

A CHEST OF DRAWERS.

[Written for the Courier-Journal.]

It seems like a friend, my darling, a dear and faithful friend;
When you are as old as I am perhaps you will comprehend.
There isn't an inch about it that hasn't its history
Of love and hope and waiting, of pain and prophecy.
Everything else has perished. The years have swept away
The other household treasures that gladdened my wedding day.
But, somehow, through all the changes, so wonderful, manifold,
To this one so memory-laden my hands have kept their hold.
I had a fine outfitting, for father was well-to-do,
And he loved his only daughter as your father, dear, loves you.
So when I left the old home for the the fair, new home I found
That the old love with the new love joined hands to clasp me round.
O, mine was a glad home-coming, old as I am, my dear,
With the years and their work between us, I can bow my head and hear
The old clock tick its welcome, and plain as the day I see
The joy in the eyes that were dearer than aught on earth to me.
I can see the open window, through which the meadows green
And the pinky snow of apple buds were plainly to be seen.
The settle against the window, the sampler on the wall,
The sunshine on the sanded floor, and then, the best of all,
This chest of drawers, new, shining, black walnut through and through,
Veneered in curly maple, brass handles shining, too.
They seemed to say, "We're what we seem to be, no more, no less."
A rather risky statement in these days, you will confess.
Here in the second drawer, the one that I claimed as mine,
Lay my store of under raiment, plenty and white and fine;
With here in this left-hand corner a modest but ample space
For my simple and small adornings, ribbons and frills of lace.
Marvels of household linen here in this lower drawer,
Spun and woven mainly by my own glad fingers, for
This was a girl's ambition in those simple, far-back days,
And I had been brought up wisely, in healthful, earnest ways.
When crowning a life made happy by such unbounded good,
Came the sweet and holy wonder, the glory of motherhood,
Here in this upper drawer, through all one summer's bloom,
Lay the dainty preparations for the blessing that was to come.
Loving that knew no limit, hoping that owned no law,
Into the tiny garment is stitched with a tender awe:
Never the proudest treasures that ever my girlhood knew
Were so precious as those that under my unwanted fingers grew.
Two little happy summers, and then one bitter day
All that was left of my baby was silently laid away;
And this drawer, that had been so freighted with tenderest hopes and fears,
Was sorrowfully consecrated by a stricken mother's tears.
Here lay the baby treasures, rattle and ring and blocks,
The little garments, aprons and bibs and frocks,
A curl from his waxen forehead, the blanket of plaid blue
That I wore before his coming, and the tiny wrinkled shoe.
Other and noble children brought to us love and pride,
But for years my heart was broken for the darling one that died.
For years I felt the clinging of his lips, his velvet hand,
In the solemn, silent midnight. Oh! mother, you understand.
This drawer next to the bottom, this was for John. His socks,
Always here in the corner, dicker and shirts and studs,
All laid in in order, everything tight to hand,
A blind man could have found them, so it would seem, but, land!
Men are curious creatures; but John was good as the best,
Never a heart more faithful beat in a human breast;
But he'd call me out of the kitchen and the keeping room likewise,
To find the thing he wanted and that right before his eyes.
If a sock had the smallest hole in't, or a shirt had a button gone,
They, with dozens mended, were the ones that he wanted on;
But I couldn't make him over, and I finally gave it up,
And waited upon him mostly from his shirt to his shaving-cup.
'Twas just a mutual service, just as it ought to be;
I'd have died for him anytime; he would have died for me.
But he did what was vastly better, in spite of some sad mistakes,
With love, and youth, and patience, we lived for each other's sakes,
Of course the years brought changes, our daughters were wooed and won,
Two boys in the search for fortune went out toward the setting sun;
Stories as sad and sweet, dear in these simple words are hid,
As the kisses on loving lips or the tears on a coffin lid.

Dear little great granddaughter, I am eighty and odd years old,
Who has words to utter what so long a life may hold?
Who its defects may number, or who its victories sing?
For the simplest life, my darling, is a subtle, wondrous thing.
Wonderful gifts and many are brought for your wedding day.
Gold and silver and jewels I would not their worth gainsay;
They speak of a bountiful future, a future so dim and vast.
But the gift I bring, my darling, is the voice of my vanished past.
You call it, in modern phrasing, curious, quaint, unique,
To you as to me, great grand-child, I know it will never speak,
But I pray it may be the witness of love that abides, endures,
Like that I have leaved my heart on from my wedding day to yours.

MILWAUKEE, WIS., July 23. CARLOTTA PERRY.

SUMMER WIDOWER'S LAMENT.

The scented cup of the eglantine
Tips to the lips of the sybarite wind,
Openly yielding its hoarded wine—
Hoarded at eve when shadows descend;
And for her kept from the dark and cold
All night long in its heart of gold.
Alas, sweet flower, prophetess of June,
Wasted will be your treasure to-day!
In the drowsy gold of yesterday noon
The beautiful spirit flitted away;
And yours and the wind's overtures are vain—
You never can woo her hither again.
The dainty geraniums and heliotropes,
Blossoming under her window-sill,
Have waited and watched and lost their hopes;
But mounting up of its own sweet will,
The red rose peers thro' the sunny pane,
Living to greet her dear eyes again!
But a fate awaits it sad as of all;
Idle and vague are the fancies it weaves;
The nights shall lengthen, the hoar frosts fall,
And maddened gales will scatter its leaves;
And I shall be left, like a willow tree,
With never a flower to mourn with me.
All glad things miss her motherly care;
A subtle sadness bides in her room;
The south wind searches her everywhere—
But ominous whispers startle the gloom,
While the restless waves of the opaline sea
Flow out and in with no tidings for me!
The woodbine riots at our cottage door;
The grass grows green in the walks to the gate;
Her bird lies dead on the cage's floor—
And I am drooping disconsolate,
Wifeless, forlorn and wrecked without grace—
Alas!—she has gone to the watering place!
RUFUS J. CHILDRRESS.

