

DAY-DREAMS.

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BY

MARTHA ALLEN.

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"Tis to create, and in creating live  
A being more intense, that we endow  
With form our fancy, gaining as we give  
The life we image, ev'n as I do now."  
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P R E F A C E .

TIMIDLY, yet hopefully, I send forth these thoughts, fancies, and dreams, which, in writing, brightened many a lonely hour; and if they but recall a pleasurable recollection, or charm away the dulness of a long winter's evening, my end will be attained. True, as Solomon says, "There is nothing new under the sun"—the more freely, then, I offer the effusions of a neophyte in the paths of literature. Greet me with sweet smiles and gentle words; your heart-warm sympathies will inspire me with energy to make renewed efforts for the goal we all strive to win—the approval of our friends.

M. A.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
A CHRISTMAS SKETCH	13
THE MOTHER	20
JACK FROST	24
DEATH OF TIME	29
QUEEN KATHARINE PARR—A LEAF FROM HER LIFE	33
PARADISE AND THE PERI	40
A SCENE AT NIAGARA	49
THE LOST PLEIAD	55
THREE DAYS IN THE PALACE	64
THE WIND OF THE WINTER NIGHT	72
LOVE AND MINERVA	79
THE ANGEL AND THE SPIRIT OF DEATH	81
JERHATHA'S DAUGHTER	86
THE CONVICT	93
LOVE AND HOPE	99
A SKETCH FROM LIFE	103
LEGEND OF THE BLACK DEATH	109
SHADOWS	114
THE LAMENT OF THE ROSE-BUSH	117

	PAGE
THE GUARDIAN ANGEL	121
A VISION	124
THE TWIN SOULS	130
SIN AND DEATH	135
MEMORY AND HOPE	145
THE MAGDALEN	149

DAY-DREAMS.

A CHRISTMAS SKETCH.

It was the night before Christmas; the first snow of the season lay a foot deep on the ground; the wind whistled through the deserted streets; the air was biting, intensely cold. Here and there might be seen hurrying home to the blazing fireside the working man, wearied with his day's toil, yet whistling a merry tune as he looked on the frozen meat and rich pie he had bought at the corner shop, for the morrow's feast. A few half-starved, shivering children, too, with baskets on their arms, filled with matches, were hastening to their wretched homes, and as the little naked feet went pattering over the icy snow, wistful were the glances cast into the brilliantly lighted windows, through which sounded the merry laugh, for it presented to their minds promises of warmth and happiness. Each busy housewife was bustling round, sweeping up the hearth, lighting the

yule log, and hanging up carefully the stockings of the little folks, that Kriss Kingle might see all things in readiness when he paid his yearly visit. Now the silvery sleigh-bells sounded in the distance; hastily the Christmas Tree, heavy with its charmed gifts, was placed in the corner, and the good mother jumped into bed; now came the sleigh-bells, nearer and nearer, jingle, jingle, on the frosty air, and lo! a sleigh, wide and long, filled with Christmas cheer. There were good wishes, kindly thoughts, kind remembrances from constant hearts; fairy gifts of good temper, faith, and charity; bags full of sugar-plums; warm, downy, white coverings, for the poor and aged; turkeys, plump and tender as young partridges; a host of rich toys and trinkets; pearls from India's seas; sparkling diamonds from earth's darkest mines; charmed emeralds, which paled at infidelity; costly furs, stripped from the mine ever amid Russia's snows; tiny jewelled bottles of Attar Gul, more precious than gold, distilled beneath the burning sun of Persia; and in the midst of this heterogeneous mass of things sat Kriss Kingle himself. He was dressed from head to foot in shining furs, from beneath which shone his surcoat, worked with gold; long golden curls from beneath his cap streamed on the wind like the dancing plumes on a warrior's helmet; eyes, bright and fierce as young eaglets,

looked towards the guiding star in the East, even that star which had gone before, and lighted the wise men to the lowly cradle of the Young Child, and again seemed sounding through the air, "Peace on earth, good will towards men." And the milk-white steeds from the farthest North, with the strength of young lions, with the speed of the antelope, dashed up the house-side, and the gallant old driver entered the spotless chamber of a young maiden, who, with rosy cheek pillowed on her fair hand, dreamt of her lover. In visions she recalled the last fond words; and, as in dreams they were repeated over again and again, the lips moved, and eagerly her hands were outstretched to embrace the loved one. Kriss Kingle bent over, and pressed on her lips the kiss the lover sent. No wonder, then, the smile loitered round them, or that the love-lights, dancing within her eyes, held her senses spellbound in dream-land, till the glorious, life-giving sun had risen, and the noisy little ones, with hands full of flowers, awakened her with shouts of "Merry Christmas, dear sister."

In a small room, lighted only by the faint moon's rays which struggled through the dust-covered, paper-patched windows, sat a youthful pair—a woman and a man: pinching poverty, care, and sickness had hollowed the cheek, and set deep lines on the forehead. The man had in vain essayed to support himself and

wife; a series of crosses had crushed them lower and lower, till, laboring at work which birth and society had unfitted him for, Sickness had laid her heavy hand on his burning brow. Now, perishing with cold, famishing for food, Death, who already was pressing his face against the cold casement, seemed their only deliverer from a world of trial. Jingle, jingle, sounded Kriss Kingle's merry bells; but he rarely entered the abode of poverty. Creak, creak, went the rickety door on its rusty hinges, and in crept a poor starved cat, which, purring round their feet, made a bed on the skirts of Mary's dress.

"See, Mary; drive that cat out," said the man, as he shivered in the blast, now pouring freely through the open door.

"Nay, Willie, let the poor animal find at least shelter. True, we have neither food nor fire; still, let us bestow what charity we may, a shelter beneath our roof."

"Well, Mary, you were ever an angel, and deserved a better fate than a home like this. So let the poor wanderer remain, for who knows but she may bring us luck; for so I have heard it said."

The cat purred and rubbed her sides against their feet, as though she understood all that was said. The tears were falling from Mary's eyes as she replied: "We should look to a higher source for luck, dear

Willie. We have seen sorrow and suffering; but I hope it has been blest to us; to God alone let our prayers ascend for mercy and forgiveness; He only can give us luck; and it may be we shall spend our Christmas in heaven."

In a mansion far away from the abodes of poverty, in a richly-furnished apartment, sat an aged couple. As they sat opposite each other by the fireside, sadly they looked on the vacant seat placed between them. Thought and memory were busy within their hearts; yet neither spoke. How desolate they looked! their age and their sad silence contrasting with the freshness and beauty so lavishly displayed in that stately room. Rarest exotics, on porphyry stands, diffused the most delicious odor; curtains of heavy damask covered the high windows, effectually barring out Jack Frost; gorgeous paintings, by Salvator Rosa, of sunny lands—

"Where the leaf never dies
In the still blooming bowers,
And the bee banquets on
Through a whole year of flowers"—

covered the walls and were reflected from many a noble mirror. The flames curled and hissed round the immense logs, in the huge chimney-place; then, with a roar, ascended, in a shower of sparks, as one of the foremost broke and fell upright in the corner.

And now the fancies of those lonely ones clustered round that shapeless log. To their imagination it took a hundred forms. First, their little toddling Mary, trying her infant steps from chair to chair; then, screaming with delight, seeking a refuge in those loved arms; then the school-girl conning her task behind the curtain; and, later still, the lovely woman who occupied that vacant chair, and read or sung to them during the long winter evenings—the same loved daughter whom they had driven, with bitter words, from their hearts and home, because her young affections had gone forth without their bidding. True, they had long since vainly regretted their cruel harshness; but no trace could they learn of their child.

Now, as sounds of mirth and festivity met their ear, they prayed she might be restored to them. Saddened and subdued, they listened to a tale of suffering an attendant told; how that a man and woman, covered with rags, stiffened with cold, dying with hunger, were borne into a neighbor's, almost as poor, to share their scanty fireside. Shuddering, they thought of their lost child, and resolved to relieve the wanderers.—Christmas dawned bright and clear; the bells of all the churches rang cheerily; the children ran and shouted through the streets; the sleighs kept up a merry chase; and the good

wives displayed their Christmas offerings. Within that same stately room, where had sat that aged couple, were now assembled a happy group. The sparkling sunlight, streaming through the crimson curtains, lit faces radiant with happiness; for love, in all its divinity, its infinitude, was there, which ever brings down heaven to earth, lighting its darkness, and coloring its hues with tints as from an angel's wing.

In the poor, homeless wanderers, they had found their banished child, and her young husband. A mother's kindness had brought back the fleeting life; the magic voice of affection had restored health to the drooping frame; and Mary's heart ascended in a grateful prayer to God, as she looked round on the familiar objects in that dear room, where so many happy hours had been spent. She felt that Kriss Kingle had not forgotten her; for this year his gift was a home in her mother's heart!

THE MOTHER.

IN a deep valley, the Spirit of Death tarried for the night, for he was very tired; he had not known rest for many days; a pestilence had followed in his path, and the young and lovely mingled their dust with the aged, who had sighed for his coming. Some hundred leagues beyond, dwelt a poor widow, and her only child had lain sick for many days. She knew that Death was near, and she wrung her hands, praying to the great God to save her child—her only, her beautiful one. Let sickness rack her body, let her be scourged with poverty, sorrow, and persecution—any affliction—if only this bitter cup might pass from her lips, and her boy live.

As she prayed, an angel appeared unto her and said, "Death tarries hard by; go to him, perchance he may hearken unto your prayer."

Then she arose, kissed the brow of her child, and wrapping her mantle around her, set forth on her toilsome journey; for it was the depth of winter, and the ground was covered with snow. She heeded it not, although her footsteps were marked by her

blood; for the aching of her heart rendered her unconscious of the stones that cut her feet. After she had walked many hours, her limbs became faint and wearied; but her soul was strong, and she said, "I know I can yet reach the valley where Death is;" for the thought of her dying child gave her fresh strength. She pressed onward—when lo! a rapid river rolled before her! Dark and icy were its waves; there was no boat to bear her across; and she threw herself on the ground. Her heart was on fire, her breath came burningly forth—when lo! the river became dried up, and she walked across, and entered the deep valley where Death still slumbered.

As she looked on him, she was amazed, and said, "Surely, if this is Death, he will grant my prayer; cruelty cannot dwell in that seraphic form."

Then came again the thought of her child, and she sat down on a stone, and wept bitterly.

And the noise of her sobs and sighs awoke Death, who said unto her, "Woman, why weepest thou?"

She answered, "I am a mother, and thou art about to take from me my only hope in life; my own lovely boy. I have come to petition thee for his life. O spare his youth, for I do so love him!"

And Death said, "What wilt thou give me, if I leave him with thee a little while longer?"

She replied, "Yes; if it must be even so, only a

little while longer. Why, I will give all I possess on earth ; or my own life, if thou wilt."

But he said, "I cannot take thy life in exchange for his; wilt thou give me thy speech?"

And she said, "O yes; 'tis freely thine."

Then her tongue lay mute within her mouth ; but her eyes still besought him; for their beseeching glances spoke all the unutterable love of a mother's heart.

Then Death said, "Wilt thou give me now thy eyes?"

And she bowed her head, and the beautiful eyes, ere they closed, seemed again to cry, "Save! O save my child!"

And she was smitten with a sudden blindness ; but still the upturned, sightless face, the clasped hands raised so imploringly, were eloquent with love.

Then Death said unto her, "His life is spared ! Go thy way." And, in silence and darkness, she retraced her steps, till she came to the rapid river ; but now her heart was full of joy ; her spirit was so light that it buoyed her up above those icy waves ; she was wafted across as a feather, the hard frozen ground scarce feeling the impress of her feet till she came to her own door, and eagerly motioned for her child ; they brought him, and she stretched forth her hand towards him, wondering if he yet lived. He wel-

comed her not. Then they told her he had mended from the first hour of the morning ; his fever had gone ; but with it, also, the light from his mind, strength from his limbs ; that such was the nature of the pestilence, those who had been attacked with it, if they recovered health, became helpless idiots. Then the mother saw the sinfulness of her prayer. And her tongue again found utterance, and she cried, "Not my will, O Lord, but Thine be done !" That night, as she prayed beside her boy, a sudden light illumined the room. She arose, and Death stood by the bedside. His head was crowned with a halo of glory ! his face breathing tenderness and love ! "Woman, wilt thou now give me thy child ?" And she said, "I will give him into the hands of the Lord."

JACK FROST.

AN autumn eve; the air was biting cold; the stars twinkled brightly. The round moon lit the forest, so that you could see each blade of grass distinctly as though 'twere noonday. All nature seemed to sleep; when, hark! what noise was that, rushing, whistling, sobbing, sighing? It was the howling Northern blasts coming from their Siberian home. Astride the foremost, rode Jack Frost. A merry little elf he seemed; his eyes so wickedly bright: his face glowing like a lit coal; every hair on his head standing on end, emitting sparks, as if on each were seated a hundred fire-flies; a mantle of crimson cloth streamed on the wind. Now poised on one foot, he shouted in frantic glee, as he tossed his cap on high, "Ho! but this is a glorious time for me!" With a bound, he sprang on the nearest tree, and, shaking it rudely, the few remaining leaves the wind had left, tumbled, circling, to the ground. Then he espied a fine chestnut, some of whose luxuriant foliage still clung to its branches, reminding one of the Summer's departed beauty. Like a roguish boy, he

sprang aloft to its topmost branches, breathed on each leaf, till it curled and withered, as if scorched; he clapped his hands, as he merrily blew before him, in clouds, hither and yon, the brown ones so dry and crisp, and cracked the brittle twigs beneath his feet. He whistled, and a sprite, who rode one of the lower blasts, which came quite near the earth, answered, "What would ye?" "Give me," he cried, "my slippers of down. I remember a garden hard by; I was in it this morning, and, hid behind a bush, watched a fair girl as she tarried here and there, tying up the strong, hardy vines, and carefully covering the tender plants with straw. Ah! but I'll have fine sport; I'll deck myself with those beautiful flowers." Speedily the slippers were brought. How soft they were! and how they shone! now he could trip silently along, light as a bird! Quickly the garden was gained. Now he ran about, patting down this bed, leaving it frosted, as if with silver; dancing on that, crushing the tiny flowerets that had still survived the summer. Then he grasped in his burning fingers a proud dahlia; its crisp stem crackled, and the haughty flower bent its head. He peeped into a bird's nest, placed against a tree; but the birdlings had flown; they did not care to await his coming; they had gone to a warmer clime, to remain till spring should chase him back to his storm-bound home.

Close to the nest grew a rose—the last of the season. For a moment he ceased his antics, to inhale its delicious aroma. Faint and dying as it was, he had rarely met aught so sweet; for the flowers, if not already gone ere his arrival, died with fear as soon as they heard his frosty voice. He drew in his breath, as he bent over the rose; but she felt his presence, and, from very fear, curled up her velvet leaves, wilted, and died. Angered, he brushed her aside, and flew through a window incautiously left open; round and round he careered, to see what fun was there. In the farthest corner was a little crib; beneath its snow-white covering lay an infant boy, the darling of his mother's heart, and she a widow; his dimpled cheek reposed on his little hand, and a smile played round the beautiful lips, as they murmured in sleep, "Mother!" What wonder Jack Frost—heedless, merry elf, as he was—stayed, charmed for a while by the infant dreamer? Yet he had work to do; he must be gone; he pressed a kiss on those rosy lips, and blew a blast into the face of the careless nurse, who wakened to find the carnation on the cheeks of her young charge deepened into the tint of fever, while the throbbing pulse quivered under the influence of that fiery kiss. He passed from the chamber to the banks of a gentle streamlet, attracted by its rippling voice. A mist hung over its waters as he

stooped to see his shadow in its shining depths; the stream hushed its singing, stiffened, and was quiet. His presence had stilled its music! Then he took his way to the sleeping city; he looked down the broad streets, over which the moonbeams cast gaunt shadows from the tall houses on either side; his searching eye descried a pale, drooping form, crouched low on a door-step. Though the head was bowed to the knees, the attitude told a tale of destitution and despair! Again his step faltered. He sat down, passed his arm round the waist of the fainting girl, and gently placed her head on his breast. Its iciness allayed the aching of her brow; for the smile that rested round her mouth was sweet and trusting, as when, an innocent child, she had prayed at her mother's knee. His burning lips pressed the maiden's brow, then invested with the purity death confers: he laid the cold head on its colder pillow. Again he flew over fences and house-tops, at every step shaking the down from his feet, giving alike to the palace and the humble cottage a covering of white. He halted for a moment, to see a lover give his farewell kiss, beneath the midnight heavens, vowing eternal truth. As he drew forth a ring to place on the finger of the maiden, Jack gave it a whisk with his cap. Away it ran on the frozen ground. He caught it, and hung it round his neck,

that, when he came again that way, he might test the lover's vow. He retraced his gambols over meadows and field, leaving on all tokens of remembrance in fretted silver. Then, as the sun in a thousand brilliant tints irradiated the eastern sky, he sought the recesses of the wood to hide till the warmth of noon-day should be passed; and then, again, by the light of the twinkling stars and golden moon, start away on his frolics.

DEATH OF TIME.

"AND TIME SHALL BE NO MORE!"

A MAN stricken with age, with locks white as snow, lay on a couch; his bright but sunken eyes were gazing on the last flickering sparks of the smouldering fire; his limbs were shaking with cold; by his side lay a broken hour-glass; it had fallen from his palsied hands. Suddenly, there was a knocking at the door. In a faint voice, he bade them enter; and, tripping lightly to his side, came a laughing girl, clad in green. A tear trembled in her eye, as she looked on the careworn, aged man; with a gentle hand, she smoothed back the straggling hair from his temples, and bent to kiss his brow; it was icy cold!

