

Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep.

"Now I lay me down to sleep,
When fades the last faint ray
Of the rosy-dinted day,
There gently stials a solemn thrill
Through the evening air so still,
As from each hearthstone, far or near,
Rise the voices of the children clear,
As in their perfect sports they stray,
While from their noisy sports they stray,
And twinkling stars in wonder peep,
"Now I lay me down to sleep."

Not alone for childhood fair
Is meant this simple prayer,
But, even to manly strength and prime
Shall come at last a needful time,
When 'mid life's battle's sudden gloom,
He hears the nearest step of doom,
And, though strong with Samson's power,
He knows the coming of that hour,
And repeats in tones more deep,
"I pray the Lord my soul to keep."

When the form that is now so proud
Shall, with age, be lowly bowed;
When the hair, now black as night,
Shall with the winter snow be white;
When the head slow time is keeping
To the eyes with sorrow weeping,
And vainly tries to call the past,
Slipping from its grasp at last,
Then faintly from the lips shall break
"If I should die before I wake."

Not for a little childish dream
Should be told this simple theme,
Not alone for quiet and calm,
But the bivouac and fierce alarm;
When dangers round about us swell,
As when peace and plenty dwell,
From age and youth and manhood's prime,
At life's closing evening time,
In accents soft and low should break
"I pray the Lord my soul to take."

RHYLLIS.

BY THE DUCHESS.

Author of "Molly Bawn," "The Tally," "Airs
Fairy Lillan," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXVI.—CONTINUED.

I am so utterly taken aback, so altogether surprised, that I even forget to blush, and can do nothing but stand staring at him in silent bewilderment. Sir James to deliver a lecture! Sir James to take upon him the part of Mentor! Is more than my brain can grasp at a moment's notice. Surely I have been guilty of something horrible, unpardonable, to shake him out of his taciturnity!

Harriet coming up at this juncture, hastens to assist me out of my dilemma. "Has he been scolding you?" she asks, briskly, with her quick ready smile. "James, I won't have Phyllis frightened to death by a stern old moralist like you. Go and get things together; and if you meet a comfortable motherly gray shawl, remember it is mine."

Thus dismissed, James, ever obedient, departs, casting a kindly glance at me as he goes. Harriet lays her hand lightly on my arm.

"Don't look so horrified, child," she says. "James' voice, from continual disuse, has degenerated into a growl, I own, but it need not reduce you to insensibility. He is awkward, but he means well, as they say in the British drama. Come"—with a faint pressure—"try to look more cheerful, or people will begin to wonder and imagine all sorts of unlikely things. You have made a mistake; but then a mistake is not a crime."

"What have I done?" I ask, rousing myself. "I only wanted to see the rink again, and Duke would not take me. He was unkind in his manner, and vexed me. Sir Mark offered to take charge of me. I believe I wanted to show Duke I could go in spite of him, but I never thought of—of anything else; and now Duke is so angry he will not even speak to me."

"Oh, that is nonsense! of course he will speak to you. You have committed a little folly, that is all. I can quite understand it. Probably, under like circumstances, and at your age, I would have been guilty of the same. But it was foolish nevertheless."

"He should not have spoken to me as he did."

"I dare say not; though I don't know what he said, and do not wish to know. There are always faults on both sides. And now, Phyllis, as we are on the subject, let me say one word. You know I am fond of you—that I think you the dearest little sister-in-law in the world. Therefore you will hear me patiently. Have nothing more to say to Mark Gore. He is very—unfortunate in his—friendships. I do not wish to say anything against him, but no good ever came of being too intimate with him. Are you offended with me? Have I gone too far, Phyllis?"

"No, no," anxiously retaining the hand she half withdrew, "I am glad, as it was on your mind, you spoke. But you cannot think—you cannot believe—" I am too deeply agitated to continue.

"I believe nothing but what is altogether good of you, be sure of that," she answers, heartily. "But I dread your causing yourself any pain through thoughtlessness. Remember how easy things go wrong, and how difficult it is sometimes to set them right again. And—Marmaduke loves you."

"I wish I had never seen this odious rink," I whisper, passionately. "I will never go to one again. I wish I never had laid eyes on Mark Gore. I hate him."

