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Love Letters
That Caused a Divorce

By
Mrs. C. E. Oldington

" Ah Love! could you and I with Him conspire,
To grasp this sorry scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits—and then
Re-mould it nearer to the heart's desire."

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám.



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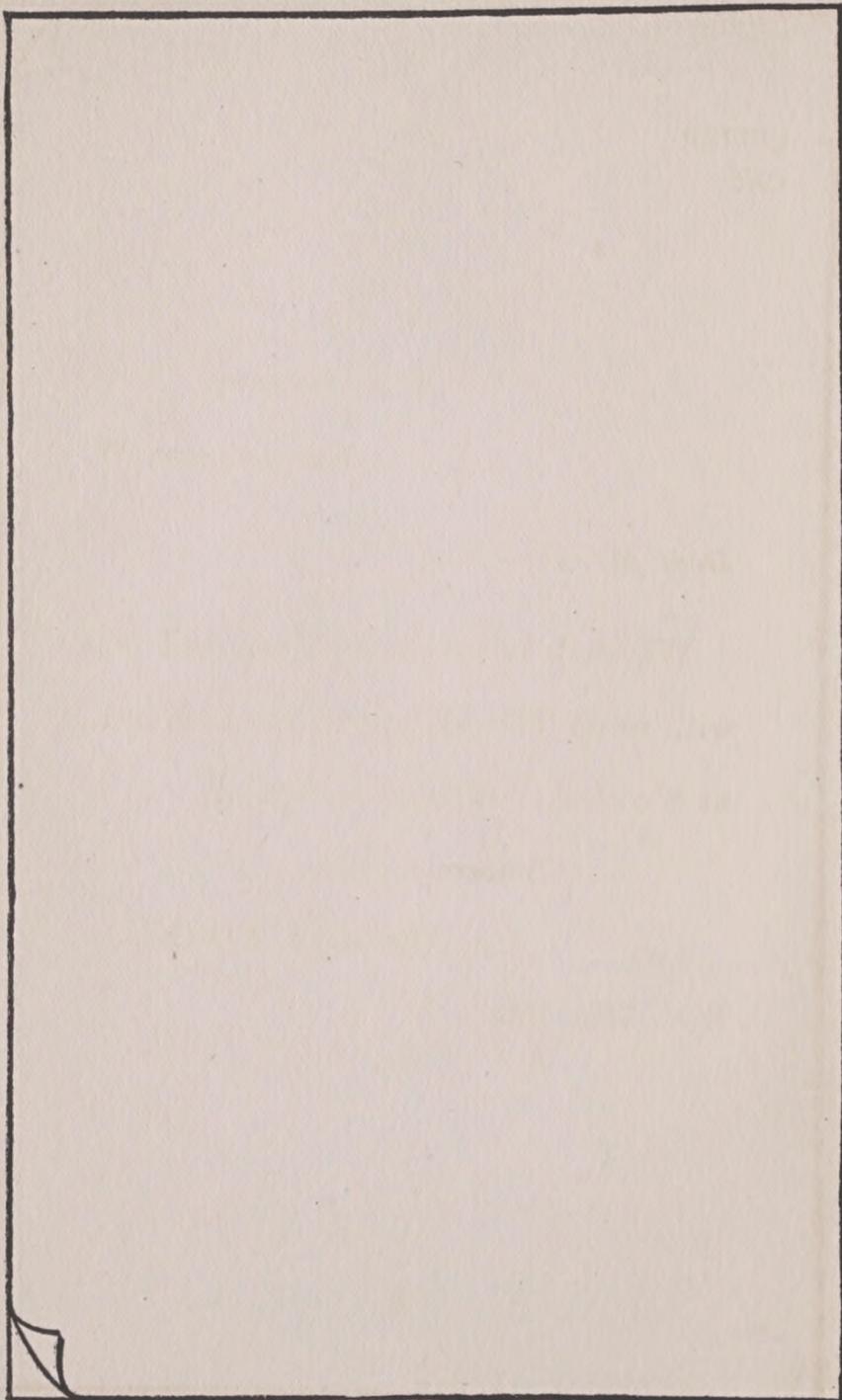
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DEDICATION

May I, My Love, to You?

*Warwick Court
Walmer
1905*



LETTER
ONE

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Mr. D—

We shall be pleased if you will dine
with us on Thursday next, the 15th inst.,
at 8 o'clock. With kind regards.

Sincerely yours,

CATHERINE YORKE.

Nov. 7th. 190—

LETTER
TWO

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Mr. D—

I had no idea that you were so devoted to music, and such a critic! We are going to St. George's Hall on Monday to hear Herr B——. Shall look out for you there.

Sincerely yours,

CATHERINE YORKE.

Nov. 17th.

