



"Dear little darling!" said Agnes, tenderly, pressing the infant against her bosom.

"Mein armer, kleiner Liebling!" sagte Agnes, indem sie das Kind zärtlich an die Brust drückte

# MATTIE STEPHENSON,

THE

## SWEET YOUNG MARTYR OF MEMPHIS.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE

DEVOTION OF MISS MARTHA STEPHENSON,

OF TOWANDA, ILLINOIS,

WHO, LIKE AGNES ARNOLD, SACRIFICED HER YOUNG LIFE IN  
THE CAUSE OF HUMANITY.

SUCH WAS THE HIGH ESTEEM IN WHICH SHE WAS HELD BY  
THE PEOPLE OF MEMPHIS, THAT A MAGNIFICENT  
MARBLE MONUMENT IS TO BE ERECTED  
OVER HER GRAVE AT

ELMWOOD CEMETERY.

It seems that this girl had not sufficient clothing, but, refusing to accept any intended for the sick, and refusing pay for her services, she wrote home for a few needed articles, and the day before she died the box arrived. She was then, of course, too ill to know any thing about it, and Mr. Langstaff, President of the Howard Association, opened the box to find some trace of the girl's history. The box contained two neat calico dresses, some cuffs and undergarments, and several small packages of delicacies suitable for the sick, and which had evidently been put up for such a purpose. They were carefully replaced, while the bystanders turned away with tear-dimmed eyes, and silently left the room.

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## THE UNFORTUNATE COURTSHIP.

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SINCE we published the account of the heroic services and tragical death of Miss AGNES ARNOLD, the adopted daughter of the late Samuel Arnold, Esq., of this city, a great deal of curiosity has been excited in the public mind in regard to her disappointment in marriage.

From parties who were intimate with both her family and George Harkness, we have obtained a reliable statement of the whole sad affair. And we venture to say that the designing young lady through whose deception and machinations Agnes Arnold and her intended husband were estranged from each other, will never know another happy hour.

For legal reasons, we are not at liberty to use her real last name. But we give her first name correctly, and persons who live in the neighborhood or know her, will readily recognize her by that.

It seems like a judgment on her from Heaven that, by the failure of her father, who was a prominent banker, she has been reduced from her former proud wealth to abject poverty.

Her first name is Sophia, and by that we will call her. She was a tall, well-formed, dashing girl, and considered quite pretty. A singular thing about her was, that while one of her eyes was a bright blue, the other was a cold gray color. To some this was attractive, while to others of her acquaintance it was quite repulsive.

The way in which she first became acquainted with George Harkness was as follows:

Agnes Arnold, on the occasion of her twentieth birthday, gave a party, to which, among the rest of her young friends, she invited Sophia.

During the course of the festivities there were singing and dancing. A difficult duet was called for by some one, and the music-master decided that the only voices present by which it could be rendered properly were Miss Sophia and George Harkness's.

Accordingly these two were persuaded by the merry company to sing. Agnes was to accompany on the grand piano.

This piano was a present which Mrs. Arnold had bought for her adopted daughter for this very occasion. It was indeed a most magnificent instrument, having been constructed by the first piano company of New York, in their best style.

Agnes was a splendid performer, and seating herself upon the stool, she struck the keys, running up and down the scale with all the ease and grace, and power of a maestro, and bringing out the beauties of the piano to their utmost extent.

The duet was beautifully given, after which Agnes played several selections from difficult operas, much to the delight of her guests.

Sophia seemed to be much impressed by Mr. Harkness, who, although he was already affianced to Agnes, was quite gallant to her friend. Indeed, it is likely that it was this fact which caused him to be so attentive to Sophia, as she was a most intimate companion of Miss Arnold.

But the disastrous result shows the correctness of the sage old remark, "Sweethearts should never trust their beaux even with their dearest friends till they are married."

It so happened that Sophia's birthday came just ten days after that of Agnes, and to her soirée she of course took good care to invite Agnes and George.

The unprincipled girl, even as she kissed her friend good-night, had resolved, if possible, to rob her of her intended husband. When she reached home, and in the quiet of her own room viewed herself in the long mirror, she thus gave utterance to her emotions:

"Ha!" laughed she, "if Aggie only knew what I am going to do, she would not feel so much at ease, nor so happy. George is a splendid fellow. I'm sure I'd like to have him for a husband. There's so much style about him; and he is altogether such a grand-looking man. Besides, he's so rich. I have often read in novels of wealthy young sawneys wedding poor girls on account of their beauty and their love, and *vice versa*. But now here's me and George. He is wealthy, and I, or at least pa, is wealthy. I love George, and we would make a good match for each other. Do I really love him? Yes, I guess I do. I will think I do, at any rate. Does he, or rather *will* he, love *me*? One thing is certain, if I intend to win him, I must design some way to part him and Agnes. It shall be done. I must have George, that is certain. I'm sorry for Aggie, but then all's fair in love and war, they say."

For several hours Sophia laid awake, studying over some means by which she might accomplish her mean and contemptible design. And ere she succeeded she had wearied herself into a fitful, broken slumber, from which she did not awaken till late on the following morning. In truth, she would scarcely have aroused then had not the chambermaid knocked at her door to inform her that breakfast was waiting for her. Hurriedly she descended to the dining-room, but without much appetite for the elegant repast spread before her.

As a general thing, her father had several guests simultaneously at his table, for it was part of the old man's method in business to invite customers to his palatial residence and entertain them sumptuously. He

often boasted that he accomplished more financially at his house than in the office. And indeed this was true.

On the morning to which we refer there chanced to be present none of this class of visitors, and consequently the repast was not enlivened with the usual small talk and exchange of compliments and repartee.

After breakfast Miss Sophia went at her daily routine; first her music practice, then her instructor came and gave her lessons in French and drawing. The rest of the forenoon, or until dinner, which was served at two o'clock, she devoted to embroidery and the acquisition of such other accomplishments as are now-adays considered to be indispensable to young ladies moving in the uppermost circles of society.

