

DOUBT IT.

When a pair of red lips are upturned to your own,
With no one to gossip about it,
Do you pray for endurance to let them alone?
Well, may be you do—but I doubt it.

When a shy little hand you're permitted to seize,
With a velvet softness about it,
Do you think you can drop it with never a squeeze?
Well, maybe you can—but I doubt it.

When a tapering waist is in reach of your arm,
With a wonderful plumpness about it,
Do you argue the point 'twixt the good and the harm?
Well, may be you do—but I doubt it.

And if by those tricks you should capture a heart,
With a womanly sweetness about it,
Will you guard it, and keep it and act the good part,
Well, maybe you will—but I doubt it.

THE GENERAL'S WARD.

Gen. Biddulph set back in his chair, looking the picture of misery, while his currie was growing cold and his henchman and trusted servant Scott was amazed and a little alarmed at such extraordinary proceedings. The cause of all this was a letter with a foreign postmark held feebly in the general's hand. It was briefly, nay, tersely, written:

—THRU HUSSAINS, DELHI, May 10, 18—

DEAR SIR—Just received your last letter; many thanks for the budget of papers you have sent; they are most acceptable. Am anything but well, and much worried. Will you do me a favor? My girl is anxious to see England; it is simply impossible for me to get leave for the next two years, and as that state of affairs does not please her who has determined to start off by herself. Of course she will have proper chaperone from here and bring her own people, but I thought you would like to do me a turn for "a little long spin" and look after her. It seems altogether a most unorthodox arrangement, but she is a young woman with a will, and you know my old maxim, "Anything for a quiet life." She will arrive, I expect, soon after you get this, and will go first to Clarges street with the woman who is taking care of her. With much gratitude and remembrance to the oldest, ever dear Dick, your affectionate friend, Druce Daly.

P. S.—Inclosed find draft on my bankers for any expense she might incur. Dossa is just 19. It certainly was an alarming prospect to a bachelor. A young girl untrammelled, untaught, to be thus thrown on his hands! The general felt as if an eclipse had suddenly darkened the sunshine of his life; as if some heavy veil had dropped over the bright vista of the future. To have his days tormented by the whims and fancies of a little mix, his social joys disturbed to escort a young savage from the tower to Mme. Tussaud's—the thought was terrible. He pushed away his plate, and in his annoyance rumbled his carefully adjusted locks of hair, whereas Scott grew more alarmed, and at last summoned up courage to ask his master if he would not like some fresh breakfast. The general woke from his dream of horror and looked gloomily at the man.

"Eh, what, Scott? breakfast? No. I think I shall stroll round to the club; I have had some troublesome news."

Scott silently brought the immaculate hat, stick and gloves, and stood by while his master rearranged his locks and adjusted his hat.

The general drew a deep breath of satisfaction as he marched up St. James' street to his club. The sun was shining gloriously, the air was warm and delightful, and gradually his depressed spirits rose, and he felt once more himself.

"After all," he mused as he walked along, "Daly used to be the best fellow in the world years ago; who knows if she may not take after him? I shall look her up in the morning, trot her about to one or two places, and then I shall have done my duty. It is just like Druce Daly!—his wrath was rising again—to put a man in my position, a bachelor, in such an awkward fix; but he always was the most careless and shiftless man possible. Wonder how he ever married and had a daughter. Let me see, whom the duce did he marry?"

Back into the far past fled his memory; but although he thought and thought, he could not recall the mother of the girl who was coming to plague his life.

"I might ask Goodwin," he determined; "he is sure to know. Druce take it! Why on earth am I to be troubled with another man's worries? Why did the mother die? Why did Daly marry and have a daughter?"

His railings at fate were interrupted by a hearty "good morning" from a hale-looking man, as he entered the club and sat down at the same table, whereon was laid a dainty breakfast.

"Good morning, Goodwin," he replied gloomily, not even trying to catch a glimpse of his reflection in the mirror opposite, a sign he was greatly disturbed.

"Have some breakfast?"
"Thanks."
Hunger was asserting itself. He took the cup of coffee, pushed across the table and stirred it round and round, his thoughts flown away to his vexation again.

"Why, hang it all, man; you look quite worried! anything wrong?" asked Col. Godwin, in an interval of hearty eating.

"Yes," laconically; and then he unburdened his mind to his friend.

Col. Godwin looked amused. "Well, I don't see anything terrible in all this," he said, with a twinkle in his eye; "you are fond enough of women as a rule; why should you object to this one?"