LETTER
THREE

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Mr. D—

Thanks for note. So sorry you missed
the treat of hearing Herr B——.

Do not forget that we play Bridge on
Thursday again.

Sincerely yours,

CATHERINE YORKE.

Nov. 22nd.

LETTER
FOUR

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Mr. D—

Am so sorry that "the odd man out" happened to be yourself on Thursday. But so fortunate for me that I had some of your music. Bring a heap more for Monday.

Sincerely yours,

CATHERINE YORKE.

Nov. 24th.

LETTER
FIVE

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Mr. D—

More Bridge to-morrow night! Hal says he forgot to mention it to you, and hopes you will arrive early. I don't! Am waiting patiently for next musical treat. Bridge is slow after Greig!

Sincerely yours,

CATHERINE YORKE.

Nov. 30th.

LETTER
SIX

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Mr. D—

It was so sweet of you to deny yourself the fascination of Bridge to play to me. I liked that second piece that we had so much. What was it? I forget.

It is so true,—as you say,—that few men now care for anything but Clubs and cards. Why are you one of the exceptions?

Do play on Wednesday. That conceited Miss Keith will be here. She plays like a barrel organ. I promise to listen

attentively. Even Hal delights in listening to you.

The flowers were perfect. So many thanks.

Very sincerely yours,

KITTY YORKE.

Dec. 2nd.

LETTER
SEVEN

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Mr. D—

Everyone so delighted with your playing on Wednesday. I forgot my duties as hostess in listening.

Your note just arrived with tickets for St. George's. So good of you. Hal's night to dine at the Club and cannot be put off. He has promised to drop me at the hall and pick me up again at 10 o'clock, so I shall not miss hearing Madame T—. Will tell you about it on Saturday.

We hope you will be one of the lucky ones this time and win back your losses. Is it true that people unlucky at cards have good luck in other ventures? Thanks so much for tickets.

Very sincerely yours,

KITTY YORKE.

Dec. 7th.

LETTER
EIGHT

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Mr. D—

I was so surprised to see you on Monday night, so fortunate that you were there to listen to my raptures over Madame T—. She is better than P—, I think.

Hal was so glad that I was not alone to get a cab and go home. The cabmen are so horrid, and I am so afraid of them, or, rather of their language.

Of course, I want to know if you are

lucky in love, just to ascertain whether the inveterate loser at Bridge has any balm for the heart, that can atone for the loss to his pocket!

It is such a horrid day, rain and fog. I really should have gone right off and joined the Ladies' Club that I want to. Why did you ask me not to join it? Hal doesn't mind in the least. I don't think he minds what I do, so long as I am contented. City men have so much to think of.

I do want to know why you don't like Clubs for women. They don't all smoke, and talk only of horse-racing and Bridge.

Come in soon, and bring that new

piece by the Russian man with the awful name.

My sister Mary arrives to-morrow. Why have you made up your mind not to like her?

The rain must answer for this long, uninteresting letter.

Very sincerely yours,

KITTY YORKE.

Dec. 9th.

LETTER
NINE

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Mr. D—

Do you really like receiving letters as much as all that?

I am so sorry that you are so determined not to like Mary, as she is just as determined to like you. So look to the buttons on your armor!

I never can find out the answer to a riddle, so I give it up. What is the answer? The question is such a very ordinary one. "Why cannot you like Mary?"

No, I give it up, for I don't see why. She is considered the beauty of the village at home, and this is no small honor for a Curate's daughter, I can assure you.

Do you know N—— in Leicestershire? You ought to now you have met the village belle!

We are just going out shopping— Mary's real first glimpse of London shops. I shall always remember mine, three years ago. Three years! It seems ages. Time goes so slowly in towns. Come early to-morrow.

Very sincerely yours,

KITTY YORKE.

Dec. 12th.

LETTER
TEN

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Mr. D—

The answer to the riddle was so absurd. I don't think you ought to think it, much less say it.

Both Hal and Mary have asked me for the answer, how can I reply, "because you like her sister too well." It sounds so foolish, and I do wish you had not said it. You have made me so unhappy, because I had to tell a fib. That was foolish of me. But when Hal asked me the answer to the riddle, he was sitting behind his paper,

and it was so much easier to say, I had forgotten to enquire, than to give your answer.

Sincerely yours,

KITTY YORKE.

Dec. 14th.

LETTER
ELEVEN

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Mr. D—

We are going to be quite a small family party for Christmas, but want you to join us. Will you come on Christmas Eve and stay over Boxing Night to go to the Pantomime with us?

We feel like real heroes, attempting to go for the first night, but I have never seen Drury Lane, and Hal booked seats a long time back to make sure of them. Do watch Mary's face at the Pantomime.

She has never seen anything but Poolc's myriorama!

