

ENGLISH FOR FUN

LEVEL 3

STORIES AND POEMS

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POEMS

1. I dream of a time

- John Foster

I dream of a time

When the only blades are blades of corn
When the only barrels are barrels of wine
When the only tanks are full of water
When the only chains are chains of hands.



2. IF

Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,

Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!



3. A Poison Tree

BY WILLIAM BLAKE

I was angry with my friend;
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

And I watered it in fears,
Night & morning with my tears:
And I sunned it with smiles,
And with soft deceitful wiles.

And it grew both day and night.
Till it bore an apple bright.
And my foe beheld it shine,
And he knew that it was mine.

And into my garden stole,
When the night had veiled the pole;
In the morning glad I see;
My foe outstretched beneath the tree.

4. Sea-Fever

BY JOHN MASEFIELD

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

5. Be like the Bird

Victor Hugo

Be like the bird, who
Halting in his flight
On limb too slight
Feels it give way beneath him,
Yet sings
Knowing he hath wings.

6. “THERE IS ANOTHER SKY”

BY EMILY DICKINSON

There is another sky,
Ever serene and fair,
And there is another sunshine,
Though it be darkness there;
Never mind faded forests, Austin,
Never mind silent fields –
Here is a little forest,
Whose leaf is ever green;
Here is a brighter garden,
Where not a frost has been;
In its unfading flowers
I hear the bright bee hum:
Prithee, my brother,
Into my garden come!

7. Along the Road

by Robert Browning Hamilton

I walked a mile with Pleasure;
She chattered all the way,
But left me none the wiser
For all she had to say.

I walked a mile with Sorrow
And ne'er a word said she;
But oh, the things I learned from her
When Sorrow walked with me!

8. Light

Francis William Bourdillon

The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one;
Yet the light of the bright world dies
With the dying sun.

The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one;
Yet the light of a whole life dies,
When love is done.

9. What are Heavy?

Christina Rossetti

What are heavy? Sea-sand and sorrow;
What are brief? Today and tomorrow;
What are frail? Spring blossoms and youth;
What are deep? The ocean and truth.



10. Do not stand at my grave and weep

- Mary Elizabeth Fry

Do not stand at my grave and weep

I am not there. I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow.

I am the diamond glints on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain.

I am the gentle autumn rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush

I am the swift uplifting rush

Of quiet birds in circled flight.

I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry;

I am not there. I did not die.

11. Abou Ben Adhem

BY LEIGH HUNT

Abou Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase!)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw, within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:—
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the presence in the room he said,
"What writest thou?"—The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answered, "The names of those who love the Lord."
"And is mine one?" said Abou. "Nay, not so,"
Replied the angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, "I pray thee, then,
Write me as one that loves his fellow men."

The angel wrote, and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And showed the names whom love of God had blest,
And lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest

12. The Snare

by James Stephens

I hear a sudden cry of pain!
There is a rabbit in a snare:
Now I hear the cry again,
But I cannot tell from where.

But I cannot tell from where
He is calling out for aid!
Crying on the frightened air,
Making everything afraid!

Making everything afraid!
Wrinkling up his little face!
And he cries again for aid;
- and I cannot find the place!

And I cannot find the place
Where his paw is in the snare!
Little One! Oh, Little One!
I am searching everywhere!

13. Daffodils

William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced; but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company:
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

14. The Charge of the Light Brigade

BY ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

I

Half a league, half a league,

Half a league onward,

All in the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

“Forward, the Light Brigade!

Charge for the guns!” he said.

Into the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

II

“Forward, the Light Brigade!”

Was there a man dismayed?

Not though the soldier knew

Someone had blundered.

Theirs not to make reply,

Theirs not to reason why,

Theirs but to do and die.

Into the valley of Death

Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,

Cannon to left of them,

Cannon in front of them

Volleyed and thundered;

Stormed at with shot and shell,

Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of hell
Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flashed all their sabres bare,
Flashed as they turned in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wondered.
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right through the line they broke;
Cossack and Russian
Reeled from the sabre stroke
Shattered and sundered.
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell.
They that had fought so well
Came through the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wondered.
Honour the charge they made!
Honour the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred!



15. I, Too

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.

They send me to eat in the kitchen

When company comes,

But I laugh,

And eat well,

And grow strong.

Tomorrow,

I'll be at the table

When company comes.

Nobody'll dare

Say to me,

“Eat in the kitchen,”

Then.

Besides,

They'll see how beautiful I am

And be ashamed—

I, too, am America.

16. Mother to Son

BY LANGSTON HUGHES

Well, son, I'll tell you:
Life for me ain't been no crystal stair.
It's had tacks in it,
And splinters,
And boards torn up,
And places with no carpet on the floor—
Bare.
But all the time
I'se been a-climbin' on,
And reachin' landin's,
And turnin' corners,
And sometimes goin' in the dark
Where there ain't been no light.
So boy, don't you turn back.
Don't you set down on the steps
'Cause you finds it's kinder hard.
Don't you fall now—
For I'se still goin', honey,
I'se still climbin',
And life for me ain't been no crystal stair.

17. Break, Break, Break

BY ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O, well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O, well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

18. Leisure

W. H. DAVIES

WHAT is this life if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare?—

No time to stand beneath the boughs,
And stare as long as sheep and cows:

No time to see, when woods we pass,
Where squirrels hide their nuts in grass:

No time to see, in broad daylight,
Streams full of stars, like skies at night:

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,
And watch her feet, how they can dance:

No time to wait till her mouth can
Enrich that smile her eyes began?

A poor life this if, full of care,
We have no time to stand and stare.

19.The Sea

James Reeves

The sea is a hungry dog,
Giant and grey.
He rolls on the beach all day.
With his clashing teeth and shaggy jaws
Hour upon hour he gnaws
The rumbling, tumbling stones,
And 'Bones, bones, bones, bones! '
The giant sea-dog moans,
Licking his greasy paws.

