



THE
MAYFLOWER.

FOR

M DCCC XLVIII.

They met with many contrary winds and fierce storms, with which their ship was *shrewdly shaken*, and her upper works made very leaky, and one of the main beams of the mid-ship was bowed and cracked, which put them to some fear that she would not be able to perform the voyage.

New England's Memorial, 1009.

EDITED BY

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1848.



Vidal.

J. Sartain.

THE PROPHECY OF THE FLOWER.

The May Flower

.MDCCCLVIII.



W. H. W. del.

J. C. Smith sculp.

BOSTON,
SAXTON & KELT.

1848.

TWO CHAPTERS ON BEAUTY, VANITY,
AND MARBLE MANTELS.

BY HELPERNSTEIN.

I AM very much in doubt whether an ugly woman should ever love. When I say ugly, I use the word in the English sense, applying to the external appearance; not to moral qualities, as the word is now mostly used to signify in New England, where the idioms of Milton still hold the ground. There a person is morally ugly, physically homely; according to the divine bard—

"It is for *homely* features to keep *home*;
They had their name hence."

My position may sound very oddly in the face of the whole tribe of twaddlers who fill our magazines with stories going to show that mental beauty is the only thing really loveable or loved in this world;

which may be a pretty philosophic illusion to the very large class of plain people who go to fill up the common clay of this common world ; but the fact is substantially true, that ugly women are not loved. What are such to do then, exclaims ugliness in every possible variety, and in every possible expression of ugliness ?

Why, recognise it as a fact, and meet it accordingly.

I would say still farther, beautiful women are rarely, if ever, vain ; ugly women and plain women are always so. Beauty is favorable to self-esteem, plainness to vanity. The beautiful woman may have a very high standard, but she looks about her, and finds she has the advantage of most whom she encounters, and her glass sends back a reflection which, if not faultless, is far, very far from being repugnant to the principles of beauty. She meets her own personal attractions as a fact, to be no more cared for, and the looks of admiration bent upon her, are a natural and every-day occurrence, which in no way affects her.

Not so the plain woman. Her glass gives back a reflection by no means satisfactory to her own standard. She finds herself passed over in social gatherings, and she grows nervous and uncomfortable under a position which she is unwilling to fill. She tries to make amends by particular charms ; she will

with the frankness, but, alas! rarely with the true magnanimity of Madame Roland, be compelled to own that she has "ungloved a fair and slender hand," to do away the impression of very unattractive features; she will flash out expressive eyes, pout a pretty lip, smile to show even teeth, half violate decorum for the sake of a bust, or with the egregious vanity of Madame de Stael, go with the arms bare, because, as she said, it was all the beauty nature had given her, and she would make the most of it.

All this is exceedingly external, appealing to the sense of others, in the weak hope that we may be less ugly in their eyes than we are in our own, which, depend upon it, we never are. This is the action of vanity, a continual reference to others in an estimate of ourselves,—a reference which the beautiful woman is protected from making by the existence of unquestionable charms.

Men pay homage to beauty, but there is no doubt their conquests are oftenest made with plain women, for vanity is far more obliging than self-esteem—and the dear creature, who finds her one only charm the subject of admiration, is overwhelmed with love—gratitude!—oh, no! with vanity, which answers the same purpose.

The beautiful woman "knows her worthiness," as Shakespeare says, and is unmoved at a whole artillery of the kind; consequently, her emotions are

likely to be the more genuine, earnest, and unadulterated. She is less likely to make compromises and mistakes. She is like a queen in her own castle, or like the fabled sleeping beauty, only to be waked when the true and destined knight shall take her by the hand.

