

CYPRESS LEAVES.



Louise J. Cutter.

CYPRESS LEAVES.

BY

LOUISE J. CUTTER.

WITH A BIOGRAPHY.

BY

MARY W. JANVRIN.

I plant a tree whose leaf
The yew-tree leaf will suit ;
But when its shade is o'er you laid,
Turn round and pluck the fruit !
Now reach my harp from off the wall
Where shines the sun aslant ;
The sun may shine and we be cold —
O harken, loving hearts and bold,
Unto my wild romaunt !

Mrs. BROWNING.

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OBEYING THE HALLOWED REQUEST

— OF —

The Dear Departed,

THAT,

WERE THESE LEAFLETS EVER BOUND TOGETHER, THEY SHOULD BE
INSCRIBED TO HIM, WHO WAS TO HER BOTH

SKILFUL PHYSICIAN AND KINDEST FRIEND,

TO

DANIEL SWAN, M. D

OF MEDFORD,

THEY ARE NOW OFFERED, WITH GRATEFUL MEMORIES,

BY

HER MOTHER

PREFACE.

To gratify a sacred, dying wish, have the writings now offered to the public in their present form, been gathered. "If you think they are worthy, let them be published after I am gone," said a young and lovely being, who lay wasting under the ruthless touch of that Destroyer, who loves to mark Earth's fairest beings for his own; and thus, with its merits and its faults—its beauties and its blemishes—goes forth this book.

O reader, lingering over its pages, look not for the splendid passion-flowers of Life's fervid Summer, nor the hardier ones of the ripened Autumn time; only for sweet, tender Spring blossoms! O critic, let not these "Cypress Leaves" wither beneath *thy* touch—for they droop, greenly, above a grave!

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CYPRESS LEAVES.

BIOGRAPHY.

"She was born 'mong water-mills;
She grew up 'mong flowers and rills,
In the hearts of distant hills.

"There into her being stole
Nature, and imbued the whole,
And illumed her face and soul."

MEMORY is a great Alchemist, who transmutes the Past to gold—an Embalmer, who preserves in costly spices remembrances of the dead! And it is well: for, when the loved ones have passed from our sight and we can talk with them no more—keeping a vigil with Memory, only, all the long weary hours—holds the heart a single thought of them, which is not far more precious than perishable earthly dross?

Extravagant praise of the dead, I am well aware, is an error into which biographers often fall; yet need my pen fear to record too eulogistic a tribute to the memory of the gentle girl, whose earthly life was an embodiment of goodness and loveliness, and whose "Cypress Leaves" are gathered to shed their sad laurels upon her early grave?

Every eye which lingers over these pages — every heart which has thrilled at some token of her worth — every heart in that household band, where

“None knew her but to love her,
None named her but to praise,—

and beside whose hearthstone standeth a vacant chair where *she* once sat, will answer — “No!”

LOUISE J. CUTTER was born at Medford, Massachusetts, August 15th, 1835. In her childhood she was a gentle, delicate girl—the pet of the home circle, and much beloved by her schoolmates. Those days passed to her as all such early days do—pleasantly, speedily, with the myriad little joys and griefs, hopes and fears, which drape with lights and shadows life’s rosiest time. As a child, there was little promise of the poetic gift which afterward dowried the life of the young girl, making it so rich with beautiful, earnest imaginings. Not until her fifteenth year did she weave her first poem; nor then, until at the suggestion of another, was it deemed, by her, worthy of publication; but, eliciting the voice of commendation, it was shortly followed by other articles both in song and prose.

Yet it was with fear and trembling that she entered the realms of authorland. As a young novice takes upon herself the vows which bind her to a new life—bending before the shrine, dropping the beads of her rosary, and murmuring *Ave Marias* all the while—so the pearls of thought slipped from her spirit’s grasp and were uttered in strains of mournful, holy music.

And then came the voice of praise and public approval, which is so very sweet to all young authors who send forth the tender fledglings of their genius from the home-nest to the outer world. How gratifying, when *other* voices answered her own, and the “echo-songs” of kindred hearts reached her in her solitude. Her desire for recognition was satisfied. Loving, childlike hearts, lingering over the creations of her pen, wondered if the author of those gentle limnings were not also fair and gentle and good. And such, indeed, was she! In character, Louise J. Cutter was all that was sweet, pure, lovely! There are none perfect on earth — “no, not one,” — but there have been earthly lives which seemed types of the heavenly, and deaths, beautiful, almost perfect in their accompanying angelic Patience, Faith, Hope. Such was the life she led of whom we write — such was the death she died — ennobled by seraphic Love.

During a period of three years, Louise J. Cutter was a welcome contributor to the press, her stories and poems finding an honored station in the publications of the day. In health, writing was her favorite pursuit; and afterward, when illness had laid its blighting hand upon her frame, still did she strive to breathe forth the earnest thoughts which filled her soul; and not until the later days of her life, when the feeble hand failed utterly to transcribe the visions which floated ever before her—not until then, in the new life which was fast dawning for her, did the “sweet singer” lay down her

harp, to sweep its cords no more until they were to be re-touched in Heaven.

To the true poet-soul *there is no death!* That which we call Death is but a transition from the Finite to the Infinite — a step over the threshold — from a poor feeble life, to a fuller, stronger, nobler. Says Mrs. Browning,

O, the world is weak—
The effluence of each is false to all;
And what we best conceive, we fail to speak.
Wait soul, until thine ashen garments fall!
And then resume thy broken strains, and seek
Fit peroration, without let or thrall,—

and such insufficiency was felt by the poet-soul of the gentle girl, who, in those last days, when the life-sands were slowly but surely ebbing, looking upon the tender mother who bent above her, whispered, with a faint sweet smile — “Mother, I shall sing in Heaven.”

Her nature was deeply moral; hence, everything she wrote was imbued with a pervading sentiment of the Good and True. Scorning deceit and treachery as she would a baser crime, every creation of her mind taught the final triumph of virtue over the machinations of vice, and breathed of the high aims and purposes which swayed her life.

With fine feelings, and a loving disposition, she had constant fellowship with all gentle, loving things — with animate and inanimate Nature — birds, flowers, running brooks — but more with tender human hearts.

In her friendships she was firm, constant — scorning deceit and falsity; giving out the love of an honorable soul and craving a like return. To such minds there can come no more painful truth than the consciousness that they have been deceived — investing the objects of their regard with imaginary perfections, and then, waking and weeping “to find their idols clay!”

But it was in the home-circle that the tender emotions of Louise's nature found fullest scope. Gentle, playful, affectionate — the dutiful daughter and loving sister — she was an ornament to the home that enshrined her — the fairest flower that blossomed there.

To her mother, whose love for her child seemed no common affection — but more like the tie which binds an elder to a younger sister, her whole heart went out. At once child and companion, that relation was very touching and beautiful. Absence from her side was painful always; but after disease had weakened her feeble frame, the shelter of her mother's arms and heart was doubly necessary.

The love of life is natural to all. The aged crave to stay a little longer here; but how strong the tie which binds to earth the young and beloved! For her of whom we write, life had many charms — the love of family and friends — of mother, father, brothers, sister, all united to her heart by precious links in the chain of home-love; and thus, with such tender arms about her, the stamp of Genius on her brow, and Hope singing sweet songs and gilding her future with rosy light — what wonder that she clung to earth for a season?

To the young and beloved the grave is very drear, until Faith points to the life beyond; and when we mark the first touch of the Spoiler's hand, how earnestly pray we that God will turn it aside. But ah, it cannot always be! "His ways are not as our ways."

In the winter of 1853, an illness which had attacked Louise and confined her to her bed for several weeks, left her in a feeble, delicate state, which caused parents and friends much anxiety.

Dr. Swan, of Medford, the family physician, who had always manifested a fatherly interest in the lovely girl, recommended a change — country air and exercise; which opinion was also expressed by Dr. Warren, of Boston, to whom the anxious parents carried their child for advice.

In the spring, finding that she still continued weak, to the health-giving hills of New Hampshire, the mother took her sick girl; but the pure country breezes brought no strength to her. A few weeks went by, and daily she seemed to grow feebler; increasing weakness precluded the equestrian exercise which had been recommended; and, in accordance with the advice of a skilful physician, who, looking upon the wasting girl, said, "My child, you had better go back to the quiet of your own home," the mother returned thither with her.

And then — but alas, how sad to trace the path of the Destroyer! The kindling eye, the brilliant flush on the still-rounded cheek, the crimson lips — *they* could no longer deceive; for the painful lassitude of step, the exhaustion which followed undue exertion, the shorten-

ing breath, the pallor which at fitful intervals usurped the hectic flush, and, above all, the hollow cough which began to sound a knell to hope — all these woke wildest fears, and whispered a word which has thrilled many and many a heart with agony — *Consumption!*

Perhaps, until now, no thought of Death and the "cool still grave" had crossed the brain of the youthful dreamer — no thought that *her* way must wend in the path of the early called; or likelier yet, if such thoughts had intruded on her silent hours, she had never given them utterance, fearing to wound the hearts that cherished her so tenderly; but now, Fear, dark and trembling, stood beside her, and she shrank from the way her feet were treading. But a record, found among her papers, written at this time, will express her feelings better than the pen of another can.

"LOUISE'S LIFE JOURNAL."

"Here shall my secret thoughts be traced, and, hidden from unfriendly eyes, rest quietly as in their own heart-home. Aye, rest quietly thou children of my soul! sleep till life's trials come upon me, till life's sorrows encompass me in gloom, till life's darkness gathers upon my brow — then may I come to thee, my soul's own children, and in thine unseen presence, forget life and life's cold world of darkness!

"—, July 1st. To-day I am sick! sick in body, sick at heart, but ah! *not sick of life!* The blue heavens look calm and bright in their summer beauty. The

pure air comes in at my open window, filling my still chamber with the sweet breath of summer flowers. Ah! *last* summer the rose bloomed upon my cheek; last summer I walked proudly forth in my own joyous health and strength. God grant that I may yet again walk thus!

"But now, my cheek is pale and sunken — my step slow and unsteady — and health and strength are gone from me. I feel that my hour of life may be short — and yet I cannot feel reconciled to the decree of heaven. I cannot say in humbleness of spirit, "My Father's will be done!" I fear the icy touch of Death — I fear the passage through the dark valley — and I fear the cold, still grave. Oh! I cannot lie quietly in its narrow depth! I cannot leave the glad bright earth, ere youth's fair roses have perished from Life's wayside! Oh, inexorable Death!

"My home — my kindred — my sweet mother — how, oh, *how* can I leave ye all? How can I give up life, when its spring time is upon me? when youthful hope is brightest, and youthful dreams linger so sweetly in my heart? Oh, I cannot, *cannot* die now. Life seems so sweet, so dear, that I could not rest well in the churchyard; I could not go peacefully to sleep under the cold sod — sleep, to moulder into dust! Oh, gracious Father, grant me life yet a little longer! — yet why do I ask it? do with me as Thou wilt, my prayer shall be for submission to Thy will.

"And if I die, — if I go down to the dark grave in my youth's rosier time, I will yet watch over thee, dear

kindred ones! My spirit shall come to thee, sweet mother, at the still midnight hour; and though unfelt, unseen, my lips shall press thy brow, blessing thee ever for the love thou bearest thy child. Sweet mother, if God takes me from thy circling arms, do not grieve for me! Think that I am near thee in the hour of quiet and the time of sorrow; think that each night I visit thee with a blessing from the Father's lips — that I love thee still with my olden fervent love, made stronger in the purity of Heaven. And you, my W——, my loved one! Thou wilt grieve for the sister of thy youth — grieve that she will no more walk beside thee in life — that thou canst never again press the brother's kiss upon her cheek. Yet sorrow not, dear one of my heart. Though I walk not with thee like one of earth, my spirit will go beside thee henceforth, and silently love and bless thee still. Yes, yes! I will be with ye all — beloved father, sweet mother, dear brothers and sister! Dear to my heart in life — in death ye shall still be dearer."

Again — in one of those deceitful pauses in consumption, when, flatteringly, he seems to paint the cheeks with the hue of returning health, and wakens new hope — for a little time Louise seemed stronger; and another journey, with change of air and scene was recommended.

In the latter part of September, 1853, she was taken to New York by a brother — and there, amid the kind-

est attentions of relatives and friends who devoted themselves assiduously to the gentle invalid, for a period it seemed as if the inroads of disease were stayed.

With revived hope, she again took the exercise which weakness had hitherto precluded ; and so, her faltering steps guided by strong and tender arms, she walked forth on sunny days, visiting the places of public interest in a great city — or, riding out into the country, looked upon the face of Nature which seemed always to her like that of a mother.

No resort interested her so much as the Crystal Palace. The treasures of Art congregated therein — especially the statuary — were sources of inexhaustible pleasure. Standing before the marble into which the sculptor has wrought the dreams of his poet-soul, she seemed to live a new life, enriched thenceforth with beautiful visions. For statuary is but an outward, tangible form of the indwelling grace and beauty enshrined in human hearts. Every poet cannot be a sculptor — but *every sculptor is a poet*.

An extract from a letter written home during that time will express the emotions she felt upon one of these visits.

NEW YORK, Nov. 1st, 1853.

“DEAR MOTHER:—Yesterday I went to the World’s Fair. The day was very beautiful ; the air clear and sweet as in summer time. W—— went with me, and he was so tender, so careful lest I should be wearied, that I could not feel fatigued. I was much pleased with

everything I saw, but will only mention what interested me most — *the statuary*. The two little marble children representing “the Children in the wood,” struck me as being particularly beautiful. They lay sleeping in each other’s arms, as babes lie in the home-cradle when the mother’s eye is watching their slumbers — the plump feet looking so life-like, the little dimpled hands clasped lovingly around each other’s forms, the pouting lips seeming as if about to part to ring forth a peal of infant glee ; and the sweet, careless innocence hovering in each fair face, made them seem to me like two cherubs strayed from Heaven, who, in wandering over the lower world, had fallen asleep in the arms of Nature.

“The “Perfumed Fountain” was very beautiful, but I will not describe it here — but will tell you of the group that pleased me most — “Christ and the Twelve Disciples.” W—— wished me to feel the whole effect of this, so he led me before it with my eyes shut ; and when he bade me open them I drew in my breath with a long inspiration, for it was to me as if I were in holy presence. Those chiselled figures, with their impressive faces, seemed to give the very air a tinge of sacredness ; and when I turned back to give a farewell look, a ray of brightness from the calm, sweet smile on the Saviour’s face seemed to enter my heart and make it purer.

“Above stairs, the gallery of paintings interested me much — one picture, especially, representing Wreckers plundering the bodies of the dead and dying whom they

had wickedly decoyed upon the reefy shore. And some of those upturned faces — oh, how they pleaded for mercy! It was terribly beautiful — that picture.

“I must mention something that I saw which will please the children. It was a figure of Captain Gulliver surrounded by the Lilliputian army. Gulliver was lying down, with mouth and eyes wide open as if in utter astonishment. The army of “little men” were literally all around and over him. One sat upon his elbow, (his arm being thrown over his head,) another had climbed upon the toe of his shoe, one into his vest pocket, a whole host were stationed under his arm, and others had raised a ladder against one of his legs *and thrown a thread over it to bind him down!* It reminded me of an ocean of tiny fish striving to capture a whale.

“I wish very much that the children could have seen it. There is something here to gratify every taste; and I saw almost everything, for W—— walked slowly, and was so careful that I did not soon get tired. But I have all *in my mind's eye*, so that, were I able, I do not think I should wish to go again.

“Next week, if possible, I expect to be at home — for I long for my little chamber and my home more than you can think, and I know that my mother, too, longs to welcome back her
LOUISE.”

Shortly after, she returned home; and then the reaction came. Daily her strength failed her; and when

the dreary winter days came, and, weak, ill, and suffering, she lay upon her bed — then she listened no longer to the flattering voice of Hope, but knew that she was surely, surely, treading that path, through which, sooner or later, every foot must pass.

Then came a change. Fear, dark and gloomy, brooded no more above her pillow; but Peace, instead, descended like a white dove, and folded its wings over her heart during all those long hours of fading strength — fading life — and fading earthly hopes.

The shadow had passed from her soul; the mercy of the Infinite had been granted her, strengthening her with promises of pardon, and of a new life where there should be neither suffering, sorrow, or sighing, nor any more sin.

And the same gentleness and quiet which had characterized every emotion of her previous life, guided her in this great change. In her dearest earthly loves she was undemonstrative, save by the gentlest tones and looks of affection; and now, in the presence of this very great new Love, whose rays illumined a life already so near the confines of the tomb, she did not noisily herald the happiness which filled her soul, — but folding Peace, like a mantle, around her, calmly awaited her summons. Yet, by the purer, holier light which dwelt in her clear hazel eyes — by the gentle patience with which she bore sufferings that grew painfully severe as life neared its termination — by the reproachful glances with which she said to the weepers about her

bed, "Mourn not for me. I shall soon see Heaven!" by all these blessed assurances, was it known that other than *earthly* arms were upbearing her then — that the Stay and Comforter was beside her.

One pleasant, spring-like day in March, 1854, the writer of this biography stood beside Louise J. Cutter. Lying on a sofa in her darkened sick room, with a face emaciated and scarcely less white than the pillow which supported her, yet still exquisitely lovely in the *contour* of its features and the *spirituelle* expression which lay thereon — with clear hazel eyes unnaturally brilliant, and waves of burnished chestnut hair oversweeping a damp white forehead — all this fading loveliness giving token of what she might have been in health and strength — so I found her.

In her emaciated hand she held a little common-place book, "in which," she said with a faint smile, holding it toward us, "she had been trying to write poetry."

Ah, it needed no TRYING! for the Poem, traced in faint, trembling chirography there, was a very heart-cry! — the "Last Wish" of her poet-soul. Like the dying swan's, her last notes were the sweetest. This latest poem she ever wrote, pencilled during those long weary hours of fading life, is one of the saddest, sweetest things that ever brought tears — telling the whole story of a heart which submits meekly, uncomplainingly, to the decree of the Father, yet implores to linger yet a little upon our pleasant earth until the birds and flowers she had so loved should come again — and

then, when Nature was bright and fair, "to die in summer time."

With aching heart I turned from the meek fair face before me to the written page again; nor did woman's eyes alone grow dim, reading that sad, sweet aspiration of a poet-soul, for manhood's heart questioned the decree which had gone forth for her.

"Is she not beautiful?" asked my companion, as we went forth and left her there, to look upon her face no more on earth.

"Yes, very, very lovely!" I replied; but it was not a vision of a fading, dying, *earthly* being I bore thence with me into the outer world — it was to me as if I had looked upon an angel!

"The Last Wish," shortly afterward, at the request of a friend who visited her often during her illness, appeared in the columns of the "American Union," a weekly for which she had been a valued contributor, and elicited the following reply which is inserted in these pages in accordance with the wishes of others.

THE ENDLESS SUMMER TIME.

INSCRIBED TO LOUISE J. CUTTER, ON READING HER "LAST WISH."

The April skies have wept their fitful tears
 Into the tender bosom of the sod —
 And thus, all silently, thy shadowy fears
 Are laid upon the bosom of thy God.
 Thou dost not *fear* to die — to pass away
 In youth and beauty, and thy girlhood's prime,
 But only breathe a sweet "Last Wish," to stay
 Upon the earth till blooms the summer-time.

Once, only once, I stood thy pillow by,
 And saw the crimson flushing of thy cheek —
 And marked the brilliant glory of thine eye,
 And heard thy voice in tender accents speak,
 Oh, were there power by *earthly* spell or prayer
 To win thy pathway from the "early dead,"
 I had not turned away — and left thee there —
 My heart *so heavy then with tears unshed!*

I know not if 'twill e'en be granted me
 To clasp thy hand, or hear thy voice again;
 We may not meet this side Eternity —
 Yet was that hour beside thee *not in vain*;
 For, where in Memory's halls, are pictures hung —
 To gaze upon thro' all life's coming years,
 I look on one sweet face, so fair and young,
 But oh, *so pale!* I may not stay my tears.

I mind me now of that oft-chanted strain —
 The sad sweet words an olden poet sung;
 It hath been so, and still must be again —
 "They, by the immortal gods beloved, die young!"
 And if, Louise, thy gentle feet must stray
 Blest vallies through, and heavenly kingdoms o'er, —
 If to the "Silent Land" thou tak'st thy way,
 We will not call thee "lost, but gone before."

E'en now the Spring is here with early bloom,
 And forest paths are gemmed with trailing flowers;
 And soon will come the deep blue skies of June —
 Delicious days of long, bright summer hours;
 And anthems glad are hymned by singing birds,
 And glad-voiced waters gush upon the air —
 And music's tones, and childhood's gleesome words,
 And balmy winds are floating everywhere.

And lovingly bends down the soft May sky,
 And human hearts are growing glad and light —
 Ah, woe that with the Summer thou must die!
 That unto thee hath come the "early blight!"
 Yet there are climes where endless Summer is —
 Where flowers are ever vernal, and the skies
 Bend always blue as June — how blest to live
 Within the *Summer-clime* of Paradise!

And oh, how blest to sing thy poet-songs
 In climes where Jesus speaketh lovingly!
 How blest to strike thy harp among the throngs
 On whom the All-Father smileth tenderly!
 How blest to go when years are light and few —
 Ere the fresh heart hath lost its early prime —
 To walk with Christ the eternal gardens through
 Where all is bloom and "*Endless Summer-time!*"

Shortly afterward, there came to me a very touching and beautiful note, written in a weak, trembling hand, which is now given to other eyes as a sacred revelation of the beauty of that heart which prompted such gentle expressions of regard, and a recognition of the interest with which she had inspired others.

"My DEAR FRIEND, —

How can I thank you for the lines you wrote me? They were so beautiful — and they came, too, in time for me to read them ere my eyes are closed forever, for I am lying now upon my sick bed, and my little bark of life is floating silently and surely toward the 'Land of Eternal Summer.'

"I am very weak. I have hardly been able, for a few days past, to speak aloud, but to-day feel a little better; and though I thought I should not write again, I cannot let pass the opportunity to thank you for your poem. Ah, my dear friend, you do not know how earnestly I wish that 'earthly prayers' *could* win me from the 'early blight' which seem awaiting me! I do not dread to die: I have no fears for the life beyond the grave: I know that happiness awaits me there: and yet, though my strength is all departed, and life seems nearly fled from me, if it were God's will, I should wish, oh! so intensely, to linger yet a few more years upon our pleasant earth.

"But I fear it cannot be — I fear that I must soon pass away! — but I shall not be forgotten! I know, my friend, that you will cherish my memory — I know that it will steal over you in many an hour of silent revery. You will come sometime to see my darling mother — and if my grave is made in our little churchyard you will visit it. Think, while you stand beside it, that the upturned face beneath is smiling on you; and that the still lips, could they move, would say, 'God bless you!'

"I must not write longer. I am growing weary. My heart sends you its last farewell.

LOUISE J. CUTTER."

And now, indeed, her "little bark of life" was floating silently and surely toward "the land of eternal

summer!" The blue violets had opened and shut their starry eyes upon the hill-slopes—the sweet May-time was past—the June roses had blushed and faded—sultry days came, when July, hot, panting, lapsed into August's arms—and then, in the prime of the summer, the messenger came!

The chords of life, so long strained to their utmost tension, would soon be severed; fainter and fainter grew the laboring breath; fierce pang and suffering could no more rack her frame; and the weary heart would soon be at rest; for, on the first bright, warm August day, she lay dying.

Around her were gathered the household band—mother, father, brothers, sister, all there; and the brother best beloved supporting her head in his arms. There was no fear in her soul that last hour: she spake as only those speak to whom the Comforter hath come—"Mother, father, weep not! I shall soon see Heaven! Brothers, little sister, you will not forget Louise. So live that we shall meet again beside the Saviour's throne."

Such were the messages, fraught with holy tenderness, her latest breath uttered. That was no gloomy death-bed from which the soul of the poet-girl went up to heaven.

In the Bible, which was an unfailing companion during the hours of her illness, are three leaves folded down by her own hand, marking passages which had been to her Divine sources of consolation. The 23d

Psalm — 14th chapter of St. John — and 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes, contain the promises and the exposition of that Faith which made her death bed so serene. Angel Louise! — would that every dying hour were peaceful, calm, as thine!

Mournfully the tidings of her death went out from the place where her life had lapsed into the better. Beyond the home-circle, whose grief no pen of mine can transcribe, the story of her departure brought tears. Many, not having seen, still loved her. The ripples from her poet-soul had circled outwardly over the waters of that sea whereon *other* barks, freighted like her own, were sailing — and the returning tide had cast many a remembrance and token at her feet. And when her frail tiny skiff had sailed *beyond* their sight on the waves of the "dark river," there were sad requiems sung for the departed.

Many touching and beautiful tributes to her memory appeared in the publications of the day, some of which are transferred to these pages.

The first given, is from the pen of a lady whose moral worth has endeared her to her personal friends no less than her literary talent has to the reading community.

LINES,

ADDRESSED TO THE FAMILY OF THE LAMENTED LOUISE J. CUTTER.

BY MRS. L. S. GOODWIN.

Dare I approach within the pale
Of grief as sacred, deeply due,
As ever woke the spirit's wail,
As ever broken household knew?
I — who have stayed inert with dread,
The while so earnest others aimed
To shower fragrance 'round her bed
Whom Muses loved and angels claimed?

Or what the balm I may impart?
Save — parents, brothers — ye will deign
Accept the tribute of a heart
That fervent mingles in your pain.
Yet let's together lift the gaze
From valley clods and pallid bier,
And trace her 'mid immortal rays,
Whose charms were e'en celestial here.

Hers was a narrow sea to cross,
And soon was gained the pleasant shore —
No more on stormy waves to toss,
To bear the earthly lot no more.
Hers was a mind of rarest gift, —
Holding communion with the stars; —
Panting to soar through clouds a-rift,
It early burst its prison bars!

He wisely rules whose "Name is Love,"
And wisely to His will we bow;
His tenderest lov'd are called above
With youth's fair impress on the brow —

As trust we 'neath soft summer skies
 The cherished plant to outer air,
 But when autumnal storms arise
 Within, its fragile sweetness bear.

From Mrs. Caroline A. Hayden, the authoress of
 "Carrie Emerson," the following fitting and beautiful
 meed to the departed was given to the public :

"Young, beautiful and gifted ! words like these,
 Seemed coined to mock life's stern realities ;
 Else why thus early perish ? Can there be
 On earth no sheltered nook for such as thee ?
 Where the young bud may gather for its dower
 Just strength enough to shield it from the power
 Of the insidious foe which oftenest flings
 Its mildew blight o'er earth's most glorious things.
 The open brow wears yet a purer white ;
 The lustrous eye beams with a holier light ;
 And on the cheek the hectic fever-flush
 Tinges the rose-tint with a deeper blush ;
 The foot has lost its light elastic tread,
 The glad voice caught a tremulous tone instead ;
 And the bright dreams that clustered round the heart,
 Touched by the same mysterious hand, depart.
 While, like the flame upon some funeral pyre,
 Flashes the light of genius, higher — higher !
 And every effort of the fertile brain,
 Gives out a nobler, more inspiring strain,
 Till, like the dying dolphin, beauty's gleam
 Has left its brilliant trace o'er life's dull stream.

"Young, beautiful, and gifted ! words like these
 Comes like the footfall of God's messenger, who sees
 A blight about to fall upon the heart,
 More deep, more fatal than the poisoned dart

Which sin and sorrow flings, when years of care
 Have taught the mind a hiding mask to wear ;
 Too beautiful and fragile for the strife,
 With which stern Fate oft mingles common life ;
 Too sensitive and shrinking for the blast,
 Which comes in fitful changes sweeping past ;
 And all too finely strung the spirit lyre,
 To bear the touch of aught save spirit fire ;
 Earth is no dwelling-place for such as thou !
 Too soon its breath would shade thy glorious brow
 There are no fetters for the free glad soul,
 O'er which the waves of death but once may roll,—
 And thou, all pure, etherialized, may blend
 With the heart-worship of each stricken friend,
 And by thine *unseen presence* help them still
 To bend, submissive, to the Father's will."

"Winnifred Woodfern" — a talented lady contribu-
 tor to the press — who had once met the gentle girl,
 addressed to her during her illness the following lines :

Louise ! Louise ! the many lays now blending
 Like grand key-notes in harmonies divine —
 The words of love so many hearts are sending,
 Fill me with fear, — I come to offer mine !
 Led by the memory of that day in Summer,
 When, 'mid my tears, I read thy words of love, —
 When my heart yearned toward the sweet new comer,
 Now looking towards her glorious home above !

Louise, I loved thee, when thine eyes, clear beaming,
 Sought in my own a kindred glance to find !
 Louise, I love thee ! in my sweetest dreaming,
 Thine is the form still present to my mind !

Yet, since that day of brief and blest communion,
 When thoughts my heart long pined to say, were told,
 I sought not, dreamed not, nearer love or union,—
 And thus perchance, thou deemest me changed or cold!

* * * * *

A few last words: — If thou art spared, to show us
 What angels on this fallen earth may be,
 Then thy pure spirit well will read and know us —
 Then thou will learn how I remembered thee!
 If I must read Death's mystery before thee,
 Come sometimes where what once has loved thee sleeps,
 Kneel on my grave — shed tears of sorrow o'er me —
 And I shall know, even in the mold, who weeps!

If thy sweet eyes are closed in deathly slumber,
 And thou art taken home to God and Heaven,
 Thou, of His saints, will swell the glorious number,
 And to thy hands the sweetest harp be given!
 Then fare thee well! When in that blest assemblage
 Thy strains float earthward, waking the divine,
 If on the upward air a prayer comes trembling,
 Bear it to God, sweet angel, — 'twill be mine!

“Lottie Linwood,” too, wove a tender heart-song in
 her memory.

As a birdling flies from its nest away
 To a south-land rich with blooms,
 Or the brilliant clouds of a summer's day
 Melt when the evening comes, —
 Or, as the gentlest rose-leaves fall,
 When touched by frost's chill breath,
 So answered she thy meaning call —
 Oh stern, relentless Death!

I knew her not, yet her warbling tone
 O'er my spirit's lyre hath thrilled;
 Tho' the harp is loosed, and the minstrel gone,
 And the pale cold hands are stilled,
 Yet it floateth out on the dreamy air
 As I sit 'neath the harvest moon,
 And I dream of a maiden young and fair,
 And I weep that she slept so soon.

Oh, the young, the good, the gifted! — all
 Whom best we love, must die!
And the flowers wreath out a folding pall —
Winds sing their litany!
 And the angels chant when the good of earth
 Lie down in the grave to sleep,
 And they strike their harps for another birth
 In the land where they never weep.

Anna M. Bates, a pleasing young poetess, sings of her
 also —

No more may her fingers awaken
 The music that breathed o'er love's chords —
 The bloom from the rose tree is shaken,
 And hushed are her own charmed words;
 But still doth there come a faint quiver —
 Not yet are those sweet echoes o'er —
 They will float far away down Time's river
 And alas, we shall hear them no more!

Hath the perfumed lamp died on the altar,
 While blossoms still garland its shrine?
 And did not the death-angel falter
 As he listened her notes so divine?

Ah no! she is laid in her grave-bed —
 The gifted, the lovely, the fair —
 And fame, from his laurels, is shedding
 Green leaflets to weave 'mid her hair.

Weep not for the maid who is lying
 So silent, so pulseless and pale!
 Bright forms hovered round her in dying
 And led her across the dark vale.
 She hath gone *to make songs for the angels*
 Away on a beautiful shore;
 And never the dirge-notes of sorrow
 May breathe through her melodies more!

Another tribute, from the pen of Lissa M. E. Burrill,
 follows:

Another harp is broken,
 Its spell-touched strings are mute!
 Strive not one strain to waken
 From that sweet silent lute!
 On earth its cords are shattered —
 Forever sadly riven —
 But 'mid the blessed singers
 'Tis swept anew in Heaven!

Another bird has faltered
 Upon its weary way,
 And down with folded winglet
 Its panting form must lay;
 But in a home of glory,
 Where hymns of rapture swell,
 Hath gone our poet sister —
 Our sweet Louise, to dwell.

Many other articles of a like nature to the above, appeared after her decease; but we will quote no more to these pages excepting some few from the "Obituary" notices which announced her death in the various papers for which she had been a welcome and valued contributor.

The pen of William E. Graves, Esq., editor of the American Union, recorded the following token of friendship and respect:

"LOUISE J. CUTTER.

"Our readers have undoubtedly all learned, ere this, the sad intelligence of the death of this interesting young lady and accomplished writer, at the early age of nineteen. Young, beautiful and beloved, she died — the victim of consumption! The mournful result has filled the hearts of her many friends with profound grief. There is always something deeply and peculiarly affecting in the death of the young and beautiful. But in the gradual decline of the poor victim of consumption, it has been often remarked —

"There is a sweetness in woman's decay,
 When the light of her beauty is fading away,"

that renders the scene doubly touching and solemn. A fairer, gentler being, or one of more spotless purity, we have reason to believe, never gladdened earth with her smile. During the latter part of her illness, her sufferings were intense. But she felt prepared to welcome

death, and she longed to be where pain and suffering would be known no more.

"Many a reader will at once recall to mind, at this time, the "Last Wish" of the dying girl, published in our columns in early spring-time.

"The original copy, in her own handwriting, is before us. And how well these lines portrayed her feelings at that time! Who could fail to sympathize with that gentle being who knew that Death had marked her for his own? — or who could fail to join in the prayer that the last wish might be realized, where she entreats,

Let me hear the song of the summer birds,
That is hushed in the wildwood now —
Let me feel the touch of the summer breeze
Once more on my heated brow!
Let me feel once more through my lattice come
The rose's and violet's breath —
Let me see the flowers and the springing grass,
Ere I sleep in the arms of Death.

"That she was fully aware of her situation at the time, is plain from the verse where she says,

The crimson flush is on my cheek,
The brightness in my eye! —
And the dark seal set on my brow
That bringeth death's cold sigh;
But I know that the Saviour's open arms
Will take me to his breast,
And his gentle smile beam on me there
In the land of eternal rest.

"Among the most intimate, perhaps, of her friends in this vicinity, we have never entertained a doubt, from repeated interviews, that the hope conveyed in the last four lines of the verse just quoted, cheered and sustained the gentle girl, during many hours of untold anguish and distress. If she — the sinless — had offended any being on earth, she had asked forgiveness. She had made her peace with Heaven; and she longed to go there — to be away from the world, and at rest.

"And yet, notwithstanding all this, with the wail of the winter winds drifting coldly and drearily by, how could she help adding,

But I long to hear the pleasant sounds
Which the wildwood warblers pour,
And to gaze on the soft blue skies again
Ere I go to return no more.
I long to see the violets bloom,
The wild rose and the thyme,
To hear soft winds go whispering by —
To die in summer time!

"And "The Last Wish" was gratified. She lived to hear the birds, to see the violets bloom, and to gaze on the soft blue sky; and she did *die in summer time!*"

In her editorial department of the Boston Olive Branch, Mrs. C. F. Gerry gave a gentle, womanly "Tribute to the memory of Louise J. Cutter."

"It is a sad and solemn task to record the death of another of our contributors — the young and talented Louise J. Cutter.

"Many of our readers have never met her, save in the fairy realm of authorland, through which she was beginning to roam with graceful steps, but they will join in our lament for her loss.

"They will remember the sweet poems and sketches which appeared in the Olive Branch under her signature, and shed a tear of sorrow for the favorite, now numbered among the early dead.

"Fair as a poet's dream, with a heart full of generous impulses, and the glorious gift of genius, she trod the path of life with a thousand bright anticipations. The star of her home, the idolized daughter, the beloved sister — she must have been bound to earth by many tender ties. But consumption placed his dire signet on her brow, and she faded slowly. For many months she failed gradually, till at last the sunken cheek crimsoned with a hectic flush; the attenuated frame, the lustrous eye, told that some hand was slowly, surely, unloosing the "silver cord" of life.

"There were those who saw this change with fearful anxiety, and clung tenaciously to hope. Spring came with gentle breeze and budding flower and singing bird, but she brought no boon of health to the suffering one, and in the "prime of the summer" she passed away from us to the land of spirits.

"Alas! how dark the shadow which has fallen on her home! How the household band will miss the low voice, the love-lit eye, the pale, fair face of the loved and lost! And her mother, to whom she was so dear a

treasure — how terrible the grief which fills her heart! We have no language with which we can fitly tell how deeply we sympathize with her anguish. But we would entreat her to turn from the tomb where the sleeper is lying, to that world of bliss whither she trusts the spirit of her child has flown; and, in the thought of endless peace and rest, find consolation in her sorrow.

"As for us, we, who have watched her career with interest, will think of her,

"Kindly and gently, as of one
For whom 'tis well to be fled and gone —
As of a bird from a chain unbound,
As of a wanderer, whose home is found —
So let it be!"

The Boston True Flag, to which paper she was also a contributor, published the following "Obituary:"

"The melancholy duty devolves upon us of recording the death of Louise J. Cutter, whilom a graceful and pleasing contributor to our columns. She died, at the residence of her father, in Medford, August 1st, at the age of nineteen, after an illness of upwards of two years, nearly one of which she had been confined within doors. Her disease was consumption, that fearful ill that seizes so often upon the beautiful flowers of earth and withers them in our view, regardless of the outstretched hands and aching hearts that would save them from the destroyer. She had, from the commencement, seen her doom, and in the words of her spirit, poured through the

channel of song, there was a tone of sweet sadness that betokened a consciousness of it; but there was a resignation mingled therewith that revealed a mind at peace. There was no complaining. A sweet serenity rested upon every line — a holy calmness that seemed to borrow its sanctity from the bourne to which she was rapidly hastening — and thus she drew near the final scene of her dissolution, her faith and trust in the glories of the future strengthening as her hold upon life grew weaker, till her angelic spirit rose to its place among the blest.

"Her life was a remarkable one. She had been brought up with few advantages of education, and few extraneous incentives to the cultivation of her mind, but the genius which was in her could not be repressed. It prompted her to the development of the mind that was rich with beautiful things. It shadowed a world beyond the one in which she lived, and peopled it with fancies of her own — a world all beautiful and good, with happiness for its aim, and virtue the means of happiness — and her pages glowed with the pencillings of virtuous triumph.

"She was a hopeful and loving writer, and what her heart wished she wove into her creations. Hence her contributions for the press were of a character to touch the hearts of the gentle and the good, in which particular they excelled. As a poet, she was earnest and ardent — pouring her thoughts into graceful verse, though at times careless through excessive earnestness, but always clear and truthful. Had life been continued to her, she would have been a writer of great excellence.

"Many will mourn her departure, but such must remember that her blameless and pure life is still continued in a region where sickness and sorrow may never obtrude themselves, and where her sad songs will be changed to those of rejoicing.

To The Metropolitan — a literary paper published at Washington, D. C., the corresponding New York editor wrote thus —

"Louise J. Cutter! How often, by the drooping and fading away of some beautiful and gentle being, the conviction forces itself more strong and enduring upon our mind, that "whom the gods love, die young."

"With feelings of keenest grief, though tempered by the hope that "that bourne" to which she has gone is the bosom of the Father — God, we chronicle this week the demise of this amiable and talented young lady at the early age of nineteen years. She was one of earth's purest poetic spirits — and loved to roam at will through the bowers of poesy, plucking offerings to cast at the shrine of affection.

"Months ago, when the snow spirit was abroad, and flaky emanations from her hand covered as with a mantle the face of Nature, with premonitions of Azrael's coming, she murmured the wish —

"Let me hear the song of the summer birds
That is hushed in the wildwood now!
Let me feel the touch of the summer breeze
Once more on my heated brow!

Let me feel once more through my lattice come
 The rose's and the violet's breath —
 Let me see the flowers and the springing grass,
 Ere I sleep in the arms of death !”

“ Her wish was granted. The snow-white crocus and the blue-eyed violets were placed in her hand when the soft south-wind began to fan her eastern home, and soon the syringa, and rose, and heliotrope mingled their fragrance for her delicate senses. But ah! as Hope “wove a flattering tale” a deeper flush painted the sick girl's cheek, a supernal brilliancy lighted her eye — and by-and-by the “silver cord was loosed, the pitcher broken” for time.

“ Is it meet for us to repine ?

“ She was weary — shall we weep
 O'er a tired heart's soft sleep ?
 Cease, fond nature — hush thy sighs !
 Angels call her to the skies :
 Hark ! the choral anthems swell —
 ‘ All is well — all is well ! ’ ”

“ We shall not forget thee, angel Louise ! ”

Thus, in these extracts from the many tributes which were written to the memory of the departed, have we evidence that worth and talent mourned her loss, speaking in kindest words of their gentle, younger sister.

It has often been questioned, whether the stormy elements of passion, and intensely vivid feeling, are

necessary to the true poet's experience. Such indeed, can say —

“ In my large joy of sight and touch ;
 Beyond what others count as such,
 I am content to suffer much, ” —

and thus, enjoying much, and “ suffering much, ” they tread their sublime pathway. But there are *other* souls — sweet, tender, *childlike*, poetic souls — which go wandering through life — like Goethe's child — friend, Bettine, with the gift of “ second sight ” upon them — seeing marvellous visions, which poets only see, of all blessed loving things, — and making their lives while on earth types of the pure and heavenly.

Such was she of whom we write — the humble, sweet, loving poet-girl !

Louise J. Cutter's was not “ a pen of fire, ” nor were the thoughts, which wove beautiful fancies, prompted to utterance by

“ A spirit of mingled fire and dew, ”

but they were the faithful transcripts of her own soul — gentle, pure, and womanly. “ Whatever her loving heart wished, she wove into her creations, ” and so, wrote no line, “ which, dying, she might wish to blot ; ” and, going down, as did she, to an early grave, was it not far better to leave behind, a record of the purest gentlest thoughts, which, guiding her every act, so beautified her brief life, than a blotted scroll of wild, fitful,

tempest-dreams, and unrealized, maddening, passionate longings for *the unattainable*?

Alas, — *the unattainable* ! Do we not all,

“ With stammering lips and insufficient sound,”

strive and struggle, “ to deliver right, the soul’s expression ? ” — hath not every heart a sense of “ Insufficiency ? ” crying,

“ When I attain to utter forth in verse
Some inward thought, my soul throbs audibly
Along my pulses, yearning to be free
And something farther, fuller, higher, rehearse,
To the individual, true, and the universe,
In consummation of right harmony.”

Ah yes ! no soul can utter fully its highest aspirations : some, indeed, fail wholly — like the delicate, trembling, shrinking sensitive flower, folding the petals *inwardly*, thus shutting the fragrance in their own hearts, or withering under the faintest touch which disturbs the air around.

Louise J. Cutter’s writings express, pre-eminently, the aspirations of a beautiful soul which, *unmatured*, went back to the Hand who gave it.

She had the faults common to all young authors ; — but she had bright promise, too, for future excellence ; and had she lived to riper years she would doubtless have improved greatly in polished vigor of style and descriptive power — for, as has been said, “ she was

often careless through excessive earnestness.” But it was not so ordered. Hope could weave no “ sweet roundelay ” whose charm might stay the step of the Destroyer. She died early.

Like a sweet tender violet she sprang up in a quiet, wayside nook — making the short spring of a life, which never ripened into summer-time for her, fragrant with the beauty of her blameless life, and quiet, loving deeds — and then she was transplanted to other gardens,

Frail, delicate, and timid,
She perished in life’s May —
And closed her eyes, as violets do,
Early in Spring’s brief day.

In Medford grave-yard moulders the casket which once, fair and stainless, enshrined the pearl of “ a meek and quiet spirit.”

The snows of two winters have draped that grave — but *she* is not there — she is risen — and for her there is no more winter — for it is always “ summer-time ” in Heaven !