Ah, you gilded butterflies of the aristocratic circles, who dress in silks, and satins, and velvets, and glitter in diamonds and golden ornaments, if you could be compelled to tread the hard and cloudy path of your humbler sisters, the poor shop girls, who, thinly clad and very often hungry, are obliged to drag to work through the deep snows and piercing winds of winter, and the broiling heats of midsummer, you would then be able to appreciate the curse of poverty! Then you would have at least some feeling for those you now so loftily designate as your inferiors; but who, nine times out of ten, are infinitely your superiors, both mentally and physically.

After dinner Sophia either went out riding with her mother in the family carriage, or on horseback. If the latter, then the colored groom always rode behind her on another horse at a distance of fifty feet. The supposed object of this was to assist Sophia in case of any accident; but the commoner folks averred that it was a special way in which Sophia's family put on airs.

Be this as it might, it did not alter the fact, nor did these envious remarks even reach the ears of Sophia's family, because those with whom they came in contact, and who thought all these things, were entirely too time-serving and cringing to their dollars and cents to ever hint what passed in their minds.

And this seems to be the great trouble of American society. There is entirely too much reverence (that is the correct word) among the working classes for mere money wealth. Let two men be put up for public office, the one an honest, toiling, intelligent mechanic, who lives in a four-roomed house on a little back street, supporting his wife and several children on a weekly salary of fifteen or sixteen dollars, and the other a known gambler and dishonest man, who steals from the public treasury, or from the pockets of drunken fools. He frequent his gilded rummory,—we say let the honest mechanic be defeated, and the gambler and thief is elected, by the votes of *working men*. The wives and daughters, too, of these very working men, will scarcely notice the wife and daughters of the honest

mechanic, but will be highly pleased to have the slightest nod of recognition from the wife and daughters of the successful gambling politician.

O, you toiling masses, before faces you will abuse capitalists and wealthy aristocrats, yet behind backs you cringe humbly to the golden god, you forge the fetters and you snap them on your own wrists, and until you have more real respect for your fellow-laborers and artisans you never will be rid of them!

Now the father of Sophia had been a young man with but little education and no trade. To be sure, he was not exactly to blame for growing up without a trade, because the rule of the Union to which his father belonged did not permit him the privilege of learning his father's art. So, when he was seventeen, he by chance obtained a situation as a sort of sweep-out clerk in a banking-house. He was avaricious, he was ambitious, he was unscrupulous, and he was smart. In these times a young man with all these qualities may easily be a millionaire by the time he is thirty. Sophia's father at twenty-three conceived the brilliant idea of taking his employer's business, not by purchasing it, but by setting up opposition to it, and offering a much higher rate of interest than could be safely done, and resorting to a number of smart financial tricks. All the money he took in he spent in beautifying his office—making it look like a very Bank of England in heavy solid walnut furniture, solid marble floor, and ponderous safes. In short, knowing the value of outside appearances, he took the greatest care to make everything *look* solid and substantial, without being gorgeous. He was correct in his judgment. Business flowed in upon him, and he at once invested in more veneer for himself. He joined the church, or rather several churches, subscribing heavily to each, and taking good care to advertise the fact. He went into the Y. M. C. A. and he went into politics, and then he went directly for the public purse. He became a sort of a small financial king, but in the end, like all charlatans and humbugs, he at last became utterly bankrupt.

This is the kind of father Sophia has, and so how can we wonder at her being otherwise than a worthy child of a worthy parent? Unscrupulousness in her heart, falseness on her tongue, and deception in her face, Sophia was well fitted to succeed in her nefarious object of at least causing Agnes Arnold to lose George Harkness, even though she herself should not win him. And we doubt very much whether she really cared for him at all. We do not see how a girl with such a heart could care for any one.

On the day to which we have referred, Sophia ordered her horse to be saddled, and, with her mounted servant in his usual position, she cantered gayly away, not to the Park, as was her habit, but down to the office where George Harkness was employed.

Her horse was pure white—a beautiful and spirited creature—and as

she rode along she caused him to rear and plunge at such a rate as to attract quite a crowd of spectators on the sidewalks, and bring out all the clerks and salesmen of the offices and stores along the street. Among the latter was George Harkness, who, upon recognizing the fair rider, at once sprang out into the street, seized the fractious steed, and brought him to a state of comparative quiet.

"Are you not afraid to continue your ride, Miss Sophia?" asked George.

"O no, not at all," laughed Sophia, who was a splendid equestrienne, as she gathered up the reins and settled herself firmer in the saddle; "Joe often cuts up this way, but I always master him."

"You had better dismount and allow me to call a carriage for you, Miss Sophia. Your groom here can take this vicious brute home again," continued George, really fearful of an accident.

With a semi-serious, pretty pout, Sophia archly replied:

"Ah, now, George, you must not abuse poor Joe that way. Please let us go home."

"Well, if I must, I must," said Harkness, gravely, "but I fear you will get hurt."

He let go of the bridle, and the next instant Joe was plunging as before, and kept it up until his mistress thought she had shown off sufficiently. Then in a moment or two, by her skilful handling of the curb and several sharp strokes of her whip, she made him perfectly tractable, bringing him to such a halt that she and he looked like a monument in stone. Patting his neck, she gave him the rein, and turning gracefully around, she kissed the tip of her fingers to George and cantered away amid the clapping of hands of the sidewalk audience.

George's fellows were half beside themselves with admiration and envy, and for the rest of that week he was assailed continually by their sallies and their requests for an introduction.

This display was the opening move of Miss Sophia. George could not help thinking of the girl every moment, and could not banish from his memory the looks Miss Sophia bestowed upon him as he held Joe's bridle. The admiration of his companions for this splendid girl piqued his pride, and he could not help thinking that here was a prize ready for him to take when he willed. Yet in the midst of it all, the beautiful, innocent face of Agnes Arnold floated before him like an angel's, and he felt that he never could love any one like Agnes.