"Good child," interposes she, calmly, as an antedote to my excitement. "Now, go and make peace with your husband. See, there he is. Marmaduke, Phyllis is too cold in this coat; give her something warm to put round her shoulders."

Mechanically I obey the faint push she gives me, and follow Duke into the dimly-lighted hall. He strides on in front and takes not the slightest notice of my faltering footsteps.

"Marmaduke," I whisper, nervously, "Marmaduke, may I drive home with you?"

"With me! For what?"

"His tone is stern and uncompromising. My new found courage evaporates."

"Because I—I want to—very much," I answer, feebly, much dispirited.

"You came here with Gore. Why not return with him? It seems to me far better for all parties you should do so."

"But I do not wish it. I would rather drive home with any one than Sir Mark Gore. Oh, Marmaduke, please let me go with you."

"It is rather late to think of saving appearances, if you mean that."

"I do not mean it. I am not thinking of anything but you."

He laughs unpleasantly.

"Do you imagine you are pleasing me by making this request?" he exclaims, angrily, glancing down at me as I stand staring at him, my head barely reaching his shoulder. Reproach and censure are in my uplifted eyes, but they do not soften him. "Do you think you are offering me compensation? Pray do not for a moment believe I am either hurt or annoyed by your behaviour of this evening. Why should I? You are not the only woman in the world who has suddenly developed a talent for flirtations."

"Marmaduke, what are you saying? Of what are you accusing me?"

I am nearly in tears by this time, and cannot find words to argue or deny the horrid imputation of coquetry.

"Don't let me stand in the way of your amusements. Of course when I chose to marry a child—and a child without a spark of affection for me—I must learn not to cavil at consequences. Understand, Phyllis, it is a matter of indifference to me whether you drive home with Mark Gore or any other man. Do not give yourself any annoyance, under a mistaken impression that you may be gratifying me. Take your choice of an escort."

"I have taken it," I say, dolefully, "but the one I want won't take me. Marmaduke, how unkind you are! Do you, then, refuse to drive me home?"

"If you insist on sitting beside me you can do so," he yields, ungraciously. "You will find it stupid, as I am in no mood for conversation, and have no desire for your company."

"Nevertheless I will force it on you," I cry, with some faint spark of pride and indignation. "Though you hate me, I will return with no one but you."

And so it is settled, and soon we are driving side by side under the brilliant dancing stars.

It is a long, long drive—much longer, it seems to me, in the chill night than in the glare of day—and not one word does my companion speak. Once, when the moon rushes out with a white gleam from behind the scudding clouds, I take courage to look at him; but he is biting his mustache, and wears upon his brow a heavy frown that completely freezes on my lips the few silly words I would have uttered.

Once, too, as his hand lies bare upon his knee, I venture to place my fingers timidly upon it, but he shakes them off, under a plain pretense of adjusting the reins; and thus, twice repulsed, I have no heart to make a further advance.

So, in dead silence, we make our journey, listening absently, to the clatter of those behind and the sound of the horses' feet as they bravely cover the ground.

In silence we reach our home, in silence he helps me down, and with the sorriest pain at my heart it has ever yet known, I go up-stairs and shut myself into my room.

Martha, under a mistaken impression that I am what she is pleased to term "poorly," pours out some eau-de-Cologne and proceeds to bathe my forehead with vigorous concern; and such is the forlornness of my state that I cannot bring myself to bid her begone. When she has put me through the various stages of undressing, has left me ready for bed, and insisted on hearing me say I am immensely better, she departs, to my infinite relief.

I turn dismally in my chair, and begin to wonder what I am to do next. Every minute my crime appears more hideous; I feel more positive he will never forgive me.

Strangely enough, as my own misdemeanors grow in size and importance, his decrease, until at length they sink into utter insignificance. The remembrance of that pink note alone rankles, and perhaps even that could be explained.

The hours slip by. Duke's foot is to be heard slowly pacing the floor.

I must and will compel him to make friends with me. How can I face a long sleepless night such as I know will be mine if I go to bed unpardoned? I will make one more effort, and this time I will not be unsuccessful. As I have not now, and never have had, a particle of pride in my composition, it takes me very little thinking to decide on this course.