Last year when Autumn’s burning, fiery finger
Was laid on every trembling forest leaf, —
When the dead Summer, ghost-like, seemed to linger
Over her orphaned beauties, ’mid her grief ;
When the bright sumach’s fruit was flushed with crimson,
And holly berries gleamed from out the wood,
And queenly asters flaunted in the garden,
And golden rod in regal beauty stood ;

When brooks went singing on 'mind rows of sedges,
 And willow osiers kissed the river tide,
 And red vines clambered over rocky ledges,
 And hardy wintergreen crept close beside;
 When oak, and ash, and maple on the hill-tops
 Flung out upon the winds their crimson banners, —
 And, washed by Autumn rains, lay spreading meadows,
 As, in the South, the cool and green savannahs;

There bloomed in her rare beauty a sweet maiden
 As young and fair as any poet-vision, —
 With all of grace and loveliness rich laden
 As angels bright who dwell in climes Elysian:
 And when the harvest moon walked forth in splendor,
 And a soft golden haze had veiled the skies,
 Gazing abroad, she spake in accents tender,
 The while a few sad tears bedimmed her eyes: —

"O, words to me are vain, my gentle mother,
 To speak the struggle wild within my soul, —
 And much I fear to tell thee, noble brother,
 How soon my feet must tread the 'shore-line goal';
 For, redder than the brilliant flush of Autumn,
 Upon my cheek the tint of crimson lies, —
 And thicker than the haze that shrouds the sunset,
 The dimming mist of death within mine eyes.

"I love to gaze upon the regal forest —
 Upon its coronal of gold and fire;
 I love to watch the round moon of the harvest,
 As up the skies it climbeth high and higher!
 Thus, oft, grew red my cheek, and lip, and forehead,
 When love-words smote my ear in whispers tender —
 And, brighter than the moon which climbs yon heavens,
 Uprose within my heart one orb of splendor.

"How blest have been the glad years of my girlhood!
 What sweets and loves were granted unto me!
 I had not thought to die when life is dearest —
 To crush the hopes upreared so tenderly!
 Yet *must it be!* for I have felt the warning —
 A cold hand claspeth mine, and nevermore
 Can I unloose it, save, when some calm morning,
 Freed, I wake upon the heavenly shore.

"Yet would I die not when the snows are draping
 A ghostly shroud the death's bosom over —
 Nor yet, when Spring is born, and skies are weeping,
 And winds are soft as breathings of a lover:
 Not when the budding maple's scarlet tresses
 Flaunt on the air, nor when the scented thyme
 Gives to the wooing winds its shy caresses —
Not then — not then! not till the Summer time!"

The bright new year was born — grew strong — was laden
 With all its richest gifts of balm and bloom,
 When, without fear or trembling, this pale maiden
 Walked down the pathway leading to the tomb.
 Nor had the Summer clasped hands with the Autumn,
 Nor yielded wearily her perfumed breath,
 Ere, meekly folding her white hands together,
 She bowed her golden head, and slept in death.

Now, 'neath a mound within a village grave-yard
 Is hid the gleam of waving golden hair, —
 And autumn rains are dropping in the turf-sod,
 Yet will they never harm the sleeper there;
 For, when, one day ago in bright September,
 I stood that grave beside — and when the breeze
 Paused, saddened, with me there, I well remember
 It seemed to whisper "*Thou'rt an angel now, Louise!*"

Boston, March, 1856.

MARY W. JANVRIN.

LITTLE EFFIE:

— OR —

THE STEP-MOTHER'S LESSON.

"No, Marion, no! I will never love her; she need not expect it. What! think you that one who has always been petted and caressed, with no wish ungratified and no dull cares to trouble her; one whose very life has been but a gay round of pleasure, and whose every thought and dream has been taught to look, not at home, but to the world for happiness, — think you that one whose whole heart is wrapt up in excitement and ambition, can ever learn to *love* a child, and that child not her own? No, indeed, Marion. "Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined." I have never been taught to love children, and I will not love little Effie."

"Oh, Arabel, how can you speak thus! how will you dare to stand at the altar and breathe the holy vows of wedlock with such a fearful determination in your heart? How will you dare promise to love and obey a husband whose only child you are determined not to love? To know that the little motherless being is yearning for your fond kiss of affection, and yet heartlessly deny her the boon of tenderness? Oh! Arabel, Arabel — I know you cannot be so unjust, so heartless. You will yet love

her, for she is very, very lovely; and if you really love the father, you must love his child."

"Never! Marion — never. She may be lovely as a fairy, yet I should not love her any more. I do love the father, but I am *determined* not to confine myself to the care of a child while I am yet so young, and once for all I say I will not love her."

"Stay, Arabel; revoke those fearful words; go not to the altar with such bitter thoughts in your heart. If you — but no; I will not say more. I know that heart better, far better than you know it yourself, and mark me, Arabel, in less than one year from the time you become the mistress of Mr. Landon's home, your love for little Effie will be equal to that which you cherish for the father!" and the fair speaker bent over the little basket of work upon the centre-table, with the air of one who knew that further argument would be useless.

The speakers were seated in a sumptuously furnished drawing-room in one of the most imposing mansions of our own fair city. Arabel Templeton, she who was first introduced to the reader, was an orphan; but from the time when she was four years old, she had resided with her aunt, a wealthy widow lady, whose every thought was bound up in the lovely being who had been so affectionately confided to her care. She was extremely proud and aristocratic; and from being constantly by her side, the little Arabel naturally imbibed much of the selfish, haughty ambition which characterized her

kind but too indulgent aunt. For Mrs. Merton, being herself childless, almost idolized her little niece. She was extremely proud of her exquisite beauty, and of the admiration she excited wherever she carried her; and thus was she early taught to look to the gay world as the only source of true happiness; and had it not been for the unwearied attention and exertion of Marion Aubrey, a relative of Mrs. Merton's, who had resided with her since her marriage, and who watched over the little Arabel with all a mother's tenderness, guarding her with all the kind watchfulness of her amiable nature — had it not been for her restraining influence, we fear the young heart of Arabel Templeton had become so immersed in the dream of worldly pleasure, as to be wholly insensible to every attribute of womanly tenderness.

And now let us describe Arabel herself. She was very beautiful; possessing a form of faultless elegance, a fine classical face, with dark, brilliant eyes and a lily complexion. But the charm of her peerless beauty consisted in the dark flowing tresses which clustered around the snowy brow and fell in profuse waves over her neck and shoulders; the striking contrast of the raven hair with the clear whiteness of her complexion, rendering the finely moulded features singularly beautiful. She was by education, wilful and selfish; seldom retracting what she had once determined upon. But in her heart, that young, tender heart, which had been entirely overlooked in the ambitious training of her proud aunt — there was a world of hidden tenderness, which needed

but the skilful touch of a sympathizing spirit, to gush forth and discover the sweetest notes of the heart's own melody.

She met with Mr. Landon — her affianced husband — at a party given by one of her friends. He was a gentleman of high standing in the city of Philadelphia, very wealthy, and possessing a person of fine manly beauty, which, together with the singular fascination of his manner, rendered his society eagerly sought, alike by the younger and more elderly portion of society. He had early been called to mourn the death of a beloved wife, and never, until he met with Arabel Templeton, had he seen one whom he felt disposed to make her successor. But he was captivated by the singular beauty of Arabel; and with the penetrating eye of love, he read in every motion the deep fount of tenderness hidden in her heart. He loved her tenderly, and, as the passion was reciprocated, soon wooed and won her for his bride. And it was with the heartless determination which the reader has already heard, that the wilful beauty was led to the altar.

The bridal was a splendid affair. Beauty and luxury flung the spell of pleasure over the scene, and never a shadow darkened the festive hour. The bride looked the very queen of beauty, with the rich folds of snowy satin falling gracefully around the elegant form, and a simple wreath of orange flowers twined among the raven tresses. The bridegroom, with his handsome face and manly form, looked more noble than ever; and his

proud glance fell upon the blooming face of his young bride.

The parting between Mrs. Merton and Arabel was extremely painful, and the tears flowed down the fair cheeks of Marion Aubrey as she pressed the form she had so long and tenderly watched over, to her faithful heart; and she whispered in her ear: "Think of me often in your new home, and love little Effie for my sake." Try and tell me, when I next see you, that you have been kind to the little being whose mother you have by name become."

Arabel looked the determined reply she could not utter, and with a full heart and tearful eyes, left the dear home of her childhood for that of him who was now all in all to her.

The heart of Arabel Landon thrilled with pride as her husband led her up the marble steps of one of Philadelphia's stateliest mansions, and pressed a fond kiss upon her fair cheek, as he seated her upon a crimson velvet sofa in the elegant drawing-room.

"This, dearest," he said, "is our home. Long has it been without such a star as thee to grace it, but henceforth, the fairest flower in Philadelphia will be its mistress."

A feeling of tenderness, such as she had never known before, stole over her as she laid her head upon her husband's shoulder, and a tear rolled down her fair cheek. Her husband kissed it off, and gaily reproaching her for weeping the very first day she entered her new home, left the room to give directions to the servant.

Left to herself, Arabel gazed around the spacious apartment, and her cheeks flushed with pride as she surveyed the rich furniture and costly ornaments. An elegant Persian carpet covered the floor, and the costly mirrors reflected back rich pictures which hung upon the walls. The beautiful works of sculpture, placed in every niche, each held a rich porcelain holder, in which was placed a bouquet of fresh flowers. The sun was shining brightly through the rich crimson drapery, which shaded the long windows, and bathed each object in a flood of mellow light.

Arabel could scarcely realize that she was the mistress of so much splendor, — and she sat there upon that rich sofa, like one in a dream.

Suddenly the door opened, and a beautiful child bounded into the room. She was about four years of age, with a fragile, fairy-like form, and a round, bright face, around which clustered a shower of golden curls, which almost hid the white dimpled shoulders. Her eyes were blue, and bright as stars, and her half-timid, gentle expression, revealed the yearning tenderness of her little heart, and the extreme sensitiveness of her ardent nature. She stole softly to the sofa where Mrs. Landon was seated, and stood with one dimpled hand laid on a chair near it, and one tiny finger of the other pressed upon the rosy lips, gazing with childlike earnestness upon the fair face of Arabel.

Suddenly dropping the little hand, she said: "You are a very pretty lady; prettier than dead mamma was,

because she had great blue eyes like me, and yours are black. But papa said you would love me, and be just like my mamma in heaven, and you will, won't you?"

A feeling almost of tenderness stole over Arabel's spirit, but she quickly banished it, and thought to herself, "If I love her now it will soon wear away, and, besides, I would not have Marion Aubrey know I had altered my determination for the world!" So when little Effie laid her tiny hand in hers, and flung one white arm over her neck to kiss her, she pushed her from her and said, in as stern a tone as she could command: "You must not be so babyish, Effie. I did not come here to take care of children, and of course I cannot love you as your own mother did."

The child, so coldly repulsed, started from the side of Arabel, as though a serpent had stung her, and the hot tears sprang quickly to her blue eyes, as she said, "Papa told me you would love me, but I shall not tell him you will not, because he would not love you so well, and then you would be unhappy — and dead mother said I must try and make every one happy."

A pang shot through Arabel's heart, but she did not trust herself to reply, and the little girl stifled a sob as she slowly left the room.

A week passed by and the greater part of each night was devoted to bridal parties, where the homage paid to the wonderful beauty of the youthful Mrs. Landon, flattered the husband's pride, and made Arabel more vain and heartless than ever.

Mr. Landon noticed, when at home, that his wife did not appear fond of little Effie, and he was greatly displeased; for though he passionately loved his wife, yet the memory of his first love was still fresh in his heart, and as he had loved her, so now he loved her child, with an affection which neither the caresses of beauty, nor the importance of other subjects could diminish. He noticed the mournful expression of Effie's blue eyes, when she timidly looked up into the beautiful face of her step-mother; and he had more than once seen the tears stealing down her little cheeks. She appeared very sad and unhappy, and though she seemed to love him more fondly than before, and would often twine her tiny arms around his neck, and lay her soft round cheek upon his, yet the silvery voice, which formerly prattled so sweetly, was seldom heard singing the childish songs her father and her old nurse had taught her. Her step grew less buoyant, and her blue eyes more spiritual as days sped on; and the doting father grew more and more anxious, for he had tried in vain to discover the cause of the sad change in Effie's usually playful nature.

Alas! he little thought the sweet child was pining for a mother's love. He heard not the simple prayer she uttered, as nightly she knelt by her downy couch, with her little hands clasped tightly together; if he had, the sweet tones of that childish voice, as she prayed to the Great Being, who, even her young heart had been taught to reverence — "Please make my new mamma love me," methinks the affection of the father for his child would

have spurned that "new mamma," and the passionate love he cherished for her been turned to scorn and displeasure. But he heard it not; and attributed the want of affection for his child, to the fatigue she felt after the constant round of parties and operas she attended. But this was not the case. She determined not to love her, and her wilfulness prevented her from showing even the small feeling of tenderness which her little step-daughter had awakened in her heart. So she continued the same frivolous round of gaiety, unheeding the little birdling that was yearning to nestle her dimpled hand in hers, and murmur with that sweet childish voice, the gentle name of *mother*.

One night, about two months after Mrs. Landon's marriage, she was going with her husband and a party of friends to hear an Italian singer, and her heart beat high with expectation as the hour drew near, for she had long wished to hear the celebrated *prima donna*. She sat with her husband in their splendid drawing-room, awaiting the arrival of the friends who were to accompany them to the opera — chatting merrily, and every now and then gazing impatiently through the richly draperied window — when little Effie entered the room, and stealing to the sofa, where sat her father, leaned her little head on his lap, murmuring: —

"Please don't go away to-night, papa. Effie is sick; her head aches very bad. Oh, don't go away to-night!" and she climbed upon his knee, and twined her white arms around his neck.

He gently raised her head from his shoulder, and gazing into her face, saw how feverishly the pretty cheeks were flushed, and how wildly brilliant were the deep blue eyes. And he could even feel her little heart beat quickly against his own.

"No, Effie, darling, I shall not leave you to-night," he said, as she once more repeated her request.

"What!" exclaimed his wife, turning from the window, whither she had retreated when Effie entered, "not going to the opera to-night!"

"No," he replied, in a mild but firm tone; "I shall not leave my sick child when even her life may be in danger."

"Fie, upon a sick child; she is as well as I am. 'Tis only a childish whim, and you are very foolish to stay at home just to gratify a mere caprice. But you must go, for I will not stay at home!"

Mr. Landon gazed upon her in mute astonishment. He had not deemed her capable of uttering such heartless words.

"Arabel," he said, when he once more recovered his composure — "Arabel, you can act in accordance with your own will; you are free to go if you choose. I shall remain with my sick child, whom your own heart should tell you is dearer to me than my very life." And thus saying, he raised little Effie in his arms and left the apartment.

Arabel was very angry that he should prefer pleasing his child to her, and determined to attend the opera in

spite of his refusal to accompany her. So when her friends arrived, she entered their carriage, and was soon in the midst of the glare and bustle of a crowded theatre. The performance commenced, and Arabel's long-cherished wish was gratified. She heard the Italian singer, but the tones of her magnificent voice fell like a mockery, and the sea of faces around her all seemed blended in one, and that one the little Effie's; while the deep, constant murmur of the assemblage sounded like one voice, uttering in childish tones, "Don't leave me to-night, papa." Even the dark face of the Italian *prima donna* seemed changed to one of childish purity, with starry blue eyes and golden hair, and cheeks all flushed with fever.

"Poor little Effie," she said to herself — "she did indeed look very ill. Oh! I wish I had staid with her!"

She was restless and impatient until the theatre was over, and she scarcely uttered a word during the weary ride home. And [when she reached it, her heart fluttered wildly, and a strange, indefinable emotion caused her to tremble like an aspen leaf.

There was a light shining from Effie's room, and with an inward dread of something, she knew not what, filling her heart, she noiselessly entered the apartment. For a moment she stood gazing upon the scene before her. Little Effie was lying motionless upon her couch, with her long golden hair streaming over the snowy pillow, and her flushed cheeks burning with fever. Her

eyes were closed, and their silken lashes swept the hot cheeks. By the bedside sat the faithful nurse, with the silent tears coursing down her wrinkled countenance; and leaning over the little sufferer, with his arms folded upon his heaving breast, and the anxious glance of his dark eyes fixed upon the face of his child, stood the father — the husband of Arabel.

"Oh! Charles," was all she could say, and burst into a passion of tears.

He started from his position, while an expression of utter wretchedness flitted over his face, and said, in a cold, stern voice, whose tone of bitterness went to the very soul of his wife — "Nurse, pass Mrs. Landon a chair."

Effie opened her blue eyes when she heard her father's voice, and starting up and clasping her little hands, exclaimed in the wild tones of delirium: — "Oh! papa, do pray God to make my new mamma love me! Please do, papa!"

A tear started to his eye, and he glanced bitterly towards his wife. But when he saw how pale and haggard she looked, and how bitterly she wept, his heart was softened and he really pitied her, when she sprang towards the couch, exclaiming: "Oh, my God! this is too much. Effie, darling, Effie, I do love you, and I always have; and I will be kind and gentle like your own mamma. But don't, don't say those dreadful words again; they burn like fire on my heart!" And she pressed Effie's little form to her bosom, and with her

raven tresses mingling with the child's golden hair, she wept long and bitterly, while Effie, exhausted with her wild ravings, nestled her little head closer to her heart, and sank into a calm, quiet slumber.

Her husband's heart was melted, and his passionate love for his wife returned with even greater earnestness than before, and when his arm stole tenderly over her bowed form, she murmured: "Oh, Charles, forgive me. I have been very selfish; but I do love her, and if God spares her life, she shall never again pray for a mother's love."

And she kept her word. Long and tenderly did she watch over that little form; and when reason returned once more, and Effie realized how kind and attentive her step-mother had been, and how tenderly she loved her, she looked up into her face, and said, with all the artless innocence of childhood: "I knew God would let you love me, and I love you now almost as well as dead mother!"

When Effie recovered from that long, weary sickness, and was once more welcomed to the cheerful drawing-room, she was carried there in the arms of her step-mother, whose love for the beautiful child she had watched so tenderly, almost amounted to idolatry; and from that hour the happiness of that little household was perfect.

Arabel tenderly loved the husband, and admired her little step-daughter.

Effie, beautiful little Effie! would often leave her play,

and, twining her dimpled arms around her mother's neck, and nestling her little cheek close to hers, murmur: "Darling mamma, I do love you as well as my angel-mother in heaven."

And the noble husband was pleased that the deep fount of love in his wife's bosom was at length unsealed, and the heart's music awakened by the hand of his child. His whole happiness was bound up in his wife and child, and he blest them both for making his home a paradise on earth.

When Marion Aubrey visited her early friend, and Arabel met her at the door of her elegant mansion, with little Effie clinging to her hand, the tears of happiness sprang to her eyes, as she met Marion's inquiring glance. And she said, as she pressed a fond kiss upon Effie's rosy lips — "Yes, dear Marion, you were right. I am proud to say that even as I love the father, so do I love his child!"

My fair lady reader, if the sacred trust of the step-mother be thine, oh, beware how that trust is fulfilled. Cherish, with all a mother's tenderness, the little beings confided to your care. For the high and gentle mission of woman is indeed blessed, and the sacred wreath of kindred love will bloom as fair beneath the gentle dews of kindness, as if the smiles of angels brightened it.

AUNT EDITH'S STORY;
OR
THE HISTORY OF A HEART.

I know myself my own deceit,
I know it is a dream,
But one that from my earliest youth
Has colored life's dark stream.

L. E. L.

It was a dark, cheerless night in winter — there was not a star to be seen in the shrouded canopy above, and the large snow-flakes fell upon the ground like one broad, white sheet.

The keen, chilling blast, howled dismally without, but the iron chill of winter cannot penetrate the closely-draped windows of our snug little parlor. The bright, cheerful fire glowed in the grate, diffused a gentle warmth throughout the room, and as I sat watching its soft flickering light, a dreamy, half-forgetful spell stole over me, and I was soon lost in a sweet dream of imagination, with a bright picture of the future for a subject, and the sweet, hallowed wand of memory lending it the glowing spell of inspiration. My head sank back upon the arm of the yielding sofa, and every object within the room disappeared from the mind's eye until I saw

nought but the bright, glowing flame as it changed from one strange form to another — brightened and faded with each fresh gust of the sweeping blast without.

And the wind — the shrill moaning wind — even that seemed changed to a low, sweet melody, sounding from the still, far-off shores of some silvery lake, and stealing upon the quiet air of a calm starry midnight with all that sweet, pure influence which hallows the blessed spell of music. And thus I lay upon the sofa, heedless of all that passed within and without; wrapt in the soul-absorbing dream which had stolen so pleasantly over my spirit.

One moment I would seem to be in Italy, with the deep-blue sky over my head, and the starry-hued flowers beneath. One moment in a stately palace with marble pillars, and lordly halls, and every costly article which makes the high and mighty works of art seem magnificently beautiful — the next in a vine-covered cottage, in the midst of group of dark-eyed maidens, listening to the silvery notes of some raven-tressed daughter of Italy, with black, starry eyes, and a voice of bird-like sweetness. And imagination would weave such brilliant pictures of love, and pride, and splendor; of palace and of cottage; of ocean and of lake; of beauty and chivalry; and all lit up by that bright, glowing fire-light. Ah! what a sweet, wild dream was that!

But like every dream too fondly cherished, it was destined to be broken. A stately "air-castle" was just raised over that bright fire, when a low, half audi-

ble sigh fell upon my ear. In an instant the dream vanished, and the castle faded from the glowing flame.

I started up from the sofa, and rubbing my eyes, gazed earnestly around the room. Was it not very strange? I had seen Italy and France — had listened to the sweetest strains of silvery melody — had gazed on scenes of thrilling beauty; and yet, each article of furniture had remained in its accustomed place in the cheerful apartment; and now and then a raindrop pattering against the window pane, told that the same storm was still raging without.

Yes, 'twas very strange; but once more that low sigh fell upon my ear, and this time I gazed — wide awake — upon Aunt Edith, as she sat in her arm-chair before the fire, apparently absorbed in a reverie, deep as had been my own.

Reader, shall I describe Aunt Edith? mayhap you think her old and eccentric, but you are far from right. She was in the very prime of womanhood, and not a line of silver mingled with the soft, raven hair, parted so smoothly upon her white, unwrinkled brow. Her eyes were dark and lustrous, and every feature was perfect in its classic outline. Her form was tall and graceful, and the hand which supported the fair cheek was small and white enough to excite the envy of the most aristocratic dame in the land.

From the first hour she blessed with her gentle presence our little household I felt irresistibly drawn towards her. I admired her queen-like beauty; but

there was a calm, sweet dignity in each gentle motion, and a meek, placid expression in her dark eyes, which well accorded with the low, earnest tones of the sweetest voice I ever heard, and completely won my heart; for they seemed to speak of some hidden sorrow, of inward suffering, and a spirit yearning for some cherished boon which had been denied it. It was this same calm, mournful manner which first excited my sympathy; and as I was her pet, the golden link which binds one kindred spirit to another soon bound our hearts with an affection too strong and lasting ever to be broken.

Dear Aunt Edith! how dearly I loved her, and how sweetly sounded each word that came from her lips. My wilful spirit would not brook advice from those less dearly loved, but when the kind tones of her sweet voice, gently and carefully remonstrated against some little fault, the advice was gratefully received and heeded with all the perseverance my naturally careless nature could command.

And fortunate was I to receive such advice from one so well fitted to guide my wayward footsteps. But as she sat there in the large arm-chair, with the glowing firelight from the polished grate lending a rosy tint to her lovely complexion, the idea suddenly entered my head, that it was very strange one so good and beautiful should never marry.

And then, thought I, what a fine night is this for a story, and a story of the heart, too!

The wailing wind without, and the cheerful fire with-

in, seemed exactly suited to the dream-like spell of forgetfulness which lingers in a low-toned voice while relating a glowing tale of the heart's own joys and sorrows.

Yes, it was just the hour for a story, and hear one I must. So, stealing up to Aunt Edith, and twining my arms around her neck, I half whispered,

"Aunt Edith, did you ever love?"

"Why, Louey," she replied, while a crimson blush made her fair face look yet fairer, "what an abrupt question! What could put such an absurd idea into your head? what could make you think I was ever in love?"

"Because, Aunt Edith," I replied, "I know that love was made for such as you, and if his 'silver shaft' has left such a heart as yours unharmed, then love has indeed failed to do his duty."

"Well done, Louey," she said, with a merry laugh, "what a pity you were not born a cavalier. How sweetly you would flatter a fine lady. But if I were to say earnestly, that I had been in love, what would you say then?"

"Why I should just as earnestly beg you to tell me the story of your early life, and why your heart has never been united to one worthy its rich wealth. Oh! Aunt Edith, I know you have loved. Do please tell me the story of your heart, and of the inward sorrow which makes those proud eyes look so very mournful."

"Do you really wish to hear the story of my early

life, darling?" she said, laying her hand kindly upon my head; "'tis a sad tale of human sufferings and sorrows; and though its recital will awaken the most bitter memories, yet will I tell you; and may the sad history serve as a talisman to keep from your young heart the blighting shadows which my own wilfulness has hung over my spirit."

"Oh! thank you, Aunt Edith," I exclaimed, delighted that she had granted my request so willingly. So in a moment I was seated at her feet; and laying my head upon her lap, awaited the recital of the heart's history, I so desired to hear.

"Louey," she commenced; and I felt the hand which rested upon my head, quiver with emotion which memory had awakened; "first let me ask you one question. Should you think the fearful fault of coquetry had caused the sorrow that you fancy you read so plainly in my eyes?"

"You a coquette! *You* Aunt Edith! impossible," I exclaimed; "the heart of a coquette is made of adamant—with not one drop of human kindness in its icy cells. No, no, Aunt Edith. You were never a coquette—you are too noble—too lofty, to stoop to the heartless wiles which form the character of a being so devoid of every attribute, which exalts the noble dignity of woman."

"Ah, Louey, judge not the past by the present. When you have mingled more with the world, you will learn to distrust the outward appearance. For mark

me, Loucy, the world — the proud, cold world you love so fondly — is all deceit. Though the outward form may be fair and pleasing, yet within may beat a heart dark as the blackest cloud of midnight. And you will learn in your voyage over life's wild ocean, that the secret breathings of the human heart will not be revealed to the gaze of truth, while the mantle of deceit so effectually covers the world."

"But I see you are growing impatient, and I will not keep you waiting. Remember, however, I do not tell it you merely to gratify your earnest request, but that you may learn from the sufferings of another to avoid the faults which caused those sufferings," and wiping a tear from her eye, and clasping my hand in hers, Aunt Edith commenced the story of her early life.

In my youthful days, the world called me beautiful. I was flattered and caressed until with my naturally coquettish nature, I became a finished flirt.

My mother being a widow, and I her only daughter, lavished all the fond affection of her heart upon me. I was her idol, the star of her widowed life, and no wish, however slight, was left ungratified. She was pleased with the homage the world paid to my beauty, and I soon learned to regard the syren voice of the flatterer as far above that of true, disinterested friendship.

I would practice all the little arts I could command, to win the love of those who pleased me, for with admiration I was not satisfied. I must have *love* — the love of the whole heart. And that once gained, the

heart was coolly laid aside, and my smiles reserved for the next new face.

On my eighteenth birthday, my mother gave a large party and among the *distingue* guests present, was the son of a wealthy merchant, who had recently taken up his residence in one of the finest country seats of our pretty village.

He was the lion of the passing hour. Being handsome and wealthy, and his society much sought among my young acquaintance, I rejoiced at the prospect of so desirable a flirtation. In the course of the evening I obtained an introduction.

It was a lovely night, and my cheek flushed with pride and pleasure, as leaning upon his arm, we stepped forth upon the trellised portico. The moon — the bright beautiful moon of Autumn — shone soft and silvery amid the starry jewels of the night, and its radiant beams fell full upon our faces, while we talked of stars and flowers, of love and poetry, and all the beauteous gifts which God has lent to brighten life's lone pathway.

He had seen Italy — the dear, glorious Italy I worshipped — and most sweetly did the rich tones of his manly voice describe it; its flowers, and its deep blue sky; its vine-covered cottages, and the starry-eyed maidens who sing the beautiful songs of their own glowing nation, beneath the mellow radiant moon; that moon, whose silver beams, even seemed to make the glorious tide of swelling melody sound yet sweeter.

How appropriately did he quote the immortal Shakspeare, when describing sunny-hued Venice, the star-city of my favorite Italy. And how my soul drank in each eloquent word that fell from his lips.

But yet, I did not love him, and I was well satisfied that I never could. Then why did I trifle with a spirit so high and sensitive? Alas, an unseen power, mightier than myself, impelled me on to ruin.

I knew that Henry Wilton was one of nature's true noblemen — that he possessed a soul far, far above the common minds of this great world — a soul that nature might well be proud of.

And as I leant upon his manly arm, and gazed into the depths of his dark soulful eyes, I resolved not to trifle with such a spirit; but when those deep eyes rested with a glance of admiration upon my face, and the rich tones of that eloquent voice grew low and tender, then did my heartless nature triumph. I thought no more of the great wrong I was committing, for I had stifled the voice of the inward monitor, and its warnings were left unheeded. I thought only of the new conquest — of the triumph I should win over the village girls — and how they would envy me for winning the marked attentions of such an acknowledged "lion."

So I plunged recklessly into the abyss before me, nor stopped to think that the same power which led me on, would leave me to return in darkness and alone.

From that night, Henry Wilton was constantly by my side. And while with him I exerted all the skill I was capable of, to please his refined and rather fastidious

taste. Every art which I had learned so perfectly was called into requisition, and never was the coquette's part played with more consummate skill.

I soon had the satisfaction of knowing that he loved me with all the fond devotion of his noble soul. His heart was mine — all mine!

Alas! for the depravity of a heartless nature. I won that noble heart to break it. The high sentiments of that lofty spirit awoke no responsive chord within my breast, and the fond glance of those deep eyes was not returned with the true confiding glance of trusting love. Ah, no, I did not love him; and yet I led him on, but to place the blighted wreath of his fond affections, in cool mockery upon his noble brow.

In party and promenade he was my constant companion.

I was extremely proud of his wealth and handsome person, and flattered by the preference of one so high-born as Henry Wilton. And thus passed the winter; and spring with its birds and flowers brought change upon its gentle breath. I began to tire of my last conquest, and longed for a change.

One sunny day, when I was sitting with my mother in our cheerful parlor, the servant brought in a letter, and on my mother's breaking the seal, it proved to contain a most pressing invitation from her only sister, residing in a distant Southern city, to spend a few months with her. My mother had marked the change in my appearance, and when I earnestly desired it, accepted the kind invitation.

I was almost wild with delight, and preparations were speedily commenced for our journey.

That evening I was sitting alone in the parlor, thinking of the intended journey and laying out plans for the future, when the door opened and Henry Wilton entered. Surprised that he had entered unannounced, I was somewhat startled, and my embarrassment he attributed — with love's own blindness — to the pleasure I felt at meeting him.

"How peerless you are looking, to-night, dearest;" he said, as he accepted the vacant chair beside me.

"Ah, yes," I replied dreamily, while my eyes were fixed upon the carpet. "I am so happy that mother has accepted Aunt Minnie's invitation."

"What invitation?" he asked hastily, while an anxious expression flitted over his fine face. I related to him the purport of the letter we had received, and that the next morning we were to start for the South.

He was much surprised at the sudden change in our arrangements, and expressed the deep regret he felt at losing us. Then, taking my hand in his, he said in a low earnest tone,

"Miss Lacy, I have long wished for this opportunity, and now I dare ask for this hand. Your own heart must tell you how very dear you have become to mine. For your love is the sole star of my existence. 'Tis the only boon I crave to make my happiness complete. I trust it will not be denied."

He knelt at my feet, and pressed the hand he held to his lips.

I hastily withdrew it, and with well feigned astonishment, said in a cold, calm voice,

"I do not understand you, Mr. Wilton. I was not aware that you cherished aught save a brother's attachment for me. I think I have not given you cause to imagine you were beloved in a different way."

He started to his feet, as if a serpent had stung him, and never shall I forget the glance of withering scorn which flashed in his proud eyes, as he replied in a low, bitter tone,

"My God, and is it possible that you — you, whom I thought all purity and truth, can have so deceived me? Have led me on, step by step, until my whole soul is yours? Have lighted the flame which slumbered upon the altar of love in my breast, and then flung over it a shadow whose icy coldness will never depart until the chill of Death removes it! Is it possible that you have won my heart, but to tamper with it like an idle toy, for a few short months, and then give it back, broken and bleeding, to him who would have sacrificed his very life for you! O! my God! I had not deemed it possible that a beautiful woman could be so heartless.

"Edith Lacy; you may repent what you have done. 'Tis not for denying me the boon I craved, but 'tis for the deception which taught me to think the love in your heart was mine, when no love was there. If it is a satisfaction to learn that I can never love another, then know it now. Your hand has snapt asunder the only chords of tenderness within my heart. May Heaven forgive you!"

Casting upon me a look of unutterable anguish, he left me alone.

There was a pang of remorse in my heart which prevented my sleeping that night, for the haggard face of the high-souled Henry Wilton was constantly before me; and his prophetic warning was ringing in my ears like a voice, not of earth, awakening the deep hours of midnight with those fearful words,

"Edith Lacy, you may repent what you have done!"

But with the golden light of morning and preparations for our journey, the memory of Henry Wilton was banished—to return again when I should indeed have cause to repent the fearful wound I gave a soul so noble.

Ah! what a delightful journey was that. Such a glorious morning, with the bright beaming sun shedding its warm rays from a cloudless sky, and the gentle breeze of spring bearing the perfume of roses upon its soft breath. How I enjoyed our ride in the old fashioned, lumbering stage-coach, which carried us from our own little village. Poor coach! 'twas almost the last of its race, soon to be numbered among the things that were. When we arrived at Aunt Minnie's beautiful residence, I was almost wild with rapture. Beautiful, exquisitely beautiful was that sunny Southern home—

A very Paradise on earth;
A place too bright for sorrow,
And yet too pure for mirth.

I stood leaning against one of the tall columns of the portico, half buried in a sea of flowers, and silently did

my soul drink in the exquisite beauty of nature in its pride. Indeed the very queen of nature, must, I thought, have taken up her abode in such a spot.

Before me was an ocean of foliage and flowers. Above me a deep glowing sky, with the rich beams of a Southern sun flooding in a tide of mellow light, every object of loveliness. At my feet the waters of a marble fountain sparkled like one diamond shower of heaven's own dew.

I was so absorbed in the contemplation of so much varied beauty, that I had not noticed the approach of Aunt Minnie, until she clasped me to her heart, and in a kind voice welcomed her dear Edith to her home, and gently chided me for making the acquaintance of the birds and flowers ere I sought her kiss of welcome.

The spell which bound my spirit had faded, and we entered the house. What fairy-like rooms! how well the rose-colored drapery of the long windows corresponded with the soft carpets, and how the polished furniture shone when the gorgeous sun-light stole through those same rosy-hued curtains. And in the large hall which led from the flower-wreathed portico, the silver-voiced birds poured out such a gushing strain of music, from their gilded cages, that lulled by such sweet melody, and the gentle play of the low murmuring fountain, I could have dreamed away life with never a wish to see more of the cold, heartless world beyond the limits of that bird-like nest.

Days flew swiftly by on golden wings, and the little

Southern paradise was becoming so dear to my heart that the only drawback upon my happiness was, that I must leave it. One morning Aunt Minnie told me that a celebrated singer was to give a concert in the city, and if I desired, she would engage seats at the theatre.

I was delighted at the opportunity of hearing the famed prima donna, and readily accepted the kind invitation. I could think of nothing during the day save the opera, and time seemed to drag slower than usual, until we were seated in the brilliant theatre. How novel seemed everything to my delighted eyes! The flood of radiant light, and the sea of strange faces around me; the low, deep murmur which sounded in my ears like the sounding melody of the mighty ocean, and the excitement and bustle around, completely bewildered me. When the curtain slowly arose there was a moment of breathless silence till the fair singer appeared upon the stage, and then the storm of applause which greeted her fairly shook the massive building. A shower of bouquets fell at her feet; and when the tumult had subsided there burst forth, upon the excited multitude, the glorious tide of swelling song which so captivated every listener of the gifted prima donna.

Magnificently did the rich melody of her own glorious land, flow from the lips of the fair Italian. My spirit thrilled with rapture, as I sat motionless, with my eyes fixed upon her radiant face, my soul drinking in the music of that silver-toned voice.

Suddenly I heard a low voice say in a deep, manly tone, "is she not beautiful?"

Thinking it referred to the singer, I glanced around, and met two dark, brilliant eyes fixed upon my face with an expression of undisguised admiration.

The next moment the owner of those same proud eyes had entered our box, and Aunt Minnie said, "my dear friend, allow me to present my neice, Miss Edith Lacy, Mr. Victor Haverland."

Without raising my eyes, I murmured a few indistinct words, and turned my face towards the stage. But I saw not the beautiful face of the prima donna—I heard not the tones of her glorious voice. I saw nought save those two brilliant eyes, I heard nought save that melodious tone.

Was it love? love at first sight, which even then thrilled my very soul? Ah! I knew not, I cared not. I knew that my heart—my cold, proud heart, which had never before trembled beneath the gaze of man, was now fluttering and trembling, and that I, usually so calm and self-possessed, quivered like an aspen.

What was it that sent the crimson tide, flushing both cheek and brow? Why did my heart leap and bound with emotion never felt before? Ah! time must answer.

The stranger turned to reply to one of Aunt Minnie's remarks, and once more I glanced toward him. How can I describe him?

His form was tall and manly and the easy grace of each motion betrayed high birth and breeding. His face was one of the most noble, in its classic outline,

that I had ever beheld. A complexion singularly white for a Southerner; eyes large, lustrous and full of soul. His brow was broad and white, and short, glossy curls of raven hair clustered around it. His cheeks were pale, but the firm, proud lip was red as coral; and the jet black moustache contrasted finely with the clear whiteness of his beautiful teeth.

He was indeed my beau-ideal of manly beauty. Just such a being as fancy had pictured in my dreams. And when he again addressed me with that rich, low-toned voice, and the glance of his deep, proud eyes rested upon my face, something within seemed to say, "you were born for each other."

I heard no more of that glorious music, and when the opera was over, and that rich voice bade me good night, I could not have told whether it was answered. But as he handed me into the carriage, he whispered,

"We shall meet again, Miss Lacy."

How those dear words were treasured in my heart! I scarcely spoke during the long ride home, and I longed for the solitude of my chamber, that I might be alone with my own thoughts.

"Why, Mary," said Aunt Minnie to my mother, when we arrived at home, "I really believe Edith has fallen in love with the son of my old friend. Well, she could not make a better choice, for he is one of Nature's true noblemen; and, if I judge rightly, already feels an interest, deeper than that of friendship, for our sweet little pet."

I blushed deeply, and bidding them good night, retired to my chamber.

How my poor brain whirled, and my heart beat and fluttered when I thought over the events of the evening. I was fairly bewildered! The voice of the Italian prima donna, and that of the noble Southerner seemed mingling together, and those dark, beaming eyes seemed gazing upon me from the flower-covered stage.

I could see in imagination, that manly form and handsome face, and a low-toned voice seemed whispering, "we shall meet again, Miss Lacy!"

I dreamed, that night, a dream I had never known before. I reclined my head upon a restless pillow; one filled with blight and shadow—with clouds and sunshine. One where sweetness mingles with the most cutting bitterness, and an icy chill oft destroys the passion flowers of the warm heart's weaving!—the deep, restless pillow of love—wild, feverish love!—the first that e'er had bound my spirit with its spell.

When I awoke, the next morning, the sun was streaming in at my window; and when I attempted to rise, I found that my head was aching violently. I laid me down once more, and soon dropped into a light slumber, and when I again opened my eyes, my mother and Aunt Minnie were bending anxiously over me. My cheeks were flushed and feverish, and my pulse quick and irregular.

I had taken a violent cold the previous night, and it had settled upon my lungs. For many weeks I was

confined to my bed, and most tenderly did my mother and Aunt Minnie watch over me, and had it not been for the tender nursing I received, I fear my life had indeed been in danger.

Each morning a beautiful bouquet placed upon my mantel, told how regular the handsome Southerner came to inquire after my health. Dearly did I love those little tokens of his regard and most impatiently would I watch their coming. And when the little vase was brought me, I would select from each fresh bouquet, some little flower, a rose or violet, and place it upon the snowy pillow, that its gentle fragrance might cheer my heart.

I was happy indeed, when the kind physician pronounced me able to leave my sick room. And when Aunt Minnie arrayed me in the most elegant morning robe which I possessed, I wondered why she took such elaborate pains with the curls which clustered so profusely over my shoulders; and why she repeated so often to my mother, that the lily on Edith's pale cheek, and the deeper shade in her eyes made her look more interesting than ever.

The pretty prisoners in their little cages seemed to know me, as I walked through the hall, and poured forth a gushing strain of melody to welcome me. I stepped out upon the portico, and stood gazing upon the scene before me, and thinking how very long it seemed since I had seen the birds and flowers, and the dear little fountain sparkling so brightly in the rich sunlight.

"How very beautiful," I murmured, half aloud.

"Beautiful, indeed," said a voice which I had not forgotten.

I turned my head, and met the dark eyes of the Southerner. Taking my hand in his, he continued,

"Allow me, dear Miss Lacy, to express the true pleasure I feel in once more beholding you. Did I not say we should meet again?"

My heart beat wildly, and I felt the crimson blood rush to my cheeks. He perceived my embarrassment, and offered me his arm for a walk in the garden. We reached the arbor, and as I felt much fatigued, we entered and seated ourselves upon its velvet-cushioned seats.

We sat for some time talking of the events of the few past weeks, and the conversation soon turned upon our first meeting at the Italian opera. His deep-toned voice had grown low and tender while speaking of that, to both, — eventful night. Then as he mentioned my long, weary sickness, and the anxiety he had felt lest he should not again behold me, he clasped my willing hand in his, and said in low, passionate tones,

"Miss Lacy, since the first night we met, you have been the subject of my dreams and thoughts. I need not tell you that I love you wildly, passionately — you know that already. And O! may I hope — may I dare to ask for such a heart as thine?"

His low, eloquent tones thrilled my very soul. His hand had swept the delicate chords of the heart-harp,

awakening the music which had long slumbered within it. The tide of tenderness was unsealed, and my own heart beat responsive melody with the kindred spirit which thrilled for me alone.

Weak and childish from my late sickness, I laid my head upon his shoulder and burst into a flood of tears.

"Edith, dear Edith," he said; "is it possible that you weep? Oh! then I am indeed beloved! Deceit may lurk beneath smiles and protestations; but tears, the pure, blessed dew-drops of the soul, can never flow from a treacherous heart. But let that dear voice of thine tell me I am beloved. Edith, darling Edith, say that your heart is mine, all mine!"

"Yes, Victor," I replied, "thy hand is the first that hath unsealed the love-fount in my heart. Henceforth, its tide of passion shall flow for thee alone."

"Bless you, my darling," he said, drawing me nearer to his manly breast. "How sweet will be the devotion which shall pay for the rich treasure of thy love! My whole life shall repay thee, and this arm shall be ever strong to shield thee from the rude blasts of life's chilling storms. While this heart lives to love thee, thy pathway shall be strewn with roses, and time—swift, withering time—shall pass so lightly that ne'er a shadow can leave its blighting trace upon thy brow."

We sat for some time in silence, each spirit drinking from the same fountain of bliss—each heart thrilling

with the same impassioned spell. Suddenly a merry laugh awoke us from our spirit-dream, and Aunt Minnie said, as she entered the arbor,

"Well, I have found you at last! I wonder what doctor Stanley will say, when we tell him his little patient went way down to the arbor, when he only gave her permission to walk into the parlor, and that very carefully, too! But I see who will have to bear the blame. So, Mr. Haverland, what must be the penalty for causing Edith to break the kind doctor's commands?"

