

though I were dead, but I ain't. I've got to see you alone. Say when and where." It was signed "Mrs. Pearl you know what," and Lloyd wondered, as he tore the paper into tiny fragments and tossed the bits into the street, why the woman had hesitated about the signature, after having published her name by registering it without disguise at the hotel.

With the reading of the note, and the confirmation of his fears, Lloyd passed from the extreme of hopeless despondency to the opposite and no less hopeless extreme of reckless indifference. When he reëntered the house all traces of his recent abstraction had vanished, and Grace, in the foolish fondness of her heart, thought that the good doctor's visit had bored her husband. She put the thought into words, adding: "Did it, Tom?"

"Certainly not; you know I think the world of the rector." He crossed the room and opened the piano. "Sing something for me, Grace."

"What shall it be?" she asked, kneeling before the music rack.

"Oh, I don't care—anything; that is, anything but church music—I don't feel in the mood for that tonight."

She sang two or three ballads, while he stood beside her and turned the leaves of the music. It was quite like the old days when he had visited her in the quiet New England homestead; and the glad light of satisfied affection shone in her eyes when she paused to ask him if they should sing some of the duets they had learned over the reedy little piano at home.

When he assented, Grace thought she had never heard him sing so well before; and she never remembered having seen him more cheerful and light hearted. She spoke of it afterwards when they had gone out to walk arm in arm up and down the veranda.

"Why not?" he asked. "The wise man knew what he was about when he said, 'Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die.'"

"Why, Tom! That sounds almost ungrateful—and we have so much to be thankful for."

"I know it, Grace, and I am thankful. I've had much more than my deservings, and if I should have to drop out tomorrow I should go with the thought that nothing could rob me of what I have already had."

There was a hard ring in his voice that Grace had never heard before, and the cynical bitterness in the sentiment jarred upon her a little.

"What makes you say that, Tom? It doesn't sound like you."

"Not like the Tom Lloyd you know, perhaps; but did you ever stop to consider that the wife knows only one side of a man? And there may be a very great difference between the side she knows and the other. Now I don't suppose that you could by any possible effort think of me as being a thief——"

"Of course I couldn't!"

"Or a gambler——"

"Why, Tom!"

"Or, let us say, a—a murderer."

"Please don't suggest such dreadful things," she pleaded. "You know I could never think of you in any of these impossible ways."

"But they are not impossible," insisted Lloyd, yielding for the moment to the promptings of the perversity which seeks to lure its victim to the very verge of the precipice he is so anxious to avoid. "I might be all these without you, or any one whom you know, being the wiser. There are plenty of cases on record to prove it."

She drew closer to his side while they paced up and down in silence. Then she said softly: "Nothing could prove it to me, Tom. I know you, and I wouldn't believe the evidence of my own eyes against your lightest word. Don't you know that?"

Lloyd shivered as he thought of what the morrow might compel her to believe, and the fit of reckless gaiety disappeared as suddenly as it had come. "It's getting chilly out here," he said; "let's go in and lock up."

Lloyd reached his office at an unusually early hour the following morning. He knew that his reply to the messenger would be taken as an answer to the note, and he wanted time to set his affairs in order before the coming of an interview which might make this and all other preparation impossible. There was more to do than he had anticipated, and it was half past ten when he had finished the letter of instructions giving Bently the authority to take charge of his papers. While he was addressing the envelope Bently came in.

"I just ran down to report progress," he said, dropping into a chair and feeling in his pockets. "Got a cigar?—thanks. Well, I went up to the hotel last night and had a squint at her ladyship—give me a match, will you?—she's there, all right, in proper person. She sent you a note in the course of the evening, but as there was nothing alarming in it, I thought there was no need of adding anything to it."

"You saw the note, then?"

"Oh, yes; the messenger boy was an obliging lad, and I fancy he knew there was nothing personal in it. What answer did you send?"

"None, except to tell the messenger that I'd be here all day today."

"Good. After I had interviewed the boy I talked shop a while with the hotel clerk. He says she came in yesterday morning from the East, and that she's been sending down to the office every half hour, since, to ask if Mr. Disburn has put in an appearance. You know Disburn; perhaps you can help me to guess how he happens to be mixed up in it."

Lloyd knew the man only as a miner who had "struck it rich," and who was endeavoring after a clumsy fashion to acquire the habits of profligacy which would enable him to spend his income.

