

COMMON JOYS.

Our common joys, O what are they
The brightest and the best;
They glad us in our busy walks,
Are with us when we rest.

SWEET LAVENDER.

A STORY OF MISUNDERSTANDING
AND LOVE WHICH WAS MADE
RIGHT AFTER ANY YEARS
OF WAITING.

The two familiar words, "Declined
with thanks," however unpleasant
to receive, are scarcely supposed under
ordinary circumstances to excite despair.

They were written upon a sheet of
large note-paper bearing in print
the address of the office of the London
Month.

It was a pretty, home-like room,
and the table was laid daintily for her
solitary breakfast.

She recalled painfully the story of
the last two years. Her husband was
nearly fifteen years older than herself.

Latterly, he had ceased to say these
things. She had pictured a life of intellectual
excitement and constant variety.

She told herself finally that her marriage
had been a mistake; that she was
no more to her husband than a source
of occasional relaxation.

Theories of this kind, somewhat
superficially grafted on to a nature that
craved incessantly, not only for affection,

As for her idea of change in him was
peculiarly imaginary; he was placid and
careful by nature.

er than that she needed more of it.
The thought was present with him in
the pauses of his work, in his journeys
to and from town; he grew more reserved,

In this way the breach widened, and
a crash became inevitable. One night he
returned, after nearly a week's absence,

Later he had come back and put before
her, as a brother or a friend might
have done, the irrefragable consequences

"You must be mad," he said, when she
paused, "but it shall be as you wish.

She ventured no further opposition
the next day he went to town as usual
he was to remain that night in London,

She felt some gladness, some foretaste of
a possible future awaiting her, but her
heart sank, aspiration seemed dead.

Was Tom really as indifferent as he
seemed? What would he feel when he
next came home—after she was gone?

Going through the house was a fresh
trial. She was a careful housewife in



"She had seen Tom Vane in the Strand,
spite of loftier aims, now, everything
would be left to the servants and disorder.

In opening a box to look for some
trinkets she came upon a packet of old
letters. She knew them well enough—

The poor girl flung herself sobbing
upon the couch. "Oh, what had she
done! had he really changed so, and

She had had no very clear reason
for adopting her mother's name in
preference to her own, save that the

strive to be to him the help and com-
panion that he needed. She laid bare
the doubts and distrust of the past

As she wrote, it seemed to become
clear that she had never seriously in-
tended to leave him, development that

The game had been "dangerous," if
it had been any one but Tom! But,
with him, now that she had owned

She had posted her letter that night,
and all the next day went happily
about the house, feeling reinstated.

Then this morning the answer
had lain upon the breakfast table. The
envelope with the direction in the

She felt the responsibility towards Miss Poyntz,
she was only her great aunt, and so
long as Elsa could remember had been

Such peace as she had gained was at
an end from that day, memory grew
vivid, quick-fingered, torturing, and

This limitation of the God-given
gift of song to the carrying of sweet-
ness into sordid ways, waking Heaven

One evening depression and hope-
lessness seemed to have reached their
climax. She had been to the Strand

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newspapers. He had written another
novel, realistic and philosophical which
had been well received, and he still

For the rest, she was utterly alone;
her aunt, Miss Poyntz, was dead, and
the house at Cambridge in the hands

One afternoon she returned from the
city with a face strangely moved from
its usual passivity. She had seen Tom

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used to try at one time, but I never had
anything accepted."
"Perhaps you did not persevere long
enough."

"Well, the last thing I sent was a
poem. All my troubles came upon me
not long after, and since that I have

"What was that?" asked Elsa, indif-
ferently.
"An affair in which I have always
felt guilty, although it was not alto-

That lady came back shortly, an old
mahogany desk in her hand.
"I thought I would bring the desk,"

Mrs. Vane took it carelessly, then
she gave a little cry, for she saw that
it had come from the London Month.

"I am not so much to blame as you
think. We were living in — street
then at our old home. When that let-

Elsa had listened to this explanation
in perfect stillness. When Mrs. Crawley
said that she had not fully read the

"If you don't mind," she said, meas-
uring her tones, "will you leave me
alone for a little while—quite alone."

"For you—oh! Mrs. Poyntz, May
God forgive me—can you?"
Elsa did not seem to see the out-

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would be to you something more than
husband or lover—your most faithful
friend.

"All this I say only to set your mind
at rest, to free you from self-reproach.
But if, my wife, if your heart should

"Oh, my love, think well—something
more than life is at stake."
The whole was finely and closely

Perhaps impotent grief at the wasted
years, the loss of joy, was the strong-
est feeling just at first; then a sense

And if—but here she could not fol-
low out the conclusions, for her heart
trembled. She went back to her writ-

She had addressed it to him person-
ally, and put her own name and ad-
dress on the outside of the fly-leaf.

It was over then. She had heard no
summons, nothing, but there was the
hasty step upon the stair, and he was

"Elsa—Elsa—do you mean to say I
did that idiotic thing?"
"Indeed that, Tom, you did."

Tom Vane had traced his wife to
Paris. He resented bitterly what ap-
peared mere groundless obstinacy and

When, subsequently, he lost sight of
her in her restless journeyings, he
blamed himself bitterly. The darkness

Were those five years wasted? was
the question they sometimes asked
themselves.—Plysdell North, in The

My Lord Makes Clocks.
Lord Grimthorpe's pet hobby is
clock and watch-making. At his coun-

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have started a scheme to encourage
servants to remain in their places.

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