"Why," answered Victor, "I suppose I shall have to see that she returns safely to the house, and then stay and play the part of nurse!"

Aunt Minnie laughed heartily, and said she feared he would make a very poor nurse if he continued as careless as he had commenced. But Victor staid with us all that day, and when he departed at night, Aunt Minnie told him that as he had made such a capital nurse, he might come the next day, if he would promise not to allow Edith to run away to the arbor again.

He replied in a tone of mock gravity, "that if he should, she might doom him to the same painful penalty which paid for the last offence."

Days flew swiftly by. Bright, blissful days of sunshine—the sunshine of the heart! Victor was with me, and in his presence, time passed so lightly, that even the rustling of his shadowy wings broke not the gentle atmosphere of happiness in which we dwelt. A

new world seemed opened before me! A new path in the wide field of life. Together our hearts perused the glowing leaves of love's golden-hued book, and our spirits thrilled alike with each glowing sentiment.

The one same link which bound soul to soul in kindred sympathy, was so closely woven, that our spirit thought with one thought; we saw with one glance; breathed with one breath; and dreamed one same glorious dream of wild, passionate love. Surely, the spell was too sweet to last — the heaven of our existence too glorious to remain forever cloudless.

My health improved rapidly, and the rose was soon returned to my pale cheek. Every afternoon we would repair to the pretty arbor, and Victor would read aloud from some favorite author, while the warm, glowing sunlight stole through the thick foliage, and the song of birds mingled with the fountain's low-murmuring melody.

How richly fell his deep-toned voice upon the calm, hushed air of summer! How well adapted was his peculiar style of elocution to the eloquent heart-strains of the poet, as he read the sublime thoughts of great and mighty minds! Ah! Victor Haverland, thine was a soul high and lofty as the glorious thoughts of those same noble minds, whose gems of eloquence thou readest so thrillingly.

When evening came with its cool, quiet air, we would wander alone through the walks of the large, beautiful garden, and often would we sit upon the grassy bank of

the miniature lake, in the deep, solemn hour of midnight, while the bright beams of the silver-hued moon, bathed us in a tide of softened light, and the countless host of golden stars gleamed like jewels from the canopy above.

To sit thus within such a paradise of beauty, was happiness too sacred almost for words, and the silence would remain sometimes for hours unbroken. But our spirits would drink deep of the same pure fount of bliss, so closely were our hearts allied.

Ah! those were blessed hours — all fraught with the very incense of human happiness!

Time passed swiftly on. Oh, why should its rustling wings flutter with the same ceaseless flight, when bliss so sweet was hanging on its wand of destiny? Autumn came, and my mother was anxious to return once more to her own northern home. And so the day was fixed upon to leave Aunt Minnie's hospitable mansion.

Ah! how I dreaded leaving that little southern heaven! How tearfully I visited for the last time, the arbor where so many happy moments had been passed — the pretty lake, with its green foliage shading it so deeply — the dear little fountain murmuring such gentle melody; and the bright birds singing in the old hall.

And how tearfully we all assembled in the cheerful parlor when the starry evening came! We were to start the next morning for the North, and Aunt Minnie must hear her darling Edith sing her favorite song, and play one more game of chess with Victor, ere — as she

said — the spell of loneliness should again be flung over her little household.

And Victor — he went with us, else I fear I should indeed have been almost heart-broken. Aunt Minnie's kind voice trembled when she bade us good night; and we retired to our rooms to dream for the last time beneath the dear roof which had so long and kindly sheltered us.

Morning came. A bright, beautiful morning; and the glorious sun was just rising from the golden east, when the carriage drove up to the gate. Then came the parting! Aunt Minnie was engaged with my mother, and I stole out upon the portico to take one last sad look at the arbor and fountain.

Most beautiful did they look with the rich sun-beams flinging a golden hue over the whole. I burst into a flood of tears, and leaning against a column, thought of the happy hours I had passed amid those scenes.

Here had the tiny bird of love first nestled its rosy wings within my heart; and with those same fluttering wings, swept the chords of the slumbering lyre whose music soon learned to mingle with the silver notes of the love-bird! Here for two whole seasons had I dreamed away life beneath the unclouded canopy of happiness, with the spell of bliss upon my soul, and never a shadow dimming the life-star.

Alas! how could I leave it? But the carriage was waiting, and my mother already seated within it! I turned towards Aunt Minnie, and she clasped me silent-

ly to her heart. She could not speak, and my heart was too full for utterance. One moment — and the silent farewell was over, and I whirling with all the rapidity which two stout horses could command, from Aunt Minnie's residence. I leaned from the window, and kissed my hand to the kind relative who loved me with all a mother's fondness, as she waved her snowy handkerchief from the portico. One last, lingering look at the dearly-loved spot, and the beautiful Southern home had faded from my view.

I wept for a few moments most bitterly, until Victor remarked in a quiet tone of mock seriousness, that if I would stop weeping for a few moments until he had taken sufficient breath, he would cry, too.

I burst into a hearty laugh in which my mother joined, and thus restored to a pleasant mood, we enjoyed the journey finely. By steamboat and railroad, by coach and carriage we travelled, until our northern home was reached. My mother and Victor were delighted when the parlor door was thrown open, and the bright cheerful fire glowing in the grate, sent a gentle warmth throughout our chilled frames.

The faithful housekeeper came forward to greet us, but though I loved the dear home of my childhood, yet a shudder passed over me, and a strange unaccountable presentiment of something — I knew not what — thrilled my spirit.

But the strange emotion soon passed away, and I was gay and joyous as ever. With books and music, chess

and visitors, the day passed swiftly by, and the time fixed for my marriage was rapidly approaching.

I loved Victor with my whole soul, and his passion seemed every day to increase. The hours we spent together were fraught with bliss, and he spoke often of the day that should make me all his own.

We received a letter from my only brother, who was then travelling in Europe, stating that he was soon to return to his native land. Mother was delighted, and Victor longed to clasp by the hand, one so very dear to the heart of his darling Edith.

One bright sunny afternoon, I was sitting in the parlor with Victor. He had just finished reading a beautiful portion of Childe Harold, and our souls yet thrilled with the exquisite poetry, when the servant opened the door and handed me a note.

A singular sensation stole over me, and a crimson blush dyed my cheek. Victor perceived it, and said in a gay tone,

"Some love epistle, I suppose?"

I tried to smile, and replied with a forced laugh,

"To pay for such an insinuation, you shall read it to me!"

So handing him the note I seated myself in the attitude of a patient listener, while he in obedience to my commands, broke the seal! His eye glanced hastily over it, and he commenced reading it to himself. The expression of his face changed, and the beaming smile was succeeded by an almost death-like paleness.

As he read on, the white teeth were set firmly together, and his manly breast heaved with inward emotion. I sat in painful suspense, until he turned to me and said, in a tone which betrayed the most intense suffering, while an expression of cold, withering scorn flitted over his fine face,

"Madam, would you hear the contents?"

"Read it, O, read it," I exclaimed, unable longer to bear such agonizing suspense, though a presentiment of something terrible, even then blanched both cheek and lip. In a tone of bitter sternness, he commenced,

"To her whose heart I once fondly deemed my own! Edith — for still will I call you so — I am dying. The shadow of Death is upon my brow, and its icy chill freezing the life-blood in my heart! Ah, why should life, so young as mine, thus early seek the quiet of the silent grave? Because a shadow, cold, dark and bitter, has clouded life's bright sky, and the spirit star has faded beneath the midnight hue which drapes the dim, veiled future! And whose hand lighted the passionless torch which is slowly consuming the life-tide in my heart's deep-shadowed cells? Whose lips bade that heart to bury its flowers of passion deep in the dark urn of memory, and its noblest dreamings within the cold grave of hope? Edith Lacy, thy heart will answer!"

"I do not reproach thee that thou couldst not love. Ah, no; far from it. I know that the mighty wand of destiny swayeth the heart's passion. But I reproach thee, that with a witchery e'en like the syren's,

thou didst lead me on, step by step, with that false smile covering a heart where the dark bird of deceit had made its nest, until my soul was taught to know no sweet unshared by thee, and my spirit to cherish no dream save for thy happiness. And when I dared to kneel and ask the love thy every motion had taught me to deem mine own, how coldly was I spurned! Ah, Edith Lacy; did I not tell thee that the chill thy hand flung over my heart, would ne'er depart 'till life should cease its weary march? Aye! the chill was cold and withering, and surely hath it done its work. Thy meteor-like smile was the insidious wile of the coquette, and its power did well attain thy purpose. Thou didst win my heart, and thou has broken it!

"My tiny bark is fast nearing the still waters of an unfathomed eternity, and the life-bird is faintly fluttering on the verge of a silver shore. Death with its shadowy wings is rustling near me. I go to seek in eternity the happiness earth has denied. My last prayer shall be for thee—my last wish that we may meet above. I ask from thee one kindly thought; and oh! forget not when the spell of happiness thrills thy spirit, that the soul of Henry Wilton passed from earth breathing thy name!"

Victor rose from his seat, and flinging the letter at my feet, said in a cold tone of bitter anguish—

"And is it possible that I, too, have been deceived? Can the same insidious smile have taught me also to love one whose bosom cherishes the dark venom of deceit? Can I have sacrificed my heart upon a worthless

shrine, and lavished all the fond worship of my nature upon a being utterly devoid of every noble attribute which should dwell within the heart of woman? Oh, my God! I had not thought the cup of misery could hold a draught so bitter!

"Henry Wilton—he was my early friend. At college we were as brothers. Well do I remember his proud sensitive nature, and the high and noble soul which scorned aught wearing deception's ignoble mark! Ah, what a spirit was his. High, passionate and proud! the very soul of honor; he was one of God's noblest creations!

"And yet thou didst not hesitate to pierce such a heart with a death-arrow from the quiver of deception! Even as I have loved thee, so were the noblest dreamings of his soul wrapt in the false heaven of thy love, and bitter was the sacrifice of such a soul on such a heartless shrine. Oh, heaven forbid that I should ally myself to one who could do a deed so terrible! Edith Lacy, know that thy hand has flung a shadow over two hearts instead of one—that thy deception has pierced two souls with the same arrow. My life is forever clouded; for oh! happiness departs when I bid farewell to thee!"

"Stay Victor, oh, stay," I shrieked; "I have not deceived thee! I love thee, as woman never loved before."

But my words were unheeded—Victor Haverland had gone forever.

Ah! Henry Wilton; thou wert indeed revenged! The

hour had indeed come when I had fearful cause to repent the wound I gave thee.

My head swam, and every object in the room seemed floating in a swelling sea. There was a cold, chilling sensation in my heart, and it did indeed seem bursting. I clasped my hand tightly over it, but the spirit-harp was swept too rudely, and I sank insensible upon the floor!

When I awoke to consciousness, I was in my own room. The windows were darkened, and by my bedside sat my mother, pale, anxious, and but the shadow of her former self. How came I there — and where was Victor? I pressed my hand upon my brow, and shutting my eyes, the past floated before my mind.

I turned towards my mother and feebly asked how long I had lain there. She told me in a low voice, that for many long, weary weeks, I had raved in the wild frenzy of delirium, and that life seemed hanging upon a single thread — how she had watched over me during the long hours of the day, and through the weary midnight, 'till nature was nearly exhausted; and, as she finished, she sank upon her knees and murmured, "I thank, thee O! merciful Heaven, that my child is again restored to me."

It was long ere I was restored to perfect health, and then I was an altered being. Repentance had faithfully performed its duty, and I lived, not for myself, but for others. I found no happiness like that of exerting myself to promote the happiness of those around me.

I learned from Aunt Minnie, that Victor Haverland

upon his return to the south, had instantly departed for Europe. His name never passed my lips, but his image was engraven on my heart, and the memory of the happy hours I passed with him, was fondly cherished, as the few golden sunbeams of perfect bliss which light for a little while, the sky of life's uneven pathway.

Aunt Edith's story was ended. I had heard the history of her heart! For a few moments, neither broke the deep silence which followed the painful recital. Each was absorbed in a reverie almost as deep as the silence itself. At length I said,

"Aunt Edith, as Victor Haverland left you so cruelly, why did you not accept the hand of that rich widower? I am sure he loves you dearly, and then he is so handsome, and has such a fine establishment!"

"Ah, Louey," she replied, "one would easily know that the little love-bird had never fluttered in your heart. When such a love as that I gave Victor Haverland is once blighted, and the heart-chords so rudely severed as were mine, no power of ours can ever transfer the soul's affections to another, and no voice, however sweet, can again call forth the music which first swept the lyre of the warm and passionate heart. Have you forgotten those truthful lines of Shakspeare?"

"Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove;
Oh no! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,

Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken,
 Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
 Within his bending sickle's compass come;
 Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
 But bears it out, e'en to the edge of doom."

"If those lines breathe as much truth as eloquence,"
 I replied, "I should rather the love-bird would never
 nestle those uneasy wings of his within my heart."

Aunt Edith smiled and answered,

"And when he does, my darling, may it be when he
 is in a happy mood, and may the melody he awakes never
 cease its notes of love, but continue to cheer thee
 with its harmonious music till life shall need its song no
 longer. But Louey, we have not heeded how swiftly the
 hours were passing. See, it is almost midnight."

I glanced up at the old clock, and sure enough it
 wanted but a few moments to twelve. So I thanked
 Aunt Edith for kindly granting my request, and after
 receiving her good-night kiss, retired to dream of co-
 quetry and broken vows.

Days and weeks passed pleasantly by, when one morn-
 ing, just as we were rising from the breakfast table, a
 letter was brought in for Aunt Edith.

She glanced at the superscription, and I thought the
 chirography must be very familiar, for she trembled
 violently and instantly retired to her room. She had
 been absent nearly an hour, when I heard her voice call-
 ing me.

I instantly obeyed the summons, and in a moment

was seated with Aunt Edith, in her cheerful apart-
 ment.

"Louey," she said, placing the letter she had received
 in my hand, "I have confided to you the story of my
 eventful life; I will make you my confidant in all that
 shall concern that story. Read this, and tell me what
 you think of it."

Full of amazement I commenced reading the myste-
 rious note. It ran thus:—

"MY OWN DEAR EDITH:—Many long, weary years
 have passed since we met. Years — for me — replete
 with woe and loneliness. I have been a wanderer upon a
 foreign shore — an exile from home and happiness. But
 whether roaming amid the glowing scenes of starry Italy,
 or the vine-covered homes of sunny France, the thought
 of thee has ever filled my breast; the image of thy dear
 face been ever present in my heart. And a voice seemed
 ever murmuring the words 'I have not deceived thee.
 I love thee as woman never loved before!' Oh, Edith;
 how bitterly have I reproached myself for leaving thee
 so hastily! I should have staid to soothe the bitterness
 which repentance had even then placed in thy heart.
 But no, I left thee with nought save reproaches, and bit-
 terly have I repented an act so unkind. I found, when
 too late, that I also loved 'as *man* ne'er loved before.'
 And oh! could you know how unhappy — how wretched
 I have been, you would forgive me.

"But I have returned once again to my native land,

and once again do I seek thy love. Youth — wild, passionate youth — has departed. But time has left no trace upon my brow — has mingled no silver with my hair; and my heart — thy heart, dear Edith, for never has it ceased to beat for thee — is still the same. Oh! Edith, do you love me yet, or has the withering hand of neglect pressed upon thy heart till it is passionless? Shall the love I seek be mine once more? May I come and woo again the tenderness that in years gone by was given me so fondly? Ah, Edith, pardon the wanderer, and once more bid happiness to thrill the true heart of

VICTOR HAVERLAND."

I glanced at Aunt Edith. The tear-drops rolled down her fair cheeks, and her hands were pressed tightly over her heart. I flung my arms around her neck and pressing my lips to her cheek, murmured,

"Oh! do send for him, Aunt Edith, and tell him how fondly you have cherished his memory, and how truly you still love him!"

She pressed me fondly to her heart, and then seated herself to answer the note.

The answer was simple, yet it expressed the heart's own eloquence:—"Come, Victor, and learn how proudly I accept the heart I have long endeavored to prove worthy of."

When afternoon came, I insisted upon playing dressing-maid to Aunt Edith, and I shall never forget how sweetly she looked in the neat robe of dark velvet,

which admirably set off her singularly clear complexion, nor how she said she had a mind to punish my wilfulness, by not wearing the tiny rose leaves, I would — much against her will — place in the braids of her glossy hair.

Evening came, and Aunt Edith was left alone in the parlor. Presently the bell rung, and the servant opening the parlor door announced, "Mr. Victor Haverland!"

None witnessed the meeting. The re-union of two such hearts was too sacred for intrusion.

Ah! what a joyous wedding was Aunt Edith's. The bride looked charmingly, and the bridegroom — I whispered in Aunt Edith's ear as I pressed a kiss upon her cheek, "I never *shall* love until I meet with one like Victor Haverland!"

She smiled, and the incredulous expression of her face, said plainly, then I fear you will remain an "old maid" longer than Aunt Edith did.

Oh! how bitterly I wept when Aunt Edith departed with her noble husband for the sunny South. Loneliness for a time usurped the place of happiness in our little household, and the long, weary days seemed fraught with desolation. I was almost wild with joy when a long, glad letter came from Mrs. Haverland, which said that the next summer she would visit us once more. The letter contained a dear little note for me, and if it pleases thee, kind reader, thou mayst read it with me, for methinks the warning it contains should be impressed on other hearts than mine:—

"I am enjoying a little world of bliss in my own little southern paradise. The same silvery fountain murmurs its low melody before the trellised portico, and the same glowing sunlight sheds its gentle beams upon the same scenes it used, in former years, to flood so gloriously. And each day Victor and myself visit the pretty arbor, and spend many a blissful hour in the dear spot where so many hours were dreamed away when the love-spell first bound our souls. Ah, Louey, I feel that I am blest indeed. Dwelling within a home lovely as a fairy's haunt. Idolized by the noblest of husbands, every hour seems replete with perfect happiness. I miss no voices from my bird-like home, save my dear mother's and Aunt Minnie's; but I know they are both angels in a happier world than this.

"And now, darling, I would warn you against cherishing in your young heart even for a moment, the despicable fault which caused me so much misery. If there be one error which above all others, will lay the foundation for future woe, it is coquetry. Repentance, stern, bitter repentance will surely follow when too late for reparation; and then a shadow, cold, dark and withering, is flung forever over the sorrow-stricken heart.

"Oh! beware lest the fearful shadow rest upon your spirit, and if ever tempted to practice the syren wiles of deception, I beg of you, call not the curse of Heaven upon your own head, but think of the future, and remember Aunt Edith's story."

THE DESERTED HALL.

Light let each footstep fall,
 Speak not too loud;
 Thou art in no lighted hall,
 Thou art in no busy crowd;
 Thou art where each emblem fair
 Speaks of the dead;
 And the cold silence there
 Tells all are fled.

Once in that quiet hall,
 Merry feet bounded, —
 While with sweet rise and fall,
 Gay music sounded.
 Now many a withered flower,
 Faded and broken,
 Of the swift fleeting hour,
 Rests a cold token!

From that deserted hall,
 No sound is heard;
 O'er that deep-shadow'd wall
 No leaf is stirred.
 Lost in the Summer's bloom —
 Sunlight is fled;
 And in the vaulted tomb,
 Slumber the dead.

THE TWO BRIDES.

"I saw two maidens at the kirk,
And both were fair and sweet;
One in her wedding robe,
And one in her winding sheet.

The choristers sang the hymn,
The sacred rites were read,
And one for Life to Life,
And one to Death was wed.

They were borne to their bridal beds,
In loveliness and bloom;
One in a merry castle,
The other a solemn tomb.

One on the morrow woke
In a world of sin and pain;
But the other was happier far,
And never woke again!"

The summer birds filled the morning air with melody, and the sweet flowers lifted their bright heads in homage to the newly-risen sun. The bell of our village church rang forth a marriage chime, and the green in front of the church was covered with merry-hearted, wondering children. Many of them held bunches of bright flowers in their dimpled hands, and when the bridal party reined their spirited horses in front of the church, they

scattered the pretty tokens over the green sward and the church steps, that they might kiss the little feet of the beautiful bride when she passed on to the altar.

And bright and blooming as they were, those summer flowers, they could not be more lovely than she whose light footsteps crushed their sweet petals. But now she stood in the little church before the man of God, listening to the holy words that bound her for a lifetime to him who had won her young heart. Very beautiful she was in her bridal robe, with the wreath of white rose-buds and pure-looking snow-drops twined in her dark tresses. And very happy was the look of trust her sweet eyes turned upon the face of the handsome bridegroom. But *his* eyes, though they answered that trusting look with one of fond affection, shone with an expression of uneasiness, and at times as the marriage rite went on, his face would grow suddenly pale, and he would throw a quick glance around, as if other thoughts than his present joy were resting on his mind.

But the rite was over. The vows were spoken, and the marriage ring was placed on the small finger of the bride's fair hand. They turned to leave the church, and though a tear glistened in the dark eye of the bride, yet her step was light and her heart full of sunshine as the flowers beneath her feet. When she walked over those flowers to the altar, she was a maiden pure and lovely as the rose-buds in her hair. Now she was a wife, bound by the holiest ties of life to make the sunshine of another's heart. She had given her happiness to another's keeping, she had exchanged her girl-

hood's freedom for chains which only Death could sever — chains which might drag her young heart to the grave, or bind it more closely to the affections of life, she knew not which. Ah, well it was she *did* not know her destiny — her footsteps would not always be over flowers! Her future looked bright to her now as she viewed it from the altar, and her heart was very, very happy.

Not so the bridegroom. His heart would thrill with happiness when he glanced down upon the lovely face of her who leaned so trustingly on his arm, but a shadow would quickly darken their happiness. A vision of a face lovely as his bride's, though pale and death-like, would come between him and the being by his side, and the spiritual eyes would seem gazing into his with a look of deep, yet gentle reproach.

The company were again in their saddles, and the bridegroom was springing upon his horse, when his restless eyes glanced into the church-yard; and as for a moment they rested there, *they fell upon a new-made grave!* Once more the sudden paleness came over his face, and his horse sprang forward with the rest. He knew who would be laid there, and ever after the shadow of that open grave seemed resting over his life.

The bridal party were gone from the church, and nought told of their presence there, save the flowers which lay withering in the summer sunlight.

It was afternoon. The sun still shone warm and bright, and again the sound of the church bell floated

over the village; but now its chime was slow and solemn, for it tolled a funeral knell. A sad procession stopped upon the green, but the sunny-hearted children strewed no flowers in the pathway, though another bride was to cross the threshold of the church. They feared the smileless bridegroom, for the maiden was garbed in the white robes of burial, and the bridegroom who had won her to his arms was — Death.

They bore her over the church steps, and laid her in the same spot where the living bride had plighted her marriage vows. And the same holy man whose lips had said, "What God hath joined together let no man put asunder," now repeated, "Earth to earth, dust to dust, ashes to ashes."

Gentle reader, go thou to the coffin and look on that lovely face with the dark hair parted so smoothly on the peaceful brow, and the sweet, almost mournful smile, lingering round the pale, cold lips, and tell me, shouldst thou think the manly-looking bridegroom of the morning had aught to do with the shaft that laid that young head low in death? Ah, surely not, you say; but, reader, it was his hand that aimed the shaft of death towards that sweet maiden's heart. He had won her love and then he had deserted her!

He had been the playmate of her childhood, and when the bloom of womanhood made her brow still fairer, he had plighted to her his vows of love and constancy. He had walked with her in the summer moonlight, he had sat with her in the winter hours, gazing

in her sweet eyes and breathing into her ear words of affection, till he had bound her young heart to him with a tie that death alone could sever, till she lived only in the light of his love. But there came a change. The glow of affection faded from his eyes when he gazed upon her face, and the once gentle tones grew cold and distant. He did not tell her that he had ceased to love her; he did not tell her that he had broken his oft-plighted vows, but he treated her coldly, neglecting her when they met, and avoiding the glance of her eye that pleaded silently to know the cause of his coldness. And he met her no more, but rumor told her that his broken faith was again plighted — plighted to a young and beautiful heiress.

From that time she faded slowly and surely away. Friends said consumption was upon her, but her widowed mother knew she was dying of a broken heart. She murmured no reproach against him whose broken faith had given her into the cold arms of Death; and when the stern archer came to claim her for his bride, she sank calmly and peacefully into his dreamless slumber.

The funeral rite was over, and they bore the maiden to the church-yard. The lonely mother gazed for the last time upon the dear face that had so often been pillowed upon her breast, and the coffin was lowered into the grave. Wreaths of bright flowers were flung upon it by the young maidens who had been the companions of her girlhood, and the grave was closed and the sad procession moved away. But the widowed mother

lingered there till the sunlight faded, and her tears fell fast and thick upon the fresh, green turf. Her last tie to earth was severed, her work on earth was done, and she went back to her lonely home, to await the summons which should call her to the dear ones who had gone before. Alas! poor mother! The same blow which had crushed her child's young heart had rebounded and chilled her own. Surely the false heart of him whose broken faith laid the gentle maiden to rest a lone sleeper in the church-yard, who, in blighting her child's happiness, buried the mother's hopes in that new-mounded grave, shall not, in this world, go unpunished. The shadow of that lonely grave, the sorrow of that stricken mother's heart, shall yet darken his life and fill his own heart with the bitterness it gave to others.

I'M LONGING FOR THE SPRING.

I'm longing for the spring, mother,
I'm longing for the spring;
For the flowers that herald summer,
And for birds upon the wing.
My heart has grown so weary, mother,
Within this darkened room,
That I long to see the signs that speak
Of sunny life and bloom.

I'm longing for the spring, mother,
For the violet and the bird;
For azure skies and trees of green,
And leaves by soft winds stirred.
My poor head aches so oft, mother,
And I feel so much of pain,
That I fear if spring doth tarry long,
It will bloom for me in vain.

I'm longing for the spring, mother,
For with the winter's snow,
Pale sickness laid its blighting hand
Upon my aching brow.
And will not sunny spring, mother,
Bring blooming health to me?
Will not my eye be bright again,
And my step be light and free?

I'm longing for the spring, mother,
For if it bring me health,
'T will be for you and me, mother,
More than a world of wealth.
For I cannot part from thee, mother,
And I know that anguish wild
Would well-nigh break thy gentle heart,
If thou didst lose thy child.

Oh! I'm longing for the spring, mother,
'T would be so hard to die,
Ere yet the passing spell of youth
Has fairly floated by.
Then pray the spring may come, mother,
With its breezes sweet and mild,
And bring the bloom of health again
To bless thy weary child.

THE LITTLE DANCING GIRL.

It was Christmas morning. The sleigh-bells were jingling merrily through the crowded thoroughfares of our own proud city, and the snow-covered sidewalks were thronged with pedestrians of all grades and nations.

One moment passed the aristocratic daughter of opulence, with her rich robes waving gracefully with each haughty step of the dainty feet, and the elegant garments held scornfully back in the delicately-gloved hands, lest they should be contaminated by touching the tattered vesture of some low-born "child of poverty."

The next, would pass a fair young girl with languid steps, and scanty clothing drawn closely around the slender form, that the winter's icy chill might not benumb her aching limbs.

Poor creature! The sad expression of suffering and sorrow upon that pale face, tells how surely the iron grasp of poverty is wearing her young life to the silent tomb.

Day after day, doth she tread that same busy street, passing the stately abodes of wealth and luxury, and meeting many a proud maiden attired in the costly robes

of affluence, who may not boast a fairer form or purer heart than her own humble self, and yet is petted and caressed by kind and loving friends who look upon her as the pride of their splendid home; while she must be content to pass the golden hours of youth, in laboring unceasingly for the poor crust of coarse bread which forms her daily meal.

Work on, work on, thou child of poverty! Soon shall the day come when the rich and poor shall sleep together in one common earth. When the same sod shall cover the high-born and the lowly.

But ah! when the last trump shall bid the dead arise, *not alike shall the high and low be judged!* No, no; they who have humbly borne the cross below, shall wear the crown above; and the proudest of earth may be the lowliest in Heaven.

It was nearly twelve o'clock, when a little girl descended the broad steps which led from the side entrance of a fashionable theatre. She was coarsely and scantily dressed, and the thin, light slippers which encased her small and exquisitely shaped feet, were quickly saturated with the soft snow.

The coarse hood which only half covered her head, exposed to view a face of the most peerless beauty. Every feature was delicate and classically beautiful, and the large, dark, brilliant eyes, had in them that deep thrilling expression which seems to speak the sweetest language of an eloquent soul.

Her hair was dark and glossy, and escaping from the

hood, fell nearly to the waist in long clustering ringlets. There was an expression of anxiety resting upon the lovely features, which told that, young as she was, the life of the sweet child had not been always crowned with sunshine.

She stopped not to admire the glittering ornaments displayed so invitingly in the shop windows, nor to gaze upon the splendid sleighs which dashed so merrily through the white streets on that bright Christmas morning.

Many a proud lady turned to gaze once more upon that glorious face, as the beautiful child hurried through the crowded streets; and many an aristocratic mother turned from the contemplation of those radiant features, to the pale, expressionless face of her own petted child, and wondered why one of lowly birth should be so lovely, when not even the vaunted tinsel of wealth and aristocracy could make her high-born child as beautiful.

But the little girl heeded not the admiring glances bent upon her face, and hurriedly walked on, though the chill breeze lifted the curls from her shoulders, and brought a rosier glow to her velvet cheeks.

It was a large room upon the first floor of an old-fashioned, grim-looking house. The white pine floor was unsullied by a single spot, and the scanty furniture was arranged with the most scrupulous neatness. Seated before the poorly-blazing fire, was a middle-aged woman, whose intellectual face, although very pale, still retained traces of once brilliant beauty.

She was dressed in a rusty black silk gown, which, from the short waist and large old-fashioned sleeves, must have been made when her years were fewer, and her small hands even fairer than now.

There was a certain air of dignity and superiority about her, which displayed itself from the anxious glance of her dark eyes to the slightest movement of the pale hands, and revealed, even to a careless observer, that she had seen "better days."

But whatever might have been her station in years gone by, it was evident that grim, blighting poverty, was now fast paling her cheek, and passing its cold hand over her once smooth brow.

She held in her lap a beautiful child of about three years of age, whose flushed cheeks and deep, irregular breathing, told that the blood in those blue veins, was burning with the wild heat of fever. His eyes were beaming brilliantly, and he lay seemingly unconscious of all that passed around him, gazing vacantly into the fire.

The dark eyes of his pale mother — for such the striking semblance between them proclaimed her — were bent upon his face, and every now and then the silent tear, and the half-stifled moan, would reveal the unutterable grief which swelled her fond heart, as she marked the vacant stare and the burning cheek of her darling child.

Suddenly the outer door creaked upon its rusty hinges, and the next moment the little girl we have before in-

roduced to the reader, bounded into the apartment. She hastily flung aside her hood and shawl, and exclaimed as she knelt beside the sick child and fondly kissed it, "Don't you think Willie is a little better to-day, mother?"

The mother laid her hand upon her head, but did not answer; and as the little boy heard the sweet voice of his beautiful sister, he partially raised himself, and flinging his little arms around her neck, murmured, "darling Allie," and sank quickly back into his mother's arms.

For a few moments the little maiden gazed upon him in silence, and then rising from her kneeling posture, she drew a chair to her mother's side, and said in a low tone as she seated herself upon it,

"Oh! mother, we had such a long, dreary rehearsal; and I told Mr. Montford how sick dear little Willie is, and how much I wanted to stay at home with him, and he said that as to-night is Christmas, he should have a very large audience, and he could not do without me; and when I cried and said I could not dance when little brother was so sick, he was so angry, and said if I did not dance to-night, and dance well, too, I should never enter his Theatre again, and he would never pay me anything. But if I would come to-night, and dance well, he would pay me to-morrow, and so I said I would go.

"Oh! to-night, mother, I do want to stay with you and Willie; I know I cannot dance to-night!" And the

little girl nestled closer to her mother's side and burst into tears.

The pale mother threw her arms over the slight form of her beautiful child, and said, while the hot tears flowed over her wan cheeks,

"Oh, Allie, do not weep so bitterly, it will break my heart; and it seems bursting when I think that my Allie—my own sweet Allie, must devote her glorious beauty to the tinselled stage, and like a wandering gipsy become a public dancer, to keep from actual starvation. But it shall not be; my Allie shall not be called a dancing girl! No, no; since God has spared my life, I shall devote it to Him and to my children, and when health is once more restored to Willie, you shall leave the stage forever!"

"No, mother," replied the noble child, "I will be a dancing girl sooner than have you labor! If Willie was not sick, I should not feel so badly, and you know Mr. Montford says he cannot afford to pay me much, because he furnishes my dancing dresses, and I fear if we do not get money to purchase medicine for little brother he will—Oh! mother, would it not be dreadful if Willie *should* die?"

The child struggled to repress the gushing tears, but they would come, and once more was the sweet face buried in the mother's lap.

They sat for a few moments in silence, and as Willie raised her head, the mother murmured in a sad, low tone,

"'Tis just three years to-day, since your father left his native land, and oh! little did he think when he bade me farewell, and pressed a last kiss upon your cheek, Allie, that he would so soon sleep in the blue ocean he loved so fondly. While he lived, what a proud home was ours, and how happy he was to sit by my side with you upon his knee, and relate the many strange incidents of his ocean life.

"And he had promised not to cross the sea again when he returned from that fatal voyage; but ere six months had flown, there came news of that dreadful shipwreck, and I realized with a breaking heart, that my own noble Melbourne, was lost to me forever, and my sweet children fatherless. And they drove us from our happy home; and oh! what have we not suffered since that sad bereavement? The blight of poverty has rested upon us, and were it not for the mere pittance you received for dancing, we should have long since starved.

"Three years ago, Allie, wealth and luxury was ours; but now, there is nought around us save penury and want. Nought to look forward to, save toil, care and poverty.

"My heart sinks within me when I think of the future; for if God spares Willie's life, you shall give up dancing, Allie, and I will toil for you till these hands can labor no longer.

"But how shall we procure medicine for him? and without it I fear he cannot survive; and oh! Allie, if

we should lay our sweet darling in the cold grave, how could we ever be happy again?" and pressing the children nearer to her bosom, she burst into a flood of tears.

Suddenly Allie started from her seat, and wrapping her shawl around her slight form, and tying the faded hood upon her head, she wiped the tears from her cheeks and said, firmly,

"I am going out now, mother, and I shall not return until I have procured medicine for Willie."

"God bless you, Allie," replied the mother. "You are a noble child, and something tells me you will be successful!"

As the little girl closed the street door, she stood a few moments upon the steps, as if in deep thought, and then saying, half aloud,

"I will go to Dr. Barton, in Summer street; he was our next neighbor when we lived in our early home, and as he was dear papa's friend, he cannot refuse me."

She sprang lightly from the steps, and feeling sure Dr. Barton would give her some medicine for Willie, she hurried on with a light step and a hopeful heart, forgetting that the friends of wealth are not the friends of poverty.

Little Allie stopped not until she had reached a stately mansion in a fashionable street, upon whose silver door-plate was engraved the name of "Barton." She rang the bell, and the door was answered by a servant, who, to Allie's timid inquiring, "if Dr. Barton was at

home," replied in a pompous tone, "that he was engaged and could not be disturbed for a beggar."

The crimson blood rushed to the child's fair cheek, but with the proud contempt of a high spirit, she deigned no answer, but said in a determined tone that she *must* see Dr. Barton.

The servant was awed by the superior dignity of her manners, and muttering something about the impudence of beggars, opened the drawing-room door, and the next moment a well dressed gentleman, with the highly polished air of an aristocrat, stood before the trembling child, and inquired in a tone of haughty condescension, "what was her business with him?"

She briefly stated her request, and told him in what part of the city she resided, to which he replied, "that he never visited poor families, and that if she wished assistance she had better apply to those nearer her own station."

Closing his richly carved door, the "man of wealth" left the child standing upon his granite steps with an almost bursting heart.

Reader, dost thou think this *fiction*? Didst thou never know a man, who in his luxurious home could count his thousands upon thousands, to turn coldly away from a starving child, denying it a few pence or timely assistance which might, perhaps, have saved its life?

If you have not, then look abroad, and learn that many, oh! too many of the high-born ones who wear

the gilded badge of aristocracy, wear also the sullied brand, which, thank Heaven, the heart of the poor man, humble though he be, would scorn to wear.

Poor Allie was bitterly disappointed, and the hope which had sprung up in her little heart, was crushed as she slowly turned to retrace her steps. She was just leaving a large street, when her eye fell upon a plate bearing the name of "Dr. Elton." She stopped, and gazing upon it for a moment, murmured, "I cannot return without the medicine;" and ascending the steps of what appeared the office of a physician, she knocked timidly at the door.

It was opened by an extremely young and handsome man, who gazed for a moment in silence upon the wondrous beauty of the child, and then in a voice of kindness, which sounded strangely soothing to her trembling heart, he bade her enter.

He drew a chair before the cheerful fire, and as she sat warming her little cold hands, he kindly inquired her name; in a sweet voice she answered "Allie Rivers," and then went on to relate her touching story.

When she had concluded, he told her his name was Elton, and he would find a more comfortable home for them, and while he lived, they should never suffer more. He told her he once had a little sister whose name was Alice, but she died, and now little Allie should be his sister, and he would love her as fondly, and watch over her as tenderly as he did his own Alice.

In an hour Dr. Elton was to leave town on important

business, but he gave Allie some medicine for Willie, and told her he would come the next morning and see how he was; and taking a bank bill from his purse, he told the little girl to purchase some food for her mother and herself, and the next day they should be removed to a cheerful home.

The bright tears stole down the rosy cheeks of the sweet child, as she thanked Dr. Elton for his kindness, and with the medicine and money clasped tightly in her small hand, hurried through the crowded streets, stopping only to purchase food for the "dear ones" at home.

Dear reader, which think you was the happiest on that merry Christmas Eve? The man who could boast of wealth untold, but who had that very day turned from his door a suffering being; or he who with not half the wealth of the former, could yet lay his head upon his pillow, with the sweet thought soothing his dreams, that he had added his "mite" to assuage the weariness of human suffering.

Many were the fervent blessings which Mrs. Rivers showered upon the head of the young physician, when Allie laid the food and medicine before her; but when the child told her of the promised assistance, she said, while a blush of pride mantled her pale cheek,

"Ah, Allie, I cannot live upon the bounty of others, while my own hands can earn an honest livelihood!"

The medicine was administered to the sick child; and he was laid carefully within the little cradle; and while

Allie sat by his side, Mrs. Rivers prepared the food which the kind stranger had provided. It was almost dark when the simple repast was over, and both mother and child seated themselves by Willie's low couch.

He had fallen into a slumber, light, at first, but as the anxious watchers bent over him, his breathing became deeper and deeper, and his sleep more death-like.

"When he awakes," said Mrs. Rivers, "he will be either better or worse; and oh! my Father grant that his dear life may be spared!"

Long did they bend in silence over that little cradle, watching the crimson flush pale and deepen on the wan cheeks, and the heaving breast rise and fall, with the feverish breath that came one moment quick and deep, and the next, so light and slowly, that one would almost think the little sufferer had ceased to exist.

Oh! ye who have watched over the sick, perhaps dying couch of the loved and cherished, marking the cold sweat creep over the dear brow, and the flying pulse beat fainter and fainter, can feel what those sad hearts felt when they bent over that suffering child.

Darker and deeper fell the wintry shades of twilight. The sick boy still slumbered on, unconscious of the anxious hearts beating over him, and the silent watchers stirred not, till a neighboring clock struck the hour of six.

"Allie, did you promise Mr. Montford that you would dance to-night?" asked Mrs. Rivers, softly.

"Yes, mother, I did," replied the little girl, while a tear started to her eye.

"Then, my child, you must fulfil your promise; but, Allie, it shall be the last time; he will pay you to-morrow, and that will buy us food till Willie is better; and then I trust I shall find means to labor for you."

The warm tears rained over Allie's fair cheeks as she murmured,

"Oh, mother, how can I leave you to watch over Willie alone?"

Mrs. Rivers drew the sweet child to her bosom, and kissed her fondly as she said in a broken voice,

"God will be with us, darling, and I cannot think he will desert us in this trying hour. Trust in Him, my child, and hope for better days; and the time may come again when we may be as honored and respected as those cold hearted ones, who drove you this day from their doors."

Yes, yes, hope on, poor suffering mother! cheer with soothing words thy child's young heart; soon shall it be filled with sunshine, and thine own meek submission meet with its sweet reward.

Aye, and soon shall thy station, too, be even as proud as those same world-honored ones, and far, far happier; for thou hast the wealth of a meek and gentle spirit, while they can boast nothing higher than worldly wealth!

Once more was the faded hood tied over Allie's glossy curls, and after receiving a parting kiss from her sorrowing mother, and taking a last look at Willie, she crept softly, but firmly, from the apartment, and chok-

ing back the starting tears, she was soon on her way through the lighted streets to the Theatre.

Brightly flashed the lights, and gaily echoed the music within the massive walls of the old Tremont. The Theatre was in the very height of its prosperity, and as this was Christmas Night, it was crowded from "pit to dome" with the beauty and aristocracy of our noble city.

Let us look around among the audience, and try, if amid the strange sea of faces, we can find one that is familiar.

There is a face of exquisite beauty, lighted up by smiles of almost heavenly sweetness; and in the same box is one so pale and fair that in marking its contrast to the glowing radiance of the other, one is reminded of a fair snowdrop beside a blushing rose.

But we have never before met those faces, lovely though they be, so let us look again.

No! there are none present whom we have met; but there, near the orchestra, sits a gentleman whose face we cannot pass by, without a second look.

What a glorious brow, and what dark, flashing eyes! what glossy hair and snowy teeth, for a man of middle age. He seems utterly unconscious that there are others around him, and even the fine performance is allowed to go on all unheeded by him.

His play-bill is doubled, so that as we glance over it to see what announcement can so fix his whole attention, we can only see the words,

ALLIE RIVERS,

THE YOUNG AMERICAN DANSEUSE,

will also appear in a favorite dance!

What can there be in this simple announcement to interest that proud stern man? But see how his dark eye flashes, and his manly breast heaves, as he continues to gaze upon it, apparently almost doubting the clearness of his own eye-sight, brilliant as are those dark orbs.

We have never met that handsome face before, and yet it seems familiar. But his gaze is rivetted upon that bit of paper; so, as we are invisible, you and I — dear reader — will enjoy “a peep behind the curtain.”

See! There in that large room, stands our little friend, Allie! how gloriously beautiful does she look. The round, white shoulders seeming like chiselled marble as they appear above the rich lace over-dress; and the long glossy curls falling like a shower around the fairy-like waist, and shading the heavenly face.

The tiny satin slippers well become those small, delicate feet, and the jewels which adorn those plump, white arms, lose half their wonted brilliancy, when the lustrous eyes flash over them.

But ah! in those large, spiritual eyes, there glistens a tear! wherefore did it come? Ah! the sweet child thinks not of the beautiful dress which makes her look so like an angel; she thinks not of that showy stage.

No, her mind is far away in the cheerless room, where her gentle mother is bending over the cradle of Willie, watching him alone and unaided. She sees them both in imagination, and as she thinks of the wild tears raining from her mother's eyes, and the flushed, hot cheeks of Willie, she starts, and grasping the arm of the stern looking manager, who stands near her, says in a pleading tone of almost frantic wildness,

“Ah! sir, do please let me go home; I know little brother is worse, and I cannot dance. Oh! do let me go home!”

“What,” almost shouted the manager, “let you go home when your name is on the bill, and the audience are even now impatient for your appearance; no, no, I shall do no such thing — you shall stay and dance, and mark me, you will fare hard if you miss a single step; but see,” he continued, grasping Allie's arm, “the play is over, and the curtain is rising, now dance well and I will pay you to-night.”