I am sitting before my fire as I develop this idea, toasting my bare toes in a rather purposeless manner, preparatory to jumping into bed. Unlike most people, I can endure any amount of heat to the soles of my feet.

Mechanically I slip into my blue slippers, and, rising, go to the glass. Yet, what I see pleases me: I certainly do look nice in my dressing-gown. No other style of garment, no matter how bewitching or elaborate, suits me half as well. This particular gown at which I am now gazing profoundly is of white cashmere, lined and wadded, and trimmed profusely with pale blue. There is a dear little frill round the neck that almost makes me love myself. It is a gift of Marmaduke's. Walking one day in Paris, during our honeymoon, it had attracted our attention in a shop-window, and he had insisted on my going into the shop then and there making myself the owner of it. Surely when he sees me now he will remember the circumstance, and it will soften him.

Ah! he was very fond of me then, I recollect, with a sigh.

My hair is streaming down my back, far below my waist; I am looking well, but young—very young; indeed, I am painfully conscious that, now my high-heeled shoes are lying under a chair, I might easily be mistaken for a child of fourteen.

The thought is distasteful. Hastily putting up my hands, I wind my hair round and round my head until I have reduced it to its every-day decorous fashion; only to find that rolls and smoothness do not accord well with a negligé costume.

Looking at myself again with a critical eye, I am again dissatisfied. I may appear older, I certainly do not present so pleasing a tout ensemble; so, with much vicious haste I once more drew out the hair-pins and let my straight brown hair hang according to its fancy. Being now at last convinced I am to be seen at my best, I proceed to act upon the thought that has caused all this unwonted vanity. I go softly to Marmaduke's dressing-room door, armed with my brush, and begin to batter at it pretty loudly.

"Marmaduke, Marmaduke!" I cry, but obtain no answer. That he is within is beyond all doubt, as every now and then through the thick oaken door I can hear a sound or two.

Again I exercise my lungs, again I batter at the door.

"Duke—Marmaduke!" I cry once more, impatiently.

"What do you want?" demands my husband, in a voice that sends my heart into my blue slippers.

"I want to get in," I return, as meekly as one can, when one's tone is raised to the highest pitch.

"You cannot now; I am busy."

"But I must. Duke, do open the door. I have something of the utmost importance to say to you."

After a moment or two I can hear him coming slowly to the door. In another instant he has unlocked it, and is standing in the door-way in an attitude that is plainly meant to bar my further approach.

"Won't you let me in?" I say. "I want to speak to you; I have something to tell you."

Here I make a dive under the arm he has placed against one side of the door as a prudent barricade, and gain the dressing-room. Having so far succeeded, I pause to glance timidly at him.

He has divested himself of his coat and waistcoat, and has evidently been brushing his hair, as it is smooth to the last degree and has about it a general air of being ready to enter a ball-room at a moment's notice.

"You might be going to a reception, your hair is so beautifully dressed," I say, with a weak attempt at raillery and coquetry. "Did you nearly break down the door to come and tell me that?" asks he, without a vestige of a smile.

Once again my eyes seek the carpet. All my affected nonchalance deserts me. I feel frightened. Never before has his voice sounded so harsh when addressed to me. I put my hands behind me, and grasp nervously the torrent of hair that flows down my back. For the second time it occurs to me how abominably young I must be looking. Somehow the word "Doll" writes itself before my lowered eyes.

"No," I say, in a whisper. "I came to ask you to forgive me—to tell you I am very sorry for it all."

"Are you? I am glad of that. In my opinion you could not be too sorry."

"Oh, Duke, do not be too hard on me. I did not mean to make you so very angry. I did not think there was any harm in what I did."

"No harm! No harm in flirting so outrageously as to bring down upon you the censure of all your guests? No harm in making yourself the subject of light gossip? Do you know that ever since last night, when you chose to disgrace both yourself and me by your conduct, I have felt half-maddened. Angry! The word does not express what I feel. A hundred times during these past few hours I have with the utmost difficulty restrained myself."

"I don't see that I have done anything so very terrible; I have not behaved worse than—than others I could name. I don't believe anybody noticed me." I reply, miserably, and most untruthfully.

"Pshaw! How blind you must think people! Do you suppose they will not comment freely on your going to that low place with Gore, at nine o'clock at night, alone? I own my belief in their dullness or good nature is not as comfortable a one as yours. Blanche Going, at all events, spoke to me openly about it."

