

Come back, come back,  
 It is some lone bird's melancholy cry,  
     Pining alone,  
 Parted from its mate;  
     And I,  
 The live long day, do sit and sigh  
     Mine own, mine own,  
 Ere it be too late,  
     Come back, come back.

Paul paused under the window. He knew that

voice; he was spell-bound; and, as he listened, Gertrude—for it was she—raised her eyes, and looked out.

An hour afterwards saw them walking together on the banks of the river; and, if Gertrude's mother had not sent a little boy to call them in, they might have walked into the water, so absorbed were they in something or other.

Three months afterwards, there was a merry wedding in Insdorf.

## THE MILK BILL.

BY MRS. E. OAK SMITH.

"MICHAEL has left the milk bill, ma'am," and Bridget (all Irish girls are named Bridget or Catherine, I always call them one or the other at a venture, and if either *should* fail, Mary brings it all right) placed in my hand, with a look of triumph, a square piece of paper, ruled and trimmed into shape by the scissors, and bearing certain marks for me to decypher as best I might. But there it was—a real bill made out in the handwriting of one of her own countrymen! Here was enough to justify the exultation of Bridget, and when she ventured to add, "Michael's a nice man, ma'am," I responded with a hearty good will.

Some are able to read the characters of individuals from an examination of their penmanship; I have a friend, some traits of whose character were admirably detailed in this way; no one could fail to read Michael from his. The bill was a picture complete. It not only presented himself in his well-adjusted, well-adapted habiliments, his frank, manly bearing, his straightforward honest simplicity, but the genuine taste of the man in the selection of his tidy, handsome wife.

"Her cheeks are like strawberries smothered in cream," looking as if exactly fitted for her condition, with her clear blue eyes, her rich and roguish lips, and her faultless complexion; and then her good-nature so inexhaustible, and her aspect so safe, where acidity might be fatal.

But we ask Michael's pardon, and Michael's wife too, for as he comes every morning with his tin can scoured to the last point of brightness, and his linen jacket with the recent gloss of the iron fresh upon it, nothing can look less like a desire for notoriety, for he brings his milk round in his own hands to his few customers, as yet guiltless of Croton water, chalk, or 'still fodder.'

Oh, Michael, I wish thee all sorts of prosperity, but indeed it would ill beseem thee to be mounted upon a rickety wagon, labelled "pure milk," thereby suggesting the existence of the thing, and thy well-arranged features distorted

by the *yell* that belongs to thy compeers. Distant be the day that shall transform thee thus.

But to Michael's chirography. Every letter was large, distinct, and exceedingly well made in itself. The failure, if failure there be, consists in the making up. Good letters, but imperfect words.

Many a one, Michael, that might shame thee in written words, would have to yield to thee in the elements. They make up a fair-looking result, but lack thy analysis. Their minds are of a like stamp, opinions imbibed from others, conclusions "jumped" at, not reached after, a fair external brought into shape by the attrition of society. Specious but unsound, shrubs not oaks, plants with pith, but devoid of fibre.

That M and S, how well they are turned. Bold, strong lines, and the curves quirled in to a nicety. Every letter is an index of thyself, Michael. There is thy bold, manly integrity, thy robust, unflinching grapple with the world, and there withal thy placid sobriety of demeanour, disdain-ing pretence and show.

I remember that one day thou didst most modestly ask the use of my pencil, in order to note down the name of an inconsiderate customer, who thus laid unnecessary exactions upon thy memory; and when it was granted with a like modesty, thou didst beg me to the office. I see now that thou didst shrink from the slow process of construction in the presence of one supposed to be skilled in the cabalistic art. Michael, it would make thee blush to look upon this sheet. Not one letter upon it can equal thine. Never shrink again, man, from the hearty, best use of thy powers in the presence of any one. Thou hast skill enough for all thy purposes, and this should inspire confidence in the presence of any one, confidence, not arrogance.

"Received payment in full." I like the explicit, triumphant close. It tells much in times like these, of slippery credit, and uncertain deposits. It looks like a sense of peril escaped, like a

positive good occurred, like hope that did not delude, like faith not misapplied.

