Reed Myrtle

Threads of Grey and Gold

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Reed M.

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Содержание

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To the Readers of

THE ROMANCES OF MYRTLE REED

– A world-wide circle comprising probably not less than two million sympathetic admirers —
This volume, which presents some of the writer's most typical utterances – utterances characterised by the combination of wisdom, humour, and sentiment that belongs to all the writings of the gifted author,

IS DEDICATED BY
THE EDITOR.

Chicago,
January, 1913.

In Memory of

A WEAVER OF DREAMS

A tribute to Myrtle Reed in recognition of her beautiful and valuable contributions to English literature.

As the spinner of silk weaves his sunbeams of gold,
Blending sunset and dawn in its silvery fold,
So she wove in the woof of her wonderful words
The soft shimmer of sunshine and music of birds.
With the radiance of moonlight and perfume of flowers,
She lent charm to the springtime and gladdened the hours.

She spoke cheer to the suffering, joy to the sad;
She gave rest to the weary, made the sorrowful glad.
The sweet touch of her sympathy soothed every pain,
And her words in the drouth were like showers of rain.
For she lovingly poured out her blessings in streams
As a fountain of waters – a weaver of dreams.

Her bright smiles were bejewelled, her tears were empearled,
And her thoughts were as stars giving light to the world;
Her fond dreams were the gems that were woven in gold,
And the fabric she wrought was of value untold.
Every colour of beauty was radiantly bright,
Blending faith, hope, and love in its opaline light.

And she wove in her woof the great wealth of her heart,
For the cord of her life gave the life to each part;
And the beauty she wrought, which gave life to the whole,
Was her spirit made real – she gave of her soul.
So the World built a temple – a glorious shrine —
A Taj Mahal of love to the woman divine.

ADDISON BLAKELY.

How the World Watches the New Year Come In

The proverbial “good resolutions” of the first of January which are usually forgotten the next day, the watch services in the churches, and the tin horns in the city streets, are about the only formalities connected with the American New Year. The Pilgrim fathers took no note of the day, save in this prosaic record: “We went to work betimes”; but one Judge Sewall writes with no small pride of the blast of trumpets which was sounded under his window, on the morning of January 1st, 1697.

He celebrated the opening of the eighteenth century with a very bad poem which he wrote himself, and he hired the bellman to recite the poem loudly through the streets of the town of Boston; but happily for a public, even now too much wearied with minor poets, the custom did not become general.

In Scotland and the North of England the New Year festivities are of great importance. Weeks before hand, the village boys, with great secrecy, meet in out of the way places and rehearse their favourite songs and ballads. As the time draws near, they don improvised masks and go about from door to door, singing and cutting many quaint capers. The thirty-first of December is called “Hogmanay,” and the children are told that if they go to the corner, they will see a man with as many eyes as the year has days. The children of the poorer classes go from house to house in the better districts, with a large pocket fastened to their dresses, or a large shawl with a fold in front.

Each one receives an oaten cake, a piece of cheese, or sometimes a sweet cake, and goes home at night heavily laden with a good supply of homely New Year cheer for the rest of the family.

The Scottish elders celebrate the day with a supper party, and as the clock strikes twelve, friend greets friend and wishes him “a gude New Year and mony o’ them.”

Then with great formality the door is unbarred to let the Old Year out and the New Year in, while all the guests sally forth into the streets to “first foot” their acquaintances.

The “first foot” is the first person to enter a house after midnight of December 31st. If he is a dark man, it is considered an omen of good fortune. Women generally are thought to bring ill luck, and in some parts of England a light-haired man, or a light-haired, flat-footed man is preferred. In Durham, this person must bring a piece of coal, a piece of iron, and a bottle of whiskey. He gives a glass of whiskey to each man and kisses each woman.

In Edinburgh, a great crowd gathers around the church in Hunter Square and anxiously watches the clock. There is absolute silence from the first stroke of twelve until the last, then the elders go to bed, but the young folks have other business on hand. Each girl expects the “first foot” from her sweetheart and there is occasionally much stratagem displayed in outwitting him and arranging to have some grandmother or serving maid open the door for him.

During the last century, all work was laid aside on the afternoon of the thirty-first, and the men of the hamlet went to the woods and brought home a lot of juniper bushes. Each household also procured a pitcher of water from “the dead and living ford,” meaning a ford in the river by which passengers and funerals crossed. This was brought in perfect silence and was not allowed to touch the ground in its progress as contact with the earth would have destroyed the charm.

The next morning, there were rites to protect the household against witchcraft, the evil eye, and other machinations of his satanic majesty. The father rose first, and, taking the charmed water and a brush, treated the whole family to a generous sprinkling, which was usually acknowledged with anything but gratitude.

Then all the doors and windows were closed, and the juniper boughs put on the fire. When the smoke reached a suffocating point, the fresh air was admitted. The cattle were fumigated in the same way and the painful solemnities of the morning were over.

The Scots on the first of the year consult the Bible before breakfast. They open it at random and lay a finger on a verse which is supposed to be, in some way, an augury for the coming year. If a

lamp or a candle is taken out of the house on that day, some one will die during the year, and on New Year's day a Scotchman will neither lend, borrow nor give anything whatsoever out of his house, for fear his luck may go with it, and for the same reason the floor must not be swept. Even ashes or dirty water must not be thrown out until the next day, and if the fire goes out it is a sign of death.

The ancient Druids distributed among the early Britons branches of the sacred mistletoe, which had been cut with solemn ceremony in the night from the oak trees in a forest that had been dedicated to the gods.

Among the ancient Saxons, the New Year was ushered in with friendly gifts, and all fighting ceased for three days.

In Banffshire the peat fires are covered with ashes and smoothed down. In the morning they are examined closely, and if anything resembling a human footprint is found in the ashes, it is taken as an omen. If the footprint points towards the door, one of the family will die or leave home during the year. If they point inward, a child will be born within the year.

In some parts of rural England, the village maidens go from door to door with a bowl of wassail, made of ale, roasted apples, squares of toast, nutmeg, and sugar. The bowl is elaborately decorated with evergreen and ribbons, and as they go they sing:

"Wassail, wassail to our town,
The cup is white and the ale is brown,
The cup is made of the ashen tree,
And so is the ale of the good barley.

"Little maid, little maid, turn the pin,
Open the door and let us in;
God be there, God be here;
I wish you all a Happy New Year."

In Yorkshire, the young men assemble at midnight on the thirty-first, blacken their faces, disguise themselves in other ways, then pass through the village with pieces of chalk. They write the date of the New Year on gates, doors, shutters, and wagons. It is considered lucky to have one's property so marked and the revellers are never disturbed.

On New Year's Day, Henry VI received gifts of jewels, geese, turkeys, hens, and sweetmeats. "Good Queen Bess" was fairly overwhelmed with tokens of affection from her subjects. One New Year's morning, she was presented with caskets studded with gems, necklaces, bracelets, gowns, mantles, mirrors, fans, and a wonderful pair of black silk stockings, which pleased her so much that she never afterward wore any other kind.

Among the Romans, after the reformation of the calendar, the first day, and even the whole month, was dedicated to the worship of the god Janus. He was represented as having two faces, and looking two ways – into the past and into the future. In January they offered sacrifices to Janus upon two altars, and on the first day of the month they were careful to regulate their speech and conduct, thinking it an augury for the coming year.

New Year's gifts and cards originated in Rome, and there is a record of an amusing lawsuit which grew out of the custom. A poet was commissioned by a Roman pastry-cook to write the mottoes for the New Year day bonbons. He agreed to supply five hundred couplets for six sesterces, and though the poor poet toiled faithfully and the mottoes were used, the money was not forthcoming. He sued the pastry-cook, and got a verdict, but the cook regarded himself as the injured party. Crackers were not then invented, but we still have the mottoes – those queer heart-shaped things which were the delight of our school-days.

The Persians remember the day with gifts of eggs – literally a "lay out!"

In rural Russia, the day begins as a children's holiday. The village boys get up at sunrise and fill their pockets with peas and wheat. They go from house to house and as the doors are never locked, entrance is easy. They throw the peas upon their enemies and sprinkle the wheat softly upon their sleeping friends.

