

Original Poetry.

The Departed Mother. BY MRS. T. D. FINCH.

They've laid her in a narrow bed Where bending willows weep;

The blooming flowers upon her grave With heavenly beauty dress;

No marble column towering high Her merits can disclose;

We'll cherish long departed worth And shed our tears of love;

Religion, though the walks of life, Her darkest hours illumed;

Delightful music thrills her soul, Life's pilgrimage is o'er;

God! sustain the weeping ones, Who mourn a mother's loss;

Miscellaneous.

DR. ESMOND'S BRIDE.

The warm, gorgeous sunset was streaming its scarlet banners athwart earth and sky;

He asked the question in a low and sweet tone;

"You are, sir, most dearest," she returned, quickly.

"I fear we are both acting hastily, Laura, and from an impulse both may regret in after years."

"Never," she interrupted, impetuously.

"Laura," Dr. Esmond interrupted, sternly.

"Oh, then I am addicted to falsehoods, too, am I?"

"I am grieved, Laura, that you persist in continuing this quarrel—this foolish altercation."

"Don't repeat it, pray," and she made a little gesture of contempt.

"You do not love me, Laura, or you would not speak thus."

"Love you?" she retorted. "Of course I do not love you; and what is more, I never did! Love you, indeed, no, indeed, Doctor Frederick Esmond, I hate you!"

She spoke quickly, excitedly, and removed the heavy golden circlet from her brow.

"Then, it is right—that we part," she said, and she turned away.

"It is me they are ridiculing," she whispered, fiercely, and the fire of her resentment filled the black eyes, as

how implied he appeared as he calmly took the ring she held out to him, and placed it on his hand.

A moment he waited, and then raising his eyes politely, said: "Good evening, Miss Lambert; then he turned and quietly walked away, out of the little front yard and into the street."

Very noble and handsome he looked to her tearful eyes, for the hot tears were they anger or penitence—would come; and when she saw him enter a low, rose-embowered cottage where May Severn lived, a pang of fierce pain went through her heart, even while she knew the old father was under Dr. Esmond's care.

She had been wicked, absolutely wicked to have wounded that proud, loving heart so sorely; not wounded only, either, but forever estranged, she feared.

Yes, feared; for Laura Lambert loved Fred Esmond, and she had blindly stifled her conscience when she hissed forth the cruel lie, "I hate you!"

Then she turned wearily away, and with a deep sigh willing up from the very depths of her heart, sought a quiet seat by the shady window, where, in the fast gathering twilight, she would be unseen.

Already she regretted the words she had spoken; and as her regret increased, her love for the doctor grew, until, with a face pale as the sheeted dead, and a heart aching to bursting, she crept to her own room, and, with a sobbing cry, flung herself upon the floor.

The day went on, and she had not seen him yet, and though her cheek was a trifle pale, and her eyes fell to the carpet when her mother asked where the doctor had gone, there was a sweet consciousness within; in that she had realized her wrong doing, and was willing to beg him to forgive her.

"Dear Fred," she said to herself, "he surely cannot but accord his pardon when I tell him."

So she waited and waited, and one bright evening, after the moon had risen, and the whole landscape seemed gentle and subdued under the magical mellowing rays, she went to the little front gate to wait until he should pass on the customary walk to the post office.

In her white muslin dress, with the bright blue ribbons he loved so well, and hair arranged as he most admired it, she looked a very charmer, standing in the moonlight, gazing wistfully down the light flooded street.

She had not long to wait, the sound of an approaching footstep that she knew too well, and a merry, cheery whistle, came plainly so her ears; then coming into the light, out of the shadow of the great stone church, she saw him, and the crimson blushes mounted her brow, neck and arms; a moment and he would be within sound of her voice, and the name—his name—was already forming on her quivering lips.

So happy to lean her head on his arm, again, and hear him call her "Laurie" again, to drive the cold, dismal echo of the "Miss Lambert" from her heart—the last sound she had heard from his lips.

He neared the little cottage of the Severns, halted, and went in.

"The old gentleman must be ill again to-night," she whispered, and her heart beat faster; and she thought of sweet little May Severn and her blue laughing eyes, and sunny golden hair, waving in tiny thick ringlets all around the queenly head.