"That is a satisfactory beginning," mused Sophia, as she stood before her glass dressing herself for supper, after returning from her canter, "and now the next move must be as bold and yet equally cautious, for George is a high-strung fellow, who, if he should suspect me for an instant, would end all my designs in a summary way. Ah, well, 'Faint heart never won fair lady,' and I don't suppose fair lady is going to win brave heart any

easier. Sauce for gander, sauce for goose! dreadful vulgar but dreadful true. La! la! there goes the supper bell. I wonder who that sharp pa of mine has got here this evening. Am I worthy of my pa? Yes, I believe I am."

### SOPHIA'S BIRTHDAY SOIRÉE.

To this *rechêrche* and splendid entertainment Miss Sophia of course especially invited Agnes Arnold, and with shrewd finesse she extended an invitation to George Harkness through Agnes.

There was a brilliant and fashionable collection of friends beneath the great banker's roof; for the great banker, as well as his daughter, had taken the opportunity to invite guests to the party.

Sophia shone resplendently. She was the cynosure of all eyes, the object of all the compliments. No outlay had been spared by her papa, and as she stood beside him to welcome the company, she might have been valued at thirty thousand dollars, for she was adorned with laces, satin and jewelry to that amount.

Early in the evening Sophia slipped to her mother's side, and told her to get some one to request the singing of the same duet which she and George had sung at Agnes's birthday party.

This programme was strictly carried out by Sophia's mother, and when called upon, Sophia of course insisted that Agnes should play the accompaniment on the piano.

At its conclusion, as George led Sophia to a seat, she whispered to him: "I hope our friend Agnes will not become jealous of you and I. I noticed her glancing rather furtively at you once or twice."

"O my, no! do not imagine such a thing, Sophia. Agnes would be angry were you even to hint it to her," replied Harkness, warmly.

"Well, I hope not, but women are gifted, you know, with keener perceptions than men," insinuated the designing girl.

"How came you to interpret a mere glance in that manner?" rejoined Harkness.

"Sh—, let us drop all such subjects," laughed Sophia. "Let us permit no green-eyed monsters—"

At this moment several of the party came to Sophia, and an animated conversation ensued, though she was somewhat chagrined to see George Harkness leave her and walk over to where Agnes had set down, and commence to talk to her.

She was too much of an adept at deception, however, to show the slightest sign of her discomfiture; and during the rest of the evening she rather avoided forcing herself upon George.

It so happened that there was present on this festive occasion a gentleman who had become acquainted with Agnes Arnold in New Orleans, when she was in that city with her father. They had not met since that time

until now. Consequently he was particularly attentive to her during the whole evening, and she in courtesy was extra pleasant to him. He did not know of her engagement, and she, in the innocent simplicity of her heart, never thought of mentioning it to anybody.

George Harkness could not fail to notice this, and it must be acknowledged it made him feel, if not exactly jealous, yet somewhat uneasy. And once a man entertains such a feeling, it is not long before it develops into rank jealousy. It is like taking a lighted torch into a powder magazine.

On second thought, he concluded that Agnes had become a little bit jealous of him on account of his apparent attentions to Sophia, and in his own mind he at once resolved to tease her a little.

In pursuance of this foolish resolution, George paid particular court to Sophia. But as we have previously remarked, that adroit young lady kept back her own ardor, and treated Harkness rather cavalierly for some time. Finally, with consummate skill, she yielded and became exceedingly pleasant.

By the time the party broke up and the guests prepared to take their leave, George Harkness was in a very unenviable state of mind between love and jealousy. Agnes never entertained the slightest trace of a thought of such a kind. But still, noticing the change in the manner of her intended husband, she wondered why it was, and all the way home she continued to twit him about it, for she was of a merry disposition. In this way, however, poor Agnes was only adding fuel to the fire which was soon to burst forth into a conflagration.

The replies and queries that were exchanged between the two lovers became sharper and sharper until, by the time they reached Mrs. Arnold's house, they were quite put out in temper, and instead of George going in, as was his usual custom, he very coldly bade Agnes good-night, and raising his hat as though to a stranger, he took his leave.

Since the moment Agnes and George had been betrothed to each other, this was the first time there had ever been even an approach to a quarrel between them. The evil leaven of the banker's daughter's base design was working.

All the way to his own home George fumed and fretted to himself as he strode along with his mind in a state of wild chaos; and when he threw himself savagely into bed, it was not to sleep, but to roll and toss from side to side, upbraiding himself, and Agnes, and Sophia by turns, till nearly daylight, when he fell into a broken slumber, as unrefreshing as it was short.

Poor Agnes was in no better condition than her lover. Like him, she also was unable to sleep, and she cried herself to sleep.

As for Sophia, she kept herself awake exactly two hours, thinking over her signal triumph, and then tranquilly passed into the land of pleasant dreams.

## THE SECOND PART OF THE PLOT.

Early the next day Sophia seated herself at her rosewood inlaid desk and began the second and really most delicate part of her plot.

The day following would be St. Valentine's Day, and taking advantage of this circumstance, Sophia wrote two anonymous notes. One she intended to send to George Harkness, and the other to Agnes Arnold.

In that which she wrote for him, she referred to his being so exceedingly attentive to Miss Sophia —, and suggested to him that it was quite a wrong thing for him to be doing so. But then she hinted that there might be good cause for it, considering the very kindly feeling between Agnes and the other young gentleman. The note was craftily and cunningly worded, just such a one as Iago would have written to Othello.

When she had completed this villainous production to her satisfaction, she indited the second one. This was to be sent to Agnes Arnold, and was worded with even more specious care than the first, for Sophia well knew that with her woman's intuitive perception Agnes would be more likely to discover the wicked fraud than her lover.

These two letters cost Sophia the whole of that day for their completion to her satisfaction. But finally it was done, and thrusting all the copies and corrections and re-copies of them into the fire, she enclosed the approved and final transcripts in their proper envelopes and sealed them.

Her father was intending to go to the post-office after tea, as he wished to get a particular letter from New York city, and he was pleased to grant her permission to go along with him.

She posted the two deadly billets, and sent them, like the poisoned shafts of the savage Indian, to do their work silently but surely.