After breakfast, the finest horse in the little town is decorated with evergreens and berries and led to the house of the greatest nobleman, followed by the pea and wheat shooters of the early morning. The lord admits both horse and people to his house, where the whole family is gathered, and the children of his household make presents of small pieces of silver money to those who come with the horse. This is the greeting of the peasants to their lord and master.

Next comes a procession of domestic animals, an ox, cow, goat, and pig, all decorated with evergreens and berries. These do not enter the house but pass slowly up and down outside, that the master and his family may see. Then the old women of the village bring barnyard fowls to the master as presents, and these are left in the house which the horse has only recently vacated. Even the chickens are decorated with strings of berries around their necks and bits of evergreen fastened to their tails.

The Russians have also a ceremony which is more agreeable. On each New Year's Day, a pile of sheaves is heaped up over a large pile of grain, and the father, after seating himself behind it, asks the children if they can see him. They say they cannot, and he replies that he hopes the crops for the coming year will be so fine that he will be hidden in the fields.

In the cities there is a grand celebration of mass in the morning and the rest of the day is devoted to congratulatory visits. Good wishes which cannot be expressed in person are put into the newspapers in the form of advertisements, and in military and official circles ceremonial visits are paid.

The Russians are very fond of fortune-telling, and on New Year's eve the young ladies send their servants into the street to ask the names of the first person they meet, and many a bashful lover has hastened his suit by taking good care to be the first one who is met by the servant of his lady love. At midnight, each member of the family salutes every other member with a kiss, beginning with the head of the house, and then they retire, after gravely wishing each other a Happy New Year.

Except that picturesque rake, Leopold of Belgium, every monarch of Europe has for many years begun the New Year with a solemn appeal to the Almighty, for strength, guidance, and blessing.

The children in Belgium spend the day in trying to secure a "sugar uncle" or a "sugar aunt." The day before New Year, they gather up all the keys of the household and divide them. The unhappy mortal who is caught napping finds himself in a locked room, from which he is not released until a ransom is offered. This is usually money for sweets and is divided among the captors.

In France, no one pays much attention to Christmas, but New Year's day is a great festival and presents are freely exchanged. The President of France also holds a reception somewhat similar to, and possibly copied from, that which takes place in the White House.

In Germany, complimentary visits are exchanged between the merest acquaintances, and New Year's gifts are made to the servants. The night of the thirty-first is called *Sylvester Aben* and while many of the young people dance, the day in more serious households takes on a religious aspect. During the evening, there is prayer at the family altar, and at midnight the watchman on the church tower blows his horn to announce the birth of the New Year.

At Frankfort-on-the-Main a very pretty custom is observed. On New Year's eve the whole city keeps a festival with songs, feasting, games, and family parties in every house. When the great bell in the cathedral tolls the first stroke of midnight, every house opens wide its windows. People lean from the casements, glass in hand, and from a hundred thousand throats comes the cry: "*Prosit Neujahr!*" At the last stroke, the windows are closed and a midnight hush descends upon the city.

The hospitable Norwegians and Swedes spread their tables heavily; for all who may come in at Stockholm there is a grand banquet at the Exchange, where the king meets his people in truly democratic fashion.

The Danes greet the New Year with a tremendous volley of cannon, and at midnight old Copenhagen is shaken to its very foundations. It is considered a delicate compliment to fire guns and pistols under the bedroom windows of one's friends at dawn of the new morning.

The dwellers in Cape Town, South Africa, are an exception to the general custom of English colonists, and after the manner of the early Dutch settlers they celebrate the New Year during the entire week. Every house is full of visitors, every man, woman, and child is dressed in gay garments, and no one has any business except pleasure. There are picnics to Table Mountain, and pleasure excursions in boats, with a dance every evening. At the end of the week, everybody settles down and the usual routine of life is resumed.

In the Indian Empire, the day which corresponds to our New Year is called "Hooly" and is a feast in honour of the god Krishna. Caste temporarily loses ground and the prevailing colour is red. Every one who can afford it wears red garments, red powder is thrown as if it were *confetti*, and streams of red water are thrown upon the passers-by. It is all taken in good part, however, as snowballing is with us.

Even "farthest North," where the nights are six months long, there is recognition of the New Year. The Esquimaux come out of their snow huts and ice caves in pairs, one of each pair being dressed in women's clothes. They gain entrance into every *igloo* in the village, moving silently and mysteriously. At last there is not a light left in the place, and having extinguished every fire they can find, they kindle a fresh one, going through in the meantime solemn ceremonies. From this one source, all the fires and lights in the district are kindled anew.

One wonders if there may not be some fear in the breasts of these Children of the North, when for an instant they stand in the vastness of the midnight, utterly without fire or light.

The most wonderful ceremonies connected with the New Year take place in China and Japan. In these countries and in Corea the birth of the year is considered the birthday of the whole community. When a child is born he is supposed to be a year old, and he remains thus until the changing seasons bring the annual birthday of the whole Mongolian race, when another year is credited to his account.

In the Chinese quarter of the large cities, the New Year celebrations are dreaded by the police, since where there is so much revelry there is sure to be trouble. In the native country, the rejoicings absorb fully a month, during the first part of which no hunger is allowed to exist within the Empire.

The refreshments are light in kind – peanuts, watermelon seeds, sweetmeats, oranges, tea and cakes. Presents of food are given to the poor, and "brilliant cakes," supposed to help the children in their studies, are distributed from the temples.

The poor little Chinamen must sadly need some assistance, in view of the fact that every word in their language has a distinct root, and their alphabet contains over twenty thousand letters.

At an early hour on New Year's morning, which according to their calendar comes between the twenty-first of January and the nineteenth of February, they propitiate heaven and earth with offerings of rice, vegetables, tea, wine, oranges, and imitation of paper money which they burn with incense, joss-sticks, and candles.

Strips of scarlet paper, bearing mottoes, which look like Chinese laundry checks, are pasted around and over doors and windows. Blue strips among the red, mean that a death has occurred in the family since the last celebration.

New Year's calls are much in vogue in China, where every denizen of the Empire pays a visit to each of his superiors, and receives them from all of his inferiors. Sometimes cards are sent, and, as with us, this takes the place of a call.

Images of gods are carried in procession to the beating of a deafening gong, and mandarins go by hundreds to the Emperor and the Dowager Empress, with congratulatory addresses. Their robes are gorgeously embroidered and are sometimes heavy with gold. After this, they worship their household gods.

Illuminations and fireworks make the streets gorgeous at night, and a monstrous Chinese dragon, spouting flame, is drawn through the streets.

People salute each other with cries of “Kung-hi! Kung-hi!” meaning I humbly wish you joy, or “Sin-hi! Sin-hi!” May joy be yours.

Many amusements in the way of theatricals and illumination are provided for the public.

In both China and Japan, all debts must be paid and all grudges settled before the opening of the New Year. Every one is supposed to have new clothes for the occasion, and those who cannot obtain them remain hidden in their houses.

In Japan, the conventional New Year costume is light blue cotton, and every one starts out to make calls. Letters on rice paper are sent to those in distant places, conveying appropriate greetings.

The Japanese also go to their favourite tea gardens where bands play, and wax figures are sold. Presents of cooked rice and roasted peas, oranges, and figs are offered to every one. The peas are scattered about the houses to frighten away the evil spirits, and on the fourth day of the New Year, the decorations of lobster, signifying reproduction, cabbages indicating riches, and oranges, meaning good luck, are taken down and replaced with boughs of fruit trees and flowers.

Strange indeed is the country in which the milestones of Time pass unheeded. In spite of all the mirth and feasting, there is an undercurrent of sadness which has been most fitly expressed by Charles Lamb:

> “Of all the sounds, the most solemn and touching is the peal which rings out the old year. I never hear it without gathering up in my mind a concentration of all the images that have been diffused over the past twelve months; all that I have done or suffered, performed, or neglected, in that regretted time. I begin to know its worth as when a person dies. It takes a personal colour, nor was it a poetical flight in a contemporary, when he exclaimed: ‘I saw the skirts of the departing year!’”

