

The Family Circle

THE TWILIGHT GRAY AND DIM

His little eyes look into mine,
Those blue, blue eyes that softly shine;
His snowy chubby arms I feel
Around my neck caressing steal;
As dulcet music to my ear
His hisping baby voice I hear;
Upon my breast his head he lays,
Into those eyes I fondly gaze,
I kiss the lips that scarce can talk,
The tiny feet that just can walk,
And as I sit and fondle him,
There in the twilight grey and dim.

I pray that God may guide aright
His pretty feet of pink and white;
That he may keep his dimpled hands
Free, ever free, from passion's bands;
His rosebud lips keep all secure
From utterance of aught impure;
Forbid his eyes to ever see,
His ears to hear too willingly,
In all his years a single thing
That to my cheek the blush would bring;
God grant my boy a liberal mind,
A noble heart, brave, true, and kind.

Were it Thy will I'd doubly bear
Of care and pain, dear Lord, his share.
These eyes of mine would burn and ache,
This heart of mine yearn, yearn and break,
That his bright eyes might miss the tears,
His gentle heart escape the fears;
These hands of mine would labor know,
These feet of mine all errands go,
That his wee hands be kept from soil,
His tender feet from thorn and toil.
Ah, Christ, you understand, I know—
Your own sweet Mother loved you so!

AN ANONYMOUS LETTER

Francis Creighton sat sipping a cup of coffee in a retired corner of a respectable restaurant, not far from the fashionable quarter of London. A table near was occupied by a couple of young men; and, as Francis sipped his coffee and read the news of the day, scraps of their conversation reached his ears.

Suddenly a gleam of interest flashed in his eyes, and, though he continued to glance at the paper, his whole attention was given to the talk of his neighbors.

'Yes,' one of them said, 'I saw Jack Travers to-day. He is one of the two young men selected as being likely to suit old Mr. Wellborough for secretary.'

'Wellborough, the big mill-owner?' the second man asked. 'Travers will fall on his feet if he gets the job. Wellborough's a millionaire.'

'Yes, and a millionaire of a good type. I wish Jack may get the post; but I'm afraid he won't if Wellborough hears his story.'

'What story? I didn't know Travers had one. Wasn't his mother that nice widow lady who used to live near your place?'

'Mrs. Travers wasn't Jack's mother, though he thought so till the time of her death. His father was an Irishman named Gilmore, who had married an Englishwoman. Gilmore was an engineer, or something of that sort. Well, Mrs. Travers, after her husband's death, went to stay in a place in Ulster called Rosclare, and became acquainted with the Gilmores. During the time of her sojourn in Rosclare, one of those party riots so common in the North of Ireland broke out. Hugh Gilmore in the melee killed a man with one blow. He was arrested, tried for manslaughter, and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. He died soon after he was sentenced; and his wife, a delicate woman, never recovered from the shock. Mrs. Travers, in her own sorrow and loneliness, became attached to Mrs. Gilmore and her little baby, and when the former died she took possession of little Jack Gilmore and took him to England with her. She had a sufficient annuity to educate the boy; but it ended with her life. My mother was well acquainted with the story; Jack himself never suspected he was not Mrs. Travers' son till she was dying. She begged him to keep the name she had given him. He was telling me to-day about the secretaryship. It is worth several hundred pounds a year. Mr. Wellborough's lawyers interviewed all applicants for the situation in London, and selected two from the number. These two go down to the old gentleman's place in Yorkshire to-morrow, on approval, as it were.'

Francis Creighton listened attentively and waited till his neighbors had taken their departure.

'By jove!' he muttered to himself: 'this is interesting! I fancy the situation is mine. I believe Mr. Well-

borough is thoroughly conservative. He will hardly give the secretaryship to a felon's son. An anonymous letter will bring him the information. I shall get my landlady's son to write a note; my own writing might be recognised. Rather fortunate that I lingered so long this afternoon!'