"This is a very different case," said the general, testily. "I admire women, it is useless to deny it, but I like them cultivated, refined, gentle, not raw, unfutured savages as this young female is sure to be. Then it is the greatest bore on earth to be tied and bound by the whims of a girl in her teens, who will

lead me a life of horror before she is done! Want to eat penny ices in the street, or some such thing!"

The other laughed heartily. "I suppose having girls of one's own makes all the difference; I don't mind their chatter and fun; it is rather pleasant than otherwise. If this young woman is anything like her mother was, she ought to be the most charming creature in the world."

"The very thing I wanted to ask you, exclaimed Gen. Biddulph. "Whom did Daly marry?"

"She was the only daughter of Bruno—you remember him out in Cashmere. It must be—let me see," continued Col. Godwin, leaning back in his chair and musing; "it must be about twenty or twenty-one years ago since I saw her. She was the most lovely girl, with a face like an angel's."

The general's face brightened. "Daly fell a hopeless victim, and in return I think she loved him passionately. He was nearly distraught when she died. The girl must be just the age her mother was when I first met her."

The general's hand stole unconsciously to his gray mustache. "And you say Mrs. Daly was very lovely?" he asked, glancing for the first time at the mirror. The breakfast had certainly refreshed him.

"Very!" emphatically.
"Ah, well, perhaps it may not be so bad. Druce Daly was a good-looking man."

"He was, indeed," responded Colonel Godwin. "Let me know when the girl arrives; I should like to see her, so I am sure would my wife. If she gets beyond you, pack her off to Combewell to play with my girls."

"Thanks. Are you going to Spencer's? I will come with you; I must speak to him about my new mare."

Somehow the news crept out. When Gen. Biddulph took his stroll in the park a few days later, he was greeted by sly hints and tender inquiries after his ward. Fair faces beamed on him, and pretty lips murmured kind promises to take the young stranger in hand and show her life. He began to shine with a reflected glory. Miss Daly, according to Col. Godwin's authority, must be a beauty, and—this was gently whispered—it was well known Druce Daly had dollars collected in goodly numbers. The ne'er-do-wells and out-of-pocket young men exhibited an extraordinary consideration for the general's welfare. They were always dropping in upon him unawares notwithstanding the frigidity of their welcome. Every morning Gen. Biddulph eagerly searched his letters in quest of some dispatch informing him of the arrival of his ward, and he called twice a day regular at Clarges street only to receive the intelligence that "Mrs. Comyns and Miss Daly had not yet arrived."

A week had elapsed since he received Maj. Daly's letter, and still no tidings had come. Contrary winds or recalcitrant engines had delayed the P. & O. with its fair freight, and the general was beginning to be uneasy. At last one morning he was gratified when he called at the house by the announcement that "the ladies were expected that evening."

Now that the actual moment was approaching when he should come face to face with the much-thought-of, much-talked-of ward, he found himself actually nervous and excited. Scott, who had received the news with stolid silence, gazed with astonishment at the spectacle of his master, fidgeting—actually fidgeting—from the window to the armchair, like the veriest school-boy. The general's mind during the unusual migrations presented a brilliant panorama of future success. He saw a vista of long social triumphs in which he shared largely. Then he fell to thinking what the queen of all these joys would be like; tall and stately, small and fragile; blue, gray, brown, black eyes; complexion as fair as a lily or dusky as the proverbial berry; a Claiopatra or a Gretchen, soft as a ball of down or sturdy as the Norse daughters. One thing, at any rate, he was certain of: she would be young. With life's spring dawning on her cheek, how could she be aught but charming? It is wonderful how a man like the general, who had lived so many years and had so much experience, could have made this mistake. Pig's beauty is all very well; but youth is more than often connected with indifferent skins, lengthy limbs and gawky forms generally desirous of wriggling out of their garments. His wishes in this case were father to the picture, and he ended by starting to welcome the traveler with the personification of female loveliness before his eyes.