This was said in a coaxing tone; but as they neared the stage he released his grasp upon her arm, and pointing towards it muttered in a deep, firm voice,

“Now on, and have care that you do not disappoint me!”

The next moment Allie was on the stage.

Like a being from fairy-land, floated that light form; deliciously swelled the rich music, and more graceful became each sylph-like movement. Darker grew the Italian eyes, and flushed the round cheeks with a still deeper crimson.

Like a thing of light she glided over the stage, while a shower of bouquets fell around her, and one beautiful wreath of flowers, as she was gliding from the stage, fell upon her head, and rested like a coronet on the glossy tresses.

When she had disappeared, the enraptured feelings of the audience burst forth, and the very walls seemed to echo the applause so richly won.

As Allie stood wearied and almost breathless from exertion, those swelling sounds brought no thrill to her young heart.

But louder and deeper they came, and the wily manager told the poor child that she must dance again, for well he knew that the wondrous beauty and exquisite dancing of the youthful being, would excite even more admiration than the magnificent acting of the brilliant "star."

So once more did that peerless form move like an air-spirit before the vast and delighted assemblage. Once more did the rich melody swell forth, and once more fell bouquets and flower-wreaths at the feet of the fairy-like dancer.

The dance was nearly ended, and for a moment the starry eyes of the child were turned towards the audience. The stranger who first attracted our attention, had risen from his seat, and upon his now almost death-pale face, fell those brilliant eyes. The tiny feet ceased their graceful motion, and a second time those bright eyes gazed as if spell-bound upon the stranger's pale

face. Then with a low, half-stifled cry, little Allie sank insensible upon the flower-covered stage.

The curtain fell, and the unconscious child was lifted in the arms of the "star" actress of the evening, and laid upon a settee; where the kind-hearted lady bathed the pale temples, and unclasped the satin dress, whose roseate tint contrasted strangely enough with the marble whiteness of the chiselled features.

Slowly opened those dark eyes, and wildly they beamed as life came back to the cold limbs.

"My father—oh! where is my father; has he gone without even speaking to his Allie? Tell me! where is my father?"

And as the pleading voice ceased, the little girl started to her feet and gazed into the face of the fair actress with an expression of such earnest, beseeching inquiry, that the tears started to her eyes as she attempted to soothe her.

Suddenly a commanding voice was heard, as if in altercation, with the harsh tones of the manager, and the next moment, a side door was flung violently open, and with a wild cry of "Father, my own father!" little Allie sprang into the open arms of the manly stranger.

When the excitement of the joyous meeting had some what subsided, Mr. Rivers told Allie, that when his proud ship was lost, he was left by the waves upon a small island, inhabited by Indians, where he was obliged to stay for many a weary month, till one day, an English ship, homeward bound, passed the island, and,

attracted by his signal, sent a boat to bring him on board.

He went with the ship to England, and thereby improving a fortunate opportunity, had amassed an almost princely fortune, and had returned to his native land to enjoy it with his wife and children.

He had been in the city nearly a week, but his constant search for his family had, to this hour, been all in vain, and it was by the merest chance that he had now found his child.

He was passing the theatre, when he was attracted by the name of "Allie Rivers," and, with the wild hope of, at least, learning *something* of his family, he had that night attended the theatre, and, as the reader already knows, found the lovely object of his search.

Mr. Rivers then called a carriage, and while they were on the way home, Allie related to her father, all that had occurred since his departure. How they had often suffered for food and warmth; how her mother had mourned over his supposed death, and how sick little Willie was.

Nor did she forget to mention the kindness of Dr. Elton, and the refusal of his former friend to assist them.

As Mr. Rivers clasped his darling child still closer to his heart, he replied that they should both be rewarded for the kindness and unkindness with which they had treated his family.

But while Allie is so earnestly relating her little story, let us, gentle reader, return once more to the old room where we left the pale mother watching over her sick boy.

After Allie's departure, Mrs. Rivers seated herself by the little cradle, and holding Willie's fevered hand within her own, watched every change of his flushed countenance, for she knew that the crisis was near, and she feared for the life of her darling.

Wearily passed the long hours, until the clock in the next room struck eleven, and then little Willie withdrew his hand from his mother's and opened his large eyes.

Their expression was no longer vacant, and as he looked up into his mother's face, and with his wonted smile wreathing the dimpled mouth, murmured "dear mamma," she felt a thrill of joy and gratitude swelling her heart, for in that calm beaming eye and gentle tone, she read that he would live to love and bless her.

Again he fell into a light slumber, but the fearful crisis was past, and now the sleep was sweet and refreshing.

Mrs. Rivers breathed a prayer of thankfulness to that "High Throne from whence all mercies flow," and then after replenishing the cheerless fire with the few chips lying upon the hearth, again seated himself to think of the past, and study plans for the darkly-shaded future.

She was wondering why Allie stayed so late, when the door opened and with a light step the sweet child

bounded into the room. She quickly asked her how Willie was, and being told that he was much better, remarked, as she untied her hood,

"Oh! mother, would not this be a happy Christmas for us if dear father was alive?"

"Ah? my child," answered Mrs. Rivers, while the tears started to her eyes, "it was God's will to take him from us, and I have tried to bow submissively, beneath his rod, but I fear—I know I can never enjoy another Christmas!" and she wept wildly and passionately.

"Oh! mother, do not weep," said Allie, twining her arms around her neck; "perhaps father will come back—we are not sure that he is lost; and mother, I heard to-night that one man on board his ship was saved by being washed upon an island, and who knows but it was papa?"

"Did you indeed hear this, Alice? Oh! God grant that it may be my husband!" and rising from her seat, Mrs. Rivers continued in a voice choked with emotion, "Oh Allie, if he should come back, would we not be happy? but no, it cannot be—the hope is too dear, too wild, for me to cherish!"

"But, mother," persisted the little girl, "would it not be strange if he should come to-night; this bright Christmas night? you know it is just three years this morning since he left us."

A sob was the only reply, and again the child spoke.

"Mother, if some one should tell you that papa was

yet living, and would be here to-night, do you think you could bear the tidings calmly?"

"Calmly! my child, calmly? Aye, and gratefully, too; but why do you distract me with these questions?"

"Because, mother, I know that my father is living, and will be here to-night!"

"What mean you, Allie? why, oh! why do you speak thus? surely you cannot mean what you are saying!"

Allie spoke not, but opening the door which led into a long entry, she spoke a single word, and the next moment Mrs. Rivers was clasped to the heart of her long-lost husband.

Ah, reader, how shall we describe that meeting—of the husband and the wife! If you are a wife, and have mourned a loved husband's loss, you may imagine it. If you are a husband, and have ever grieved for a cherished wife, you can feel what we would describe; but, as we are neither, we must leave it, gentle reader, to your own imagination.

There was much to be told on both sides, and the gray light of morning crept through the frost-covered window-panes, ere the recitals were finished.

As soon as it was sufficiently light, Mr. Rivers called a carriage, and his family were conveyed to one of the large hotels, where they were to remain until their own home should be prepared to receive them.

Little Willie recovered rapidly, and ere many days had passed, they were re-instated in their proud man-

sion which had been their former home, and the birth-place of their beautiful children; and we can attest, there was not in our fair city, a happier household than the one which gathered each morn and eve, beneath the roof of the wealthy and truly aristocratic Melbourne Rivers.

The friendship which had formerly existed between Mr. Rivers and Dr. Barton, was never renewed; why, the latter well knew. But the noble and kind-hearted Elton, was ever welcomed most cordially to the elegant home of those whom he had befriended when the blight of poverty was near.

Many years, dear reader, have passed since the father's return. Other fair children have caused the noble mansion of the Rivers' to ring with merriment, but "Willie" is now a tall and handsome man, with the same glossy hair and brilliant eyes which formed the charm of his father's beauty.

And Allie, our right beautiful Allie! what of her? She, too, has grown to womanhood, good and beautiful as an angel; but no longer doth she form the sunshine of her early home, and the darling of her loved parents.

Our handsome friend, the noble Elton, long since won a high reputation in a Southern city, and there he built as beautiful a cage as ever echoed with the sweet warblings of a sweeter bird. And to that glorious home did he carry his peerless bride—his own sweet Allie; and who shall say that the happiness of the gentle being is not perfect?

Surrounded by all that can make life happy—idolized by a noble husband, and cherished by a large circle of admiring friends, is she not truly blessed?

Each successive Christmas, there is a family gathering within the stately mansion of Melbourne Rivers; and though in the midst of affluence and plenty, yet they never forget that there is poverty around them. Many a suffering family has learned to bless their kindness, in cheering them, not only by soothing words, but by that assistance, which, with their own exertions, has placed them beyond the pale of blighting poverty.

Ah, reader, could you look in upon one of those pleasant Christmas gatherings, and mark the sunny joyousness of each bright face, and hear the merry laugh and song as it bursts forth from rosy lips, like silvery melody, methinks you would murmur, as you turned from the glowing picture,

"Oh! how sweet it must be to do good with what our heavenly Father has given us!"

BEWARE OF LOVE.

Lady, with thine eye of blue,
With thy heart so kind and true,
With thy tresses dark as even,
And thy soul as pure as heaven,—
Listen not to love's sweet tongue,
Leave him with love's song unsung.

Lady, when he comes to thee,
Murmuring harp-like melody,
Praising the beauty of thy brow,
Bidding thee breathe love's holy vow,
Thrilling thy soul with siren lay,—
With scornful lip, O! turn away!

Lady, when with eloquent tone,
He asketh thee to be his own,—
Breathes in thine ear the wild love-tale,
Saying that love shall never fail,—
O! turn away and heed him not,
Else thou wilt be soon forgot.

Lady, when he hath won thy heart,
He will scorn it and depart,
To gaze no more in thine eye of blue,
To care no more if thy heart be true;
He is cold as the stars above,—
Then lady! O, lady! beware of love.

WOMAN'S MISSION.

What does it all mean—this excitement about “woman's mission?” Methinks half our sex must have gone crazy, stepping so boldly from the hearthstone to the rostrum! Do they think it woman's mission to turn from the home-fold, seeking notoriety? Do they think it woman's mission to go abroad in the wide world, trying to crowd herself into the outside seat man occupies, and push him from the platform, that *she* may be heard? No, no! the woman who would stand boldly and unblushingly before the multitude, so far forgetting the delicacy which should shrink from such an action, as to raise her voice against the stronger sex, should drop forever the very name of woman.

If such *were* woman's mission, why was she not created with man's strength? why was she formed delicate and shrinking as the timid bird?

Because such is *not her* mission. We find not the true woman standing forth before the world; but go to the home-fireside and see her there! see the smile of soul-affection lighting up her face as she welcomes him, who all through the day has toiled unceasingly for her and for her children; see how quickly her kindly words drive away all looks of weariness from his face, and the

vexation of business from his mind ; watch her as she bends over the sick bed, wiping the moisture from the burning brow, holding the cooling drink to the parched lips, and soothing the sick one's nervous mind with sweet words of hope and cheer. How noiselessly, how tenderly she arranges everything ; dropping the curtain that the sunshine may not be too brilliant ; stepping lightly and softly that the sound may not waken the sufferer.

See her when she stands beside the erring one, stealing her soft hand in his, while she gazes into his face so entreatingly, and pleads with all the eloquence of her earnest heart, that he walk once more in the path of duty. Mark how the tears chase each other down his cheeks, as the clasp of the gentle hand grows tighter, the pleading voice more earnest ! Ah ! those low tones have sunk deep into his wayward heart, and he inwardly resolves to go back into the world and sin no more.

The gentle pleader leaves him, but he is saved ! saved through the quiet, unseen influence of a meek, shrinking woman !

See her yet once more, as she sits with her child when the hush of night makes earth more beautiful. How tenderly her hand rests on the golden head of the little cherub kneeling at her feet ! how pure the smile that comes over her face when the childish voice repeats after her, " Our Father who art in Heaven ! " And then how meekly she kneels by the prattler's bedside and

pours forth her whole heart in prayer for his future welfare. Not even when the days of childhood have gone by are those hours forgotten by the golden-haired listener ; many, many a time when the siren voice of temptation whispers in his ear, there floats to his heart on the still tide of memory, the low, sweet words of his mother's prayer, as she knelt long years ago by his bedside. Ah ! that mother may be an angel now, but she yet holds an unseen influence over the heart of her child — an influence gained by those gentle prayers she taught him when he knew no thought save innocence.

Yes ! yes ! this, woman, is thy mission. To form the sunshine of the home-hearth ; to lighten the cares of the weary with happy smiles, to soothe the couch of suffering with words of tenderness, to lead the erring back to virtue, and teach the lisping tongue of childhood the sweet words of truth and holiness. Ah ! truly, the Father hath given thee work fitting for His angels ; see to it that thou doest it well. Strive not against thyself, for thou art a woman, and woman's place is home ! — her mission, love.

THE DESERTED WIFE TO HER HUSBAND.

We meet no more; though on the hearthstone gleaming,
The firelight nightly sheds its quiet glow —
Though the long days and hours of silent dreaming,
Like the past hours shall swiftly come and go —
Though in the hall the old clock's constant chiming
Rings out the hour that used to bring thee home —
And though I list to hear thy steps approaching,
'T is all in vain — thou wilt not come.

We meet no more; we, who have passed together
So many hours upon life's changing tide —
We, who in summer days and wintry weather,
Have walked earth's weary pathway side by side —
We, who have wept in woe and smiled in gladness,
Have cherished each the other's hopes and fears,
Whose hearts have often beat with one same sadness —
We meet no more in all the coming years!

We meet no more; the time hath gone forever
When I had power to charm thy wayward heart —
When I alone could soothe grief's heavy fever,
And bid the shadow from thy brow depart.
Mayhap mine eye hath lost the youthful brightness,
You used to say was like the starlight's gleam;
Mayhap my feet hath lost the bounding lightness
That bore me on through life's first, joyous dream.

We meet no more; I know not if some other
Hath won my former place upon thy breast,
If thou dost lavish now upon another,
The tender love that once made me so blest;
I only know that through the lonely evening,
There stands beside my own a vacant chair —
That when I start up from my silent dreaming
To meet thy gaze, thou art not there!

We meet no more; our home is thine no longer;
Thy steps have wandered from its quiet spell,
Though in my heart the love-beat ne'er was stronger
Than when I gave to thee that calm farewell.
Yet when Death stills life's dark and wearying pain,
There is another and a happier shore,
There shall the wife and husband meet again —
On earth we meet no more!

THE MASKED STRANGER.

CHAPTER I.

She leans beside the vault where sleeps her mother,
The tablet has her name upon the wall;
Her only parent, for she knew no other;
In losing whom, the orphan lost her all. L. E. L.

This is the deepest of our woes,
For this these tears our cheeks bedew;
This is of love the final close,
Oh, God, the fondest, last adieu! BYRON.

It was a clear, beautiful night in Autumn. The pale moon flung a silver radiance over the world, but her fairest beams seemed flooding the white tombstones of a small churchyard in a pretty English village. There were tall trees waving above those lowly graves; and as the Autumn breeze swept through them, bearing the withered leaves upon its course, they seemed ever murmuring in a solemn chant for the silent forms resting in dreamless slumber beneath.

The tombstones, with the pale moonlight streaming over them, seemed like white spectres guarding the sacred enclosure from intrusion. In one corner, beneath the drooping branches of a willow tree, was a new-made grave. Although the raised turf was fresh and

green, while those around looked sere and dead, yet there was a marble monument rising above the grave, telling that the duty of the living to the dead had not been forgotten.

The monument was simple, yet beautiful, and bore the brief but impressive inscription, "MY MOTHER," carved in the centre of a wreath of myrtle.

It was near the hour of midnight that a slight, fair form passed slowly through the little churchyard gate, and made its way towards the new-made grave in the corner. The form was that of a young girl, whose white dress, pale face, and long, jet black tresses, almost gave the idea that she was some beautiful spirit, who had chosen that quiet burial place for a midnight haunt.

She soon reached the little corner, and kneeling before the monument, clasped her small white hands and murmured, in a sweet, but broken voice — "Oh, my mother, why did you not take me with you? Why did you leave me alone in this cold, bleak world? How can I breast the chilling waves of life, with no loving heart beating beside me; no tender hand to lead me from temptation; no kindly breast whereon to lay my poor head when my heart is weary with the weight of joyless life? Oh, my mother, would that this green mound covered both our forms; would that I were with thee in thy far-off home!"

She sank down upon the cold ground and buried her face in her hands, while the fragile figure quivered

with inward agony. Suddenly another form stood beside the monument, a form handsome and manly, and a deep, rich voice, in faltering tones, said, "Effie,— Effie Norton!"

The weeping girl quickly raised her head, and her dark eyes fell upon a face pale and haggard as her own.

"Ah, Tracy, why do you come to reproach me at this hour, when my heart is almost broken?" she murmured, while her tears fell upon the grass beneath her like shining dew. The question was unheeded by the pale intruder, and folding his arms upon his proud breast, he continued,

"Effie Norton, where is the heart you once gave me? where is the hand you placed in mine one year ago this very night, and promised that at the altar it should be given me for life? Where is the love which once cheered my wayward destiny as the heaven-star cheers the lone wanderer? Ay, Effie Norton, where is the heart and hand which once were mine?"

"Oh, Tracy, Tracy, it seems unkind to distract me thus; but I cannot blame you. I deserve it. The heart I gave you is yours still, and will continue to be while life remains in this poor breast. But the hand, Oh! Tracy, that is already another's!"

"Another's, Effie! another's! The hand which I have toiled for, prayed for, perilled even life to win, given to another! Well, well, this is my reward, a fitting one for the suffering I have passed through to gain it."

The low, thrilling voice ceased, and the young man leaned against the monument with a face pale and cold as the marble itself, while his form trembled from very agony. The fair girl raised her eyes to his face, but it was so white and wore such a terrible expression of intense anguish, that she shuddered as she muttered, in a half-whisper, "and I have caused this," and starting from her lowly posture, she flung her white arms around his neck, and said, in a tone of frantic earnestness,

"Oh! Tracy, God knows how I love you; and what a dreary waste life will be without the heart you once said was mine; but I had not power to stay my destiny when it came bringing woe and despair. Come, sit once more beside me, Tracy; here upon my sainted mother's grave, and let me tell you that my own will did not break the holy vow I made to you."

The stern expression disappeared from the proud face of Tracy Aubrey, and his large black eyes beamed softly as he seated himself beside Effie, and with her little hand still clasped in his, prepared himself to listen to the explanation he had sought.

"My mother," commenced Effie, in a low, quivering voice, "as you already know, wedded, when very young, a man to whom she was devotedly attached, but whose superior talents was their only resource, neither possessing any fortune. For three years they struggled with poverty and suffering, and at the end of that time Lord William Southingham, who had known and loved my father from his boyhood, obtained for him the office of

first secretary to Sir Robert Walpole — then in the zenith of his power as prime minister — whose favorite he remained until his death, which occurred when I was but three years of age. Through the influence of Lord William, Sir Robert settled upon my mother the large annuity to which my father, had he lived, would have been entitled.

“My mother removed to this quiet village, where she has remained, with no companion save myself; and for many years I have been the idol upon whom she has lavished all the fond affection of her gentle soul. I have never expressed a wish which were it in her power, she has not gratified; I have never been unhappy but her watchful eye has detected the cause and with sweet words and kindly smile removed it. She has dearly loved me, Tracy, and fondly, devotedly, was the affection returned.

“She cherished a strange attachment to Lord Southingham; probably the memory of my father seemed linked with his kindness. He came to spend a week with us last summer, and would often drive out alone with my mother, or remain for hours with her in the library. One morning she came to me after her usual drive with Lord William, and never shall I forget the half-pleased, half-anxious expression of her countenance, when she informed me that his lordship had asked my hand in marriage, and on her bended knee she begged me to accept him. Yes, Tracy, my mother knelt at my feet, and implored me, if I loved her, if I cherished

the memory of my lost father, to accept Lord Southingham.”

“And you did!” said Aubrey, bitterly.

“Nay, Tracy, I did not, and my mother left me with a pale, haggard cheek, and faltering step, while I threw myself upon a couch, weeping with agony that I had refused the first request my mother had ever made.

“The painful subject was not mentioned again; but as the Summer days passed by, my mother’s face grew pale and thin, and her sweet gentle smile, changed to a look of mournful sadness, which went to my heart like a living reproach. I watched her form grow more shadow-like, and her cheerful step slow and unsteady. Even her dark, glossy hair, became threaded with silver, and her eyes, with their sad, reproachful expression, often glistened with unshed tears. Oh! how bitterly did I repent sacrificing her happiness for my own, when I saw my angel mother laid upon a sick couch, with Death written upon her sweet face, and pale, cold hands. Then came the thought that I had repaid all her tenderness, all her love and care, with disobedience. And when she called me to her bedside, and with tears dimming her eyes and the flush of death upon her cheek, begged me once again to grant her only request; to soothe her dying pillow by gratifying the wish she had for years cherished, and the fulfilment of which she had looked forward to as the solace of future years, even of death; then I acceded to her request. I wedded Lord Southingham, and when the painful rites were ended, and I knelt beside her couch once more, the

heavenly smile she gave me, as she laid her death-cold hand upon my head in blessing, repaid me for the lifetime of misery I knew would follow. Do you still reproach me, Tracy?"

"No, no, Effie, I only love you more for the sacrifice. But, oh! Effie, I have lived so long in the light of your dear smile; I have labored so earnestly, and deemed one sweet word from you a blessed recompense for every sorrow; I have loved you so wildly, so deeply, that to lose you forever—to know that another has won the jewel I have toiled and prayed for, seems more bitter even than death!"

"Do you forget that I too must suffer; that a cold, chilling blight has fallen upon my heart, crushing all its youthful dreams, and filling its future with weariness and woe? Do you forget that I cannot be happy without your love? That my heart must wear the black seal of misery though life; do you forget all this, Tracy?"

"Ah, no, Effie, I do not forget. Ours is a wayward destiny, and we were both born to suffer. In your proud home you will yet be happy, and I will hover near you—for I could not live in air that was not breathed by you. I will be ever near you, Effie, though you know it not; and tenderly, though silently, will I watch that beloved brow, that no dark shadow may rest upon it. But have you no token for me, no gift that I may gaze upon in the still hour of midnight, and dream of the love that was once mine?"

Effie withdrew her hand from the one which clasped it, and turning her head towards the little corner, her

eyes fell upon a rose-bush upon which still bloomed, like an emblem of constancy, a single white rose. With a small pearl knife, she severed a glossy curl from the luxuriant tresses clustering around her white brow, and plucking the rose, she pressed it to her rosy lips, and then placed it, with the ringlet, in the hand of her lover.

"And now, Tracy," she said, in a voice choked with anguish, "we must meet no more. The duty I owe him who is now my husband, and the promise I made to her who slumbers beneath us, must be kept sacred, even though the sacrifice be life. But, Tracy," and the heavenly light which shone in the dark lustrous eyes, made her seem like some sweet angel—"we shall meet in a brighter world, and there our union shall not be broken. Leave me now; let me be alone by this dear grave once more, that I may prepare my weary heart to struggle calmly in the cold, proud world."

Aubrey spoke not, but his manly arm for an instant encircled the slender form beside him, and bending low, he pressed his lips upon the fair brow upraised to his face, and murmured, in a low, broken voice—"Farewell, Effie; may the angels of Heaven hover near you that no shadow may darken the sunlight of your life!"

Another instant, and Effie Norton was alone in the churchyard.

Alone in the churchyard at the hour of midnight! Alone with the silent dead. The white tombstones rising from the lowly graves like the shrouded forms be

neath them — the trees sighing, with their slow moving boughs, a low, constant requiem — the withered leaves rustling with a sound like that which startles the very soul when the cold earth falls upon a coffin — the sad Autumn breeze echoing back each moan of sorrow — the silver stars gazing in pity upon the pale, suffering mourner!

Ah! what an hour was that to the young, tender heart of Effie Norton, as she knelt there, by her mother's grave, with her white hands clasped tightly together, and her tearful eyes fixed vacantly upon the green turf. Memory, with her white robes, came gliding near her with her magic wand, recalling scenes which had slumbered in her heart's quiet cells, and awakening sweet dreams she had deemed crushed forever.

She knelt there, till the waning stars warned her that day was near, and then, leaning her head upon the turf, she breathed a farewell prayer, pressed her lips once more upon the white, cold marble, and dashing the tears from her eyes, hurried from the churchyard.

CHAPTER II.

Yet, ere that moon was old, we saw the Donna Julia ride
Gay on her snowy palfrey, as Don Alonzo's bride;
The bride was young and beautiful, the bridegroom stern and old,—
But the silken rein was hung with pearls, the housings bright with
gold.
L. E. LONDON.

It is the mind ill at ease that seeks for excitement.
ETHEL CHURCHILL.

It was a gay evening in Southingham Hall. Rich

music floated through the spacious rooms, and the flood of light from alabaster lamps was rivalled only by the light from starry eyes.

It was the first fete given by Lady Southingham, and all the nobility were present to honor it. There were many beautiful ladies there, whose high rank and glowing charms had won the admiration of the million; but yet, amid all that bright array of beauty, the brilliant hostess had no rival. The magnificent diamonds she wore might have purchased a crown, or filled a hundred homes with luxury and comfort; but they grew dim in the light of her dark, flashing eyes. Her white brow looked strangely pure, contrasted with the shining mass of jet black tresses, which, contrary to the fashion of the day, were allowed to fall loosely over the neck and shoulders, with no ornament, save a wreath of delicate flowers, fastened by a single superb diamond.

As she moved from group to group, with queen-like grace, the light word and silver laugh flowing from her lip with such seeming joyousness, one would scarcely have recognized the pale, fragile mourner of the little village churchyard.

But one who looked deeper than mere outward appearance, could easily perceive that the inward spirit was restless and unhappy, though striving to appear cheerful and gay. Those beautiful eyes, though they sparkled, were sometimes fixed on vacancy, with that peculiar stare which tells that the mind is wandering far away — living again amid former scenes. The tones of that

sweet voice were sometimes low and sad, and the light, careless laugh checked suddenly, as if the eye beheld a shadowing vision. And what was that silver laugh as it came from those coral lips when she moved amid the glittering throng of gaiety and fashion? A vain, taunting mockery to the radiant smile which lighted the peerless features!

But Lady Southingham was idolized by her lordly husband, who, though many years her senior, mistook her subdued gentleness for love. He never thought that another could have won those young affections; he never heard, in the music tones of that sweet voice, the mournful strain; he never marked the wandering, restless glance of those thrilling eyes; no, no, Lord William Southingham had never studied the strange character of woman, and he could not see that though his young wife was obedient and gentle, yet her heart, even when by his side, was far away.

As the mistress of the noble house of Southingham, Lady Effie was courted and admired; but as the reigning beauty, she was petted, caressed and flattered. Her wondrous beauty was the subject of many a glowing sonnet, and many a sparkling toast rang with praise of her loveliness.

Flattery was poured into her ear, and the compliment was given alike in toast and song. Not alone by the brainless fop was her society courted and her beauty praised, but the high and wise acknowledged the witching fascination of the gentle belle, and bent low at her

peerless shrine. And was the young countess unaffected by all this homage? Oh! no; her heart, gentle and sad as it was, was human; and where is the human heart entirely insensible to the voice of adulation?

And so Lady Southingham sought, in pleasure and excitement, the forgetfulness which solitude could not bring. Her form was the proudest at the courtly fete, her step the lightest at the midnight ball, and her wit the most sparkling at the banquet. Her vanity — the vanity which characterizes every human breast, whether great or low — was pleased and flattered with the praise bestowed upon her. Her heart, strewn with the withered flowers of blighted hope, dared not rely upon its own sweet meditations for the quiet peace and happiness it sought so vainly; so she turned to the glittering world for enjoyment — happiness it could not be.

She strove to bury her misery in the giddy pleasures of society, concealing its bitterness beneath the brilliant flow of sparkling wit. But the restless eye; the strange coldness in the music-like laughter; the startling gaiety of the fascinating manner; the deep shade of forgetfulness which now and then flitted over the radiant smile, and the sarcastic keenness of her ready wit, revealed to a close observer that the heart of the proud and envied countess knew not the sunny spell of free and native happiness.

As we have before mentioned, this was the first entertainment Lady Southingham had given, and she enjoyed the satisfaction — as Lady Stanley remarked, when she

bade her beautiful friend good-night — of seeing nearly all the world in her own stately drawing-rooms.

But the glowing hours flew swiftly by, and the fete was over.

Alone in her fairy-like dressing-room was Lady Effie. The velvet robe she had worn was laid aside, and a silken wrapper flung carelessly around her stately form. The wreath still nestled among the jetty tresses, but its flowers were faded and dead, and seemed mocking, with their blighted leaves, the brilliancy of the diamond that flashed amid them. The smile she had worn, like a mask, when in the midst of that gay crowd, had faded from the lovely face, and its radiance was succeeded by an expression as sad and gentle as was the former proud and brilliant. The cheek, flushed with excitement but a few hours ago, was strangely pale, and she sunk from very weariness into a fauteuil beside her mirror.

It was a sweet place — that luxurious dressing-room ; a fitting nest for a being so fair and delicate as the youthful Lady Effie. There were rare exotics making the air heavy with perfume ; there was superb statuary, reflected in the polished mirrors with that faint, indistinct outline which reminds one of the shadows of a summer twilight ; there were jewels of princely value scattered in careless profusion over the ebony toilet-table, and shining like golden stars in the soft light of the little antique lamp ; and there was an easy air of high-bred luxury from the very pictures on the wall to the delicious chocolate steaming so invitingly in its rich China cup upon the stand.

But the dark eyes of the young countess rested not upon the luxury around her. The apartment was very warm and the casement flung open. The light silken curtains were drawn aside and the beautiful stars seemed gazing in upon the pale, sad face, upraised to their pitying light.

And where was the heart of Effie Southingham as she sat gazing upon those kindly stars ? The heavy curtains of the past were swept aside by the magic wand of memory, and the young heart of the beautiful woman was far away in the little village where her girlhood was passed, nestling by that quiet grave in the lone churchyard ! She was living over again the hour she knelt upon that hallowed sod, with her white cheek pressed against the cold marble, and her warm tears mingling with the shining night-dew. All the splendor she had seen since she became the mistress of that proud home, all the homage she had received from the gay, glittering world, was forgotten in the sweet, painful dream of the past.

Instead of the low whisper of adulation, she heard the gentle tones of her angel mother. In place of jewelled splendor she saw a plain, white monument, with a tall tree drooping over it. Even the low rustling of withered leaves, and the sighing of the autumn wind, seemed lingering on her ear and echoing in her heart.

She saw again the pale, proud face of Tracy Aubrey, as he pressed his cold temple against the white headstone. She sat once more upon that mounded grave,

with her trembling hand clasped in his, and his dark, soul-speaking eyes fixed upon her face. She remembered how that manly form shook with emotion as he bent low to press upon her brow the last fond kiss of blighted love, and in imagination, she felt those cold, quivering lips, as, for an instant, they touched her forehead. She heard that whispered blessing, and felt again the frantic woe which thrilled her, when the last faint echo of that low farewell died away upon the midnight, wafted onward by the autumn breeze.

She covered her face with her hands and shudderingly strove to shut out the painful picture, but it became more and more vivid, and she wept as bitterly as on that starry night when she bade farewell to the lonely grave where slept her sainted mother. But suddenly she raised her face from her hands and gazed earnestly towards the window. Surely she heard the leaves rustle beneath the light balcony. Again she heard the same slight rustling, and a moment after, a low, sweet melody upon the night air. Lady Effie had heard the light strings of the guitar swept in the festal hall and in the calm moonlight, but she knew no hand, save one, to move them thus.

The silvery prelude was ended, and a rich, thrilling voice mingled with the music notes. The cheek of the lady grew yet paler, and her dark eyes more brilliant, as she listened, with clasped hands and throbbing temples, to the low words of that deep voice, as it sang in strangely sweet, yet mournful tones,

"I have roamed afar in stranger lands,
I have roamed across the sea,
But my blighted heart, like a weary bird,
Returneth still to thee.
I have stood beside the beautiful,
Who moved in courtly pride,
But still, as in a midnight dream,
I lingered at thy side.

"I have mingled in the lighted hall,
With the gifted and the gay,
And though beauty's spell was round me,
Yet my heart was far away.
I thought upon the hour I sat
Within the church-yard lone,
And I heard again the sad farewell
Of a low and gentle tone.

"There's a shining tress of raven hair,
Resting in sweet repose,
Above the heart that weareth still
A white and faded rose.
I wear them as the emblems
Of a love that once was mine,
For the heart that beats beneath them
Still worships at thy shrine.

"When kindly stars are beaming
From out the silver sky,
And the soft wind murmurs sadly,
As it passes gently by;
May memory glide beside thee
With dreams of other days,
And charm thee like the melody
Of low and witching lays.

"May the dream she wakes be sweet, as when
 It first was dreamed by thee;
 May it wake a thought of pity,
 And a tender sigh for me.
 Oh! fare-thee-well, my Effie,
 May the wind that murmurs free,
 Bear to yon Heaven the blessing
 That I'm murmuring for thee."

And did Lady Southingham remember the thrilling voice of that manly singer? Ah, yes, too well, and was moving towards the balcony when the light foot-step was suddenly stayed. The cheek, which a moment before was pale as the snowy hand, was crimsoned with a flush of shame, and muttering, half aloud, "My God, what am I doing?" she sank upon a couch and buried her face in its silken cushions.

Though she did not love her husband, yet she respected him, and her high and noble sense of honor was shocked that she should allow even her thoughts to rest upon another.

Long and bitterly did she weep, till, wearied and faint, she sank into a deep slumber, forgetting alike her throbbing temples and aching heart.

Slowly and coldly paled the white stars, and soon, in place of silver moonlight, the rosy beams of the morning sun came dancing in through that draperied window, gilding picture and jewel with a golden tinge. But the sunlight fell upon no fairer object of beauty than the pale, classic face of the gentle sleeper, who lay, with her

small hands still clasped together, and her raven hair pushed back from her white brow. She was wearied and worn out, and it was many hours ere she awoke; and when at length the silken lashes were raised from the marble cheek, the large eyes fell upon the face of her husband, who sat beside her, holding one small hand and gazing tenderly upon the beautiful face before him.

Lord William had been a very handsome man in the chivalrous days of his early manhood, and even now, though the dark curling hair was turned to silver-gray, and the high brow marked with many a deep line, his form was still unbent and manly. The expression of his face was usually stern and somewhat haughty; but it was wreathed with a smile of love and pride, as he smoothed back the rich tresses from the brow of his young wife, and said, in a tone of singular sweetness:

"I feared you were ill, my sweet wife, you looked so pale and weary; but that bright glance and gentle smile tell me I need not fear the fading of so fair a flower. Here is a note from Lady Stanley; you were sleeping so sweetly, that I gave orders not to have you wakened, so I opened the note myself, as it required an answer, and being an invitation to a moonlight sail on the Thames, I sent word that as I have a little romantic passion for moonlight and water, I should try and accompany you."

Lady Effie thanked him with so sweet a smile and tone that he felt more than repaid for his care and tenderness.

Thus passed the time at Southingham Hall. Its lordly master grew each day more fond of his young and lovely wife, and, as she moved beside him, smoothing with her soft, fair hand, the silver locks which clustered thinly around his temples, or read to him from some favorite author, he felt that he was indeed blessed, and everything which human love could suggest was ordered for the happiness of her who was the solace of his life.

Fetes were given and banquets attended. Lord William was proud of the homage and flattery his noble lady received from the high and gifted, and his heart would thrill, when he thought that the beautiful queen of the festive train, the brilliant star whose radiant beams eclipsed all others, was his own.

He saw her, day after day, the same gay, gentle being; he marked the brilliancy of the sparkling eye, and the lightness of the echoing laugh, when the admiring crowd thronged around her with smiles and praises; he felt the light touch of her graceful hand upon his forehead; he heard the sweet tones of her voice ringing in the witching song; he looked not beyond the sunny smile which wreathed both lip and brow, and so he thought her happy. Ah! well is it for us that we know not the bitterness which oft-times rankles in the heart of the loved one, when the beaming eye sparkles most brilliantly, and the light laugh echoes its gayest strain of joyousness! Did we know that keen misery caused that unwonted sparkle; that the gay laugh was

but a hollow mockery to an aching heart; that the sunny smile was the mask that covered the unshed tears of human woe, how quickly would the merry jest change to the word of sympathy, the light beating heart throb with the pain of pitying sorrow.

One bright sunshiny morning, Lady Southingham sat alone in her boudoir, when the door opened, and her friend, Lady Stanley, was announced.

"Why, how well you are looking, my dear," she exclaimed, in her usual lively tone; "I believe that pretty dressing-gown becomes you even more than the festal robe! But do you not anticipate a fine time at Lady Montague's fete? you know it is so seldom, now-a-days, that we are enlivened by a masked ball."

"Ah, yes," replied Lady Effic, "I have already chosen my costume, and am waiting most patiently for the expected evening; but do you know we leave town immediately after the ball? Lord Southingham is in delicate health, and we hope the fresh air of the country will restore him."

"Leave town after the ball!" said Lady Stanley; "why, how very provoking; only think how we shall miss you; I wish his lordship would contrive to postpone his illness until a more convenient season. But I must be at home; I have not yet ordered my costume. So adieu, sweet one, till we greet each other from our masks, for you need not flatter yourself one can mistake that queenly step and dainty form, even though the domino folds shroud the fair outline!"

Again Lady Effie was alone, and fearing that she might be interrupted before her usual hour of reading to Lord William, she went directly to the library, where his lordship was already awaiting her. He looked unusually pale, and his eyes were dark and heavy; but there was no quiver in the rich voice as he bade his young wife a merry "good-morning," and led her to a seat beside the open window, where the sweet warbling of birds and the perfume of roses were borne into the apartment on the same gentle breeze.

It was the night of Lady Montague's fete. In her pretty dressing-room Lady Southingham still lingered, as if unwilling to leave so sweet a spot. Her costume was very rich, though somewhat fantastic. She wore no jewels save those which glistened amid the heavy black tresses, and the single diamond shining on the tiny clasp of each small slipper. Lord William was too ill to accompany her, and yet he insisted upon her attending.

Standing before her mirror, with one fair hand pressed upon the white brow, and the other clasping a bouquet of withered flowers, she seemed lost in a dream of the past, and although gazing upon the beautiful face reflected upon the glass, she did not seem to notice the restless glance of the black eyes, nor the deep crimson which burned upon the hot cheek. But she stood there, gazing vacantly upon her own sweet face, seemingly unconscious that the hour was swiftly passing.

Suddenly she moved towards a stand, and, opening a small billet, read, in a half whisper, half mutter:—"If Lady Southingham cherishes the memory of by-gone years; if her heart still treasures a thought of him to whom her early vows were plighted, she will wear to-night, as a token of that memory, *a faded rose!*"

Crushing the note in her hand, she paced the room nervously, while the flush which paled and deepened on her cheek told how bitter was the struggle between love and duty.

"Oh! my God," she murmured, "why do I hesitate, when my own heart tells me 't will be wrong? I will not waver longer; I will remember the duty I owe him whose kindness I am so unworthy of. But yet, it can do no harm—perhaps he did not write the note, and—and—no, no, it cannot be wrong. I will wear it!"

A step approached the door of her dressing-room, and half frantic from excitement, she sprang to the mirror, selected a withered rose from the bouquet she held, and placed it in her raven hair, with its white leaves nestling beside a brilliant diamond. How strange the contrast—*a radiant gem and a faded rose!* but they nestled together like the emblem of Life and Death, each a strange mockery to the other.

For the third time, Lady Effie's maid entered the apartment to remind her mistress of the lateness of the hour; and as she fastened her mask, she noticed the excited gleam of her eyes and the trembling of the small hands, but Lady Effie assured her that it was

nothing, and flinging her domino over her shoulders, she was soon on her way to the scene of festivity, with a brow which throbbed with pain, and a heart beating with the consciousness of deviating from the duty she owed to him to whom her bridal vows were plighted.

CHAPTER III.

Gaily the maskers thronged the hall
Where glittered the light of the festival;
Many a lordly knight was there;
Many a lady proud and fair;
But one there was who stood aside
From the train that moved in festal pride;
And eyes which beamed, like jewels bright,
In wonder gazed on that stranger knight.

It was a brilliant scene — that gay masquerade. There was the stately princess in her robes of royalty; the delicate nun with the long dark veil falling round her like a shadow; the Spanish lady coquetting with her richly-carved fan; the graceful Hindoo, the pretty peasant, the gorgeously attired Sultana, and the charming little maid of honor. Every nation, almost every grade, was there represented. There were Persians, and Spaniards, and Italians; gloomy-looking friars, gaily-dressed knights, ferocious bandits and lordly nobles; princesses and flower-girls; the imperial robe beside the gipsy mantle; the gay plumes of the dashing cavalier waving by the dark veil of a pensive sister of charity.

There was that strange mixture of the grotesque and the serious, the grave and the gay, the artificial and the real, which is seen only at the masked ball. But one there was among that motley crowd who, though he avoided all intercourse with the gay assembly, was yet the unconscious "lion" of the fete.

He wore the dress of a Roman; and though his cloak was drawn closely around him, yet it could not conceal the stately proportions of a most noble form. He conversed with no one, and if any ventured to address a passing remark, it was answered in the same brief, yet courteous manner. His rich and singular costume would alone have excited the admiration of the throng; but the strangeness of his manners, the cold *hauteur* which repelled every attempt towards drawing him into conversation, at once wove around him the spell of mystery, and at the same time set curiosity astir.

There were many conjectures as to who he might be. Some thought he was the famous bandit chieftain; some, the great poet of the age; and others even went so far as to assert for a fact, that he was the king. But curiosity was, for once — as it should be ever — unsatisfied. They saw a noble figure, whose graceful stateliness admirably personated kingly dignity — large, black, flashing eyes, whose thrilling brilliancy seemed to speak the poet's soul — and the mysterious air which might infer the polished outlaw. But the face was hidden from the inquisitive gaze, and none there were who

recognized the proud carriage of the fine head and the regal firmness of the courtly step.

He paid not the slightest attention to the gay costumes around him, but his handsome eyes wandered restlessly over the gathered assembly of grace and beauty, as if searching for some object of intense interest to him alone. If a group of maskers wandered near the spot where he stood, he would draw his graceful cloak around him, as if it were an imperial garment, and himself the monarch whose sceptre swayed the world, and moving away, seek some shadowed recess, whose silken curtains partially concealed him from the crowd. Thus was the curiosity of the gay masqueraders continually baffled. They could not obtain the slightest glimpse of his face, and though many sought, none learned the haughty stranger's name.

"Ah, dearest Lady Southingham," cried the sprightly Lady Stanley, approaching the spot where the young countess was standing, a few moments after her arrival, "did I not say we should meet to-night? But do you know we are all dying with curiosity to learn whether yonder stranger be an eccentric prince or a wandering minstrel? There is so much majesty in his courtly air, and such an expression of soul in his bright eyes, that all the ladies are in love with him — out of pure romance, you know! But let us walk past him and see if we cannot get a glimpse of his features, for I know they must be gloriously handsome."

And placing her arm in that of Lady Southingham,

they sauntered carelessly towards the column against which the proud stranger leaned. His arms were folded upon his breast, and his ample cloak, being unclasped, had fallen back upon his shoulders. As the two ladies passed the column, his dark eyes rested for a moment upon the glossy tresses of the fair countess, and he started so suddenly that the cloak fell, discovering to many curious eyes, his rich and imposing costume. He gazed for a moment after the fair form of the queenly beauty, and then, as if recollecting himself, hastily replaced the cloak and moved away to a distant part of the room.