The Two Years

Tread softly, ye throngs with hurrying feet,
Look down, O ye stars, in your flight,
And bid ye farewell to a time that was sweet,
For the year lies a-dying to-night.

In a shroud of pure snow lie the quickly-fled hours —
The children of Time and of Light;
Stoop down, ye fair moon, and scatter sweet flowers,
For the year lies a-dying to-night.

Hush, O ye rivers that sweep to the sea,
From hill and from blue mountain height;
The flood of your song should be sorrow, not glee,
For the year lies a-dying to-night.

Good night, and good-bye, dear, mellow, old year,
The new is beginning to dawn.
But we'll turn and drop on thy white grave a tear,
For the sake of the friend that is gone.

All hail to the New! He is coming with gladness,
From the East, where in light he reposes;
He is bringing a year free from pain and from sadness,
He is bringing a June with her roses.

A burst of sweet music, the listeners hear,
The stars and the angels give warning —
He is coming in beauty, this joyful New Year,
O'er the flower-strewn stairs of the morning.

He is bringing a day with glad pulses beating,
For the sorrow and passion are gone,
And Love and Life have a rapturous meeting
In the rush and the gladness of dawn.

The Old has gone out with a crown that is hoary,
The New in his brightness draws near;
Then let us look up in the light and the glory,
And welcome this royal New Year.

The Courtship of George Washington

The quaint old steel engraving which shows George and Martha Washington sitting by a table, while the Custis children stand dutifully by, is a familiar picture in many households, yet few of us remember that the first Lady of the White House was not always first in the heart of her husband.

The years have brought us, as a people, a growing reverence for him who was in truth the "Father of His Country." Time has invested him with godlike attributes, yet, none the less, he was a man among men, and the hot blood of youth ran tumultuously in his veins.

At the age of fifteen, like many another schoolboy, Washington fell in love. The man who was destined to be the Commander of the Revolutionary Army, wandered through the shady groves of Mount Vernon composing verses which, from a critical standpoint, were very bad. Scraps of verse were later mingled with notes of surveys, and interspersed with the accounts which that methodical statesman kept from his school-days until the year of his death.

In the archives of the Capitol on a yellowed page, in Washington's own handwriting, these lines are still to be read:

"Oh, Ye Gods, why should my Poor Resistless Heart
Stand to oppose thy might and Power,
At last surrender to Cupid's feather'd Dart,
And now lays bleeding every Hour
For her that's Pityless of my grief and Woes,
And will not on me, pity take.
I'll sleep amongst my most inveterate Foes,
And with gladness never wish to wake.
In deluding sleepings let my Eyelids close,
That in an enraptured Dream I may
In a soft lulling sleep and gentle repose
Possess those joys denied by Day."

Among these boyish fragments there is also an incomplete acrostic, evidently intended for Miss Frances Alexander, which reads as follows:

"From your bright sparkling Eyes I was undone;
Rays, you have, rays more transparent than the Sun
Amidst its glory in the rising Day;
None can you equal in your bright array;
Constant in your calm, unspotted Mind;
Equal to all, but will to none Prove kind,
So knowing, seldom one so young you'll Find.

"Ah, woe's me that I should Love and conceal —
Long have I wished, but never dare reveal,
Even though severely Love's Pains I feel;
Xerxes that great wast not free from Cupid's Dart,
And all the greatest Heroes felt the smart."

He wrote at length to several of his friends concerning his youthful passions. In the tell-tale pages of the diary, for 1748, there is this draft of a letter:

> "Dear Friend Robin: My place of Residence is at present at His Lordship's where I might, was my heart disengag'd, pass my time very pleasantly, as there's a very agreeable Young Lady Lives in the same house (Col. George Fairfax's Wife's Sister); but as that's only adding fuel to fire, it makes me the more uneasy, for by often and unavoidably being, in Company with her revives my former Passion for your Lowland Beauty; whereas was I to live more retired from young Women I might in some measure aliviate my sorrows by burying that chaste and troublesome Passion in the grave of oblivion or eternal forgetfulness, for as I am very well assured, that's the only antidote or remedy, that I shall be relieved by, as I am well convinced, was I ever to ask any question, I should only get a denial which would be adding grief to uneasiness."

The "Lowland Beauty" was Miss Mary Bland. Tradition does not say whether or not she ever knew of Washington's admiration, but she married Henry Lee.

"Light Horse Harry," that daring master of cavalry of Revolutionary fame, was the son of the "Lowland Beauty," and some tender memories of the mother may have been mingled with Washington's fondness for the young soldier. It was "Light Horse Harry" also, who said of the Commander-in-Chief that he was "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen!"

By another trick of fate the grandson of the "Lowland Beauty" was Gen. Robert E. Lee. Who can say what momentous changes might have been wrought in history had Washington married his first love?

Miss Gary, the sister of Mrs. Fairfax, was the "agreeable young lady" of whom he speaks. After a time her charm seems to have partially mitigated the pain he felt over the loss of her predecessor in his affections. Later he writes of a Miss Betsey Fauntleroy, saying that he is soon to see her, and that he "hopes for a revocation of her former cruel sentence."

When Braddock's defeat brought the soldier again to Mount Vernon, to rest from the fatigues of the campaign, there is abundant evidence to prove that he had become a personage in the eyes of women. For instance, Lord Fairfax writes to him, saying:

> "If a Satterday Night's Rest cannot be sufficient to enable your coming hither to-morrow the Lady's will try to get Horses to equip our Chair or attempt their strength on Foot to Salute you, so desirious are they with loving Speed to have an occular Demonstration of your being the same identical Gent – that lately departed to defend his Country's Cause."

A very feminine postscript was attached to this which read as follows:

> "Dear Sir
>
> "After thanking Heaven for your safe return, I must accuse you of great unkindness in refusing us the pleasure of seeing you this night. I do assure you nothing but our being satisfied that our company would be disagreeable, should prevent us from trying if our Legs would not carry us to Mount Vernon this night, but if you will not come to us, to-morrow morning very early we shall be at Mount Vernon.
>
> *"Sally Fairfax*
> *Ann Spearing*
> *Eliz'th Dent"*

Yet, in spite of the attractions of Virginia we find him journeying to Boston, on military business, by way of New York.

The hero of Braddock's stricken field found every door open before him. He was fêted in Philadelphia, and the aristocrats of Manhattan gave dinners in honour of the strapping young soldier from the wilds of Virginia.

At the house of his friend, Beverly Robinson, he met Miss Mary Philipse, and speedily surrendered. She was a beautiful, cultured woman, twenty-five years old, who had travelled widely and had seen much of the world. He promptly proposed to her, and was refused, but with exquisite grace and tact.

Graver affairs however soon claimed his attention, and he did not go back, though a friend wrote to him that Lieutenant-Colonel Morris was besieging the citadel. She married Morris, and their house in Morristown became Washington's headquarters, in 1776 – again, how history might have been changed had Mary Philipse married her Virginia lover!

In the spring of 1758, Washington met his fate. He was riding on horseback from Mount Vernon to Williamsburg with important despatches. In crossing a ford of the Pamunkey he fell in with a Mr. Chamberlayne, who lived in the neighbourhood. With true Virginian hospitality he prevailed upon Washington to take dinner at his house, making the arrangement with much difficulty, however, since the soldier was impatient to get to Williamsburg.

A petite hazel-eyed woman – she who was once Patsy Dandridge, but then the widow of Daniel Parke Custis – was delaying important affairs. At night-fall the distracted warrior remembered his mission, and made a hasty adieu. Mr. Chamberlayne, meeting him at the door, laid a restraining hand upon his arm. "No guest ever leaves my house after sunset," he said.

The horse was put up, the servant released from duty, and Washington remained until the next morning, when, with new happiness in his heart, he dashed on to Williamsburg.

We may well fancy that her image was before him all the way. She had worn a gown of white dimity, with a cluster of Mayblossoms at her belt, and a little white widow's cap half covered her soft brown hair.

She was twenty-six, some three months younger than Washington; she had wealth, and two children. Mr. Custis had been older than his Patsy, for she was married when she was but seventeen. He had been a faithful and affectionate husband, but he had not appealed to her imagination, and it was doubtless through her imagination, that the big Virginia Colonel won her heart.