I instantly take fire. "N's doubt," I cry, with passion. "Lady Blanche Going has her own reasons for wishing to degrade me in my husband's sight. She is a wicked woman! Were I to do half what she has done, and is capable of doing, I would be ashamed to look you in the face. I hate her! If you believe what she says, rather than what I say, of course there is little use in my speaking further in my own defense."

"I believe only what I see," returns my husband, significantly; "and that—I regret to say of you, Phyllis—is more than I can think of with calmness."

He turns from me as he speaks, and begins to pace excitedly up and down the room, a frown born of much anger upon his forehead.

"To think you should have chosen that fellow, who has hardly a shred of character left, as your friend!"

It would be impossible to put on paper the amount of scorn he throws into the last word.

"He is no friend of mine," I say, sullenly, beating my feet petulantly against the ground. "I always understood he was a particular friend of yours. If you consider him such a disreputable creature, why did you invite him to your house?"

"Because I was unfortunately under the impression I could ask any man with safety into my wife's house," says he, loftily; and the quotation in which Cesar's wife is brought to bear comes to my mind: I am almost tempted to mention it for purposes of provocation, but refrain. In truth, I am really unhappy, and at my wit's end, by this. Surely I cannot have so altogether forgotten myself as he seems to imagine.

"There are worse people here than Mark Gore," I remark still sullenly.

"If there are, I don't know them, and certainly do not wish to discuss them. The misdemeanors of the world do not concern me; it is with you alone I have to deal. Ever since Gore entered the house you have shown an open and most undignified desire for his society. I bore it all in silence, neither thwarting you nor exhibiting my displeasure in any way; but when I see you casting aside common prudence, and making yourself a subject for scandalous remarks, I think it is high time for me to interfere and assert my authority. Were you several years younger than you are, you are still quite old enough to know right from wrong; and for the future"—here he stops short close beside me, and, with his blue eyes flashing, goes on, "for the future, I insist on your conducting yourself as my wife should."

When a man is without his coat and waistcoat, and thinks himself ill-used, he generally looks more than his actual height. Marmaduke, standing before me with uplifted hand to enforce his remarks, and with a very white face, certainly appears uncomfortably tall. He is towering over poor little me, in his heeled shoes and white gown, and for a moment it occurs to me that I ought to feel frightened; the next instant anger has overpowered me, and raised me to his level.

"How dare you speak to me like that? By what right do you use such language? You who every hour of the day make yourself conspicuous with that horrible cousin of yours? Do you suppose, then,

that I have no eyes? that I cannot fathom motives, and actions, and—"

"What do you mean?" interrupts he, haughtily.

"That sounds very well; but if, when you accuse me of flirting with Mark Gore, I had drawn myself up, and asked, in an injured tone, 'what you meant,' you would very soon have told me I know only too well. Have I not noticed you with Blanche? Do you ever leave her side? Wh'spering in corridors—lingering in conservatories—letting her write you letters! Oh, I know everything!" cry I, absolutely sobbing with long pent-up rage and grief.

"Write me letters!" repeats Duke, in utter bewilderment.

"Yes; long, long letters. I saw it." Blanche never in her life wrote me a long letter, or any other letter that I can recollect.

"Oh!" when I saw it with my own eyes, and only yesterday, too! How can you deny it? In the morning she pretended she had a headache, and I went up to ask her how she was, and there on the table was a pink note, with three of the pages closely written over, and while I staid she folded it into a cocked hat; and when I came home in the evening I went into your room—this room—for some eau-de-Cologne, and it was lying there on the table under my nose, I wind up with passionate vulgarity.

"I think you must be raving," says Duke his own vehemence quieted by mine. "I don't know what you are talking about. A letter—yet stay," a look of intelligence coming into his face; and, going over to a drawer, he rummages there for a moment, and at length produces the very three-cornered note that had caused me so many jealous pangs. "Is this the note you mean?"

"Yes, it is," coming eagerly forward.

"I now recollect finding this in my room, when I returned from shooting yesterday. She asks me to do a commission for her, which, as it happens, quite slipped my memory until now. Take and read it, and see how just were your suspicions."

