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Vol. I. No. 7. DURHAM, Co. Grey, MARCH 28, 1878. \$1 per year in Advance.

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**POETRY.** IN THE OLDEN TIME. Would you talk of the love of the olden time, When earth was free from wrong and crime, When faith was simple and hearts were warm To brave the tempest and face the storm; When lovers met by the fragrant tree, Where summer breezes were blowing free, And the clattering larks on the leafy boughs Would stop to listen to lovers' vows? Do you think that the world was purer then? Was there more of truth in the hearts of men, Less love of power and lust of gain, And less of sin to wither and stain? Were the tender vows that lovers spoke North the shade of their trying oak In the olden time that is now long past, More strange in purpose, more sure to last? Though the world grows old with its load of crime, Though the simple faith of olden time, Its earnest purpose and quiet ways, Are lost in the tumult of later days, Yet the glimpse of Eden looms again With cheer and brighten the hearts of men; And whether the times be now or old, The wonderful story will still be told.

**The Bouquet of Lilies.** "Well, mamma, is there anything fresh in that weary packet which you are turning over so patiently?" asked Lucia Mordant, yearning, as young ladies not in their first season after an evening's dissipation. Mrs. Mordant looked round with a good-natured smile on the two fair girls who were gazing her breakfast-table with their youth and beauty.

"Well, I darest you and Lillian will consider there is something both fresh and interesting," she replied, tossing a card to her daughter. "At least, it is an old friend of yours, Lucia, and I darest your cousin's taste will endorse yours, unless he is very much changed."

"Oh! how charming! Meyrick Elderton actually come back at last! Well, I certainly consider he has mourned enough for that tiresome old mother of his!" exclaimed Lucia, clapping her hands.

"Hush, my dear! Don't talk like that, or you will quite horrify your cousin," said Mrs. Mordant, reprovingly.

Certainly Lillian's sweet young face, whose delicate tint corresponded with her pretty name, were a rather astonished look at the cavalier allusion to a relationship which she held so sacred; but she was only a guest at her aunt's fashionable London residence, and some four years younger than the veteran Lucia, so she was fain to retire beneath the humble conviction of her own ignorance of the world, and remain silent.

"Well, well, dear mamma, never mind about Lillian's grave looks," exclaimed Lucia, laughing. "It is only that I say what other people think; and it was really too provoking of his mother to die just when, I am certain, he was on the very eve of proposing to me. But you will write and ask him to dine, of course, mamma?"

"I darest I shall," replied her mother, "because it suits my table to-day, having been disappointed of General Wyndham, and it will fill a vacant place, and seem friendly and kind."

"Yes, that will be charming. And mind, Lily, you are not to try any graces on him; he is mine by right; and you must make love to Sir Philip Stanley instead."

Lillian laughed gaily. "Yes, in very daughter-like fashion I will, seeing that he is about as old as dear grandpapa himself. I shall be quite safe with him, shall I not, auntie? Mamma would not be at all alarmed as to my flirtation."

Mrs. Mordant smiled kindly on the lovely girl, whose simplicity and freshness recalled the early days of a daughter she had lost, and to supply whose place, perhaps, she had begged her niece during the London season from a fond, widowed mother.

It was a severe trial to Mrs. Charles Mordant to part with her darling, even for the orthodox three months; but she believed it a duty to her child to give her such an advantageous introduction, and she sacrificed her own feelings for her sake.

It was a small dinner party that assembled in the evening of which we speak, and perhaps Lillian never looked better than in the kind of subdued toilet that suited such an occasion.

The simplicity of an exquisite, fresh white wrap dress, with pink coral and mosaic ornaments, and one beautiful sprig of lilies, with their dark green leaves, in her rich brown hair, was exactly adapted to her delicate young beauty and girlish form; while Lucia's matronly charms required a fuller-blown toilette for their suitable adornment; at least, so thought Meyrick Elderton as he sat opposite to that sweet face during dinner, and caught the shy glances of the unmistakable and pitying sympathy at the evident traces of suffering still visible on his pale and handsome features.

There was something so soothing to a spirit still sad and depressed by the loss of a worshiped mother in the gentle and subdued thoughtfulness of the violet eyes thus encountered, that it was little wonder if he sought out their owner afterwards in the drawing-room, and drew the fresh, country blossom into an atmosphere of pure and innocent talk that is seldom found in garish London drawing-rooms.

They spoke of flowers and poetry and emblems, and that led to allusions to Lillian's home and beloved mother, which naturally brought back the remembrance of Meyrick's ever-present regrets for his own lost parent.

He could scarcely have believed it possible to speak of her to a stranger; but Lillian's own love for her parent was so vivid and apparent, that he was sure she could understand his; and ere long he found himself speaking of his loss, of his mother's perfections, and his own deep sorrow, to his eager listener, whose eyes filled with tears at the recital.