"Why, how is this, old Time! thou shouldst be up and stirring; the sky is all ablaze with light; trumpets have been sounding; hear'st thou not? Strange forms are flitting through the air; crowned angels are seated on the clouds, which fly athwart the heavens as though they were winged; a star fell to the earth even as I entered; is it not wondrous,

these appearances! what mean they? I came for thy leave to go forth on my yearly mission—to clothe the fields in green, to waken the rivers and streams from their ice-bound sleep, to bid the violet and anemone peep from their snowy bed; for, lo! Winter is beside thee, to say farewell."

For, as she was speaking, another had entered the room—an old man, also, with features pinched with cold and want. A mantle of furs was wrapped round his gaunt form; shivering, he crouched by the fire, holding his bony fingers over the flame: he, too, seemed dismayed by the appearances abroad. As his young sister, Spring, ceased speaking, he turned towards Time, that he might hear his reply.

"My children, both of you, farewell! Your day is past; never more shall Winter send forth his howling blasts to desolate and destroy the fair face of nature, nipping the sweet bud of promise, and causing the heart of man to weep in bitterness; neither shall Spring, with her smiles, again clothe earth with beauty; her joy-giving life is ended! She can no more breathe her spirit of fragrance into the flower-cup, or paint its petals in brilliant hues. The rivers and streams by whose banks she strayed with light-some heart, teaching them to discourse sweet music, will never more awaken to her voice: my strength fails me. Shadows, thick and fast, come before mine

eyes; again I hear the great God calling this earth into being. Eden, in its primeval beauty, looms before my vision. Eve, in her transcendent loveliness, wanders forth with Adam, to list as 'the morning stars sing together, and the sons of God shout for joy.' I go forth with Noah, on that happy morn when the dove returned with the olive branch, and the faint sunbeams, struggling through the rosy clouds, announced that the waters of the deluge were spent. Now I hear the voice promising unto Abraham that through him all the nations of the earth should be blessed! I go forth with Isaac to meet his bride! I repose beside the pillow where Jacob slept, when he saw the ladder which reached unto Heaven. I stand with Moses beside the burning bush, as he listens, in awe-struck silence, to God's commands! I am with him as he leads the children of Israel from the proud court of Pharaoh! I journey with them through the wilderness, in the dark midnight, guided by the pillar of fire, unto the Red Sea! I hear the rushing east wind, as, at the voice of the man of God, the waters divide, and are piled up on either side like mighty walls! I am with Mary in Bethlehem, as the wise men from the east bow down before the young child! I stand on the walls of that Jerusalem which the Almighty-He wept over! I am by the Cross! and tremble, as memory recalls those dark-

ened hours when the vail of the temple was rent in twain, and the tombs gave up their dead! Once more I sit by the lowly sepulchre, and, looking within, see the angel sitting there, and witness the grief of Mary, as she looks in vain for the body of her Lord! Chasing each other through my brain, are the memories of the mighty nations whose rise and fall I have looked on! Babylon, Nineveh, Egypt, Rome, how have ye fallen! and now I, too, must fall. It is the coming of the Son of Man, whose heralding signs in the heavens have affrighted ye. He has said, the heavens shall depart as a scroll, the earth shall pass away, and 'Time shall be no more!' Lo! even now one waits without, who shall give rest to my weary soul."

They opened the door. Behold, there was waiting a Pale Horse; and on it sat Death! His face was stern and sad; his eyes were as a flame of fire; their terrible splendor was more potent, more piercing than his shaft. Then was heard a mighty voice from the throne of heaven, crying, "It is done!" The voice reached the drowsy ears of Time! A smile of joy for a moment brightened the wasted features. Then the weary eyes closed; the head sank heavily on its pillow; and the long-suffering spirit slept.

QUEEN KATHARINE PARR.

A LEAF FROM HER LIFE.

THE frosts of winter were disappearing before the genial influences of early spring. The Lady Katharine, once more a widow, though now wearing, beside the widow's hood, the sweeping sable pall which marked her as the relict of the departed Henry, was residing at Chelsea. It was a delightful morning, and her heart participated in Nature's Jubilate. She walked through the beautiful and extensive pleasure-grounds, and looked forth on the Thames—its rippled surface dotted with many boats, the evidences of active joyous life. She looked upwards to the broad expanse of ether, through which the sun's rays were streaming, gilding the noble trees, now covered with budding verdure; and her spirit rose in a song of thanksgiving on the wings of the up-soaring lark. It seemed to her as though the last toilsome years of her life were blotted from her memory. Again a merry child, crowned with wild flowers, she sported and sang with her only sister Anne, in the verdant

vale that bordered the Kent, in her childhood's home.

For the last six months of her wedded life, alternate fits of terror and agony had racked her soul. She well knew she was "but a poor pensioner on the bounties of an hour;" that the sword suspended over her head was upheld but by a single hair. It was not possible, therefore, she could feel much sorrow for the death of her sensual, tyrannical husband. No, her "bosom's lord sat lightly on its throne," inspiring her with a girlish vivacity, very unlike the meek, staid demeanor that had characterized her during her three trials as wife and step-dame. Sir Thomas Seymour, Lord Admiral of England, the only one who had ever possessed her affections, was again a claimant for her hand.

On this fair morning, she seemed to tread on roses; she had just received one of his passionate epistles, petitioning that the two years she had desired should intervene between their marriage should be changed to months. How could she resist his ardent pleadings? for years he had remained in single loneliness for her sake. Then came the memory of his disinterested affection; the many evidences of his constancy; and with them mingled recollections of her blighted youth, her dreary womanhood, with its days of bitter trial and temptations; and, woman-like, she yielded

to her heart's suggestions to see him, as he prayed her, that night.

As evening drew on, dark heavy clouds, scudding along the sky, seemed to betoken the approach of a storm. But the Lady Katharine gave no heed to storm nor darkness; she thought but of the moments that must elapse ere Seymour could arrive. On this night she had thrown aside her mourning, knowing how unsightly were the widow's weeds to him she waited for. She wore a dress of rich gold brocade; the bodice fitted tightly to her graceful, petit figure; the sleeves, open and flowing from the shoulders, were lined with crimson satin, beneath which hung rich falls of lace, veiling the beautifully rounded arm. Her head was covered with a round crimson velvet hood, edged with pearls, which well contrasted her brilliantly fair, blooming complexion; from her neck depended a ruby cross of great value. As the quarter-hour chimed from the old clock, she gathered her train across her arm; and, forgetful of dignity, or aught else but love, she sped down the grass-grown walk, through the meadow, loth that any one but herself should perform the office of portress for him. But the old gate, with its rusty hinges, withstood her utmost efforts to open; in vain she shook and pulled the lock, till, on a more vigorous thrust from the outside, the fastening gave way, and she, no longer

Katharine the Queen, but Katharine Parr the loved, the beautiful, is clasped to the breast of him she so dearly loved. It were vain to tell of the pleading words of him so well skilled in the spells that work on woman's heart. With his magnificent voice modulated to the softest, lowest tones of affection, he warmly urged her to become his wife, to reward his tried affection by bestowing on him that hand so long ago plighted him. Katharine's ears were so little used to love's importunities, her former marriages having been arranged solely by relatives, that she was little fitted to withstand Seymour's entreaties, more especially as her own inclinations echoed his every word.

Casting aside royal etiquette, she permitted Seymour again and again to press her beautiful lips, and place on her finger the ring of betrothal. She only felt that she was passionately beloved by the man of her heart; she cared not for the joyless bauble that sometime graced her brow, but thought only of the tenderly beloved one whose arm now encircled her. With fond caresses and promises soon to meet, the lovers parted. And now, each night saw Katharine standing beside the old gate, her hand clasped in Seymour's, as, with bowed head and tearful eyes, she listened to his fond pleadings. Yet Katharine well knew there were many reasons why their marriage

should be for a while deferred. First, the tenor of Henry the Eighth's will, regarding any issue she might have, either male or female, making them heir presumptive to the crown of England, would for a few months prevent the contemplated espousal. Somerset (and his Council, too) was wroth at the presumption, as they termed it, of the Lord Admiral, in aspiring to the hand of the Queen Dowager, and opposed it most strenuously. The Princesses Mary and Elizabeth would also condemn this unseemly haste. All this reasoning she laid before him; but Seymour would not brook delay; and Katharine had either to resign her lover or her scruples. So who can wonder that the lover's eloquence prevailed over punctilio!

The gay month of May, flinging its engarniture of beauty over leaf and bower and bud, was near its close. The beds of hyacinths perfumed the air with their odorous breath. The rich-hued blossoms of the clustering rose, peeping from their emerald coverings, told that Nature's gala month was nigh. Already the trailing vines had crept round and round the fluted marble pillars—the white buds looking, in the changeful silver light of the young moon, like rows of pearls. It was the Lady Katharine's bridal night. Arrayed in a pure white robe of richest lace, she seemed as radiant as that bright eve; her only ornament the starry wreath of jasmine flowers that bound

her brow—that brow, with its pencilled arch, pure as the mountain snows—the tracery of the blue-veined temples, so clear beneath the glossy bands of golden hair; the color on her cheek, like the faint blush of the moss rose-bud. As thus she stood within her lighted hall, waiting for Seymour, she ever and anon would raise her small white hand, as if to list for his well-known step. At length it greets her ear, and Seymour, with courtly grace and lofty bearing, knelt before her. Well he then appreciated the gift of that noble woman's hand, and many were his promises to secure her happiness. And who can tell of the feelings of Katharine on that happy eve, though three times already had she plighted her troth! yet, only now, for the first time, did her heart thrill with tenderness. For a moment her memory reverted to her last gorgeous bridal. She recalled the feeling of that terror-stricken hour, when, as the nuptial ring was placed upon her finger, her cheek blanched, her heart fainted; for the same ruthless hand that then clasped hers had signed the death-warrants of two as lovely, and once as passionately beloved queens, within the last seven years. But now she was girt round with pure and holy thoughts, like ministering angels. In place of the loud pealing of the organ, the low murmur of the mountain rill alone echoed her vows—for the dazzling lights, the trembling

light of the moon, now glancing on the flowers, now lost in the shade. Her only perfumes, those which the night-gale wafted round; her brightest jewel, now dearer far than ever England's crown—her husband's love; and, encircled by his arm, her fair head resting on his bosom, she at length gave utterance to the suppressed fondness, the tenderness of a lifetime.

PARADISE AND THE PERI.

"'Tis written in the Book of Fate,

The Peri yet may be forgiven

Who brings to this eternal gate

The gift that is most dear to Heaven !"

THE bright sunbeams were bidding good-night to earth ; tired and wearied of the long summer's day, they were to be at length released, to rest in those cool, brilliant valleys whose azure calm no mortal foot has trodden. How joyous they were, dancing and glistening ere they went in Cashmere's clear lake ; now darting upwards, like sparks of fire ; now resting on the crested wave, like regal gems ; anon plunging beneath, only to rise more resplendent, like youthful maids, from their delicious bath in the sparkling waters ; and now glancing upwards, the whole western heavens became crimsoned with their farewell blushes.

A Peri, listlessly reclining on the dewy bank, had watched the last faint, lingering sun's ray depart, and now could no longer resist the ardent longing that possessed her, to also enter those heavenly vales that

had once been her home. She thought of her long exile, her loneliness, her recreant race, and she remembered that Allah was a God of Mercy ; peradventure, by repentance she might gain entrance to those halls of the blest.

Very lovely she looked as she stood at the crystal gate. As the light from within its charmed portals streamed on her fair brow, her radiant eyes were dimmed with tears ; yet she could still see groves of towering palms, Eden's clear fountains, and close to their edge the blue tinted Campac blossoms, that grow nowhere but in Paradise. The moon, also, looking wondrously fair, crowned with a bright circlet, reposed in that dazzling light. Lowly she bowed her head, and tears stole down her cheeks, as the memories of her happy home added to her remorse.

The pitying angel, who stood within, seeing her disconsolate attitude, half opened the gate, so that the ambrosial air of heaven fanned her fevered cheek. He asked her, " why she wept ? " Then, in one long burst of eloquent sorrow, she told of her repentance, her hope of forgiveness, her desire to re-enter and dwell in Paradise. But the angel waved her off, yet gently, for his heart sympathized with her sad prayer to be forgiven. He told her there was a hope for her, a probation of which she might

avail herself; that it was written in the Book of Fate—

“The Peri yet may be forgiven
Who brings to this eternal gate
The gift that is most dear to heaven!”

For a moment she mused: what could she bring to those halls? what gift could compete with their glories? Rapidly, in mind, she scanned the wealth of earth; she knew the very spot beneath the ruins of Persepolis where the genii had hidden immense treasures of burning rubies, along with the jewelled cup of King Jamshid—each gem shining like the steps of Allah's throne. She knew where bubbled the stream whose waters contained the Elixir of Life; one drop of which would confer youth and immortality. She knew where to obtain rarest pearls worth a monarch's ransom. But what would they be as gifts to open to her longing soul those halls of which one moment spent in their holy happiness would outweigh all this unnumbered wealth. As she thus meditated, she cast her eyes downward on that sweet land, so bright and beautiful in the first smile of morning, its air breathing balm, its sparkling rivulets flowing through groves of spice, sandal-wood, cloves, and aloes, the sea of India stretched far in the distance. This seemed, indeed,

a Paradise; but man, the destroyer, had brought death within those spicy bowers; the rivers ran with human blood. Mahmood, in his fierce wrath and desire of conquest, had desolated that land of the sun; he had recklessly overthrown the shrines, and trodden their idols under foot. With ferocious cruelty he spared none, however beautiful and loved, that crossed his ruinous path; his bloodhounds tore the child from the grasp of its mother, the maiden from the sacred fane. Sorrowfully the Peri gazed on this scene of slaughter. Adown the war-field, she beheld a youthful warrior—the last of his race. The dead and the dying lay in heaps around; yet bold, undaunted, he gave his proud conqueror glance for glance, and, when asked to surrender, hurled his last remaining dart at the face of his ruthless foe. A zephyr changed its course—the tyrant lived. He only, the last and bravest, fell: his proud heart had broken—its pulse could never more thrill at the mention of glorious deeds. The Peri marked the spot where he lay, and quickly descending on a sun-beam, caught the last drop of life-blood from that heroic heart—the last drop that quivered ere the noble spirit fled; she encased it in pearl, to bear it upward, never doubting it would prove the welcome gift that would unbar for her the gates of light; for, though shed in unholy strife, she knew the heart

which had been its well-spring had freely given it in the sacred cause of liberty. That had purified, ennobled it, making it a pure offering for the heavenly gates. Again she winged her flight to that glowing portal. Alas! the crystal bar of Eden moved not.

The angel took the drop: and although a free welcome is ever accorded the brave, who thus die for their native land, he told her the boon that would gain her entrance must be far holier than that. Saddened, but not dispirited, she again descended to earth. This time, Egypt, with its ruined temples, its sepulchred kings and splendid palaces, was her resting-place. But the charm of those fair scenes had departed. The demon of the plague, on the hot wing of the deadly simoom, had passed over the land, destroying all its bloom and freshness—converting it into one vast pest-house. The dead lay unburied in the streets, making most foul the air; the very vultures sickened and turned from the disgusting prey.

The Peri, in sorrowing pity for the sights that had met her at every step, as she threaded the close, hot streets, passed into the clearer country, and espied close by a lake of clear, fresh water, a dying youth. The damps of death had already gathered on his brow; his lips were purpled with the dread disease, yet a happy smile rested on them; the terrors of

death could not rob him of the consoling consciousness that she he loved was safe—safe, in her father's princely mansion, from dread of contagion.

While he thus felicitated himself, a graceful, slender girl sprang to his side. By stealth, she had eluded the watchful care that guarded her, and imagining, with the heart's prescience, some evil to him she so dearly loved, had sought the bower close to the lake their love had hallowed, only to find her lover dying on its brink. Kneeling by his side, she raised the aching head, and pillowed the livid cheek upon her breast.

"And didst thou think thus to desert me? Was it kind? I, who would rather be thine in death than live to gain a throne! Nay, turn not from me that loved face! life or death with thee!"

And again, and again, she wildly, fondly pressed her rosy lips to his, drinking, in those soul-thrilling kisses, deep draughts of death.

"Nay, beloved, am I not thy own dear bride? Can I live without thee?"

"When the stem dies, the leaf that grew
Out of its heart must perish too!"

With a sigh, she fell on the already lifeless form of her lover, and expired, inhaling his last breath.

"Sleep, fair children," said the Peri, as she softly

stole that farewell sigh, warm bathed, as it was, in woman's purest love; "this surely, this pure, self-sacrificing sigh will gain me entrance to Eden."

Thus saying, she breathed on the dead, dispelling for a while the noxious vapors that had gathered round them—giving them so lovely a semblance that corruption feared to approach. Then, with the first gray tint of morn, as a suppliant, she again bowed before Eden's gate—in vain; it moved not; yet she could see the purified souls within striking their harps attuned to gladness. She inhaled the perfume of the incense clouds flung from golden censers by bright-winged seraphs. She heard the tinkling of the bells that hung on the trees close to Allah's throne, and her heart throbbed with pain. Should she never again enter there? was her search ever to prove vain? The angel had told her the maiden's story was written in characters of light within those halls; but holier far than even that sigh must be the gift that would remove the bar that closed the gates to her longing soul.

Again earth received her in Syria's garden of roses, where Nature wantoned through a wilderness of sweets; its cool fountains laved her burning brow. The many beauties spread around possessed no charms for her; carelessly she looked on the riches nature spread with so lavish a hand. The notes of

the nightingale came meltingly on the breeze, but she heard them not; unclouded skies, with not a floating shadow to dim their brightness, spread o'er-head, but she saw them not. She was weary and sad.