"You don't suppose we frightened him, do you?" said Lady Stanley, with a merry laugh. "But really, I think he must be some noble prince, who, like every gallant knight, pays court alone to our fair queen of beauty, and for the sake of romance, chooses to woo in disguise. Well, well, I must say he possesses an admirable knowledge of human nature, to have learned thus early that mystery is the very witchery of love; for indeed, were that charm lost, love would soon lose every other sweet."

The weary heart of Lady Southingham could not sympathize with the light gaiety of the festive train; so when Lady Stanley joined a merry group, she quietly left the lighted hall, and seeking the balcony, gave herself up to the reverie which had stolen over her.

The damask curtains swept over the open window which led out upon the balcony, concealing the

form of the gentle countess from the crowd within. The pale moonlight, the golden stars, and the sweet, fresh air, heavy with the perfume of roses, seemed weaving around the young heart of Lady Southingham, a dream like those of earlier and happier days.

She leaned her head upon the balustrade, and the rich waves of shining-black tresses swept over the soft cheeks and small white hands. Before her reposed, Heaven-like, nature in its holy loveliness. Behind her was the world — the cold, weary world! deceitful as its own siren festivity — full of mockery as the gay laugh which stifles the moan of a breaking heart.

Beside her stood memory's unseen form, waving her white wand over that bowed head. The almost living picture of the past, which, at the summons of that mystic wand, shut out the lifeless picture of the present, glided like a weird phantom before the inward vision of the dreaming lady.

She thought how few short years ago she was a merry-hearted girl, passing away the fleet hour with the birds and roses in an unassuming village. Now she was a titled beauty, flattered, caressed, and envied; wearing the outward semblance of joyousness — bearing the inward blight of crushed affections. A shining tear started to her eye and fell upon the folded hands, when she was startled by a light footstep. As she raised her head to ascertain who was the intruder, the crimson curtain parted, and in another instant the noble form of the masked stranger stood beside her.

As the lovely countess had removed her mask, she was somewhat startled and was about to leave the balcony, when a sweet voice murmured, "Effie, dearest Effie, can it be you have forgotten me?"

A cloud for an instant obscured the moon, and when it had passed away, the proud stranger was kneeling at the feet of Lady Southingham. The mask was removed, and the clear, cold moonlight shone full upon the handsome face of TRACY AUBREY!

"May God bless you, my own Effie," he said, in the same low, thrilling tone, "for wearing that faded rose, to-night. I should have known that form in any garb, but the signal flower assured me that the memory of other days is still kept within thy heart, though the gay world would fain have dimmed it with its siren splendor."

He drew the passive hand within his own, and the glossy head of the young countess was the next moment nestling upon his manly breast. The world, her husband, and her high station were alike forgotten in the wild happiness of that meeting. She was young, passionate, and impulsive. She loved Tracy Aubrey as few women are capable of loving, and it were strange, indeed, if she did not meet him with a thrill of rapture which even the white-robed angels might have forgiven.

"Do you remember the farewell in the still churchyard, darling?" he whispered. "I have been ever near thee since that dark hour. I have marked the

restless glance which sought an unseen form, and the unconscious sigh which told that even when the whisper of adulation was floating by, the heart was listening to a silent voice. I have sought this interview, not as the dependent Tracy Aubrey, but as one whose wealth and title equals thine own. And we have met again, sweet Effie; may we not be happy? may we not love fondly as before?"

Lady Effie did not answer, and as Aubrey pressed the hand he held, he bent his proud head and touched his lips to the marble brow. Quick as thought the countess sprang from his arms, and stood trembling with indignation before him. That burning kiss had awakened her to a sense of her position, and her voice quivered with emotion as she said, in a tone of despair:—

"And is it possible that I can thus betray the trust of him whose honor should be held sacred? Is it possible that I have listened to words of love from another? that I have forgotten the dying blessing of my angel mother—even my own unsullied honor? Oh! Tracy, Tracy, may God forgive thee for this interview."

As she flung aside the sweeping drapery from the window, and with the step of an injured empress sought the festive hall, she heard the wild tones of Aubrey, as he said:—

"Oh! Effie, I pray you do not leave me thus. Speak but one word and tell me I am forgiven—but a single word, Effie, and we will meet no more!"

But the passionate voice and the wild prayer were

alike unheeded. She swept on with a still prouder step, and Aubrey murmured, as he sprang from the balcony to the dew-stained earth beneath,—"'Tis well; I can but love her more for her noble spirit!"

Lady Southingham was alone in her boudoir, whither she had immediately gone on her return from the masquerade.

Her face was wan and haggard, and every limb trembled like the aspen leaf. She was miserable; nay, wretched. She had humbled her own lofty pride, and the very thought of listening to words of affection, even from her early love, when her vows of constancy and faithfulness were so solemnly plighted to another, appalled her sensitive heart and filled it with the frenzied anguish of reproach.

Had her husband been unkind, or denied the love and sympathy which was her due, she would not have been thus affected. But he had ever treated her most kindly, and the tender gentleness of his manner told how deep and fond was the love he lavished upon her.

Her hands were dry and hot as if burning with fever; and as she pressed them upon her pale temples, she could feel the flying pulse throb wild and rapidly. But quick as was the hot pulse, it did not beat so wildly as the woe-filled heart.

She flung herself upon a couch, and sought the slumber which brings forgetfulness and peace to the excited mind, but the feverish agony which caused that excite-

ment kept sleep at a distance, and burying her face in the yielding cushions, her over-burdened heart gave vent to the passionate tears which would else have burst it; tears which were the sweetest luxury of the weary mind.

"Oh! my lady," cried the countess' maid, throwing open the door of the boudoir, "do go directly to his lordship's room—we fear he is dying. He was in the library most all night, and as one of the servants was passing the door, he was startled by a heavy fall; and, on going in, he discovered that his lordship had fainted. They carried him to his dressing-room, but oh! my lady, he is so pale and faint—and he asks only for you; do go to him, for I know he must be going to die!"

Dizzy from weeping and thoroughly alarmed, Lady Southingham hurried to her husband's apartment. As she flung open the door, he was reclining in his large arm-chair, and his face, so wan, so ashy white, looked even paler in contrast to the rich crimson of his damask dressing-gown.

As his young and beautiful wife sprang towards him, he met the anxious glance of her dark eyes with a look so full of love and pleasure, that she started with an indefinable fear: for plainer even than the look of love in that pallid face, she saw the ghastly shade of Death.

The wild tears burst forth afresh when she stood beside him, and marked the unearthly glare in his sunken eyes, and the strange hollow tone in which he faintly whispered, as he drew her nearer to his heart:—

"God bless you, my own one. You have been the light of my life, and now you have come to soothe, with your angel presence, my dying hour. I have ever prayed that I might die upon your breast, and that your sweet voice might drive away the fear which ever fills the human soul when pale Death comes. My life-prayer is answered, and I die happy. May God bless you, my angel wife!"

He strained her for an instant to his almost pulseless breast, and pressed a cold kiss upon her pale brow, and, with a fond blessing yet lingering on his lip, sank back motionless in his chair. Lady Effie knelt down by him and took one marble hand in hers, but its icy coldness startled her, and she gazed upon his face. The heavy eyelids were closed, and there was a dark, pallid line settled beneath them. The chin had fallen and the whole face looked ghastly in its unearthly paleness. The frightened countess murmured his name, but the sealed lips gave back no answer; Lord Southingham was dead!

A week had passed by. The world had seen the noble form of Lord William Southingham laid in the stately vault where reposed the ashes of his titled ancestors. They had seen his beautiful widow dressed in the garb of mourning; they had marked the sincere grief with which she mourned her lordly husband's death. They missed the silver tone and the queenly form of the brilliant beauty from the festal hall, for Lady Southingham had withdrawn from the gay world to the sweet solitude of retirement.

CHAPTER IV.

Life may change, but it may fly not;
 Hope may vanish, yet can die not;
 Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;
 Love repulsed, but it returneth.

SHELLEY.

Two years had passed since the lovely Lady Southingham withdrew from the gay life of the London world. It was again autumn — just such a night as that on which she bade farewell to her mother's grave. The bright moon was shining down upon that little churchyard, and its pale beams silvered the white headstones. The same willow tree waved its sighing boughs above the simple monument in the corner, moaning ever the same low dirge.

It was near midnight, when the little wicket was hastily pushed open, and a lady, richly attired and unattended, hurried across the churchyard towards the corner.

Few would have recognized in that stately lady, with her proud step and glorious beauty, the wan, sorrow-stricken Effie Norton, who crossed the same churchyard five years ago that very night. But when she reached the monument, and flung herself on her knees before it, her travelling hat became unclasped and fell from her head; and if the reader had looked on the beautiful face which the silver moonbeams shone upon, he would immediately have recognized the lovely features of Lady Southingham.

The two lonely years of her widowhood had been passed far from her London home and that loved village

of her childish years; far, far away, amid solitude and retirement. She had just returned to the village for the purpose of visiting her mother's grave, and too impatient to wait for day, she had stolen from the pretty cottage of her hostess, and wended her way alone towards the spot she held almost too sacred to visit, when the cold eyes of strangers could witness her emotion.

She was almost overcome when she knelt once more beside that lowly grave, and a tide of sweet and painful memories came rushing like waves upon her mind.

O! how strange a thing is this still memory, coming so noiselessly at the midnight hour, when the lone spell of silence rests over the slumbering world, awakening, with a mystic power, such wild, weird fancies — calling grim phantoms from the heart's secret places — awakening low, soft voices, which seem chanting the gentle songs we used to love in by-gone days, when childhood's witching presence crowned even shadows with wreaths of fancied flowers! How sweetly spiritual are the dreams we revel in, when the visionary world folds its light mantle around us, while its bright air-castles, its sweet visions, and its soothing fancies float before our mental eyes, like gay-colored feathers dancing with the west winds! Oh! memory — sweet, blessed angel as thou art — thine is the power to soothe the weary heart when the world's coldness presses it too heavily!

While the beautiful countess was yet lost in the spell the hour and place had woven around her, she heard

the small wicket swing open, and turning her head she saw a noble form and manly face whose counterpart had long been graven upon her heart.

Another instant, and that proud form was beside her. A look of trusting love made his handsome face radiant, as the moonbeams fell over it, and the dark eyes beamed with hope when the low voice murmured — “May I love you now, dearest?”

She did not turn from him, but her sweet face showed the emotions of her heart as she placed her hand in his and answered — “Yes, Tracy, you *may* love me now; for methinks could my sainted mother look down upon us, she would bless the reunion of our hearts with a willing smile of sweet approval.”

There, by that white monument, where a sad farewell had once been spoken, were the vows again plighted, which had once in deed, but not in heart, been broken. As they left the churchyard for the cottage her ladyship was visiting, Tracy Aubrey told his sweet Effie, how, by the death of his uncle, he had succeeded to the earldom of Kingston, and how lonely he had been in his stately home, without her love to bless him.

Ere many weeks had passed, the lovely Lady Southingham became Countess of Kingston. A few months were spent in retirement, and then Kingston Hall was opened to the gay world, and its sweet mistress was again the shining light of the festive train. Many a proud nobleman, who strictly followed the strange fashion of being entirely indifferent to beauty, save in

other men's wives, was struck with the most natural astonishment when he witnessed the devotion of Lord Kingston to his gentle wife; for they almost considered a man insane who could complacently talk to his own lady when any other person would listen to him.

But Lord and Lady Kingston continued ever the same devoted couple, each happy in the consciousness of the other's love, for thoroughly had that love been tested.

Every autumn, they visited the grave of Effie's mother, nor was Lord Southingham's forgotten. The lofty vault, where he rested in dreamless slumber, was often visited, and the rich bouquet of fresh flowers which was left upon the coffin, told how fondly the memory of his love and kindness was still cherished.

Among the little treasures Lady Kingston always kept in the pretty ivory escritoire in her dressing-room, was a tiny-jeweled casket, in which nestled, like gems lost from a regal coronet, two faded roses. One was the same Lady Effie placed in the hand of Tracy Aubrey when they parted in the village churchyard — the other was the one she wore in her hair when she met the “Masked Stranger” at Lady Montague's fete.

THE FALLING LEAVES OF AUTUMN.

Sweep, sweep, thou wind of Autumn,
With thy low and fitful moan,—
There's whispered many a tale of woe
In thy deep and hollow tone!
Thou bear'st upon thy withering blast
Full many a cry of pain,
That mingles low and mournfully
With thine own fitful strain.

Then sweep, thou wind of Autumn,
And chant thy hollow song,
And echo back each cry of woe
When thy wild blast sweeps along.
Thy power can make the cheek grow pale,
And the light of life depart;
And thy low wail can send a chill
Of terror to the heart.

But there is yet another voice
More solemn than thine own,
That speaketh to the human heart
With a low and dirge-like tone.
Ay, there comes a spell more solemn
Than that the wild wind weaves,
When we mark the countless numbers
Of Autumn's falling leaves.

There's a whisper in their melody,
Like voices from the tomb,
Which seem to chant the funeral dirge
Of beauty and of bloom;
They breathe a mournful requiem,
When they fall with rustling sound,—
For hearts, that ere they fall again,
Shall moulder in the ground.

They tell how many a star of life,
Will shine all bright and brief;
And how the beautiful will fade,
Like Autumn's falling leaf.
Ah, let them strew our weary earth
In one dry, quivering wave,
As if they fell upon the ground
To deck Hope's shadow'd grave.

Ye withering winds of Autumn!
Ye fill the heart with dread,
Your hoarse wail chants the requiem
Of bloom and beauty fled;
But the silent voice that thrills the soul
And the spell of sadness weaves,
Seems speaking in the restless sound
Of Autumn's falling leaves.

THE IDEAL AND THE REAL.

From fifteen to twenty-five, we dwell in the visionary world. While the fascinating ideal lies before us, with its bright colorings, and sweet, poetic dreamings, we scorn and detest the cold and sickening reality. With the ideal spell upon us, we read in every flower a romance — see in every star a phantom brighter than the star itself — hear in every melody a strain which thrills our souls, and awakens every slumbering feeling of sympathy. But time glides away, alike unheeding happiness or sorrow. The sweet life of youth is past, and, with maturer years, come care and anxiety. We pass from the visionary world, to the cold, business-like reality. We love the same sunny flowers; admire the same silver stars; and listen enraptured, to the thrilling notes of melody. But, oh! we no longer read a romance in the rose petals, fancy bright phantoms in the stars, nor do our souls thrill with every note of music. We see the flowers without the romance; the star without the vision, and deem the sympathetic strain lost in the melody we used to love.

Thus it is, passing from the ideal to the real. In youth, we view life through a gauze-like veil, which while it shows luxury and pleasure in the most gor-

geous light, conceals by that same siren brilliancy, the rough paths of toil and sorrow which we wander through in after years.

The poet, seated in his cheerless room, alone and without luxury, will forget the world, as the spell of poetry steals over his soul. He does not see that every article about him bespeaks blighting poverty; he thinks not of the wealth and gaiety which even then glitters in the world around him. He is buried, heart and soul, in the glorious world of poetry, and as he traces with a trembling hand the eloquent thoughts which rush upon his fevered mind like living waters, — the flying pulse, the flushed cheek, and the strangely brilliant eye, reveal the startling intensity of the wordless eloquence which bewilders his brain and scorches his very heart. The midnight hours fly on unheeded. The cold, gray light of day steals through the dusty windows, and the visionary heaven fades like a waning star from the poet's mind. Before him lie the sentiments of his soul, traced in lines which mayhap will thrill millions long after the green sod covers the form of him who wrote them.

But the poor poet scarcely bestows a look upon the well-filled sheets. The sweet spell of imagination has left him dispirited and heart-sick, and he enters the proud world once more, sickened and disgusted with its hideous realities.

The glowing pictures we weave so brightly "in youth's sweet time" are never realized in after life.

But even when the dark hair has turned to gray and the young form become bowed with years, we look back upon those youthful dreams with emotions almost as sweet and painful as the prisoner in his lonely cell who sees for the last time the lingering sunbeams.

Ah! well it is for us that the ideal becomes lost in reality, else should we cling too closely to the pleasures of earth. The ideal once banished, and we pass through real scenes of life-sorrows, till the heart is led to place its hopes and dreams upon a better shrine, and to look beyond this weary world for the happiness which fades with the ideal of youth.

A TEAR.

Think not thou e'er hast won a heart,
And that heart holds thee dear,
Till it sheds for thee, and thee alone,
A pure and heartfelt tear.
For a smile of love and a spoken word
Ne'er yet affection proved;
But when we mark the starting tear —
Oh! *then* we are beloved.

Wake not for me the witching lyre,
The wild, impassioned lay;
There is no need of "words that burn"
To steal my heart away.
A passionate tale that's sweetly breathed,
May a token of love appear, —
But the test which thrills the soul the most
Is a mute and simple tear:

A tear that is sent by tenderness
From its home within the heart,
And sweetly flows, unconscious all
Of the power that bade it start.
There's many a heart that a tender word,
And a smile and caress may win, —
But give me the tear that silently flows,
And speaks for the soul within.

THE ACTRESS:

— OR —

THREE LEAVES FROM LIFE.

LEAF, THE FIRST.

"Oh! Fame! Fame! dazzling with thy splendor, bewildering with thy beauty, thou dost lure me on, on to the dizzy height from which millions have fallen — but still I follow thee. I know not but thy bright spell be the siren's. I know not but thy charm be the destroyer's, and yet my spirit yearns for thy caress, my heart longs to bind thy laurels to my brow."

With cheeks flushed from excitement the fair young speaker closed the volume of Shakspeare she had been perusing, and flinging the rich curls from her brow, moved towards the small mirror that hung near the white-curtained window. And again she spoke in the same wild tone,

"Aye, Nature has been bountiful. She has fitted me with every requisite for the life I covet, and that life must be mine! I cannot bear the humdrum quiet of this simple village. I was not born for such a life. My restless spirit is ever longing for something it has not,

and when I ask its name, a voice seems whispering from out my heart, and the word "*fame*" comes trembling up its still cells. And the wild wind while it cools my brow, bends to my ear, murmuring "*fame, fame.*" Even the little gurgling brook, as I watch its dancing ripples, echoes back my spirit's cry, and its low melody seems a sweet told story of fame's bewitching brilliancy. Yes, yes, I *must* have fame. I am a clergyman's daughter, it is true, but I was born to lead an actress' life, and ere another year comes round, my feet shall have pressed the boards which must lead me to the fame I hope to win."

It was a strange feeling which thrilled the heart of that fair girl, when she turned from the small glass, and flung herself carelessly upon the neat white couch that stood in a corner of the chamber.

Very singular were the thoughts which rushed, like waves, upon her excited mind. But she made no endeavor to repress those thoughts, and so the golden twilight faded, and the full, white moon came sailing up the clear heaven, and its fair, soft rays stole through the open window and draped that snowy couch with a veil of silver. Still did the young girl lie there alone, buried in those wild strange feelings. The sweet quiet of the evening hour possessed no charm to soothe her troubled mind; even the consciousness that it was the sabbath failed to check the unholy flow of thought.

She had sat that day in the high-backed pew of the old church, while the rich, earnest tones of her white-haired

father gladdened the heart of many an humble villager; but the impressive words of the good old clergyman had fallen upon the heart of his only child unheeded.

Even while she stood gazing up into his face, while his lips breathed forth the simple and beautiful language of his soul, her eyes saw not the radiant expression of the venerable countenance; her ear heard not the clear inspiring words of the rich voice. Her mind was far from the still sanctuary where the air of holy peace gave such happiness to humble hearts. Her spirit felt not that quiet peace — her soul caught not the sacred inspiration of their simple worship. No! the heart of Annabel Lorimer was filled with a wild unrest that forbade the angel of peace to enter there. She knew not how many restless beings would gladly give up wealth and fame to lead the quiet life she led; and so she yearned to leave her sunny home to mingle with the cold-hearted world in the great cheerless city. She longed to exchange the peaceful happiness of home, for the gilded pomps and heartless glitter of the unfeeling world. Yes, that proud, beautiful girl; the only daughter of the old clergyman; the light of her pleasant home; the pride of her native village; resolved, even while she sat in the ivy-grown church she had loved in her innocent childhood, to leave her sweet home and loving friends, to seek for fame in the cold world.

Alas, for the heart that trusts its frail bark of happiness on the fair seeming lake of fame! Freighted with genius, guided by energy, with the flag of hope floating

on the changing breeze of fortune, it often strikes upon a hidden rock, and its rich freight is ruined; its pilot crushed; its drooping pennon torn from the mast-head, and the fragile bark wrecked forever.

While the young girl yet lay buried in her dream of future greatness, a low, sweet voice was heard to speak her name. She started quickly, saying, "in a moment, mother," and arranged her dress to go below.

A burning crimson flushed the fair cheek when that gentle voice dispelled her wild dream, and she murmured, "Ah! mother, it will indeed break thy heart to lose the child of thy love. I cannot leave thee; I cannot bring sorrow to thy gentle spirit — but yet, I shall return again! I shall bring thee wealth and luxury. I shall strew the path of thy old age with golden flowers. Yes, yes, I will go. I will gain wealth for thy sake, my mother, I will win fame that its rays may lighten thy heart in future years.

She smoothed back the dark curls that floated around her face, and assuming a smile of quiet which covered the wild restless within, went below in answer to the summons of her mother.

Ah, what a sweet scene that was, which the bright moon saw, as its pale rays shone through the windows of the little cottage parlor. By the table in the centre of the room sat the old clergyman, reading by the light of a brightly burning candle. His good wife sat near him with her mild eyes fixed upon his face, and a gentle smile of trust and holiness lighting up the still fair fea-

tures. Near the open window, through which the sweet fragrance of climbing roses was borne on the evening breeze, sat the nephew of the good clergyman, a young man with dark eloquent eyes and handsome face. He was the only child of Mr. Lorimer's half sister, and since her death, which occurred when he was but ten years of age, he had resided in the clergyman's family. He had been educated by his kind uncle for the ministry, and it was the intention of Mr. Lorimer that he should succeed him when age required him to give up the care of his dearly beloved flock to another.

Mr. Lorimer paused in his reading when Annabel entered the room, and looking up into her face with a fond smile of affection, said, "Why so late, my daughter?"

She did not answer him, but a crimson blush overspread her face as she seated herself in the vacant chair by the same window her cousin occupied. The old man went on reading in his clear voice the words of holiness, and his daughter gazed upon his face with an unusual interest as she drank in the melody of the rich, silvery tones. Ah, it was not the holy words he spoke which so fixed her attention and caused her to forget for a little time the strange yearnings of her restless heart. It was that she was listening for the last time for many years to the loved voice of her doting father — that this was the last time she would sit in that little parlor with those she loved seated around her.

And was no thought given to her cousin? did she

not regret leaving him who had so long been to her as a dear brother? No, she did not think of that now. She did not even know *how* dear he was to her. She thought the love she felt for him was the love of a sister, she did not dream of loving him in another way.

But not so Charles Clayton! he *knew* how dearly he loved his beautiful cousin. He knew how his boyish affection for her had grown into the deep strong love of manhood, and the secret he kept locked so firmly in his own breast, haunted his midnight dreams and wakeful hours till the fair girl's beautiful image was graven indelibly on his heart. But he knew his cousin looked upon him only in the light of a brother, and so he sat there in the moon-light gazing upon her radiant face, his dark eyes glowed with a deeper light, and his young heart trembled for his future if he was to spend his life without the sunshine of his cousin's love.

But the last verse was read, and the sacred book was closed. All knelt in the attitude of prayer, and the clear solemn tones of the white-haired minister floated on the stillness of the little room like the closing of an angel's hymn. Beautiful was the picture! The dancing moon-beams playing over the floor, the forms of youth and age kneeling with bowed heads, the calm, deep hush of quiet night broken only by that praying voice.

The prayer was ended. Annabel stole quickly to her father's side and pressed her lips upon his brow. Silently he drew her to his heart and his hand lingered on

her young head in blessing. Her mother's smile of happiness grew deeper as her beautiful child twined her fair arms around her neck and pressed the usual kiss upon her cheek, and her eyes still rested on her face as she touched her dewy lips to the brow of Charles — her brother, as she called him. Then the good-night was spoken and the family separated for nightly rest — one to go forth in the silence, to launch alone upon the siren waves of life.

Once more in her chamber, Annabel flung herself upon her couch to woo slumber for a few hours. Her sleep was restless and full of strange dreams, and she woke again ere the stars had paled. While she lay with her hands clasped over her bewildered brow, the sound of the clock, striking three, fell upon her ear.

In an instant she was up, and flinging back the curtain she gazed forth. All was still, but it was nearly as light as day, and she hastened to put on her bonnet and shawl and place in a small bag such articles of clothing as she would most need. This done, she took from her drawer the little purse that contained nearly all the money which her father had given her the past year — this leaving home was not the scheme of a day; but one she had been forming for months, nay, years; and then opening her door she passed noiselessly and cautiously out. She paused not till she reached the woodbine-covered porch, for the front door had not been fastened. In those days, reader, one was not obliged to bolt and bar one's doors through fear of the house-breaker and

assassin, and now she stood lingeringly on the steps, trying to stifle back the tears which would come.

She succeeded at last and with a gesture of impatience and determination dashed the grief drops from her cheeks and passed out through the gate. But here she paused and looked back. The little cottage with its open porch, its garden full of blooming flowers, and the look of quiet comfort about everything, from the white-curtained windows to the neat walk leading to the gate, was a pretty sight, truly. But it was not that which fixed the fair girl's gaze — it was the home of her childhood! the home where she passed the time of glee and laughter; the home where she had blossomed into womanhood and where first had sprung up within her that strange desire for wealth and fame. She could gaze no longer! Kissing her hand towards the cottage she turned into the road leading to the next town, where the morning stage was to pass — and the first leaf in the life of Annabel Lorimer was ended.

LEAF, THE SECOND.

The steady wings of Time had sailed slowly and evenly through the space of eight long years. In the richly furnished chamber of a hotel, sat a young and beautiful woman attired in a robe of crimson velvet. Her form was queenly and elegant; her face, with its large, dark, brilliant eyes, and clear complexion, and small, proud mouth, was lovely and fascinating. Her

hair, dark, rich and heavy, hung in glossy ringlets over her shoulders, and her small, jewelled hands were white as the leaf of a lily.

In her blooming womanhood, Annabel Lorimer was even more beautiful than had been the lovely maiden. The restless glance which shone in those dark eyes eight years ago, was exchanged for one of almost cold calmness, and the nervous manner for a dignified quiet which seemed more proud and haughty.

In her hand she held a paper which announced her last appearance before the world, and as she finished reading the long and flattering paragraph she threw it aside and murmured with a smile of bitter satisfaction,

"Yes, my purpose is gained! I have wealth and fame, but where is the happiness I trusted this would bring me? Ah! my parents, my only happiness will be when I lay at thy feet the wealth I have won. I thought the laurel wreath would cool the restlessness of my heart, and bring me peace; but no, its leaves freeze my brow and its incense sickens me. I am weary of the world! I despise the glare and frivolity my youthful fancy so longed for.

"Let me lay my head once more upon my mother's breast, let me receive once more my father's blessing, and I shall be happy! Oh! my home, my home! why did I leave thee? why did I give up thy sweet peace for the heartlessness and glitter of the world? But stay, I will not weep. I shall see ye soon, dear

ones! I shall breathe in a few short days the air of home! But oh! this fear, this chill of apprehension that comes over me when I think of my kindred! Oh! God grant no harm may have befallen them! God grant I may find them well and happy."

She rose from her chair and flinging a rich shawl over her shoulders, passed down the stairs and entered the carriage that was to convey her for the last time to the theatre.

Yes, reader, Annabel Lorimer's purpose *was* gained. Early and late she had toiled to gain wealth and fame, and her reward had come. The laurel wreath rested proudly on her brow, the wealth she coveted was at her command. The first year of her appearance before the world her talents had not been appreciated, but by a sudden turn in the wheel of fortune she was brought into notice and raised to the high position she now occupied.

Friends crowded around her with flattery and homage, but she knew well it was her position, her wealth that drew them. In the long weary year of suffering and privation, when she had studied in the garret of an old, tumble-down house she boarded in, she had found no friends. Now that her scanty wardrobe was exchanged for one rich and luxurious, her garret for costly furnished rooms, her unknown name for the brilliant title of a gifted favorite of fortune, her poverty for wealth, they crowded around her with professions of friendship and regard.

But the beautiful favorite disdained their proffered friendship, and her manner was cold even to haughtiness. Many admirers had knelt at her feet. Some there were, too, who bowed not at her shrine for the sake of the riches she possessed, but from real, disinterested affection had offered noble hearts to the gifted woman. But she had refused them, one and all. And wherefore! could she not among so many hearts find *one* to lean upon in her loneliness? could she not find *one* worthy of the love she withheld?

No! for that heart which the world thought so cold was already occupied. Almost unconsciously to herself, the image of her cousin had stolen into it when others sued for her love, and the sisterly affection she had cherished for him grew into one of a deeper, stronger nature. She thought of him taking the place of her father in the hearts of the humble villagers she had passed the days of her childhood with. She thought of him dwelling in the sweet solitude of her simple home, where the bustle and noise of the world never came, and she longed—with a yearning as strong as that which tempted her to leave it—to return once more to her native village.

She longed to fling off the wreath which rested too heavily on her brow, to draw a long, free breath, where the fresh air of nature was not tainted by artificial breezes. In fact, she was weary—weary of the world, weary of her brilliant fame, weary of her own heart while it beat amid so much worldly heartlessness.

And this was the last night she would appear before that world, whose smiles she had left her home and the home-ones to gain. Go with her, dear reader, to the theatre.

In the green-room she sat, with her shawl yet lying carelessly over her shoulders, reading and looking over the papers which lay in confusion on the table near which she was sitting. How glorious she looked as she sat there in that graceful attitude, with her luxuriant curls fastened back from her brow by a diamond circlet, and falling carelessly over her marble-white shoulders. Ah, truly, Annabel Lorimer *was* beautiful. Those lustrous eyes were far more brilliant than her diamonds, and her clear, white skin rivalled the snowy satin which fitted so charmingly her graceful form.

And yet she sat there, seemingly all unconscious of her peerless beauty, quietly looking over those scattered papers. She had taken up one which she was reading with more interest than the rest, because it was a country paper; when suddenly she grasped it tighter in her hand, and holding it close to her eyes, read over and over again the simple paragraph which had chained her attention. She had risen from her chair and stood leaning, with the paper yet in her hand, towards the light. One hand was pressed tightly on her brow, as if she could not convince herself that she was awake. But there were those dreadful words yet staring her in the face.

Yes, it was reality!

The paper dropped from her grasp, the paleness of death came over her face, and she sank heavily into a seat. But she shed no tears, though the veins in her snowy forehead swelled till they seemed to bursting, and she sat so still that her very breath seemed shut forever within the firm-closed, ashy lips. Her eyes seemed suddenly glazed and distended, as they stared fixedly and wildly on the paper she had flung upon the table. Woe, woe, was written on every feature of that distorted face — and yet no tears! Reader, she was stricken with grief too deep for tears, for there, in the green-room of the theatre, *she had read the announcement of her mother's death!*

She did not move from her chair, till some one, speaking her name, told her the audience were awaiting her appearance. Then she started as if with sudden fright, and pressed both hands over her brow, while she closed her eyes to shut out the glaring lamp light. Slowly the color came back to her cheek, and her breathing became more free and distinct; she took her hands from her brow, and rising from her seat, gathered up the trailing folds of her satin robe and passed on with her usual proud and elegant step to the stage. As she swept by the gentleman who had spoken to her while she sat so silent and unconscious, he started as if a lightning flash had dazzled his eyes. For in the few moments the beautiful actress had sat with her white hands clasped on her brow, there had a change passed over her face which one would have deemed

years could not have wrought. The brilliant eyes gleamed with an expression unnaturally cold and strange, and the small, proud mouth was firmly closed as if the silent lips shut in a world of tearless anguish.

But yet she passed on to the stage, her heart bleeding at every pore, her very soul writhing in agony, and with the eyes of the world feasting on her glorious beauty, went through her part with a coolness which the audience, had they known the sorrow in her heart, would have called the calmness of insanity.

Never had her acting been more brilliant. The excited audience sat with parted lips and heads bent forward to catch every word; to see every superb movement, till the curtain hid the magnificent form from sight. For a few moments, the silence of the house was oppressive; and when the spell was broken, the thunders of applause which shook the very walls, seemed to roll forth from the hearts of the multitude like the waves of the stormy ocean. But the beautiful enchantress came no more before them; she had fled from the splendor of the gay world; she had fled from the temple where the wreath of laurel was laid upon her brow. And thus closed the second and most brilliant leaf in that young and singular life.

LEAF, THE THIRD.

The bright, clear moonbeams shone placidly down on the cheerful cottage of good old Parson Lorimer.

The season was spring, and the flowers were blooming in the neat yard, and the trees were fast losing their bright blossoms. The vine, climbing over the little porch, looked green and luxuriant, and in the porch, seated in his favorite arm-chair, was the old clergyman. His hair was bleached even whiter than when we saw him last, for as the moonlight lay over it, it looked like so many scattered threads of silver.

The eight long and weary years which had passed, had told upon his countenance. The eyes had lost their bright, beaming expression, and the broad, high brow was deeper furrowed. His withered cheek rested on the palm of his hand, and his gaze was fixed on the clear heaven, as if his all of happiness were dwelling there.

Ah, poor old man! he had seen more trouble in those eight years than he had known in all his life before. The loss of his only child had nearly driven him frantic with grief; and now his wife, his gentle Mary, had gone, and he was left alone in the world. He had not murmured against the will of his Father; he had borne his sorrows with the fortitude of a true Christian. And yet this last cup seemed a bitter one to drink, for his days were far spent; and though broken down with sorrow and feeble with age, he had neither wife nor child to soothe the stream of his life as it ebbed slowly away.

Truly, it was a hard lot for an old man, who had passed his life in the sunshine of domestic love, and who,

till within the last few years, had known neither grief nor trouble. Aye, a hard lot for one to bear, who, for nearly half a century, had labored constantly and untiringly for the good of his fellow creatures. But the old clergyman bore it bravely, with the spirit of a true Christian; and as he sat there gazing on the golden stars, he was thinking of his wife — how peacefully she passed away — of the time when he, too, should be called to that far-off home, to spend an eternity with the “loved and lost.” Then a thought of his child crossed his mind. Was she yet alive? could she be in the world, and her old father be allowed to lie down and die alone? Ah! this was the most bitter of his griefs. His wife he knew was in heaven; his daughter — he knew not whether the wide world held her.

He felt that he could die in peace if he could but once again rest his hand on the still loved head in blessing, if he could once again press his child to his breast, and hear her say once more — “My father!”

He buried his face in his hands, and breathed a silent prayer for the wanderer; but ere he had raised his head, he was startled by the sound of rumbling wheels. An open carriage was coming up the road so fast that the horse seemed almost to fly. It stopped before his gate, and ere it started on, the elegant form of a woman, young and beautiful, was half way up the neat walk. The bright moon made the evening nearly as light as day, and the dim eyes of the aged man recognized that radiant face ere his glance had thrice scanned the beau-

tiful features. A heavenly smile came over his face, and raising his eyes upward, he murmured,

"Thank God! my daughter!"

Another moment, and she was kneeling before him, with her head bowed in his lap, and his trembling hands resting on her glossy curls, while his lips were murmuring the olden blessing. Suddenly she raised her eyes to his face, and the first words she had spoken came choking from her lips,

"My mother died!" was all she said; but her father knew her meaning, and answered,

"Yes, my daughter, of grief."

Quickly she sprang from her knees, and passing round a corner of the house, flew wildly over the field that led her into the churchyard path. She knew well the spot where they had buried her mother — under the willow, where the twin sister of her childhood slumbered, and five minutes from the time she left her father, she was kneeling by her grave — aye, kneeling by the grave of her mother, whose dying blessing she had not received.

She bowed her head upon the turf, and tears, the first she had shed since she read that terrible announcement, in the theatre, gushed from her eyes. Oh, it was terrible to witness such heart-rending grief. Deep, heavy sobs came welling up from her heart, and the stifled, half-frantic voice kept murmuring in agony,

"Come back, come back, my mother! bless me once, only once more!"

Alas, the mother's ear heard not the frantic wailings of her child; they could not break the stillness of the dark grave's silent depths. But one earthly gaze witnessed that young creature's sorrow; but one earthly heart bled in sympathy with hers.

Charles Clayton had witnessed the meeting between the father and his child. He had seen her fly past the window where he sat, and he knew she had gone to her mother's grave. After soothing the somewhat excited mind of his uncle, and telling him he would watch her lest she might stay too long in the night air, he had followed the footsteps of his beautiful and still loved cousin.

For over an hour he had stood silently in the shade of the drooping willow. He did not wish to intrude upon the sufferer's deep sorrow. But when she grew calmer, he moved to the grave and seating himself beside the sorrowing girl, raised her bowed head to his shoulder. She had heard his voice when it murmured — "Annabel," so gently, and now she looked up for a moment in his face, but the tears gushed forth again, and burying her face in his bosom, she sobbed,

"Oh, Charles, it was you, it was you, she blessed when she was dying!"

"Nay, nay, Annabel, with her last breath she breathed a blessing on your head." The manly voice trembled as he said this, for the scene had affected him deeply. For a few moments he sat in silence, and then in a low, gentle tone he breathed forth words of soothing — words

of holy faith and submission that fall like balm upon the aching heart. And like balm they fell upon the almost broken heart of that young girl, calming the wild emotion, and soothing the deep grief; for when her cousin led her back to her father, there was an expression of meek submission on her countenance which told that though the heart bore the same sorrow, it bore also more of a Christian spirit.

A year has passed since Annabel Lorimer returned to her home. The bright moonlight plays once more over the pretty cottage, and the sweet breath of spring flowers floats through the open windows.

In the little parlor a small company are assembled, for good old parson Lorimer has given his beautiful daughter in marriage to his worthy successor. Dear reader, should you know that radiant bride, with the meek look of a Christian spirit beaming from her eyes, and the smile of such gentle sweetness wreathing her calm happy face, for the proud, brilliant actress, in her velvet robes and flashing diamonds? Does she not look far sweeter in that muslin dress, than she did in her rich attire? And now she is a minister's wife; but the gentle look in her dark eyes tells that the trust reposed in her will not be misplaced; she will be equal to her duties. Well, we echo the blessing of the happy father, as he laid his hands on the young heads of the noble couple, and wished them a long life of happiness and peace.

THEY SAY THOU WILT DIE.

They say thou wilt die
When autumn sweeps by,
Like a star from the brow of even!
That angels will come from their shadowy home,
And bear thee away to heaven.
Oh! say, shall thy tone
Breathe forth the death moan —
Oh! say, wilt thou leave me alone?

Each glance of thine eye,
And each quivering sigh
Thrills my soul with wildest delight;
Where thy look doth beam, life seemeth a dream,
And when thou'rt away it is night.
Will thy dear spirit fly
To the heaven on high —
Oh! say, my own, wilt thou die?

In this world's wild strife,
Thou alone art my life, —
I will love thee forever and ever;
E'en the angels above shall not sunder our love —
No power our spirits shall sever.
If thou lie in the tomb,
In thy beauty and bloom,
The lovelight will set amid gloom.

Oh! tell me, my love,
 When the angels above
 Bid thee worship at heaven's shrine;
 If they bear thee there, will they hear my prayer,
 And carry my spirit with thine?
 For, oh! if thou die
 When autumn sweeps by,
 My soul will go with thee on high.

THE CASTLE AND THE COTTAGE.

CHAPTER I.

Affection is a fire which kindleth as well in the bramble as in the oak, and catcheth hold where it first lighteth, not where it may best burn. Larks that mount in the air, build their nests below in the earth; and women that cast their eyes upon kings, may place their hearts upon vassals.

MARLOWE.

"Never, Adelaide, never! If you wed a low-born peasant boy, when a proud noble kneels to the beauty I have cultured, for the same object, you are no child of mine!"

"But, mother, think how fondly I have loved Lorenze St. Leon!"

"Loved! Adelaide, loved! What is the love of one plebeian heart to the admiration of a *world*? Have you no thought that, as the beautiful wife of Lord Harcourt, you will be the proudest star of the titled train? the brilliant shrine towards which shall float the wandering homage of a thousand hearts? the peerless centre of a world in which none move save the high-born and the great? Could you be content to pass a simple life of mere love within a low-roofed cottage when all the pomp and pride of a lordly castle would woo you as

a mistress? Ha! ha! Adelaide; a maiden with the beauty of an empress talking of loving a peasant boy—a wandering plebeian, when an earl kneels at her feet.”

“Ah, mother, I confess the picture you have drawn would realize the wildest dreams of my ardent fancy, for oh! I should so love to dwell in a stately castle; to be garbed in the rich robes of pride and affluence; to be proclaimed the loveliest of the courtly throng; to lead a proud life of gaiety and splendor amid the dazzling luxuries of titled wealth. Oh! yes, I should love to be a rich and beautiful countess—but—but—Lorenze St. Leon is handsome—oh! so proudly handsome; and, mother, the Earl of Harcourt—the high, the nobly born—the stern, proud nobleman, is *horribly, terribly deformed!*”

A cloud flitted for an instant over the pale face of the ambitious mother, for the tone of wild enthusiasm in which her daughter had first spoken had sunk into a low, weird-like whisper, as she slowly, yet with startling distinctness, uttered that dreadful truth. But the mother's heart was not crushed by that dread sentence. She knew that she might dazzle that youthful imagination by siren pictures of glittering splendor, and that the heart of her child, too young and thoughtless to be scarce conscious of its own will, must, with such pictures spread fascinatingly before it, sooner or later, yield to her wishes. She drew the fair form of the lovely girl yet nearer, and taking both her small hands within her own, said, in a low, earnest tone:—

“Listen to me, Adelaide. You are not, as you have ever thought, of lowly birth. There is as noble blood coursing through those blue veins, as Harcourt's haughty earl may boast. Ours was an ancient family, and our house one of England's proudest; but I wedded for love, poor, foolish love, and the same hour that brought upon my head a father's curse, brought upon my life one still darker—the gaunt, chill curse of poverty!

“Your father, Adelaide, was also of a noble family, but alas! he was the younger son, and being strangely handsome, was no favorite at home. There had been, for many years a deadly feud existing between the two houses, and from the hour I left the proud home of my childhood, I have never seen a single member of our family. My father, stern and unyielding, forbade me to enter his doors again, and my beautiful sisters were too angry to care whether I lived in luxury or penury. Your poor father struggled against his hard lot for three long years, and then he was laid to rest beneath the kindly sod which shuts out the spectre forms of misery and woe.

“Adelaide, I have passed my life within a vine-clad cottage, with want and sorrow for my portion, when, with my ancient name and youthful beauty, I might have won a nobleman, and thus led a life of luxury and splendor. But no, I married for *love*, and love is all I have ever received. I have dwelt in drear obscurity for many long years, with but one hope to cheer me—one object to look forward to. And that object, Adelaide,

that single hope I have so long and fondly cherished, you are already acquainted with; 'tis to see you enjoying the proud station from which my own foolishness drove me — to see you triumph over the glittering circle who cast me from them. Many a time, when you have stood beside me in all the sunny innocence of childhood, I have inwardly thanked Heaven that you were so peerlessly beautiful. You have been nurtured, Adelaide, not in luxury, but in ease. Those small hands have never known labor to soil their whiteness — that young heart has felt no blight to dim the sparkle of those dark eyes.

“But, Adelaide, you can never know the sacrifices I have made to obtain for you this ease. You can never know what I have suffered, to keep, unimpaired, the glorious beauty which I knew would bring us, at no distant day, the wealth and station which are rightfully ours.

“And that day has come at last. The haughty Earl of Harcourt, this very morning asked your hand in marriage, and yet, Adelaide, you say you cannot wed him, for you love an ignoble plebeian.