"I was compelled to come up on business, which will keep me here some weeks," he said, "and Mrs. Mordant was an old friend of my mother, and I am obeying her last wishes in emerging from my seclusion, or I could scarcely have been here to-night. Now, I am glad I came."

Lillian did not exactly ask herself why he was glad. It was a very pleasant if vague impression of his real meaning, which she did not care to analyze, more especially as she was half bound in honor not to bestow a thought on Lucia's lover.

Yet it was very strange that he should sit by her for at least an hour while Lucia was slugging and playing with her other guests, if that was the case; and equally so that when Meyrick dreamed, as he did many a time and oft, of his mother, that night, she was in her early youth, looking most wonderfully like Lillian Mordant.

"There, I am quite tired out, Meyrick. Go to the girls. I will sit here while you wander about," said Mrs. Mordant, placing herself in a chair in a refreshment-room at the Crystal Palace, where the party were enjoying the loveliest afternoon that ever graced a floral fête. "I saw them go into the cut-flowers tent just now."

"The young man gladly obeyed, and soon joined the girls as they were admiring some of the brilliant specimens of Nature's own favourites there exhibited.

Meyrick came up to Lillian as she was gazing eagerly at a beautiful bouquet of rare lilacs that glittered like snow among their dark green leaves.

"Would you like them?" he whispered. "Oh, yes, were they not possible," she murmured. "They are my favourite flowers, as well as my namesakes."

"What's that?" asked Lucia, turning from some brilliant roses that bloomed in rich fragrance near their rivals. "Oh, what lovely lilies! I would so like to wear them to-morrow night at the ball! The very thing for my hair and dress. Could you bribe or steal them, I wonder?"

Meyrick laughed, but made no reply and certainly did not volunteer his interest for their acquisition; and something in his look and tone told Lillian, as she believed, that they certainly would not be far her cousin if they were obtained at all.

Great, sweet dreams glided the maiden's feet that night, and when she descended the stairs in the delicate freshness of a morning toilette, the maid who waited on her during her visit declared she had never seen anyone look "sweeter than Miss Lillian, who beat Miss Mordant all to bits, as anyone would say but herself."

Perhaps Susan would hardly have given the girl such an undisputed palm a few minutes later had she been in the breakfast-room, which the cousins entered together.

"See, Lucia, here's something beautiful for you!" said an elderly half-sister, who was so completely "laid on the shelf," that she was but rarely recognized by the gay world in which they moved, except as a foil, which led to the youth and beauty of her younger sister. "I never saw such beautiful lilies in my life. Who can have sent them to you?"

"The girls both knew too well who was the donor. There was no mistaking the rare, unique bouquet which had excited the admiration of both; and Lillian was as colorless as the flowers themselves as her cousin looked at the label, and then laughed joyously.

"How very charming!" she said. "Of course, Meyrick can have put one meaning in such attention—so very pointed, as I know it must have given him so much trouble to get them; and to remember my fancy, so thoughtfully. Depend on it, Doris, you will have to console mamma for my absence before long, and you, Lily, will perhaps have to be bridesmaid before you go home again."

Poor Lillian! It was a terrible trial to hear these glorifications, to listen to Lillian's arrangements as to the combination of the flowers with scarlet for her hair at the ball that night.

"Put them in water. They will keep fresh till then," she remarked to the footman, on his taking away the breakfast things.

What desecration in Lillian's eyes to commit them to a domestic's indifferent hands!

But it was not for long. She was compelled to admit her aunt and the luncheon tray, and drink the wine that was to cure her headache.

But she did escape the long afternoon drive, which, with Meyrick Elderton in attendance, devoting his cares and attention to Lucia, would have betrayed her cherished secret.

Crushed by all this shame and distress, Lillian suffered so acutely during the absence of the party, that Mrs. Mordant, on her return, gave up all idea of taking her to the ball that evening.

Miss Mordant begged to remain, and even Lucia made a faint offer of her society; but Lillian only implored for rest and quiet.

Best! In that long, long night, which would be but the beginning of such endless wretchedness, Lillian felt that she must go home.

She would betray herself if she remained and she so longed for her mother's fostering care and sympathy.

Susan was astonished to receive orders to pack the young lady's trunk; and Mrs. Mordant actually started to see the pale girl who stole into her dressing-room, and announced her departure by the afternoon train.

"Impossible, my dear! Your mother would be frightened to death. Stay a day or two; you will soon be better."

"I have telegraphed already. I must go dear aunt; I am so ill, and I should never get well here. I am so very—very sorry! You have been all goodness. Please forgive me, but I must go!"

"And the concert this afternoon at the Palace; it is a thousand pities you should miss it. Mr. Elderton is to be here at half past two to take us."

"I could not bear it—the fatigue I mean," she said. "I am only fit to go home."