What, then, is beauty the great and much to be desired gift? Certainly, if received as a holy gift. It rarely brings happiness to its possessor, but it brings something higher, — reverence — constancy. Such, if loved, never cease to be loved. Even in the rude physical age of Homer, the old warriors look with awe upon the frail beauty whom the poet, in this way, has contrived to invest with a mournful and tender dignity. Tasso and Petrarch grew into immortality through their love of such; and Heloise, Mary Stewart, and Josephine, each with their several qualities, have brought the beings of their devotion into the foremost ranks of humanity, to be instinctively approved or condemned. Nobody cares for the learning of Abelard; he is remembered only as the lover of Heloise; Mary — the unqueenly Mary — but the fascinating and beautiful woman, we try to forgive because of her thorough genuineness, a fullness of heart that made her life a long inglorious martyrdom. The loving and unselfish Josephine is too sacred for words. We care little for portraits of women like these. We feel in our

hearts they were beautiful, in voice, eye, motion ; grace and soul-pervading beauty must have been instinct with them.

Such are the beings who unconsciously challenge love, because they become to the observer impersonations of loveliness. They realize to the nice eye the dreams of the imagination — they are the ideals of grace, of poetry, and they care as little for their own marvellous power as does the statue which chills while it sets the heart astir.

But what are the ugly ones to do? Must they live without love? Certainly, without the poetry of love. They may have esteem, respect, friendship, and many approximations to love, and if they will be rid of vanity, and live content in a *great fact*, in company with the larger part of those about them, they may have what to most of persons is more desirable than the romance of love: they may have every-day content, which is a very respectable and enviable position to be placed in, and with no tendency to flirtiness, which vanity is very apt to produce, they may be thoroughly praiseworthy and respectable, and being the majority they have it in their power to stare down and put down every beautiful woman who may appear like a vision in their path. It is true, by such a course of frowning, they gain nothing from the other sex but a double dose of flattery, which they would not dare to ex-

pend upon the really beautiful, and they will find themselves at every moment likely to be deserted of their seeming admirers who flatter them in order to do homage to their more favored sisters.

But a truce to sarcasm. There is certainly enough to do in the world, great human needs enough to occupy every magnanimous mind, without reference to the beauty of the missionary. Once in her life even an ugly woman may be pardoned for yielding to her little romance, her domestic heart-break ; but, after that, let her give her vanity its "quietus with a bare bodkin," and her life will be little stirring of events, and her real womanhood of ten times the sacredness and value ; indeed, she will please, in spite of her plainness, those only whom she should desire to please.

CHAPTER II.

I had a friend once who hated marble mantels ; black marble mantels he regarded as the abomination of abominations. He said they had not the frankness and honesty of a mirror, while they revealed quite as much. After much persuasion, he gave the following story as a reason for this dislike.

Passing through one of the by-streets of one of

our great cities, said he, as I often had occasion to do in the way of my profession, I observed a small wooden chapel, which, of a Sabbath-day, was thronged with worshippers, and the vestry room through the week was a place of constant resort. Making inquiries, I was told that the young priest who presided there was remarkable for his eloquence, sanctity and benevolence. He was the guide and the physican of his people, and had been for nearly five years almost worshipped by them.

Curiosity, one morning, prompted me to attend his ministration. I was struck with the solemnity of the service, which, without being either Catholic or Episcopal, swayed from one to the other. The opening form was confessional, for I observed many of the worshippers placed in a small box, at the entrance, slips of paper, which an old deacon afterward conveyed to the priest. Kneeling before the altar, the priest took each of these, and having read them made a mark upon a slate, and then cast them into a brazier filled with coals, and they were consumed.

He then came forward, and he and all the congregation knelt, while with a voice most earnest and musical, he alluded to the nature of the various offences which had been confessed, and then all responded to his simple, earnest appeals for pity and forgiveness by the cry,

“Have pity, O God!”

I recollect little of the subsequent ceremonial, unique as it was, for I found myself so impressed with the sublime spirit of worship, that I remembered only that I was a responsible human being, needing the pity and forgiveness of the Most High, who knew the needs of the creature he had made.

At the close, the priest raised his hands with the simple benediction, “The good Father bless ye, my beloved,” and he folded his hands meekly and retired. I was so struck with his manner, so truthful and so gentle, so touching the very fibres of the human heart, that I was only aroused by the exclamations of the poor people about, who were saying, “Ay, and ye may well look after him; he is an angel of good.” “No preaching for money there; his is for the love of God and poor human souls,” and other things of the kind.