She left Mr. Chamberlayne's and went to her home – the "White House" – near William's Ferry. The story is that when Washington came from Williamsburg, he was met at the ferry by one of Mrs. Custis's slaves. "Is your mistress at home?" he inquired of the negro who was rowing him across the river.

"Yes, sah," replied the darkey, then added slyly, "I recon you am de man what am expected."

It was late in the afternoon of the next day when Washington took his departure, but he had her promise and was happy. A ring was ordered from Philadelphia, and is duly set down in his accounts: "One engagement ring, two pounds, sixteen shillings."

Then came weary months of service in the field, and they saw each other only four times before they were married. There were doubtless frequent letters, but only one of them remains. It is the letter of a soldier:

> "We have begun our march for the Ohio, [he wrote]. A courier is starting for Williamsburg, and I embrace the opportunity to send a few words to one whose life is now inseparable from mine.
>
> "Since that happy hour, when we made our pledges to each other, my thoughts have been continually going to you as to another self. That an All-powerful Providence may keep us both in safety is the prayer of your ever faithful and affectionate Friend,
>
> *"G. Washington*

"20th of July
Mrs. Martha Custis."

On the sixth of the following January they were married in the little church of St. Peter. Once again Dr. Mossum, in full canonicals, married "Patsy" Dandridge to the man of her choice. The bridegroom wore a blue cloth coat lined with red silk and ornamented with silver trimmings. His vest was embroidered white satin, his shoe- and knee-buckles were of solid gold, his hair was powdered, and a dress sword hung at his side.

The bride was attired in heavy brocaded white silk inwoven with a silver thread. She wore a white satin quilted petticoat with heavy corded white silk over-skirt, and high-heeled shoes of white satin with buckles of brilliants. She had ruffles of rich point lace, pearl necklace, ear-rings, and bracelets, and was attended by three bridesmaids.

The aristocracy of Virginia was out in full force. One of the most imposing figures was Bishop, the negro servant, who had led Washington's horse up and down the gravelled path in front of Mr. Chamberlayne's door while the master lingered within. He was in the scarlet uniform of King George's army, booted and spurred, and he held the bridle rein of the chestnut charger that was forced to wait while his rider made love.

On leaving the church, the bride and her maids rode back to the "White House" in a coach drawn by six horses, and guided by black post-boys in livery, while Colonel Washington, on his magnificent horse, and attended by a brilliant company, rode by her side.

There was no seer to predict that some time the little lady in white satin, brocade silk, and rich laces, would spend long hours knitting stockings for her husband's army, and that night after night would find her, in a long grey cloak, at the side of the wounded, hearing from stiffening lips the husky whisper, "God bless you, Lady Washington!"

All through the troublous times that followed, Washington was the lover as well as the husband. He took a father's place with the little children, treating them with affection, but never swerving from the path of justice. With the fondness of a lover, he ordered fine clothes for his wife from London.

After his death, Mrs. Washington destroyed all of his letters. There is only one of them to be found which was written after their marriage. It is in an old book, printed in New York in 1796, when the narrow streets around the tall spire of Trinity were the centre of social life, and the busy hum of Wall Street was not to be heard for fifty years!

One may fancy a stately Knickerbocker stopping at a little bookstall where the dizzy heights of the Empire Building now rise, or down near the Battery, untroubled by the white cliff called "The Bowling Green," and asking pompously enough, for the *Epistles; Domestic, Confidential, and Official, from General Washington*.

The pages are yellowed with age, and the "f" used in the place of the "s", as well as the queer orthography and capitalisation, look strange to twentieth-century eyes, but on page 56 the lover-husband pleads with his lady in a way that we can well understand.

The letter is dated "June 24, 1776," and in part is as follows:

"My Dearest Life and Love: —

"You have hurt me, I know not how much, by the insinuation in your last, that my letters to you have been less frequent because I have felt less concern for you.

"The suspicion is most unjust; may I not add, is most unkind. Have we lived, now almost a score of years, in the closest and dearest conjugal intimacy to so little purpose, that on the appearance only, of inattention to you, and which you might have accounted for in a thousand ways more natural and more probable, you should pitch upon that single motive which is alone injurious to me?

"I have not, I own, wrote so often to you as I wished and as I ought.

"But think of my situation, and then ask your heart if I be *without excuse*?

> "We are not, my dearest, in circumstances the most favorable to our happiness; but let us not, I beseech of you, make them worse by indulging suspicions and apprehensions which minds in distress are apt to give way to.
>
> "I never was, as you have often told me, even in my better and more disengaged days, so attentive to the little punctillios of friendship, as it may be, became me; but my heart tells me, there never was a moment in my life, since I first knew you, in which it did not cleave and cling to you with the warmest affection; and it must cease to beat ere it can cease to wish for your happiness, above anything on earth.
> *"Your faithful and tender husband, G. W."*

"'Seventy-six!" The words bring a thrill even now, yet, in the midst of those stirring times, not a fortnight before the Declaration was signed, and after twenty years of marriage, he could write her like this. Even his reproaches are gentle, and filled with great tenderness.

And so it went on, through the Revolution and through the stormy days in which the Republic was born. There were long and inevitable separations, yet a part of the time she was with him, doing her duty as a soldier's wife, and sternly refusing to wear garments which were not woven in American looms.

During the many years they lived at Mount Vernon, they attended divine service at Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia, one of the quaint little landmarks of the town which is still standing. For a number of years he was a vestryman of the church, and the pew occupied by him is visited yearly by thousands of tourists while sight-seeing in the national Capitol. Indeed all the churches, so far as known, in which he once worshipped, have preserved his pew intact, while there are hundreds of tablets, statues, and monuments throughout the country.

In the magnificent monument at Washington, rising to a height of more than 555 feet, the various States of the Union have placed stone replicas of their State seals, and these, with other symbolic devices, constitute the inscriptions upon one hundred and seventy-nine of these memorial stones. Not only this, but Europe and Asia, China and Japan have honoured themselves by erecting memorials to the great American.

When at last his long years of service for his country were ended, he and his beloved wife returned again to their beautiful home at Mount Vernon, to wait for the night together. The whole world knows how the end came, with her loving ministrations to the very last of the three restful years which they at this time spent together at the old home, and how he looked Death bravely in the face, as became a soldier and a Christian.

The Old and the New

Grandmother sat at her spinning wheel
In the dust of the long ago,
And listened, with scarlet dyeing her cheeks,
For the step she had learned to know.
A courtly lover, was he who came,
With frill and ruffle and curl —
They dressed so queerly in the days
When grandmother was a girl!

“Knickerbockers” they called them then,
When they spoke of the things at all —
Grandfather wore them, buckled and trim,
When he sallied forth to call.
Grandmother’s eyes were youthful then —
His “guiding stars,” he said;
While she demurely watched her wheel
And spun with a shining thread.

Frill, and ruffle, and curl are gone,
But the “knickers” are with us still —
And so is love and the spinning wheel,
But we ride it now – if you will!
In grandfather’s “knickers” I sit and watch
For the gleam of a lamp afar;
And my heart still turns, as theirs, methinks,
To my wheel and my guiding star.

The Love Story of the "Sage of Monticello"

American history holds no more beautiful love-story than that of Thomas Jefferson, third President of the United States, and author of the Declaration of Independence. It is a tale of single-hearted, unswerving devotion, worthy of this illustrious statesman. His love for his wife was not the first outpouring of his nature, but it was the strongest and best – the love, not of the boy, but of the man.

Jefferson was not particularly handsome as a young man, for he was red-haired, awkward, and knew not what to do with his hands, though he played the violin passably well. But his friend, Patrick Henry, suave, tactful and popular, exerted himself to improve Jefferson's manners and fit him for general society, attaining at last very pleasing results, although there was a certain roughness in his nature, shown in his correspondence, which no amount of polishing seemed able to overcome.

John Page was Jefferson's closest friend, and to him he wrote very fully concerning the state of his mind and heart, and with a certain quaint, uncouth humour, which to this day is irresistible.