And when the night wind roars
And the moon rocks in the stormy cloud,
He bounds to his feet and snuffs and sniffs,
Shaking his wet sides over the cliffs,
And howls and hollos long and loud.

But on quiet days in May or June,
When even the grasses on the dune
Play no more their reedy tune,
With his head between his paws
He lies on the sandy shores,
So quiet, so quiet, he scarcely snores.

20.Ozymandias

Percy Bysshe Shelley

I met a traveller from an antique land,
Who said—"Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;
And on the pedestal, these words appear:
My name is **Ozymandias**, King of Kings;
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."



STORIES

The Necklace

Guy de Maupassant

She was one of those pretty and charming girls born, as if by an error of fate, into a family of clerks. She had no dowry, no expectations, no means of becoming known, understood, loved or wedded by a man of wealth and distinction; and so she let herself be married to a minor official at the Ministry of Education.

She dressed plainly because she had never been able to afford anything better, but she was as unhappy as if she had once been wealthy. Women don't belong to a caste or class; their beauty, grace, and natural charm take the place of birth and family. Natural delicacy, instinctive elegance and a quick wit determine their place in society, and make the daughters of commoners the equals of the very finest ladies.

She suffered endlessly, feeling she was entitled to all the delicacies and luxuries of life. She suffered because of the poorness of her house as she looked at the dirty walls, the worn-out chairs and the ugly curtains. All these things that another woman of her class would not even have noticed, tormented her and made her resentful. The sight of the little Brenton girl who did her housework filled her with terrible regrets and hopeless fantasies. She dreamed of silent antechambers hung with Oriental tapestries, lit from above by torches in bronze holders, while two tall footmen in knee-length breeches napped in huge armchairs, sleepy from the stove's oppressive warmth. She dreamed of vast living rooms furnished in rare old silks, elegant furniture loaded with priceless ornaments, and inviting smaller rooms, perfumed, made for afternoon chats with close friends - famous, sought after men, who all women envy and desire.

When she sat down to dinner at a round table covered with a three-day-old cloth opposite her husband who, lifting the lid off the soup, shouted excitedly, "Ah! Beef stew! What could be better," she dreamed of fine dinners, of shining silverware, of tapestries which peopled the walls with figures from another time and strange birds in fairy forests; she dreamed of delicious dishes served on wonderful plates, of whispered gallantries listened to with an inscrutable smile as one ate the pink flesh of a trout or the wings of a quail.

She had no dresses, no jewels, nothing; and these were the only things she loved. She felt she was made for them alone. She wanted so much to charm, to be envied, to be desired and sought after.

She had a rich friend, a former schoolmate at the convent, whom she no longer wanted to visit because she suffered so much when she came home. For whole days afterwards she would weep with sorrow, regret, despair and misery.

*

One evening her husband came home with an air of triumph, holding a large envelope in his hand.

"Look," he said, "here's something for you."

She tore open the paper and drew out a card, on which was printed the words:

"The Minister of Education and Mme. Georges Rampouneau request the pleasure of M. and Mme. Loisel's company at the Ministry, on the evening of Monday January 18th."

Instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation on the table resentfully, and muttered:

"What do you want me to do with that?"

"But, my dear, I thought you would be pleased. You never go out, and it will be such a lovely occasion! I had awful trouble getting it. Every one wants to go; it is very exclusive, and they're not giving many invitations to clerks. The whole ministry will be there."

She stared at him angrily, and said, impatiently:

"And what do you expect me to wear if I go?"

He hadn't thought of that. He stammered:

"Why, the dress you go to the theatre in. It seems very nice to me ..."

He stopped, stunned, distressed to see his wife crying. Two large tears ran slowly from the corners of her eyes towards the corners of her mouth. He stuttered:

"What's the matter? What's the matter?"

With great effort she overcame her grief and replied in a calm voice, as she wiped her wet cheeks:

"Nothing. Only I have no dress and so I can't go to this party. Give your invitation to a friend whose wife has better clothes than I do."

He was distraught, but tried again:

"Let's see, Mathilde. How much would a suitable dress cost, one which you could use again on other occasions, something very simple?"

She thought for a moment, computing the cost, and also wondering what amount she could ask for without an immediate refusal and an alarmed exclamation from the thrifty clerk.

At last she answered hesitantly:

"I don't know exactly, but I think I could do it with four hundred *francs*."

He turned a little pale, because he had been saving that exact amount to buy a gun and treat himself to a hunting trip the following summer, in the country near Nanterre, with a few friends who went lark-shooting there on Sundays.

However, he said:

"Very well, I can give you four hundred *francs*. But try and get a really beautiful dress."

*

The day of the party drew near, and Madame Loisel seemed sad, restless, anxious. Her dress was ready, however. One evening her husband said to her:

"What's the matter? You've been acting strange these last three days."

She replied: "I'm upset that I have no jewels, not a single stone to wear. I will look cheap. I would almost rather not go to the party."

"You could wear flowers," he said, "They are very fashionable at this time of year. For ten *francs* you could get two or three magnificent roses."

She was not convinced.

"No; there is nothing more humiliating than looking poor in the middle of a lot of rich women."

"How stupid you are!" her husband cried. "Go and see your friend Madame Forestier and ask her to lend you some jewels. You know her well enough for that."

She uttered a cry of joy.

"Of course. I had not thought of that."

The next day she went to her friend's house and told her of her distress.

Madame Forestier went to her mirrored wardrobe, took out a large box, brought it back, opened it, and said to Madame Loisel:

"Choose, my dear."

First she saw some bracelets, then a pearl necklace, then a gold Venetian cross set with precious stones, of exquisite craftsmanship. She tried on the jewelry in the mirror, hesitated, could not bear to part with them, to give them back. She kept asking:

"You have nothing else?"

