

Harte Bret

Her Letter, His Answer & Her Last Letter



Bret Harte
Her Letter, His Answer
& Her Last Letter

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HER LETTER

I'm sitting alone by the fire,
Dressed just as I came from the dance,
In a robe even *you* would admire, —
It cost a cool thousand in France;
I'm be-diamonded out of all reason,
My hair is done up in a cue:
In short, sir, "the belle of the season"
Is wasting an hour upon you.

A dozen engagements I've broken;
I left in the midst of a set;
Likewise a proposal, half spoken,
That waits – on the stairs – for me yet.
They say he'll be rich, – when he grows up, —
And then he adores me indeed;
And you, sir, are turning your nose up,
Three thousand miles off, as you read.

"And how do I like my position?"

"And what do I think of New York?"

"And now, in my higher ambition,
With whom do I waltz, flirt, or talk?"

"And isn't it nice to have riches,
And diamonds and silks, and all that?"

"And aren't they a change to the ditches
And tunnels of Poverty Flat?"

Well, yes, – if you saw us out driving
Each day in the Park, four-in-hand,
If you saw poor dear mamma contriving
To look supernaturally grand, —
If you saw papa's picture, as taken
By Brady, and tinted at that, —
You'd never suspect he sold bacon
And flour at Poverty Flat.

And yet, just this moment, when sitting
In the glare of the grand chandelier, —
In the bustle and glitter befitting
The "finest *soirée* of the year," —
In the mists of a *gaze de Chambéry*,
And the hum of the smallest of talk, —
Somehow, Joe, I thought of the "Ferry,"
And the dance that we had on "The Fork;"

Of Harrison's barn, with its muster
Of flags festooned over the wall;

Of the candles that shed their soft lustre
And tallow on head-dress and shawl;
Of the steps that we took to one fiddle,
Of the dress of my queer *vis-à-vis*;
And how I once went down the middle
With the man that shot Sandy McGee;

Of the moon that was quietly sleeping
On the hill, when the time came to go;
Of the few baby peaks that were peeping
From under their bedclothes of snow;
Of that ride, – that to me was the rarest;
Of – the something you said at the gate.
Ah! Joe, then I wasn't an heiress
To "the best-paying lead in the State."

Well, well, it's all past; yet it's funny
To think, as I stood in the glare
Of fashion and beauty and money,
That I should be thinking, right there,
Of some one who breasted high water,
And swam the North Fork, and all that,
Just to dance with old Folinsbee's daughter,
The Lily of Poverty Flat.

But goodness! what nonsense I'm writing!
(Mamma says my taste still is low),
Instead of my triumphs reciting,
I'm spooning on Joseph, – heigh-ho!

And I'm to be "finished" by travel, —
Whatever's the meaning of that.
Oh, why did papa strike pay gravel
In drifting on Poverty Flat?

Good-night! – here's the end of my paper;
Good-night! – if the longitude please, —

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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