Are you quite better? Chills are so unpleasant and all bachelors are so careless of draughty carriages, etc. Have you ever travelled in a very cold, not new, second class, South-Eastern carriage, with a crusty spinster who insists on ventilating her craze for the open air treatment? I did, once, and had neuralgia and a cold in my eye and influenza afterwards! I wish they would label carriages for open air treatment, or spinsters, and then one would know what to do.

Bring plenty of music. We will sing carols and altogether behave like people

should at this festive season. But you must promise not to say anything silly to me, like you do sometimes, because I want to be friends with you.

Sincerely yours,

KITTY YORKE.

Dec. 19th.

LETTER
TWELVE

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Leon,—

Did you enjoy Christmas? You have succeeded in making me very unhappy. And this to begin the New Year with!

Of course, I have to spend a lot of time alone, but I am sure it is not, as you say, entirely Hal's own fault that he gets home so late, and I see so little of him. You don't know what he has to do in that horrid City. I don't believe it would go on one whole day without him.

I shall not be so lonely if you can run

in frequently and join our Bridge party. If you do not play, you can be the good Samaritan to me.

I have never had a platonic friend before. Everyone says there is no such thing, but we will prove "everyone" wrong. I do want to be real friendly with you, and you have promised to keep faithfully to the path of friendship, and not a word or thought beyond. I am so glad I asked you, and you promised. It is so wrong and so foolish to pay empty compliments to another man's wife.

However, we talked that all out and settled it. You and I start as the first platonic friends to convince everyone in

general, and ourselves and Hal in particular, that such a friendship is possible.

What a dear, not-a-bit-jealous thing he is!

We (being Mary and I) have got a deeply laid scheme on. Do not try and discover it. I hope you will be perishing of curiosity when next we meet.

Yours, as ever,

KITTY YORKE.

Jan. 2nd.

LETTER
THIRTEEN

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

My Dear Leon,—

What fun! Certainly, we will put on thick veils and go with you. We did not think when Mary first proposed the scheme that you would go with us. But we shall not be so nervous with a man to share the fun and the blame.

We can meet you at the station, and you must promise to take us to see all the different things. I have never been allowed to go to anything of the sort before, and I do want to see those savage

people, and the women who look as if their heads were cut off. And I want to walk about, and listen to the Bands, and see the lights and the people, and, in fact, I want to do just what I have been told not to do!

I have not seen you for nearly a week, and it seems such a long time. Have you found that set of Spanish Dances for me?

I hope Hal will not be very vexed if he finds out we have all been to —— without telling him. I confess it has just that spice of mischief in it that makes it such a desirable thing to do. What perverse creatures we are! Why couldn't we

all have been made good in the first instance, and be saved all the trouble and effort?

The station at 6.

Yours ever,

KITTY YORKE.

LETTER
FOURTEEN

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

My Dear Leon,—

You ask me to tell you all about myself. There is so little to tell. I am one of nine very ordinary, uninteresting children born to my parents,—a country curate and his wife—unable to keep one child really, not to mention nine, out of his annual pittance. How I have always loved and pitied my father! In looking back now I can see that his life has been one long effort to feed and clothe his children, and an eternal pitiless struggle to keep up appearances.

How I envied our charwoman! She was poor in such a nice comfortable manner. She could beg, borrow, or even steal, and there seemed no alteration in her life. Her friends would sympathize and not blame her.

But I want to tell you of my father. About myself there is nothing. I can see so plainly all the snubs and insults and petty tyranny which he bore so patiently. My soul again rebels as it did when I was only a child and did not know the degradation of genteel poverty.

Can you realize the effort it is for a cultured, refined scholar to have to subject himself to his Vicar, when that good

gentleman worships money, position and the flesh pots? I have cried many bitter tears over the refined torture doled out by that pillar of the Church to his Curate.

I must tell you one incident to show you the man. My father had carefully prepared his usual homely sermon for the morning service, making it as simple and kindly as he could for the parishioners, trying, as he ever does, to lead them to Heaven by love and not drive them by fear. The service was partly over when the fox-hunting Squire's wife and a few of their guests came into their large pew. I noticed one of the choir boys sent with a slip of paper from the Vicar to my

father. I saw the blood mount into my father's face, and then die slowly away, leaving him pale and calm.

You are wondering, as I did, what was on that small slip of paper.

It was simply the words, "I will preach the sermon."

I know you are not small-minded enough to grasp what that meant.

It was for the Vicar to be heard by the Hall folks, the Vicar to be brought before the eyes of my Lady of the Hall, as it was some few weeks since he had been tolerated as one at a dinner there! Can you imagine this man?

KITTY.

LETTER
FIFTEEN

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

My Dear Leon,—

Seriously, there is nothing of interest in my life. I always meant to marry a very poor man because I envied them so. I felt I could cook dinners and mind babies, but I could not face the everlasting struggle of “make-believe.”