As I put out my hand, I know that I am acting meanly, but still I do take it, and, opening it, find my three closely-written pages have dwindled down to half a one. Five or six lines carelessly scrawled, are before me.

"Are you satisfied?" asks Duke, who, half sitting on the table with folded arms, is watching me attentively.

"Yes, in a low voice; "I was wrong. This is not the note I saw with her. I now understand she must have meant that one—for somebody else, and, knowing I saw it, sent this to you to blind me."

"More suspicious Phyllis? As to what other charges you have brought against me, I can only swear that when I told you a year ago you were the only woman I had ever really loved, I spoke the truth."

"From all you have said to me to-night, I can scarcely imagine you would now repeat those words," I say, in trembling tones.

"Yes I would. If I live to be an old man, I shall never love again as I have loved, and do love, you."

"Yet you are always meeting Blanche; you are always with her. Only this very morning I found you both together in the corridor in earnest conversation."

"It was quite by accident we met; I had no idea she was there."

"She was speaking to you of me?"

"She said something about your manner towards Gore the night previous. It was something very kind, I remember, but it angered me to think any one had noticed you, though in my heart I knew it must be so. It was too palpable. She meant nothing hurtful."

"The wretch! Duke, listen to me and believe me. If I had not felt positive that note," moving a little nearer and laying my finger upon it, "was the one I saw with her, I would never have acted towards Mark Gore as I did last night. But I felt wounded and cut to the heart, and tried to torture you as I was being tortured. It was foolish, wicked of me, I know, but it made no one so miserable as myself."

TO BE CONTINUED.

Understanding Men's Natures.

About mid-afternoon yesterday a citizen who pulls down the scales at 196 pounds descended the first flight of stairs beyond the Postoffice in just the same manner that a bag of oats would have chosen, and when he brought up at the foot he was in no frame of mind to chip in anything for the heathen in Africa. The first citizen who arrived on the spot knew what his duty required of him on such an occasion, and he smilingly remarked:

"I don't believe you can improve on the old way!"

The second citizen passing was in a hurry, but he knew that he must halt and inquire:

"Like that any better than coming down the way the rest of us do?"

The third citizen had business at the Postoffice, but he turned aside, cleared his throat, and remarked:

"Evidently fell down stairs? Curious how it sets the blood circulating! Some of you had better see if his nose is broken—good bye!"

There was a fourth spectator, and he slowly entered the door-way, bent over the victim, and remarked:

"I'd have given a dollar to see him come down! He's one of the sort who bump every stair!"

The fifth man was about to add his mite when the victim rose up. His elbows were skinned, his nose barked, his coat torn and his back sand-papered the whole length. He knew that everybody in the crowd was hoping to see him jump up and down and shake his fists, and paw the air, and to hear him declare that he would lick all the men who could be packed in a ten-acre lot, and therefore he brought a sweet smile to his face, lifted his hat like a perfect gentleman, and limped up stairs with the bland remark:

"Stubbed my toe as I came in the door, you know, and came near falling in a heap."

Short as the literary career of M. Zola has been, his writings have already made a fortune both for himself and his publishers. The sale of his works has been enormous.

The King of Italy has promised to act as god-father for the infant son of Prince Wilhelm of Prussia.

A LITTLE PLAY-SPELL.

Maritime: The best way to shorten sale is to stop advertising.

The high price of beef is gradually drawing the yellow dog into the hot vortex of the bologna sausage factory.

Judge Hilton's failure in Stewart's dry goods business suggests the ancient reason—that he couldn't get Jews to it.

A somnambulist fell from a third story window in a Pennsylvania town, and was not awakened; but she was buried the next day.

Buffalo has got the base-ball fever so bad that a man can't catch a baby falling from a second-story window without yelling "Judgment!"

Papa: "Pon my word, I—I think I shall have the heartburn." Little daughter: "Shall I fetch it for you, papa? Is it in the cupboard?"

"Pa," asked little Johnny, "what does the teacher mean by saying that I must have inherited my bad temper?" "She meant, Johnny, that you are your mother's own boy."

"Yes, I've got a horrid cold," said Mrs. Jankinson. "I've dosed and dosed, and I believe I've taken no less than thirty-nine articles, and I begin to feel like an Episcopalian."