Now all these remarks placed the preacher in the masculine gender, and I was convinced I had listened to a woman. The voice, the air, the habits of the preacher; all confirmed me in my opinion. It was in vain I afterward attempted any civilities— with a solemn yet gentle dignity, I felt myself repulsed. All communications passed through the box at the door, and though I did once so far presume as to throw therein a slip containing the words— “I have plucked out the heart of your mystery,”

I was so ashamed of the act when he appeared at the confessional that I could have wished for annihilation. When he read the paper, he dropped it into the brazier, but made no mark upon the slate, nor did he lift his eyes, or show, other than by an exceeding paleness, that he was alive to the incident.

I learned the priest occupied some plain rooms in the rear of the chapel, which he had himself built; that he received no pay, in any shape, either for preaching or medicine; that he had an elderly female, who was his only attendant. He never went out; a few flowers, books, and ministering to the poor, filled up his whole life. The dead were brought to the chapel for the service, infants duly received the sign of the covenant, and the marriage vow was pledged, all in the same area, from which he never strayed.

Many years elapsed, and I had outgrown my unmanly curiosity, when one morning my office was fairly besieged with applications. The priest had fallen ill. I went immediately, but was refused entrance; the old woman telling me with tears in her eyes, that he was certainly near dying, out of his head, yet raving with all the sweetness of an angel. With professional freedom I pushed her withered hand aside from the lock and entered the sick room, closing the door against all obtrusive curiosity.

The poor old woman rushed forward and threw

herself at the side of the bed in an agony of grief. There were the fair hands, the long locks, and the expression of patient suffering which only woman wears. She was delirious, and in a high fever. I left a prescription, and administered a palliative myself upon the spot.

Ill as she was, her delirium was suspended partially, a moment, and she fixed her eyes upon me sternly, saying :

“God deal gently with thee according as thou dost respect my secret.”

I bowed reverently, and left the house. I was not allowed a second entrance, although she must have hovered for weeks upon the verge of the grave, and when she next made her appearance in the chapel she was a white shadow, nothing more, and the house was filled with tears and sobs, in the midst of which arose her clear sweet voice like a chord of music. I noticed one petition which I knew was designed for me.

“May the good in any heart, though rejected here, be a sacred deposite in the bosom of God, to be hereafter brought forth and receive its reward !” I found myself weeping like a little child, while listening to her words.

She lived in this way many years, and at length expired in the midst of the morning confessional, surrounded by the prayers and blessings of the poor.

Hitherto I have said nothing as to her personal appearance. The long priestly garments she had assumed were favorable to disguise, and her amber colored hair, parted upon the top of her head, gave her an exceedingly apostolic interest. As a priest, she was earnest, true, beautiful; but as a woman exceedingly plain. The only handsome feature she had was her nose, and nothing can be made of that even by the most consummately vain. It is a fixture which can never be tortured into anything like availableness. But the soul speaks in the voice, and hers had all the depth of intonation, and all the flexibleness of a spirit like hers, always conversant with what is highest and best. I never heard her laugh, but her smile was just, not mortal.

And now for her story, which may be told in a few words. I had it from the old nurse after her death, who gave me the only record she had left behind her,—a short poem, which she would seem to have written at the time of her grief, and to have preserved with a convulsive and monkish feeling of penance. And now for the reason why my friend so hated marble mantels,—black marble mantels.

THE STORY.

MARGARET LINCOLN had always been a very plain girl; but having a mind of great clearness and order, she put the subject of personal attractions aside as a thing from which she was entirely set apart, and found herself content with the many resources of a virtuous and elegant life. She was high bred and amiable, and had a fortune at her own disposal, so that life might have seemed to promise well for her in spite of her plain face and slight twist of the shoulders.

Unfortunately she accepted an invitation to visit a cousin of hers, a handsome but giddy woman, whose house was the resort of the wealthy and the fashionable. Here the delicate assiduities of Mr. —, a man of intellect and refinement, won, not only upon the esteem, but the affections of Margaret; and she who had never felt a pulse thrill at the language of either flattery or love, found herself entirely absorbed in one who seemed to love her for the beauty of her soul, the fine issues of a fresh and earnest and loving spirit.