"Why, yes. But I don't know what you like."

Suddenly she discovered, in a black satin box, a superb diamond necklace, and her heart began to beat with uncontrolled desire. Her hands trembled as she took it. She fastened it around her neck, over her high-necked dress, and stood lost in ecstasy as she looked at herself.

Then she asked anxiously, hesitating:

"Would you lend me this, just this?"

"Why, yes, of course."

She threw her arms around her friend's neck, embraced her rapturously, then fled with her treasure.

*

The day of the party arrived. Madame Loisel was a success. She was prettier than all the other women, elegant, gracious, smiling, and full of joy. All the men stared at her, asked her name, tried to be introduced. All the cabinet officials wanted to waltz with her. The minister noticed her.

She danced wildly, with passion, drunk on pleasure, forgetting everything in the triumph of her beauty, in the glory of her success, in a sort of cloud of happiness, made up of all this respect, all this admiration, all these awakened desires, of that sense of triumph that is so sweet to a woman's heart.

She left at about four o'clock in the morning. Her husband had been dozing since midnight in a little deserted anteroom with three other gentlemen whose wives were having a good time.

He threw over her shoulders the clothes he had brought for her to go outside in, the modest clothes of an ordinary life, whose poverty contrasted sharply with the elegance of the ball dress. She felt this and wanted to run away, so she wouldn't be noticed by the other women who were wrapping themselves in expensive furs.

Loisel held her back.

"Wait a moment, you'll catch a cold outside. I'll go and find a cab."

But she would not listen to him, and ran down the stairs. When they were finally in the street, they could not find a cab, and began to look for one, shouting at the cabmen they saw passing in the distance.

They walked down toward the Seine in despair, shivering with cold. At last they found on the quay one of those old night cabs that one sees in Paris only after dark, as if they were ashamed to show their shabbiness during the day.

They were dropped off at their door in the Rue des Martyrs, and sadly walked up the steps to their apartment. It was all over, for her. And he was remembering that he had to be back at his office at ten o'clock.

In front of the mirror, she took off the clothes around her shoulders, taking a final look at herself in all her glory. But suddenly she uttered a cry. She no longer had the necklace round her neck!

"What is the matter?" asked her husband, already half undressed.

She turned towards him, panic-stricken.

"I have ... I have ... I no longer have Madame Forestier's necklace."

He stood up, distraught.

"What! ... how! ... That's impossible!"

They looked in the folds of her dress, in the folds of her cloak, in her pockets, everywhere. But they could not find it.

"Are you sure you still had it on when you left the ball?" he asked.

"Yes. I touched it in the hall at the Ministry."

"But if you had lost it in the street we would have heard it fall. It must be in the cab."

"Yes. That's probably it. Did you take his number?"

"No. And you, didn't you notice it?"

"No."

They stared at each other, stunned. At last Loisel put his clothes on again.

"I'm going back," he said, "over the whole route we walked, see if I can find it."

He left. She remained in her ball dress all evening, without the strength to go to bed, sitting on a chair, with no fire, her mind blank.

Her husband returned at about seven o'clock. He had found nothing.

He went to the police, to the newspapers to offer a reward, to the cab companies, everywhere the tiniest glimmer of hope led him.

She waited all day, in the same state of blank despair from before this frightful disaster.

Loisel returned in the evening, a hollow, pale figure; he had found nothing.

"You must write to your friend," he said, "tell her you have broken the clasp of her necklace and that you are having it mended. It will give us time to look some more."

She wrote as he dictated.

*



At the end of one week they had lost all hope.

And Loisel, who had aged five years, declared:

"We must consider how to replace the jewel."

The next day they took the box which had held it, and went to the jeweler whose name they found inside. He consulted his books.

"It was not I, madame, who sold the necklace; I must simply have supplied the case."

And so they went from jeweler to jeweler, looking for an necklace like the other one, consulting their memories, both sick with grief and anguish.

In a shop at the Palais Royal, they found a string of diamonds which seemed to be exactly what they were looking for. It was worth forty thousand *francs*. They could have it for thirty-six thousand.

So they begged the jeweler not to sell it for three days. And they made an arrangement that he would take it back for thirty-four thousand *francs* if the other necklace was found before the end of February.

Loisel had eighteen thousand *francs* which his father had left him. He would borrow the rest.

And he did borrow, asking for a thousand *francs* from one man, five hundred from another, five louis here, three louis there. He gave notes, made ruinous agreements, dealt with usurers, with every type of money-lender. He compromised the rest of his life, risked signing notes without knowing if he could ever honor them, and, terrified by the anguish still to come, by the black misery about to fall on him, by the prospect of every physical privation and every moral torture he was about to suffer, he went to get the new necklace, and laid down on the jeweler's counter thirty-six thousand *francs*.

When Madame Loisel took the necklace back, Madame Forestier said coldly:

"You should have returned it sooner, I might have needed it."

To the relief of her friend, she did not open the case. If she had detected the substitution, what would she have thought? What would she have said? Would she have taken her friend for a thief?

*

From then on, Madame Loisel knew the horrible life of the very poor. But she played her part heroically. The dreadful debt must be paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their maid; they changed their lodgings; they rented a garret under the roof.

She came to know the drudgery of housework, the odious labors of the kitchen. She washed the dishes, staining her rosy nails on greasy pots and the bottoms of pans. She washed the dirty linen, the shirts and the dishcloths, which she hung to dry on a line; she carried the garbage down to the street every morning, and carried up the water, stopping at each landing to catch her breath. And, dressed like a commoner, she went to the fruiterer's, the grocer's, the butcher's, her basket on her arm, bargaining, insulted, fighting over every miserable *sou*.

Each month they had to pay some notes, renew others, get more time.

Her husband worked every evening, doing accounts for a tradesman, and often, late into the night, he sat copying a manuscript at five *sous* a page.