That night Sophia slept less than any previous night, owing to her anxiety as to what the real effect of her plot would be. In truth, a whole week passed before she could hear the least tidings. But they were satisfactory to the wicked girl when they did come.

Stopping at the house of a young lady who was intimate with both families, she mentioned casually that she supposed George and Agnes would soon be married.

"Married!" exclaimed her friend, "no indeed; and that is not all, for I do not believe they ever will be."

"Now you really do not mean what you are saying, do you?"

"I do, really. I am certain the marriage is or will be broken off. And there's something else about it which I would rather not tell you."

"Rather not tell me? Why, what is the reason you would rather not tell me?"

"If you will never mention it, Sophia," whispered the friend, "I will tell you."

"O, you may depend I never will, dear," assured Sophia.

"It is this, then; that the match was broken off on your account."

"La, me! well upon my word! did you ever? On my account! my account, who am as innocent as a new-born babe!" ejaculated Sophia, with an admirable feigning of utter astonishment.

"Well, now, don't never breathe one word that I have told you, Soph."

"O, I won't; but it only shows what a mean, jealous disposition is capable of doing. I did not think that of Agnes Arnold."

"Did George make any advances to you, Sophia?"

"O, not more than any gentleman might do with perfect propriety. But to tell you the truth, I think he was a little too attentive to me to ease Agnes on the evening I had my birthday party. Don't you remember?"

"Yes, I noticed it at the time."

"And did you not notice that after the opening I purposely avoided him, to prevent any ill-will on the part of Agnes?"

"Yes, I saw that you did not give him any encouragement. But la! Sophia, suppose George has taken a fancy to you, and suppose you do get him instead of Agnes, is he not a splendid prize? Why, I would give my two eyes to have him. I do think he is perfectly splendid. Mind, too, how rich he is."

After much more conversation of a like nature, and which it is of no consequence to repeat here, these two well-matched friends parted, and with the utmost coolness Sophia deliberately drove out to Mrs. Arnold's house.

It so happened that when she got there, no one was home but Mrs. Arnold, and her reception not being particularly warm towards Sophia, that delectable young lady left after a very short stay. Yet nothing passed between Agnes's mother and her in regard to the all-absorbing topic.

One fact began to worry Sophia very much, which was that, as yet, George had not made her any visit. She had fondly hoped that when he became estranged from Agnes he would come courting to her. But he did not. This caused her a shade of anxiety, but she comforted herself with the thought, He will come after awhile.

## MRS. ARNOLD'S STATEMENT.

At this lady's special request, and on account, also, of the subsequent touching reconciliation between George and Agnes, we have suppressed the letter which the former wrote to the latter when he had thought that she loved him no longer. Regarding the conclusion of the intercourse between her daughter and George Harkness, Mrs. Arnold states:

"I extremely regret that this matter should have been brought before the public at all. Nothing could be so distasteful to me, and I am sure it would have been even more so to Agnes and George. But since not only our

own friends and acquaintances, but also well-meaning strangers, have misunderstood, and therefore misstated certain facts, I consider it my duty to both the young people to correct various inaccuracies which have gone abroad.

"George, as well as Agnes, was extremely sensitive in disposition. Both were proud, and consequently when they were made the victims of Sophia's maliciousness—for I can call it by no other term—neither one would seek any explanation from the other. It was impossible for any third person to interfere with a reasonable hope of success. Such affairs are invariably made more complicated and less capable of amicable settlement by the meddling of others.

"I noticed a change in both a short time after the occasion of Sophia's birthday party.

"George did not come as frequently to the house as before, and when he did come, there was not that warmth and sprightliness which he used to display. Agnes also altered. Instead of the merry, happy, light-hearted girl she had been, she became sad, quiet and anxious.

"I often pressed her to confide her troubles to me, and she did, so far as she could. Really she had none, except the constant dread—indefinite, it is true, but for that reason more harassing—that some time she might perhaps lose George. She was so well aware that she had never done anything to cause his singular treatment, that she could not account for it in any other manner than by supposing that, in the dashing, showy Sophia, he saw something more pleasing than in herself. It could not have been the mere prospect of wealth, because George knew Agnes was to inherit all we had. This was certainly as much or more than Sophia could have.

"This indefinite apprehension and uncertainty continued for some time before Agnes came at the true cause. But she would not even then have known it but that, by my advice, she asked George plainly why he had cooled so toward her.

"O, dear mother," said she, when she told me, "would you believe it, George is jealous of me. I thought my heart would break when he said what he did to me. I am sure that this is Sophia's work. Yet why should she serve me in this manner? I always thought so much of her, and she always seemed so friendly to me, and now for her to treat me so? And George, too, I little dreamed that he could ever become jealous of me. He never had the slightest cause for it, I am sure, has he?"

"I had never seen anything in the conduct of my daughter to cause jealousy on George's part, and of course I told her so.

"Well, mother, what would you do, if you were I?" she asked.

"I did not know how to advise Agnes on such a delicate matter, fraught as it was with so much peril to her own peace and happiness. Her welfare was too great an object to my heart to allow of a hasty answer. Therefore I told her that I would think over it and tell her the next morning.

"That same evening George called, and, on the spur of the moment, I resolved to step down into the little back parlor in which he and Agnes generally sat and talked, and ask him frankly what the trouble was. But when I entered the room, his manner was so changed from usual—he being cold, formal, and almost distant—that my resolution fell to the ground, and I merely replied to his frigid greetings as one stranger might to another. I told him Agnes would be down presently, and left the parlor, feeling quite hurt.

"George did not stay more than half as long as was his habit, nor was there any singing or piano playing, from which I judged that the young people's interview had not been as pleasant as it ordinarily was.

"After his departure Agnes came up stairs. It was always her habit, before going to bed, to come and kiss me good-night. This time she went on along the passage without doing so. But immediately after her room door closed, it was quickly opened again, and the dear girl came running to my own room, and, throwing herself into my arms, she began crying and exclaimed:

"O mother, darling mother, I was thinking about something, and I forgot to get my kiss. There now, I'll give you two sweet ones, and they will make up. Good-night!"