As her eyes roamed over the vale, a little child, in innocent play among the wild flowers, crushing in his eager hands the brilliant butterflies that fluttered amid the starry jasmine, attracted her attention. As, scarce heeding, she watched his sports, a man, soiled and travel-worn, dismounted from his tired, hot steed, that it might assuage its thirst from the spring that welled so deliciously cool near by. On the man's face was written the impress of the stormy life he had led; wild and furious passions, like lightning clouds, chased each other across his haggard brow; they told dark tales of the past. Suddenly, the vesper hymn, like sweetest music, rose on the calm evening air; the boy started from his play, and, kneeling on the fragrant sod, breathed his pure, child-like petition to the Eternal God. The wretched, careworn, sin-stained man looked on that cherub boy, and his past life rushed before him; his childhood's hour and mother's teachings; boyhood's days, so fair and blest, and the prayer he had been taught to lisp at that mother's knee, returned to his seared memory; then, as the sin-defiled lips uttered that

prayer of his sunny boyhood, tears of soul-felt repentance streamed from his eyes. And now he, too, kneels in humble prayer by that little child, while loud hymns and hallelujahs proclaim throughout the court of heaven the triumph of a soul forgiven.

All heaven and earth were still—a calm, holy silence; for around was diffused the living fragrance of that repentant sinner's acceptance; and now, as the last ray of crimson light faded on the clear air, a smile from the angel at Eden's Gate illumined the tear drop that still glistened on the sinner's cheek. The Peri, assured by that kindly smile, caught the drop, and on joyous wings sped upward, bearing the glorious gift that would, at length, unbar those crystal gates.

"Joy, joy forever! my task is done—
The gates are passed, and Heaven is won!"

A SCENE AT NIAGARA.

AT the close of the year 18—, a solitary traveller was seen slowly wending his steps towards the mysterious and magnificent cataract of Niagara Falls. He was a man apparently in the prime of life, of middle stature, of high, pale brow, and deep, melancholy eyes, that burned dark and gloomily, like sepulchral lights; his whole cast of countenance betokened the visionary. Of German birth and naturally melancholy temperament, he had spent his life in a vain search after ideal happiness: his wanderings had extended over nearly the whole of Europe, but in no place had he satisfied the vain cravings of his heart. In the palaces of princes, in the tent of the wild Arab of the desert, in the cell of the devotee, amid the loud warwhoop of the savage Indians, in the scenes of peace and strife, had he sought to realize the dreams that had haunted his youth; but disappointment met him at every step. With a spirit wearied and disgusted, he had bidden farewell to the shores of the Old World, hoping to find in the land of freedom the object of his long search. He had been

but a short time in Canada, and on this day, for the first time, looked on that immense body of water called Horseshoe Falls. The sun was gilding, with his departing rays, the tops of the tallest trees: the effect was inexpressibly grand. Surprised and delighted at this glorious evidence of God's greatness, he sunk on a low moss-covered stone, and gazed on the wild waste of waters dashing hither and yon like demons in play, dancing a thousand antics as they rushed headlong down the mighty depth below. He shuddered; some irresistible unknown power seemed impelling him to at once bury his discontent in those waters, now so dazzlingly white with sparkling foam, now dark as the hell of his own thoughts. He turned his eyes upward; the heavens were bright and clear, the fresh evening breeze fanned his burning temples and wrapt him for a time in forgetfulness of his wasted life. Gradually the din of the waters became hushed, and the rainbow-seeming vapor that had hung over them in the mild rays of the rising moon appeared like a column of silver; but whilst he looked the rays of light separated, heavenly music floated on the air, around and above him appeared forms of the most transcendent loveliness. The band circled him round, and from their midst stepped forth one so far beyond aught he had ever conceived, even in his wildest dreams of beauty and grace, that involuntarily he

knelt in adoration. Her golden hair was bound with a tiara of sparkling gems, robes of azure and gold floated in a wavy cloud around her, and, as her voice broke on the stillness of the air, Rupert Warheim thought he was already entering the regions of the blest, and the celestial voice of the shadowy being before him was his welcome to his everlasting home. Again he hears those tones, so sweetly musical, and now he can distinguish words.

"Rupert, I am the daughter of that beautiful star, now far away in the western sky; these maidens are my ever constant attendants. At your birth you were placed under my especial charge. I was to be the guide, the arbitress of your destiny. For long years I have watched, yet remained idle, curious to see how a child of humanity could live uncontrolled. Now am I satisfied; yet my heart throbs with pity; for the result of my inactivity has been to you years of unhappiness and misery. All mortals at their birth are placed under the tutelage of spirits, and, though in their folly they imagine they are free agents, there is ever a controlling hand stretched forth to guide aright, to shield from dangers incurred through a momentary withdrawal of that protecting arm. You have been left to your own guidance, therefore incapable of centering hopes and affections on earthly objects; your soul, though you knew it

not, unconsciously pined after the spirit-land. I, though seemingly careless of your destiny, love you better, ay, fonder than the bright abodes I am willing to abandon for your sake!"

"Bright vision, my longing aspirations, my wasted youth, confirm thy words; I love thee fondly as thou canst desire, my spirit's only bride; say, canst thou forsake thy native skies and dwell forever uncomplainingly on earth?"

"Rupert, I have chosen; yet list to the penalty I have incurred: to my home in yon beautiful star I may never more return; yet think not I have none other to shield my sheltered love in. Consent to be mine, mine only, and we will leave this world, where you have known only sorrow, and beneath these waters, so lately whirling round in frantic play, now sleeping calmly in the bright moonlight, we will seek another home, where the skies will smile as serenely as ever in your own loved land, and a king might envy the throne that shall there be yours; neither care nor sorrow shall assail you; a charmed life shall invest you with endless youth. Give your consent, and this night we will spread our nuptial couch far below Niagara's eternal thunder!"

Rupert had listened in silent amaze to her wondrous pleading: love already possessed his heart, so softening his rugged nature that he felt any spot,

however drear or desolate, would be paradise, if blest with her bright presence. "Lady," cried he, "do with me as thou wilt; I am thine forever!"

A beautiful smile passed over the lady's face as he spoke; then, desiring him to follow fearlessly, she plunged into the dark waters. Down, down they dived, deep and yet deeper into ocean's hollow, heedless of aught but that he fulfilled the decree of fate, his destiny in the form of the fair one urging him on. At length they reached ground: a more beautiful, fairy-like spot ne'er greeted mortal sight: palaces formed of the most brilliant crystals and costly gems, magnificent gardens filled with delicious fruits, rarest flowers exhaling sweet perfume, all combined to please the eye, entrance the senses. Rupert rapturously gazed on these submarine treasures—a paradise indeed.

"And here," said he, "I am to live through unnumbered ages?"

"Yes, till time shall be no more;" then gracefully waving her hand, pointed upwards through the waters raging above their heads, and bade him look towards the eastern sky, now kindling with the rosy beams of day. He cast his eyes in the direction indicated, then turned to his beautiful protectress. Alas! she had vanished; in her stead horrible forms compassed him round, varying their shapes each instant. A sea

of fire rolled at his feet, towards which they tried to drive him; shuddering he shrank from their clammy grasp, made but one step backwards, and fell into the burning abyss. Down he sank, gasping, striving to extricate himself from the excruciating torture he endured; one violent struggle, and, opening his eyes, found it broad day, the sun high in the heavens, the sky "deeply, darkly, beautifully blue," Niagara's broad waters roaring in his ears, the vapor hanging in cloud-like masses, as on the preceding day, and, despite his many cares, his weariness and sorrow, right glad he was to find himself still on terra firma; to know the bright tempter and the succeeding horrors were but the vagaries of the arch-fiend, Nightmare.

THE LOST PLEIAD.

"A Story from the stars, or rather one
Of starry fable from the olden time,
When young imagination was as fresh
As the fair world it peopled with itself."

MANY, many years ago, there dwelt in Persia a prince renowned for beauty of person and mind—his form of grace, perfect as Endymion; to see him was to love. During the long tedious days of that sultry clime, he was wont to recline in some flowery bower, where, untrammelled by cares of state, he would rear *chateaux en Espagne*, and his fancy, roaming far beyond cloud-land, revelled in regions where houries dwelt in moonlit halls; imagination often cheated him, as he thus mused, into the belief that he heard the harps and celestial voices of those dwellers in Paradise, and he longed to cast off mortality that he might be blessed with the possession of creatures so beautiful. When night closed over the scene, for a while dispelling his visions, a sail across the glasslike sea varied the monotony to which he was condemned. * * * *

The day had been unusually hot—not a zephyr stirred the white cinnamon blossoms—the hours dragged wearily on—Cyrus threw aside his book. He was too languid to read; his raven steed stood idle; but at length even the wearisome hours of that long, hot day came to a close, and “still evening, clad in her sober livery of gray,” spread refreshing dews on the parched flowers; the breath of twilight, redolent with perfume, came healingly to man and beast. The western sky was radiant with blushes; Cyrus seemed inspired with new life; all languor and inertness had fled; he sprang into his boat, and gaily spread wide the silken sail. One, to have seen that delicate ivory skiff, would have fancied it a sea-nymph’s cradle, so exceedingly beautiful was its form, and so rare its embellishments: ’twas carved in many a quaint device, like a wreathed shell, lined with cushions, the hue of the rose-bud; the sail was of purple silk, wrought with gold. The boat was wafted onward to where the crimson clouds had faded to a pale amber; the solitude, the soft breeze, and quiet sea well harmonized with the mood that had crept over the prince. How little now appeared to him all earth’s greatness compared with the illimitable starry firmament—man’s creations, with the mighty deep, unchanging in form and power, the same grandeur now as at creation’s dawn. As, one

by one, the bright stars arose from the silent waters, he wished for wings to visit them, to know why they were placed there; he thought they looked coldly on him in their gleaming beauty; then their immeasurable distance, and the futility of his desires, filled him with sadness. Oh! that he might meet with some fair spirit who could understand and sympathize with his imaginings—on whose affection he could ever rely—that he might press to his beating heart one whose soul thrilled but at his voice. True, as a monarch’s heir, he could command smiles and gay words—aye, and caresses—but these false endearments were not what he craved: the love he sought must be far nobler than any within the precincts of a court could give. Slowly the boat glided

“O’er the glad waters of the dark blue sea,”

and insensibly the motion lulled him to sleep; and, in that deep repose, one could more attentively observe the rare beauty of his countenance. There was but one defect which marred it—the straightly drawn under lip, which, even in sleep, betrayed, by its tremulous quivering, his inconstant nature. This fault alone obscured his otherwise dazzling qualities: brave to recklessness—gentle, yet daring withal, neither danger nor risk could deter from an object on which his fancy centred; but, once gained, too

often it was with wilful waywardness cast aside for some newer fantasy. * * * How long he had slept, he knew not; but, as he looked forth, nature seemed to have assumed a new guise; a spell enshrouded him, from before which the earthly mist shrank from his gaze, and to

“His charmed eyes were given
The spirits of the starry heaven.”

Far in the west appeared heaven's brightest constellation, the cross; high over his head the serpent waved his scales of gold; but lo! a pageant moving slowly towards the sea, “The Lyre of the Pleiades,” a lyre whose strings were of gold, borne aloft by seven fair sisters, who, as they bent over the instrument and struck the living chords, filled earth and heaven with sweet sounds. They were, indeed, radiantly lovely; each wore a coronet of gems clasped high upon the brow by a single star, which served as a fillet to bind the dark flowing tresses. One of that bright band, apparently the loveliest, cast a glance of love on Cyris; he could not be mistaken; she whose cheek wore the richest blush, whose eye seemed lustrous with unshed tears, cast on him a glance of intelligent, unmistakable love. Cyris prostrated heart and brow before the lovely one; nor withdrew his gaze till the lyre dipped beneath the

sea, and the clouds rolled up their fleecy skirts, while the melodious murmurs of the far-off fountains, the shrill matin song of the birds, all told him that morn was advancing, with rosy steps, to sow “the earth with orient pearls.” He returned home, joyous with excitement, to await another twilight. Wearily, hour after hour sped on, till darkness came again; then the purple sail was unfurled, and as a speck of foam, again the little boat danced on the waves, and again the vision appeared; slowly the seven fair sisters uprose on their glittering car, while their song-like music was borne on the breeze. Slowly, slowly, they rose, till, to his strained gaze, they seemed but as burning stars in the far heaven. He watched until the morning mists, gathering in the east, warned them to seek their ocean bower; but, ere they touched the wave, an electric glance was interchanged by the lovers. Night after night thus passed, their eyes alone discoursing love; and well they understood that silent, yet expressive language. At length came the moon, and, under her jealous sway, no star dare appear. Cyris looked, therefore, in vain for his starry lyre. In the mean while, the lovely Pleiad, consumed with passion, had sought her father's enchanted throne; and, with tears and entreaties, besought him to sanction her union with

a mortal. King Atlas in vain essayed to say nay to the caresses of this his youngest and most loved child. He foresaw danger and death in the desired espousal. Won by her prayers, he gave the kiss of assent, and her bridal with Cyris was resolved on.

In a bower of roses, close beside a fountain, whose spray fell like a shower of diamonds, haunting the air with sounds and sighs of melody, leant Prince Cyris; a couch of moss, strewn with blossoms and buds, breathing sweet perfume, was spread at his feet; but he pressed not its fragrant pillow. Suddenly he started, for across the mirror of the fountain a shadow passed; and by the clear, dark eye, the raven tresses, the star upon her forehead, the sparkling coronet, the silvery vest, and robes of azure, half veiling a form of perfect grace, the lovely Pleiad stood confessed. At length his vain aspirings had been gratified; the love he had craved was now his, in all its purity and truth. Was he happy? All day they reclined by the cool fountain, and, looking in each other's eyes, imaged paradise; nor did they separate till night called for her starry host. Then, as he had been wont in other days, Cyris went forth in his fairy skiff to watch his loved one till she again became a burning star; thoughts of blessedness came over his soul; he thought of her affec-

tion, loving-kindness, devotion, truth, and purity, and longed for the morning hour, that he might again clasp her in his arms, and repeat his protestations of love. Months passed thus, and then came change, like a dark cloud, to dim and soon shut out forever the light of happiness. With Cyris, old feelings began to assume their wonted ascendancy; soon indifference usurped the place of ardent love. The vows he had once spoken were like the cold moonbeams on the sea, changing and lost in every successive wave. To Cyris, inconstancy possessed a charm over which even his immortal bride had no power; to her, the change was frightful; to live, to die with him, had been her hope—to be a sharer of his earth-born lot she had abandoned her glorious sphere; and now, as a flower whose perfume had been inhaled till it had palled upon the senses, she was thrown aside, crushed, and forgotten! Oh the misery of that hour! the waking of the trusting eye, as the careless look and altered tone foreshadowed the future. She had so purely loved him, her woman's heart had made him half divine. She, so guileless and pure, to be consigned to such a fate! to have left her starry home with its happy unconsciousness, her fair sisters' affections, for woman's destiny on earth—sorrow and bitter tears!

"They parted as all lovers part—
 She with her wronged and breaking heart;
 But he rejoicing he is free."

Again Cyris appeared at court; again the young and fair welcomed his coming; once more he frittered time in idleness, or in pursuit of some vain chimera, which, with reckless daring, he strove to possess. But she—the loved, the lost—she had looked her last on his white plume; she had strained her ear to catch his last footfall; and when it no longer charmed her ear, despair, like a vulture, gnawed at her heart. The shadows of evening were gathering over the sky; the winds of night wailed a mournful response to her sad soul; she bowed her head upon her hands, and burning tears coursed down her pale cheeks. Hark! she hears the voices of her fair sisters: "Come, sister, come; thy place awaits thee." The lyre was rising from the bosom of the green wave, where it had rested amid pearl islands and gardens of coral. In vain they entreated; her place remained vacant; her chord unstrung; and when its music was hushed in the distance, she flung herself on the grass and wept. Ah! how light had once been her now sorrowing heart—

—"Till love's witchery came,
 Like the wind of the south o'er a summer lute blowing,
 And hushed all its music, and withered its frame."

She sought the fountain, and cast into its clear depths her starry crown; then, before its sparkles died in the waters, sprang to meet them! * * *

No mortal hand made her grave; none marked the spot; the waters alone sang her requiem; but near there grows a rose-tree, whose blossoms are unlike the summer growth of flowers; each rose is pale and drooping, as though its only dew was tears. Still, on that sky-lyre is there a vacant place; still, a chord mute; for, low and deep in the bosom of the clear fountain, rests the warm, trusting heart of the lovely Pleiad, who there sought to hide her terrible woe, when, too late, she learned that

"Love is of heavenly birth,
 But turns to death on touching earth."

THREE DAYS IN THE PALACE.