“Now listen, Adelaide. If you wed Lorenze St. Leon, a thousand curses shall rest upon your head. If you wed Lord Harcourt, you have my blessing and my prayers. You will feel, too, that the mother who has watched over your childish years, who has shielded you from want, and borne the grim burden of suffering for her child's sake — is made happy by your decision.

“Wed the former, and you will pass a plain life of quiet, meaningless love, in a low-roofed cottage. Wed

the latter, and you will enjoy an existence of luxury and splendor amid the pride and brilliancy of a princely castle. Now, my child, I leave the decision to yourself. Choose as your own heart dictates. But remember, you are choosing between a lofty castle and a lowly cottage — the proud title of nobility and the simple lot of the peasant — the curse of a mother and her heartfelt blessing. Choose wisely, my child; decide not for the past, but the future!”

With a rigid expression of anxiety resting upon her still handsome features, the mother rose from her seat, and retreating to the window, remained half-hidden by the flowing muslin drapery which swept over the low seat. But the earnest gaze of her large eyes was fixed, with intense eagerness, upon the bowed form of her beautiful daughter.

Long did the young girl remain with her sweet face buried in her graceful hands, while the rich mass of raven tresses concealed any show of emotion which might agitate the snowy breast. But yet the anxious mother could perceive a slight quivering of the fair form, and once she heard a faint sigh as it came trembling through the rosy lips. But when the regal head was raised from the white hands, there was no tremor in the queenly form, no quiver in the proud voice as she said, in tones of thrilling sweetness, “Mother, I will wed the Earl of Harcourt!”

CHAPTER II.

———The hour of sacrifice
Is near. Anon the immolating priest
Will summon me. THE HUNCHBACK.

She wrapped herself up in a brilliant future. Still there were moments when she felt that its hopes were icicles.

ETHEL CHURCHILL.

The fair hand of the beautiful Adelaide slightly trembled as she pushed open the little wicket which led into the garden attached to her mother's cottage. Her costly garments enhanced by their surpassing richness the regal style of her wondrous beauty, for she was attired in bridal robes, and in one short hour she would be a countess. But though her dark eyes had rested proudly on the dazzling gems flashing in the midnight blackness of the glossy tresses, yet she had restlessly turned from their brilliancy, and stolen into the small garden to bid farewell to the shrubs and flowers that had been her silent companion, when childhood's spell hallowed the sweet hours she had dreamed away in their midst.

She passed slowly through the rustic arbor at the lower part of the garden, pausing every now and then to pluck a rose from some favorite bush, or to linger, for the last time, beneath the branches of a tree that she had often sat under, when the summer moonlight silvered the light shrubbery. Ah! where is the heart that can gaze for

the last time upon the hallowed scenes of childhood with a calm eye and motionless lip? Where is the heart that can bid farewell forever to scenes which have sweetly and silently twined themselves around the inmost affections of the soul—without the simple tribute of a starting tear? And where, too, is the heart that can easily forget these early scenes; these dear sweet dreams of innocence and childhood that come to us in the silence of after years, and give to memory a charm which soothes the very depths of life's own weariness? Oh! I cannot think that even in this cold, selfish world, there beats a heart so hard and stern and passionless! I cannot think there beats a heart so void of nature's heaven-like tenderness, that it could refuse the tributary tear of sweet regret when it bade a last farewell to the loved scenes of earlier years.

The heart of Adelaide possessed a goodly share of pride, but it was that pride which deceives the possessor with its false show. Her nature was generous and noble, and as she flung herself upon the seat in the pretty arbor, and thought that she was sitting there amid those dear scenes of youth for the last time, the warm tears sprang to her eyes, and she murmured, as the memories of the happy past stole over her:—

“Alas! can all the pride and pomp of future splendor atone for the sacrifice of happiness? I may be proud, and high, and wealthy—but shall I be happy? Will the glaring light in the saloons of fashion fall upon me with the gentleness of this moonlight? Will the hom-

age and admiration of a heartless world yield me the same happiness which the sweet words of St. Leon have ever caused? Oh! Lorenze, would that I were free again to listen once more to those low words of thine! would that my life could be passed with thee; methinks the humblest cottage would be a paradise, if graced by the noble form ——”

“And you chose a life of pride within the stately castle, to the quiet home and unchanging love I offered thee!”

Adelaide had not heard approaching footsteps, and the voice which addressed her, though it was low and sweet, somewhat startled her. She quickly raised her head, and her eyes met those of a young man, who stood before her with his arms folded coldly and proudly upon his manly breast. He was singularly handsome, both in form and feature, and the eyes which rested calmly upon the beautiful face of Adelaide, were large, black, and strangely expressive. But the expression of half-scorn, half-pride melted into one of sadness, as the trembling girl sprang towards him and, laying her small hand on his arm, exclaimed:—

“Oh! Lorenze, tell me that you do not hate me; that you do not think me selfish and cold! Tell me that the memory of the vows we have breathed for each other—the sweet hours we have spent together in this dear spot, shall be cherished in your heart as in my own! Oh! Lorenze, tell me that you forgive me—that you will never, never forget me?”

“Forget you! Adelaide; forget you! Think you that I, too, am false-hearted?”

“Do not reproach me, Lorenze, and at this hour. I cannot bear it. Do not look upon me with that cold, scornful smile. Tell me that you will ever think kindly of me when I am far away.”

“Adelaide, I shall ever think of you with pity.”

“Pity! Lorenze St. Leon; pity! I ask no pity from you. I can bear reproaches; I can bear scorn; but I will not bear *pity*! I have chosen my station in life and I will maintain it. I ask the pity and the love of none. So farewell, Lorenze, and when you do think of me, think that I am happy.”

The haughty farewell was unheeded by St. Leon. He stood for a moment gazing upon the fair form before him with a sad yet stern expression on his proud face; then, in a tone of thrilling distinctness, he said:—

“Yes, Adelaide, you *have* chosen your station in life! You have chosen *pride* in the castle, when you would have known *happiness* in the cottage! You have chosen a heart, cold, stern, and passionless as the white stars above us, when you might have chosen a soul whose love for you must be unchanging as these same stars! Heaven grant that you may have no cause to repent the choice, Adelaide—this choice that has given the peace and happiness of your heart to a heartless and unfeeling world. I shall not forget you, Ada; my prayers will ever be that God’s blessing may rest on thee. Love not

the world too fondly, lest it betray thy trust. Now, farewell!"

Again his proud eyes met the glance of the agitated girl, and again that same cold expression came over his face, and in another instant he was gone.

Adelaide gazed long and abstractedly towards the leafy entrance of the arbor, and then, sinking upon the seat, buried her face in her hands and murmured:—

"Would that I had chosen the peasant's lowly cot! And yet, why should I? I have chosen wealth, and rank, and luxury. As a peasant's wife I must dwell in obscurity, and be content to hide the beauty heaven has bestowed upon me beneath the simple hat and mantle of a class scarce higher than a band of gipsies. As the wife of a noble I shall be arrayed in the courtly robes of rank, and the glittering world will acknowledge the witchery of the beauty my mother says will far surpass the proud dames of the imperial court. Oh! I shall not repent my choice. I must be happy amid so much wealth and splendor. But my husband—I cannot love him. He may be hideous to me. I must not think of love—I must look to *pride* for happiness. Yes, yes, pride! pride—and pomp—and glitter. Oh! I shall be happy—I know I shall."

"What are you saying, Adelaide, in that half-crazy tone? Of course you will be happy; so come into the house and do not keep us waiting any longer. The earl has arrived and everything is ready—and of course you will be happy."

Adelaide followed her excited parent up the neat pathway that led to the cottage and, in a few moments, she was standing by the earl's side, listening to the sacred words which bound her to him forever. And truly, what a strange scene that bridal was. The bride was beautiful as a dream, with her full, proud form, and sweet, heavenly face, around which waved a raven mass of glossy tresses. The bridegroom was ugly and ill-shapen as Shakspeare's Richard. His hair was coarse and straight, and his face was nearly hidden by whiskers which might have served an outlaw chief. His eyes continually sought the earth, but when, for an instant, their marble lids were raised, one could perceive that the half-closed orbs were dark, and, in strange contrast to his almost hidden person, singularly beautiful.

It was a striking—a painful contrast. She so young, so bright, and peerless—he so frightfully deformed. It seemed like placing a dark storm cloud beside a bright, pure star. But the bridal rite was read as calmly as though it bound two willing hearts; and Adelaide, though she shuddered and turned pale when the solemn "amen" of the minister fell with strange distinctness upon the deep silence of the little parlor—yet felt relieved when the painful ceremony was ended.

It was a dark, cheerless afternoon when the bridal party arrived at Lord Harcourt's stately castle. The journey had seemed longer to Adelaide than it really was. Her mother and Lord Harcourt had slept nearly

all the way, and though she tried to think of a bright future, yet memory would steal by her side, and place constantly before her eyes a vision of the scenes she had left behind.

She ran, like a child, through the richly furnished apartments of the castle, expressing her delight at everything which pleased her fancy. Her husband followed her, and at every expression of pleasure that escaped the cherry lips of his bride, he would shrug his shoulders and raise his really fine eyes to her face with an expression which seemed to say, "Worth marrying me for, isn't it?"

Passing through the large drawing-room, he called her attention to the splendid mirror in which both their forms were reflected in vivid contrast. Adelaide had never before beheld her own magnificent form, and now as she stood gazing upon its exquisitely beautiful proportions, a flush of natural pride crimsoned her roseate cheek, and made the superb features look still lovelier. And if the costly glass enhanced her loveliness, it made the deformity of her husband only more frightful. He stood, with folded arms, gazing intently upon the queenly form that looked so peerless in contrast to his own, and, as Adelaide's dark eyes glanced towards him, he muttered, in a bitter tone,

"Yes, yes, fair Adelaide, I am deformed! terribly frightfully deformed. But you are beautiful as the vision of an angel. You are gloriously perfect, both in form and feature. Now listen. I married you that I

might show the world that, hunchback though I be, I could win a more beauteous bride than the proudest Adonis in the realm. I married you that, when the proud world paid homage to your heavenly beauty, I, the frightful hunchback, the pitiably deformed, could gaze upon the bright star of beauty's train, and say that the envied prize was all my own. Ha! ha! ha! It will be a sweet triumph for me when the fair Countess of Harcourt makes her debut before the gay world of rank and fashion!"

With a low, and to Adelaide, strangely mocking laugh, he left the gorgeous apartment.

The young bride stood for an instant, with her hands pressed tightly over her brow, and her eyes fixed vacantly upon the spot where her husband had stood. Then with an effort, she moved from the spot, and going to her own beautiful dressing-room, closed the richly carved door, and flinging herself upon a silken couch and burying her face in its cushions, burst into a passion of hot, raining tears.

"Oh, my God!" she murmured, "what is to repay me for the sacrifice I have made? I have cast from me a true, noble, faithful heart, and received in exchange the mere name of a heartless demon; and my very beauty must be made the means of his triumph over the world. Oh! St. Leon, hadst thou heard those bitter words, thou wouldst *know* I had cause, deep, mocking cause, for the vain regret you feared would come. Oh! would that I were free again. Would that I were once more a simple peasant."

Long and bitterly she wept, till her temples throbbed with pain and her heart grew sick and over-burdened with grief. But who could she blame for her bitter anguish? No one. She had chosen the proud station of wealth, and that station was now her own. She remembered the words of her mother — the threatened curse if she did not wed Lord Harcourt. Should she blame the only parent for this unhappy marriage — that mother who had watched so tenderly over her childish years, and had done this, as she thought, for her child's happiness? Oh! no. Adelaide Harcourt was too noble for so selfish an accusation. She knew the choice had been left to her own heart, and she had chosen wealth. But she had not studied her own character, and she did not know how deeply she loved the noble peasant she had spurned.

But now she was another's — forever and irrevocably another's. And now, when it was too late, she realized the depth of the affection she still cherished for him who could in future be nought to her. She remembered how she had often sat in the rose-covered arbor of the cottage garden, and woven bright pictures of the future; but in each picture the noble form and handsome face of Lorenze St. Leon had ever appeared the dearest and the proudest charm.

She could now look forward to a brilliant future. To a future filled with pomp and splendor, and wreathed with the radiant flowers of pride and luxury. But the form that should be the charm of that future was, to her

sensitive nature, hideous in its frightful deformity. The *heart* that should be her richest treasure amid all this future pride, was cold and as incapable of love or even the noble sentiments of honor, as the China images in her boudoir. She knew that the heart of her husband, if indeed he possessed one, was as inferior to the high soul and lofty sentiments of her former lover, as the earth-worm is to the star that shines so proudly above it.

But the proud heart of her noble lover had been cast from her, and she was bound by the most sacred vows, to him she had chosen for his rank and wealth. She determined to crush the vain passion her vows forbid her to cherish longer, and place all her hopes of future happiness upon the pomp and glitter of the proud world.

CHAPTER III.

The fateful day passed by; and then there came
Another and another. MARCIAN COLONNA.

Better, oh, better that I had not listened to the vanity of a heated brain — better that I had made my home with the lark and the wild bee, among the fields, and the quiet hills, where life, if obscurer, is less debased, — and hope, if less eagerly sought is less bitterly disappointed. THE DISOWNED.

The young and beautiful Countess of Harcourt reclined upon a rich fauteuil in her luxurious dressing-

room, on the morning after her first appearance at a brilliant fete. Her unrivalled beauty had excited the utmost admiration, and many a proud belle already looked with jealousy and envy upon the bright star whose matchless loveliness bid fair to eclipse them all, and its fair possessor to become at once the reigning beauty.

Lady Adelaide was well pleased with the admiration she received from the glittering throng of fashion. The pomp, the dazzling splendor, and the gaiety and fashion she had beheld, was all novel and therefore pleasing to her young heart. The flattery and praise of the gay world fell not upon an unwilling ear — the crown of admiration was not placed upon an unwilling brow. She had entered into the festive excitement with a keen zest, and she had schooled her heart to enjoy its brilliancy. And as she sat there, alone, in the very midst of the rarest luxury, and thought of the triumph of the last evening, and of the wondering homage that had been rendered to her beauty, she could not repress the inward wish that Lorenze St. Leon had beheld her in her flashing jewels and rich attire. She wondered if he would have thought her lovelier than in the simple dress of a peasant, with only a few dewy roses wreathed amid the waves of her dark hair and worn upon her snowy bosom.

She rose from her seat and opening the casket that contained her jewels, clasped the rich bracelets on her white arms, and placed the shining tirc on her glossy

head, where it rested like a regal diadem. Then she moved towards the large mirror and gazed long and earnestly upon the superb beauty of her own fair form and features. The jewelled coronet that flashed over the marble forehead was very brilliant, but the dark, lustrous eyes were more radiantly dazzling. The velvet softness of the matchless complexion, the roseate tinge upon the fair cheek, and more than all, the sweet expression of the glorious face — would be enhanced as much by a simple flower as by a sparkling gem. And, as the young countess unclasped the rare gems, and slowly replaced them in the emblazoned casket, she murmured in a low, half-unconscious tone,

“And it was for these glittering baubles that I gave up love and happiness! For these poor trinkets that I sold myself to a heartless monster. And he would love me no better in my costly robes than he did in my peasant dress. He would admire me as much with a plain rose wreathed in my hair as if a regal coronet flashed upon my brow. And he is right. Jewels cannot give peace to the soul; nor admiration, happiness to the heart. The restless spirit will yearn for a something above this worldly glitter — a something higher than shining gems and rich attire.”

There was a knock at the boudoir door, and the next moment Lord Harcourt entered the apartment. He flung himself at full length on a sofa, and turning his face towards his wife exclaimed,

“Well, my little beauty, how did you enjoy yourself last night, at Lady Walford’s fete?”

"Oh! very well, my lord, much better than I had anticipated."

"So you wasn't disappointed, hey? Well, I'm glad you enjoyed yourself. I never felt prouder in my life. The young Duke of Hereford and the Earl of Neville, arm-in-arm, sauntered near where I stood concealed by the curtains of a recess, and as you passed by, the duke exclaimed,

"For heaven's sake, Neville, tell me who is that splendid creature?"

"That is the Countess of Harcourt," replied the earl. "You recollect her husband; he is deformed!"

"Yes, yes," said Hereford, "I heard of Harcourt's marriage; but where in the name of wonder, did he find a bride so gloriously beautiful? Why, she will eclipse the proudest beauties of the day. What could have tempted her to marry him, when, with her superb beauty, she might have become a queen. But I suppose she married for wealth, for it certainly does not seem possible that such a being could love a hunchback."

"And I suppose you married me for wealth, Adelaide; but who will say you are not well repaid? Look at those magnificent diamonds; there were none more costly at the fete last night. Look around on the luxury that is yours, and see if it be not stately enough to satisfy even a heart like thine that beats for nought save pride and splendor. Yes, Adelaide, you married me for wealth, and I married you for beauty. And you have found the wealth you sought, and my purpose, too,

is gained. I have shown the world what the human heart will sacrifice for rank and pomp. But come, my dear, don't look so sober. I have ordered the carriage, and when you are dressed for a ride, you will find me waiting in the drawing-room."

As he passed from the room he caught her jewelled hand and pressed it to his lips. She withdrew it, indignantly, and told him in a haughty tone, that she would be ready to accompany him in a few moments. As she moved to the mirror and gathered up her night-black tresses into her coquettish little hat, a flush of deep crimson burned on either cheek, and her voice trembled as she murmured, in a tone of disgust,

"The young duke was right when he said I could not love my husband, but my husband was wrong when he said his wealth and title would repay me for marrying him."

Days and weeks past by. Lady Harcourt had become, as Lord Hereford had predicted, the reigning beauty. Her society was sought and courted by the fashionable world, and the most extravagant praises were lavished upon her brilliant beauty. She had attended fetes and operas, had seen pomp and splendor till she was heartily tired. She had mingled with the world till she had learned that its gaiety and pomp is empty as the air bubble; that its homage only gives the human heart a restless longing for something higher, purer and better.

The wealth, the splendor she had anticipated and

sought, had, for a little while, dazzled her fancy, but its witchery soon faded, and she yearned to enjoy again the quiet life of her earlier years. The gaiety, the brilliancy of the world may, for a while, please the ear and eye, but it cannot satisfy the longings of the soul. Life must have some object to strive for; something whereon to place its hopes, its confidence, and its affections. And if it have no such object, the heart must naturally sicken of a continual round of pleasure, until life itself seems devoid of every attraction, and the spirit grows restless and weary. Then we turn from the gay amusements of the world, disgusted with its sameness and its insufficiency to yield the happiness we have vainly sought, and in our eagerness to place our neglected affections upon a worthier shrine, fix them, it may be, upon an object which reason and circumstances must at once condemn.

Thus it was with Lady Harcourt. She had sickened of the world's pride and gaiety, and she would readily have given up all the rank and luxury that surrounded her, to have become once more an inmate of the little cottage where life's vanities, perplexities and disappointments, had been unthought of and unfelt; where the bloom on her cheek had been brighter than the roses clinging round the arbor — her heart merrier than the warbled lay of the wild bird, and her fairy step more light and bounding than the golden-winged butterfly she had chased so joyously.

She scorned and despised her husband, and yet she

felt that if he were noble and high-souled, she could, notwithstanding his deformity, love him fondly and deeply. But he was cold and heartless. He could not sympathize with the nobler and more sensitive feelings of his lovely wife, and she turned from him with a natural contempt she was too frank and independent to conceal, or even vainly attempt to overcome.

She had narrowly watched her mother, from day to day, and she thought she smiled less frequently and seemed far less happy than when at the cottage. And when she one day questioned her if the gay life they now led fulfilled all her glowing anticipations, she answered that if it were not for the mere name she would be far happier in their peaceful cottage than amid the bustle and excitement of fashionable life.

Ah! there it is. It is name — fashion, that the human heart most fears. It will sacrifice its peace, its happiness, for the mere name of wearing the costly robe of aristocracy. It will wear away life in a proud castle when it yearns for the happiness that dwells beneath the humble roof of the flower-wreathed cottage. Oh! when will the spirit of human independence free itself from the despicable shackles of name and station? When will the heart dare follow its own inclinations and acknowledge allegiance only to its own free will? When will life cease to crouch and bend to pale-faced aristocracy out of the miserable regard it bears its gilded name?

Lord Harcourt had left town on business he thought

of vast importance, and Lady Adelaide had gone alone to Lady Neville's fete. Lady Neville was the dearest friend of Lady Harcourt, and Adelaide would on no account, offend her by declining to be present, as her ladyship had said, let what would happen.

Lady Harcourt felt restless and weary, and so, leaving the gay throng, she wandered languidly through the walks of the splendid garden. She stood leaning against one of the columns near the entrance of the green-house, gazing silently and thoughtfully upon the full bright moon that flung its clear beams over her face and form. The tiny leaves of the luxuriant vine that wound its green tendrils around the snowy column, twined themselves in her soft hair as she pressed her glossy head against them. The diamonds shining amid the jetty mass of raven tresses, seemed to sparkle less brilliantly as the silver moonlight played gently over them. The jewelled arm, looking like chiselled marble in its rounded beauty, carelessly clasped the vine-wreathed column with the radiant gems shining from the vine-leaves.

The sweet, cool air, and the gentle fragrance of summer roses, refreshed Lady Harcourt's weariness, and her pale temples seemed to throb less painfully; while the beautiful moonlight, streaming placidly over the rare flowers, carried her back to other days, and she stood there, gazing with vacant eyes, upon the divine beauty of the starry night.

"Dear, dear flowers," she murmured, in a tone of

passionate regret, "how vividly ye recall the blessed memories of my childhood! Oh! that I were back once more in my humble home. One hour spent beneath its lowly roof were worth a thousand in yon painted world!"

"Art so soon weary of the world, sweet lady?" said a low, thrilling voice at her side. The young countess started from her position and turned her graceful head towards the intruder, just as her jewelled hand was clasped in another; and the same sweet voice continued, "Spurn me not from you, Adelaide. I could not longer stay from your side. I knew you were not happy, and I have come to love you. Will you cast me from you again, Ada? Me that have been still true, despite your own inconstancy?"

"Lorenze, dear Lorenze!" and Lady Harcourt pressed her hand upon her brow, and murmured, in a strangely bewildered tone, "I thought you far away. Tell me, how came you here, and at this hour?"

"Nay, dearest, ask me not; the time we may spend together is too precious to be passed in useless explanations. Enough that I am here, and that I love you dearer than ever. Say that you will not cast me away, Ada!"

"Cast you away, Lorenze, never! Think you I could bid you leave me, when my heart is yearning for an object to love? No, no, Lorenze, I have been shut out from the sun of affection, with the cold rays of fashion glaring upon me, till I am sickened of the world, and

will bless you for the love you lavish upon me. I can not love my husband — his cold, heartless nature forbids it. You are generous and noble, and I will love you. It will not, cannot be wrong.”

St. Leon pressed the small hand he held, and drawing her arm within his own, whispered, “Do not return to the crowd within, while the moon shines down so sweetly. The night is too fair to be passed even in castle walls — too much, dearest like those we used to love in other days.”

For some time they walked on in silence, each too happy in the consciousness of the other's presence, to express that happiness in words. St. Leon was the first to break the silence, but his tones were low and gentle as he said,

“Did you not say, Adelaide, when I stood by your side, that you were weary of the world? that you longed to become once more the inmate of a quiet home like the one where your childhood was passed?”

“Yes, Lorenze, I did say all this; and I may repeat it; I *am* weary of this worldly pomp and gaiety, and I yearn for the peace and quiet I once enjoyed. I have sought happiness in pride and splendor, but I have sought in vain. Instead of finding happiness in the proud station I so unwisely chose, I only learned, when too late, that I drove it from me when I turned from my cottage home.”

“You were young, Adelaide, and too inexperienced to understand your own heart or you would not have

made so unhappy a choice. But do you think that now you have become accustomed to this gaiety and fashion — now that you have dwelt in the luxurious castle, you could be happy in a lowly cot?”

“Happy, Lorenze, happy? I could be happier in the gipsies' tent, than in the stately home I call my own! I could be happy anywhere did I know there was a heart to love me; a being to whom I could cling through sunshine and storm — one whom I could love, not for rank, but for a noble heart and lofty soul.”

“And could you leave your castle home to dwell in one far, far humbler? Could you give up the admiration of the world and be content with the changeless devotion of a single heart? Could you forego your stately pride to dwell in plain obscurity, with only one to care for you?”

“Gladly, gladly, Lorenze, I am sickened of this artificial life — this vain, insipid pomp and show. The very luxury around me is hateful to my sight, for the existence I am breathing away is passed in useless seeking after enjoyment that cannot be. My life has no object to make it interesting, save the pursuit of pleasure; and what is pleasure to a heart that contains one particle of life's true energy — one thought of lofty impulse and noble feeling; like the empty casket to the eye that seeks the diamonds it once contained; like the mocking echo to the voice that cries for mercy. No, Lorenze, I can endure this flimsy life no longer. I must have some object to love, some purpose to live for.”

"Adelaide," and St. Leon clasped her white hand in his, and fixed his dark, fascinating eyes upon her face, "Adelaide, you say you do not love your husband—that he is cold and stern. Is it not wrong to dwell with one whom you so bitterly despise? Is it not wrong to glide with graceful steps and a face all radiant with smiles amid the luxury of your proud castle, when, in your heart, the serpent of hatred points its venomous head toward the master of the wealth you revel in? Tell me, Ada, does not all this seem like a mockery to the solemn vows of wedlock?"

He paused for an answer, but no answer came from the lips that were already pale and quivering. Lady Harcourt's face was turned from him, but the hand he held fluttered in his clasp, and he saw the influence he had gained. He drew the fair arm closer in his, and continued, in the same low tone of thrilling eloquence:

"While the heart wears its sacred chains lightly and happily—while it bends not beneath the weight, those vows should be kept holy as the promise of an angel. But when the heart looks upon its plighted vows with scorn, contempt, and hatred; when the chains become heavy and galling, and the face cannot smilingly greet the object of its hatred without inwardly breaking every vow it can no longer hold sacred, then the laws of man may yield to those of nature, and the heart may no longer wear, with repulsive feelings, the chain that binds it to the keenest misery a human heart can know.

"No, Adelaide, the vow which binds you to the Earl of Harcourt is not inviolable. Had you ever loved him—had you ever cherished for him one feeling of respect—to break that vow would be a crime. But you have not. You married him when every affection was placed upon another. You married him when you were too young to understand the nature of the vows you were plighting; and even when the words of God's minister were falling upon your ear, you were thrilled with the misery you felt when the last words of the only one you ever loved sank into your heart. You have sat for hours by your husband's side when, in imagination, you were sitting with another. You have listened to your husband's voice when your heart was echoing the unspoken words of an ideal tone. Yes, Adelaide, you have smiled upon an earl when you were yearning for a single word from a lowly peasant.

"That peasant, Ada, is beside you. He can offer you naught but an humble cottage, and the wild, passionate, devoted affection of a true and faithful heart. Will you be his, Adelaide; will you trust the happiness of your future to his keeping? You love me, Ada, madly, passionately. You can never be happy without the heart I offer you. I am a peasant, it is true; but, in the firm consciousness of my own right, I dare kneel thus at the feet of Harcourt's proud countess, and ask, once again, *Will you be mine?*"

He knelt at Lady Harcourt's feet, his radiant face eloquent with devotion, his fascinating eyes raised to

the countess' pale face, and her trembling hand still clasped in his. For a single instant her eyes answered the gaze that rested upon her own, but only for an instant, and then her hand was withdrawn and the young countess sank upon a rustic seat and buried her face in her hands.

Love, duty, honor, happiness — all in that young heart wrestled for the mastery. Which should be conqueror?

Thoughts came rushing over the mind like mountain waves. She remembered that of late her husband had been unusually cold and stern. That he had many times spoken unkindly, nay, harshly to her. She despised her husband — she was sickened of her luxurious home — she scorned the proud, heartless world. She thought how she had, in by-gone days, plighted her vows of constancy to her peasant lover. She remembered the happy hours she had passed with him, wandering in the fields and groves, gathering the fragrant flowers, and singing sweet songs at the rosy hour of twilight, or when the silver moon looked kindly down from her vaulted home. She saw the mishapen form of her husband standing in mocking contrast by St. Leon's handsome person. She knew that to pass her life in the castle of her wedded lord, would be to pass it in misery. To pass it with St. Leon, it *must* be one of happiness.

The struggle raging in her heart became yet wilder. Which should be the conqueror? With one wave of

his mysterious wand, Love swept the trembling citadel and placed his rosy seal of triumph upon the fluttering heart, with all the dainty haughtiness of a proud victor. Lorenze St. Leon stood, with folded arms and firm lip, gazing upon the queenly form of the elegant countess, when the bowed head was proudly raised, and the sweet face beamed with a trusting smile, as she placed her jewelled hand in his, and in a low tone said: —

“From this hour I am yours.”

CHAPTER IV.

The mask is off — the charm is wrought —
And Selim to his heart has caught,
In blushes, more than ever bright,
His Nourmahal.

LIGHT OF THE HAREM.

It was night — still, dark, and starless. Like a regal palace rose the stately Castle of Harcourt through the gathering darkness of the night shadows. But one solitary light shone from the lofty edifice, and that seemed shining but dimly, as its fitful rays glimmered through the richly-draped window of Lady Harcourt's luxurious boudoir.

Standing by a window, with one hand holding back the curtains that swept the rich carpet, and gazing abstractedly forth upon the night, was the Lady Ade-

laide. Her superb form was enveloped in a costly cloak of embroidered velvet, and an exquisite little hat of the same material sat pettishly upon her glossy head, with its profusion of raven plumes drooping over the white forehead and partly concealing the glorious face. There were no tears upon her cheek — none sparkling in her dark, brilliant eyes. Her face was marble-pale, and the proud lip was pressed together with a firmness which told the strong, unbending will of the beautiful and haughty woman.

She was that night to leave her stately home forever, but she left it by her own choice; and the strong-minded Lady Harcourt was not one to regret a choice that promised so much for future happiness, nor to shed a torrent of weak, foolish tears over a decision which the world might condemn, but which her own heart knew was made for future peace.

And what is the world, that we should so fear its censure — so love its praise? 'Tis a place where the young heart, beating with hope and genius, struggles bravely to attain its noble object, and receive, as its reward, scorn, neglect and coldness, till every warm feeling is turned into bitterness; every high hope broken, and the heart itself crushed like the flower whose gentle head is bent to the lowly earth by the harsh, chilling blast. 'Tis a place where the arrow of sorrow is aimed at the breast that seeks its smile; where the innocent heart that believes it all truth and happiness, is blighted by its unkindness and deceit;

where, in place of encouragement, the young and struggling spirit of genius receives contempt, and the stricken soul, instead of sympathy, the cold smile and mocking sneer.

Oh! ye who yearn for happiness, seek it in a spot where the smooth tongue of flattery cannot sully its brightness; where the wily smile covers not a deceitful heart; where the icy taunt of scorn may not crush every noble thought, every gentle feeling, and every spark of genius. No, no; if ye desire happiness, seek it on the solitary desert, rather than in the heartless, artificial world! Place every high hope and noble dream upon the holy altar of Heaven, and thy reward shall come from Him who can give to the heart that seeks it at His hands, peace and happiness for this life and for the life hereafter.

While Lady Harcourt yet stood gazing from the window, the clock struck twelve. She dropped the curtain, and, as she turned from the window, muttered, while a cold smile of triumph curled the proud lip: —

“Ha! ha! methinks Lord Harcourt will wonder much, when he returns, to find his prisoned bird thus early flown!”

She did not pause to give the room where she had passed so many hours, even a farewell look; but, as she swept from the apartment, said: —

“If I am acting rightly, I am leaving misery behind; but if wrongly, may God forgive me.”

She passed through the drawing-room and hall to the

outer entrance, where a close carriage was in waiting. The coachman sprang from his box, opened the carriage-door, and the next moment the lady sank upon the rich cushions, the sole occupant of the vehicle. In an instant the coachman was in his place, and gathering up the reins, the impatient and spirited horses were soon moving at a pace which would, in the day-time, have excited the suspicions of every honest pedestrian. But the noble animals sped on with almost lightning rapidity, and the fashionable world reposed on their soft couches, or revelled at some princely banquet, little dreaming that the proudest of their number—the flattered, the caressed, the envied Countess of Harcourt—was even then, alone and unattended, flying from her luxurious home to the lowly cot of the peasant.

The sun had already risen when Lady Harcourt's carriage came in sight of the spot which had been the countess' former residence. There she was to meet Lorenzo St. Leon; and there, at her request, was she to pass her future life. As she let down the sash, she immediately recognized the familiar hedge where she had, in childhood, gathered the spring roses; and, leaning from the window, she clasped her hands in wonder, as her eyes fell upon the spot she once called her home.

She no longer saw the plain, simple cottage, with its low, woodbine-covered porch; but in its place rose one much larger, and so beautiful and fairy-like, that Lady Harcourt thought, for an instant, it must have been placed there by the magic of the wizard.

It was almost hidden by the luxuriant vines which covered the long windows, and large, exquisitely built portico. On the broad marble steps of the portico stood rich vases, containing the rarest exotics; and on each side of the walk was a marble figure of the most beautiful sculpture.

Lady Harcourt could scarcely believe her own eyes, when the coachman opened the carriage-door, and she walked slowly up the smooth avenue. And if she had not noticed the aged yews which had shaded her mother's cottage, she would hardly have believed this exquisite spot to be the home of her childhood. As she was entering the open door, she paused to gaze with admiration upon the kneeling figure of a little marble flower-girl. The hat of the beautiful creature was thrown carelessly back,—and the sweet, child-like face, wearing a timid, gentle expression, that deeply enhanced its virgin beauty, was slightly upraised. On one arm the sculptor had placed a small basket, in which were bouquets and wreaths of waxen flowers, looking as if still fresh with diamond-like dew. The other arm, round and plump as that of infancy, was gracefully extended, and in the small hand was held a bunch of moss roses, which she seemed entreating Lady Harcourt to accept.

Long and earnestly did the young countess gaze upon this rare gem of art, and an involuntary tear started to her eye as she marked the earnest, supplicating expres-

sion of the sweet face, and the seemingly forced smile, which seemed to cover a sea of unshed tears.

But the lady's admiration did not overcome her curiosity, and she passed into the hall. The parlor door was opened and Lady Harcourt entered it to await the appearance of St. Leon, who, much to her ladyship's surprise and apprehension, had not yet appeared, to welcome her. She paused a few moments to admire the elegant taste displayed in the neat, yet rich furniture, and then, moving to the open window, which looked out upon the beautiful garden, she stood, wrapt in thought, gazing upon the beauty without, while the silken curtain half concealed her form. A light step pressed the carpet, and a low voice said:—

“Adelaide!”

The fair countess turned from the window and raised her dark eyes to him who had spoken her name. She started suddenly, and the paleness of death succeeded the rosy tinge of her cheek and lip, for before her, with his arms calmly folded, stood her husband! For an instant the beautiful woman returned the gaze that seemed to challenge her own, but the full, proud lip was quivering, and her strength seemed leaving her, and sinking upon a sofa, she muttered, coldly:—

“I am punished!”

“Yes, Adelaide, you *are* punished, and sufficiently too, I hope. But don't look so serious, dearest, and I will do all in my power to comfort you.”

This was said in a merry tone, and while the countess

sat gazing upon him, speechless with wonder, Lord Harcourt removed a wig from his head, a tight-fitting coat which contained the hideous hump, the ferocious whiskers which had concealed his features, resumed his natural gait,—and there were the dark clustering curls, the noble brow, the open smile, and the proud, handsome form of Lorenzo St. Leon! He ran to the portico, and snatching the bunch of moss roses from the head of the flower-girl, knelt before the still speechless countess, and presented the bouquet for her acceptance, with a grace that would have done honor to the most gallant of courtiers.

But no answering smile wreathed the still pale features of Lady Harcourt. She took the roses, it is true, but the gaze with which they were presented was all lost upon her, for as soon as she could command her voice, she said, laying her hand upon his shoulder and gazing steadily in his face:—

“Tell me, are you Lord Harcourt or Lorenzo?”

“Oh, as for that matter, just whichever you please,” was the merry answer. “In London they called me Lord Harcourt, but here, in our pretty little home, I have no objection against being called Lorenzo. But who will you be—shall I address you as Lady Harcourt or Adelaide?”

The young countess could bear such mystery no longer, and raising her eyes supplicatingly to her husband's face, she said,

“Now if you love me, Lorenzo, do explain, if you can, this strange mystery.”

"Well, Ada, if you really cannot be happy without my telling you a long story, I will commence now and get through as quickly as possible, provided I succeed in satisfying your ladyship."

"I was left an orphan in my earliest years, and my childhood was passed far, very far from Harcourt Castle, or this pretty spot. I resided with my father's brother, in a beautiful cottage, the exact counterpart of this, our own sweet home. My uncle was both wise and good, and I loved him as they only love who have but one to look to as parent and friend. He had early learned, from some cause or other, to distrust the world and despise its follies; and he lived a life of quiet seclusion, which seemed to soothe and heal the wound the world had given one of the noblest of hearts.

"It may have been my sympathy with his thoughts and feelings that taught me to love the life he led, and to look upon the wealth and fashion of the world as gross and empty. But certain it is, I grew up with a wild enthusiastic love of nature, and a dread, almost hatred, of the world and its pomp. Often, while strolling in the portico of my uncle's beautiful cottage, would I fall into one of those waking dreams which taught me to look into the future—to the time when I should wander through the grove and watch the silver starlight, with the ideal of my fancy to sympathize with the inspiration the wild beauties of nature awakened in my heart.

"These wild, idle dreamings awoke still wilder ones.

I wished to be loved, but loved for *myself* and not for my *gold*. From such dreams and fancies, I was thrown into the deepest grief by the death of my dear, kind uncle. I mourned for him with sincere sorrow, and the beautiful cottage seemed like a silent charnel-house, without his beloved presence. I determined to travel until the poignancy of my grief should be somewhat alleviated, and having some affairs to look after, I resolved to visit Harcourt Castle for the first time since my childhood.

"On my way thither, I passed through this pretty village, and for the first time, met my fair Adelaide. I saw you, Ada, when passing the cottage, and determined to win you in the guise of a lowly peasant. You were the embodiment of all the wild dreams I had so long cherished, and from the first moment I beheld you I loved you with a deep and lasting passion. As a peasant I sought your society, and as a peasant I won your love.

"I discovered in your mother the ambition which aspired to a more noble match than my humble self, for her gifted and beautiful child. I discovered in yourself, or thought I did, a yearning for pomp and glitter, and I determined to drop my assumed name, that of St. Leon, and to sue for your hand as Lord Harcourt. I procured the disguise I have just now thrown aside, and as a hideous hunchback, sought your hand, and, to my astonishment and regret, was accepted.

"I met you in the garden an hour before you were

wedded to the hunchback, and I almost relented the part I had assumed. But I had resolved to punish the pride I so much disliked, and before the nuptials took place, I had again assumed my disguise. You are well acquainted with what has since followed. You have, like myself, become disgusted with show and gaiety, and have learned that the pride of the lordly castle cannot keep the heart warm, nor awake its noble aspirations.

"I have once again won you to my heart and home, as the lowly peasant, and now, if you are satisfied with castle life, we will spend the remainder of our days in our rustic cottage."

Adelaide expressed herself perfectly satisfied with the glittering fashion of the past, and her husband was delighted with the praise she bestowed upon the beautiful cottage, and the pleasure she anticipated for the future. When the once ambitious mother arrived at the new home of her children, she could scarcely find words to express the joy she felt; but she did not acknowledge that she had never been happy in their stately castle.

Long and happy was the life our graceful couple passed in their country home. They were beloved and respected by the surrounding peasantry, to whom they were known as Lord and Lady Harcourt. Many were the blessings showered upon the benevolent inmates of Harcourt Cottage — for thus it was designated by the peasantry.

If the reader doubts my estimate of the happiness of

our noble cottagers, he should have the privilege of glancing at the group seated in the rose-covered portico, on a bright summer evening.

The pretty children, seated on the marble steps, playing with the bright flowers or listening to some charming story told by the delighted grandmother; and more than all, the sunny smile beaming from the handsome features of Lord Harcourt, and the radiant face of his beautiful wife, would convince the reader — if still he doubted — that, though in Harcourt Castle the romantic pair found "only pride and pomp, in Harcourt Cottage they found happiness and peace.

DEATH OF THE HOUSEHOLD PET.

The sunbeams play upon the floor
As in the days ago;
The rays dance through the open door
As they have done so oft before
On many a sunny morn.

The kitten lies upon the hearth
And sleeps the hours away;
She never frolics now in mirth,
But seems to feel the household dearth
That e'en would mock her play.

The ringing laugh no more is heard,
That cheered the home ones on;
They hear no sweetly prattled word, —
The nest hath lost its singing bird,
The little pet hath gone.

The father's voice is mute with grief,
The mother weeps in woe,
But sorrow brings them no relief,
They miss the sunlight bright and brief,
That blessed them here below.

The music of the dancing feet
That pattered o'er the floor,
The prattling tone so gently sweet,
The bounding form they used to meet —
They will come back no more.

They miss the little sunny face,
The floating curls of gold,
They see the form of childish grace
As it lies within its narrow place,
All motionless and cold.

They miss the lost one's sweet caress —
The tone of silver strain;
They know the heart that throbbed to bless
With its little world of tenderness
Will never throb again.

They gather round the fireside yet —
They mark the vacant chair,
And quickly every eye is wet,
For the darling one, the cherub pet,
She is not, is not there.

Then let the sunlight come and go,
Around that silent hearth, —
Those sad hearts feel that here below
There is no balm to heal their woe,
No star to brighten earth.

A shade is o'er the household cast,
The sweet home-light hath set;
And every joy in life seems past —
Each life-flower withered by the blast
That chilled the household pet.

CHURCH-BELL CHIMES.

How sweetly and solemnly they float on the clear air of a bright Sabbath morning. How like the low whisper of an angel voice they steal upon the listening ear and waken in the heart-cells the slumbering memories of other days. It is one of my life's sweetest pleasures to listen, on a dewy summer's morning, to the low, soft music of these chiming bells, — when the still quiet of everything around, and the clear blue sky — bluer, clearer, purer than on other days — seems proclaiming to the unheeding one that this is the Sabbath, the calm, holy Sabbath; when the birds seem warbling sacred notes as they glide by with noiseless wings, and the azure-hued flowers seem bending their meek heads as the silvery praises of the golden-feathered songsters float by them, borne up to heaven on the sweet breeze of summer.

How quickly do the chiming bells carry me back to other days; — to the little village where my childish feet first trampled the spring violets, and my young heart first learned to love the music of the wild birds. There was but one church in the village, but the bell that hung in the belfry was sweet-toned and clear, and as its kindly voice called the happy villagers to their

Sabbath worship, I thought its sounding chime far sweeter than the richest strains I have ever heard since. And when I wandered among the gravestones of white and gray in the little churchyard, at the sweet roseate hour of twilight, the same soft chiming of the church-bells came floating upon the dim air, seeming only more silvery, more subdued than at morn.

How I wondered when my mother would clasp my hand tightly in hers, and drawing me to a grave that was beneath a spreading willow, kneel upon its green mound and weep till I thought her tears must wet the coffin that lay beneath the cold green sod. Yes, I used to wonder then how she could weep, when the evening was so beautiful and fair. I thought, in my childish simplicity, that tears should never flow at such an hour and amid a scene of such pure beauty. Ah! I knew not what a luxury it is to weep when the sweet calm evening gathers its darkling drapery of twilight silence around us. I knew not that tears are like the balm-words of angels to the stricken heart.