He knocked briskly at the door in Clarges street, and smiled benignly on the man who opened it and preceded him up stairs. The sun was lingering on the walls as he mounted the stair case, and the evening air came in sweet and fresh through an open window. It had been very hot all day, and the general was surprised at first to find a bright fire burning on the hearth of the room into which he was ushered, until he remembered that of course the travelers would be chilly. The room was empty, but from an adjoining chamber came sounds of voices, loud and almost discordant. The general shivered. Could hers be one of them? He hoped not. It was apparent to the meanest intelligence that some sort of altercation was proceeding. He grew nervous. Rows and disturbances were at all times appalling. After a few moments the voices dropped and he let his eye wander round the room. In one corner stood a huge traveling case, with labels all over it; masses of wraps vivid scarlet, a bear skin rug and an unmistakable Scotch

plaid were tossed unheeded on the floor, while parcels and small boxes were strewn around in the wildest profusion. The hands of the clock moved slowly on. Waiting is always annoying, now it was most provoking. But just as he was debating whether to go or stay the door of the inner room was opened, and a pale, fair, faded woman of about 40 made her appearance. The general advanced with a low bow.

"How do you do, Gen. Biddulph?" she said, in languid tones, extending a thin, delicate hand. "I am so sorry to keep you waiting, but I was detained by Dossa," (sighing faintly). The general hastened to push an easy chair forward. "I am really quite glad you have come," continued Mrs. Comyns, sinking into the chair, and drawing the shawl closely around her, "for she is altogether beyond me."

"Are you alluding to Miss Daly?" asked the general hastily.

"Yes," sighed the lady, out of friendship to Maj. Daly I undertook the charge of his daughter; but I was totally unprepared for her wild temper and ways."

"She is high-spirited?" he suggested feebly.

"Very," Mrs. Comyns replied dryly. "My health is so bad I am quite incompetent to manage her."

"May I not see her?" asked the general, after a pause.

"She will be here in a minute. I dare say you heard some sounds of quarreling when you came in. Yes, I thought so; that was Dossa giving her a lesson—in fact pulling out the poor creature's hair in handfuls." The general uttered an exclamation of dismay. "I think it is only right to let you know what she is," the lady continued, holding out her hands to the fire, though to him the room was insufferably hot, "unless you are prepared; perhaps you are. Has Maj. Daly told you anything about her?"

The general was reluctantly compelled to reply in the negative.

"Just as I expected; he is too lazy to do anything of the sort. My own opinion is that he is too delighted to get rid of her for a time. I am not surprised."

"But she is so beautiful?" said the general, apologetically, the picture of his visionary ward rising clearly before him.

Mrs. Comyns turned her head aside. "She is a trifle dark," was her reply; and somehow the general traced suppressed merriment in her tones.

"She is a brunette, then? he asked, anxiously.

Mrs. Comyns laughed softly. "My dear Gen. Biddulph," she said, looking at him for a moment, "I see you are not an ignorant with the state of things. May I ask if you remember the late Mrs. Daly?"

"I have no personal recollection, certainly; but I know her to have been a beautiful and amiable woman," he returned promptly.

"That was the first wife; I mean the second."

"The second!" repeated the general, blankly.

"It is a most extraordinary story. Major Daly, in one of his eccentric moods, wandered up country, fell ill, and was carefully nursed and tended by a native woman of inferior rank. With zeal worthy of a better cause, Major Daly sought her out when he recovered, and he married her."

Mrs. Comyns' soft low voice died away. The general stood silent as a statue. "Then this girl," he said, at length, "is—is?"

"Black," observed Mrs. Comyns, "black as your hat on the chimney. A sound of rapid movement came from the inner room, the door was burst open, and before the general had time to recover himself a girl stood in the opening. "Ah, here is Dossa. Dossa, this is your guardian; come and shake hands with him."

Speechless with astonishment and vexation, the poor man gazed with horror on the figure before him. Squat, short, dressed in the most unceremonious garb, with huge gold rings dancing in her black ears, and innumerable silver bangles shining on her dusky arms, stood the beauty of his dreams, the heiress, his ward. He advanced feebly, with outstretched hand. The girl's face expanded into a broad grin, her white even teeth gleaming like pearls in their ebony setting.

"She is shy," said Mrs. Comyns, with a smile still hovering around the corners of her mouth. "You will be better friends by and by."

Murmuring some incoherent farewell, the general seized his hat, and hastily made his escape from the room, and out of the house. He strode home overwhelmed with the horrible discovery. Mortification, anger and vexed pride surged in his heart, and he longed at that moment for Major Daly's head, that he might have relieved his overcharged feelings. He would be a laughing stock of the season. After so much anticipation, what result! He passed the evening alone, he could not face the club, and sought his pillow a much depressed and annoyed man.