My greatest dread was to become the wife of a poor parson like my father, or, equally to be dreaded, the sharer of the joys and poverty of a half-pay officer. We have many near N——.

I really meant to marry Johnny Bing, who graced the dual professions of organ-blower at church, and boot boy at the Vicarage. But Johnny was not appreciative and never asked me! Then Hal came to our village concert,—he was staying with his friends some few miles away,—he heard me sing “Hush, the Bogie Man,” to please the kiddies, and—here I am!

Now you know all about me, and you are going to be a good friend and not say anything foolish,—and above all, my dear man, you are to avoid being a politician to me. “For why,” you ask. Because they have an invariable rule of say-

ing one thing and meaning exactly the
opposite.

Yours,

KITTY.

LETTER
SIXTEEN

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

My Dear Leon,—

Do, for heaven's sake, remember our contract and stick to it. How can you say such things to me? and how can I listen to them? You will simply put an end to our friendship altogether, if you do not keep strictly to the terms of our platonic agreement.

You have terrified and unnerved me by the awful, passionate things you have said to me. Do think more,—do realize that I am your friend's wife and cut off

from your path in life as completely as the night is severed from the day.

Help me to keep your friendship, and kill that other feeling that you have for me. It is not love, believe me, for I know that love cannot exist without respect and honor.

I cannot discuss it more with you. I only ask you to be true to your better self and put your honor before all else.

Help me to do what is right and keep me your friend as ever.

KITTY YORKE.

LETTER
SEVENTEEN

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Leon,—

It is ages since I heard from you or saw you. Why do you obey me so implicitly? Surely you know that when a woman most begs you to leave her, she is only longing the more for your presence. Have you not seen that I speak with my mind and conscience and not with my heart?

I must not say more to you. Already we have nearly shattered the barrier of friendship, that I have begged you to build to hide from our eyes what—alas!

—is more difficult to tear from our hearts.

It is terrible to think of, and I feel such a despicable being. I would give my all to undo the fact that we have allowed love to enter where friendship can only be. And yet, if we take that from our lives now, what is there left?

What a mystery life is! I have meant to be good,—really pure in mind and soul. It has been no effort to me until I realized that your presence was more to me than anything else in life.

I confess this much to you, and ask your mercy and help.

We will both forget; we will both do all we can to make Hal happy. I will do

more, do all for him that I can. *I* do. He wonders at my feverish anxiety to please and help him. What a mean hypocrite I feel! And yet what else can I do?

No, that is all. I will do that and you will help me. We will never, never speak of this again; never by word or deed, not even by a look must we wander from the cold, narrow footpath of friendship. Because I can see that beyond that cold, calm footpath stretch the warm, passionate deserts of love and lust. Ah, no, help me by your silence, but do not keep away from me for ever.

Your friend,

LETTER
EIGHTEEN

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Leon,—

Thank you for your silence, which is your help to me. How long will it take you to forget? I keep making the most fervent vows not to think, not to miss you, not to want you, and sometimes I succeed for quite an hour; and then something, a word, a song, a chance meeting will bring back the longing for what "might have been."

If only you had never spoken,—never

told me of your love, mine would never have had the courage to have been born. But once the sin is committed, once a love is created, you cannot kill it. Tell me can this cruelty be true? Only tell me by your actions and not by words.

Have you tried, as I do, to kill love? Have you trodden it under-foot, and stamped and crushed your heel on its neck, and then found yourself longing and striving to see it live again? Have you conjured to yourself feelings of horror and remorse, killed your love a thousand times in your mind, only to find it warmly pulsing in your heart?

Poets and sentimentalists say you can-

not kill this Cupid,—that ought to be painted as a fiend and not an innocent-looking cherub. But being neither poets nor sentimentalists we must prove to each other, conclusively and in absolute certainty, that love can die.

Let it die, it is an impure creation as all human affections must be, and therefore, I argue, it is perishable.

But, my dear one, do pray for me that it may perish quickly. All the interest seems taken from my life. How I hate to own to my sin and weakness!

And yet I must own to it, that deep, deep in my heart at this moment I am hugging with tender satisfaction the

thought, that you love me, even if you
for ever must despise me.

I must never see you again. I have
made up my mind to that. Good-bye.

Yours,

KITTY.

LETTER
NINETEEN

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Leon,—

Three weeks and two days since last I heard from you! I hope you have been as happy and contented as I am.

Hal took me to see Tree on Tuesday and we both enjoyed it. We are going to Henley, and I want to go home, too, for a long change, if only Hal can get away to join me. I cannot go without him.

When are you going to Norway with your friend? I hope you will have good sport.