Physiology: "Mother, what have people got noses for?" asked an Austin child of her mother who had seen better days. "To turn up at poor folks, my child," was the cynical response.

Prof. Proctor has a new girl baby, and, although only a few weeks old, it inherits and evinces his father's taste for astronomy. Its researches at present extend no farther than the milky way.

"Yes," said the lady, "I like to have a handsome cook. You see, my husband's business keeps him out late at night and there'd be no man in the house if the cook didn't have a policeman visiting her."

As he waited for a prescription the druggist said to him: "That is my son, sir, sitting by you; don't you think he looks like me?" "Well, yes," replied the customer, "I think I can see some of your liniments in his face."

In good old days long gone: Old lady (apropos of wily and ancient leg of mutton) "I'd ye mean to say that this is lamb?" Butcher—"Cert'nly, mum. Old lady—" "Maybe it was, once; you and I was lambs about the same time."

"Well, my dear, are you getting on nicely with your music?" "Oh, yes, mamma: last month, when I played four-hand pieces with my music teacher, I was always a couple of bars behind. Now I am always at least three ahead."

Old Slobson was raking in the front yard yesterday, when he noticed a boy gazing through the picket fence in a most earnest manner. "What are you doing?" asked the old man. "Watching the Rake's Progress," replied the boy, as he dodged just in time.

"I think," said a fond parent, "that little Jimmy is going to be a poet when he grows up. He doesn't eat, and he sits all day by the stove and thinks, and thinks." "You had better grease him all over. He is going to have the measles. That's what ails Jimmy."

A growler's luck: "This is just my luck," said the gloomy man at the theatre. "Here's a performance going that's so bad it's agonizing to witness, and it's the first time in six months that I haven't had a woman with a bath-tub hat in front of me when I've been to the theatre."

A school-mistress, while taking down the names and ages of her pupils, and of their parents, at the beginning of the term, asked one little fellow, "What's your father's name?" "Oh, you needn't take down his name; he's too old to go to school to a woman," was the innocent reply.

Some awfully mean scoundrel filled a grocer's wily barrel with rain water, and the next Monday morning the superintendent of schools, the president of the temperance alliance, and two school teachers came round to the store, denounced the astonished grocer as a swindling thief and a perjured villain, and demanded their \$1 50 back again.

An Illinois girl lately called at a coroner's office and, addressing the solitary occupant of the apartment, said: "Be you the coroner?" "I guess you'd think so if you ever see an undertaker shake hands with me," blandly answered the official. "You ain't going away nowhere for a day or two, be you?" "Not that I know." "Well, I'm glad to hear it," continued the maiden with an air of much encouragement. "Johnnie Bowles has been keepin' company with me since Christmas, but I hear that he's going to take another girl to the circus to-night and if he does I'll swaller poison."

"I ain't got enough sense to vote at a ward election," remarked old Isom. "Why?" asked a bystander. "Yer see, a nigger what keeps a bacon store at de uther end ob town give 50 cents premium on a silver dollar made last year. I tuk a dollar wid de correck date, an' going to de store, handed it ter him, and tole him ter gin me de premium. He looked at the dollar, handed me fifty cents and drapped it in the draw'r. I tuk de 50 cents an' come on up town. I have just discovered dat I see out 50 cents. I repeats dat I ain't got sense enough ter vote, an' de Newtited States can hab my freedom back at any time de secretary of war will notify me ob dat fact."

One Sunday at Montgomery we were talking about duels, and, when the names of several parties who had gone out in past years to satisfy their honor were mentioned, the judge knocked the ashes of his cigar and said: "Gentlemen, it may be mentioned right here that I have been there myself."

"Were you challenged?" "I was. It was over in South Carolina and I called a man a liar. He sent me a challenge, and I selected swords as the weapons. We met at 7 o'clock the next morning. It was just such a morning as this—bright, beautiful, and full of life." "And how did you feel?" "Very queer. I shall never forget my sensations as I saw my rival, and he seemed to be as visibly affected. We couldn't either one of us say a word." "Was it in a grove?" "Oh, no; it was at the depot." "The depot? Why, you didn't fight at the depot, did you?" "Well, no. The morning express trains passed there at 7, and he took one and I took the other."