And this life lasted ten years.

At the end of ten years they had paid off everything, everything, at usurer's rates and with the accumulations of compound interest.

Madame Loisel looked old now. She had become strong, hard and rough like all women of impoverished households. With hair half combed, with skirts awry, and reddened hands, she talked loudly as she washed the floor with great swishes of water. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down near the window and thought of that evening at the ball so long ago, when she had been so beautiful and so admired.

What would have happened if she had not lost that necklace? Who knows, who knows? How strange life is, how fickle! How little is needed for one to be ruined or saved!

*

One Sunday, as she was walking in the Champs Élysées to refresh herself after the week's work, suddenly she saw a woman walking with a child. It was Madame Forestier, still young, still beautiful, still charming.

Madame Loisel felt emotional. Should she speak to her? Yes, of course. And now that she had paid, she would tell her all. Why not?

She went up to her.

"Good morning, Jeanne."

The other, astonished to be addressed so familiarly by this common woman, did not recognize her. She stammered:

"But - madame - I don't know. You must have made a mistake."

"No, I am Mathilde Loisel."

Her friend uttered a cry.

"Oh! ... my poor Mathilde, how you've changed! ..."

"Yes, I have had some hard times since I last saw you, and many miseries ... and all because of you! ..."

"Me? How can that be?"

"You remember that diamond necklace that you lent me to wear to the Ministry party?"

"Yes. Well?"

"Well, I lost it."

"What do you mean? You brought it back."

"I brought you back another exactly like it. And it has taken us ten years to pay for it. It wasn't easy for us, we had very little. But at last it is over, and I am very glad."

Madame Forestier was stunned.

"You say that you bought a diamond necklace to replace mine?"

"Yes; you didn't notice then? They were very similar."

And she smiled with proud and innocent pleasure.

Madame Forestier, deeply moved, took both her hands.

"Oh, my poor Mathilde! Mine was an imitation! It was worth five hundred *francs* at most! ..."

The Gift of the Magi

O' Henry



One dollar and eighty-five cents. That was all. She had out it aside, one cent and then another and then another, in her careful buying of meat and other food. Della counted it three times. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was nothing to do but fall on the bed and cry. So Della did it. While the lady of the home is slowly growing quieter, we can look at the home. Furnished rooms at a cost of \$8 a week. There is little more to say about it.

In the hall below was a letter-box too small to hold a letter. There was an electric bell, but it could not make a sound. Also there was a name beside the door: "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

When the name was placed there, Mr. James Dillingham Young was being paid \$30 a week. Now, when he was being paid only \$20 a week, the name seemed too long and important. It should perhaps have been "Mr. James D. Young." But when Mr. James Dillingham Young entered the furnished rooms, his name became very short indeed. Mrs. James Dillingham Young put her arms warmly about him and called him "Jim." You have already met her. She is Della.

Della finished her crying and cleaned the marks of it from her face. She stood by the window and looked out with no interest. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a gift. She had put aside as much as she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week is not much. Everything had cost more than she had expected. It always happened like that.

Only \$ 1.87 to buy a gift for Jim. Her Jim. She had had many happy hours planning something nice for him. Something nearly good enough.

Something almost worth the honor of belonging to Jim.

There was a looking-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen the kind of looking-glass that is placed in \$8 furnished rooms. It was very narrow. A person could see only a little of himself at a time. However, if he was very thin and moved very quickly, he might be able to get a good view of himself. Della, being quite thin, had mastered this art.

Suddenly she turned from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brightly, but her face had lost its color. Quickly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its complete length.

The James Dillingham Youngs were very proud of two things which they owned. One thing was Jim's gold watch. It had once belonged to his father. And, long ago, it had belonged to his father's father. The other thing was Della's hair.

If a queen had lived in the rooms near theirs, Della would have washed and dried her hair where the queen could see it. Della knew her hair was more beautiful than any queen's jewels and gifts.

If a king had lived in the same house, with all his riches, Jim would have looked at his watch every time they met. Jim knew that no king had anything so valuable.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, shining like a falling stream of brown water. It reached below her knee. It almost made itself into a dress for her.

And then she put it up on her head again, nervously and quickly. Once she stopped for a moment and stood still while a tear or two ran down her face.

She put on her old brown coat. She put on her old brown hat. With the bright light still in her eyes, she moved quickly out the door and down to the street.

Where she stopped, the sign said: "Mrs. Sofronie. Hair Articles of all Kinds."

Up to the second floor Della ran, and stopped to get her breath.

Mrs. Sofronie, large, too white, cold-eyed, looked at her.

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Mrs. Sofronie. "Take your hat off and let me look at it."

Down fell the brown waterfall.

"Twenty dollars," said Mrs. Sofronie, lifting the hair to feel its weight.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours seemed to fly. She was going from one shop to another, to find a gift for Jim.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the shops, and she had looked in every shop in the city.

It was a gold watch chain, very simply made. Its value was in its rich and pure material. Because it was so plain and simple, you knew that it was very valuable. All good things are like this.

It was good enough for The Watch.

As soon as she saw it, she knew that Jim must have it. It was like him. Quietness and value—Jim and the chain both had quietness and value. She paid twenty-one dollars for it. And she hurried home with the chain and eighty-seven cents.

With that chain on his watch, Jim could look at his watch and learn the time anywhere he might be. Though the watch was so fine, it had never had a fine chain. He sometimes took it out and looked at it only when no one could see him do it.

When Della arrived home, her mind quieted a little. She began to think more reasonably. She started to try to cover the sad marks of what she had done. Love and large-hearted giving, when added together, can leave deep marks. It is never easy to cover these marks, dear friends—never easy.

Within forty minutes her head looked a little better. With her short hair, she looked wonderfully like a schoolboy. She stood at the looking-glass for a long time.