"And with a merry laugh, she ran away to her chamber again. I wished very much to go to her; but after a moment's thought, I concluded it would be best to let matters rest until the next morning.

"I passed a miserable night myself, with thinking of my daughter, and I am sure she did also, for in the morning her eyes were swollen and red from crying.

"When the postman came, he brought a note from George to Agnes. She gave it to me to read, and I was more astonished than ever. It was written in a cold, cutting style. It was the final blow that parted George and Agnes forever in this world.

"It was immediately after this event that my daughter volunteered to go to Shreveport.

"It seemed as though the wickedness of Sophia had triumphed. But it was not to be so; for, although she had thus succeeded in estranging George and Agnes, she did not succeed in winning him for herself.

"She employed all sorts of artifices to accomplish this end, but failed completely in her object. And one day, in her desperation, she inadvertently referred to the notes she had originally sent to him and to Agnes. This slip made the whole plot clear to George, and he taxed her with her cruel heartlessness, and bade her farewell.

"I was sitting in my room one night, feeling lonely enough, for I was thinking of Agnes far away, braving death and pestilence for the cause of humanity, when all at once the bell rang violently. It was getting rather late, being well on to ten o'clock, and the servant felt rather timid about



opening the door. So I went myself to a front window overhead, and asked who was there. It was George Harkness.

"Come down, Mrs. Arnold!" he exclaimed, in an excited manner. "Come down and let me in; I must see you and Agnes."

"I will be down right away!" replied I, getting excited myself. And, shutting the window, I called to Sallie to open the door and show Mr. Harkness into the parlor.

"When I went down, he was sitting on the little rocker that Agnes always used.

"Mrs. Arnold," said he, in a somewhat unnerved tone, "I don't want to say a word till Agnes is here, and then I will tell you all,—how foolish, how cruel I have been!"

"George," replied I, "you will not see Agnes again, at least for some time. She is not here."

"Where is she, Mrs. Arnold, for Heaven's sake?"

"She has gone to Shreveport, to nurse the yellow fever patients, and——"

"Agnes! yellow fever! I am her murderer!"

"I never beheld such utter wonder, nor such utter despair ever depicted in a human face before. George had leaped to his feet as he interrupted me, and as he uttered the word murderer, he sank back again on the rocker all in a heap. His face I shall never forget, as he fixed his distended eyes on me, and breathed so chokingly between his gritted teeth that I was terrified out of speech, till he started again, and, burying his face in his hands, and bowing himself almost to the floor, he began to upbraid himself in the wildest exclamations.

"George!" I spoke in a firm, commanding tone that surprised myself, "if you are a man, stop all this; follow Agnes to Shreveport, tell her how you have wronged her—for you have deeply wronged her—and bring her back home."

"She would not look at me again now, after what I have done!" he groaned.

"Nonsense! yes, she will. She loves you dearly, and you love her, I know. Do as I tell you, and all may yet be well!"

"I talked to him a little more in this strain, and the consequence was, that the next morning at nine o'clock he was on his way to Shreveport.

"Would to Heaven, Mr. Bradshaw, I might finish as I could so much desire; but you know the rest—how Agnes and George both perished in that far away pestilence-stricken city. Perhaps in God's own wisdom it is better so. And, as Agnes when dying, prayed, so now do I, in my loneliness pray: 'Not my will, but thine be done.'"





Correct likeness of Agnes Arnold at the age of seventeen from a painting by Thalion. Copied by the permission of Mrs. Arnold.

Ein correctes Bild von Agnes Arnold im Alter von siebzehn Jahren nach einem Gemälde von Thalion. Copirt mit gütiger Erlaubniß der Frau Arnold.

## MATTIE STEPHENSON'S HEROISM.

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Beside the name of Agnes Arnold there shines forth another with equal refulgence. It is that of Mattie Stephenson, of the town of Towanda, Illinois. She was actuated by the same motives exactly as Agnes, though, perhaps, there were characteristics about her that were not with her compeer, Agnes. Miss Arnold was exceedingly lovely in person, very rich, and engaged to be married. Her prospects were golden. We have seen that these prospects, by the designs of a rival, were dimmed, and then she volunteered to go to Shreveport and help the afflicted.

On the contrary, Mattie was poor in purse, passably pretty in face, and was not as yet entrammelled in love. Her volunteering, therefore, was from pure childlike love and inborn bravery of heart. The most touching proof of all this was given in the fact that she had no money to buy clothes, yet she refused all proffers of pay for her services. Yet she took charge of the very worst case in the city of Memphis, without an instant's hesitation, and tenderly nursed the patient till death.

After her death, clergymen, lawyers, doctors, merchants and working people, in fact all classes and everybody who could leave their houses, followed the noble young woman to her grave at Elmwood Cemetery.

At the time the pestilence broke out in Memphis, Mattie was on a visit to some friends in New England. She had been reading every day in the papers about the dreadful disorder spreading from Shreveport along up the river, and the daily increasing lack of nurses. It was about time for her to be returning to her family in the town of Towanda, Illinois, and she made up her mind, instead of going thither, to continue on to Memphis, there to volunteer for the fearful work of nursing.

Being fully aware that if she mentioned her intention to her friends, they would by all means in their power prevent her carrying them out, she kept silent in regard to the matter.

In due course of time she arrived at Memphis, or at least at the first quarantine station, and when she announced what she had come for, rough men were touched to the heart. And prompted by their feeling, they would have turned her back sternly to save her life, for they knew that she would almost certainly die if she took the fever. But they knew also that there were scores of perishing people with no one even to give them a drink of water. And they were too glad to accept the services of any one willing to face the terrors of the pestilence.

"I don't like to let you pass, Miss Stephenson," said the inspector, "but as you still insist after I have so plainly explained to you the perils you invite,

I will let you go on, and ask Heaven's best care and blessing upon your brave, noble heart."

"I thank you kindly, sir," replied the heroic young girl, "for your candor, but I have considered all about it before I started, and I will go right on."

"Very well, pass her in, conductor."