As he sat at breakfast the next morning, carefully studying his Bradshaw preparatory to taking flight, Scott entered, marched up to his side, and tendered a tray with a card upon it. The general took it up mechanically. "Miss Daly," he dropped the innocent pasteboard as if it had been a scorpion. "I am engaged, Scott," he gasped, leaning back in his chair aglissat. "Say very sorry, but—"

"Beg pardon, general; the young lady was most anxious to see you."

The general groaned. "Show her in." He turned savagely to his Bradshaw. What was he to say to the blackmoor

when she appeared? He could not submit to be hunted down in this way. She must be made to understand clearly that he would have nothing to do with her, and to-night he would start for Paris en route for some place, the further from England the better.

The door opened. He shut the book nervously. The apparition of the night before loomed in the doorway. He turned cold; it was worse by daylight than in the evening gloom. He shut his eyes for one second, and when he opened them again they fell on the sweetest, fairest face it had ever been his lot to see. Before he could recover from his surprise the owner of the face was speaking.

"Gen. Biddulph," she said hesitatingly, "please forgive me for disturbing you so early, but I could not rest until I had seen you and apologized for my nonsensical rudeness last night."

The general looked mystified. "To whom have I the pleasure of speaking?" he asked hurriedly.

"I am Dossa Daly."

"Miss Daly! But, surely—I—that is—"

"Please let me explain all," said Miss Daly, quickly, her pretty face suffused with blushes. "I scarcely know how to begin. I—when we landed yesterday some people, friends of Mrs. Comyns, met her, and when they were gone I learnt from her that there was a little excitement about me, and—it was very foolish of them—they wished to see what I was like. They told her you knew nothing about me, and a spirit of mischief entered our heads, we determined to play a little joke on you, and pass off Sunda here," drawing the smiling black maid forward, "as me. It was very, very wrong, but I hope you will forgive us."

The general drew himself up stiffly, and looked decidedly grim.

"I don't know what papa would say if he knew how shockingly I had treated his old friend," continued the culprit, her pretty head drooping gracefully; "but I hope—I do hope you will forgive me."

The general thawed. He took the little hand outstretched and pressed it warmly.

"Who could resist such a pleader?" he replied gallantly, the vision of loveliness before him dispelling his wrath. "But—then you were not—scolding—your maid last night?"

"No, no," laughed the girl gayly; "that was part of my plot. I wanted you to think I was the most horrible creature in the world. Sunda acted that scene all alone for your benefit."

"She was most successful," said the general, dryly; "but I will be even with you yet, Miss Dossa, for the trick you have played upon me. I might have known Druce Daly's daughter would have had a good spice of mischief in her composition. It is just the sort of thing your father delighted to do when we were boys together."

Dossa lifted her deep gray eyes to his. "Then you have forgiven me?" she said softly.

"Now—forever—always!"

The general's ward was a great success.

Two Enormously Wealthy Families.

Brooklyn Eagle.

Comparatively few people are acquainted with the Wilson family in New York, and the public never hears of it, though it had been dragged into more or less eminence lately by the fact that the heiress to the Astor millions is to marry the eldest son of the Wilsons. The engagement of Orme Wilson to Miss Carrie Astor was not a surprise to people who are acquainted with the family. It was exactly what everybody had expected to occur. The Wilson place is next to the Astor's summer residence at Newport, and from the time Miss Caroline Astor was 12 years old her playmate was young Master Wilson. When they became of age they were engaged, as a matter of course. Miss Astor is neither brilliant nor beautiful. She is quiet, has domestic tastes, and cares little for society. It is said that \$50,000 a year will be settled on the bride by her family, and a like amount will go to the groom from his family. This will give the pair an income of \$100,000 a year. Possibly enough to buy the necessaries of life. The extraordinary thing about the Wilson family to my mind is the manner in which they conceal the fact that they are people of immense wealth. No one ever thinks of ranking them with the great wealthy families of the metropolis, and yet they are millionaires many times over. They are very exclusive, not at all prominent in society, and their name seldom gets into the papers. A friend of mine who was looking for an eligible building site for the erection of a large structure up town told me that he was perfectly amazed at the amount of property the Wilsons held. All over the city, and in the most valuable portions, he ran across big lots of land which belonged to the Wilson estate. What an enormously wealthy family the Astors will be in the course of fifty years? Their property now is estimated at something over \$150,000,000. The only son and all three of the daughters have married into families of extraordinary wealth. They all know how to hold on to it, too.

Certain claim agents of Washington issued circulars informing postmasters who are entitled to readjustment of salary under the act of March 3, 1884, that if their claims are not presented before Dec. 1, they will be barred. Postal officials say there is no authority for such statement.