A blessing rest on the memory of those sweet days! those witching hours of sunny childhood, when the goal of my ambition was a mother's smile — my greatest sorrow a mother's tear. Other days have come, and other ties are woven round the harp-strings of my heart. I hear no more the warbling of the wild bird in my native village; my feet no longer press the azure flowers in childish glee. Life's rosy time has passed me by, and its sky-hued flowers are withered and dead; but

they yet lie in the deep casket of my heart, blighted and broken, like the ideal dreams of childhood.

But, though these olden scenes are past — these olden dreams laid low by Time's blasting wing — yet they seem to throng around me in all the sweet freshness of by-gone beauty, when I hear the church-bells chiming for Sabbath worship, and listen to the rich praises of the summer birds. And I think, while they seem sweeping over the strings of my heart, awakening memories that have long been hidden by the shadow of time, how welcome would be a grave in that far-off village churchyard, where my young feet strayed long years ago and my childish heart thrilled with the silver song of each warbling bird. And my last prayer shall be that I may rest there when my spirit shall seek its home in yonder happy world, and my ear be greeted with the soothing sound of the chime-bells of Heaven.

BEAUTY AND INTELLECT.

"My dear, do you not fear cousin Alice will supplant you in the Charles' affections?" quietly asked Mrs. Leslie.

"Supplant me! mother, what do you mean?"

"As I say, Emma; do you not fear the power of Alice's superior intellect upon the intelligent mind of Charles Mordaunt?"

"Fear Alice Arnot! with her plain face? Me, the admired and courted Emma Leslie, fear a being who cannot claim one gem from beauty's casket."

"But, my dear, you know the brilliant conversational powers of Alice, soon make one forget that her features are not beautiful. As for me, I somewhat fear the effect of such intellect as Alice's upon Charles' truly lofty mind."

"Ha! ha! mother; do you really think I need fear Alice Arnot? Why she might converse as eloquently as she pleased for a whole hour, and one smile from my face would drive every word from his memory. What if she has intellect; if beauty be wanting she may as well talk to the winds; for, believe me, mother, nought but beauty can captivate the heart of Charles Mordaunt." And the lovely Emma Leslie drew up her stately form

and curled her superb lip as she glanced in the costly mirror.

'T was night. The proud mansion of the aristocratic Mr. Leslie, glittered with lights brighter than the starry gems of heaven. The drawing-rooms were crowded with the fairest flowers of the aristocracy, and the splendor displayed in the magnificent parlors of the millionaire dazzled the eye, till one would almost deem himself dreaming in a fairy palace.

The soft rays from many lamps fell daintily on the rich damask curtains, lending a glowing, rosy-hued light to the spacious rooms that rivalled the fairest beams of an Italian sunset. Sweet music was poured forth in rich, melodious notes. Now, in wild, ravishing strains that thrilled the very soul with its intense melody, and then melting into low, soft notes, that stole upon the perfumed air like tinkling bells from some far-off fairy haunt.

And beauty was there, in all its pride and loveliness. Fair blondes, with their sunny tresses floating gacefully over snow-white shoulders, and dark-eyed brunettes, with braids of raven hair shading their madonna-like brows, promenaded the magnificent saloons.

But the brightest star in the gay throng was Emma Leslie. And gloriously beautiful did she look; moving like an orient queen among her guests. All bowed at the shrine of her peerless beauty; and the noble heart of Charles Mordaunt, the hero of the night, thrilled

with admiration, as he gazed upon her transcendent loveliness. Yes, his heart thrilled with admiration, but not love, for he wished for something more than mere beauty to tempt him to lay his heart a willing sacrifice on love's sweet altar. He knew that Emma Leslie, though very lovely, was wanting in the pure sincerity and loftiness of soul which gives the real charm to woman.

Emma led Charles to where her mother and cousin were seated, and with a peculiar smile, as her mother's eye rested upon her, introduced him to Alice Arnot. A soft blush overspread her features, as her eyes met those of Charles Mordaunt. He noticed it, and offered his arm for a promenade.

"Emma," said Mrs. Leslie, "I fancied Alice looked almost pretty, with that crimson blush on her cheek, as Charles led her away. Do you not feel sorry you introduced her?"

"No indeed; why should I fear Alice Arnot? Do I look as though she could be a dangerous rival?"

Mordaunt led Alice out upon the flower-wreathed balcony; and, as her timidity wore away, he listened to her interesting conversation with unwonted interest. Unconsciously did she talk on, thrilling the gifted mind of Charles with the eloquent thoughts that flowed like music from her lips, till he forgot that she was plain — forgot all, save the low, silvery voice he was listening to. He gazed into her dark eyes, and marked how expressively they beamed, while she talked of subjects

too sublime to think of lightly. He fancied he saw mirrored in their clear depths, the high and noble soul, which lent inspiration to each word she uttered. He knew that beneath that plain face dwelt a mind of lofty, glorious intellect; he cared not for more; his heart was already won,—he had found a true woman, and he was happy. He deemed Alice Arnot, with her plain face and brilliant intellect, far above her fairer cousin, with all her outward charms of glowing beauty.

Emma Leslie curled her pretty lip with vexation, as she noticed the marked attention Charles bestowed upon Alice. He scarcely seemed aware of her presence. For him, Emma's beauty had indeed lost its charm.

From that night, until Alice's departure, Mordaunt was a constant visitor at the mansion of Mr. Leslie; and when Alice departed for her beautiful home on the banks of the majestic Hudson, Charles accompanied her.

When Alice Arnot again visited Emma Leslie, it was as the bride of Charles Mordaunt.

Poor Emma had learned a bitter lesson. She had loved Mordaunt as devotedly as her heartless nature was capable of loving; and had felt no little pride when she deemed his manly heart her own. But now that pride was humbled. Intellect had won the victory over beauty, and Emma Leslie learned, too late, that beauty, without intellect, is as the casket without the gem.

FLOWERS IN THE SICK ROOM.

"Throw them away," said the stern-faced physician; "throw them away—this is no place for such things!"

Throw them away! throw away the only things in that darkened room, which call up a dream of the beauty she will never see again, when the eye of the pale invalid rests upon them! throw away the only things in that room which give it such a look of gleaming sunshine, the only things which bring a bright, glad smile, over the wan cheek of the sick girl; for as she gazes on the beautiful emblems, she thinks of the fairer, brighter flowers, blooming in the better land to which she is so quietly and surely hastening. Flowers which the cold winds of chill autumn may not blight! flowers which will not fade away when the spring bloom is on them, like her own life.

Methinks had the thoughtless physician seen the sunny spot in the dark eye of his patient, and the bright flush which came over the white cheek, when those bright flowers were first brought into her silent room, he would not have said so coldly, "throw them away." For the unnatural brilliancy in those dark eyes, the beautiful flush of such delicate brightness on either cheek, tells that when the summer flowers shall bloom again in sweetness and beauty, she will not behold them!

tells that when another season puts forth its bright buds and blossoms, the sun-hued flowers will bloom upon her early grave!

Then throw them not away! they will do more good than all the medicine the physician ever will give her. Rather throw away his useless medicines; for they will not save her life, neither will they bring one thrill of joy to her heart. But those bright flowers with their sweet fragrance and sun-like beauty, they will bring a warmth like the olden gladness into that sinking heart; they will give a gleam of sunshine to the dark stream, whose cold waters she must pass alone.

Many months have I been an invalid. Many hours, lonely and weary, have I passed in my sick room, and many times have the flowers which kind friends have often sent me, brought a thrill to my heart, and a tear to my eye. For they wake dreams of other days, ere my step had grown slow, or my cheek had lost the red hue of health. Then place flowers in the sick room! place them where the eye of the weary invalid may rest often upon their beauty; for they soothe the couch of sickness like angel smiles, and bring dreams of a sunnier land over the faint and dying one.

SHALL I BE MISSED?

Shall I be missed if I pass from earth
When the sweet wild flowers are springing to birth?
Will Time's bright stream flow on as fair,
And home be the same if I am not there?
Will the faces I love wear the same gay smile,
And hearts I have cherished beat lightly the while?
Will my bird sing on with warbling breath,
If the voice of its mistress be hushed in death?

If my form be laid in the damp, cold earth,
Will a gloom rest over the household hearth?
Will the home ones think how I stood by their side,
At the morning hour and the even-tide?
Will they weep when they think how I loved them all,
How I cherished each word that would lightly fall?
Can kindred and friends I have loved of yore,
Forget this heart when it beats no more?

Ah! friends will sigh when they hear it said
That a loved one sleeps with the lowly dead,
But the tones of others will cheer their lot —
Other faces will come, and mine be forgot.
Wild tears from kindred hearts will flow,
But time will pass and assuage their woe;
My *face* will glide from each sorrowing heart,
But my *name* and my *memory* ne'er will depart.

But there's one heart that within the grave
 Will bury each hope in life's dark wave;
 There will be one wound, time ne'er may heal, —
 One soul forever its woe will feel;
 There will ever be sorrow in one dear tone,
 There will be despair in each fitful moan; —
 Ah! none can soothe her anguish wild,
 None know how the mother will miss her child.

She will miss my care when old age comes on,
 She will miss my love when its light is gone;
 She will miss my tears when her own are shed,
 She will miss the form that is cold and dead.
 Oh! I have no *fear* of the last faint sigh,
 Yet I ask that Death may pass me by;
 And my prayer for life, may Heaven forgive —
 My mother, my mother, for *thee* would I live!

THE BALL-ROOM BEAUTY.

CHAPTER I.

Let me usher you, dear reader, into the elegantly furnished drawing-room of a large and stately mansion.

The long windows are curtained with crimson drapery; and the rich furniture, the costly works of art, and the unmistakable air of elegance and refinement blended with the spell of luxury, bespeak the princely wealth of its noble occupant.

The polished grate with its bright, cheerful fire, sheds a glowing warmth throughout the apartment, for the day has been cold and chilly. In a small niche, half concealed by a silken curtain, stands a rich French writing table. It is strewn with papers — and before it sits a gentleman with his arms carelessly folded, and his dark eyes fixed vacantly upon the table. He is evidently wrapt in a profound revery.

While he sits there so quietly, apparently unconscious of aught around him, let us examine his features.

His brow is broad and high, and the short, glossy curls of raven hair which shade it, contrast finely with its marble whiteness. The handsome features are classically moulded, but the large dark eyes, whose every

glance reveals the noble soul within, lend expression to every lineament. Ah, his was that proud beauty, whereon Nature had placed her stamp of nobility.

And Norman Stuart possessed no ordinary soul. No, his was a mighty intellect; his every thought the jewel of a lofty spirit. He had, the previous evening, delivered an elegant extemporaneous address before a large and delighted audience. And as he sat there in the drawing-room of his own elegant mansion, he was thinking over the events of the last evening, and, in imagination, the deafening applause of the assemblage still sounded in his ears.

He had been sitting thus nearly an hour, when the door suddenly opened, and a young man entered. He stood for a moment with his hand upon the silver door knob, and then bursting into a merry laugh, said, as he approached the dreamer,

"Why, my dear fellow, what are you thinking about? Are you not going to the ball this evening? for, if what rumor says, prove true, it will be a splendid affair," and the young man carelessly threw himself upon a velvet sofa to await the answer of his friend.

Stuart sat for a moment buried in deep thought and then replied,

"No, Charles, I believe I cannot attend to-night. I have important business which needs my attention at home, and besides I have no fancy for such frivolous amusements."

"Oh! Stuart," said Charles, rising from the sofa;

"this is too bad, when you almost promised me last week that you would go. But you must; I will not let you off so easily; why, it is to be the grandest ball of the season, and I understand Florence Sidney, the celebrated belle, will be present, so say you will go—I will call for you at ten." After receiving an affirmative answer, Charles departed.

Stuart drew his chair before the glowing fire and sat for a few moments, musing upon the conversation of his friend; suddenly he said half aloud,

"A ball-room belle! why should I wish to see her? and yet I will go to please Mapleton!" and he rose to prepare himself for the ball. Ah, Norman Stuart, methinks thy willingness to please thy friend was not thine only motive for complying with his request!

He had heard of Florence Sidney, and though he would not acknowledge even to himself, that he had accepted Mapleton's invitation merely to behold her, yet so it was. He was an ardent worshipper at the shrine of beauty, and the reports he had heard of Miss Sidney's loveliness had excited a desire to behold her.

He was much longer than usual performing the duties of the toilet, and a little sparkle of pride—a very little, shone in his dark eyes, as he surveyed his elegant form and handsome face in the large mirror of his dressing-room.

Charles Mapleton, punctual to the moment, rung at the door just as the clock struck ten. The two friends soon reached the brilliantly-lighted hall, and a moment

after were mingling with the gay, joyous throng. Stuart was leaning over the chair of a fair friend, when Mapleton, touching his arm, whispered,

"Come with me, and I will give you an introduction to Miss Sidney."

Stuart took his friend's arm and accompanied him into the next room.

They paused a moment at the door, for Miss Sidney was so completely surrounded by a crowd of admirers, that it was impossible to get within "speaking distance," and Stuart wished to examine her features more minutely than personal acquaintance would allow.

She was indeed a superb creature. Her form was faultless in its queenly proportions, and every movement easy and graceful. Her face was classically moulded, and her complexion dazzlingly brilliant. Her eyes were of a deep blue; large, lustrous, and shaded by long, silken lashes, which were allowed every now and then to sweep the velvet cheek with a gracefulness perfectly bewitching.

Her brow was broad and white as alabaster, and her hair of rich golden-hued brown, like a shower of sunbeams, fell in thick clustering curls over a neck rivaling the whitest marble.

She was attired in a snowy satin, over which was worn a rich robe of wrought lace, caught up carelessly, with pearls. The short lace sleeve was looped up with tiny pearl clasps, and rich bracelets sparkled upon arms of the most faultlessly beautiful proportions. Indeed,

her dress was most elegant and recherche, and well calculated to enhance the high order of her beauty.

Stuart stood gazing upon the fair creature with all the passionate admiration which beauty ever excites, thrilling his heart. He thought her very, very lovely, but he could have wished the snowy brow a little more strictly intellectual; the deep, flashing eyes more soul-like in expression; the coquettish manner a little more dignified; but yet all this would pass unnoticed by an admiring crowd, when her fair face was radiant with the sweet, witching smile, which played so prettily around her coral lips. Stuart and his friend pressed through the crowd, and Mapleton, after exchanging the usual compliments, said,

"Miss Sidney, allow me to present my friend, Mr. Norman Stuart."

She arose from her seat, and bowing gracefully, while the blue eyes were cast down, and the long lashes swept the beautiful cheek, murmured a few words in a sweet voice, and the next moment was leaning upon his arm.

The heart of Stuart beat yet more rapidly when he felt the pressure of that little hand upon his arm, and met the glance of those blue, brilliant eyes.

Every eye followed the handsome couple as they promenaded the magnificent hall, and every now and then murmurs of "beautiful — so well matched — made for each other," fell upon the ear of Stuart.

Although the young lawyer seldom danced, yet he

did go through a quadrille with Miss Sidney, and enjoyed it finely, too. He could scarcely tell which most enchanted him, the piquant wit of her conversation, or the witching smile which made her radiant face even more brilliant. He was by her side throughout the evening, and when he bade her good night, and her silvery voice invited him to call at her father's residence, his heart as well as voice replied, that he should accept the invitation with extreme pleasure.

When he was once more seated before the cheerful fire in his beautiful drawing-room, the dreamy spell of forgetfulness was once more flung over him. But now the dream was not of fame, but love; first, passionate love! and the fair form of Florence Sidney seemed in imagination yet beside him, and her sweet tones yet thrilling his very soul.

Ah, in the bliss of that wild dream he forgot that he had seen that beautiful being only in the ball-room! He forgot that he heard nought from those coral lips, save the silly nothings of a vain frivolous mind! He forgot that the heavenly smile of those radiant features was one of the studied acquirements of the fashionable belle!

Ah, yes, he forgot all this, and his dreams that night were crowned with the glowing flowers which love wreathes so sweetly around the youthful heart.

The delicious music still echoed in his ears — the gay dancers still whirled before him, and a bright, beautiful fairy, who waltzed divinely, smiled bewitchingly, and

whose bird-like voice caused every chord in his heart to thrill with a new and dream-like passion, seemed floating before him on a silver-hued cloud of love, light and beauty.

CHAPTER II.

In the richly-furnished parlor of a stately mansion, a bright, glowing fire was flickering in the grate, and lending a rosy hue to the costly furniture.

The last faint beams of the setting sun stole through the damask drapery of the windows and lingered lovingly upon the tiny marble images on the mantel. A lounge was drawn up before the fire, and the reader will recognize in the blue-eyed, golden-tressed lady reclining upon it, the fair Florence Sidney.

She had dropped the book she had been perusing — a new novel — and was gazing abstractedly into the fire, watching the changing shadows of the glowing flame.

Seated near the centre table was a young girl of some eighteen summers, whose dark, expressive eyes, raven hair, and pale, intellectual face, contrasted strangely with the starry eyes, sunny ringlets, and blooming complexion of Florence.

The contrast was indeed very striking — both were beautiful, but while one resembled the dark-eyed daughters of Italy, the other reminded one of the sunny-hued flowers which bloom so brightly in the glorious "land of song."

The silence had been unbroken for nearly an hour, when Florence, turning toward her companion, said, in an earnest tone, "Oh! Alice, I do wish you had been present at the ball last evening, you would have been delighted; why, almost everybody was there, and the arrangements were magnificent; but whom do you think I was introduced to?"

"I cannot think, I am sure," replied Alice, after musing a few moments.

"You have heard of Norman Stuart?"

"The distinguished young barrister?"

"The same."

"Yes; I once heard him deliver an address, and a most eloquent one it was, too."

"Well, I flirted with him the entire evening!"

"What, Florence; flirted with a barrister! and such a one as Norman Stuart!"

"And why not, Alice?"

"Why, in the first place, I did not know that barristers ever flirted; and in the second, I know that such a man as Norman Stuart would not evince the slightest partiality for any woman to whom he was entirely indifferent. And thus, if he would flirt—as you call it—with you, it is very evident that you have made some impression upon his mind; and, really, Florence, I did not think you would try to win the affections of such a soul as his but to blight them as heartlessly as you have many others!"

The blush which glowed upon the cheek of Florence,

told that the gentle reproof was keenly felt, and, for a moment, she was silent; but, suddenly rising from her reclining posture, she said,

"Alice, I wish you would come and sit here with me, on the lounge; I wish to talk with you."

"Alice immediately laid aside her work, and seated herself beside her cousin.

Florence seemed at first to hesitate, but after a slight pause, she commenced,

"So you think, Alice, that Norman Stuart would not flirt unless his intentions were of a serious nature?"

"I do most certainly think so," replied Alice, while the puzzled expression of her countenance showed how perfectly amazed she felt, to hear such a sober question from the lips of her frivolous cousin.

"Well, Alice," continued Florence, "I will tell you in confidence, that I am not flirting with Stuart! You have heard, probably, that he is very wealthy, keeps a splendid establishment, and, as a barrister, is very popular. Now, papa was saying the other day, that the highest destiny of a woman's life was accomplished, when she attained a desirable match."

Alice opened her dark eyes yet wider, and the expression of her face showed how much of contempt as well as astonishment she felt, that such a sentiment could pass the lips of a man. Florence went on.

"Now, I shall exert all my powers to win the heart of Stuart. Only think, Alice, how grand it will seem to be the mistress of so much splendor, and how much

attention I shall receive as the wife of the Hon. Norman Stuart!"

"Florence," said Alice, earnestly, "do you love Stuart?"

"Why, what a singular question, Alice; of course, I should love him if he were my husband; and even now, I think him one of the handsomest men I have ever met with. He has such an eloquent voice, and then his manners are so perfectly high-bred!"

"Oh! Florence," exclaimed Alice, "that is not love; and could you be so heartless as to win the finest affections of a noble soul, when you did not as ardently reciprocate the sacred passion? could you accept the heart of a man, merely because he is popular, keeps a fine establishment, and possesses a handsome face? Could you promise at the altar, to be the companion, the help-mate of a high and gifted nature, when in your heart you knew you were plighting those sacred vows merely to gain an entree into a high circle, and enjoy the attentions of that circle, bestowed for no higher acquisition than being the wife of a distinguished man?"

"Fie, Alice; how strangely you do talk! what other motive should I have for wishing to be the wife of such a man? you don't suppose I should want to wash his dickeys, mend his stockings, and cook his dinners, do you?"

"Ah, Florence, I see you do not understand me. I mean that your heart should beat in unison with his;

your spirits be bound together by the sweet link of kindred sympathy; and your every thought, dream, and aspiration, mingle in one same stream; for, without sympathy, there can be no happiness between two wedded hearts!"

"Happiness, indeed!" said Florence, with a scornful curl of her red lip, "there would be a vast deal of happiness in studying out a husband's thoughts and dreams, and allowing one's heart to be troubled with their lofty aspirations, I'm thinking! No, Alice; when I marry, it will not be to study a husband's happiness. It will be to admire more, and to be more admired; to see more of the world and less of home; to receive calls in my own stately establishment; to leave my card in other drawing-rooms as the Hon. Mrs. So-and-so. In fact, Alice, I marry to lead a brilliant life of fashion, gaiety, and what I consider happiness! But it is almost dark, and I must go and arrange my dress, for Mr. Stuart calls this evening, and as he is what papa calls a "most desirable match," I must try and look my best!"

Alice sighed as her gay cousin danced out of the room and went to her own apartment humming a merry song, in a light happy tone.

"Ah," she murmured, "can it be possible that such a mind as Norman Stuart's, can be captivated with a beauteous casket when there is no jewel within?"

Alice forgot that the fresh, piquant sayings of a frivolous beauty, commonly excite more admiration than the

sensible conversation of a really intellectual woman. A woman of refined and lofty intellect cannot fail to excite admiration and respect, while the trifling absurdities of a gay, frivolous mind, when sweetly and prettily displayed by a coquettish beauty, possess a charm which the mind of a talented man can seldom resist; and thus it is, that while they cannot esteem such trifling inconsistencies, yet men of lofty intellect generally allow themselves to be blindly captivated with the very qualities they condemn!

Alice Merton was an orphan and an heiress; and since her childhood had resided with her uncle Sidney.

First the play-mate of her cousin Florence, then the companion of her girlhood, she became the cherished friend—almost mother of the wilful beauty. Indeed the attachment existing between them was most singular, considering the striking contrast in their dispositions; for while Alice was gentle, high-minded and intellectual, Florence was vain, heartless and wilful.

But, notwithstanding all this, the two cousins loved each other with all the ardent affection which characterizes an attachment between two natures so widely different.

Alice had often wept over the faults of her cousin; but alas! they were faults of nature, and therefore not easily wiped away. She had at first remonstrated earnestly and gently, but she soon found that remonstrance was useless, for though Florence dearly loved her, and would listen patiently to a reproof, which from others

would not be borne, yet Alice perceived that it made no impression upon her mind, and she soon ceased her exertions to instill into the mind of Florence the lofty principles which so exalt the mind of woman.

When evening came, and Alice received an introduction to Norman Stuart, she was more astonished than before that a man with such a mind should fancy a being so like a bright-winged butterfly.

But, with a woman's quick discernment, she read in the glance which rested so often upon the beautiful face of Florence, that the passion she had awakened in his heart, was destined to color the stream of his future existence.

The evening passed pleasantly away, and Stuart departed to dream once more of the fair creature at whose peerless shrine he so ardently worshipped, while Florence was more delighted than with any previous conquest.

Stuart became a frequent visitor, and rumor soon announced an engagement existing between the distinguished barrister and the celebrated belle.

Time sped on. Stuart had proposed, and was, of course, accepted. The wedding day was appointed, and the unusual bustle at the Sidney mansion told that it was near at hand.

Never beamed the sun more gloriously; never sang the birds more sweetly, than on the bright spring morning which greeted the blue eyes of Florence Sidney, on the day appointed for the bridal.]

"My wedded life will be very happy," she murmured, as she flung aside the light muslin drapery from her window.

Ah! Florence, thou shouldst not judge from the rising of the sun; wait till you have marked its setting!

The morning wore quickly away, and the golden stars of evening soon succeeded the glowing sun. The mansion of the Sidneys was illuminated at an early hour, and the elegant parlors presented a most brilliant appearance.

The guests were soon assembled, and many a young heart thrilled with happiness and pride; many a fair cheek flushed with a more brilliant hue; and many a starry eye sparkled brighter than the rich flood of mellow light, which fell so softly upon radiant features and snowy necks.

The murmur of silvery voices, and the melody of bird-like music was hushed when the bridal party entered.

Never did bridegroom look more noble than Norman Stuart; and never did a bride look more like a beautiful being from some fairy festival, than did Florence Sidney.

They stood in the centre of the richly-lighted apartment; the "man of God" before them; the brilliant assembly around them, and the gorgeous light from rose-stained lamps falling softly upon their forms.

And what visions floated before the minds of each, in that fleeting moment of silence? what dreams, perhaps never to be realized — were they fondly cherishing?

The noble bridegroom saw in the brightly painted future of imagination, a beautiful home, to which he should return after the business of the day was over, and enjoy the companionship of the little earthly angel who was henceforth to be the idol of his heart, the star of his home, the sharer of his joys and sorrows, and the friend to whom — above all others — he was to look for encouragement and kindred sympathy.

The bride was looking forward to a life of gaiety, fashion, luxury and splendor; her dream was not of home and wedded happiness; her visions not of blended sympathies, and kindred companionship; no, her dream was one of life's brilliant pleasures, and her fancy pictured naught save bliss.

A golden canopy above her, starry flowers beneath her feet, and the spell of luxury thrown over all! this was the dream of the bride — the other, of the bridegroom!

Alas! alas, for human dreams; cherished for a lifetime — blasted in a moment!

But the solemn voice of the aged minister broke the silence, and the beautiful marriage rite was commenced. The holy vows were breathed, the sacred words spoken, and the future happiness of the proud, the passionate, and the high-souled Norman Stuart, was in the keeping of — *A Ball-Room Beauty*.

CHAPTER III.

Florence Stuart was in her new home.

A month had gone by ; to her, a month of pleasure — to Norman, a month of happy uneasiness ! He was happy, because the being he loved so fondly was his wife ; he was uneasy, because every evening was spent at the opera, and at parties, and he had as yet enjoyed none of that domestic happiness, of which he had so fondly dreamed.

Alice Merton, at the earnest invitation of Florence and her husband, resided with them. She knew there was no similarity in the tastes of Norman and Florence ; and that, consequently, they could not be happy ; yet she resolved to stay with them and exert all her influence for the happiness of both. Her nature was entirely different from her cousin's ; and while Florence was happy in the crowded ball-room, Alice resorted to the well-filled library, as the most useful and entertaining source of amusement.

Stuart had become weary of such a continual round of balls and operas, and one evening remarked to his wife, as she entered the drawing-room,

"Florence, we will not go out to-night ; only think, we have been married nearly two months, and have not yet spent a single evening at home ; so to-night we will stay and keep Alice company ; I will read to you both."

The pale face of Alice brightened, and her dark eyes

beamed with pleasure, for she had long wished to hear Stuart read ; but her cheeks flushed with disappointment when Florence exclaimed,

"What, Norman, stay away from the opera to hear you read from a dull, uninteresting book ? Why you must think I wish very much to hear you read !"

Stuart bit his lip, and strove to speak gently as he replied,

"The book shall not be dull nor uninteresting ; it shall be the finest production of one of the oldest authors !"

"Oldest authors !" repeated Florence, scornfully, "a very great inducement, truly. I hate the very name of 'old author,' and as for their fine productions, I would go into hysterics to hear them read ; I detest them, and besides I would not stay at home to night, even to hear you read that charming novel Carrie Wilson sent me !"

"Charming novel !" replied Stuart, in a tone of bitter irony, "I am well aware you would not stay at home to hear me read it, for I would not disgrace myself with reading such a book ; but I really wish you would stay at home this evening, for I have an engagement to-morrow night and the next, and I am fairly tired of so much bustle and excitement. You know we attended the opera last night, so do stay at home with me this evening !"

"I shall do no such thing, Norman ; do you think I am going to stay at home every evening ? I never have,

nor will I ever, to please any one ; so get ready, I am going to order the carriage ! ”

“ Very well, Florence,” replied her husband, “ I will go with you to-night — but remember, from this time, I cannot accompany you ! ”

Florence said nothing, but went to order the carriage, and was soon in the midst of a crowd of admiring friends, with that sweet, witching smile lighting up her radiant features.

Poor Norman ; his blissful dream of wedded happiness had vanished ; his passionate love for his beautiful wife was chilled by a dark shadow.

Alice Merton sat in the drawing-room alone, after Florence and her husband had gone, and the tears rolled down her fair cheeks, as she thought of the unhappiness in store for them, for if it had commenced thus early, she might well tremble for the future.

Days and weeks flew swiftly on ; out every evening, Florence passed no time with her husband, who preferred spending his leisure hours in his own cheerful parlor. He was bitterly disappointed ; and his affections, crushed and blighted, sought not to win the heart of his young wife back to the delights of her beautiful home, and the unappreciated society of the home ones.

The Spring had passed by, and bright hued Summer succeeded it.

One evening, Florence remarked to her husband that she wished very much to visit a celebrated watering place, as most of her acquaintances were going, and it

would be exceedingly dull at home. Stuart had always detested watering places, but he replied that if she wished to go very much, he would accompany her ; for he thought that perhaps he might enjoy more of her society even there, than he did at home.

So it was decided that they were to start the next week, and, as Alice was to accompany them, Florence was perfectly delighted ; and, as she thanked her husband with that beautiful smile upon her features, he felt well repaid for his ready acquiescence in her request.

The next week they were at the springs. Alice found much pleasure in admiring the beautiful scenery, and reading in her quiet room. Florence resorted to the elegant parlors, as the only source of happiness.

There were beautiful women there, but the fascinating Mrs. Stuart surpassed them all. She was the reigning belle, the attractive star of the passing hour ; the lovely rose, around which the gilded butterflies of fashion clustered ; and her vanity was greatly flattered with the homage and adulation she received. Had she spared time even to spend a few hours of each day with her husband, he would have been far happier ; but no, she would rather listen to the syren tones of the wily flatterer, than to the eloquent voice of the noble and gifted being who called her wife !

One dark rainy morning Florence was reclining upon a lounge in her own room, reading a freshly published novel. Her husband was seated near her, gazing in silence out upon the clouded sky. It seemed to him so

like his own existence — first fair and beautiful, then shut in by dark, heavy shadows — that every pattering raindrop which fell upon the window pane seemed falling upon his heart.

His life had commenced with the bright sun of hope and happiness shining from a shadowless sky, but alas! too soon was that sky overcast with rayless clouds.

In the pride and vigor of life, his high, noble spirit longed for a heart to beat responsive to his own, for a congenial spirit, whose chords of human music were awakened by the same power which awoke the slumbering melody of his soul.

But this was denied him. His destiny was linked with one who could not appreciate the noble qualities of his lofty nature; one who detested the very aspiration he so fondly cherished!

Ah! how blest would be his life, if the companion of his bosom were like himself; if their dreams could mingle in the same glowing stream; their sympathies blend in the blessed harmony of kindred love!

He turned from the window and the glances of his dark eyes fell upon the form of her, whose pleasure it should have been to smooth the marks of care and weariness away from that lofty brow, and to awaken with her own hand the music of his heart.

She reclined upon the velvet lounge, a morning wrapper flung loosely around her form, her golden hair scattered in dishevelled masses over her shoulders, and a book he detested held in the jewelled hand; and this

was the wife of such a man! He, a noble and gifted being, the dreams and aspirations of his lofty spirit, soaring far above the gossamer vanities of life; she, a *ball-room beauty*, whose very existence hung upon the adulation of the world!

Ah! 'twas a bitter picture, and bitter were the thoughts of Norman Stuart, as he sat in the silence of that room, contrasting the picture he had drawn on the eve of his marriage, with the one before him.

Florence had dropped the book which she held, and sauntered languidly to the window where sat her husband, and as she seated herself on a chair near him, he said,

"Florence, I received important letters last evening from the city and from them I learn that affairs demand my immediate attention. I have already given orders to the servants to have everything ready for a speedy return."

"What!" said Florence opening wide her dreamy eyes, "return to the city when life at the springs is in its gayest season! Indeed, Norman, I shall do no such thing."

"Florence," replied Stuart rising from his seat, "I have bent to your will till I shall do so no longer! I will not suffer myself to be made the tool of a vain, heartless woman, who has neither love for me nor respect for herself. My business needs my attention at home, and to-morrow I shall return; you can go or stay — as you think best; and he left the apartment.

Florence commenced weeping, and immediately went to seek Alice, to pour into her ear an exaggerated story of what she called Norman's unkindness.

She found Alice in her room, and the story was soon told, and Florence sank sobbing upon a couch expecting her cousin would sympathise with her when she was so wretched. But instead of that, Alice took no notice of her tears, and merely inquired what objections she could possibly have against returning home?"

"Why," sobbed Florence, "the great ball is to come off next week, and I am enjoying myself so finely here!"

"And what of that," replied Alice, "would you wish your husband to return alone—and besides, what pleasure could you take at the ball in the situation you are in?"

Florence commenced sobbing anew, and saying that Alice and Norman were both trying to make her unhappy, left the room for her own apartment.

She concluded, however, to return home with her husband, and the following day they left the springs. Florence was too sullen to speak; her husband was cold and stern, and the proud expression of his handsome face told that he had determined to stifle every feeling of affection, wasted as it was upon a being so unworthy of it.

The journey was very unpleasant, and they were all glad when once more seated in their own drawing-room.

The situation of Florence prevented her going abroad, and the long, weary days passed lonely enough.

Florence still felt angry with her husband, and would scarcely speak in his presence, and he, naturally yearning for the sympathy of a spirit like his own, sought the society of the gifted and kind-hearted Alice. In the presence of such a being, he would forget for the time his own unhappiness, for the sweet bond of sympathy between two congenial natures like theirs, seemed like a ray of sunshine to his crushed heart.

And Alice pitying him as she did, exerted all her powers of pleasing, to soothe the bitterness of his disappointment. She tried in vain to effect a reconciliation. Florence was too angry, too wilful to wish it; and Norman was too proud to attempt it.

Thus was Alice Merton placed in no enviable situation. She loved her cousin and pitied her husband; she was the sister, the confidant of the former, and the sincere friend of the latter. She was well acquainted with the nature of Florence, and knew that the wilfulness arose more from habit than from heart.

She knew that she had never felt the influence of a gentle mother, and that entrusted as she had been to the care of an uninterested governess, she had been brought up with no higher aim than to shine like a bright butterfly, in the crowded ball-room, and she could not help pitying, even while she chided her.

She knew that the soul of Stuart soared above such vanities, and she grieved that the wife of his bosom so little appreciated the loftiness of his noble character. Thus were the sympathies of the gentle-hearted girl awakened for both.

CHAPTER IV.

Norman Stuart sat in the drawing-room alone. There was a hurrying to and fro from the chamber to the kitchen, and the important glances of the old house-keeper told that something unusual had occurred.

Suddenly Alice entered the room, and Stuart read in the expression of her face, even before she spoke, that he was a father!

"How is Florence?" he exclaimed eagerly.

"Nicely," she replied, "and you may come and see what a sweet little daughter you have got!"

A ray of light broke like a sunbeam, over his pale, anxious face, as he followed Alice to his wife's apartment. He bent over the silken couch and pressed his lips to the pale cheek of Florence, and then turned to welcome the little stranger whose low wail stole so soothingly over his soul.

It lay upon the lap of the nurse, a feeble, helpless infant; but as Norman Stuart knelt before it, and kissed its tiny face, the shadowy veil of futurity seemed for a moment lifted and the eye of the young husband saw in imagination a lovely being who twined her white arms around his neck, and murmured in a sweet tone, "Father!"

But once more the dark veil fell, and the vision faded from his view. He kissed again and again that little unconscious face, and as he turned to leave the cham-

ber, Alice saw a pearly tear course down his manly cheek. He entered the library and sinking upon his knees, murmured,

"I thank thee, Oh! my God, that thou hast given me something to love!"

As he sat there in the quiet of the apartment, with the dark shadows of evening fast gathering around him, he was thinking of the future, the dim, unknown future!

Ah, happy is it for us that the drapery of time hides it from our view.

Stuart little thought of the unhappiness in store for him as he murmured half aloud,

"Yes, it must be so, if the husband's love proves no incentive to higher aim, the love of the mother for her child, must prove a sacred tie to bind her more closely to home, and her heart must naturally yearn towards the father of her darling!"

Alas, he knew little of the iron power of habit, nor thought that it needed something more potent than a mere kindred tie, to burst its mystic spell.

The sundering of that tie perhaps might prove effectual, but surely, not when its links first bind the wayward heart!

Days, weeks, months passed by. The bloom of health returned once more to the fair cheeks of Florence Stuart, and the mirror told her that that fair face was lovelier than ever. Norman was happier than before, for though he could not enjoy the society of his still world-loving

wife, yet when the drawing-room afforded him no pleasure, he could resort to the nursery, where he would sit for hours, holding his beautiful child, and gazing upon its sweet, innocent face. His whole soul seemed wrapt up in one dream; one hope; one thought, and that was —*for his child!*

Florence dearly loved it, but the fearful spell of habit was not yet broken, she thought the world was even as dear. But ah! Florence Stuart knew not her own heart! She loved her child with a sacred affection; but that affection was slumbering in her bosom, to awake, when its fond yearnings would be for an angel in Heaven!

Alice Merton loved the sweet babe with a most tender affection, and Stuart loved her, for the care and tenderness she lavished upon it.

Florence was seldom at home, and Norman would have been unhappy indeed, had he thought the little birdling was left to the sole care of an uninterested nurse.

Summer, and autumn had gone by, and winter with gay pleasures had returned once more. Mrs. Stuart divided her attention between the opera and the ball-room, and the few hours she passed on the morning of each day, with the sweet little Rosalie, were, she deemed, sufficient to prove a most tender affection.

The heart of Norman was deeply grieved when he found that not even this blessed tie could transform the thoughtless beauty, into a gentle and loving wife.

He had fondly hoped that with the love of the mother, would return the love of the wife; but alas, time had revealed how vain was that hope!

Florence still enjoyed the same round of girlish pleasures, and while the husband and father passed the long winter evenings in watching over his idolized child, the vain mother spent those precious hours in the glittering ball-room!

The season of gaiety was nearly over.

The snows and frosts of winter were fast melting beneath the rays of warmer suns, and every heart save Florence Stuart's greeted the returning breezes of spring with a most cordial welcome. She had attended many a scene of pleasure during the season, but yet the heart was not satiated, and she was eagerly looking forward to the magnificent party to be given by her "dear friend," the aristocratic Mrs. Roscoe.

It was to be the last of the season, and therefore no expense would be spared to make it the most splendid. As it was near at hand, Mrs. Stuart had given up her few hours visit to the nursery, and every moment was spent with milliners and dressmakers, for she intended her dress should be most beautiful.

She had persuaded Alice to accompany her, and her waking as well as sleeping hours were filled with brilliant dreams of the pleasure she expected to enjoy.

The wished for morning dawned at last, with a bright sun beaming from an unclouded sky. Florence was in the drawing room, busily occupied in preparing her

magnificent costume. Her heart beat high with joy and expectation, and she had scarcely thought of little Rosalie, so intently was every thought wrapped up in her dream of pleasure.

Stuart went from the breakfast room to the nursery. His beautiful child was lying on the lap of the nurse, and gently taking it from her, he told her he would tend it while she went to breakfast.

As he held the sweet darling in his arms, he noticed that the little face was unusually pale, and the expression of the large blue eyes was dull and heavy.

He felt the pulse beat slow and feebly, and the little hands were icy cold. His heart was filled with apprehension, and a tear started to his eye, as the thought stole over his heart, that she might die! But the thought was quickly banished, for ah! 'twas too terrible to think of even for a moment, that his Rosalie, his hope, his idol, could leave him, when his whole soul was wrapped up in her, and his spirit seemed linked to hers by every tie of human tenderness. No, no! she would not die, he could not cherish a thought so dreadful.

"Nurse," he said as she entered the apartment, "have you not observed the strange alteration in little Rosalie's appearance?"

"Why no," she replied, "I don't see that anything ails her; I suppose she's teething, and children are often a little sick and restless when they are cutting their teeth!"

"But look, nurse, how pale and cold she is; don't

you think you had better speak to her mother?" asked Norman anxiously.

"Why, no indeed, there's nothing serious ails the child, and besides what good would it do to speak to her mother even if she were sick? I don't believe she'd trouble herself to come and see her if she were dying!"

"Nurse," said Stuart, sternly, "let this be the last time I hear your mistress mentioned with so much disrespect!"

He felt the truth of what she said, but yet, Florence was the mother of his child, and as such, he would not hear a servant speak disrespectfully of her.

He pressed the little cherished form once more to his heart, and gave her to the care of the nurse, saying as he did so,

"Don't leave her for an instant—and send for me, if she is worse!"

As he passed through the hall, he opened the door of the drawing-room, and said to his wife,

"Florence, I think you had better visit the nursery; little Rosalie seems quite unwell!"

"Oh, fie!" she replied without turning her head, "you are always worrying about Rosalie; I am sure, Doctor Warnford said no longer ago than yesterday, that she was a remarkably healthy child; but if she draws a deep breath, or cries, you think she must surely be going to die."

Stuart did not trust himself to reply, but shutting the door passed on.

The day passed away ; to Florence, swiftly ; to Norman, every minute seemed a weary hour. His heart was with his child, and a strange presentiment of something dreadful seemed lying with fearful weight upon his mind.

When he retired to his home, the night shadows were fast gathering, and with a quickly beating heart he hastened to the nursery.

Rosalie was lying on her tiny silken couch, and Alice was bending over her. She moved from her position when Stuart entered, and he quickly took her place, by the side of his child. An exclamation of anguish broke from his lips, as his anxious glance fell upon the face of his darling. The lovely face was no longer pale ; the cheeks were flushed and burning ; the blue eyes beamed with a strange unnatural light, and the throbbing pulse was quick and irregular.

"Alice !" said Norman, in a low quivering tone, "tell me what you think of her ?"

Alice did not reply, but as she met his earnest glance, she shook her head, and the tear that had trembled on the silken lashes rolled down her fair cheek. That pearly tear was Stuart's answer.

An hour had passed, and he was standing over that little form, watching every change of the flushed countenance, and listened to the deep heavy breathing ; when the door opened, and Florence entered to kiss little Rosalie before she left the house.

Her husband looked up, and as his eye glanced

over the superb costume of his beautiful wife, he exclaimed,

"Good God ! and is it possible that you can attire yourself in those rich robes ; that you can meet the admiring glance, and listen to the empty voice of adulation, in the crowded ball-room, while your only child lies in such a state ? I have long known that you were cold and heartless as yonder image, but surely I had not deemed you capable of this !"

Florence stood, for a moment, scarcely knowing what reply to make. She looked at her child ; its cheeks were flushed, and its eyes sparkled brightly. She thought 'twas health. Alas ! she knew not that it was the false light, which like the dying flame, but shines more brilliantly when Death is nearest !

Yes, Florence Stuart mistook the light of Death for that of health. The voice of grief in which her husband addressed her sounded to her ear like harshness, and *that* she would not brook. She glanced once more toward her child ; then in the mirror ! She saw the reflection of her own fair form ; never had she looked so peerlessly beautiful. Could she forego the admiration she must that night receive ? Ah ! once again habit triumphed.

She stooped and kissed the hot cheek of little Rosalie, then turning toward her husband, she said in a cold tone of defiance,

"I shall go to-night, in spite of all you can do to prevent me !"

The expression of his proud face was fearful, when he replied, as she swept from the room,

"Florence Stuart, if there be a God above, you will bitterly repent this last proof of utter heartlessness!"

When she had closed the door, he sank into a seat and bowed his head upon the couch.