I should not have written to you, only I want you to know that I am going to give up my Club and stop my letters being received there.

Of course, I am not doing this to prevent my hearing from you. That was quite unnecessary as we thoroughly understood each other, and I know you will respect my wishes.

I wanted you to know that I am quite happy. Quite. And as this is your only desire,—you have ever assured me of this,—then you have your desire, and there is not the least danger of my forgetting for one moment again that I am ever your friend.

KITTY YORKE.

LETTER
TWENTY

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Leon,—

I must wish you good-bye before you start for Norway. I do sincerely hope you are preparing to start in a less reckless mood than when I saw you on Friday. I could hear by your every word that you are resenting my wish, you are thinking me cold and unkind.

I shall always remember you calling me cold and calculating. I could undeceive you on that point even now, if only——

But, no, we are getting on dangerous ground again. How awfully hard it is to make one's self think of anything else except what your heart is thinking. That is the worst of having the gift of concentration!

I was taught by my father to try and cultivate that, and it is really a habit, to make your mind concentrate on one thing only, instead of flying from one thought to another. It has been useful to me until now. But now I am anxious to think of twenty different things at once. I want to rush from one occupation to another. I cannot rest. I must keep on all day, and never think.

I am going to hate you for this, I am sure. I am going to lose my peace of mind, and always be secretly hankering after the unattainable. I can feel it and I must hate you for it.

Go, and catch fish, and sit and dream and dream. Heavens! how you can choose indolence and inactivity now I do not know.

I ought not to have written like this. I did not mean to. But I am always making vows to forget, never, never to think of you again, and then—well, then I find that power of concentration most provoking! Alas! my friend, you must extend your pity to

me. I am one of the frailest of my
frail sex.

Yours ever,

KITTY.

P.S.—I thought it would be so very
childish and weak to give up my Club,
and so I am going to continue it. But,
of course, you must not write to me.

LETTER
TWENTY-ONE

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Leon,—

I was astonished to-day to hear that you have not started for Norway. I have just returned from my Club where I found your letter. What am I to say? Dear, I pity you. Why can't you forget me? I thought that I was doing my part so well, though it is very hard.

I do not know what to say to you now, your letter was so piteous. You are lonely. I am lonely. You are hungry for love. I hunger, too. You wander

about in misery, alone. I am miserable, too.

Oh, it is too pitiable; and there is no help for it. We can only go on silently. How often people sneer when they hear of a man's friend loving his wife and vice versa. But such in many cases it is, that the friend has looked on and seen what the man in his selfish blindness has missed.

How lonely one can be in a crowd!
How lonely one can be in a room full of people! And how lonely one can be anywhere without one's love!

I can see it all now. I laugh and talk and go on to all appearances in my usual way, but I am always thinking of you,

wondering where you are. It is maddening to me.

If only Hal would care; if only he would be cruel to me! Anything, anything but that cold, calm indifference which is crueller and harder to bear than a blow.

I wanted so much in life. I wanted every day filled right up, and above all else, love, real, worshipping love. You offer it to me—too late. I cannot take it. I dare not listen. Believe me, I know all that love could give me. Can I not see the home made by love, and even the dream children that might have been. Ah, Leon, we dare not think. Go on,

drift on, apart from me. I dare not see you. There is for ever that immeasurable gulf between us. I dare not meet you, in fear, that in my weakness I hold out my hands to you, and you would take them, and drag me into that gulf of sin and sorrow wherein we should both perish. Please keep away from me. It is all you can do to help me in my misery.

Yours ever,

KITTY.

LETTER
TWENTY-TWO

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dearest,—

I believe you. It is less sinful to live with the being you love in conventional sin, than to live a long lie in legitimate sin. What is there so binding in a mere ceremony, or a set of formal words! I was a child and did not know. I meant to do always what is right, and did not know the cruel temptation of love.

I will think over what you have asked me. But if ever I do wrong, I shall never, never be happy again. It would kill the

soul in me, kill the brightness and laughter that you have loved. Would you take me at that price? Would you care for the body of the woman you love if you had killed the soul in her? Tell me this.

Yours,

KITTY.

LETTER
TWENTY-THREE

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

My Love,—

Let me write to you and tell you all; it makes it easier for me, and it will be some small comfort to you.

I have given up thinking whether to love you is right or wrong, because I cannot help it. We must just go on from day to day, and be quite content with the chance look or word we fling to one another. If only there was no need for deception, no inner knowledge of the

wrong we, unintentionally, have done in thought, I could be happy—even now. Not happy in the calm, placid way of a woman who has been tempted by love, and been cold enough to rise superior to its call, turning her mind to things parochial and spiritual. But I could have been happy in my own way; happy, simply because you love me, proud of the fact that your heart chose me out of all the women you see and meet each day in this wonderful, cruel London, and that in spite of so called honor, in the face of everything conventional, and, risking your soul's salvation, you let your love rise triumphant above all and chose me.