The anonymous letter was despatched to Mr. Wellborough that evening, and Francis Creighton journeyed to Yorkshire by an early train next morning. At the station nearest to Mr. Wellborough's place a carriage was in waiting. The coachman explained that his master expected two gentlemen, and after a few moments Jack Travers appeared. The young men greeted each other with some awkwardness and at once took their places in the carriage, and a half-hour brought them to Wellborough Hall. Its owner was waiting for them.

'You must pardon an invalid for asking you to undertake so lengthy a journey,' Mr. Wellborough said courteously, 'and partake of luncheon before we proceed to business.'

During the progress of the meal, Francis fancied he detected a shade more attention to himself than to his rival, and his hopes were high as he accompanied Mr. Wellborough to his library. The gentleman seemed to have some hesitation in beginning the conversation.

'Up till this morning, Mr. Creighton,' he said at length, 'you had the better chance of obtaining the situation. Your training and qualifications seemed to fit you for the post. An anonymous letter, however, has caused me to change my mind.'

'Indeed!' Creighton's surprise was genuine. 'It does not concern you, and generally I pay no attention to such letters; but this case is different.' Mr. Wellborough hesitated a moment. 'When my brother and I became joint owners of the Wellborough Mills in Bradford, the business was fast going to the bad. Neither of us had any private capital with which to prop it up, and not very much experience. At this period I became acquainted with a young Irish engineer named Gilmore. The man had a perfect craze for machinery of all kinds, and he gave me plans by which a great improvement might be made in the looms. Just after doing so he disappeared completely. His plans, after some changes, were found to be quite workable, and the new machinery effected a considerable saving both in labor and money. It proved the turning point in my brother's career and in mine also. New mills were bought, the new machinery introduced, and we became wealthy men.'

Mr. Wellborough paused. 'We tried, and unsuccessfully, to find Gilmore,' he resumed. 'No trace of him could be found. The anonymous letter I received this morning tells me that the young man we have left in the dining-room is the son of Hugh Gilmore, who ended his life in prison for the crime of manslaughter. If that be so, he must have the situation, you see, Mr. Creighton. I shall make inquiries, of course, before arriving at a final decision. When I do so, I shall communicate with you. In the meantime, please accept this cheque for the inconvenience you have been put to.'

The cheque was a liberal one, but Francis Creighton went back to London cursing his ill-luck. A few weeks later he had a letter from Mr. Wellborough. 'Young Travers, when I questioned him, told me that his father was a Hugh Gilmore, who had died in prison. I at once placed the matter in a detective's hands; and I now find that he and the man whose suggestions brought fortune to my brother and me were one and the same person. Gilmore unfortunately struck a man who was a ringleader in some row. All evidence went to show that Gilmore was trying to make peace at the time, though he was afterwards convicted. He had always been impulsive. I am very thankful to the writer of the anonymous letter, contemptible as such communications generally are. I think Gilmore—or Travers, as you choose to call him—will suit me very well indeed; and I hope you will find a situation soon, if you have not already done so.'

'I don't think I shall ever again send an anonymous letter,' Creighton said bitterly, as he tossed the communication into the fire.

HANDWRITING OF AUTHORS

An interesting study is the handwriting of authors, as it indicates to a greater or less degree their personal temperaments.

Longfellow wrote a bold, open back-hand, which was the delight of printers. Joaquin Miller wrote such a bad hand that he often became puzzled over his own work, and the printer sings the praises of the inventor of the typewriter.

Charlotte Brontë's writing seemed to have been traced with a cambric needle, and Thackeray's writing, while marvellously neat and precise, was so small that the best eyes were needed to read it. Likewise the writing of Captain Marryat was so microscopic that when he was interrupted in his labors he was obliged to mark the place where he left off by sticking a pin in the paper.

Napoleon was worse than illegible, and it is said that his letters from Germany to the Empress Josephine were at first thought to be rough maps of the seat of war.

Carlyle wrote a patient, crabbed, and oddly emphasised hand. The penmanship of Bryant was aggressive, well-