“If Jim doesn’t kill me,” she said to herself, “before he looks at me a second time, he’ll say I look like a girl who sings and dances for money. But what could I do—oh! What could I do with a dollar and eightyseven cents?”

At seven, Jim’s dinner was ready for him.

Jim was never late. Della held the watch chain in her hand and sat near the door where he always entered. Then she heard his step in the hall and her face lost color for a moment. She often said little prayers quietly, about simple everyday things. And now she said: “Please God, make him think I’m still pretty.”

The door opened and Jim stepped in. He looked very thin and he was not smiling. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and with a family to take care of! He needed a new coat and he had nothing to cover his cold hands.

Jim stopped inside the door. He was as quiet as a hunting dog when it is near a bird. His eyes looked strangely at Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not understand. It filled her with fear. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor anything she had been ready for. He simply looked at her with that strange expression on his face.

Della went to him.

“Jim, dear,” she cried, “don’t look at me like that. I had my hair cut off and sold it. I couldn’t live through Christmas without giving you a gift. My hair will grow again. You won’t care, will you? My hair grows very fast. It’s Christmas, Jim. Let’s be happy. You don’t know what a nice—what a beautiful nice gift I got for you.”

“You’ve cut off your hair?” asked Jim slowly. He seemed to labor to understand what had happened. He seemed not to feel sure he knew.

“Cut it off and sold it,” said Della. “Don’t you like me now? I’m me, Jim. I’m the same without my hair.” Jim looked around the room.

“You say your hair is gone?” he said.

“You don’t have to look for it,” said Della. “It’s sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It’s the night before Christmas, boy. Be good to me, because I sold it for you. Maybe the hairs of my head could be counted,” she said, “but no one could ever count my love for you. Shall we eat dinner, Jim?”

Jim put his arms around his Della. For ten seconds let us look in another direction. Eight dollars a week or a million dollars a year—how different are they? Someone may give you an answer, but it will be wrong. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. My meaning will be explained soon.

From inside the coat, Jim took something tied in paper. He threw it upon the table.

“I want you to understand me, Dell,” he said. “Nothing like a haircut could make me love you any less. But if you’ll open that, you may know what I felt when I came in.”

White fingers pulled off the paper. And then a cry of joy; and then a change to tears.

For there lay The Combs—the combs that Della had seen in a shop window and loved for a long time. Beautiful combs, with jewels, perfect for her beautiful hair. She had known they cost too much for her to buy them. She had looked at them without the least hope of owning them. And now they were hers, but her hair was gone.

But she held them to her heart, and at last was able to look up and say: “My hair grows so fast, Jim!”

And then she jumped up and cried, “Oh, oh!”

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful gift. She held it out to him in her open hand. The gold seemed to shine softly as if with her own warm and loving spirit.

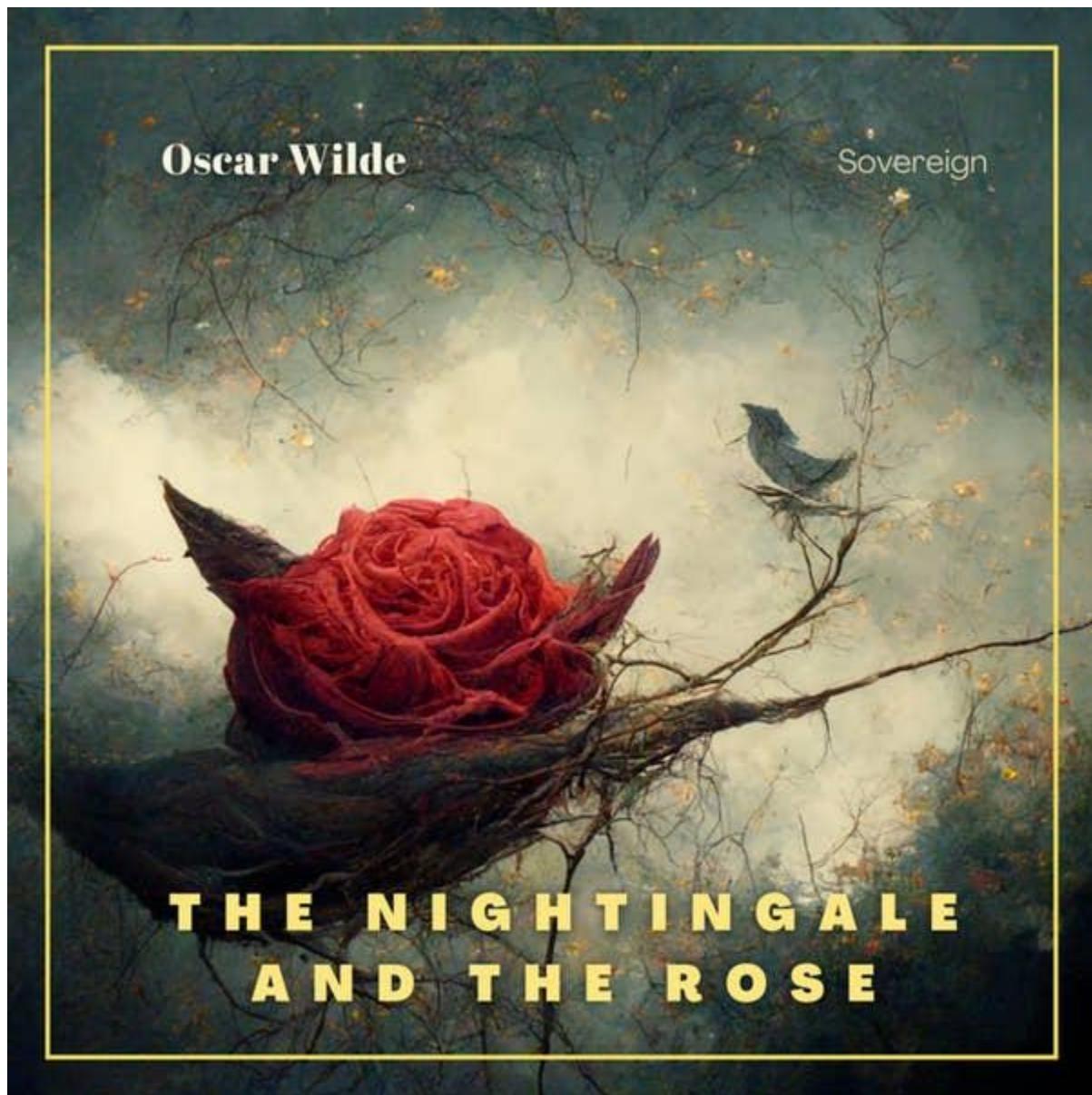
“Isn’t it perfect, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You’ll have to look at your watch a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch.