Though we are parted in one sense, for ever, what can part or come between the real love of a man and a woman? I am not speaking of calf love and the sweet folly of children. No, dear heart, we both know how quickly those sweet memories fade. Alas! that we both feel the overmastering love of man for woman, woman for man, the clamorous longing of passionate love for its mate, the old, old story of the Garden of Eden, the unspeakable mystery of the greatest force in the world, that cruel love that draws souls and bodies together with the strength of Heaven, and yet doles out the eternal penalty of pain and retribu-

tion. Oh, the misery of it all—and yet
the sweetness! I am tired with thinking.
Good night.

KITTY.

LETTER
TWENTY-FOUR

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Love,—

I have wanted you so much. I have felt so far from you. Each day that we live quite apart, without a word or a look, is a day lost from our short lives.

How good you are to me! I do feel that. You never forget for one minute that you love me. I can see it in every small act of yours. I wish we could make life more happy, more tolerable for each other. If only there was another way! Not that road of sin and sorrow, not the pain for others who do not know and can

never realize the agony of wrongly placed love.

I still have hours of fighting against you, hours of thought and prayer that tire me body and soul. And I think I have quite conquered love and found happiness and peace in duty. I sleep and forget, only to wake, dear love, and hold out my arms to you in pure weakness and craving for love and protection. That is sin. I feel it. But sweet sin,—far too sweet,—to call forth repentance. I would rather live one day with my love than a century without. Where will this lead us? I wonder——

KITTY.

LETTER
TWENTY-FIVE

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear One,—

I have been thinking of the fact that you do not care for poetry, and yet you so love music. I think that many manly men despise the poets and really condemn them unheard. Yet poets so often express what ordinary mortals may be capable of feeling, and yet incapable of putting into words.

Hear what Shelley says in "Love's Philosophy."

“The fountains mingle with the river,
And the rivers with the ocean,
The winds of Heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine?”

“See the mountains kiss high Heaven,
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister flower would be forgiven
If it disdained its brother:
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea,
What are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?”

There is a law divine, I am sure. It makes for each one a perfect mate somewhere. It is only the narrowness of

chance that keeps them asunder in this world.

I could have believed in, and imagined a heaven where one could live eternally with one's earthly love, but there is no hope of that held out to us. We lose all in losing our chance of life together here. Oh, I did not want this, I did not mean to steal my happiness in a few moments of bliss, as we do.

I did not wish to give to any heart pain and sorrow by my life; I wanted just to live and be true and a good woman. What have I done to miss it all?

KITTY.

LETTER
TWENTY-SIX

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

My Dear One,—

I am terrified at the depths to which love has led me. I am faint with longing. You do not know what it means to me to miss seeing you for one day, and you have punished me for my prudishness by leaving me for a whole week and not tried to see me.

I acknowledge that it is sheer prudishness to feel that I cannot let you kiss me, and yet own that I love you, really and intensely love you. Do you believe that?

And yet there is something that will not let me. I should sink so in your eyes as well as in my own. You would not see me like all those other women. You would not like to think that I held love so lightly. No, it is too much to me,—it is my life.

Other women can fill up their lives with dressmakers and milliners. I cannot. I was made for love,—you have taught me that,—and if only I could feel weak enough to say to you “take me, we will pay the price together,”—but, love, I cannot.

I feel so wicked, so dishonorable in loving you. I can only hope to have

strength to live out my life and not give pain to innocent hearts. We will not let each other do that. Will you be strong, dear heart, and remember that when I am weak? And let me be your strength when love is mastering reason and all in you.

During the past week I have sometimes hated you, with that peculiar hatred which is part of love, and then comes the overwhelming longing to be near you. I am happy when I know that you are even near me. I can stand in a room, breathless with happiness, only to hear your voice.

Oh, the mad, delicious folly of love,

the pain, the pleasure, the hope and fear,
the intoxicating bliss of even knowing
the thrill of a loved presence!

KITTY.

LETTER
TWENTY-SEVEN

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

My Love,—

Keep far from me to-day. I am weak and so lonely. It is so hard to go on taking interest in what matters so little. Life seems so appalling, so useless. How can I live on, even to give so-called happiness and peace to others,—just a figure head, the unwilling ruler of what ought to be a home.

What a dear word that is, home, when it really means all that it would convey. To-day I can see, in piteous, pathetic

contrast, the home created by deep, passionate love; and on the other hand the mere shelter and monotonous toleration of cold, calm indifference. How I long for the warmth and the thrill of a love-lit home! Cannot you see each day dawning with new pleasures, new interests, even new sorrows? The expectant bliss of being amongst others, knowing that the hour would surely come when they would be but a passing thought, and you would be alone with love and could sink into those tired arms and find perfect rest and peace. Love is surely a touch of the Divine.