They were engaged for a length of time, waiting some business arrangements, and Margaret found

the whole world like a scene of enchantment. One feeling of distrust had never crossed her innocent mind. She thought so little of her own personal appearance, that she never questioned whether it weighed in the mind of her lover.

One day she was sitting by a table, writing a note, when, accidentally raising her eyes toward the black marble mantel, she found herself powerless to move them from the images therein reflected. She raised her eyes to herself in the opposite mirror and then glanced at the marble mantel, where she beheld her own beautiful lover, her own beautiful cousin. It was enough—they were both false, disloyal.

Again she glanced at her own reflection. In the agony of the moment, she grew hideous to herself. She even found herself making faces, distorting herself with instinctive disgust.

“Have n’t you finished that note yet, Maggie?” It was the musical tones of her lover. Poor girl! she tried to leave the room, but she fell down convulsed.

The false pair rushed toward her, and everything kind and gentle was uttered. She did not tell the cause of her emotion, and they always supposed it the prelude to a fever which followed. Margaret, in her weakness and lovingness, tried to forgive,—to forget. It was a trifle—the way of the world. But her heart told her it was an evil way, and she,

in the depth and singleness of her love, felt she could not abide the test. She could do better without love than with jealousy, and in the strength of her own womanly truth, she at length was able to withdraw herself entirely from the evil influence. Subsequent developments proved the justice of the course she adopted. Hence sprang her pious seclusion, and her entire devotion to the needs and the sufferings of humanity, and hence sprang the invariable axiom of my friend, an ugly woman should never love, or should avoid black marble mantels.

The following is the poem, the only record of Margaret Lincoln :

LOVE DEAD.

The lady sent him an image of Cupid, one wing veiling his face. He was pleased thereat, thinking it to be Love sleeping, and betokened the tenderness of the sentiment. He looked again, and saw it was Love dead, and laid upon his bier.

M S.

This morn with trembling I awoke,
Just as the dawn my slumber broke:
Flapping came a heavy wing sounding pinions o'er my head,
Beating down the blessed air with a weight of chilling dread—

Felt I then the presence of a doom
 That an Evil occupied the room—
 And I dared not round the bower,
 Chilly in the grayish dawning,
 Dared not face the evil power,
 With its voice of inward warning.

Vain with weakness we may palter—
 Vainly may the fond heart falter,
 Came there then upon my soul, dropp'g down like leaden weight,
 Burning pang or freez'g pang, which I know not, 't was so great;
 Life hath its moments black unnumbered,
 I knew not if mine eyes had slumbered,
 Yet I little thought such pain
 Ever to have known again—
 Love dies, too, when Faith is dead,
 Yesternight Faith perished.

I knew that Love could never change—
 That Love should die seems yet more strange—
 Lifting up the downy veil, screening Love within my heart,
 Beating there as beat my pulse, mov'g like myself a part—
 I had kept him cherished there so deep,
 Heart-rocked kept him in his balmy sleep,
 That till now I never knew
 How his fibres round me grew—
 Could not know how deep the sorrow
 Where Hope bringeth no to-morrow.

I struggled, knowing we must part,
 I grieved to lift him from my heart,
 Grieving much and struggling much, forth I brought him sorrowing—
 Drooping hung his fainting head— all adown his dainty wing,
 Shrieked I with a wild and dark surprise—
 For I saw the marble in Love's eyes—
 Yet I hoped his soul would wait
 As he oft had waited there—
 Hovering, though at Heaven's gate—
 Could he leave me to despair?

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Unfolded they the crystal door,
Where Love shall languish never more —
Weeping Love thy days are o'er. Lo! I lay thee on thy bier,
Wiping thus from thy dead cheek every vestige of a tear —
Love has perished — hist, hist how they tell,
Beating pulse of mine, his funeral knell —
Love is dead, aye dead and gone;
Why should I be living on? —
Why be in this chamber sitting,
With but phantoms round me flitting?