steps, then throwing himself upon the bed to try to keep his promise to Shirley, then rising once more and going back to his arm-chair by the fire, to sit there staring with wide weary eyes into the dying glow, only to rise again and resume his perambulations.

He could not rest; his brain was throbbing and excited, his eyes were sleepless and burning. An intense weariness was upon him; but it was a weariness which repose could not lessen. He was weakened by anxiety and confinement; the strain had been too great even for such a powerful frame as his. For nights and nights he had not slept in prison. It was not his own fate which had troubled him; it was Shirley who had filled his thoughts; that her sorrow and anguish should be made public, that the love which he had buried so deep in his heart should be brought to light again, had tortured him with an intensity of suffering which had worn out both body and mind.

And now, though the ordeal was over, the suffering remained. Although he had been pronounced guiltless, the shadow of evil had fallen upon him, foul suspicion rested upon him; he was blighted, dishonored, shamed! He felt to the depths of his soul how true Shirley's shrinking from him had been—that she was right when she told him that they ought not to meet again; that, if they married now, the evidence against him would be infinitely stronger, the suspicion of his guilt infinitely darker. And yet it was very hard, bitterly, unspeakably hard that they should suffer so intensely when they were innocent of all wrong!

The fire died out unheeded, the night hours wore on, but no rest came to the burning eyes and throbbing brain. Guy Stuart sat and thought and thought until thought became an unmeaning chaos, and his brain grew confused and bewildered.

Chilly as the night was, he felt stifled in the room; he went to the window, staggering slightly as he walked—for he was weaker than he was aware—and, throwing it open, leaned out into the night-air, looking with blind unseeing eyes at the silent deserted street, where the gas-lamps were flickering somewhat in the wind which had risen during the last hour. Resting heavily against the window frame, Guy Stuart let the soft breeze blow upon his burning brow and cool his aching eyes. He remained there for some few minutes, the reaction after his intense excitement creeping over him slowly.

As he stood, a man passing by in the street glanced up at the window and went swiftly on his way; but Guy staggered back with a hoarse cry of terror and pain, pressing his hands to his eyes, as if to shut out some horrible vision, and shaking with a fear which was new and strange to him. When, a minute later, he glanced out again, there was no one in sight; and he went back to the fire with the wild troubled look deepening in his eyes.

"Is my brain going?" he murmured, half aloud. "Am I going mad? It was of course a delusion of the brain; but——"

He fell back in his chair, covering his face with his hands once more, and gradually his great exhaustion conquered thought; his eyes closed, his aching limbs stretched themselves out to rest, and a heavy sleep—the sleep of intense fatigue—fell upon him.

The night wore on; the dawn came, and the sun rose high in the heavens, but the sleep—heavy dreamless sleep, like that obtained by a narcotic—still held him in its stupor. When he awoke, his eyes, opening slowly and blindly, fell on Oswald's anxious face, as he stood beside him holding a letter.

"Stuart, how is it with you?" he said, bending over him; and bewildered still, Guy held out his hand for the letter.

(To be continued.)

Feminine Personals.

Poverty parties are the latest rage, and are greatly enjoyed by those who wear patches as a "joke."

A pretty table decoration consists of an oval basket filled with snowballs and fringed with white lilacs.

Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Salisbury, of Big Stone City, Dak., have been married seventy-seven years. The husband is 99 years of age and the wife 97.

Cuban ladies and gentlemen, when travelling, dress precisely as if for a promenade—that is, with great richness and extravagance. Jewellery is profusely worn.

Just before selling the furniture of an old lady at Ryde, Eng., the executor examined an ancient bureau and discovered a secret drawer in which were upward of 1,000 sovereigns, closely packed.

A California widow had plans made for a $50,000 monument for her late departed, but when the lawyers got through fighting over the estate the widow was doing housework at $2 per week for the man who draughted the monument.

Nancy Hanks Lincoln, the mother of Abraham Lincoln, is buried on the outskirts of Lincoln City, Ind. A plain slab of marble about four feet high, almost covered with grass and dogweed, marks her grave. On the stone is the inscription: "Erected by a friend of her martyred son, 1879."

A rich North Carolinian put his 16-year-old daughter in charge of a young divinity student who promised to see her safe to a boarding-school. The school was reached on time, but a telegram was sent back to the parent saying that they had stopped at a way station long enough to be married.

Mrs. Charles E. Williams, of Westfield, Mass., arose in her sleep the other night, went to the window of her room on the second floor, raised it, opened the blinds and stepped out. When she struck the area below she awoke, and was considerably frightened, but that was all the harm her fall occasioned.

Mrs. Cleveland receives hundreds of letters daily asking for her photograph, for flowers and crazy-quilt patches from her dresses. For all requests there is the stereotyped reply: "Mrs. Cleveland wishes me to say that, while it would afford her great pleasure to gratify your desire, she is obliged, owing to the large number of similar requests, to refuse." These notes are written on the official letter paper of the White House, and are signed by Colonel Lamont as Private Secretary.

A Little Boy's Heroism.

The inquest at Bristol last evening on the body of Frank Jenkins, aged 6 months, moved the jury to a vote of admiration for Johnny Jenkins, aged 4 years. Frank, having been left to play with a lighted lantern, set himself on fire, Johnny, who was in charge, took the baby out of his cradle and dragged him downstairs, shouting for assistance. A neighbor who came and put the flames out was too late to save the child.—*New York Sun.*

It has been estimated that after a lapse of 10,000,000 years the sun cannot give out sufficient heat to support life on the earth.