I want to see how they look together.” Jim sat down and smiled.

“Della,” said he, “let’s put our Christmas gifts away and keep them a while. They’re too nice to use now. I sold the watch to get the money to buy the combs. And now I think we should have our dinner.”

The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the newborn Christ-child. They were the first to give Christmas gifts. Being wise, their gifts were doubtless wise ones. And here I have told you the story of two children who were not wise. Each sold the most valuable thing he owned in order to buy a gift for the other. But let me speak a last word to the wise of these days: Of all who give gifts, these two were the most wise. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the most wise. Everywhere they are the wise ones.

They are the magi.



“She said that she would dance with me if I brought her red roses,” cried the young Student; “but in all my garden there is no red rose.”

From her nest in the holm-oak tree the Nightingale heard him, and she looked out through the leaves, and wondered.

“No red rose in all my garden!” he cried, and his beautiful eyes filled with tears. “Ah, on what little things does happiness depend! I have read all that the wise men have written, and all the secrets of philosophy are mine, yet for want of a red rose is my life made wretched.”

“Here at last is a true lover,” said the Nightingale. “Night after night have I sung of him, though I knew him not: night after night have I told his story to the stars, and now I see him. His hair is dark as the hyacinth-blossom, and his lips are red as the rose of his desire; but passion has made his face like pale ivory, and sorrow has set her seal upon his brow.”

“The Prince gives a ball to-morrow night,” murmured the young Student, “and my love will be of the company. If I bring her a red rose she will dance with me till dawn. If I bring her a red rose, I shall hold her in my arms, and she will lean her head upon my shoulder, and her hand will be clasped in mine. But there is no red rose in my garden, so I shall sit lonely, and she will pass me by. She will have no heed of me, and my heart will break.”

“Here indeed is the true lover,” said the Nightingale. “What I sing of, he suffers—what is joy to me, to him is pain. Surely Love is a wonderful thing. It is more precious than emeralds, and dearer than fine opals. Pearls and pomegranates cannot buy it, nor is it set forth in the marketplace. It may not be purchased of the merchants, nor can it be weighed out in the balance for gold.”

“The musicians will sit in their gallery,” said the young Student, “and play upon their stringed instruments, and my love will dance to the sound of the harp and the violin. She will dance so lightly that her feet will not touch the floor, and the courtiers in their gay dresses will throng round her. But with me she will not dance, for I have no red rose to give her”; and he flung himself down on the grass, and buried his face in his hands, and wept.

“Why is he weeping?” asked a little Green Lizard, as he ran past him with his tail in the air.

“Why, indeed?” said a Butterfly, who was fluttering about after a sunbeam.

“Why, indeed?” whispered a Daisy to his neighbour, in a soft, low voice.

“He is weeping for a red rose,” said the Nightingale.

“For a red rose?” they cried; “how very ridiculous!” and the little Lizard, who was something of a cynic, laughed outright.

But the Nightingale understood the secret of the Student’s sorrow, and she sat silent in the oak-tree, and thought about the mystery of Love.

Suddenly she spread her brown wings for flight, and soared into the air. She passed through the grove like a shadow, and like a shadow she sailed across the garden.

In the centre of the grass-plot was standing a beautiful Rose-tree, and when she saw it she flew over to it, and lit upon a spray.

“Give me a red rose,” she cried, “and I will sing you my sweetest song.”

But the Tree shook its head.

“My roses are white,” it answered; “as white as the foam of the sea, and whiter than the snow upon the mountain. But go to my brother who grows round the old sun-dial, and perhaps he will give you what you want.”

So the Nightingale flew over to the Rose-tree that was growing round the old sun-dial.

“Give me a red rose,” she cried, “and I will sing you my sweetest song.”

But the Tree shook its head.

“My roses are yellow,” it answered; “as yellow as the hair of the mermaiden who sits upon an amber throne, and yellower than the daffodil that blooms in the meadow before the mower comes with his scythe. But go to my brother who grows beneath the Student’s window, and perhaps he will give you what you want.”

So the Nightingale flew over to the Rose-tree that was growing beneath the Student’s window.

“Give me a red rose,” she cried, “and I will sing you my sweetest song.”

But the Tree shook its head.

“My roses are red,” it answered, “as red as the feet of the dove, and redder than the great fans of coral that wave and wave in the ocean-cavern. But the winter has chilled my veins, and the frost has nipped my buds, and the storm has broken my branches, and I shall have no roses at all this year.”

“One red rose is all I want,” cried the Nightingale, “only one red rose! Is there no way by which I can get it?”

“There is a way,” answered the Tree; “but it is so terrible that I dare not tell it to you.”

“Tell it to me,” said the Nightingale, “I am not afraid.”

“If you want a red rose,” said the Tree, “you must build it out of music by moonlight, and stain it with your own heart’s-blood. You must sing to me with your breast against a thorn. All night long you must sing to me, and the thorn must pierce your heart, and your life-blood must flow into my veins, and become mine.”