The next moment the train was thundering forward with the brave girl, while the men about the station looked wonderingly at each other, and said:

"No humbug about that little woman! She's a real heroine! God bless that brave girl."

Upon her arrival in the stricken city, she beheld a scene calculated to terrify the stoutest soul. All over the place, wherever she turned her eyes, there arose clouds of smoke from burning tar and pitch, used as disinfectants. Men were engaged in scattering chloride of lime, phenol, carbolic acid, &c., in all directions. The smell was positively frightful, and almost suffocating. Hearse dashed around at a gallop on their way to the cemetery.

Mattie wasted no time in curiosity, however, but promptly presented herself at the office of the Howard Association. There she again awakened great surprise by her unassuming manner and quiet courage.

"We're very glad to have you, Miss Stephenson," said the clerk in charge of the office, "and we'll soon find you a patient."

Even as he spoke a messenger ran in and exclaimed:

"Can you send us a nurse right off to Dr. Williams? A lady in childbirth and got the fever beside."

The clerk glanced inquiringly at Mattie. Such a case was one from which the most practised nurses would shrink. There was no one there save Mattie, and yet the clerk did not like to even suggest to her about her going. But she quickly read the meaning of his silent look, and turning to the messenger, she said, without the slightest excitement:

"Yes, I will go right along with you."

"You will?" ejaculated the messenger, in utter wonderment, eyeing her from head to foot.

"That's what I said," quickly answered Mattie; "and you had better be moving, and not standing wasting precious time for nothing."

"We have no other nurse in now, so you will have to take this young lady, or go without," added the office clerk.

"All right, come along, Miss," said the messenger, and he went out, closely followed by Mattie.

When the messenger led Mattie into the house of sickness and affliction, the doctor looked first at her and then at the messenger, giving the latter quite a frown as a rebuke for bringing him a shy young girl for such a case.

"There was no other nurse there, sir, and so I had to fetch this young lady, who's kindly volunteered to come," explained the messenger, interpreting the physician's frowns.

Mattie noticed the dilemma, and taking a step forward, said:

"Doctor, I know exactly what the case is. I'll do my best, and I am not afraid but that I can manage it."

"Very well, Miss, only I thought you would not like to be assigned to such an one," said the physician.

"Neither would I, sir," candidly replied Mattie; "but under such extraordinary circumstances as these, I have not the slightest objection."

"Bravely spoken, my young lady!" exclaimed the doctor, in admiration. "You're a sensible, practical person. Girls of your age are generally so very romantic and finicky. I wish we had a hundred more like you, though. We'd soon make headway against this frightful fever."

The doctor was obliged to leave now, to attend to other patients, and in Mattie's care, therefore, he left the poor, suffering woman whom Mattie had come to nurse.

The brave young heroine's first care was to calm the patient's terror and excitement, and this she soon succeeded in doing. She slipped her arm under the woman's neck, and leaning down, laid her cheek against the hot, saffron-hued forehead without the slightest fear. She did so to assure the poor creature that she was not afraid of her.

"O!" groaned the latter, "please, for God's sake, don't go and leave me like the other three nurses did! When they came and found what ailed me, they all ran away and left me alone."

"Never mind, now, just quiet all your fears. I will not go and leave you," said Mattie, in comforting, soothing tones. "God will take care of us both. There, put your arm around my neck."

And the sweet girl, taking her patient's arm, deliberately, even lovingly, placed it about her own neck, though it was like a band of fire, with its fever-heated veins and arteries. And the woman clutched her tightly, like a drowning person clutches the rescuer, while her heavy, fetid breath almost scorched her fair young face. Yet Mattie never flinched from the dreadful ordeal, but continued to talk so kindly, so soothingly to her patient, that the latter soon became perfectly quiet. Indeed, she presently sank into a sleep that promised to refresh her greatly, while Mattie sat down on an old rocking-chair beside the bed and watched her.

The hour for giving the medicine left by the doctor came; but, as the patient still slumbered, Mattie would not awaken her, as she firmly believed in the common-sense rule that Nature heals the sick in slumber better than the physician.

When the woman did arouse she seemed somewhat better, and the instant she opened her eyes, Mattie took hold of her hand, and said in cheery tones:

"My! you have had such a nice sleep. It must have made you feel much better. Now then, take your medicine."

"Thank God, you are still here!" exclaimed the patient. "Yes," she continued, "I feel much better. But don't go away and leave me. I'll die if you do. I know I will."

"No, I will not leave you. Come, now, take your medicine."

Reassured, the apprehensive patient obeyed Mattie, who, tenderly raising her head, administered the dose.

Matters went on smoothly during the rest of the day. The doctor called again in the evening, and, concluding that he would not be needed before morning again, took his departure, after complimenting Mattie for her heroism.

After he left, Mattie was all alone with the sick woman. She kept the lamp burning dimly out in the entry, and sat down beside the bed, always holding the sick woman's hand in her own to assure the poor creature she would not leave her. Through the crack of the partially open door the lamp made the strangest shadows on the walls. The silence, too, was dreadful; but the noises now and then out in the street were still more awful; for the occasional vehicle that dashed along like a piece of artillery on the field of battle, Mattie knew to be a patient being taken to the hospital, or a corpse being hurried to the graveyard.

Yet all this was as nothing to the trial to which brave little Mattie was yet to be put. Her patient had fallen asleep, and Mattie was thinking of her friends at home—of how they would talk when they found out where she was and why she had come—when a neighboring clock bell tolled the hour of eleven.

In an instant the sick woman, with a wild, despairing shriek, that curdled and chilled her nurse's blood, sprang up out of bed on to the floor. Mattie was so startled that for a moment she was quite helpless; but only for a moment, for, as the patient was just in the act of bounding through the doorway, the brave young girl seized and grappled with her. The struggle was short but terrible, and Mattie by superhuman strength dragged her to the bed, and lifted her in again. And there she held her till the paroxysm was over, talking to her in calm, assuring tones the while, to get her quiet.