THE sun's farewell beams were crimsoning the western sky; fleecy purple clouds, piled mountain high, cast rays of golden light over leaf, and tree, and flower. Sadly musing, by an oriel window, sat a noble lady; her beautifully formed head, with its redundancy of golden curls, rested on the small, fair hand. Perchance, she but gazed on the varied prospect spread before her, noting, contemplatively, the effect of light and shade as evening deepened; and yet, ever and anon, she would shade her eyes from the gathering darkness, and look forth as one who watcheth; but naught answered the searching gaze; the giant trees, like the pillars of some vast temple, cold and immovable as they looked beneath the moon's rays, alone met her glance. The chill night air swept in gusts through the open casement; but still the lady lingered, seemingly loath to leave; yet, as she wrapped round her shivering form the ample drapery that veiled the window, impatiently she beat the soft cushions with her little foot; then, as if she could no longer restrain the chafing of the proud

spirit within, arose and hastily paced the room, the small curved lip became more haughtily bent, the pale features assumed a sterner cast. A step sounds in the corridor; a voice sweet as the prattlings of infancy to the mother's ear stirs the profoundest depths of her heart, and Seymour, the Adonis of the court, kneels before her. For a moment the blush of gratified pleasure mounted to her cheek; then, as if the baneful breath of the sirocco had blown over it, the crimson flush faded, and the pale stern lip, and haughty eye, asked of the delay; for, to her, moments, as they lagged on, seemed hours. The Lady Elizabeth had seen the blossoming of but fifteen summers. Ever a child of fairest promise, she early possessed the art of attracting the regard of others. There was a winning fascination in her manner, united with childlike simplicity and gentleness; yet, at times, there was an imperial flash of the eye that spoke of more than the pride of beauty; a look of command on the lofty forehead; and, in the haughty wave of the hand, the fierce spirit of the Tudors. The attentions and caresses of Seymour, seconded as they were by the unprincipled women by whom she was surrounded, wove a spell round her susceptible heart whose potent influence survived long after the scheming brain that had woven the mesh had mouldered to dust. Few young girls were ever in more

serious peril than the Lady Elizabeth at this period. Lonely and unprotected; deprived of the counsels of her only friend, Queen Katharine, by death; left solely to her own wild will; exposed to the audacious familiarities of a bold, bad man, who deemed her as the heiress of the crown—a fair stepping-stone to power; and, as such, scrupled at no means to attain his purposes. The difference in their ages (nearly twenty years) only invested the Admiral with a more manly grace. Then, besides, he was her first love—perhaps the only one she ever really loved; and what young heart doth not ponder over its first affection? and, in after years, recall the romance of feeling with which it was cherished—the longing to set at defiance all restraints, and to sacrifice, at the shrine of this first pure love, wealth, ambition, ay, and even sovereign power, were it proffered in exchange for that priceless gift—an honest, faithful heart? With a proud gesture, the lady repulsed the arm that would have embraced her, as she asked why the eagerness of love had already passed from his step.

“Nay, nay, sweet one, thou wrongest me. There is no need of haste where one knoweth himself beloved. Hark! even now the hour strikes which I appointed! Thou must not so easily take offence, sweet Bessy. Thou knowest I could not see a charm in other save

thee. Come, nestle within these arms; let the dove in thy eyes o’ermaster the eagle.”

The full heart found vent in a burst of weeping. In that fond hour all else was forgotten but love; royal estate, her brother’s displeasure, and the denunciations of the Council—all were powerless to crush the heavenly germ of happiness that sprung in her heart. She pressed her cheek to his manly breast; and, as he kissed the tears from her eyes, wished she were a lowly cottage maiden, and he the dear one who dwelt beneath the shadow of her roof.

* * * * *

The first of February dawned clear and cold; a crowd of gay nobles and gallant cavaliers thronged hall and court-yard; the sunny air rang with the noisy preparation of departure. Francis, Duke of Anjou, was that day to start for home, accompanied, part way, by the Queen and all her court. The Duke, long a suitor for the hand of the Queen, was at length convinced of the futility of waiting longer for her consent. He was completely wearied of the absurd thralldom in which she had so long held him. Year after year, he had striven to bring her to the desired point in vain; and, finally, had crossed the seas to try the effect of a personal appeal; but, finding she still trifled, he determined to remain no longer

the puppet of her wayward will, and announced the day of his departure.

Now Elizabeth, though loath to wed him, was equally unwilling to lose her lover. His presence seemed to have become necessary to her happiness. It seemed to have imbued her with the lost spirit of her youth, or she was charmed by the romantic gallantry that had induced him to cross the seas in disguise, to throw himself at her feet; but, whatever it was, certainly the Queen committed many tender follies for his sake; and, as though Oberon had anointed her eyes with the charmed juice, seemed to see in the ill-favored, misshapen form, the ugly nose, and marred complexion, but the appearance of a "most marvellous proper man." It must be remembered the Queen was now in her forty-ninth year; therefore, the marks of fondness she bestowed on Anjou seemed, to those who did not regard them as political coquetry, as the unequivocal tokens of doting tenderness. She really appeared, during the three months he remained in London, inspired with a most ardent affection, and, by every wile and endearment, tried to detain him. Numberless were the entertainments devised for his amusement; balls and masques, tragedies and comedies vied for his approval. However, all her enchantments were fruitless to retain him other than as her wedded lord. So, on

this bright, frosty morn, the journey was commenced, Elizabeth and all her court accompanying him (despite his wishes to the contrary) part way to the coast.

After a three-days' travel, they arrived at Canterbury. Each day the Queen had thought to say farewell, yet each day she found the word more sad, more painful to pronounce. The Prince now besought her to return, telling her, very cavalierly, she had better go home, he did not need her escort further, and he much feared, if she still persisted in accompanying him, that with her feasting, idle shows, and the delay consequent, the present favorable weather would pass away, and he should be obliged to remain her guest a while longer. As this was what Elizabeth desired, she renewed her loving professions, telling him, if he would only wait a while, she would be able to arrange all difficulties, and certainly marry him; but Anjou was no longer to be cajoled by this modern Circe. So, as the most effectual way of ridding himself of her importunities, he told her that, as the affairs of his own kingdom needed his attention, he must now return home; but that the following March would find him again a suppliant for her favor. Pale, bathed in tears, Elizabeth extended to him her hand, which he, kneeling, pressed to his lips. As he turned away, the Queen's countenance was convulsed with anguish, plainly showing the severe struggle in her heart be-

tween duty and passion. Henceforth she was her country's bride only; for this parting ended the last matrimonial negotiation in which Elizabeth ever engaged.

* * * * *

The gloom of midnight rested on the lowly cot and the stately palace. In an apartment, hung with rich tapestry, a wan lamp lighted the death-scene of England's Elizabeth. The dim firelight cast its long grotesque shadows over the ancient hearth of that regal chamber; the rare hangings and gilded carvings of the old oaken panels, lit by the flickering embers, seemed to the affrighted watchers forms of life. Three days ago, the court physician had announced that the mighty Queen was dying—yet still the sands of life ebbed. It had seemed impossible to that lion-hearted woman that death could lay his cold numbing hand on her heart, and, as she felt his approach nearer and yet nearer, she flung down her gauntlet—the mighty Queen defying him to the combat. As he grasped the bed, she sprang from its shelter, and most obstinately stood on her feet for fifteen hours, thinking thus to baffle the conqueror. But whether on the cushioned couch, or in the tented field beneath heaven's arch, he is ever near; and, when the appointed moment arrives, quietly stretches forth his hand to the quick soul, and straightway the sinews

shrink, the blood stagnates, the heart becomes still! So at length felt this mighty Queen, as she succumbed to his terrible power! All her greatness could not avail her to purchase one hour of life; neither could it quiet the soul's desperate frenzy!

Where now was her defiant courage, the dauntless energy to banish from her lonely, unsoothed pillow, the spectres of the past? One after the other came her murdered victims—from the rack, the gibbet, and the stake—whispering into her ear sentences fraught with doom! Norfolk, too, was there; and the once dearly-loved Essex. She, too, who had sought the stranger's holy right—hospitality and protection—Mary of Scotland, her unhappy cousin.

Slowly the dark hours wore on, bearing the Queen to eternity! As midnight chimed from the clock of the tower, her once strong spirit became paralyzed, and sunk into a lethargic slumber, from which she never roused! None knew the moment when the restless spirit passed from its earthly tabernacle. The sonorous bell tolled three ere it was discovered that the Queen had ceased to breathe! Death had entered the palace!

THE WIND OF THE WINTER NIGHT.

A RUSHING of mighty wings, and lo! came the blasts of the North, roaring, howling, buffeting, in wild glee. Their frozen chains were rent, and from the icebound seas and bleak wilds of Siberia they rushed madly forth. As they drove before them the black storm-clouds and drifting snow, they halted to spend their fury on a lovely vine-clad land, seemingly embowered in groves of the most delicious fruits and fragrant fields, high with budding grain, whilst here and there between were miniature lakes, whose crystal-like waters lay calm, unruffled as the sleep of infancy. So, we may imagine, lovely and happy was the home of our first parents, before the advent of sin defaced and scattered its beauties. Here all things betokened love, peace, and plenty; to the prodigality of nature, man had added his handicraft; stately palaces, rich with architectural glories, reared their marble fronts to the fury of the tempest; but scarce had it sounded its challenge, in those rushing winds, ere it was subdued; furious and wrathful as they looked, they slowly fell earthward,

first rustling over the wheat-ears, then, lower still, sighing, they swept the tall grass, as from a temple near stepped forth the genius of the place, and thus he spoke:—

“Spirits of the North, in vain ye strive to disturb the harmony of our lovely homes. Here, under the new *régime*, since man has become convinced that by association alone his terrestrial destiny can be accomplished as God originally designed it should be, all is happiness and content; every evil—vices, crimes, diseases, sorrows of every nature—is forever excluded from our charmed circle. And by the purest simplicity, by the greatest economy of means, by distributive justice, has this great transformation of society been effected. Now we live as one people, with the most perfect agreement, proportioning our labor to the wants and inclination of all, thereby not only conforming to the laws of nature, but our own pure organization, which also enables us, as you see, to subdue the wintry winds, to become absolute masters of the surface of our earth; for in our advanced knowledge of meteorological facts, and the enlarged sphere of our labors, we have so cunningly cultivated the products of mother earth, that by the vegetable growth alone we are enabled skilfully to correct the disturbed electrical equilibrium, and thereby arrest the winter's storm, the summer's hurricane; and by

this potent charm we drive you back to the North. Yet, ere you depart, say what are the signs of the times? what have ye seen on your onward course?"

A dark, scowling form, in obedience to the request, raised his storm-crowned head, and thus replied:—

"Of the times I know naught. To thy power I yield, and thy wise intelligence must draw the inference from the relation we will give. The Northern Lights, in their crimson glory, shot athwart the sky, dimming with their lurid light even the brightness of the Polar Star, as our chains were removed, and the mandate, 'Get ye forth,' was issued; and from the toppling icebergs we sang a requiem over a gallant band, as, statue-like, they stood on their noble ship, gazing with horror on that waveless sea which held them spellbound on that dread deck to die. We listened to the last cry of their fierce despair; then onward, through those desolate climes where the earth is scarce ever green, where, in mist, and snow, and biting cold, which hugs them in an iron embrace, dwell those unhappy exiles whose destiny is to labor in those icy climes till the throb of the beating pulse shall become faint and numb as the frozen streams around their wretched huts. All things were dead around; clouds and darkness rested on the desolate moor; not a moving thing was to be seen; all nature slumbered. The intense cold of that region had con-

finied all within doors but one, one wretched, care-worn man, who, with bowed head, and clasped hands, looked forth on nature's desolation; he thought of his happy home, of his glad childhood; then how love had cast a golden shadow over his manhood, and his treasured bride, and his loved little ones. O God, and was such grief real! Should he not awaken from this cruel dream, in his happy home, and clasp the wife within his arms, and feel the tender kisses of his darlings on his cheeks, and hear their pleading tones? Alas! alas! this living horror was real, was true; in this darkened land, beneath this ungenial sky, far from all he loved, from every human sympathy, he must wait the summons to eternity. As I saw the frozen tear resting on his hollow cheek, I felt that death alone could release the pale slave; so, in pity, I breathed on his heart and froze its currents; when night fell, the sleet formed him a shroud; and, as we sang over him a dirge, we knew he was at rest. Then away to the cloud-capped hills of eternal snow, dusky and huge, the eye wearied in gazing on their heights; but, in the vale below, lovely with waving trees and fair flocks, was a lonely cottage; through the latticed casement we saw an aged mountaineer, who, with his little family, was partaking of the evening meal. With a wild shout we rushed through the mountain gorges, leaping from crag to crag, startling

the bold eagle from his eyrie, and casting headlong, down, down, into yawning depths, a chamois hunter, who had sought refuge from the sudden storm beneath those icy rocks; as we mocked with echoes his bitter cry for wife and home, we started an avalanche, tumbling, tearing, with deafening crash; uprooting trees, in its headlong course, it fell in the vale below, and the lonely cot was buried in the ruins as in some mighty sepulchre; then

“Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among,
Leaps the live thunder!”

As the storm increased, and the rain poured in torrents, up the mountain side, toiling wearily upwards, came a gentle girl. Her sweet face was pale as her Alpine snows; and, as the big tears gushed over it, we marvelled what brought one so young and lovely to those giddy heights, where only the wing of the vulture or the sure-footed chamois might find a footing. Yet all unconsciously she wandered on, unheeding the yawning precipices, the beating rain, or the forked lightning; her heart seemed turned to stone; and as one who, searching for immortality, knows no fear, so she, groping in the dark, passed the spectre Death again and again among those gloomy solitudes. With the unerring prescience of affection,

she found him she sought for. There lay the brave hunter, with the mountain stream for his bed, the brown rock for his pillow. There was none other near to watch over his slumbers but her. She wrapt round him her own mantle, and laying her fair cheek on his mute heart, like a wearied child sunk to rest. We heard, in the distance, the cry of the wolf and the vulture; but she was so fair, so like the sweet flowers which bloom by the clear lake-side, that, though our mission is sorrow and destruction, we would fain preserve her in her purity. We spread over the lover and his bride a snow-white covering, and left them in darkness and loneliness. Then we passed over a battle-field, where lay the still unburied dead; and I bore on my wing the wailings of the widow, the desolate lamentations of the orphan, to that city where, a few hours before, resounded the cry of Liberty and Freedom, to show those boasters how hollow, how false had been their promises. The voice of human sorrow, as the heart-strings shivered, were alone heard for the tones of the trumpet and the inspiring cry of victory. The shell and the ball had defaced the proud walls of many a stately mansion, and, in their ruins, they seemed bound afresh to the tyranny of years.”

And the genius answered: “Thus it is ever. War and antagonism but break hearts and fill graves.

Not till the entire association of the human race can man be free; then only will slavery, in all its odious forms, vanish from the earth; then society, freed from its conventional shackles, shall rise superior to the puerile fancies of the day; then only will nation strive with nation in love and confidence—a war of science and of the fine arts; and the command given at Creation's dawn, 'increase and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it,' shall be fulfilled."

LOVE AND MINERVA.

Night's gems were sparkling in the sky.

"The young Moon, like a Roman mother,
Among her living jewels beamed,"

and stooped to dip her silver bow into the fair fountain, by whose side, on a couch of moss and fragrant leaves, reclined in pensive mood the blue-eyed Queen of Wisdom. The severe dignity of her high pale brow was softened by the influences of the hour; the radiant eyes, like twin stars, beamed with so pure, so chaste a light, that Love, as he crept from beneath a myrtle hedge, where he had been sleeping, forgot, in gazing at her exquisite loveliness, that it was the stern Pallas whose smiles had captivated him. But, he said to himself, "lovely woman never yet refused me her favor; I'll e'en try my luck;" so, very carelessly he threw himself at her feet, and, as he gazed into her lustrous eyes, in rapturous terms commended her fine shape, her hair, her sparkling glances, her rosy lips. The nymph, more pleased by the flattery than she cared to show, blushed, smiled, puckered up her lips, and tried to look more charm-

ing. Then Love praised her voice, and said, how delicious it would be to lie forever in that cool shade, listening to its dulcet tones; and if he but dared clasp her waist, the bliss of the moment would render him constant ever. The goddess sighed, for joy is ever akin to sorrow. She thought of her reputation; but love's fond whispers were sounding in her ear, his shaft piercing her heart. Her wondrous wisdom had taught her no counter-spell against his power; she looked into the clear fountain, whose shining depths reflected, as in a mirror, her blushing charms, then—for

“Woman at heart is woman still”—

sunk into Love's clasping embrace, and hid her blushes on his breast; while from the shade of every tree sprung forth a nymph, some alarmed, some amazed; others struggling with mirth thus to see Wisdom resting in the arms of Love.

THE ANGEL AND THE SPIRIT OF DEATH.

THE shadows of night were gathering over the earth; the moon, as yet a crescent, cast but a faint light; by its glimmer, one could scarcely fail to perceive—indistinctly, though, 'tis true—two figures which seemed to lean against the old Elm, in Catesby Park; the old tree still glowing with verdure, redolent with perfume, albeit a century's storms had howled around its head. One of those forms was an Angel—one of those bright creations who kneel in adoration before the great White Throne, yet, by the inscrutable will of God, unaware of the sufferings to which the sons of humanity are doomed in this probationary state of existence; the other was the Spirit of Death; thus they discoursed. First, the Angel spoke, and his voice stole through the hushed evening air like the strains of some old eastern melody: “I have travelled far and wide, over this beautiful world, in the glorious morning, when the sun first peeped from his rosy curtained clouds, gilding everything on which he shone with joy, sowing the grass with

pearls, and inspiring the lark with new songs. O how lovely all nature seemed! And I saw a young lover. He was in his early youth. In the fervor of first love, he knelt beside the maiden of his choice. Their hopes were glowing and bright, as the traditional flower which grows wherever the shadow of the rainbow falls. Her cheek vied with the rose; her lips fragrant as the breath of morning. I witnessed their bridal, as the stars danced up the purple sky; and the tenderness and devotion of a long life will be a foretaste of that heaven which shall succeed. I then passed through a city; its riches and splendor could not be surpassed; all spoke of happiness and prosperity. I entered, with a group of maidens, a festal hall, where the sunny smile and radiant eye made sweet music. I halted where there was a mighty gathering of the nation; where the red banner of victory floated triumphantly to the sound of the trumpet and the spirit-stirring drum. It was a gallant sight to see those young brave hearts rejoicing in their country's freedom. I could not refrain my voice, as their shout unanimously rent the sky—'Liberty or Death!' Again I paused, in the dim twilight, to listen to the music which appeared, to my rapt senses, strains from Paradise; it was the Convent vesper hymn! How peacefully calm! it breathed the very essence of holiness and content!