“Death is a great price to pay for a red rose,” cried the Nightingale, “and Life is very dear to all. It is pleasant to sit in the green wood, and to watch the Sun in his chariot of gold, and the Moon in her chariot of pearl. Sweet is the scent of the hawthorn, and sweet are the bluebells that hide in the valley, and the heather that blows on the hill. Yet Love is better than Life, and what is the heart of a bird compared to the heart of a man?”

So she spread her brown wings for flight, and soared into the air. She swept over the garden like a shadow, and like a shadow she sailed through the grove.

The young Student was still lying on the grass, where she had left him, and the tears were not yet dry in his beautiful eyes.

“Be happy,” cried the Nightingale, “be happy; you shall have your red rose. I will build it out of music by moonlight, and stain it with my own heart’s-blood. All that I ask of you in return

is that you will be a true lover, for Love is wiser than Philosophy, though she is wise, and mightier than Power, though he is mighty. Flame-coloured are his wings, and coloured like flame is his body. His lips are sweet as honey, and his breath is like frankincense."

The Student looked up from the grass, and listened, but he could not understand what the Nightingale was saying to him, for he only knew the things that are written down in books.

But the Oak-tree understood, and felt sad, for he was very fond of the little Nightingale who had built her nest in his branches.

"Sing me one last song," he whispered; "I shall feel very lonely when you are gone."

So the Nightingale sang to the Oak-tree, and her voice was like water bubbling from a silver jar.

When she had finished her song the Student got up, and pulled a note-book and a lead-pencil out of his pocket.

"She has form," he said to himself, as he walked away through the grove—"that cannot be denied to her; but has she got feeling? I am afraid not. In fact, she is like most artists; she is all style, without any sincerity. She would not sacrifice herself for others. She thinks merely of music, and everybody knows that the arts are selfish. Still, it must be admitted that she has some beautiful notes in her voice. What a pity it is that they do not mean anything, or do any practical good." And he went into his room, and lay down on his little pallet-bed, and began to think of his love; and, after a time, he fell asleep.

And when the Moon shone in the heavens the Nightingale flew to the Rose-tree, and set her breast against the thorn. All night long she sang with her breast against the thorn, and the cold crystal Moon leaned down and listened. All night long she sang, and the thorn went deeper and deeper into her breast, and her life-blood ebbed away from her.

She sang first of the birth of love in the heart of a boy and a girl. And on the top-most spray of the Rose-tree there blossomed a marvellous rose, petal following petal, as song followed song. Pale was it, at first, as the mist that hangs over the river—pale as the feet of the morning, and silver as the wings of the dawn. As the shadow of a rose in a mirror of silver, as the shadow of a rose in a water-pool, so was the rose that blossomed on the topmost spray of the Tree.

But the Tree cried to the Nightingale to press closer against the thorn. "Press closer, little Nightingale," cried the Tree, "or the Day will come before the rose is finished."

So the Nightingale pressed closer against the thorn, and louder and louder grew her song, for she sang of the birth of passion in the soul of a man and a maid.

And a delicate flush of pink came into the leaves of the rose, like the flush in the face of the bridegroom when he kisses the lips of the bride. But the thorn had not yet reached her heart, so the rose's heart remained white, for only a Nightingale's heart's-blood can crimson the heart of a rose.

And the Tree cried to the Nightingale to press closer against the thorn. "Press closer, little Nightingale," cried the Tree, "or the Day will come before the rose is finished."

So the Nightingale pressed closer against the thorn, and the thorn touched her heart, and a fierce pang of pain shot through her. Bitter, bitter was the pain, and wilder and wilder grew her song, for she sang of the Love that is perfected by Death, of the Love that dies not in the tomb.

And the marvellous rose became crimson, like the rose of the eastern sky. Crimson was the girdle of petals, and crimson as a ruby was the heart.

But the Nightingale's voice grew fainter, and her little wings began to beat, and a film came over her eyes. Fainter and fainter grew her song, and she felt something choking her in her throat.

Then she gave one last burst of music. The white Moon heard it, and she forgot the dawn, and lingered on in the sky. The red rose heard it, and it trembled all over with ecstasy, and opened its petals to the cold morning air. Echo bore it to her purple cavern in the hills, and woke the sleeping shepherds from their dreams. It floated through the reeds of the river, and they carried its message to the sea.

"Look, look!" cried the Tree, "the rose is finished now"; but the Nightingale made no answer, for she was lying dead in the long grass, with the thorn in her heart.

And at noon the Student opened his window and looked out.

"Why, what a wonderful piece of luck!" he cried; "here is a red rose! I have never seen any rose like it in all my life. It is so beautiful that I am sure it has a long Latin name"; and he leaned down and plucked it.

Then he put on his hat, and ran up to the Professor's house with the rose in his hand.

The daughter of the Professor was sitting in the doorway winding blue silk on a reel, and her little dog was lying at her feet.

"You said that you would dance with me if I brought you a red rose," cried the Student. "Here is the reddest rose in all the world. You will wear it to-night next your heart, and as we dance together it will tell you how I love you."

But the girl frowned.

"I am afraid it will not go with my dress," she answered; "and, besides, the Chamberlain's nephew has sent me some real jewels, and everybody knows that jewels cost far more than flowers."

"Well, upon my word, you are very ungrateful," said the Student angrily; and he threw the rose into the street, where it fell into the gutter, and a cart-wheel went over it.

"Ungrateful!" said the girl. "I tell you what, you are very rude; and, after all, who are you? Only a Student. Why, I don't believe you have even got silver buckles to your shoes as the Chamberlain's nephew has"; and she got up from her chair and went into the house.

"What a silly thing Love is," said the Student as he walked away. "It is not half as useful as Logic, for it does not prove anything, and it is always telling one of things that are not going

to happen, and making one believe things that are not true. In fact, it is quite unpractical, and, as in this age to be practical is everything, I shall go back to Philosophy and study Metaphysics."