For instance, at Fairfield, Christmas day, 1762, he wrote to his friend as follows:

> Dear Page
>
> "This very day, to others the day of greatest mirth and jolity, sees me overwhelmed with more and greater misfortunes than have befallen a descendant of Adam for these thousand years past, I am sure; and perhaps, after excepting Job, since the creation of the world.
>
> "You must know, Dear Page, that I am now in a house surrounded by enemies, who take counsel together against my soul; and when I lay me down to rest, they say among themselves, 'Come let us destroy him.'
>
> "I am sure if there is such a thing as a Devil in this world, he must have been here last night, and have had some hand in what happened to me. Do you think the cursed rats (at his instigation I suppose) did not eat up my pocket book, which was in my pocket, within an inch of my head? And not contented with plenty for the present, they carried away my gemmy worked silk garters, and half a dozen new minuets I had just got, to serve, I suppose, as provision for the winter.
>
> "You know it rained last night, or if you do not know it, I am sure I do. When I went to bed I laid my watch in the usual place, and going to take her up after I arose this morning, I found her in the same place, it is true, but all afloat in water, let in at a leak in the roof of the house, and as silent, and as still as the rats that had eaten my pocket book.
>
> "Now, you know if chance had anything to do in this matter, there were a thousand other spots where it might have chanced to leak as well as this one which was perpendicularly over my watch. But I'll tell you, it's my opinion that the Devil came and bored the hole over it on purpose.
>
> "Well, as I was saying, my poor watch had lost her speech. I would not have cared much for this, but something worse attended it – the subtle particles of water with which the case was filled had, by their penetration, so overcome the cohesion of the particles of the paper, of which my dear picture, and watch patch paper, were composed, that in attempting to take them out to dry them, my cursed fingers gave them such a rent as I fear I shall never get over.
>
> "… And now, though her picture be defaced, there is so lively an image of her imprinted in my mind, that I shall think of her too often, I fear for my peace of mind; and too often I am sure to get through old Coke this winter, for I have not seen him

since I packed him up in my trunk in Williamsburg. Well, Page, I do wish the Devil had old Coke for I am sure I never was so tired of the dull old scoundrel in my life…

"I would fain ask the favor of Miss Bettey Burwell to give me another watch paper of her own cutting, which I should esteem much more though it were a plain round one, than the nicest in the world cut by other hands; however I am afraid she would think this presumption, after my suffering the other to get spoiled. If you think you can excuse me to her for this, I should be glad if you would ask her…"

Page was a little older than Jefferson, and the young man thought much of his advice. Six months later we find Page advising him to go to Miss Rebecca Burwell and "lay siege in form."

There were many objections to this – first, the necessity of keeping the matter secret, and of "treating with a ward before obtaining the consent of her guardian," which at that time was considered dishonourable, and second, Jefferson's own state of suspense and uneasiness, since the lady had given him no grounds for hope.

"If I am to succeed [he wrote], the sooner I know it the less uneasiness I shall have to go through. If I am to meet with disappointment, the sooner I know it, the more of life I shall have to wear it off; and if I do meet with one, I hope and verily believe it will be the last.

"I assure you that I almost envy you your present freedom and I assure you that if Belinda will not accept of my heart, it shall never be offered to another."

In his letters he habitually spoke of Miss Burwell as "Belinda," presumably on account of the fear which he expresses to Page, that the letters might possibly fall into other hands. In some of his letters he spells "Belinda" backward, and with exaggerated caution, in Greek letters.

Finally, with much fear and trembling, he took his friend's advice, and laid siege to the fair Rebecca in due form. The day afterward – October 7, 1763 – he confided in Page:

"In the most melancholy fit that ever a poor soul was, I sit down to write you. Last night, as merry as agreeable company and dancing with Belinda could make me, I never could have thought that the succeeding sun would have seen me so wretched as I now am!

"I was prepared to say a great deal. I had dressed up in my own mind, such thoughts as occurred to me, in as moving language as I knew how, and expected to have performed in a tolerably creditable manner. But … when I had an opportunity of venting them, a few broken sentences, uttered in great disorder, and interrupted by pauses of uncommon length were the too visible marks of my strange confusion!

"The whole confab I will tell you, word for word if I can when I see you which God send, may be soon."

After this, he dates his letters at "Devilsburg," instead of Williamsburg, and says in one of them, "I believe I never told you that we had another occasion." This time he behaved more creditably, told "Belinda" that it was necessary for him to go to England, explained the inevitable delays and told how he should conduct himself until his return. He says that he asked no questions which would admit of a categorical answer – there was something of the lawyer in this wooing! He assured Miss Rebecca that such a question would one day be asked. In this letter she is called "Adinleb" and spoken of as "he."

Miss Burwell did not wait, however, until Jefferson was in a position to seek her hand openly, but was suddenly married to another. The news was a great shock to Jefferson, who refused to believe it until Page confirmed it; but the love-lorn swain gradually recovered from his disappointment.

With youthful ardour they had planned to buy adjoining estates and have a carriage in common, when each married the lady of his love, that they might attend all the dances. A little later, when Page was also crossed in love, both forswore marriage forever.

For five or six years, Jefferson was faithful to his vow – rather an unusual record. He met his fate at last in the person of a charming widow – Martha Skelton.

The death of his sister, his devotion to his books, and his disappointment made him a sadder and a wiser man. His home at Shadwell had been burned, and he removed to Monticello, a house built on the same estate on a spur of the Blue Ridge Mountains, five hundred feet above the common level.

He went often to visit Mrs. Skelton who made her home with her father after her bereavement. Usually he took his violin under his arm, and out of the harmonies which came from the instrument and the lady's spinet came the greater one of love.

They were married in January of 1772. The ceremony took place at "The Forest" in Charles City County. The chronicles describe the bride as a beautiful woman, a little above medium height, finely formed, and with graceful carriage. She was well educated, read a great deal, and played the spinet unusually well.

The wedding journey was a strange one. It was a hundred miles from "The Forest" to Monticello, and years afterward their eldest daughter, Martha Jefferson Randolph, described it as follows:

> "They left 'The Forest' after a fall of snow, light then, but increasing in depth as they advanced up the country. They were finally obliged to quit the carriage and proceed on horseback. They arrived late at night, the fires were all out, and the servants had retired to their own houses for the night. The horrible dreariness of such a house, at the end of such a journey, I have often heard both relate."

Yet, the walls of Monticello, that afterwards looked down upon so much sorrow and so much joy, must have long remembered the home-coming of master and mistress, for the young husband found a bottle of old wine "on a shelf behind some books," built a fire in the open fireplace, and "they laughed and sang together like two children."

And that life upon the hills proved very nearly ideal. They walked and planned and rode together, and kept house and garden books in the most minute fashion.

Births and deaths followed each other at Monticello, but there was nothing else to mar the peace of that happy home. Between husband and wife there was no strife or discord, not a jar nor a rift in that unity of life and purpose which welds two souls into one.

Childish voices came and went, but two daughters grew to womanhood, and in the evening, the day's duties done, violin and harpsichord sounded sweet strains together.

They reared other children besides their own, taking the helpless brood of Jefferson's sister into their hearts and home when Dabney Carr died. Those three sons and three daughters were educated with his own children, and lived to bless him as a second father.

One letter is extant which was written to one of the nieces whom Jefferson so cheerfully supported. It reads as follows:

> "Paris, June 14, 1787.
>
> "I send you, my dear Patsey, the fifteen livres you desired. You propose this to me as an anticipation of five weeks' allowance, but do you not see, my dear, how imprudent it is to lay out in one moment what should accommodate you for five weeks? This is a departure from that rule which I wish to see you governed by, thro' your whole life, of never buying anything which you have not the money in your pocket to pay for.
>
> "Be sure that it gives much more pain to the mind to be in debt than to do without any article whatever which we may seem to want.
>
> "The purchase you have made is one I am always ready to make for you because it is my wish to see you dressed always cleanly and a little more than

> decently; but apply to me first for the money before making the purchase, if only to avoid breaking through your rule.
>
> "Learn yourself the habit of adhering vigorously to the rules you lay down for yourself. I will come for you about eleven o'clock on Saturday. Hurry the making of your gown, and also your redingcote. You will go with me some day next week to dine at the Marquis Fayette. Adieu, my dear daughter,
> *"Yours affectionately,*
> *"Th. Jefferson"*

Mrs. Jefferson's concern for her husband, the loss of her children, and the weary round of domestic duties at last told upon her strong constitution.