In sooth, this earth is a very lovely place. Do not, I entreat, pass over her face! stay thy dark wing! let not the happiness God himself has created prove by thy presence so evanescent!" Then the Spirit of Death raised his hand, and by so doing cast from before the eyes of the Angel the filmy veil which, when a mere passer over the earth, had obscured his vision, so that he only saw the outward show of mortality, and bade him go forth and look into the secrets of nature, and, when another moon had waned, to meet him there, and say if he should stay his shaft. * * * Again the moon shone fair upon the old Elm, but the form of the Angel was bowed as if with grief; his face was sad, and most reluctantly he replied to the inquiries of the Spirit of Death: "Yes, I have been on the mountain-tops, and in the lovely valleys. Alas! alas! that happiness should be but outward seeming—gayety but the mask assumed to conceal the breaking heart! The shout of victory, so quickly followed by the anguished cry of pain, the wail of the widow, the orphan's tear! The gay bridegroom had already mingled in the world's tumult; deserted the home of his young affections and gentle thoughts; carelessly he spoke of his love as a dream of fairy-land romance; the freshness of youth had forever departed from his heart; ambition had usurped its place; he was changed, indeed; yet

he sought to believe the change was in others rather than himself. And his bride! how sad her looks! how pale her cheeks! her brow thoughtful with care; her lip had forgotten to smile; sorrow's stamp was on her heart, sealing within it the gushing tenderness of early years; the charmed words of love could never again loosen the spell; her affections had become their own grave! I saw the sweet rose which bloomed in the early morn—'twas hanging lifeless on its stem, frozen by the cold northern blast. Again I looked on the city, whose prosperity and riches seemed inexhaustible; an armed legion had swept through its pleasant valleys, and levelled its proud towers in the dust. The cry of battle met my ear, even on the plain where so recently the hymn of the vestal band ascended unto God. Then—but for a moment—I was charmed by a minstrel's voice; but I scanned his heart; there was sorrow and wasting care within it; hope had lured him with giddy, empty promises of fame; and the checked frown and hidden sigh strove to be unseen, unheard. He deemed it sufficient, if the world knew not the misery to which he had sold himself. Sad, sad lesson for the heart to learn! And the gay, the young—they are ever striving after the unattainable, or playing with straws—trampling on the few flowers which bloom on their path—only at length rendered conscious by the

thorns which pierce their feet! And even the bright sunshine is chased away by the rolling thunder and the driving rain.

“Alas! 'tis all but outward show—
The sunshine of yon green earth below.”

Spirit of Death! your flight over the earth is indeed a mission of mercy. The wretched and way-worn pray for thy coming. Stay not thy shaft, for it speeds the weary spirit home.

JEPHTHA'S DAUGHTER.

“Since our country, our God, O my sire!
Demand that thy daughter expire!
Since thy triumph was bought by thy vow,
Strike the bosom that's bared for thee now!”

COLD and pale broke the gray light of morning over horseman and foot, their helmets and breast-plates gleaming with gold; the crimson banners, inscribed with many a sacred device, flaunting in the misty air—the glistening spears and dancing plumes stretching dusk and shapeless in the distance far beyond the eye's reach.

'Twas the vast army of the Israelites, led by their chosen captain, the mighty Jephtha, as he thus stood a little aside, supporting his only child, his beloved Miriam. Not a sound of revelry or shouting laughter was heard along the ranks, so deeply they respected the sorrow of that fair girl. Yes, she was fair as the white jasmine; as she half leant on her father's breast, one could not but mark her stately grace as she bowed her gem-encircled brow; the troubled flashing of her brilliant eye, the tremulous lip, the sigh vainly

checked, all spoke the heart's agony at this first separation from him who had been father, mother, friend. * * * And Jephtha led the army of Israel, and, as he journeyed, he raised his voice in prayer, that God would be with them in the coming fray—that He would bring him back a conqueror; and then he cried: “Whatsoever thing shall first meet me on my return, that thing shall be the Lord's, and I will offer it as a burnt-offering.” Now Jephtha had left with Miriam, to solace the days of absence, one to whom she had been betrothed, on whom she had bestowed the first love of her young heart, and, with him for companion, she wandered out, night after night, at the soft hour when the setting sun closes his portals, shutting out the magic of daylight, giving instead hues which shadow forth the glory of heaven, to watch for the promised messenger to tell of Jephtha's return. How bright in ethereal beauty appeared those hours, as, hand clasped in hand, in silence, they sauntered on, gazing into each other's eyes for answers to questions their hearts had framed, forgetting in their strong sympathy the words had been unuttered by their lips! Then, looking upwards to the crowds of stars—some so shadowy pale, others radiant with golden light—blessed God for creating this beautiful world. At length came one who told of Jephtha's return; he was even then at hand.

Miriam called together her maidens, saying, "Array thyself in purple, that we may go welcome my father." Then, carrying branches of the citron, the palm, and the myrtle, scattering flowers in the path, dancing to the sound of the timbrels, they went forth to meet him. Soon they heard the trumpet's tone; then the clash of the cymbals; then rose, in the distance, the banner of Jephtha, whose majestic form appeared riding at the head of the victorious army. With a light step, and a glance bright with happiness, Miriam sprang towards him. No welcoming word, no kindly kiss greeted her. He turned from her with a deadly sickness; for he bethought him of his rash vow, as he beheld at his feet his darling child, whom he had thus devoted to destruction. "My father, you weep! why is this? Alas! that tears should fall, when all are blest by your return; and now you rend your clothes! Speak, that I may share your grief."

"My daughter, my heart is very sad. I have vowed unto the Lord what, I fear, has been most rash. Listen, my child," and he told her of his vow.

With a convulsive start, she sprang aside from his encircling arm, while the life-blood rushed in crimson torrents to cheek and brow; then, receding, left them deathlike in pallor. Her lips became white and cold, and, with outstretched arm, as though to ward off

some shape of horror, with rigid form, suppressed breath, and eyes straining and staring as though every nerve was stretched to its utmost tension, she presented a ghastly aspect of despair. In that moment she had bidden adieu to life, to hope, to happiness forever. The pangs of death were in that moment's utter agony. In all the wide world, there was not even one straw at which her drowning soul could catch to save her from the terrible fate which menaced. She cast her eyes upward. The sun was shining brightly; the very weeds beneath her feet were redolent with his bright beams; the breeze swept through the myrtles, leaving echoes of sweet words spoken beneath their shade. All was fair; all nature full of grace. She alone was desolate; on her soul rested the shadow which made all earth seem shrouded in gloom. Slowly the tears gathered in the strained eyes; the mouth lost its rigidity; the hand relaxed, and fell to her side; the struggle was over. She had been so strictly taught the duty of obedience, that to rebel from that stern vow never once occurred to her. She met her father's anxious eyes with a faint smile, as she replied: "Do with me as thou wilt; give me but a little while to cast aside this keen bitterness at the thought of death and the tomb. I will retire to solitude, there to prepare for the hour in which I shall go hence." Trembling and

pale, she drew her veil over her face, and, supported by her maidens, she passed from before them on to a mountain cave that, in happier days, had been a favorite resort. There she thought she could best prepare her soul for God; and she prayed Him to give her strength to endure; to look calmly on the dusky form of death; to think, without horror, of the separation of soul and body—the great mystery of eternity.

* * * Miriam sojourned in the mountains nigh unto two months. One night, with mind o'erworn with grief and watching, she had, in utter forgetfulness of time and place (in her great despair), flung herself on the ground, hiding her face in the tall rank grass, when she was startled by a footstep near. She raised her eyes, so beautiful in their tearful brilliancy, and met the sorrowing gaze of her betrothed.

“My Miriam! and is it thus we meet? I come to bear thee hence. Nay, raise not thy hand so imploringly to stay my speech. Is not our God with us? Has He not said, ‘Thou shalt not kill’? What right has Jephtha thus to dispose of thee? Even now a fleet steed waits at the entrance to the grove, to bear us, far beyond these mountains, to a home so beautiful and bright an angel might dwell there. Secluded from aught of evil, my arm shall be thy protection, my bosom thy shelter. Nay, I will not

leave thee. I cannot endure this life-long misery; long years without thee—never to see thee—never to hear thy sweet voice pronounce my name—never more to feel the loving clasp of thy hand! Have I no power

‘To snatch the loveliest of earth’s daughters from
A doom my soul sickens at?’”

“Cease, cease; you rive my heart. Thou knowest how dearly thou art loved; thou movest me to bitter sorrow, although thou canst not make me falter in my duty. Seek not to change my purpose; rather strengthen my failing courage by thy fortitude. Nay, clasp me not; ’tis in vain. I cannot consent.”

One desperate prayer to Heaven for aid, one wild caress—and she was gone. * * *

The hour had arrived; ’twas a sultry summer’s day; the sun looked dimly through the dark purple clouds, as if he mourned the mistaken enthusiasm that had assembled that great multitude. Slowly approached Miriam; her face colorless as the mountain snow; her raven hair, freed from clasp or band, fell to her feet; her white robe hung loosely round her lovely form; its purity and simplicity well accorded with her angelic beauty.

A deep silence reigned around as Jephtha met her. He was much changed; his sunken eyes and haggard face bespoke the agony of his mind; for, though he

conceived he had no right to retract from the performance of his vow, his very soul trembled as the angel of death shook his wing over that dear head.

"O, my daughter! my daughter! gladly would I die for thee; gladly give my life for thine, if so my vow could be fulfilled."

Slowly the words came from the pale, half-closed lips.

"Farewell, my father! I have bidden adieu to all I held dear. It matters little, a few years longer—a pang more or less. Prepare the pile!"

She seemed stunned; more like one who had ceased to feel than the yet living, breathing, and unhappy girl. With a heart bursting with agony, Jephtha led her on—on to where the pile of sweetly-scented wood reared its dark shadow, like a bird of prey swooping to seize a dove. With an unfaltering step she ascended; and as Jephtha applied the burning torch, a cry from ten thousand voices rent the heavens, while the clouds, with giant blackness, poured forth their torrents, that they might sweep away the relics of so foul a sacrifice. Down, down poured the furious rain; as though the vials of wrath were again opened over the devoted earth, and the howling wind scattered the funeral brands; but Death had risen over the pile, and the pure spirit of Miriam was nestling within her mother's bosom in paradise.

THE CONVICT.

NOVEMBER was near its close; all day long the leaden-hued clouds had been driving across the sky, weeping torrents of rain; the wind howled and moaned like a weird thing through the tall masts of the old ship; the black, angry-looking waves dashed over the deck, drenching with their cold spray the wretched crowd that there huddled together, straining their eyes to catch a last view of the white cliffs of Albion, fast disappearing in the distance. There were amongst that band gray-haired men, on whose brows time had set his impress, yet they were scoffingly defiant in sin; others looked sorrowfully towards their once happy homes, and the big tears rolled down their furrowed cheeks, for they thought of the dear ones lost to them forever. Men, too, were there, mere boys in years, yet old in crime, who smiled as they gazed; to them, sin-dyed, exile from home, fatherland, presented but little of sorrow; gold, the only guerdon they prized, could be gained in any land by craft and daring. It was a convict ship, with its freight of human souls, journeying to

that far land to which the* outraged laws of their country had condemned them.

Crouching close to the vessel's side, far as possible from contact with those rough, rude men, was a female, a child in years, although her slender form had attained the perfection of womanly grace. The tiny hands were clasped so tightly that each blue vein swelled out as though it would burst beneath the pressure of the iron chain that bound them. The upraised, pale, suffering face, so rigid with woe, seemed as if one pang more would transform it, like Niobe's, to stone; but the large black eyes, so full of passion, of power, with their strange, wild look, almost burned the white cheek o'er which they flashed. What could that child have done to incur the felon's lot? to be thus sent far from friends and home, to sorrow and misery, none near to soothe the bitter agony, to bathe the fevered brow, to see the flush of youth fade from her cheek, or shed a tear over her grave? Weeks sped, bearing the convicts, through storm and sunshine, to their new homes. The men, some of them, were even more reckless with jibe and jeer than when they started; even those few who had wept on leaving home had become merry, beguiling the toilsome hours with anticipations of the future—how they would build a new home in the wild, by some pleasant murmuring

brook, where the birds of spring should come to them, bearing messages of love from the absent; thus cheered, they would commence life anew. Only she, that fair child, bowed down with shame, remembered the past; yet she neither wept nor prayed; she shrank from all companionship; her eye was ever bent on the ground, or watching the far-off billows that were bearing her from all she held dear. Day by day she withered; the blight on her young heart was eating away her life.

One day she called me to her, and in a sweet, low voice, thanked me for the little kindnesses it had been in my power to bestow; then besought me, when I returned to my home, to visit her ~~old~~ father. "Take," said she, "this curl, my only remembrance; give it to him; he will cherish it for my sake; and tell him"—here her voice faltered—"my prayer, my dying prayer, was for him."

Need I say I promised all she desired, and then tried somewhat to cheer, to console her; but in vain. Alas! poor mourner! for her there was no future.

Next morn, as I ascended to the deck for my usual stroll, I observed a coffin lying there—a white pine coffin, merely a few boards nailed together; and they inclosed that once perfect form; that strangely fair face was shrouded forever. Pitying men* raised the coffin, prayers were read, a momentary pause, a

plunge, causing the very heart to sicken, and the convict had found a grave beneath the surge of the wild sea.

Some years later, on returning to England, I inquired the history of that fair girl. A few words told her life. She was the daughter of an opulent farmer, who had centred all his pride, his worldly hopes in her, his only child. Possessing ample means, she was sent to a neighboring academy, where she acquired an intellectual culture that totally unfitted her for the sphere in life in which she was destined to move. Thus, completely isolated from all companions of her own age, her rare beauty and many accomplishments united with circumstances to effect her ruin.

A stranger visited her forest home—one of rank far above her own, beautiful as Antinous, skilled in all arts to win a female heart. Why linger over a tale the same in all ages? Love's commencement is ever a fairy fancy, a glittering network of costly gems; but its ending is despair and death. So Alice found it; she saw the eyes whose light she worshipped grow cold; she heard the voice, so loved, grow strange, and utter bitter, taunting words in reply to fond entreaties, or, worse still, mockingly laugh at her pleadings. He had striven to infuse into her soul the scepticism and dark sinful thoughts that

formed his nature; failing this, he left her. Forsaken, yet fond, day after day she watched for his return, arraying herself in the dresses he was wont to admire, twining amid her curls the freshest flowers, thus wearing the semblance of hope and joy, while despair crushed her heart. It was long before she could believe that he whom she had so loved could thus wrong, betray her; but a season came when stern realities forced themselves upon her, dispelling forevermore all day-dreams, and thrusting her into the battle-ground of life. She was about to become a mother; yet the holy name of wife she dared not claim. Who can tell of the terrible awakening? The darkness of the grave gathered round, as she thought of the finger of scorn that would soon point to her disgrace. The river's side was near; anguish and terror had driven the light of reason from her mind; and there, beneath a cloudless sky, in summer's festal month, she had, with a burst of weeping, placed her basket-cradled babe in the silver tide. The water-flags stayed its course, though not its death; it was taken from the winding river, and the mother's doom was sealed.

Strange reasoning! the plea of insanity was deemed sufficient cause to change the death-penalty to exile. Better far the cold sod resting on that loving heart than severance of all earth's ties. Her crime

was known to all; her deep woe, the more than mortal agony, were known but to herself and God, and He is ever merciful. That young heart, with all its weight of sin and penitence, now rests beneath the wave; the gale sings over it an eternal dirge; while he, the wronger, the betrayer, lives amongst England's noble ones, courted and honored. Who can read the ways of the Most High?

LOVE AND HOPE.

A GIRL stood on the pebbly beach, and looked on the summer sea; its blue waves, dotted with foam, played round her feet. As she gazed on that other sky, with its golden and purple clouds, reflected in ocean's waters, fanciful imaginings wove round her their charmed spell. Suddenly, a youth clad in seraphic beauty stood beside her; eyes brilliant as the evening star pierced her soul; his lip was like the scarlet tinted rose; snowy wings, trembling in the evening breeze, casting off sparkling jets of light, hung by his side; his voice was sweet as Israfel's. "Maiden, from my home on Olympus, I saw thy rare purity of face and form; youth has thrown round thee his evergreen; even now thine eyes, beautiful as the wild Merlin's, answer my every glance; thou shalt be mine; we will sip the dews from the flowers of life, bathe in glorious sunlight; when the darkening clouds spread out their skirts, heralding the tempest, we will flee to brighter skies, to sing our jubilate." He clasped her unresisting form to his breast; by that electric touch, warmth and new life

sprung in her soul; heaven was brought down to earth; life was half a dream, all poetry; the free zephyrs marvelled at her wondrous loveliness, and, enamored of the crimsoned cheek, kissed it with a lover's freedom. And love set his fiery seal upon her heart; it withered, like a leaf before the breath of the south wind, beneath that burning impress. Yet she clung to him, calling the chains with which he had bound her rainbow links; then, for love is of changeful mood, wailed, wept, and frantically called upon his name—when he would again charm her with the spell of his dazzling beauty, and again bewilder her with dreams, and doubts, and fears. At length came a time when love wearied of his toy; she had been to him ever but a wild flower, blooming by the way-side; her beauty and fragrance had attracted and charmed; for a day, he had enshrined her in his heart, then flung her to the wind to perish. "Nay, dearest," said he, "weep not; I but try a sail on the sunny sea; ere thou canst miss me, I shall return; mourn not." Alas! the girl had learned to doubt his promises; the heavy tears gathered in her eyes, as she bade him farewell. Then arose the storm and the darkness; the booming thunder echoed from the dark rocks, the rain descended in torrents on her unprotected head; there was no shelter near. Overpowered by grief, she flung herself on the wet sand, and gave

vent to her despair. As her lamentations mingled with the storm, and her brain seemed rent with agony, she felt a cool hand pressing on her burning brow; Hope, the bright boy, was standing before her, bidding her dry her tears—Love would return anon. "See," said he; "the storm and the darkness are passing away; already the moon's silvery light forms a glittering pathway across the sea, for the return of Love's light bark." Thus did Hope cheer her fainting heart, promising also to remain her companion. Many a weary moment he charmed away with his sportive fancies; oft, too, at the sunset hour, he would wreath for her hawthorn spray and white lilies, to crown Love on his return. Then he would point to a speck on the distant waters, and tell her it was Love's bark. But at length Hope grew tired of his companion; so one cloudy, dark, stormy day, when most needed, he fled also.