So he returned to his room and pulled out a great dusty book, and began to read.

After Twenty Years

O' Henry

The policeman on the beat moved up the avenue impressively. The impressiveness was habitual and not for show, for spectators were few. The time was barely 10 o'clock at night, but chilly gusts of wind with a taste of rain in them had well nigh depopulated the streets.

Trying doors as he went, twirling his club with many intricate and artful movements, turning now and then to cast his watchful eye adown the pacific thoroughfare, the officer, with his stalwart form and slight swagger, made a fine picture of a guardian of the peace. The vicinity was one that kept early hours. Now and then you might see the lights of a cigar store or of an all-night lunch counter; but the majority of the doors belonged to business places that had long since been closed.

When about midway of a certain block the policeman suddenly slowed his walk. In the doorway of a darkened hardware store a man leaned, with an unlighted cigar in his mouth. As the policeman walked up to him the man spoke up quickly.

"It's all right, officer," he said, reassuringly. "I'm just waiting for a friend. It's an appointment made twenty years ago. Sounds a little funny to you, doesn't it? Well, I'll explain if you'd like to make certain it's all straight. About that long ago there used to be a restaurant where this store stands--'Big Joe' Brady's restaurant."

"Until five years ago," said the policeman. "It was torn down then."

The man in the doorway struck a match and lit his cigar. The light showed a pale, square-jawed face with keen eyes, and a little white scar near his right eyebrow. His scarfpin was a large diamond, oddly set.

"Twenty years ago to-night," said the man, "I dined here at 'Big Joe' Brady's with Jimmy Wells, my best chum, and the finest chap in the world. He and I were raised here in New York, just like two brothers, together. I was eighteen and Jimmy was twenty. The next morning I was to start for the West to make my fortune. You couldn't have dragged Jimmy out of New York; he thought it was the only place on earth. Well, we agreed that night that we would meet here again exactly twenty years from that date and time, no matter what our conditions might be or from what distance we might have to come. We figured that in twenty years each of us ought to have our destiny worked out and our fortunes made, whatever they were going to be."

"It sounds pretty interesting," said the policeman. "Rather a long time between meets, though, it seems to me. Haven't you heard from your friend since you left?"

"Well, yes, for a time we corresponded," said the other. "But after a year or two we lost track of each other. You see, the West is a pretty big proposition, and I kept hustling around over it pretty lively. But I know Jimmy will meet me here if he's alive, for he always was the truest, stanchest old chap in the world. He'll never forget. I came a thousand miles to stand in this door to-night, and it's worth it if my old partner turns up."

The waiting man pulled out a handsome watch, the lids of it set with small diamonds.

"Three minutes to ten," he announced. "It was exactly ten o'clock when we parted here at the restaurant door."

"Did pretty well out West, didn't you?" asked the policeman.

"You bet! I hope Jimmy has done half as well. He was a kind of plodder, though, good fellow as he was. I've had to compete with some of the sharpest wits going to get my pile. A man gets in a groove in New York. It takes the West to put a razor-edge on him."

The policeman twirled his club and took a step or two.

"I'll be on my way. Hope your friend comes around all right. Going to call time on him sharp?"

"I should say not!" said the other. "I'll give him half an hour at least. If Jimmy is alive on earth he'll be here by that time. So long, officer."

"Good-night, sir," said the policeman, passing on along his beat, trying doors as he went.

There was now a fine, cold drizzle falling, and the wind had risen from its uncertain puffs into a steady blow. The few foot passengers astir in that quarter hurried dismally and silently along with coat collars turned high and pocketed hands. And in the door of the hardware store the man who had come a thousand miles to fill an appointment, uncertain almost to absurdity, with the friend of his youth, smoked his cigar and waited.

About twenty minutes he waited, and then a tall man in a long overcoat, with collar turned up to his ears, hurried across from the opposite side of the street. He went directly to the waiting man.

"Is that you, Bob?" he asked, doubtfully.

"Is that you, Jimmy Wells?" cried the man in the door.

"Bless my heart!" exclaimed the new arrival, grasping both the other's hands with his own. "It's Bob, sure as fate. I was certain I'd find you here if you were still in existence. Well, well, well! --twenty years is a long time. The old gone, Bob; I wish it had lasted, so we could have had another dinner there. How has the West treated you, old man?"

"Bully; it has given me everything I asked it for. You've changed lots, Jimmy. I never thought you were so tall by two or three inches."

"Oh, I grew a bit after I was twenty."

"Doing well in New York, Jimmy?"

"Moderately. I have a position in one of the city departments. Come on, Bob; we'll go around to a place I know of, and have a good long talk about old times."

The two men started up the street, arm in arm. The man from the West, his egotism enlarged by success, was beginning to outline the history of his career. The other, submerged in his overcoat, listened with interest.

At the corner stood a drug store, brilliant with electric lights. When they came into this glare each of them turned simultaneously to gaze upon the other's face.

The man from the West stopped suddenly and released his arm.



"You're not Jimmy Wells," he snapped. "Twenty years is a long time, but not long enough to change a man's nose from a Roman to a pug."

"It sometimes changes a good man into a bad one, said the tall man. "You've been under arrest for ten minutes, 'Silky' Bob. Chicago thinks you may have dropped over our way and wires us she wants to have a chat with you. Going quietly, are you? That's sensible. Now, before we go on to the station here's a note I was asked to hand you. You may read it here at the window. It's from Patrolman Wells."

The man from the West unfolded the little piece of paper handed him. His hand was steady when he began to read, but it trembled a little by the time he had finished. The note was rather short.

"Bob: I was at the appointed place on time. When you struck the match to light your cigar I saw it was the face of the man wanted in Chicago. Somehow I couldn't do it myself, so I went around and got a plain clothes man to do the job.

JIMMY."