A State Prison Incident.

As the train neared the heavy wall frowning down upon the iron thoroughfare, the pale-faced woman with sad eyes, and streaks of gray among her hair, pressed the little gold-haired girl more closely to her side.

"Sing Sing!" rang out the trainman's voice.

I have passed the station time and time again, but always the sound of that name falls upon my ears with dismal import. In the glow of a summer mid-day, when all the earth is beautiful, when songs of gladness fill the air—the name sends a chill of despair to my heart; a sympathetic feeling for those who are condemned to pass long hours, weeks, dragging months and weary years within those dismal walls. At midnight, when the wind whistles among the Hudson river palisades, and when the fleecy snow clouds scurry along the black horizon, I've often been awakened from a pleasant dream of home where dear ones are gathered, by the sound of that name—Sing Sing. And within a stone's throw are hundreds sleeping, dreaming perhaps of other days, or tossing upon hard couches, with the grim fingers of despair dragging from the heart's core the conscience stricken cry of remorse.

I chanced to catch the look of utter sorrow that came upon the woman's face as the trainman sang out "Sing Sing." The train stopped, and she got out with the child. Here, thought I to myself is a life chapter about to be reversed. Having time to spare, and knowing that I could catch another train in an hour, I followed the pale-faced woman and child.

To the great iron gates she went; they were open when she showed a slip of paper to the man in charge. He, at chance happened, was not unknown to me; he recognized me and allowed me entrance without a pass.

I followed the woman to official headquarters. I saw her speak to the gentleman sitting at the desk, and I saw a strange look come upon his face. He pressed a button in the wall, and to the young man that responded he whispered a few words. Then the woman and child followed the young man from the room. Hastily stepping forward, I told the official I was a member of the press. Ere I had finished he pointed after the departing two and said:

"Follow them. You will find a sad but interesting theme to write about by so doing."

Through the long, black halls I traced the trio. Into a well-lighted and aired room they entered, and I after them. There was smell of medicines, that deep, heavy silence, telling me, if I had even been blind to the long rows of snowy coats and pale faces that I was in the prison hospital.

The woman stood still for an instant, clasping the little one's hand tightly as she gazed around the great room. Ah! a sudden light came into those sad eyes as they fell upon one particular cot half way up the room with a wan, hollow-cheeked face upon the white pillow.

There was no necessity for the young official to conduct her to the cot. Love—love which years of bitter separation could not destroy pointed the way. Swiftly she glided to the cot. She knelt by the side of it; she pressed a kiss upon the pallid brow, over which the parchment-like skin was tightly drawn. "James, James, do you know me?" came from her pale lips.

The sufferer's lips moved, but no sound came from them. The eyes were fastened upon her face—burning eyes, deep-set among hollow sockets. Did he recognize her?

She lifted the little girl up. "Kiss poor papa, Hattie; poor papa is sick."

Like the touch of dewy rose-leaves the sweet lips of the little girl were laid upon the hollow cheeks.

Then a strange, inquiring look came into the man's eyes. The eyes turned from the little girl to the tearful face of the woman. The lips opened and in faint husky tones came the faltering words: "Who—who is it?"

"Our baby, James. Little Hattie. You have never seen Hattie before. She was not born when—when—"

The horror upon the man's face cut short the wife and mother's words.

"Don't talk to long too him, madam; he is very weak," said the nurse who approached. There she knelt, the poor, pale-faced woman with the wondering face of her little girl pressed to her cheek. Slowly the minutes slip by, and the sunshine coming through the window falls upon the cot. It touches the man's face. He lifts his eyes to the ceiling, and as the wife's arms tenderly draw the head to her bosom the little girl kisses poor papa.

"Ha—Hattie, wife—free—free." The woman's head bends lower; her lips touch the pallid brow. Then, rising, she presses the little girl to her as she gazes tearfully upon poor papa who is free at last.

A remarkable private act, the Earl of Devon's estate bill, was recently introduced in the House of Commons. It empowers Lord D. and his son Lord Courtenay, to sell every acre of the vast family estates, preserving no other house but Powderham, and deals with mortgage debts amounting to \$1,250,000. The bill has become a necessity through the conduct of Lord Courtenay, who a few years ago passed through the Bankruptcy Court with debts amounting to \$3,500,000. The Courtenays, who are of royal descent, owned in time past no inconsiderable portion of Devonshire, besides holding one of the largest properties in Ireland. Much of their Irish property has been sold.