A few moments, then, with clasped hands and throbbing breast, she saw the doctor walk leisurely out, laughing to May who leaned confidently on his arm. She saw him bend his head to say something to her, as they drew near, and then May laughed merrily.

"It is me they are ridiculing," she whispered, fiercely, and the fire of her resentment filled the black eyes, as

sweet and tender only a moment before.

They passed the gate. May smiled brightly, and Dr. Esmond gravely bowed. Laura nodded haughtily.

Then they went on. Oh, the heartache, the sorrow, the remorse, and regret, that filled her soul as she watched them; then she ran wildly to her quiet room again, tore off his favorite adornments, and began to school herself to the bitter truth that he was lost to her.

The next morning she sent him back his tender, loving letters; the thick curl of his splendid hair; a faded, withered tube-rose, the photograph that lay opposite hers in the album, and demanded her own.

In an hour he came to her again. Every trifle, every memento, even the embroidered wash-stand, and the chain and charms made from her own raven hair. There was no word, no line.

"Lost! Lonely forever!" With a weary sigh she murmured the words, and placed the package away from her sight, to go forth into the world again with a headache that should never cease.

"Yes, she is a fine woman, worthy of any man who can win her."

Doctor Esmond and his brother were walking slowly past the residence of the Lamberts.

"You ought to take your chance, Phil; she would suit you exactly."

"Thank you, no, most magnanimous brother. Besides having never seen the fair lady, I prefer the little curly-haired May-rose further down the street."

Philip Esmond pointed his finger to the Severn cottage.

"May's a lovely girl, but she can't be mentioned beside the other."

Doctor Frederick Esmond seemed particularly interested in the conversation.

"See here," said the brother, facing him, decidedly, "all this roundabout skimming is very well in its place, but just now it will not do. Here I am, your twin-brother, and a member of the same profession as your honorable self, just returned from California, and find you grown grave, morose, savage as a meat ax, and ready to knock anybody down who mentions a lady's name to you. What's to pay?"

Doctor Philip Esmond seemed very indignant.

"Nothing, I assure you. I don't care much for the ladies however."

"Not a woman hater, Frederick? If you've degenerated into that sort of a beast, I'll disown you!"

Frederick laughed.

"There's no possible danger, brother, mine. But Phil," and he lowered his voice to a confidential murmur—"Phil, my experience in women, love, and faith has embittered me against them all."

"Whew," whistled Phil. "I am glad it isn't me—for what would pretty little May do without me?"

"So you're engaged, after a month's acquaintance?" asked Fred.

"Precisely—that is, we will be married soon. It is all the same, isn't it?"

"I hope you will be happy, boy; and I wish it were me and—"

"What is this distress of yours, Fred? Come, tell me."

He dropped the merry joking way, and inquired gently, almost wistfully.

"Laura Lambert—she that has gone away on her country visit, of whom you have heard May joke me so often—she was my betrothed bride."

"Well?" asked Phil, softly.

"We quarrelled; she told me she hated me; she returned my letters; I sent her hers. That is all!"

"It is plenty; you told me you made up your mind to marry her, and now you are following—'that's just it, that proud, sneering way you've got. Probably she has it, too; and between you both, you stay at 'wards,' points forever. Why

don't you go and see her. Fred, you rascal?"

"She's not at home, now," he replied, carelessly.

"Then write to her."

"No, I don't care to do that. She is to blame, and not I. She said she hated me. Do you imagine I'll surrender when she despises me?"

"She don't despise you. These loving little girls are quick to become vexed, and are just as willing to forgive. Try her."

Frederick shook his head slowly.

"Then you don't care for her?" retorted Phil, angrily.

The doctor turned a piercing glance upon him.

"Love her," more than you ever dreamed of loving May Severn."

Phil smiled grimly, and they entered their office.

Over the broad fields, and high hills whose summits were crowned with the flaming glories of the late autumn days streamed the bright sunlight, falling on the uncovered head of Laura Lambert, as she trod the broad paths, communing with her own thoughts.