"Yes, I know of him," he replied; "but I can't imagine what he can have to do with the affair. He's only been in Colorado three or four years."

"That's so, too. Well, she's mighty anxious to see him, any way, and if she's got him in tow, I should think your little bank account wouldn't be worth asking for. By the way, are you sure she wants money?"

"I'm not sure of anything, Bently. It's quite as likely to be vengeance as anything else, and in that case I know her well enough to expect no mercy. In any event, I have made up my mind to tell her to do her worst. She cannot have a penny of what I've earned and saved for Grace and the children."

"That's the talk!" exclaimed Bently, jumping up and walking excitedly up and down the office. "That's just what you ought to have done at the first. If a one horse lawyer can do you any good, you know right where to find him every day in the week!"

Lloyd smiled in spite of his forebodings. "I know I can always depend upon you, Harry, and here is a proof that I do. I've been getting my business affairs into shape, and you'll find a letter of instructions in this envelope, telling you what to do in case anything happens to me."

"Are you sure it's as bad as that, Tom? Isn't there a chance that you're making a mountain out of a mole hill? Why won't you turn the whole business over to me, and let me fight it out for you?"

"It's rather late to do that now; but I'll promise you shall have an opportunity to do what there is to be done. It is only fair to tell you, though, that there isn't a ghost of a chance for me. It's just as I told you

last night; if this woman chooses to speak, she can hang me."

Bently was sobered again immediately, and he stopped in front of Lloyd. "Tom, if it's that bad, why don't you just lock that door and run for it?"

Lloyd shook his head. "You don't understand, Harry. I'm not afraid of anything but the disgrace, and I can't run away from that. I'm not sure that I'd care to live after the thing comes out."

"Well," rejoined Bently, with his hand on the latch of the door, "I suppose it's your own funeral, and you will do as you please about it. Send up to the office if you want me."

When he was gone, Lloyd lighted a cigar and leaned back in his chair to wait. He tried to think of business, and went over the details again in his mind to see if he had taken every precaution necessary. There seemed to be nothing forgotten, and his thoughts wandered to other things.

What would become of Grace and the children? Would she take them back to the old home in New England, and would she try to have them grow up in ignorance of their father's ignominy? It would be best so, and he would suggest it when the time came; the law's delay would give sufficient opportunity for this and for all the other things he would wish to say to her. He knew well enough she would never leave Colorado while he was alive, though he could not help thinking that it would be better for her to be spared the miseries of waiting and sharing with him the bitterness of the interval.

Dwelling upon this phase of the wretched affair, his resolution to defy his accuser began to weaken. In justice to his wife and children, would it not be wiser to temporize, even though by so doing he could only hope to postpone the evil day? But then, if it were vengeance and not money—Bently's suggestion came again with overpowering emphasis. Who would question it if he saw fit to take his wife and children on a hurried journey? Or if the hue and cry were raised, what difference could it make so long as he was safe and with those whom God had given him?

The details suggested themselves of their own accord. A west bound train would leave at one o'clock. There was time enough for hasty preparation. The better part of his savings was either in ready money or in paper that could be immediately discounted at any bank. Since his business frequently called him away at short notice, Grace would not question the

hurried departure, and there would be plenty of time afterwards for such explanation as he might think it best to make.

The argument was dangerously subtle, and in self defense Lloyd took a half finished report on the Bald Eagle mine out of its pigeonhole and plunged into its mathematical intricacies. The effect of the mental bath was good. Hour after hour he pored over the columns of figures in his notebook, transferring the concrete results to the pages of the report; and when the work was finally completed, he was surprised to find that it was three o'clock, and that he had quite forgotten to go out to luncheon at the usual hour.

When the report was finished, there was nothing else to do; and the tide of perplexing thoughts surged back upon him like a pack of ravening wolves. For a few moments he tried to beat them off, fighting with all his strength for self possession and patience. When he saw that the effort was useless, he shut his desk and left the office. Five minutes later he was handing his card to the clerk at the Markham.

"Send that up to Mrs. Pearl Lloyd," he said, and then he walked the tiled floor of the rotunda until the boy came back with the empty salver.

"The lady says for you to come up to the parlor."

Lloyd turned upon his heel, and ran rapidly up the broad flight of steps. The parlor was empty, and he went to a window and stood looking down into the busy street. Would she never come? Or was this delay only another barb to the arrow of her vengeance?