"And only those who know can tell
What love is after hope's farewell."

When the maiden realized her loneliness, she neither wept nor sighed; the time for tears had gone by; she closed her eyes, and prayed for death. Lo! one approached, a female form, tall and shadowy pale, yet wearing more than mortal beauty on her brow; the mistlike arms were extended embracingly towards

her; the mournful eyes wore the expression a mother's might wear as she looks on a dearly-loved, long-lost child. The golden curls, streaming on the wind, were cinctured with nightshade blossoms. "My child, I wait for thee; lay thy head on my breast; its coldness will allay thy heart's fever, cool thy burning brain, and give thee peace so profound, impassive, that thou wilt give no thought to the world that has so grieved thee. In my embrace, thou shalt know a repose Love could never have given thee." The girl upraised her tear-stained face, and cast a troubled glance over the sea, striving in vain to see the distant speck towards which Hope had ever pointed. Huge black shadows, like far-off phantoms, alone rested on the wave. The caressing arms of Death received her fainting form. On that cold, quiet breast, the weary one found rest.

SKETCH FROM LIFE.

WHEN I first knew Margaret M——, she was but a petted, lovely child, the darling of her grandparents, to whose protection she had been consigned on the death of her mother. A father's love she had never known—the fiat which had summoned him to the realms of bliss had gone forth before her infant eyes had opened on this world. Yet, though these deepest of all afflictions had thus early fallen on her young spirit, they had saddened and shaded, but not wholly obscured its light. True, she was rarely seen to laugh, but then her smile was so beautiful, so full of truthfulness and love, it almost made one imagine a seraph from on high, in the fulfilment of some heavenly mission, had for a brief space animated her lovely form. At times she was sportive as the mountain roe, and would bound over the hills and through the valleys of her native home, stopping at one cottage to give old Betsy the bouquet of violets gathered in her rambles expressly for her, knowing her fondness for flowers; next at the hut situated by the old chestnut-tree down in the valley, to leave the

basket of eggs and fruit, a present to her pretty little namesake, the wood-cutter's daughter; then taking the ruined mill on her way home, an hour would be spent in reading the Bible to poor old John, who had grown so blind that he knew not day from night; then trip home to be ready to place the cushioned stool for grandmamma's feet, and hand grandpa his spectacles. Thus early, both at home and abroad, were her kindnesses and attentions bestowed on the aged and weary. Dearly did I love her, young as I was. Years rolled on, and I departed to a foreign clime, where, amid the turmoils and cares of business, Margaret passed not before my mind's eye; but when the departing sunbeams tinted with gorgeous colors the western sky, and my spirit became infused with the might, the majesty of beauty, or when some of the loveliest conceptions of genius were presented to my sight in forms of rare sculpture or glorious paintings, whose depth of coloring and lifelike tints caused my heart to thrill with rapture, then blest memory restored the past—the "happy, happy hours of childhood" were again enacted over, and Margaret was unforgotten.

Once more I trod the halls of my fathers; the embraces of relatives, the congratulations of friends scarce over before I hastened to visit my little playmate. She was grown to womanhood; but a fearful

change had come over her; the Angel of Death had o'ershadowed her with his dark wing—his herald Consumption, in its loveliest form, had visited her. As I smoothed back from her high marble brow the bright glossy ringlets of auburn hair, and looked into the clear depths of her dark eyes, I murmured at the decree; I cried aloud, in the fulness of my heart's agony, she was too lovely, too pure—oh, my God!—too good to die, too beautiful to lie in the cold dark tomb!

Day by day I was at her side. Oscar, her brother, was home from West Point, where he had been for about a year; he, and her young sister Josephine, and myself alternately, read to her during the long dreamy hours of August. Terrible was Oscar's grief if one but hinted at the possibility of his sister's death; he clung to her with more than a brother's love; every feeling of his soul seemed centred in that form, wasted almost to transparency; the very thought of laying her in the earth was fraught with madness. Often, at the evening hour, she would recline on a couch, her head pillowed on his breast; Josephine at her feet, seated on a low ottoman, her harp before her, drawing forth low, ravishing notes of melody, till the tears would glisten in the soft eyes of Margaret, and she would bid her repeat again and again the enchanting strain. Hours

have so passed, and, as we watched the smile flit over her flushed cheek, Oscar would whisper—"Margaret is better; she will yet be spared to us; Death cannot touch with his serpent fangs a creature so fair." But even while the words were on his lips, she would turn on him her eyes glittering with bright unearthly rays, and shudder with pain: he sickened and lost all hope, for he felt he had indeed been cheating himself with delusive dreams.

'Twas a tranquil evening in autumn: the sun was rapidly sinking to rest; not a cloud marred the soft light of the sky, not a leaf stirred on the still branches. I had wheeled the couch, from which Margaret now seldom rose, close to the open window; I gazed on her wasted features, and the desolating certainty that we must soon part, for the first time was fully understood by me in all its anguish and misery. The rose I had given her in the morning had fallen from her hair; its leaves were withered, scattered over the floor. I gathered them up and passionately pressed them to my lips. I knelt beside her, and whispered—"Margaret, beloved, you will not leave me? You will not die?"

A smile of ineffable sweetness passed over her countenance. She extended to me her hand, and replied—"Mourn not, dearest, that I cannot live; my fate has been wisely ordered. I have suffered

much and acutely. See the flower you gave me; it was beautiful, yet it is dead. Is it not a type of me?

'Though with fond and gentle care
Its bright leaves were shaded,
Decay was still there.'

And look, dearest; the sun has nearly sunk behind the hill. Pray with me that the light may linger yet a little while to guide me to my home, for I feel I am dying—yet am happy, with your hand clasped in mine—words of love——" Her voice failed. I caught her sinking in my arms; her eyes were closed. Oh, God, was this death? What would I not have given to be able to restore animation to that frail form? Bitter, bitter tears, wrung from the heart, which seldom course over the cheek of manhood, sprang to my eyes. Oh, but for one more glance, one other word! In vain. There she lay, cold and pale, alike unconscious of my misery, and the deep, enduring grief of Oscar and Josephine, who had been summoned by my cries. Soon the aged grandparents, who had so idolized her, aunts and uncles, were all standing round the low couch; and, as the wail of sorrow ascended to the throne of the Most High, the old pastor, who had held Margaret at the baptismal fount, slowly entered the apartment. With faltering steps, he approached the lifeless form; in

silence he pressed each trembling hand, then bade them join with him in prayer. Never shall I forget the soul-stirring eloquence of that devout man. With humility and fervor, he besought God that the spirit which had animated the stiffening clay might not depart from its earthly tenement till it had vouchsafed some sign, some token to mourning friends that her faith had been built on the "Rock of Ages." Trusting his prayer to the intercession of His glorious Son, he rose from his knees. A moment scarce elapsed before Margaret opened her eyes: entire consciousness returned; she recognized the good Mr. L——, spoke of her willingness to die, of her faith and trust in Christ's redeeming love, whose arm then sustained her, again bade us all farewell, and her pure spirit took its flight to God.

THE LEGEND OF THE BLACK DEATH.

SPRING was abroad in the valleys and on the mountain-tops; the groves of ice-trees passed away in the warm embrace of the sun; the birch-wood and other forest-trees clothed themselves in tender green; the little streams, again freed, became sparkling crystals singing on their way, while on their banks grew nodding flowers of glittering whiteness, like the snows that still crowned the tall mountains; far above over their heads flew the soft blue clouds, chased by the south wind. The lark sang loud and clear as he soared on tireless wing; the insects brushed their tiny pinions, then somewhat drowsily essayed a flight. Nature seemed fully roused from the torpor of winter; yet a strange stillness rested on all; a shadow darkened hall and cottage, flowing stream, and fragrant wood-flower. 'Twas the silence, the shadow of death. A pestilence, called the "Black Death," had rode on the wind over Norway, staying her steps in the loveliest valleys, kissing, with her foul lips, the fairest and noblest children of the north. Sore dis-

may filled their hearts; they cried unto Heaven with a loud voice, that the scourge might depart. Still the evil one lingered; passing from cot to cot, where-soever she cast her glance, Death, who followed in her train, set his mark. Now it happened that, in a certain valley, on a bright morning in this fair spring-time, a young peasant, of the name of Engstrom, rose from the stupor in which he had long lain, and, opening his eyes, looked around him. On the ground, close by his couch, as though fallen from utter exhaustion while ministering to him, lay the dead body of his mother. The remains of his young sister, her sweet innocent face purpled by the destroyer, was stretched beside her. The fire had burnt out on the hearth; he was fainting for food, so he arose and went forth to search for the living, and to satisfy the cravings of nature. He stood on the door-stone, wondering at the solitude, the stillness. Their trim little garden, that at this season was wont to bear the signs of busy labor, all quiet, deserted; no sound of cheerful horn, calling the cattle together for feeding, greeted his ear, nor merry youthful voices chanting national airs to the hum of the busy wheel; there was but the song of the birds, the ripple of the spring that gushed forth in the shadow of the brown rock, and the beating of his own heart. From cottage to cottage all was the same; all were stiff in death; none were spared.

"For the angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,
And their hearts but once heaved, and forever grew still."

The companions whom he had seen but a few days before in buoyant health now stark livid corpses; so quickly had they been stricken down, there was none left to mourn. Blank despair sat on his brow as he turned from scenes of horror. O! frail are the links that bind us to life, when the chains of affection are broken thus by death; when we see those on whom we have bestowed our all of love and trust lying before us, the same, and yet how changed by a few passing hours, insensible to our grief, unknowing our passionate agony! then the thousand dreams of youth and hope depart forever, and life becomes a weariness, a pain. Engstrom climbed the steep mountain-path; his native land, like a rich flower-garden, spread widely in the distance; he gazed, and the tears flowed from his haggard eyes, for all its beauties could not drive from his memory his once happy home, the tender mother, whose loving care made that home a paradise; sweet sister, loved friends, all were gone; where they once dwelt, now lay those loathliest semblances of humanity that had so affrighted him. A heavy plunge into space would rid him of all misery, reunite him with the lost, for he fully believed he only was living in all the world. At this moment, a low

pitiful whine arrested his rash deed; his faithful dog, unnoticed, had followed his footsteps, and now with upraised calm brown eyes seemed to ask, why so little faith? Then, again, he wondered if death had spared but him; and the sweet witchcraft of love whispered, perchance his bride, his betrothed, Marie Steinhart, lived. Hastily he descended the acclivity, determining not to know rest till he had sought for her. Mile after mile his weary feet had trod; evening was drawing nigh; dark and heavy the boughs of the pine forest interlaced above his head; the blast moaned drearily, as if in wrath; huge shapeless shadows gathered round; but he cast his eyes toward heaven, and breathed a prayer for help. Now the light became clearer, for he entered the valley where Marie dwelt—still that appalling silence. The tall fir-trees, dark and gloomy, stirred not a branch; the rapid river rushed on between its high banks without a sound—there was no sign of life. Then, with a mighty cry, Engstrom flung himself on the cold ground to die; sadly his eyes roamed over the darkening landscape; suddenly he started—could it be, or was he dreaming?—surely that was a wreath of smoke curling upwards; some one must be near; he should clasp a living hand, hear words of sympathy from human lips; true, it might be a false lure, but the evening mist rising; still, the faint vague fancy that

his first surmise was correct possessed him, so onward with hope for his guiding star. Now he approaches the cottage, breathlessly gazes on the curling columns that slowly mingled with the quiet air, then bounding forward (his dog barking as though he understood his master's feelings), he stood upon the threshold, pushed open the door—behold, upon the hearth, clear and beautifully burned the fire that had been his beacon thither. A young maiden stepped forth. O! joy inexpressible! it was Marie. She, by the inscrutable will of God, was the only living creature in her valley, after the visit of the "Black Death." Their happiness was too intense for words; he could only clasp her again and again to his breast, shedding tears of rapture. The following morning, hand in hand, they entered the chapel, where no priest stood before the high altar, nor clouds of incense perfumed the air. God alone was there, their only witness. Trustingly, confidingly they knelt, asking, as if of a father, that He would bless their union; and the faith, thus humbly plighted in His holy name, He consecrated and watched over. From this loving, devoted pair, descended the noble generations of fair daughters and brave sons that have peopled Norway unto this day.

SHADOWS.

"THEY COME LIKE SHADOWS, SO DEPART."

THE dark silent night—and yet I fear it not, but love it; my soul goeth forth with a long mournful wail, into the silent midnight, after companionship. I gaze into space; my heart thrills, for 'tis not alone; some other watcheth, also, the wide solemn heaven; one with whom my soul holds mysterious affinity. Perchance oceans roll between; yet, by the heart-throb, I feel 'tis even thus; and a more cheerful spell, like a healing balsam, falls upon me.

The holy night! with its gift of thought, restoring gentle hours; the loved, the lost return again. Again, a thrilling voice breathes into mine ear tales of worlds of light, where the tired spirit may find peace. The calm moonlight in a silver flood falls around me. Leaf and tree, and stately walls, are lighted by the moon's cold rays—how solemn she looks, gliding through the deep blue sky; now a cloud, purple-tinged, whispering her, counsels a gayer measure. It may not be; her mission is to give dreams

of heaven—to speak of those loved ones who walked awhile on earth, looked on her bright disk, and are now slumbering the sleep that knows no waking. Egypt, in its day of power, she shone on. Calmly, coldly as now, she gilded her giant pyramids; young brave hearts looked on her, and dreamt and talked of love. Rome and Carthage looked on her, ere they, too, passed away.

Away with sleep! I love the varied fantasy that round me press when the day vanisheth. I like the feeling of loneliness which gives unto the soul power to pierce the dim future, to annihilate space, and to traverse on lightning wings the realms of boundless thought. Sparkling, glistening, moaning, lies before me the mighty ocean, bearing on its bosom the lessening sail of the beloved wanderer. I hear the dear familiar tones murmuring my name; but now the wild wind passes, and though 'tis perfumed with the breath of summer, the odor of forest wild-flowers still clinging to its wings, albeit it has a sad note: it speaks of storm and tempest.

Now, Memory, wave thy wand, that the storm and the darkness may depart! Sweep away the bitter toilsome memories of the day, and give to the night its haunted power! Let me wander in Fancy's fairy realm.

Lo! I see a little child wandering on the sea beach;

he is all alone. How wildly beautiful is the scene. Dark high rocks cast their fantastic shadows far out on the sea, alternating with streams of light on the dancing waves. The boy still loiters, heedlessly gathering sea-shells, and still the waves rise higher and higher on the sands; he seems to have no fear. Ah! now I see, by his azure wings, he is no habitant of earth. It is Love, resting awhile. He ever sports and plays; he opens to the parched, wearied soul, a glimpse of Eden; he promises Paradise—then leaves the stubborn heart, that will not forget, to wither with grief—to discover, too late, his fair promises were but lures that lead to death. Away—away—tempter! I will walk on the wave-worn shore, and the winds of night shall be the only music mine ear heedeth, till the struggling soul breaks the bonds that enthrall, and, on soaring pinions, unveils the mystery of Eternity.

THE LAMENT OF THE ROSE-BUSH.

ON the banks of a lovely stream grew a white rose-bush. So loaded was it with blossoms, that its leaves touched the tiny waves that sang and danced so merrily in the early sunbeams. Ah! those were happy hours for the sweet rose-bush. No anticipations of the future darkened her hopes; no cares or sorrows clouded the joyous present.

As one by one her buds expanded, filling the air around with perfume, feelings of gratified pride animated her bosom. How glorious to her appeared the heavens above, the bright sun, the earth which gave her birth, and her beautiful flower sisters, that grew close to the water's edge—the tall foxglove, its loose purple bells seeming filled with diamonds; Hope's sweet gem, the forget-me-not; and the humble violet, so modestly hid beneath its clustering leaves.

The western breeze wantoned by; and, after sporting for a while in loving dalliance amid her foliage, bore on his wings a portion of her fragrance to the little cottage, but a stone's throw off. How it gladdened the hearts of its inmates; for it recalled the memory

of the past—the promise of their only, their beloved son; he would return to dwell with them when the roses bloomed. How anxiously, tearfully, yet cheered and upheld by hope, had they watched the old rose-bush! and now he would soon be with them; again tread the haunts of his childhood; for the white blossoms hung in the stream. How beautiful was that old bush to them; how graceful her branches; and then how gayly she bowed her head, with its fragrant treasures, down to the very waters. And the stream hushed its singing, to gaze and wonder at her exceeding beauty.