But the violent exertion was too much, and the poor woman began prematurely that sorrow which, for the sin of Eve, God adjudged all woman-kind should suffer. Mattie nerved herself for the awful trial, and, like the good, brave girl she was, she kept faithfully her promise to do the very best she could. Not a soul was there to help her, for the screams and groans of the unfortunate mother brought in no passer-by. Screams and groans were too common to attract anybody's attention.

Two long, long, dreadful hours passed away, and on the bed beside the

mother lay two babes, one dead and the other dying, and both as yellow as gold.

And sadder than all, the mother too was now dying, though Mattie did not know it. Poor, dear girl, she even tried to cheer the mother's heart by saying:

"Never mind, one is still alive. Be brave; you will live, and have one of your babies living also."

But the maternal ear was deaf, the mother's soul was summoned, and she heeded not the kind words and soothing voice.

At two o'clock all was over, and there was Mattie, the heroine, alone—alone with three loathsome corpses. She stepped out, and bringing in the lamp, gazed sorrowfully at the dead ones. And to show how little fear there was about her, this girl straightened the contorted limbs of the mother, and with rare and touching pity, she laid the babes on their dead mother's breast, and folded an arm over each of them.

"That's how she would have liked to have them if she had lived," said Mattie to herself.

Her next act was to set the furniture and other things to rights, after which she sat down and awaited the coming of the doctor in the morning. He did not arrive until half-past five, and during the intervening time Mattie kept up her solemn vigil by the dead. When he came he was much surprised at what had occurred, and commended Mattie warmly for her extraordinary bravery and fidelity to her terrible duty. He directed her to the office, where he told her she should rest herself for a day or two, for he was afraid if she did not she would quickly die herself from mere excitement and fatigue. But he did not know the heroic girl. Word came that she was wanted, and she at once entered the sick room again. This time it was to No. 43 Main Street. There an old gentleman and his wife had taken in four orphan children, whose parents had all died of the fever, and from them they both took it. At the same time two of the children went down with it, making four patients in the one house.

Mattie, assisted by one of the regular Howard nurses, took charge of them all, and tended them so faithfully that they all recovered in a short time.

So on, in this way, from house to house, and from case to case, did young Mattie Stephenson flit, like a bright, ministering angel from heaven, nursing the sick, and, in her humble way, administering consolation to the dying, whispering the last words of piety and Christian hope into many ears and hearts as the dark river flowed at their feet and engulfed them.

Had it been so ordered by Providence, that this child-saint—she was scarcely eighteen years old—was to live, she would have been the most popular and celebrated philanthropist of the times. But such was not to be. She was to do so much, and then go home to God and be rewarded.

Her last patient was a man named Sullivan, who lived on Concord Street. Yet this delicate girl, who might easily have excused herself from the case, did not do so. "All she saw was that a human being was suffering, with no one to help. That was enough for her, and she went with her pure and holy heart and took care of him.

Sullivan died, and Mattie, through over-exertion with him, reduced her system so much that she fell an easy victim to the contagion. And the very day Sullivan died, Mattie was taken down with the fever.

The moment she felt the peculiar, dreadful headache, the numbness and pain in her back and limbs, she knew what was coming, and asked to be taken at once to the Waltham Infirmary. She was placed in an easy chair, propped up with pillows, covered carefully over with blankets, and carried quickly but tenderly to the hospital.

There she was promptly put to bed, and most specially well nursed, for the brave, devoted girl's name had become a household word in the stricken city; and when it was known that Mattie Stephenson was down with the fever, there was universal sorrow and a universal prayer that she might recover.

At the infirmary she was the object of everybody's pity and attention. Indeed, a more touching sight was never seen than when Sisters of Charity and Mercy, Howards, priests, and clergymen of all denominations, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian and Episcopalian, all vied with each other in their kindness to the stricken girl. For the time they felt that in true Christianity and God-love there were no creeds, no *ists*, no *isms*. None dared to claim the dying girl as a member of his or her peculiar sect. No, she was a real handmaiden of God. Each and all spoke to her of God and of His goodness and mercy, and to each and all she returned the assurance that God was with her crossing the river.

And surely He was, for all averred they had yet to see any one dying with the fever whose passing away was so placid, so peaceful as Mattie's. Even after she had become unconscious, there was constantly a smile flitting over her features; and whenever her lips moved, it was to speak of the bright heaven to which each ebbing wave of Jordan was bearing her nearer and nearer, or to administer incoherent words of consolation to some patient whom she imagined she was nursing.

All the medical skill and careful nursing was destined to be of no avail, and that day, just at sunset, the sweet martyr of Memphis passed away from earth. Her last words, as she suddenly squeezed the hand of a Sister of the Sacred Heart who stood at her bedside, were:

"God bless you all, I am going home."

Mattie, noble, blessed Mattie, was dead; and the myriad golden harps round Heaven's white throne, in sublimest unison, sang forth the praise of a new saint brought from earth, to be among them for evermore.



## A MOST PATHETIC INCIDENT.

One of the most touching incidents occurring in connection with this brave girl, Mattie Stephenson, was the following:

While she was well, and working at her dangerous post of duty, no one had had either the time or curiosity to inquire who she really was, or where she had really come from. All knew she was called Mattie Stephenson, and all knew that she was from some town in the Northern States, but nothing more. And but for an accident, her history would never have come to light.

When Mattie came to Memphis she had only a moderate change of clothing. She would not take any of that which had been donated for the sick, and at the same time she positively refused to accept any pay for her services, though all the paid nurses were receiving twenty and thirty dollars a week.

She wrote to her people at home, asking them to send her some little things that she most needed. And only on the day that she died did the box containing them arrive from Towanda, Illinois.

A. D. Langstaff, Esq., who was in the room, consulted with the ministers present, and then pried open the box to see if there were any note or token by which Mattie might be traced. A handkerchief, washed and neatly folded, lay upon the top of the other things. Mr. Langstaff was deeply affected, and turning away, requested one of the sisters to take the contents of the box out. That lady did so with the tears coursing down her pale face. The contents of the little box were some undergarments, wrist cuffs, two neat plain calico dresses, and a package or two of delicacies suitable for the sick. From the letter that accompanied the box, it was ascertained who Mattie was, and where her friends and family resided.