But let the bill and its contents pass; the glory of the thing lies in the signature. Here it is. No, Michael, I won't give thy name in full, I will not accelerate the period of the pony and the wagon, the yell and other horrors of a milkman; I will be content with saying, that in signing thy name as I behold it here, thou hast allowed me to look into the arcana of thy very mind. I read all, and the process of completing this, to thee, important document.

I see the little white table, upon which thy pretty wife has just placed from its receptacle in the cupboard, beside the red-and-white flowered crockery, the pen and ink, unwonted instruments in thy hands, and preserved therefore with the greater care. She has spread thereon a newspaper in addition to the white napkin, for she is well aware of the hazards incurred in the use of weapons like these, as is evident from the size of the dot upon the *i* in thine own name, and the extra cross upon the *t*, to say nothing of the apt illustration of the Society Islands, where the pen became unmanageable in its spattering, and the well defined New Holland, corresponding to the size of thy thumb.

It takes thee some time to get well seated, Michael, to an operation of this kind; it is too miminy-piminy for thy powers, requires a close-

ness of action ill adapted to the massiveness of thy movements. I see it all by the hesitancy visible in the date. But thy confidence grew with thy progress, every letter being better and better defined, till the "Received payment in full," is thrown off with something of a flourish, sitting half erect in thy chair, and thy lips having ceased their sympathetic motion.

Now comes the signature. Michael, thou art great here. Thy own sense of manhood came back to thee in full. It isn't written as well as the rest of thy chirography, that is, the letters are not as well made. All undue care was thrown aside in the execution. It was the summing up of the whole matter; it was the impress of the man. Here are no separate well made letters; it is a continuous whole. The result of thyself. Thou didst not think once of separating *M i c h a e l*—he is to thee one and entire, and such dost thou appear in the "bond."

Thy name looks half like a challenge, as who should impeach Michael —'s, and the finale hath a firm-set touch, a consciousness of dignity, an utterance as of one who had shaken off a momentary feeling of inferiority produced by the necessity of appeal to a rarely needed accomplishment, and who cried within himself,—

"A man's a man for a' that."

## THE DUST ON THE LILY.

BY MRS. S. J. HALE.

PURE as cheek of youthful maiden,  
When she kneels in morning prayer,  
With sweet dewy fragrance laden,  
Spread the Lily's blossom fair—  
Type it seemed of truth and feeling,  
Where the heart its faith might trust,  
Save that wooing winds, in stealing  
O'er, had left a trace of *dust*.

One who long, as life's sole treasure,  
*Perfect love and truth had sought,*  
On the Lily gazed with pleasure—  
'Twas the transcript of his thought:  
Joy's bright visions o'er him hovered,  
Nature's promise bade him hope,  
Till the *dust* his eye discovered,  
With his curious microscope!

Then, with doubt and sadness burdened,  
On his way that lone one goes,  
Heeding not that life is guarded  
By enjoyments for its woes—  
That the *good* from *evil* wrested,  
Is the triumph of the soul,  
As the proud ship's strength is tested  
When the storm-heaved billows roll.

Gentle wife, thy bridal over,  
In thine own sweet home at rest,  
Dost thou dream of sighing lover?  
Of gay crowds to make thee blest!  
No, thy soul a blessing dearer  
In thy life-pledged friend hath found,  
And thine angel-guides seem nearer  
As heart-hallowed cares abound.

Mother, as the Lily's beauty  
Shines above the water's strife,  
Thy sweet, placid smile of duty  
Charms the restless waves of life,  
And thy humble faith may borrow  
Happiness amid thy pain,  
For thy lot of care and sorrow  
God hath promised to sustain.

Thus, in nature's garden planted,  
Blooms some flower for every hand,  
And the light divine is granted  
All who seek the spirit land;  
Never let earth's darkest hour  
Quench thy star of heavenly hope;  
Never scan thy chosen flower  
With *dust seeking* microscope.