When their son returned, he accompanied them to admire their favorite; but, alas! already the roses had begun to fall; the ground was strewn with their leaves; their aroma was fast departing. The rose-bush drew together her branches, and sullenly folded them round her fading treasures. Her melancholy moans saddened the hearts of her friends. A shower had fallen, and as she flung from her the glittering drops, mingled with them were her fast-falling tears; while a sweet low voice, seemingly from the centre of the bush, thus spoke: “Why, oh! cruel fate, have you thus despoiled me of my beauty? My blossoms, my sole source of happiness, scattered at my feet; their petals withering, their fragrance fled! Could you not spare to me my loved ones? In what

have I offended? Did I not spread my branches to the sun, that the sin of sullenness might not mar their beauty? Have I ever withheld from the toil-worn wayfarer my refreshing perfume? Have not all alike been gladdened by my loveliness? Why have you, then, destroyed me? And, as she shuddered, a fresh shower of rose-leaves fell to the ground; and her old friends bowed down their heads and wept.

A form, as of an angel, stood before them,

—“With hair of light,
And dazzling eyes of glory,”

on whose clear brow shone immortality; thus she addressed the mourners:—

“Know ye not, O sad ones, the laws of nature are irrevocable, and must be obeyed? The blossoms, so dearly loved, must fade and die; but they shall live again. A little while—another season—and the bush will become arrayed in new loveliness. Fresh flowers will put forth from her bosom; again her breath will be precious odor. Murmur not, therefore, loved ones, that the flowers must die, for the benignant Deity, who, during their evanescent existence, lavished upon them the graces you mourn, will anew raise them, in beauty and fragrance, that they may become sweet, although silent messengers of

peace and love, from heaven to the dwellers on earth ;
for this end were they created."

The angel spread her dewy wings, and passed from
their sight; and the rose-bush hung her head; but
she sorrowed no more, for she knew the words of the
angel were truth.

THE GUARDIAN ANGEL.

A MAIDEN, lovely and youthful, lay on a couch of
death; friends stood around, and freely were tears
shed and sighs breathed; yet the Conqueror took the
worn spirit by the hand, and to the sounds of sweet
music, led her up through the starry air to that
home of peace prepared from the beginning of the
world. She had loved with all the deep and pas-
sionate idolatry the heart can know but once; but
the light that shone around her proved, in its
evanescent splendor, a false meteor, that, when its
brightness passed, rendered the darkness more drear
and wretched.

"This ever has been woman's fate—to love,
To know one summer day of happiness,
And then to be most wretched!"

Months passed on, flowers grew over her grave,
and birds sang above it; but the gentle spirit of her
who slept beneath had received its mission—to watch
o'er him loved best on earth: and as a shadow she
oft stood revealed in the blue light of morning, or

was heard in the moan of the night-wind, when the dew fell heaviest; although to the careless and worldly one the shadow seemed but a passing cloud over the sun's brightness; the moan of the night-wind but the sighing of the breeze among the pines. To him, Mary's dancing step and bird-like voice were forever stilled; if his thoughts followed her at all, it was but to the narrow grave, over which blossomed the early rose. She was already forgotten; yet her sweet guardianship over the loved one, despite the sorrow his cold forgetfulness had caused her, was unceasing. When he mingled with the young and fair, and whispered winning flatteries to not unwilling ears, a low sweet voice, deep in his heart, bade him not crush the wild-flowers of youth, and cause the young eyes to o'errun with tears, by false words. Then the voice borrowed Memory's tone, and recalled the fond trusting heart, now cold in its grass-grown bed, mid darkness and decay; and with a shudder he passed by. When, in the festal hall, the wine-cup, mantling with light, was drained again and again, and the crimsoning cheek and the flash of the brilliant eye told a sad tale to the fond spirit near, a profiled outline on the wall startled the inebriate, and the sparkling cup was rudely dashed aside. When wandering amid the haunts of vice, fascinated by their false gayety—for misery ever wears a mask—a word, a

tone of music, a perfumed air, drove the present from before him, presenting in its stead his early years of innocence and truth; then, by that link of the past, the guardian angel led him from the false and the frail. When, through her gentle ministry, pure thoughts rested within his soul, then Mary's spirit rejoiced, and, with the tenderness of earthly love united to a diviner nature, led him with low and gentle tones away from the revel, first to see unnoted beauties in the silvery moonlight in diamond sparkles dancing on the waters; then in the fair earth, changing but ever beautiful, presenting the same variety of charms, whether wrapped in its snowy mantle or arrayed in sunbeams, crowned and wreathed with summer's regalia of flowers. Then upward directing his gaze to that starry sky, where, within its charmed portals, a glad welcome awaited him from those dear ones gone before. Thus ever by his side, restraining his wavering footsteps, warding off the rough gale of misfortune, soothing hours of solitude by sweet thoughts and fancies, softening the hand of sorrow, teaching him not to build his hopes on earth's fragile soil, was her mission mercifully accomplished in the summer sunshine and the winter rain, and ever pointing heavenwards.

A VISION.

"I HAD A DREAM, WHICH WAS NOT ALL A DREAM."

I STOOD within the entrance of an ancient temple; Time had passed from his youth since the shrine had been raised, for the roof was gone and half the pillars worn away. The broken columns were twined with wreathing ivy and wild grape, their clusters of topaz-colored fruit hanging in rich profusion over the ruined archway; flocks of doves and wild pigeons, that had built their nests in the eaves, flew to and fro, and, with melancholy cooings, disturbed the lone solitude. Looking afar, I descried a multitude of armed men approaching, presenting an array of waving plumes and streaming banners indescribably brilliant. From their midst there came a man, his face beaming with enthusiasm, lit with the fires of a glorious soul, the personation of a hero; having marshalled his troops, in eloquent accents he bade them strike for the freedom of their hearths. He told them of old histories when Poland was free, ere the furious blast of war had beat down their homes, and

darkened their firesides; the ruthless invader, fierce with conquest, had defiled their maidens, and cast them dying by the road-side; the aged sire, scarce cold on the bier, dragged forth to satiate the fury of their bloodhounds; even the smiling innocence of the tender infant was no protection from bitter cruelty; whole towns and villages given to the flames; mortal eyes could not look on such desolation and ruin unmoved. In the very hopelessness of despair, man had risen from his mighty wrongs, and, with pale lips, swore to be revenged or die. My nerves were roused to their utmost tension, in my sympathy for those gallant men; involuntarily, I invoked the spirits of the immortal dead—

"Ye that at Marathon and Leuctra bled,
Friends of the world, restore your swords to man,
Fight in the sacred cause and lead the van."

Suddenly, I saw a cloud of dust rising, I heard the trampling of hoofs. Behold! Wrapped in furs, with banners dripping snow, came Russia's cohorts. I saw the brave chieftain prepare for battle; while afar off, in the clouds, sat Peace, resting her white wings. Sadly she gazed on those warlike preparations and the men who so desecrated her name. In vain, alas! in vain the lofty courage, the high resolve of those devoted patriots; the volleyed thunder, that with

deafening crash shook the earth, and mingled with the sweet odor of rose and myrtle that floated on the gale, was the knell of not one, but thousands of brave departing souls; rank after rank fell bleeding to the earth. Soon, the roll of the drum was alone heard, where so short a time before went up to high heaven the shouts of liberty. Poland was dead. Russia had crushed the burning hearts of her sons with the ice of death; she existed no longer on the earth. A little while, and, like a mist, all the well-trained columns of the haughty victors, the heaps of dying and dead, all passed like a wreath of smoke, and deep silence rested on the plain as before.—With quick but noiseless steps, I turned to re-enter the temple. Before I could do so, another mighty army arrested my attention. The young leader, with form tall, powerful as the young pine ere 'tis bent by the winter's storm; dark flashing eyes, like the summer's lightning, stood foremost of the throng, shouting his war-cry, in answer to the trumpet's salute of the foe. I prayed that victory might smile on his banners. Peace, too, bent a pitying gaze on the youth. The battalions under his command were composed of warriors from every clime. Those arrayed against them, with snowy plumes, their spear heads glittering in the sun, were led by one who wore a mitre, and carried in his hand the sceptre of the church, for

lovely Italie was the plain again to become a battle-field. Now the din of war pealed on the air; the crash of steel, the rush of the deadly ball; hand to hand, foot to foot, was the attack, overpowering, terrible as the winged hurricane. Soon the crimson banners were borne headlong to the earth; trampled and torn, they pillowed the heads of the dying, and drank up their ebbing lifeblood. Victory seemed on the side of the young captain, when, behold! the soldiers of France, republican France, poured into the plain, and, uniting their forces against that now little band, completed their rout. The fight was ended; the mitred ruler extended the sceptre of the church anew over Italia's vine-clad land, and again freedom slumbered.—Once more, I saw a motley crew contending for the possession of a painted bedizened female they called Liberty. As party after party rushed into the *mêlée*, shouting wildly, the gay lady would coquettishly cast aside her veil, so as to display to the admiring crowd her gem-encircled brow and radiant eyes, which smiled approval. The smiles were showered on all; each panting soldier thought the beaming glance was for him. Then I saw the crown she wore was of false brilliants, false as her smiles, and I knew her as the arch-fiend called Misrule, who had assumed the garb and seeming of Liberty; she but mocked and led those wild spirits

to destruction. Again was the desperate strife renewed, again the lovely plain became a slaughter pit. Soon came a single horseman, unattended. Fearlessly he rode amid those armed reckless men; with the fierce courage of a dauntless soul, the power of indomitable will alone, he constrained those vacillating spirits; with eyes stern with resolve, he beat down their banners, and taking to his bosom the purple-vestured female, became at once ruler and dictator. The throne of the Bourbons was trampled beneath the feet of the spoiler; and France, poor France—with her brain of fire, heart of fear, her ardent enthusiasm and noble feelings, was constrained to pay the bitter penalty of want of unity in her leaders and the frivolity of her people. To my wondering inquiries for an explanation of these strange sights, Peace, with her lute-like voice, replied, “You have witnessed a phantasm of the past, sometimes vouchsafed to mortal sight to teach mankind a lesson. The soul, the godlike principle within, still remembering Eden, with its scented gales, pants for the freshness and the beauty freedom’s blessed influence alone can confer; Liberty, that shall go forth to earth’s dark places, releasing the captive, and distributing with liberal hand food and clothing to the homeless beggar; Freedom, that with mighty hand shall dash the king from his throne, and shiver to

atoms his broken sceptre; these have been the thoughts all powerful, that have caused man, again and again, to burst the iron chain of tyranny, and, casting care and sorrow to the winds, have striven, aye, through oceans of blood, to attain that glorious boon. But not yet is the hour; man must rise higher in his intellectual nature, before the dark films of earth can pass away, and the bright sunbeam of truth reveal the utter worthlessness of rank and distinction. On that holy morn, when republicanism shall dawn on the world; when blind, deluded man, freed from the shackles of error, shall look on his fellow-man as brother, war and oppression shall flee away; the fragrant incense of love and charity shall ascend as a perfume to heaven; just and equal laws, preventing oppression, dispensing freely to all nations fair and beautiful gifts, their motto Liberty, shall extend, with charmed influence, from the frozen climes of the north to the burning sands of Africa, and all the sons of humanity shall awake.

“Soon, soon shall the thrones that blot the world,
Like the Orleans, into the dust be hurled,
And the word roll on like a hurricane’s breath,
Till the farthest slave hears what it saith,
Arise, arise, be free.”

THE TWIN SOULS.

THERE was music in heaven, as two white-winged spirits left the throne; and, tarrying not for the faint star-rays to fade in the crimson light that heralded the day-god, floated adown the golden flood, towards that world an atoning love had redeemed from sin. There was joy and gladness on the earth in two darkened chambers, where the rose-colored curtains were closely drawn. Softly on the single ray of sunlight, streaming obliquely through the crack in the shutters, entered the pure, snow-white spirits, and nestled within the hearts of the two infant cherubs, holy and innocent as doves, that lay sleeping within their little cots. There they lay, sweetly smiling; for, though weary leagues separated them in their earthly homes, the same love-memories lingered with both, and the remembrance of Eden's bowers, and its entrancing harmonies, radiated amid the dimples on their cheeks. The one, a fair girl, lived on beneath a gentle mother's guardianship, nurtured in kindness and love, till her soul became an echo, answering to all in nature that was pure

and lovely. Yet, though she shook off the soil and the stain which clings to earth's pleasures, she still was discontent—she sorrowed for her twin companion—for that young, bright-winged spirit, who, in that far-off time, had mingled with her in blest communion. Their homes were far apart, and years passed on, and only in dreams did they glide to each other's embrace; but, then, with the soul's intelligence, they met; hand clasping hand, cheek pressed to cheek, they felt the bliss of loving—they quaffed the cup of immortality. Then, again, with unfolded wings, they together traversed the universe, till humanity's wants dissolved the vision, and they arose, trembling—not with fear, but with sorrow—that the dream had fled. And it came to pass, that, on the evening of a day of unusual disquiet, the young girl met the idol of her dreams. It was at a gay revel, where mirth and laughter held their merry sway; but, despite the levity which reigned around, the maiden felt the presence of the loved one hallowed the hall; fain would her heart have bounded forth to rest at his feet, to bask in the divine light of that wildering smile. She cared not that in the world's seeming they met but as strangers; she knew the haze of mortality alone prevented soul meeting soul in a clasping embrace. A mysterious sense of happiness pervaded her being, revealing

itself in playful blushes, as she strove, by various graces, to awaken his remembrances; but, alas! he had too much mingled with the world; and its gross contact, sin-defiled, had brushed the purity from the spirit's pinions; and, though he gazed with tenderness on the lovely girl, whose hand he clasped, he felt not that mystic assurance of recognition, which the girl, with woman's subtler instincts, felt in all its exquisite rapture. He looked on her, and passed by; whilst she, for long, long months, lived but on the thought of that night; in fond worship she hoped and waited for him whom she had enshrined within her heart, musing on the proud smile, recalling the treasured words, and again thrilling at the memory of that lingering touch. Sad perversity of woman's heart; thus loving and trusting him who had already forgotten her very existence. The maiden had been long betrothed to one till now she deemed she loved; too late had the heart revealed itself; she prayed him who had her troth-plight to forgive the wrong she had unwittingly done him; the bond that united them was rent. In that fatal hour, when she met that soul-fraught glance, her fate was sealed; and her warm heart, with all its fresh affections, restlessly waited for him who recked not of the rich offering woman's faith and love proffered. Years passed on, and the maiden dwelt alone; all her kindred were

departed or dead. A profound vehement passion still impelled her to weary heaven with prayers for him whom her spirit still clung to;—time had silvered the raven curls, paled the rose on her cheek, and subdued the lightsome step, whose every pace was grace. Still, in visions, she saw that far-off world of light, and the angel soul that could alone make life lovely. Hope, the enchanter, still spread his illusive scenes before her eyes, dazzling her with his phantasms. In the rich twilight of a summer's eve, the maiden was summoned to soothe a soul about to exchange the agony of life for the bliss of Paradise. Sorrowing, the maiden knelt by the wretched couch, on which reposed the wan, faded form, of him to whom, in the spring-time of youth, she had consecrated her affections, and the soul, on the eve of departure, assoiled of its sins, recognized its twin. With a glad cry the maiden flung herself in the arms outstretched to embrace her. She forgot the long years that had intervened; she forgot the rags and misery that now surrounded him, remembering only that starry night before the throne, in the far-off time; and, like a tired child, nestled within the arms that so lovingly enfolded her. Not a question was asked or answered; but, as he pressed her closer to his breast, he whispered, "I am forgiven, beloved, if thou, in thy purity, shrink'st not from my embrace!

Redeeming love will provide a home in eternity."
And Peace, inspired by Faith, crept into the maiden's
soul, for she felt a spirit, once so pure,

"Is always pure, ev'n while it errs;
As sunshine broken in the rill,
Though turned aside, is sunshine still:"

and, as she bowed in prayer, the soul passed to God!

SIN AND DEATH.

A MORNING in spring; all nature seemed to shout for joy; the very air breathed incense; the east was gorgeous with rose-hued clouds, heralding the god of day. In an embowered shade, half grotto, half cot, knelt a young female; her hands meekly clasped on her snowy bosom, her dark eyes upraised, eloquently repeated the prayer her lips murmured. It was Adah, the beautiful, offering her thanksgiving to the Eternal; and as she prayed, her child, her first-born, crept to her feet, and holding up his tiny hands, lisped, "Keep us from evil."

Her orison ended, she rose, spread the morning's frugal meal, arrayed her boy, and again looked forth most anxiously for Cain. Not long she waited, ere her heart thrilled at his well-known step; joyously she sprang forward to greet him; but he thrust her back; a sullen frown sat upon his brow.

"Cain—my beloved Cain, what has angered thee again? Surely an evil spirit counsels thee; I know thee not in this guise."

"Go to, Adah. I am sick at heart, wearied of

this incessant toil; for 'tis naught else; but go, Adah—your household duties claim your attention; nay—I meant not to be harsh.”

“But, Cain—our morning meal—will you not eat?”

“Yes—yes—I had forgotten;” and, seating himself, he raised the little Enoch to his knee, and gave him to eat of the fruits Adah had placed before them.

Adah seeing him thus occupied, left him with the child, fondly trusting the innocent gayety of the boy would recall the smiles to his father’s face: alas! her hope was vain; evil thoughts had so gained the mastery, that love, which is indeed light from heaven, “a spark of that immortal fire with angels shared,”—could gain no entrance to his breast. Again he went forth, and the shades of evening had gathered over the earth ere he bent his steps homeward. Adah sat within her door; tearfully she mused on the days when Cain was gentle and loving; when, hand in hand, they had been wont to offer sacrifice and prayer to Jehovah! Now, how changed; silent, careworn, he gave no thought to God—scarce words to her. She could not comprehend the meaning of the change she mourned. Hark! she hears his footsteps.