After the birth of her sixth child, Lucy Elizabeth, she sank rapidly, until at last it was plain to every one, except the distracted husband, that she could never recover.

Finally the blow fell. His daughter Martha wrote of it as follows:

> "As a nurse no female ever had more tenderness or anxiety. He nursed my poor mother in turn with Aunt Carr, and her own sister – sitting up with her and administering her medicines and drink to the last.
>
> "When at last he left his room, three weeks after my mother's death, he rode out, and from that time, he was incessantly on horseback, rambling about the mountain."

Shortly afterward he received the appointment of Plenipotentiary to Europe, to be associated with Franklin and Adams in negotiating peace. He had twice refused the same appointment, as he had promised his wife that he would never again enter public life, as long as she lived.

Columbia

She comes along old Ocean's trackless way —
A warrior scenting conflict from afar
And fearing not defeat nor battle-scar
Nor all the might of wind and dashing spray;
Her foaming path to triumph none may stay
For in the East, there shines her morning star;
She feels her strength in every shining spar
As one who grasps his sword and waits for day.

Columbia, Defender! dost thou hear?
The clarion challenge sweeps the sea
And straight toward the lightship doth she steer,
Her steadfast pulses sounding jubilee;
Arise, Defender! for thy way is clear
And all thy country's heart goes out to thee.

The Story of a Daughter's Love

Aaron Burr was past-master of what Whistler calls "the gentle art of making enemies!" Probably no man ever lived who was more bitterly hated or more fiercely reviled. Even at this day, when he has been dead more than half a century, his memory is still assailed.

It is the popular impression that he was a villain. Perhaps he was, since "where there is smoke, there must be fire," but happily we have no concern with the political part of his life. Whatever he may have been, and whatever dark deeds he may have done, there still remains a redeeming feature which no one has denied him – his love for his daughter, Theodosia.

One must remember that before Burr was two years old, his father, mother, and grandparents were all dead. He was reared by an uncle, Timothy Edwards, who doubtless did his best, but the odds were against the homeless child. Neither must we forget that he fought in the Revolution, bravely and well.

From his early years he was very attractive to women. He was handsome, distinguished, well dressed, and gifted in many ways. He was generous, ready at compliments and gallantry, and possessed an all-compelling charm.

In the autumn of 1777, his regiment was detailed for scouting duty in New Jersey, which was then the debatable ground between colonial and British armies. In January of 1779, Colonel Burr was given command of the "lines" in Westchester County, New York. It was at this time that he first met Mrs. Prevost, the widow of a British officer. She lived across the Hudson, some fifteen miles from shore, and the river was patrolled by the gunboats of the British, and the land by their sentries.

In spite of these difficulties, however, Burr managed to make two calls upon the lady, although they were both necessarily informal. He sent six of his trusted soldiers to a place on the Hudson, where there was an overhanging bank under which they moored a large boat, well supplied with blankets and buffalo robes. At nine o'clock in the evening he left White Plains on the smallest and swiftest horse he could procure, and when he reached the rendezvous, the horse was quickly bound and laid in the boat. Burr and the six troopers stepped in, and in half an hour they were across the ferry. The horse was lifted out, and unbound, and with a little rubbing he was again ready for duty.

Before midnight, Burr was at the house of his beloved, and at four in the morning he came back to the troopers awaiting him on the river bank, and the return trip was made in the same manner.

For a year and a half after leaving the army, Burr was an invalid, but in July, 1782, he married Mrs. Prevost. She was a widow with two sons, and was ten years older than her husband. Her health was delicate and she had a scar on her forehead, but her mind was finely cultivated and her manners charming.

Long after her death he said that if his manners were more graceful than those of some men, it was due to her influence, and that his wife was the truest woman, and most charming lady he had ever known.

It has been claimed by some that Burr's married life was not a happy one, but there are many letters still extant which passed between them which seemed to prove the contrary. Before marriage he did not often write to her, but during his absences afterward, the fondest wife could have no reason to complain.

For instance:

> "This morning came your truly welcome letter of Monday evening," he wrote her at one time. "Where did it loiter so long?
>
> "Nothing in my absence is so flattering to me as your health and cheerfulness. I then contemplate nothing so eagerly as my return, amuse myself with ideas of my

> own happiness, and dwell upon the sweet domestic joys which I fancy prepared for me.
>
> "Nothing is so unfriendly to every species of enjoyment as melancholy. Gloom, however dressed, however caused, is incompatible with friendship. They cannot have place in the mind at the same time. It is the secret, the malignant foe of sentiment and love."

He always wrote fondly of the children:

> "My love to the smiling little girl," he said in one letter. "I continually plan my return with childish impatience, and fancy a thousand incidents which are most interesting."

After five years of married life the wife wrote him as follows:

> "Your letters always afford me a singular satisfaction, a sensation entirely my own. This was peculiarly so. It wrought strangely upon my mind and spirits. My Aaron, it was replete with tenderness and with the most lively affection. I read and re-read till afraid I should get it by rote, and mingle it with common ideas."

Soon after Burr entered politics, his wife developed cancer of the most virulent character. Everything that money or available skill could accomplish was done for her, but she died after a lingering and painful illness, in the spring of 1794.

They had lived together happily for twelve years, and he grieved for her deeply and sincerely. Yet the greatest and most absorbing passion of his life was for his daughter, Theodosia, who was named for her mother and was born in the first year of their marriage. When little Theodosia was first laid in her father's arms, all that was best in him answered to her mute plea for his affection, and later, all that was best in him responded to her baby smile.

Between those two, there was ever the fullest confidence, never tarnished by doubt or mistrust, and when all the world forsook him, Theodosia, grown to womanhood, stood proudly by her father's side and shared his blame as if it had been the highest honour.

When she was a year or two old, they moved to a large house at the corner of Cedar and Nassau Streets, in New York City. A large garden surrounded it and there were grapevines in the rear. Here the child grew strong and healthy, and laid the foundations of her girlish beauty and mature charm. When she was but three years old her mother wrote to the father, saying:

> "Your dear little Theodosia cannot hear you spoken of without an apparent melancholy; insomuch, that her nurse is obliged to exert her invention to divert her, and myself avoid the mention of you in her presence. She was one whole day indifferent to everything but your name. Her attachment is not of a common nature."

And again:

> "Your dear little daughter seeks you twenty times a day, calls you to your meals, and will not suffer your chair to be filled by any of the family."

The child was educated as if she had been a boy. She learned to read Latin and Greek fluently, and the accomplishments of her time were not neglected. When she was at school, the father wrote her regularly, and did not allow one of her letters to wait a day for its affectionate answer. He corrected her spelling and her grammar, instilled sound truths into her mind, and formed her habits. From this plastic clay, with inexpressible love and patient toil, he shaped his ideal woman.

She grew into a beautiful girl. Her features were much like her father's. She was petite, graceful, plump, rosy, dignified, and gracious. In her manner, there was a calm assurance – the air of mastery over all situations – which she doubtless inherited from him.

When she was eighteen years of age, she married Joseph Alston of South Carolina, and, with much pain at parting from her father, she went there to live, after seeing him inaugurated as Jefferson's Vice-President. His only consolation was her happiness, and when he returned to New York, he wrote her that he approached the old house as if it had been the sepulchre of all his friends. "Dreary, solitary, comfortless – it was no longer home."

After her mother's death, Theodosia had been the lady of his household and reigned at the head of his table. When he went back there was no loved face opposite him, and the chill and loneliness struck him to the heart.

For three years after her marriage, Theodosia was blissfully happy. A boy was born to her, and was named Aaron Burr Alston. The Vice-President visited them in the South and took his namesake unreservedly into his heart. "If I can see without prejudice," he said, "there never was a finer boy."