CHATTANOOGA, TENN.—I think a good many of your readers would be pleased to see the following in print. W. S.

ONLY COUSINS, DON'T YOU SEE.

Charming cousin, tell me where
Shall I find one half so fair?
Let me, as I taste thy lip,
Swear how sweet is cousinship,
Like a sister? Yes, no doubt;
Still, not a sister out and out.
Who that ever had a sister
Felt his heart beat when he kissed her?
Who, by looking, ever knew
That his sister's eyes were blue?
Who, in name of all the loves,
Bets his sister pairs of gloves?
Charming cousin, still are you
Sister in a measure, too;
We can act as pleases us.
No one thinks its dangerous;
Talk of love or of the weather,
Row or ride or read together,
Wander where we will alone,
Careless of a chaperon;
You may dance with none but me—
Only cousins don't you see.
Cousins safely may forget
All the laws of etiquette.
Charming cousin, in your eyes
I can read a faint surprise,
Most bewitchingly they glisten
To my nonsense as they listen.
What can Harry mean to say?
You may come to know some day!
Just one word, sweet cousin mine,
Ere we go to dress and dine,
If I ever chance to woo,
Cousin, she must be like you;
And the one that comes the nearest
To yourself will be the dearest;
Type of what my love must be,
Cousin, what if you are she?

T. H. C.

UNDER AN UMBRELLA.

[Walter L. Sawyer, in the Chicago Current.]
Where I gained it you may seek it,
Where I told it you may speak it—
Love that dares both wind and weather,
Draws the maid and man together,
Reconciles to April showers
Hastening May (and orange) flowers—
Love and I and Annabella
All were under an umbrella.
Little hands that held fast to me,
Eyes whose glances shot straight through me,
Lips that murmured thanks for kindness,
Cheeks that mocked my feigned resignation,
Dainty feet that, when they stumbled,
Touched my heart (which never grumbled)—
Love and I and Annabella
All were under an umbrella!
Walked we, talked, till Cupid weary,
Made her answer thus my query:
"Why I like the rainy season?
Oh, because!" She gave the reason.
Then a blush her dimples hollowed—
You may never know what followed!
Love and I and Annabella
All were under an umbrella!

THE LITTLE WIFE.

My little wife's a world too sweet
For such a man as I am;
But she's a Trojan—hard to beat
As Hector, son of Priam.

A winsome, willful morsel she;
Brought up to grace a palace.
She ran away to marry me,
Half love, half girlish malice.

She never has repented though;
We built a cot in Jersey;
She wore delaine and calico,
And I wore tweed and kersey.

So great our love, it bridged across
Whatever might divide us;
However went the gain or loss,
We felt as rich as Midas.

I helped her with the brush and broom,
Her morning labors aiding;
She followed to the counting-room,
Made out my bills of lading.

And once, when sick of chills I lay,
She balanced up the pages;
Did all my work from day to day
And brought home all my wages.

Then I was just a shipping-clerk—
Old firm of Graves & Gartner;
Till after long and weary work
They took me in as partner.

Then year on year went gayly round,
While we grew rich and richer,
Until in every spring we found
We dipped a golden pitcher.

When Gartner left (growing old and lame)
I bought him out completely;
Made wife a partner—changed the name
To Wheatly, Graves & Wheatly.

A silent partner? Not at all;
With genius more than Sapphic
She improvised—that lady small—
The poetry of traffic.

And "poetry, that's truth," preface,
For Mrs. Browning said it;
Her hand, unerring, traced the course
Of debit and of credit.

Her sense of honor, fine as floss,
Yet strong as hempen cables,
Light as a lariat flung across,
Dragged down our business fables.

See made our home a Paradise
With taste supreme and subtle;
But said "I want no cloth of price,"
Wrought with a knavish shuttle."

And fitting through our offices,
With word and smile admonished,
"We'll work no matamorphosis
To make a lie look honest?"

And so the business grew and grew,
With not a cloud to daunten;
Till wife, who wanted tea like dew,
Sent me adrift for Canton.

No sooner was I well at sea,
Than with a whirl insane,
Down came that flood of '73,
And shook the world with panic.

Then many a house as strong as life
Was rent and torn asunder;
Poor Graves went trembling to my wife
And said "we're going under."

Wife saw the gulf but kept her poise,
Disposed of plate and raiment,
Sold all her jewels (but the boys)
And met the heaviest payment.

Then Graves and she with work and wit,
With care and self-denial,
Upheld the firm, established it
The surer for the trial.

Through all the strife they paid the hands
Full price; none saw them falter,
And now the house, rock-founded, stands
As steady as Gibraltar.

But wife keeps with us, guards us through
Like Mariam watching Moses;
She drinks her tea as pure as dew,
And sells it—fresh as roses.

Yes, she's a Trojan; hard to beat
As all the sons of Priam;
But bless you! she a world too sweet
For such a man as I am!

—Buffalo Express.