The summer had been one of severe discipline to her tender spirit. She had fully realized how pitiful a thing it is to be bereft of the friend of friends, whom we love above all other; and in the delightful quiet of her country home she had learned the lesson of perfect patience, acquired only by keenest suffering.

Yet, to-day, when she thought she had learned to speak his name calm and unmoved, she found how deep she had wound in her heart was, and when she had read the letter from her village home, from May Severn, she had fled to the cool woods to battle down her rising emotions again.

May had told her, with deprecating sweetness, that she and Doctor Esmond would be married on the following Tuesday, at midday; that Laura must come; there must be no denial; they all wanted her, and Fred particularly requested it. Poor Laura! the tears would not when she read May's note, in which she called him Fred; in which she learned the truth she had been fearing all the summer. Then May had won him at last, and she was invited to see them united.

It was a bitter struggle between half buried love and duty; for now, she argued, it was wrong to think of him any more; he was another's; he had given her up easily; but she had not so carelessly done so.

Well, she might as well go; if he could send for her, and in her presence take May to wife, surely, she should be able to witness it.

So she answered May's letter, promising to be present.

Her skies never hung over a fairer earth than those on May Severn's wedding morn, and Laura Lambert arose with a calm quiet heart, and prepared for the occasion.

"Five months ago this very day, I saw him for the last time—five long long months, yet not unhappy, though from joyful," she said to herself, as she before the mirror twining a stray curl over her finger. "He loved me then," she thought, "and had I not given away to my foolish anger, I would have been the happy bride to day, instead of another."

A tear lay unshed 'neath the long silky lashes, but she firmly dashed it away.

"This will not do. I must be womanly; and though the heart aches, the face must give no sign of the inward conflict."

She took from the wardrobe her white dress, unconsciously, perhaps, and not thinking it might prove unsuitable for the occasion. Then she drew a narrow blue velvet around the massive braid that crowned her little head, and a band of the same about the fair white neck, whose swan like loveliness was enhanced by the lark that shaded its gracefully. A small pearl pin caught the neck of the dress, and thus she was

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advised for Doctor Esmond's wife. Her cheeks were a trifle flushed, she entered, attended by her brother, the well-filled rooms, and was congratulated on every side by friends on her healthful appearance.

The bridal party had not yet come down, and she sat near the window, watching the gentleman, her heart throbbing wildly, and of excitement lightning her face, and glowing in her eyes.

Presently a servant came to Laura, and she followed her to the room; but she had determined that she should Frederick's dream she regretted the past.

"Oh, Laura, darling, I am so come. I was fearful you would come in my room, only while the doctor and I are in the minister."

May caught her arm, and there sat Fred, handsome and laughing as ever, attended of sparkling elegance, scarce less than the bride herself.

Laura bowed coldly, yet shyly, and Fred extended his hand. "Miss Lambert, you are a come stranger!"

"Am I? Thank you, I am pleased to be here."

Her voice was steady and she turned coldly toward Fred, farrowed her.

"We must bury all animosity, do you not agree with me?"

"Most certainly," she replied, "and we will be friends."

His voice had a spice of love. "May Severn is my friend, you will be."

"And I am forgiven—forgiven, Miss Lambert—He took her hand, and his own. Then she raised his; they were loving and gazed fixedly on her."

"Doctor Esmond you see, we can be friends but friendship."

She flushed hotly, and away.

"Then I am mistaken, Laura, I thought—I dream that we might, this day our vows!"

"What do you mean, Her tones were low."

"Scream me if you will, you choose, but let it be I love you. Laura, my for you only."

In all their days never had spoken this was surprised insulted.

"Frederick Esmond speak such language, the bride awaits your consent, you address such words to whom you have utterances will be your time."

She looked sternly gazed in bewilderment. At that moment, a ring on the arm of Philip.

"Here, Laura, do Doctor Phil Esmond is to be—"

"Darling, darling, under a sad mistake to May; it is Philip, little Laura, look to see you love me again."

"Oh, Fred?"

And she hid weeping the sweet. "Why, she never I was going to tell you May, in surprise."

"So it seems. Laura's curls. Phil stood looking at her in surprise."

"How can she see you please."