His last act before fighting the duel with Hamilton, was writing to his daughter – a happy, gay, care-free letter, giving no hint of what was impending. To her husband he wrote in a different strain, begging him to keep the event from her as long as possible, to make her happy always, and to encourage her in those habits of study which he himself had taught her.

She had parted from him with no other pain in her heart than the approaching separation. When they met again, he was a fugitive from justice, travel-stained from his long journey in an open canoe, indicted for murder in New York, and in New Jersey, although still President of the Senate, and Vice-President of the United States.

The girl's heart ached bitterly, yet no word of censure escaped her lips, and she still held her head high. When his Mexican scheme was overthrown, Theodosia sat beside him at his trial, wearing her absolute faith, so that all the world might see.

When he was preparing for his flight to Europe, Theodosia was in New York, and they met by night, secretly, at the house of friends. Just before he sailed, they spent a whole night together, making the best of the little time that remained to them before the inevitable separation. Early in June they parted, little dreaming that they should see each other no more.

During the years of exile, Theodosia suffered no less than he. Mr. Alston had lost his faith in Aaron Burr, and the woman's heart strained beneath the burden. Her health failed, her friends shrank from her, yet openly and bravely she clung to her father.

Public opinion showed no signs of relenting, and his evil genius followed him across the sea. He was expelled from England, and in Paris he was almost a prisoner. At one time he was obliged to live upon potatoes and dry bread, and his devoted daughter could not help him.

He was despised by his countrymen, but Theodosia's adoring love never faltered. In one of her letters she said:

> "I witness your extraordinary fortitude with new wonder at every misfortune. Often, after reflecting on this subject, you appear to me so superior, so elevated above other men – I contemplate you with such a strange mixture of humility, admiration, reverence, love, and pride, that a very little superstition would be necessary to make me worship you as a superior being, such enthusiasm does your character excite in me.
>
> "When I afterward revert to myself, how insignificant do my best qualities appear! My own vanity would be greater if I had not been placed so near you, and yet, my pride is in our relationship. I had rather not live than not to be the daughter of such a man."

She wrote to Mrs. Madison and asked her to intercede with the President for her father. The answer gave the required assurance, and she wrote to her father, urging him to go boldly to New York and resume the practice of his profession. "If worse comes to worst," she wrote, "I will leave everything to suffer with you."

He landed in Boston and went on to New York in May of 1812, where his reception was better than he had hoped, and where he soon had a lucrative practice. They planned for him to come South in the summer, and she was almost happy again, when her child died and her mother's heart was broken.

She had borne much, and she never recovered from that last blow. Her health failed rapidly, and though she was too weak to undertake the trip, she insisted upon going to New York to see her father.

Thinking the voyage might prove beneficial, her husband reluctantly consented, and passage was engaged for her on a pilot-boat that had been out privateering, and had stopped for supplies before going on to New York.

The vessel sailed – and a storm swept the Atlantic coast from Maine to Florida. It was supposed that the ship went down off Cape Hatteras, but forty years afterward, a sailor, who died in Texas, confessed on his death-bed that he was one of a crew of mutineers who took possession of the *Patriot* and forced the passengers, as well as the officers and men, to walk the plank. He professed to remember Mrs. Alston well, and said she was the last one who perished. He never forgot her look of despair as she stepped into the sea – with her head held high even in the face of death.

Among Theodosia's papers was found a letter addressed to her husband, written at a time when she was weary of the struggle. On the envelope was written: "My Husband. To be delivered after my death. I wish this to be read immediately and before my burial."

He never saw the letter, for he never had the courage to go through her papers, and after his death it was sent to her father. It came to him like a message from the grave:

> "Let my father see my son, sometimes," she had written. "Do not be unkind to him whom I have loved so much, I beseech of you. Burn all my papers except my father's letters, which I beg you to return to him."

A long time afterward, her father married Madame Jumel, a rich New York woman who was many years his junior, but the alliance was unfortunate, and was soon annulled. Through all the rest of his life, he never wholly gave up the hope that Theodosia might return. He clung fondly to the belief that she had been picked up by another ship, and some day would be brought back to him.

Day by day, he haunted the Battery, anxiously searching the faces of the incoming passengers, asking some of them for tidings of his daughter, and always believing that the next ship would bring her back.

He became a familiar figure, for he was almost always there – a bent, shrunken little man, white-haired, leaning heavily upon his cane, asking questions in a thin piping voice, and straining his dim eyes forever toward the unsounded waters, from whence the idol of his heart never came.

For out within those waters, cruel, changeless,
She sleeps, beyond all rage of earth or sea;
A smile upon her dear lips, dumb, but waiting,
And I – I hear the sea-voice calling me.

The Sea-Voice

Beyond the sands I hear the sea-voice calling
With passion all but human in its pain,
While from my eyes the bitter tears are falling,
And all the summer land seems blind with rain;
For out within those waters, cruel, changeless,
She sleeps, beyond all rage of earth or sea,
A smile upon her dear lips, dumb, but waiting,
And I – I hear the sea-voice calling me.

The tide comes in. The moonlight flood and glory
Of that unresting surge thrill earth with bliss,
And I can hear the passionate sweet story
Of waves that waited round her for her kiss.
Sweetheart, they love you; silent and unseeing,
Old Ocean holds his court around you there,
And while I reach out through the dark to find you
His fingers twine the sea-weed in your hair.

The tide goes out and in the dawn's new splendour
The dreams of dark first fade, then pass away,
And I awake from visions soft and tender
To face the shuddering agony of day
For out within those waters, cruel, changeless,
She sleeps, beyond all rage of earth or sea;
A smile upon her dear lips, dumb, but waiting,
And I – I hear the sea-voice calling me.

The Mystery of Randolph's Courtship

It is said that in order to know a man, one must begin with his ancestors, and the truth of the saying is strikingly exemplified in the case of "John Randolph of Roanoke," as he loved to write his name.

His contemporaries have told us what manner of man he was – fiery, excitable, of strong passions and strong will, capable of great bitterness, obstinate, revengeful, and extremely sensitive.

"I have been all my life," he says, "the creature of impulse, the sport of chance, the victim of my own uncontrolled and uncontrollable sensations, and of a poetic temperament."

He was sarcastic to a degree, proud, haughty, and subject to fits of Byronic despair and morbid gloom. For these traits we must look back to the Norman Conquest from which he traced his descent in an unbroken line, while, on the side of his maternal grandmother, he was the seventh in descent from Pocahontas, the Indian maiden who married John Rolfe.

The Indian blood was evident, even in his personal appearance. He was tall, slender, and dignified in his bearing; his hands were thin, his fingers long and bony; his face was dark, sallow, and wrinkled, oval in shape and seamed with lines by the inward conflict which forever raged in his soul. His chin was pointed but firm, and his lips were set; around his mouth were marked the tiny, almost imperceptible lines which mean cruelty. His nose was aquiline, his ears large at the top, tapering almost to a point at the lobe, and his forehead unusually high and broad. His hair was soft, and his skin, although dark, suffered from extreme sensitiveness.

> "There is no accounting for thinness of skins in different animals, human, or brute [he once said]. Mine, I believe to be more tender than many infants of a month old. Indeed I have remarked in myself, from my earliest recollection, a delicacy or effeminacy of complexion, which but for a spice of the devil in my temper would have consigned me to the distaff or the needle."

"A spice of the devil" is mild indeed, considering that before he was four years old he frequently swooned in fits of passion, and was restored to consciousness with difficulty.

His most striking feature was his eyes. They were deep, dark, and fiery, filled with passion and great sadness at the same time. "When he first entered an assembly of people," said one who knew him, "they were the eyes of the eagle in search of his prey, darting about from place to place to see upon whom to light. When he was assailed they flashed fire and proclaimed a torrent of rage within."

The voice of this great statesman was a rare gift:

> "One might live a hundred years [says one,] and never hear another like it. The wonder was why the sweet tone of a woman was so harmoniously blended with that of a man. His very whisper could be distinguished above the ordinary tones of other men. His voice was so singularly clear, distinct, and melodious that it was a positive pleasure to hear him articulate anything."

Such was the man who swayed the multitude at will, punished offenders with sarcasm and invective, inspired fear even in his equals, and loved and suffered more than any other prominent man of his generation.