Just then a truck horse slipped on the pavement and fell, and Lloyd watched the curious crowd gather around the prostrate animal. Every one had a suggestion to offer, and each new expedient seemed more cruel and brutal than the last.

"That's the way of the world," mused Lloyd. "When you're down you must be beaten and kicked and tortured till you get up again or die. Why hasn't some fool in all that crowd got sense enough to cut the harness and give the poor beast a chance to get on his feet?"

"You wouldn't expect anybody in a crowd to know anything, would you?"

She had entered the room so quietly that Lloyd had no warning of her presence until she spoke. He felt the blood leaving his face as he turned to meet her.

"I didn't know you had come," he said.

"I must have been thinking aloud."

"No, you were taking to yourself, same

as you used to," she said with the sardonic smile that he remembered so well.

She was standing by the closed piano, and Lloyd thought that the passing years had touched her lightly. She was a handsome woman of the blonde type, and in all her checkered career she had never lost sight of the fact that her power would disappear with her beauty. Lloyd noticed that she was well dressed, and he thought he detected a shade of embarrassment in her manner, which struck him as being a little singular.

"I suppose we might as well sit down," she said, dropping upon the piano stool. "How've you been all these years?"

"I don't know how that concerns you," he replied, resenting the approach to familiarity. "You said you wanted to see me; I am here—what have you to say?"

"They tell me you've steadied down since I saw you; that you've joined the church and turned good; that you've got a wife and children—"

Lloyd had steeled himself to bear taunts and gibes, but the mention of Grace and the children seemed an unnecessary refinement of cruelty.

"I told you these things didn't concern you," he said angrily. "Say what you've got to say, and have done with it!"

"I suppose I ought to have gone ahead without trying to see you," she said, ignoring his resentment and picking nervously at the fringe of the piano cover, "but I just didn't dare to trust to luck. I thought maybe after all these years you'd be willing to overlook what I did that time when I was hard up."

"What do you mean? I don't understand you."

"I mean about the money I made you give me for keeping still. When I heard that Jim Bradley was dying, I went to him and found out that he had confessed to the priest; told him all about the whole business—how you and John Lloyd quarreled over the cards, and how he shot John just as your pistol went off."

For an interminable second Lloyd thought he would suffocate, and then the blood rushed from heart to brain until he had to turn to the window and catch at the sash to keep from falling. She appeared not to notice his agitation, and went on without looking up.

"Of course, after that, I had to leave the country. I knew you'd be mad enough to kill me when you heard about it. I didn't mean to come back, but Mr. Disburn—"

She hesitated, but by this time Lloyd had

regained enough presence of mind to help her.

"What about Disburn?"

"Why, he says he won't live anywhere but in Denver, and I was afraid after we were married you might get square with me by telling him."

"Was that what you wanted to see me about?" asked Lloyd, forcing himself to speak calmly.

"That was it."

"Then you may set your mind at rest upon that point—I shall say nothing to him. Now answer me one question; how do you know it was Bradley's bullet and not mine that killed your husband?"

"I ought to know," she replied, with a trace of the evil smile. "I took the cartridges out of your pistol, and loaded it with blanks. John was always a little bit scared of you."

Lloyd turned to the window, and looked out into the street until he could trust himself to speak again. Then he said: "Let us understand each other now, once for all. You have nothing to fear from me, either now or henceforth, so long as you keep on your own side of the fence. From this day I shall try to forget that I have ever known you, and if you are as shrewd as I take you to be, you will do nothing to remind me of that fact. I don't think it's necessary to say any more. Good afternoon."

When he reached the street he felt as if he were walking on air. He meant to go straight home, and his hand was already

raised to stop the passing car when the demon of business, in the person of the prospective purchaser of the Bald Eagle, seized upon him and bore him back to his office, whence he was not suffered to escape until long past his usual hour.

When he was once more free, and had boarded the North Denver car, his impatience outran the rapid transit electrical machine until the latter seemed to creep by comparison. The journey found its end at last, however, and Grace opened the door for him as he ran up the steps.

"Late again!" she said in playful reproach. "The poor babies were heart broken because they had to go to bed without seeing you."

"It's a shame," he admitted, taking her face between his hands. "We won't let it happen any more—any way, not till the next time. You may go and pour the tea while I run up stairs and kiss the little ones."