"You cannot go alone, my poor child," said her aunt, tenderly. "Yet I do not know how to manage for you, unless Susan—"

"No, no—I am quite able to go. The guard will take care of me. Please do not think of it," said the girl, eagerly.

How despair had given her courage. She would not have proposed, much less undertaken, such a journey alone a few short weeks ago.

There was a great wonderment and opposition from her cousins when they heard the astonishing proposal; but her pale face and earnest determination gained the victory.

They accompanied her to the railway station, and when she nodded her farewell from the window of the carriage, Mrs. Mordant's heart smote her.

She ought not to have let that fragile young creature go alone in such a suffering state.

True, she had placed her specially in the guard's care, with a more persuasive eloquence in the shape of a golden coin of the realm; and she had entreated the good offices of a matronly old lady in a corner of the carriage.

Moreover, as they returned to the brougham that was waiting for them, Lucia observed, sentimentally: "I am really very glad she is gone. How do you know that she is not beginning with small-pox, or some horrid complaint? and we might all have caught it. She looks had enough for anything, I am sure."

Perhaps Lucia had an uneasy idea that her cousin's "sneeze was desirable for more causes than one. She might remember that on the previous day, Meyrick had expressed rather too much interest in the girl's disposition to be satisfactory, and he had been more abstracted and depressed during the drive for a lover in the presence of his liege lady.

Still, he was subject to low spirits, and perhaps anything in the shape of illness might bring back his mother to his mind with painful force.

Mentally, poor Lily was reclining in the corner of the carriage with closed eyes and melancholy heart.

She only longed for her mother's arms, her mother's soft sympathy, and rest from every other eye and voice.

"Watford—Watford!" sounded on the platform.

Lillian opened her eyes mechanically. The old lady was leaving the carriage. So much the better. She would not need to talk, and with a sigh of relief, which proved only how little we may learn to be thankful for, she once again closed her eyes, and tried to shut out her own misery.

But in vain. The old lady had no end of baskets and bags, and every seat had one under it, which, with no end of apologies to the poor girl, were extracted in succession, till what seemed at least a whole vanful of packages were collected, and the girl once more left in peace and quietude.

Not a whit. Once more the door opened ere the train moved out of that busy station, and a successor to the worthy individual of many packages came into the carriage; but, in this case, without any renewal of the trouble and disturbance.

That was all Lillian knew. Her eyes were resolutely shut, for there could be no necessity to talk to this stranger; and if she did not look up, she could scarcely be addressed.

Not a sound save the rustle of a paper disturbed the silence till they reached the next station.

Again they started, but this time Lillian felt a slight touch on the folds of her travelling-dress; a faint perfume scented the atmosphere of the carriage.

She started and looked up. A large spray of lily blossoms lay on her lap, and opposite to her sat Meyrick Elderton, with a half-caused, half-tender smile on his lips.

"Lillian," he said, gently, "have I offended you that you thus fly me? I have been mistaken indeed."

"I—you—that is, I do not understand you! I thought you were going with my aunt and Lucia," she stammered.

"So you took the opportunity to avoid me," he continued, perhaps rather presumptuously, arguing quite the reverse from her manner. "Was it so? Am I indeed so odious to you, Lillian? Am I to relinquish all the bright hopes I have dared to cherish of late?"

Lillian's answer is not recorded, because it did not find vent in words; and no one but a lover could be so skillful in interpreting looks and signs as to gather its meaning; and besides, there are some scenes that should have no witness—too sacred for the common eye, too full of happiness for ordinary ken.

When it may be advisable to take up the thread of this little *historiette*, Meyrick was, by some chance or other, sitting by Lillian's side.

"I cannot understand it all now," she said. "How was it the flowers were sent to Lucia? I am sure she understood them as—as meaning something, and so did I. It was very naughty of me if you are speaking truth now."

"I am not surprised, dearest," he said, "that you did not understand such stupidity. You would hardly imagine that I could be so absurd as to forget that your cousin's name, like your own, began with L; and when I directed the flowers 'Miss L. Mordant,' I never doubted they would reach their lawful owner, besides which, I am afraid I quite ignored the existence of a Miss Mordant the elder, and should have trusted to your juvenility to keep you as Miss L. Mordant in any case. However, I shall know better in future, and shall never omit my darling's sweet floral name till it is so completely changed and merged in another as to make such mistakes impossible. But I began to suspect the mistake last night when I saw the flowers in the hall; and calling there this morning, I heard you were ill, and gone off by the train."

"Poor Lucia!" thought Lillian; but then added, aloud: "Then you did not go to the Crystal Palace?"

"No," he replied. "I wrote Mrs. Mordant a note, saying I was gone in the country on important business; and so I was."

They laughed now, as Lillian had thought she never could laugh again.

The flowers were never remembered till the end of the journey; and when they were looked for, they were as crushed and ruined as the old lady's baskets had been in danger of becoming.