This world is cruel mockery enough

now. Can you imagine what it would be robbed of earthly love?

When the world was made the Creator was indeed satisfied, for this is a lovely world. And then, surely, He made man, just feeling that he would rule and would work and could uphold the dignity of the world. And then there wanted something really to appreciate the beauty of it all, something to inspire man, something even to tempt him to ambition and desire for life,—real life, not humdrum,—and so the Creator fashioned a bundle of sweet inconsistencies to be at once the joy and pain of life and behold—woman! not the frail, anæmic substitute, but the

glorious, healthy, pure woman. I would like to have been a man, just to have found such an one, and have taken her for my own and shown her the real meaning of life. My dear, we only exist and do that very feebly. But I suppose the inevitable must always be bowed to.

KITTY.

LETTER
TWENTY-EIGHT

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dear Love,—

Let us meet somewhere, as you asked me to do once long ago. I am going to wish you good-bye in my own way, and then you can go to the Antipodes as you suggest and I can—well, I don't know yet.

I am still deliberating coldly and calmly and this is a very difficult matter for a passionate nature to do. But it is good for one to practice self-restraint, that is, if we really can believe in good

and bad. Our latter-day ideas of what is good and bad are so fearfully confusing and misleading.

As a girl at home it always appeared incongruous to me that we could be taken to dine at the Hall or the Vicarage, and sit next to a horrid old roué, with dresses that only partially covered us. We were allowed to dance or sit out with these same old or young debauched creatures; yet to be seen walking in the lovely fields or woods with an intelligent man, or even with one minus the intelligence would be an unpardonable offence, and compromise not only the girl but the man.

It seems to me after much looking on

and thinking that the same unwholesome principles penetrate all so-called society. Oh, I am so tired of it all, so weary of the every-day strain of keeping up appearances.

I am going to see you once quite alone, let you take me in your arms, and kiss me, knowing full well the sin, the conventional sin, wish you good-bye, dear love, for years, perhaps for ever, and then you must leave me and let me fight my own small battle.

But we shall each have the memory of that farewell. It must last us a lifetime. It will be the one golden memory in both our lives. Never again must we

meet afterwards, because I cannot bear to see you again after I have stepped down from my pinnacle, especially as I am stepping down to you, dear, not in a moment of madness or passion.

I have thought and thought of what I should like most in the world, if I knew that it was my last wish, and it is that you take me into your arms and kiss me and then good-bye. We shall have done wrong. If only,—if only, we alone could take the punishment.

KITTY.

LETTER
TWENTY-NINE

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Dearest,—

What am I to say to you? I know you cannot leave me. I am still thrilling with the memory of that parting. What was it you said to me? Let me go over again, word for word. It is all burnt into my heart and brain. Did you say, I must leave all and be yours at any price. Did I answer, I cannot, the road to you is sin, black and appalling, and misery for so many. Did you say, No, my love, you shall not sin, you shall only keep silence. A few compromising meetings, a letter

from me to you, all the blame, all the sin and shame on me, little one, and then will you be brave and keep silence. Did you go on, "I will take you away, and you shall be loved and worshipped. Every act of my life would only be for your happiness. I would shield you from every look or word of pain. I would make you forget all else but ourselves and our happiness. We would grow old without knowing it, because the eyes of real love are so blind, they do not see the streaks of gray and the lines of time. I would make you forget all but your love for me by sheer force of my own pure love for you."

Did you say each word of this, my love? I felt faint and cold and begged you not to tempt me, and then the agony of it all was too much. The moment of parting came,—you could not hold out your arms to me. I could see the pain in your eyes, and I conquered that faintness and fear and held out my arms to you.

I can still feel the touch of your arms around me—that kiss! Never, never shall I forget it. Let me keep the memory of that somewhere away from every other memory of life, let me conjure up that moment in my mind when I die, and then I shall forget death and all its terrors.

KITTY.

LETTER
THIRTY

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

Loved One,—

I do miss you. It is weeks since you left me and I am still dragging on from day to day, living only for a word from you, existing only in the hope of seeing you.

I did not mean you to leave me. I thought you never could if once you had kissed my lips. Is it that you despise me? Is it that you thought me an angel and found me only a woman? no, it is

not this. I know what it is. We dare not ever meet again. You realize it. I realize it.

I tempted you to kiss me, to see if you were a weak man or a strong. I wanted that kiss as I have never wanted anything else in my life. Having obtained my wish I am content to live on with the memory of that minute's bliss, and I am content and even happy, if you, my love, can only let me know that you are happy too.

After all what is there beyond? What is there to wish for? Nothing worth having.