He was gone so long that she crept silently up after him. She found him kneeling beside little Tom's crib, with his head on the pillow, and the child's chubby arms clasped about his neck. When he heard her step he freed himself gently, and rose; and as they left the room together she said softly: "You love the children, don't you, Tom?"

He seemed to find speech difficult, and they had reached the lower hall before he answered her. "I never knew how much until today."

### THE FLEET RETURNS TONIGHT.

THE fleet returns from the Shoals tonight;  
All the village folk are out;  
Upon the beach is many a light,  
And many a friend about,  
And many a group of children bright  
Make the wild echoes shout;

And on the beach are aged men,  
And aged women, too,  
And hand is clasped in withered hand,  
While hearts beat warm and true,  
And friends who have lost sight of friends  
Their ancient ties renew.

*Frank H. Sweet.*

# LITERARY CHAT

## A REVIVAL OF GEORGE SAND.

In France there has been during the past three years a revival of the works of George Sand. After lying dust laden in libraries for a generation, giving place to the Maupassants, the Daudets, and the Zolas, a new turn of popular taste has forced them into new editions, with the charm of modern binding, text, and illustration.

There are dozens of this author's stories, so old that they are new again, that might be dressed in these fresh prints, but most of them will have lost their flavor. They are meaningless to the readers of the modern school of fiction.

What are the stale audacities of a woman who puttered about the garden of a country house in a man's coat, to the Paris that sees hundreds of respectable, commonplace women flashing by in knickerbockers, balancing themselves astride a flashing wheel?

George Sand comes back to us today stripped of all the trifling impediments to her fame. It is not her faults, her protests against orders then existing, which we regard seriously, but her power as a poet of nature. She is a poet of the very highest order—one who appeals to the most cultured taste.

Her communion with nature was so close and deep that she saw the joy and the beauty of the passing by of the forces of the great world.

In that clever anonymous book, "The Breadwinners," which is finally supposed to have been written by Colonel John Hay, the educated, aspiring daughter of the carpenter is made to seek a sensation by hunting up a volume of George Sand, having heard of her "wickedness." She throws the book aside as stupid—"all about a lot of peasants, as poor as crows." These peasants are as real today as they were fifty years ago, and as full of charm to the mind capable of understanding them.

## WILLIAM SHARP.

WILLIAM SHARP has shown himself to be one who knows his own time, however little, as yet, his own time may know him. In a book of poems published six years ago he wrote this preface:

"That there is a romantic revival imminent in our poetic literature, a true awakening of the genuinely romantic sentiment, is my

earnest conviction. Many things point to this freshly stirring stream of tendency. Among our younger artists there is a quickening of life, of emotion, of passion, such as has not animated English art since the days of the endeavor of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.

"In pure fiction, the era of romance as opposed to pseudo realism is about to begin, if the tide be not already well on the flow. In the ebb and flux of literary sentiment, the story of adventure must always have a steadfast place; for the world is always youthful to the young, and the young love adventure and romance even when the chill of a reactionary period has touched them with its blight."

We have seen this day of romance come in, but we have not, we believe, come to a point where Mr. Sharp's original shudders fit the popular mind. We have seen the advance sheets of a collection of short stories by him, soon to be published. They are fantastically horrible. One, "The Birth of a Soul," is full of a realism that is only saved from indecency, as a hideous nude figure is saved from indecency, by its very repulsiveness. It is decked with rags of moralizing which are not original at all, being the same old story of heredity, of sin begetting sin. This seems to be the worst sort of materialism. There is a pessimism which leaves out the fresh element of growth that is born with every human life. There is a lack of sanity, of health, which revolts and disgusts. Mr. Sharp has a marvelous use of words, but he has in his tales the element of decay. No truly great mind ever sees the world as he sees it. His point of view is unhealthy, is demoralizing, and what is worst of all, entirely disgusting.

## MAURUS JOKAI'S NOVELS.

THE regular novel reader is too apt to take his fiction by the yard. He imports it from England and France, or takes the standard, home made article, as it is handed out by the book sellers and critics.

Our continental literature comes to us usually by way of France, having been first translated into French, and then, in most cases, cheaply turned into something that passes for English. That there were great novelists in Russia we never knew until Turgenev became a Parisian and introduced Russian literature to France. We have now translations of two novels by Maurus Jokai, the Hungarian novelist, which are artistic reproductions in English