Not a person was there in the room who was not shedding tears during this scene, and we doubt if there ever was an incident so touching.

That evening Mattie died, and the day following she was buried in Elmwood Cemetery, on a rising knoll a short distance from the entrance. To show how deeply grateful the people of Memphis were to the dead girl's memory, we need only refer to the following description of her funeral, at which it is stated that every well person in the whole city attended.

First came two carriages with the pall-bearers, who were G. W. Gordon, A. D. Langstaff, J. W. Smith, W. B. Lonsdale, and E. J. Mansfield. Another carriage contained Rev. W. E. Boggs and Rev. Dr. L. Blackburn.

Next came the hearse with the remains, encased in the richest and most beautiful casket that money could procure. Then followed, on foot, the members of the Howard Association, the Mayor of the city, members of the press, and the citizens.

Upon arriving at the grave, Rev. Mr. Boggs, after some appropriate remarks, read from the Gospel of St. Luke the parable of the Good Samaritan. He concluded as follows:

"It is a time for action rather than words, my brethren. Our precious time must be given to the humane task of caring for the living. You of the Howard's cannot linger even by a spot so hallowed as the grave of this brave and tender young woman. I saw her but once, and then under the most trying circumstances in which a modest, retiring girl could be placed. It was in a chamber of a victim of this fearful scourge, who had been hurried by it into the pangs of motherhood. Terror had broken the tenderest ties of life; men had nerved themselves to face the danger by strong drink; women, otherwise so ready with their sympathy and aid in that hour of agony, whose bitterness only a woman can know, stood aloof, with pale faces and parted lips. A slender, shy girl hovered over that panting mother, whose pangs were not repaid by hearing the welcome cries of a living child. She knelt with me in prayer to the Great Father to heal the exhausted body; or, if such was His higher will, to receive her departing soul. There was nothing of the self-conscious heroine about the shy and gentle creature; no traces of Joan of Arc or Charlotte Corday, as we see them portrayed by the artist's brush; and rude man that I was, I had well nigh forgotten the circumstance, until recalled by the statement of her noble-hearted physician, Doctor Blackburn, who wept for her as for a beloved daughter.

"The two women now sleep not far from each other, in the quiet shade of our beautiful Elmwood—one from Illinois, the other from the more distant hills of Bonnie Scotland. Lips like mine cannot fittingly speak the praises of such a life—such a glorious death. May Divine Power use this example of unselfish philanthropy to grave on our hearts the sublime moral which the blessed Son of God draws from this, our wondrous parable of the Good Samaritan—'Go thou and do likewise.' Let us tell her story to our boys and girls. Let the breathing marble and the sculptor's art do some justice, not to her merit, which man can never reward, but to ourselves and the gratitude of our city. This is the crowning act of charity, and Miss Mattie Stephenson has the approval of Him who said: 'Greater love than this hath no man, that he lay down his life for another.'"

#### MATTIE'S MONUMENT.

Immediately after Mattie's burial a movement was set on foot to obtain subscriptions to raise a beautiful monument over her grave in Elmwood Cemetery. The subjoined resolutions, passed by the Howard Association of Memphis, explain the whole subject:

OFFICE OF HOWARD ASSOCIATION,  
Memphis, Oct. 18, 1873.

Soon after the story of our suffering went abroad, when so many hearts were paralyzed with terror at home, and when so many of our people lay dying without help, Miss Martha Stephenson, a brave young girl of Towanda, Illinois, hastened to our midst, and dedicated herself to our sick and dying. From that time till she herself was seized with the dread pestilence, she devoted her whole energies to the noble purpose for which she had come. With tenderness and alacrity she attended the suffering, day and night, till her own life was demanded. Already the object of her mission, the kindness of her offices, and the heroism of her character, had excited the interest and admiration of all who had seen her; and when the destroyer, which spares neither the good, the beautiful, nor the brave, laid his fatal hand upon her, aid rushed to her relief, and extraordinary efforts were made to save her. All that human skill, attention, and sympathy could do for her was done; but all in vain. This morning she passed away, and thus ended her mission of love and mercy. She consecrated herself to the good of others, and perished a martyr to the cause of humanity. Her brief history while among us was grand, noble, and beautiful.

The circumstances under which she came, leaving her home and friends to die for those who knew her not, render her death peculiarly mournful, and we herein attest our sincere sorrow. Such examples of self-sacrifice, Christian heroism, and personal fortitude ought ever to be honored and remembered. Therefore be it

*Resolved*, That the Howard Association deeply lament the death of Miss Stephenson, the minister to the suffering and the friend of the helpless.

*Resolved*, That we sympathize with her family and friends in the loss of one who laid down her own life that others might live.

*Resolved*, That in honor of her memory, and in justice to ourselves, and as an example to her race, a suitable monument be erected to mark the spot where she sleeps, and that her epitaph shall tell this sublime and beautiful story of her life.

B. B. ANDERSON,  
W. J. SMITH,  
W. J. GORDAN,  
Committee.



The *Evening Ledger* says of her:

"Angel of Patience! sent to calm  
Our feverish brows with cooling."—*Whittier*.

"Without knowing it, she has taught the world a great moral lesson. Perfect examples are required to produce the highest types of character. When she died she only began to live on earth and in heaven. The weak things of the world are often chosen to confound the mighty, and a weak girl, without prestige, influential friends, or accidental fame, has come into our midst from a remote village, to add lustre to the attributes of her sex. She has done even more for the living and the unborn than for the sick and dying. In life she may have been ever so obscure, but in the posthumous gratitude of a people, for whom she laid down her existence, she is immortalized; in verse, a soft, rhymed poem; in history, a heroine; in tradition, a martyr to gentle impulses; of sublime faith a chosen exponent; in the hearts of the people an ideal of all that is good, beautiful, and unselfish in life; her grave at Elmwood a shrine where worth and beauty, heroism, womanhood, and silver-haired old age will ever pay affectionate tribute."