It is impossible for us to live as if we

had casually met, just the ordinary conventional engagement, the society wedding and the life of indifference and commonplace platitudes! This was not for us. Man always desires the unattainable, and so does woman, only she won't be honest enough to say so.

Do you think if you offered that moment of bliss to any poor, bored creature, who has never known one thrill of heaven's gift of love, in exchange for a life time of dull monotony and earthly care, she would not gladly exchange all for that moment? I think she would and that she would be richer for the exchange.

I go back to that kiss, not once but a thousand times each day in memory.

I have read of passionate lovers, raining hundreds of kisses on the heroine's face, brow and neck, but nothing could explain in words that kiss.

You held me in your arms and I lifted my face to you. You bent down and put your lips to mine and just held me there. That one long kiss——Not a hundred passionate, hasty, impetuous kisses, not the kiss of a man to his wife, or a rake for his woman, not the kiss of lust or even of desire, but the clinging kiss of love. I wanted that. I have had that. My love, we have had all that is worth

having. Wherever you are, you can go back in memory to that as I can. We can meet there in that moment at any time in our lives. The best of life—when we can realize what life is,—is only in memories. Do you know this?

KITTY.

LETTER
THIRTY-ONE

HIGH STREET,
KENSINGTON, W.

My Dearest,—

Why do you mind so much? Please don't. Just try and realize that what I say to you is not imagination but truth. I can only once more assure you that you took the best of me in that moment. You have had all that is worthy of our love.

I shall never meet you willingly, never see you again. It is my wish that you go now, as you said you would, and leave me, or rather the shell of me here. You have my heart, my soul conventionally

pure. Take it with you, and leave the remainder to the world that claimed it first and took it.

Remember one thing, we must not die without each other; we may live without, but we cannot die without love. I have often thought and even hoped that we might be in some danger together. That in the years to come when our time for quitting this puzzle of a world comes, we might be on some ship that founders. Because then for both of us it would mean only pleasure, not pain, only hope, not fear. I am a coward, but if you held me, I should forget all else, and not even know that danger was near.

If you would just hold me and kiss me once again like that, I could go from this world to any other, and neither know nor mind the passing.

Thus for us, my love, this world holds for us one great fear the less. It is not for us "until death doth us part," but "until death doth us unite."

KITTY.

EXTRACT FROM A MORNING
NEWSPAPER.

Before the President of the Probate,
Divorce, and Admiralty Division
(Mr. Justice Jeune). Yorke v.
Yorke. D—— Co-respondent.

Counsel gave details of the marriage,
adding that a dissolution was sought on
the ground of the misconduct of the wife.
There were no children of the marriage,
and the case was undefended. His client
did not ask for damages, and was pre-
pared to make the respondent an allow-
ance on certain terms, one being that she

agreed never to see the Co-respondent again. Counsel then read a letter of an incriminating nature from the Co-respondent to the Respondent which had been found by the Petitioner.

In granting a decree nisi the learned Judge commented upon the magnanimous and unusual offer of the Petitioner, and contrasted this with the conduct of the Co-respondent, which he considered as dishonorable and more than usually despicable, as while he was the Petitioner's friend, he had stolen the affection of his wife and ruined his home.

SCENE.—THE C—— CLUB.

FIRST SYMPATHETIC FRIEND.

Awfully sorry, Yorke, to hear of your terrible trouble.

SECOND SYMPATHETIC FRIEND.

I am, too, old chap. It is really too awful. Much worse than losing one's wife by death.

SORROWING PETITIONER.

My dear, good fellows, don't mention it. The late Mrs. Yorke was an awfully cold, ordinary mortal, not capable of caring a scrap for a fellow. She was one of those goody-goody freezing sort of

women, who like music and the fine arts.
I shall be all right. I am just off to the
Music Hall to console myself
with something a trifle less frigid.

GENERAL CHORUS.

Hear, hear. Wish you luck.

SCENE.—THE DECK OF THE
MONGOLIA, OUTWARD BOUND
FOR AUSTRALIA.

HE.

I swear to devote my life to your happiness. You may leave me or stay with me, I shall ever have only one thought. You may be cruel to me, hate me, loathe me. I can only say I love you, I worship you. Let me take you to the English Bishop when we land and explain all, and if the church will not consecrate our union, we will join the church that will.

SHE.

I can think no more—fight no more, do with me as you will. But look (*pointing to the Quay*) I must go back. I pray you——

HE.

What is it, loved one? I can see nothing and we are just clear of the dock. There is no going back. What do you see?

SHE.

That little, old, bent man—the girl in black holding his arm in both hands——

HE.

I see them.

SHE.

Let me go back. Father,—Mary—
Father!

HE.

Kitty. Remember. *Dulce est amari.*

JAN 24 1906

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