He had many acquaintances, a few friends, and three loves – his mother, his brother, and the beautiful young woman who held his heart in the hollow of her hand, until the Gray Angel, taking pity, closed his eyes in the last sleep.

His mother, who was Frances Bland, married John Randolph in 1769, and John Randolph, of Roanoke, was their third son.

Tradition tells us of the unusual beauty of the mother —

> "the high expanded forehead, the smooth arched brow; the brilliant dark eyes; the well defined nose; the full round laughing lips; the tall graceful figure, the beautiful dark hair; an open cheerful countenance – suffused with that deep, rich Oriental tint which never seems to fade, all of which made her the most beautiful and attractive woman of her age."

She was a wife at sixteen, and at twenty-six a widow. Three years after the death of her husband, she married St. George Tucker, of Bermuda who proved to be a kind father to her children.

In the winter of 1781, Benedict Arnold, the traitor who had spread ruin through his native state, was sent to Virginia on an expedition of ravage. He landed at the mouth of the James, and advanced toward Petersburg. Matoax, Randolph's home, was directly in the line of the invading army, so the family set out on a cold January morning, and at night entered the home of Benjamin Ward, Jr.

John Randolph was seven years old, and little Maria Ward had just passed her fifth birthday. The two children played together happily, and in the boy's heart was sown the seed of that grand passion which dominated his life.

After a few days, the family went on to Bizarre, a large estate on both sides of the Appomattox, and here Mrs. Tucker and her sons spent the remainder of the year, while her husband joined General Greene's army, and afterward, the force of Lafayette.

In 1788, John Randolph's mother died, and his first grief swept over him in an overwhelming torrent. The boy of fifteen spent bitter nights, his face buried in the grass, sobbing over his mother's grave. Years afterward, he wrote to a friend, "I am a fatalist. I am all but friendless. Only one human being ever knew me. *She* only knew me."

He kept his mother's portrait always in his room, and enshrined her in loving remembrance in his heart. He had never seen his father's face to remember it distinctly, and for a long time he wore his miniature in his bosom. In 1796, his brother Richard died, and the unexpected blow crushed him to earth. More than thirty years afterward he wrote to his half-brother, Henry St. George Tucker, the following note:

> "Dear Henry
>
> "Our poor brother Richard was born in 1770. He would have been fifty-six years old the ninth of this month. I can no more.
>
> *"J. R. of R."*

At some time in his early manhood he came into close relationship with Maria Ward. She had been an attractive child, and had grown into a woman so beautiful that Lafayette said her equal could not be found in North America. Her hair was auburn, and hung in curls around her face; her skin was exquisitely fair; her eyes were dark and eloquent. Her mouth was well formed; she was slender, graceful, and coquettish, well-educated, and in every way, charming.

To this woman, John Randolph's heart went out in passionate, adoring love. He might be bitter and sarcastic with others, but with her he was gentleness itself. Others might know him as a man of affairs, keen and logical, but to her he was only a lover.

Timid and hesitating at first, afraid perhaps of his fiery wooing, Miss Ward kept him for some time in suspense. All the treasures of his mind and soul were laid before her; that deep, eloquent voice which moved the multitude to tears at its master's will was pleading with a woman for her love.

What wonder that she yielded at last and promised to marry him? Then for a time everything else was forgotten. The world lay before him to be conquered when he might choose. Nothing would be too great for him to accomplish – nothing impossible to that eager joyous soul enthroned at last upon the greatest heights of human happiness. And then – there was a change. He rode to her home one day, tying his horse outside as was his wont. A little later he strode out, shaking like an aspen, his face white in agony. He drew his knife from his pocket, cut the bridle of his horse, dug his spurs into the quivering sides, and was off like the wind. What battle was fought out on that wild ride is known

only to John Randolph and his God. What torture that fiery soul went through, no human being can ever know. When he came back at night, he was so changed that no one dared to speak to him.

He threw himself into the political arena in order to save his reason. Often at midnight, he would rise from his uneasy bed, buckle on his pistols, and ride like mad over the country, returning only when his horse was spent. He never saw Miss Ward again, and she married Peyton Randolph, the son of Edmund Randolph, who was Secretary of State under Washington.

The entire affair is shrouded in mystery. There is not a letter, nor a single scrap of paper, nor a shred of evidence upon which to base even a presumption. The separation was final and complete, and the white-hot metal of the man's nature was gradually moulded into that strange eccentric being whose foibles are so well known.

Only once did Randolph lift even a corner of the veil. In a letter to his dearest friend he spoke of her as:

> "One I loved better than my own soul, or Him who created it. My apathy is not natural, but superinduced. There was a volcano under my ice, but it burnt out, and a face of desolation has come on, not to be rectified in ages, could my life be prolonged to patriarchal longevity.
>
> "The necessity of loving and being loved was never felt by the imaginary beings of Rousseau and Byron's creation, more imperiously than by myself. My heart was offered with a devotion that knew no reserve. Long an object of proscription and treachery, I have at last, more mortifying to the pride of man, become an object of utter indifference."

The brilliant statesman would doubtless have had a large liberty of choice among the many beautiful women of his circle, but he never married, and there is no record of any entanglement. To the few women he deemed worthy of his respect and admiration, he was deferential and even gallant. In one of his letters to a young relative he said:

> "Love to god-son Randolph and respectful compliments to Mrs. R. She is indeed a fine woman, one for whom I have felt a true regard, unmixed with the foible of another passion.
>
> "Fortunately or unfortunately for me, when I knew her, I bore a charmed heart. Nothing else could have preserved me from the full force of her attractions."

For much of the time after his disappointment, he lived alone with his servants, solaced as far as possible by those friends of all mankind – books. When the spirit moved him, he would make visits to the neighbouring plantations, sometimes dressed in white flannel trousers, coat, and vest, and with white paper wrapped around his beaver hat! When he presented himself in this manner, riding horseback, with his dark eyes burning, he was said to have presented "a most ghostly appearance!"

An old lady who lived for years on the banks of the Staunton, near Randolph's solitary home, tells a pathetic story:

She was sitting alone in her room in the dead of winter, when a beautiful woman, pale as a ghost, dressed entirely in white, suddenly appeared before her, and began to talk about Mr. Randolph, saying he was her lover and would marry her yet, as he had never proved false to his plighted faith. She talked of him incessantly, like one deranged, until a young gentleman came by the house, leading a horse with a side-saddle on. She rushed out, and asked his permission to ride a few miles. Greatly to his surprise, she mounted without assistance, and sat astride like a man. He was much embarrassed, but had no choice except to escort her to the end of her journey.

The old lady who tells of this strange experience says that the young woman several times visited Mr. Randolph, always dressed in white and usually in the dead of winter. He always put her on a horse and sent her away with a servant to escort her.

In his life there were but two women – his mother and Maria Ward. While his lips were closed on the subject of his love, he did not hesitate to avow his misery. “I too am wretched,” he would say with infinite pathos; and after her death, he spoke of Maria Ward as his “angel.”

In a letter written sometime after she died, he said, strangely enough: “I loved, aye, and was loved again, not wisely, but too well.”

His brilliant career was closed when he was sixty years old, and in his last illness, during delirium, the name of Maria was frequently heard by those who were anxiously watching with him. But, true to himself and to her, even when his reason was dethroned, he said nothing more.

He was buried on his own plantation, in the midst of “that boundless contiguity of shade,” with his secret locked forever in his tortured breast. “John Randolph of Roanoke,” was all the title he claimed; but the history of those times teaches us that he was more than that – he was John Randolph, of the Republic.

How President Jackson Won His Wife

In October of 1788, a little company of immigrants arrived in Tennessee. The star of empire, which is said to move westward, had not yet illumined Nashville, and it was one of the dangerous points “on the frontier.”

The settlement was surrounded on all sides by hostile Indians. Men worked in the fields, but dared not go out to their daily task without being heavily armed. When two men met, and stopped for a moment to talk, they often stood back to back, with their rifles cocked ready for instant use. No one stooped to drink from a spring unless another guarded him, and the women were always attended by an armed force.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.