“Ah, Cain, where hast thou tarried? I have

waited long thy coming; that eternal frown still upon thy brow? cannot my fond endearments chase the cloud away? Look, then, upon our sleeping boy;” and she drew back the gauze curtain that covered his couch. “See how lovely! his cheeks are dimpled with health; doth not his innocence and love cheer thee? Kiss him, and pray he may be ever preserved from guile and sin. See, he smiles in his sleep.”

“Smiles; ay, doubtless, he dreameth of paradise, my poor, wronged, disinherited boy!”

Nay, Cain—nay, speak not thus; tear such murmurs from thy heart. Our home surely can be to thee paradise, if thou wilt. Have we not our affection for each other, that must survive all afflictions? And, then, our darling boy and our Eve? our sweet sister, too? Surely, Cain, we have much to be thankful for. I cannot think you mean all the impious words you utter. But we have talked the night away. I must not forget the message I have been charged with. Our brother Abel bade me say, that, in thy absence, he has built two altars, that, together, ye may offer sacrifice. Doubtless even now he waits for thee.”

“I have none to offer; let him go alone.”

“Nay, beloved, a gentle and a contrite heart,

with earth's fairest fruits, are fittest offerings to God."

"And why should I be gentle? why good and grateful? I have toiled in the sun, day after day; for what? Merely bread; grovelled in the dust, to expiate my father's sin; but Abel approaches."

"Good-morrow, brother; God be with you; Adah, sweet sister, hail! Come, Cain, let us forth to sacrifice; see, Adah has gone with her young charge to inhale the fragrance of the early morn; let us go, also."

"I pray thee, Abel, leave me, and sacrifice alone; God loves thee."

"And thou, also, art the child of His guardian care."

"But, Abel, thee He loves most; and 'tis fittest, for thou obeyest Him in all things."

"This is very wrong, brother; thou art the elder. Why, then, this reluctance to take thy due precedence in our priesthood?"

"Abel, I have resolved to pray no more."

"I entreat thee, do; it will calm thy mind."

"Nothing can calm me now. So leave me; being determined, I but stay thy pious purpose."

Cain, I will not be gainsaid; for my sake be prevailed on; choose which altar thou fanciest most, and prepare thine offering."

"My offering, if it needs must be so, sorely against my will, cannot be of much account; show me thine."

"Here they are—a shepherd's lowly offering—the firstlings of my flock."

"Well, I till the ground, and will give what it hath given to me. These fruits I place upon what seemeth to me but turf and stone; and, as I do understand but little of these things, be thou the first to lead the way."

Then Abel kindled a flame upon his altar, and kneeling besought God to accept his humble offering—nothing in itself, but as the thanksgiving of him who bowed his face before the Giver of all good. And the flame burned with a steady, pure, and bright light, and ascended unto heaven. But Cain, standing erect, shouted forth his impious ravings, insulting the Most High; and a whirlwind overthrew him, and his altar, scattering the fruits over the ground. Abel—in sorrow, in consternation—entreated him to pray for forgiveness; but the evil spirit was still dominant; his anger rose; he attempted to upturn his brother's altar. In vain Abel opposed, and strove to moderate his rage.

"Stay, brother; my altar shall be thine, if thou art desirous of offering again, in penitence, and with humbler heart."

"Give way, Abel—give way."

"Thou affrightest me, my brother; what meanest thou?"

"Stand back from my path! Dost thou not understand plain words? Thy God loves blood! Keep off, or he'll have more!"

"In His name I stand before thee, and prevent this great sin."

"For the last time I bid thee stand back—else"—But Abel still resolutely maintained his position; Cain, frantic with rage, snatched a burning brand, and felled him to the earth! Wearily, painfully, the pale eyes opened, gazed around, then closed forever!

Death had entered the world!

As Cain sat in helpless dismay, looking alternately on Abel, and the blood-stained brand that had given him to that cold embrace, Adah, accompanied by Eve, Zillah, and Adam, came towards him. They had heard voices in contention, and had come to learn the cause. Zillah sprang forward, and, wildly clasping the form of Abel, screamed with affright, "Abel! brother! husband! what means this? Why dost thou not answer me! What means this stony lifelessness? O God, this blood! Cain—Cain—speak to me! Who has done this thing? Was it some prowling beast, become evil, since our expulsion from

Eden? O! why didst thou not protect him from this violence, and save me from this despair? My sister Adah, come hither; father, thou, too, look on thy second born, and see the bitter fruits of Eve's transgression!" and with a burst of anguish, frightful in its intensity, she threw herself on the lifeless body of her husband.

Sadly Adah strove to draw her away; for she saw in the sorrowful countenance of Adam, and in the indignant glance of Eve, their knowledge of the guilt of Cain.

"Come, Zillah, my daughter," said Eve, "let us away till he is gone. His presence causes my breast to ache with horror. This bosom, that nourished thy helpless infancy, gave sustenance also to thy brother's murderer! Come, dear child; we will return anon. O death! death! 'twas I that sinned! Take my life for his; for I am maddened by this dreadful doom. Hence, fratricide! Thou hast brought sorrow and desolation on our happy home! My life will henceforth be a living death; for thou hast slain thy brother; and my sin has raised the evil thought within thy soul that hath worked us all this woe! Canst ever sleep again, and not see before thee thy brother's bleeding corpse? will earth e'er seem fair again, stained as it is with gentle Abel's blood? Away from my sight!

' May the grass wither from thy feet! the woods
Deny thee shelter! earth a home! the dust
A grave! the sun his light! and heaven her God!"

"Mother! mother! curse him not. He is my betrothed; and still thy son. O! make not life burdensome to him by thy heavy curse; and thou, my father, wilt not add more bitterness to our already o'erflowing cup. See Zillah, our gentle sister, though distraught with grief, mourning the loss of him she dearly loved, yet speaks to us in kindness."

"No, Adah, I will not add my curse; the remorse that now consumes that proud spirit will prove his deepest punishment. Eve spoke hastily, in the first grief and horror of the dread moment, when she saw the doom foretold in Eden fulfilled—that doom which numbed her heart e'en on the day pronounced, while still the flavor of that delicious fruit, which grew so near and temptingly to our loved home, still clung around her mouth. Go comfort Cain, thy husband; he needs thy soothing words;" and as he spake, he followed Eve, as she led towards their dwelling the grief-stricken Zillah. But Adah returned to the side of Cain; and as she cast her arms round him, stooping to kiss his brow, a voice broke the silence:—

"Cain! Cain! where is thy brother Abel?"

With trembling fear, Adah stretched her hands

over the proud head, raised so defiantly, as though to protect it; for she felt it was the voice of the Lord, and she knew He spoke in anger. But Cain threw off the protecting arms that would have shielded him from that just wrath, as he replied,

"Am I my brother's keeper?"

"Nay, Cain, beloved; listen to me; thou knowest thou hast sinned. Pray, and thou shalt be forgiven, even for this thou hast done. Thou art too stern; bend thy knee in penitence. And thou, O! God, be merciful. He is not ever thus, but kind and loving; ay, and loved his brother well as I did. If there must be punishment, for what I know he bitterly laments, let the suffering fall on my head; let me redeem him, my lover husband, from the consequences of this most foul crime. Listen not to his ravings; 'tis but sorrow prompts them. Hearken: even now he calls on Abel from the dust—to yon poor lifeless clay—to say how he did love him."

"Adah, the doom thy husband has incurred, must fall upon his guilty head alone; thou canst not save him; he has shed his brother's blood; and thus I curse him from the earth, which he shall till, and to his labor she shall not yield her strength; 'a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be all thy days.'" But Adah cried again for mercy. "O! spare him! This punishment is greater than he can bear; for,

behold, if thou drivest him away under this heavy ban, it shall come to pass that whoso findeth him shall slay him."

"Not so; I will set a mark upon his brow, that he may go forth in safety, and on whosoever slayeth him, I will take sevenfold vengeance."

And behold! God set a mark upon his brow, which burned into his brain like living coals. Then Cain rushed out with a bitter cry; but Adah followed, and restrained his flying steps, still counselling repentance.

"Turn aside, Cain, a little while, till I bring our boy; and then, together, we will bid farewell to home, and seek another dwelling-place." Though the wilful heart still rebelled, yet he gave heed to her words, tarrying by the road-side until she brought her boy unto him. Then, in sorrowing sadness, they turned their backs forever on Eden.

MEMORY AND HOPE.

A WOMAN sat beneath a wide-spreading tree; she leant her head on her hands; bitter tears coursed down her pale cheeks; she had bid farewell to one she loved beyond all the treasures of earth, and who had betrayed her trust. Memory was busy with the past; thought succeeded thought, each more tumultuous than the other, like ocean's billows driven by the raging tempest. Now she was again a child, sporting on a wide plain, chasing the golden butterflies as they rested—now on the broad leaf of the tintless lily—now, again, on the wing, brushing in their flight the dew from the richly-scented clover. Then she knew of life but its infantile joys—now came back the school-girl's days, the long hours of study, in the little close room, when she had so longed to be out in the green fields, among the haymakers, instead of listening to the long prosy discourse of Master Walter. Anon came visions, pure as snowflakes, deepening to love's own hue, as in their early glory and brightness they floated on. Oh! she was

happy then; life seemed fair as a summer's dream, how the recollection of those happy hours tortured her. He, the loved one, was then faithful—true as the ideal her fancy had created. Now, like Noah's weary dove, drooping and travel-worn, her soul could find no resting-place. All was one dark, dreary solitude. The cool breeze fanned her burning temples; but she saw not that day had passed away; that night had closed round her with its infinity of stars, gazing so coldly, so un pityingly, on the bitter tears which stained her youthful cheek. She knew naught but her love and her despair.

"O! give to me," she cried, "to drink of Lethe's stream, that the remembrance of past pleasure and present pain may alike fade away. I care not to recall one hour of my life; the past and the future are the same. Let me live only in the present; not one hour of brightness has shone upon me; but, drop by drop has distilled the poisonous Upas—disappointment—which has soon o'erclouded all the sunshine. Not a flower has bloomed on my path, but on its crimson leaves have I discerned the trailing of the serpent. Pass away—pass away—for your memories burn like drops of fire into my heart."

Lower sank the bowed head, and the tear-drops fell splashing to the earth, to be borne thence, on the wings of zephyrs, to the Recording Angel, to bear

witness against that recreant one, and bar his entrance to the halls of light. She felt a hand pressing her shoulder; and, looking up, she saw standing beside her a form like an angel. Mistlike raiment floated round; the radiant brow was encircled with a wreath of snowy blossoms, that glistened like moonlight; the eye, so full of light and love, reanimated her drooping soul.

"Maiden, I am called HOPE; and though born in heaven, I dwell with the daughters of earth. My mission is now to thee. Bestir thyself; gird on the armor of courage; let not thy heart faint thus! what though the fading light of day has already disappeared beyond those western hills! will not the morrow's sun again disperse the clouds of darkness and shed the rosy light over all the earth? So shall it be with thee. Cast aside this fantasy which has obscured thy reason, and live for what is nobler, better—for the good of thy suffering sisters. In acts of kindness and benevolence thou wilt find peace. I will send to thee my twin sister, FAITH. She will instruct thee, with her voice of more than mortal sweetness, to rest thy heart in heaven. There only can its harmonies be restored, and the clouds of sorrow pass from thy soul, which is now benumbed—palsied—by earthly passion."

As the maiden listened to those gentle accents, she felt the shadows departing from her soul. HOPE'S inspiring promises gave her new life; and, with a smile almost like those of other days, she gave her hand to her heavenly visitant, to lead her to FAITH!

THE MAGDALEN.

IN a gorgeously beautiful room, the floor inlaid with Italian marble, the walls covered with rich folds of drapery, telling many a tale of ancient lore in their inwrought gold and colored silks, the air heavy with perfume, knelt a young female. There were crimson velvet cushions, piled one upon another, near; yet she recked not of their soft voluptuousness. Crouched low on the cold hard stones, her unclosed eye, beautiful as a star, was filled with nameless dread; the moonlight shone on her bare forehead, from which in agony she had flung back the masses of raven hair, scattering the diamonds, with which it had been braided, over the floor. The myrtle and olive grew close beside the casement, through which swept the music tones and gay converse of the festival; yet she heard them not. From bland whispers and flattery, from the sparkling wine-cup and courtly throng, with a feverish, restless soul, craving peace, Mary had sought her stately room. Her heart was indeed sick unto death; in a

passionate burst of tears, she vented her deep wretchedness. It was not a momentary grief; no, all the sweet promises of life had fled; listless, she felt no longer interest in the richness and splendor which surrounded her; painful memories had driven love and hope afar. A quick step, a movement near, roused her; a man in the first prime of manhood stood beside her; his arm encircled her waist, his thick clustering curls of golden hair mingled with her own dark braids; in tones sweeter than harp or lute, he breathed words of impassioned tenderness in her ear; the changing light that sparkled in her eye, the faint rose color that wandered over her cheek, showed she was not unmoved; yet, as the passing flush faded, as though she hated herself for the excess of happiness his presence caused, a look of contempt and scorn gathered round the perfectly beautiful mouth; she withdrew from his embrace, clasped her white hands across her heart, as if to stay its bursting throbs, and hurriedly paced the room. "Think not this is frenzy," she said, "though during the last hour my brain, racked with suffering, has seemed as if one pain more would have turned it to madness indeed," and her face became rigid, deathlike, as if from desperateness of pain. Again she spoke: "The stars that now shine calm and bright in yonder blue, had not yet risen when there

passed beneath my window the Prophet, Him whom they call Jesus. Attracted by curiosity, I leaned forth to look on the vast multitude that ever follow Him. At that moment, the crowd became so dense that He paused, and raising His eyes, their glance met mine; I heard him say, in a clear, distinct voice, "Though thy sins be as scarlet, they shall become white as snow." Instant it seemed as though there had been a plague spot within my soul, which that look had cleansed away. Wondrously beautiful He was. I could have prostrated myself at His feet for one word of blessing, of forgiveness, but the innate pride of my nature, and fear of the rabble restrained me, till He passed from my sight; then the stars appeared to fade, the lifeblood forsook my heart, my brain was tortured with terror of I know not what—ay, call it fantasy—I know not what it is, I only know from that hour my wasted life has risen in dark array before me, days spent in idleness, in folly; a thousand fanciful things linking themselves in my imagination, my countless wealth spent in such worthless gauds as these," and she spurned with her foot the costly jewels that had bound her dark hair. Calm, stern, and cold, she continued: "Call you that wild feeling, love, which I have lavished on thee? rather call it a blight, that would have festered and consumed thy soul's purity. Seest thou yon dark

cloud, like a pall, rising over the moon? So would my love have darkened thy life, for it has ever been but

‘A mingled rush of smoke and flame.’

“Nay, if thou wilt cling to me—as a bird who has escaped from the snare of the fowler—accompany me to that Holy Teacher; hand in hand, we will kneel, confess our sins, and pray forgiveness. Oh! I entreat thee, come—see, I have prepared spices and precious oil as gift offerings.” He whom she loved smiled derisively at her words; the affection she had vowed to him seemed very pleasant; the life they had led, one of light and beauty; he, at least, desired no other. True, crowds gathered round Him whom she named, but they were principally the poor and lowly; and that she, who had been worshipped as a queen, alike haughty and beautiful, reckless of sorrow, sin, or shame; the woman who bowed only to pleasure, should weep tears of bitterness at the feet of the humble, despised Nazarene—it was indeed madness, a momentary frenzy. With this thought, he drew the lovely head to his breast, whispering consoling, soothing words, in fondest terms of endearment, thus trying to allay her feverish fears, her superstitious terrors, as he deemed them. Now rose on the stillness of the midnight hour the shouts, the loud songs of the multitude; as if the words were a potent

spell to draw her thence, she started from his arms. “Farewell, we shall never meet again.” One parting look of sadness, and she was gone. Threading the almost deserted streets of the hot, dusty city, heeding not the words of mockery that pursued her flying steps, guided alone by those notes of rejoicing that in a thousand echoes floated before her, she at length came to the spot where Jesus, surrounded on all sides by the people, was unable to proceed further. Forcing her way through the midst, she humbly knelt at his feet; the brodered velvet robe she wore swept the ground; the moonlight in a rich flood poured over the once proud head, now bowed lowly in the dust. “Woman, what would ye?” Her only reply was a gasping sob, as she caught the hem of His garment with her cold, trembling hands, and pressed it wildly to her lips. Just then a door near by was opened, and Jesus entered to rest awhile; the crowd pressed in till the little dark room could hold no more. Mary sat at His feet, embracing and kissing them; taking from her bosom the box of precious ointment she had provided, she anointed them with it, wiping off the soil and stain of the highway with the long glossy braids of her beautiful hair; tears filled her bright eyes; thence falling to His feet, assisted her loving, self-appointed task. Her cheek was pale as the lily-bell; the flush of earthly thought could never

more win it from its hopes of heaven. A smile of rapture lighted the now tranquil features, for the hour of dread and danger was past. Like sudden sunshine breaking from the bosom of a dark storm-cloud, had peace entered her soul; tears of penitence had washed away her sin. That voice, that in her hour of pride she had heard calling the "weary and heavy laden, promising unto them rest," had pronounced her pardon, accepted her humble offering, and she rested her head on His feet like a tired and weary child.

THE END.

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