Suddenly he started up, and grasping the hand of Alice, as she bent over little Rosalie, said in a tone hoarse with emotion,

"Alice, will you grant me one favor? it may be the last I shall ever ask of you."

"Anything, anything you wish," she replied.

A tear started to his eye as he answered,

"It is one which I well know will grieve your kind heart, but yet I must ask it. Go with my wife to-night. Mark if the laugh flow as brightly from her lip; if the voice of adulation brings the glow as softly to her cheek, and if that smile, that cursed smile, can beam as brightly, as though her husband was not alone in his home, watching over, with a bursting heart, the form of her dying child! will you grant me this, Alice?"

"I will," she replied, in a voice scarcely above a whisper.

"Then go, and may God bless you as I do!" was his fervent response.

The gentle girl pressed one more kiss upon the cheek of the sweet babe, and left the apartment.

Ten minutes after, the carriage rolled from the door,

bearing the kind-hearted Alice, and the unnatural mother, to the scene of festal pleasure.

The sound of the carriage wheels had scarcely died away in the distance, when the nurse entered the apartment, and going up to the couch as if to take the infant from it, said, in a tone of much importance,

"Mistress told me, sir, to take care of baby myself.

"What," exclaimed the now infuriated man, as he pushed the woman from the bedside, "did she dare send her menial to take my child from my arms? Did she dare bid the hand of another wipe the death-sweat from that angel brow, when the father was bending over it? Oh, my God! most bitterly shall she repent this! Begone, and let me not see your face again!" he said, as the nurse stood trembling before him, frightened at his vehemence of manner. "But stay; find James, and bid him go for the physician, and when he arrives, tell him I am in the library."

It was but the work of a moment for Stuart to take the light couch in his arms and carry it gently to the library. There was a fire glowing in the grate, and a lamp burned softly on the mantle.

Every moment seemed an age to the anxious father, until he heard a step approach the door, and the next moment doctor Warnford entered the apartment. He stepped quickly to the little bedside, and gazed intently upon the lovely face of the beautiful infant; then he felt the pulse, and shook his head as he turned toward Stuart, who stood with clasped hands, and heaving breast awaiting his opinion.

"Mr. Stuart," he said, "from my heart I pity you, for no earthly power can save your child. She cannot live till morning!"

Ah, how those words fell upon the father's heart. But he did not weep. No, not even a sigh escaped him. His anguish was too intense, too thrilling for tears. He refused the offered kindness of the sympathising physician, and once more he was left alone with his child.

Oh! how did his noble heart bleed, as he knelt by that tiny couch, to watch the life-tide recede forever from the paling lips. No tongue can tell the intensity of sorrow which swelled his heart, till the veins in that broad forehead seemed bursting, and the strained eyeballs flashing sparks of living fire. How full of agony was the gaze fixed upon the beautiful face of that dying child! He marked the glow depart from those little cheeks; the brilliancy from those blue eyes. He saw the cold dew of death gathering damply upon the snow-white brow, and the glassy film over the eyes whose glance had ever caused his very soul to leap with joy.

Once more did he wildly clasp that cherished form to his breaking heart, and press his lips in agony to his child's, as if to keep in life.

But alas, life was already blighted, and the paling lips grew colder and colder. He laid the little form back upon its couch—to die! And kneeling by its side, and taking the tiny hand between his own, he waited the hour that should sever the tie which bound the departing spirit to his own.

Nought broke the silence of that room, save the life-like ticking of the little mantle clock. Slowly, slowly the moments passed on, and so thrillingly was the stillness that the agonized father could almost hear the rustling wings of Death as they fluttered over his child.

Ah! gently was the pure spirit of that sweet child led through the dark valley. No suffering, no gasping for the departing breath; but gently, sweetly, as droops the rose at Summer twilight, was the angel spirit passing.

The little clock struck twelve—the dim, dread hour of midnight. The death-damp on that marble brow grew damper yet. The breath came more faintly through the pale lips; the eyes became more fixed and glassy.

Suddenly a heavenly smile overspread the marble features; the blue eyes for a moment brightened, as though they already caught a sight of the "better land," then they closed—forever.

The tiny hand the father clasped, quivered like a leaf stirred by the breeze; and then, 'twas icy cold. He heard nought save the beating of his own heart; and *Norman Stuart knew that he was childless!* The cold sweat stood in large drops upon his forehead, and the rigid face was almost as motionless as the lifeless clay before him.

His very breath seemed suspended, and the bleeding heart almost ceased to beat. But there he knelt while the long hours dragged slowly on. Not a tear did he

shed ; not a moan did he breathe. But the death-like paleness of the marble cheek, the strained and blood-shot eye, the wild rigid glance fixed so vacantly upon the statue-like face of the dead, told how acute, how terrible was the agony that struggled so fearfully in his soul.

Oh ! it is bitter to gaze on the tears of woman ; but when we behold the strong man stricken like the feeble infant, with anguish too intense for tears, too deep and terrible for words, when the noble head is bowed — not like woman's, with submission — but with the dark blighting spell of woe which flings a leaden torpor over the soul and prostrates every nerve. Oh ! then, then it is appalling !

The silver stars were already fading, when Florence Stuart once more entered her home. Alice came with her, and with trembling hearts they hastened to the nursery. No husband, no child was there !

Alice sprung past Florence, and the next moment she had reached the library. Florence had followed her and as she flung open the door, and advanced a step into that room of death, both stood as if paralyzed by the scene before them.

The expiring lamp still flickered with a dim, ghastly light ; the flame had died away in the grate. In that silken couch rested the beautiful form of little Rosalie ; *a fair, cold corpse !*

Kneeling beside it, with one marble hand clasped within both his own, and his vacant gaze fixed upon the

beauteous clay ; his pale, haggard face scarce warmer than that on which he gazed, and his noble form bowed as with the change of years, knelt the father.

Aye ! there he knelt — alone — hearing nought, seeing nought, save the dead face of his angel child.

Alice laid her hand upon his shoulder ; the gaze was withdrawn from the unconscious face, and he sprang to his feet. His soul was awakened from that benumbing torpor, and he realized the extent of his misery. The expression of his face was fearful to behold, as he sprang toward his wife and grasping her arm with desperate strength, and pointing to the little waxen form which lay so motionless in the embrace of Death, exclaimed,

“Look there ! while you were receiving the world's homage in the crowded ball-room, Death came and took your child ; my idol ! never more will its little arms twine around your neck ; never more will its soft cheek press your own. She, your Rosalie is dead, and you were not here to soothe her dying pillow.

“No, no, you deserted her — left her with the shadow of Death hovering over her, and while you were mingling in the dance, her spirit passed from earth ; and I, alone in the grim hour of midnight, received the last fond glance of those dear eyes, and marked the cold film steal over them ! I inhaled the last chill, struggling breath, and held that tiny hand when it quivered with the death-spasm. Yes, I — with no pitying hand to wipe the sweat of woe from my brow ; no lip to

whisper comfort to my breaking heart, watched my angel child sink to the sleep 'which knows no waking.'"

He paused—released his iron grasp; a strange, fierce expression shone from his flashing eyes, and bursting into a wild, hollow, unearthly laugh, which told that reason had fled, he fell back pale and insensible as the clay before him.

Then it was that the arrow of retribution sank deep into the heart of Florence Stuart! The tie was sundered, and the fearful spell which had so long bound her heart, was broken forever.

Her agony was terrible, and she wrung her hands, exclaiming,

"Oh, God! I have murdered them! My child; my husband!"

In her wild frenzy she would press the little form of her dead infant to her bosom, and cover its cold face with kisses. Then she would kneel by her injured and insensible husband, and chafing his marble temples, utter the most thrilling cries of wild despair.

Now it was that all the fortitude and presence of mind in the character of Alice Merton was called in requisition; and the despairing cries of the unhappy Florence, seemed to give new energy to the strength the occasion required. She hastened to arouse the servants, and ere long Doctor Warnford arrived at the house of mourning.

The still insensible form of Stuart was carried to his room, and when restored from that death-like swoon, he

was raving in the delirium of a brain fever. Two days from that on which she attended Mrs. Roscoe's ball, Florence Stuart followed her only child to the grave.

Oh! who shall paint the anguish of that sorrow stricken women, as she took her place by the bedside of her suffering husband. Her child, her darling Rosalie, gone forever, and her husband stricken down in the pride and strength of manhood—his spirit hovering between life and death.

There was repentance stern and bitter, mingling with the most poignant grief, and her anguish was too terrible for earthly power to sustain. She saw the past, the irretrievable past, with a naked eye, and bitter, yet sincere was her repentance. She found a balm at the foot of the throne, where mercy is never denied the truly repentant heart; and she felt as she drew nearer to the blessed Redeemer that, "though her sins were as scarlet, they should be white as snow."

Many long weary days did she watch over her husband. It was her hand that held the cooling draught so gently to his fevered lips, and pressed the throbbing brow when racked with burning pain. And often in the still watches of the quiet midnight, would Florence Stuart kneel by that sick bed and pray with an humble contrite heart, to the Great Being to whom she now looked for life and comfort.

The kind physician would often admonish her to seek repose, but yet not once did she leave that sick room, and she would only allow herself a few hours rest each night on the sofa at the foot of the couch.

At length came the crisis, and doctor Warnford must himself watch with his patient. He deemed it advisable for Mrs. Stuart to remain in another room. Conscious how much her husband's life depended upon his being kept perfectly quiet, she consented.

How fervent were the prayers she breathed that he, her husband might be spared; and when the crisis was passed and the physician told her that danger was over, she poured forth her whole soul in gratitude to Him who in his infinite mercy had listened to her prayers, and with His blessed comfortings had sustained her through that terrible trial.

The doctor well knew what caused that long, weary sickness, and he told Mrs. Stuart that during her husband's convalescence, it was better for both that she absent herself entirely from his room, as his nerves were at present so weak that the least excitement would cause a relapse.

It was a bitter trial for her to be deprived the dear privilege of watching over the loved form, but she felt that it was better not to meet till he should have fully realized the misery he had gone through.

A week had passed by since that fearful crisis. The invalid was rapidly recovering, and was once more able to sit by the window of his room and listen to the sweet music of the birds, for it was bright balmy summer. His spirit had grown purer — better. His proud heart was chastened by sorrow, and he placed his hope and affections upon that "better world," to which he had been brought so near.

The shadow of Death had passed so near him as almost to touch him with its chilling hand, and the cold waters of eternity had almost deluged the slumbering soul. But yet through the providence of the Great Redeemer, he was once more permitted to leave that couch of sickness — almost of death; and he left it, if not a happier, at least a better man!

Doctor Warnford had told him of Florence's unceasing watchfulness and care. He described in glowing colors the devotion with which she had watched by his bedside, and the anxiety which had paled her cheek while bestowing the unwearied attention which had done more than the physician's skill could do, to restore him once more to life and health.

And as Stuart listened silently to the kind doctor's praise of his wife, the hope he had so long cherished once more awoke in his heart. But he had not yet seen her for whom that wild hope was awakened; he knew not whether she had changed.

'Twas a sweet summer twilight, the dim, gray shades, with their dreamy spell, were fast gathering over the flower-wreathed earth, as Norman Stuart sat by the open window of his room. He was thinking of the past, and a tear rolled down his pale cheek when he thought of his child.

The cool breeze lifted the curls from his broad brow; and the sweet pensive stillness soothed his weary spirit.

Suddenly a soft hand was laid upon his shoulder; a slight form knelt at his feet, and a low quivering voice, murmured,

"Oh! my dear husband, will you take your repentant wife once more back to your heart? Will you give her the fond love, which once was her's? Oh! my Norman, can you, will you forgive me—*me*, your once loved Florence?"

The tears rolled down his cheeks, as he lifted that light form, and Florence Stuart was pressed to the heart of her husband! And the link of kindred sympathy and love, which then, and there, bound their hearts together, was never broken.

As days, months, and years passed on, and Florence continued the same humble, affectionate being, devoting the beauty and love which had before been given to the world, to her husband, and her home, he blessed her often as the star of his existence; the gentle angel of his happy home. Alice Merton, the sweet, kind-hearted Alice, always resided with them, beloved by both as a dear cherished sister.

Norman and Florence very often visited the grave of their lost darling, and though the fond father would bedew the little mound with tears, yet he knew his Rosalie was a blessed angel, and he could not murmur at the dispensation which had transformed "the ball-room beauty" into a *true and loving wife!*

TO MY MOTHER.

Oh! fare thee well, sweet mother!
I am going from thy side;
You'll miss me in the sunny morn,
And at the even tide.

You'll feel no more my hand, mother,
Pressed gently on thy brow —
You'll see me sit no more by thee
As I am sitting now.

Oh, I have loved thee well, mother,
I've looked upon thy face,
And wondered if a *dearer* love
Could e'er thine own replace.

Yes, I have loved thee long, mother;
My deepest love was thine —
Its first affection strong and true,
My heart poured at thy shrine.

Thy hand has cooled my brow, mother,
When my heart with pain was tried;
And through the long hours you have watched
Like an angel by my side.

Yet I must leave thee now, mother,
And bitter tears I weep —
For who, oh, who, will take my place
When I am laid to sleep ?

TO BROTHER GEORGE.

Oh, forget not, sweet brother,
When I stand no more by thee —
When we meet no more in joyous love
Around our household tree.

Forget not, when my voice no more
Shall mingle with thine own,
How I have loved each tender word
That fell from thy dear tone.

We have walked together side by side
Through long and happy years,
Our hearts bound by a sympathy
That grew with smiles and tears.

But it is over ! we no more
Shall walk together here —
No more shall seek each other's side,
To mingle smile or tear.

My voice no more will speak thy name
In sorrow or in glee;
And yet I know thou'lt ne'er forget
The love I've felt for thee.

I know, though long years glide away,
And many a change shall come,
Thou'lt think of her who grew with thee,
Within thy childhood's home.

And when the twilight shadows fall
Across the churchyard graves,
Thou'lt seek the spot where o'er my form
The tall grass bends and waves.

Oh, linger there, sweet brother, —
Come oft at fading even —
And while thou thinkest of the lost
I'll smile on thee from heaven.

I'll bend low at our Father's shrine,
And pray His blessings sweet,
May guard thee like an angel's host,
Till by his throne we meet.

And we shall meet, my brother,
Upon that better shore !
We shall roam its valleys hand in hand,
Dwell side by side once more.

Then I'll not say to thee, "farewell,"
Although we now must part —
I'll only say "His love be thine,
His peace be in thy heart !"

MIDNIGHT O'ER THE WORLD.

Hush — 'tis midnight! Midnight o'er the proud, cold world. In yonder noble mansion, sits a fair young mother — beautiful, high-born and gentle. Why sits she there, in the lone midnight hour, with tears streaming from her starlike eyes, and sorrow swelling her young, warm heart? Costly furniture, ornaments which might grace the boudoir of a queen, jewels which might glitter in a regal crown, beauty, luxury, pomp, splendor, are scattered around her. Yet there she sits, in the still midnight, unmindful of the silent, fleeting hour.

On a silken couch, carved with many a dainty figure, and inlaid with many a costly gem, lies a little waxen form, cold, silent, and dead! The golden curls are brushed back from the white brow; the blue, laughing eyes are hidden 'neath the marble lids; the full chiseled lip, now pale as the wan cheek, is wreathed even in death with the same sweet, childish smile. The dimpled hands, folded so innocently over the snowy bosom still clasp a half-blown flower — faded, broken, withered ere it bloomed! blighted like the child's young life.

Sweet angel; when the red sun set in the golden west, the life-blood was coursing through those blue

veins, and the sunny ringlets, kissed those rounded cheeks and azure eyes. But midnight came, and the little limbs were motionless and cold; the star eyes closed, and the fair young form resting in the icy arms of Death. And there sits the pale, beautiful mother, with the spell of pride and splendor flung around her sorrowing over her lost idol!

Ah! reader, is not this a strange, sad picture? Does it not seem very strange that Death, grim, shadowy Death should enter such a home, and bear from the arms of love and luxury, that sweet, fair child; that little earthly idol, — when many a sad, stricken heart is longing for the rest which the shadowy angel brings? Yes, it does seem very strange; but the sad picture, teaches us that even amid wealth and pomp, we may bear the blighting chill which sorrow brings, and that neither splendor nor love can stay the fleeting arrow from the quiver of the mighty Conqueror.

Let us look upon one more picture ere the midnight hour passes. What a cold cheerless room! No costly furniture — no silken drapery — no glittering ornaments — no pomp — no pride — no splendor. But the fire on the small hearth burns dim and feebly, and the candle flickers with every breath of air. Here, too, sits a mother, pale, wan, and emaciated. She, too, is watching over her child; but Death has not blighted its sweet, young life, nor chilled the warm, beating heart. No, its little cheeks are flushed with a rosy hue, and the red lip quivers with the warm, soft breath.

Slumber, sweet, soothing slumber, has hushed its silver voice, and, unconsciously, it lies in its small, broken cradle, knowing not that a pale, loving mother sits beside it, watching each gentle breath, and night after night, working on without a murmur, wearing life away for its dear sake ! Sweet, angel mother, labor on for thy worshipped child ! Mayhap when years have rolled away, and that young form is breathing with the stately pride of manhood, he may bless thee with a proud home, and the love and tenderness which is now lavished upon him, may be repaid with love as kindly as thine own. If not, there is a Heaven above, and there shalt thou meet a blessed reward, when thy sweet, hallowed mission in this cold, proud world is ended !

But the midnight hour is waning, and the life pictures fading from our view. We have learned that Death may pass by the home of poverty, and snatch a worshipped idol from the midst of love and affluence. Ah, this is indeed a strange, wayward world, filled with many a strange life-picture !

OUR HOUSEHOLD BAND.

Six lie in the village churchyard
Where the willows are ever weeping,
And the mounded turf and marble gray
Tell us where they are sleeping ;
The summer dews have, many years,
Wept on their little graves ;
And the autumn breezes murmur there,
Like a sound of ocean waves.

Six are left in the wide, cold world, —
Six of our kindred number ;
But happier far are the six who rest
In the silence of breathless slumber ;
They dwell in a land where ne'er is felt
The sorrows we feel below ;
They live in a heaven of love and bliss,
We live in a world of woe.

Our eldest, in his own loved home,
Sees children around him playing ;
Our second in his youth's sweet prime,
Is still in the cold world straying ;
And four are left to cheer the hearts
Which have joined in our woe and mirth ;
The *father* who watched over our infant years,
And the *mother* who gave us birth !

Oh! when will the chain that binds us now,
 By Death's pale hand be broken?
 Who first will hear the solemn word
 By the stern destroyer spoken?
 Alas, alas, we may not know
 Who first will pass away, —
 Whose dust shall first in the churchyard
 Mix with its kindred clay!

The village church-bells pealing forth
 When the summer sunlight wanes,
 Seem, as they fall on my listening ear,
 Chiming two solemn strains;
 One for the six who gather yet
 Around the household hearth, —
 One for the six who calmly sleep
 In the cold and silent earth.

THE WIFE'S STRATAGEM.

Ye fair married dames, who so often deplore
 That a lover once blest, is a lover no more, —
 Attend to my council, nor blush to be taught
 That prudence must govern what beauty has caught.

OLD SONG.

"Well, Fanny, this is what *I* call *comfort*!" and the speaker, young Charles Selwyn, threw himself back in his spacious arm-chair, placed his slippered feet upon the crimson ottoman — by the way, they were the same slippers Fanny embroidered in the halcyon days of their courtship — and rested a pair of handsome eyes most complaisantly upon the face of his pretty wife.

For the especial benefit of my "single blessed" readers, I will endeavor, if my own "single" pen have power, to portray a pretty scene of domestic bliss and comfort as was ever enjoyed by a young and happy couple, whose unclouded honeymoon had not yet reached its meridian.

It was a very bird's-nest of a room. The bright coal-fire made the polished grate shine like ebony, while it shed a cheerful light around the cozy apartment. The soft astral burned clear and bright on the round centre-table, with its gentle radiance playing over the figures

of the carpet and the damask roses of the fringed hearth-rug. Everything, from the spreading of the table-cloth, to the placing of the chairs, was arranged in the nicest manner, with an eye to taste and regularity. Even the little Canary in his wire cage, seemed nestling his pretty head under his downy wing, merely out of respect to the quiet order below him.

And to complete the picture, there sat the young husband, in all the imaginable bliss of velvet slippers, flowing dressing-gown, and cozy arm-chair; while his gentle wife, with her smoothly brushed ringlets and neat attire, read aloud in her peculiar sweet tone, a charming story from a new magazine. Indeed, had the reader taken a peep into that quiet parlor, I think he could have thought, with Charley Selwyn, that it was a most graphic picture of real solid comfort.

"Charles," said Fanny, as she closed the book, "who was that gentleman you were conversing with at Mrs. Vane's last night, while Lillian was playing the harp?"

Oh! that was Harry Gray; we used to be great friends when I spent my evenings with the club. Last night was the first time I have met him since our marriage. A splendid fellow, and glorious company — but a rigid bachelor."

"What was the promise he reminded you of when we were passing through the hall?"

"Why, he wished me to meet with the club again, to-morrow night, as I haven't met them for some time, I promised him I would. I shall be away only an hour

or two, and you can amuse yourself with a book if you are lonely."

Fanny said nothing, but a cloud flitted over her pretty face, as she unfortunately happened to think that Bertha Lee told her once, in confidence, that herself and husband never would have parted had it not been for that very club which Charles had promised to meet, and for which Bertha's husband so sadly neglected her.

Fanny and Charles had been married but two months. They resided in a beautiful cottage in the suburbs of the city, which, though somewhat out of the way, yet seemed a perfect little paradise to its inmates. To be sure, Fanny was sometimes a little lonely while Charles was away in the city, where he was obliged to spend the long hours of the day; but then she had the pleasant evenings to look forward to, and though she kept a domestic, yet, like every prudent wife, she superintended the household affairs herself, which served as an agreeable pastime, to wile away many an hour which, otherwise must have seemed tediously wearisome. Her own fair hands prepared the exquisite niceties which Charles enjoyed so much after his labors in the counting-room were over. Her hands arranged the polished furniture, and placed his easy-chair before the comfortable fire, and laid his slippers on the rug near the grate, so they should be nice and warm, on his return.

A loud cheer of welcome made the well-filled hall ring as Charles Selwyn entered with Harry Grey His

club friends crowded around him ; some with inquiries as to the cause of his long absence, some with words of welcome, and some congratulated him with a jest and laugh, upon his good luck in marrying the beautiful city belle.

Selwyn was delighted with the reception he received. He had been absent so long from the entertaining circle, that the excitement and gaiety seemed enhanced by the charm of novelty. The merry laugh flowed forth spontaneously — the brilliant jest flew from lip to lip — the sparkling wine lent a deeper swell to the ringing song — and Charles Selwyn wondered how he could have forgotten, for two long months, that lighted club-room and the brilliant society of his gay associates.

But the young husband seems already to have forgotten the little cottage where he left his pretty wife, telling her he should be at home in less than two hours ; so we will ourselves take a peep into the quiet parlor.

Before the glowing fire stood the large easy-chair and the neatly embroidered slippers. Fanny sat by the centre-table, with a book, in which she had in vain tried to become interested, laying beside her, with one white hand still resting over the unread pages, and the other pressed nervously against her throbbing temples.

Charles had promised to be at home in two hours, but the "two hours" were long since past, and the tiny hand of the mantel clock told five minutes to ten. Poor Fanny ! She remembered just how her friend Bertha looked when she told her that the ring of a hus-

band's step on the floor of the club-room was the death-knell of home-love and home happiness ; and his every laugh within those siren walls a ghastly mockery to the untold misery which the laugh itself foretold.

Before her marriage Fanny Selwyn had resided in the city, where her beauty and vivacity had drawn around her a large circle of friends, who loved and admired her as much for her goodness as for her grace and intelligence. As an only daughter she was petted and caressed at home, where everything within the power of her fond parents was done to secure the happiness of their idol. It was a sad trial to her young heart when she left that sweet home of her childhood ; and when she turned from the embrace of her gentle mother, as they parted on the night of her bridal, the tears she had before succeeded in crushing back within their inward fount, burst forth in a torrent, and the young bride had flung herself into her husband's arms, with wild, unchecked sobs welling up from her warm heart. But a tender smile and a word of affection soon dispelled the clouds from her fair brow, and since that hour Charles had seen no more of those wild tears, for Fanny cherished too deep a regard for his peace of mind to pain him with the constant sight of grief. To say that at times she did not feel very, very lonely, would be untrue. She missed the kind words and sweet smiles of her mother, and the lively companionship of her young acquaintances ; but she loved her husband with intense devotion, and strove in every way to make his home cheerful and happy.

But to-night the very demon of unhappiness seemed weaving a spell of misery around Fanny Selwyn's heart. Her mind was full of dark forebodings, and she had become so nervous that nought save weeping could soothe the feverish excitement of her troubled feelings. And she *did* weep long and violently. But there was no mother near her to pillow that graceful head upon her bosom and whisper in her ear kind words of sympathy — no husband to take the little hand in his and banish every sad thought by one of those beaming smiles — no dear companion of her girlish years to mingle tears with her own. And so the young wife wept on, alone, while her truant husband echoed back the gay laugh, breathed forth the brilliant repartee, and joined in the ringing song which swelled within the walls of that same dreaded club-room whose very name awakened such sad forebodings in the fond wife's heart.

Fanny had been sitting for some time, with her face buried in her hands, when the little clock struck twelve.

Twelve! twelve o'clock, and Charles not yet home! Fanny grasped a lamp and held it close to the clock. Yes, it had told aright — it was midnight. She seated herself once more and gave way to another passionate burst of tears. Again the musical monitor chimed. This time it struck but one. The young wife sprang from her chair and dashed the tears from her eyes, flung open the window and listened for his step; but no step was heard. The pale moon and the white stars were kindly beaming from the far heavens, but poor Fanny

heeded not the beauty of the silent night. She gazed long and earnestly into the dim haze, but her eyes fell upon no dear form; her ear caught no sound of an echoing footstep. Indignantly closing the window she lighted her little nightlamp, and without even glancing again towards the clock, retired to the snug chamber where her aching temples were soon buried in the snowy pillows of the pretty French couch.

A few moments after the clock struck two, the night-lock was heard to spring back, and with a noiseless step, Charles Selwyn entered the little parlor. The astral was still softly burning, the arm-chair yet stood before the grate. But all was silent as the night itself. He opened the door of the sleeping apartment and whispered, "Fanny!" but no answer was returned. Two dark eyes peeped, for a single instant, from beneath their silken lashes, and two little ears heard the low tone of Charles as he murmured, "She is sleeping — I am glad she did not sit up for me."

The delicious coffee and the warm white cakes were already steaming on the table, when Charles Selwyn entered the dining-room on the following morning. Fanny was already in her place, looking prettier than ever in her neat morning robe and plain white collar. She poured out the steaming coffee with her own fair hands, but her own was scarcely tasted, and the clouded brow and slightly quivering lip, when she essayed to speak, told she had not forgotten the last evening's neglect.

The breakfast hour passed most unpleasantly to the inmates of the pretty cottage. The husband felt that he had done wrong; first, in breaking his promise to be at home early, and secondly in passing so many hours in useless revelling, which should have been spent at home. But, with man's usual perversity, he was not willing to acknowledge that he had done wrong, and so, long before he had finished his second cup of coffee, he had arrived at the manly conclusion that he had a perfect right to go *where* he pleased and return *when* he pleased, and that Fanny had no right to feel either angry or grieved. So when he arose from the table he did not give her, as usual, a good-bye kiss, or bid her a kindly good-morning, but arranged his coat and hat in silence, and, without a word, or even a glance towards his wife, closed the door and started for the city, with the determination to spend another evening at the club-room. And he *did* spend another evening at the fascinating resort. And yet another and another; till he learned to look upon the brilliant club-room and the sparkling gaiety of his bachelor associates as necessary to his happiness. But it was not the peaceful happiness he had enjoyed when his evenings were spent at home. Oh! no, far from it. He was restless; oftentimes low-spirited and unhappy. Even his wife's fond kiss and gentle smile seemed to add more fuel to the restless flame of disquietude; and his own conscience told him that though she tried to laugh and smile, yet her heart was miserable. She had pleaded with tears and affectionate

words for him to leave that dangerous place, forever; but ah! its siren spell was already woven round him, and each night a phantom hand beckoned him onward toward its charmed entrance, where the subtle tempter stood to lead him still further on — to ruin.

One starry night Fanny Selwyn was sitting in her little parlor, alone. Charles had gone to the city, and as usual, the tears were sparkling like diamond dew-drops on the young wife's silken lashes. She had not spoken unkindly to her husband for his late cruel neglect, either had she allowed a cloud of displeasure to darken her brow when in his presence. She continued, as before, to devise everything love could suggest for his comfort. The same extra dainties were prepared by her skilful hands; even were little luxuries often left over the grate, that they might be warm on his return from his midnight resort. She strove by kindly words and deeds, to win him back once more to his home; but it was all in vain.

And so, to-night, she sat in the easy-chair, gazing into the glowing fire, with the large tears rolling over her cheeks and falling down upon her hands. For two long, weary hours had she sat thus, with despair and misery in her young heart, and its pearly token upon her cheek. But suddenly her eyes beamed with a mischievous light, and a dimple played prettily around the little proud mouth, as if sent there by a merry thought. For a few moments she sat as if in deep meditation, then, spring-

ing up from her seat, she exclaimed, clapping her white hands triumphantly,

"Yes, yes, it shall be done! If love won't win him back, stratagem shall, and I'll do it." And lighting her lamp, she glanced at the clock, but though at that very moment it struck twelve she did *not* seem to heed it; for, as she went lightly to her chamber, she hummed some snatches of a song, ceasing only to say, in a gay tone, every now and then — "Oh! I know such a stratagem *must* succeed! I know it will; it is so very strange."

The next morning, when Charles came down to breakfast, he was astonished at the unusual gaiety of his wife. She laughed and talked as in the earliest days of their marriage, and the sunny light in her dark eyes and the merry strain in her silvery tone, he thought could come only from a happy heart.

"Charley," she said, and when he had risen from the table and sat down for a moment on the sofa, "Charley" — and she placed her little hand on his shoulder and gazed into his handsome face — "I have something I wish to tell you. You know mother and my old friend, Ellen Graham, rode out to see me yesterday. Well, a large number of city ladies, among whom are nearly all my former acquaintances, have formed an entertaining society, called the 'Ladies' Circle,' which Ellen wishes me to join. They meet every evening in the week, and as they have a fine, airy hall, and plenty of books and chess, Ellen says they enjoy themselves highly, so I

promised her I would become a member, and I am to meet with them to-night for the first time. I shall go to the city in the afternoon, and spend the night with Ellen, as it would be inconvenient for me to return home at so late an hour. I shall stay with her every evening I attend the circle, and, let me see — how often shall I be able to meet them? Five — no, four; I don't think I can go more than four evenings in the week — but I shall certainly go four evenings. Will it not be fine, Charley? Only think, a 'Ladies' Circle' — pretty name, isn't it?"

Charles did not answer the question, but gazed into his wife's sweet face, with a somewhat puzzled expression, which she did not seem to notice, for she continued in the same careless tone: — "You know Bridget can attend to everything just the same as if I were here" — a fact Selwyn greatly doubted — "and I suppose you yourself will be at home by one or two."

The astonished husband hardly understood what his wife was saying, but the sarcasm which that last sentence contained, though uttered in a careless tone, was not lost upon him. It stung him to the quick and the crimson tide which told its effect, mounted to his very temples.

"There, Charley, you may go now," said Fanny; "I've told you all I am going to. But stop, let me kiss you first — you know you won't see me again till to-morrow night."

And with his young wife's kiss yet playing on his

cheek, Charles Selwyn started for the city. He did not understand the "circle" affair. He had never before heard of such a circle, and he little relished the idea of his wife being from home four evenings of the week. To be sure, his own evenings were spent at the club-room; but then he had been accustomed to seeing Fanny at the breakfast-table, and how could he spare her sweet face and beaming smile from the morning and evening board. Poor Selwyn! For once in his life he was fairly puzzled.

The day wore away, and the young husband had nearly forgotten, in the usual cares of business, both the "Ladies' Circle" and the club-room. But twilight came, and his steps were turned homeward. He entered the little parlor, but there was no laughing voice to bid him welcome, no dear face to greet him with a sunny smile. He could not bear the gloomy silence, and walking into the dining-room seated himself at the supper-table. Old Bridget poured out his tea, which he drank in silence, and, as he did not feel much appetite — there was no dainty dish beside his plate, prepared by daintier hands — he soon rose from the table and started for the city.

But the brilliant club-room had lost its charm; the festive mirth of his gay associates its fascinating witchery.

He could not help contrasting that noisy revery with the sweet quiet of his own little parlor, and the pure happiness which had hovered round his fireside. He

was abstracted and weary during the evening, and even the gay jest and light laugh of the brilliant Harry Grey seemed to have lost its usual influence, for Selwyn could not respond, in word or heart, either to jest or laugh. and so, at a much earlier hour than was his wont, he turned his restless footsteps homeward.

It was with a strange feeling of loneliness that the discontented husband sat down to the morning meal. There was no neatly arrayed form beside him; there was no smiling face, with the silken curls dancing over the graceful shoulders, to look the heart's love for him in every sunny glance. His coffee, which had always been so very delicious, was dark-colored and tasteless. The steak was burned almost to a crisp, and even the bread was so heavy, and bore such unmistakable evidence of an undue portion of saleratus, that it was wholly unpalatable. All Bridget could offer, as an excuse, was, that her mistress had always superintended the breakfast herself, and that she had forgotten how she settled the coffee.

Thus passed a fortnight at the cottage. The young wife was absent nearly the whole of the time, and when at home the household affairs were left entirely to old Bridget's care. Poor Selwyn had not tasted a decent cup of coffee since Fanny joined that hateful 'circle,' and more than that, he could not, half the time, see Fanny herself.

Oh! how sadly did he miss the nice little dainties he had been so accustomed to. His arm-chair was never

drawn out before the grate, ready to receive his weary form; his slippers were never ready for his tired feet; and Fanny, when she was at home, seemed too weary or too busy to read to him or even listen to his own conversation. Even the cheerful home-look of the neat parlor seemed exchanged for a cold, gloomy, comfortless aspect.

The young husband had become sickened with the rude festivity of the lighted club-room; and now that they seemed lost to him, he fully appreciated the sweet enjoyments and pure, social comforts he had once slighted for society which could neither bring peace nor happiness. He yearned to enjoy again those same quiet home-comforts, to have the same sweet spell of domestic bliss woven once more round his neglected fireside; and he determined to spare no efforts to regain it.

It was on a bright, cold morning that our young couple were seated at the breakfast-table. Neither had spoken for some moments, when, suddenly, Charles pushed aside his plate and cup with a very decided flourish, and folding his arms and turning towards Fanny, said, in a tone at once resolute and serious,

"Fanny, will you leave your 'Ladies' Circle,' if I will leave the club?"

For a single instant there sparkled a roguish twinkle in Fanny's bright eyes, and an extra dimple hovered round her rosy lips; but only for an instant—for the pretty face wore a deeply serious expression when she

put down the cup of coffee she had held to her mouth without drinking a swallow, and answered, in a tone of well-feigned astonishment,

"Why, Charley, how very strange it is of you! How could you possibly get along without the brilliant society of those splendid fellows? They haven't turned you away, have they?"

"No, Fanny, they have not turned me away; but I have become heartily tired of their light festivity, and if you will leave the Society you have joined, I will never again meet with them. Will you leave it, Fanny?"

"Yes, Charles, I will, if you wish it."

"Thank you, Fanny, a thousand times. We will henceforth spend our evenings in our own little parlor, and I solemnly promise never to step my foot within the club-room door again."

And he kept his promise.

After a few moment's conversation, in which all differences were happily adjusted, Charles imprinted a kiss upon his wife's fair cheek and departed for the city, with a lighter heart and more cheerful countenance than he had known since the first night he visited the club-room.

The door had scarcely closed upon her husband, when Fanny Selwyn flung herself upon the sofa and burst into a fit of laughter. "Ha, ha, ha, didn't I know stratagem would win him back, even though love did fail? Well, well, I have learned how to manage my

husband ; just let him miss a few of his domestic comforts, myself included, for a short time, and I shall at last come off victorious."

When Charles Selwyn returned from the city that night, and opened the parlor door, he was greeted with a smile and kiss from his pretty little wife ; and as he glanced around the room and his eyes fell upon the easy-chair standing before the cheerful fire, with his dressing-gown and slippers all nicely warmed, he could not refrain from exclaiming,

" Oh ! Fanny, you cannot think how happy I am to see our pretty room look like old times again."

From that day, the sun shone upon no happier household than the one which gathered round that little cottage fireside. Fanny never seemed too weary to read during the pleasant evening, nor was Charles ever tired of listening to her sweet voice. The fair wife could not again complain of her husband's neglect, for never was there a more devoted husband than Charles Selwyn. And as years passed lightly by, and the home of Selwyn became each day dearer to his heart, he often laughed with Fanny over the happy success of her simple stratagem, and he never regretted that it had won him from the pleasures of the dangerous club-room to the peaceful happiness of his own loved and cherished home.

TO THE ABSENT BROTHER.

Thou art gone, thou art gone, from the home of thy youth,
Thou art gone from its love, thou art gone from its truth,
From the clasping of arms that around thee would twine,
From the murmur of voices that mingle with thine.
The Farewell of loved ones hath saddened thine ear,
Thou art parted from those who have cherished thee here.

From the kisses thy mother pressed on thy young brow,
From the tears of affection she sheds for thee now ;
From the father, whose blessing and tear-blinded eye
Spoke volumes of love when he bade thee good-bye ;
From the sister who spent with thee childhood's sweet morn,
From the loved of thy home, thou art gone, thou art gone.

Thou went bravely forth in thy manhood and pride,
A young heart within thee, a world at thy side ;
Thine eye saw no shadows, thy heart gave no fears,
To the future that slept in the fast coming years.
But there mingled a sigh in thy farewell tone,
For thou went forth a wanderer, young and alone !

The sweet years of childhood forever gone by,
 Its glee lost in care, its smile in the sigh;
 Thy home-hearth exchanged for the world's crowded mart,
 Where cold words may chill all the warmth of thy heart;
 Oh! say, is it strange we tremble for thee,
 Launched alone on the waves of life's siren-like sea!

Yet go! for youth's spring-time is over thee now,
 May the laurel thou seekest be twined on thy brow,
 Thy name shall be breathed in each loved one's prayer,
 That the stream of thy life may be tranquil and fair;
 That the sunshine of peace o'er thy pathway be shed,
 And a blessing, a blessing rest on thy young head.

HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Hush the light laugh; 'tis the midnight bell
 Which tolleth the old year's parting knell.
 Time's quivering wings are rustling by,
 Bearing the old year's dying sigh;
 And we hear a voice like a "sound of dirth,"
 Sighing, *what will the next year bring forth?*

Yes, yes, *happy new year*. New year in the castle,
 new year in the cottage. New year on the dancing
 ocean; new year on the sunny land. But ah! does
 the ringing echo meet a response from every heart?
 does every voice murmur in joyous tones, "*a happy
 new year?*" Oh! no, no; there are pale, wan cheeks
 whereon bright tears are shining like sparkling dia-
 monds — there are white lips whereon no heart sun-
 shine hath lingered for many a long dreary day — there
 are cold spectre-like hands, pressed tightly over slow-
 ly breaking hearts — there are sad, low voices mur-
 muring in the bitterness of woe, "one year ago to-
 day!"

Mark yon proud mansion. In the spacious hall little
 dancing feet are gliding to and fro; small and white

hands are filled with rare and costly gifts ; young hearts are beating wild with happiness, which knows no shadow ; sweet, rich voices are ringing forth like bridal chimes, "*A happy new year !*" Ah ! yes, this is the happy new year to the inmates of yonder home. Wealth, luxury and pleasure surround them. Every cherished one of that circle who gathered round the luxurious board last new year's morn, sits this joyous morning in the accustomed place. The chilling void of a broken band has ne'er been felt within that kindred circle, therefore they echo with light hearts and fervent voices, "*a happy new year !*"

How neat and pretty looks that little cottage. It boasts no spacious hall, where for years have gathered the high-born ancestry ; it boasts no massive doors with carved devices and silver knobs. 'Tis not the home of gilded aristocracy, but the far nobler one of peace and happiness, though its inmates be ranked among the lowly ones of earth. Let us take a peep into that pretty room. In the centre stands the table with its snowy cloth spread smoothly over it, and the warm white biscuits steaming through the perforated cover.

Everything to promote human comfort is there, everything, save princely luxury. The kettle is singing merrily over the bright blazing fire, and the gray cat purrs contentedly on the hearth rug ; and unmindful of all, sits the fair, young wife. Yes, she sits there unheeding all around her ; the dark hair parted smoothly on the white forehead, and the tears shining on the soft

cheeks. One hand holds a little silken hat, with a curling feather drooping jauntily over the side, and the blue ribbons crinkled by the neat little bow that nestles under a plump, dimpled chin. In the other hand is a broken toy, with the small marks of little teeth upon it. Look at that sweet young wife ; see how mournfully she gazes upon those cherished tokens, and how the tears gush forth as she murmurs, "one year ago to-day, my Willie wore this little hat, and clasped in his dimpled hand this broken toy ; now he lies in the cold, dark grave, with the death shroud folded round him, and his pale hands crossed over his silent heart !"

Ah ! yes, yes, *one year ago to-day !* Many, many a sad change has passed over us since then. Last New Year's Day the idol of our country was with us in all the pride of vigorous life ; this new year he lies cold and silent in the embrace of arms whose clasp is never loosened ; with the death-seal on his marble lips, and the shadow of eternity resting over his noble brow. Well, well, he "*still lives*" in a better world, and we can only bless his loved memory, and with fervent hearts thank Heaven for even that precious boon.

Ere next new year shall come with its merry greetings, *we too, may be at rest !* This year we may revel in affluence ; next year, we may wear the blight of bitter poverty. None may tell what change the fleeting years shall bring ; none may lift the mystic veil which drapes the future.

But *this* is New Year's morning — so we must not al-

low these sombre shadows to flit so darkly before us, while the merry sleigh-bells are jingling around us, and light hearts are beating so joyously; but we'll hope that none may suffer from poverty, while the wealth and aristocracy of our proud city stand with pitying hearts and open purses to relieve them, and soothe with kindly words of sympathy the bitterness of human suffering. And with a light heart and happy tone we'll murmur to one and all, "*A Happy New Year!*"

THE DREAM.

DEDICATED TO WILLIAM F. CUTTER, BY HIS SISTER LOUISE.

I dreamed that thou did'st die, Will,
And slept within the tomb,
And o'er the sunlight of my life
There hung a veil of gloom;
For those dear eyes of thine
Were forever closed in death,
And from thy cold and pallid lips
There came no warming breath.

And when upon thy heart, Will,
I pressed my hands in woe,
I dreamed that through its silent cells
The life-blood ceased to flow;
And when I kissed thy marble brow,
And bade thee speak to me,
Thou answered not, and then I knew
Thy soul had broken free.

I dreamed that thou didst lie, Will,
All motionless and still —
That thy young life was stricken down
With death's cold, silent chill;
Thy voice was hushed forever,
And thy weary spirit fled
And when I wildly called thy name,
They told me thou wert dead.

Yes, they told me thou wert dead, Will,
 That I called for thee in vain,
 That thy young heart had ceased to beat, —
 Thou ne'er would'st speak again.
 Oh! my heart was filled with darkness we,
 For its sunny light had fled,
 And there seemed no joy upon the earth
 When I dreamed that thou wert dead.

THE WARRIOR'S WIFE TO HER HUSBAND.

I loved thee in thy beauty,
 And I loved thee in thy pride,
 When the helmet rested on thy brow,
 And thy falchion by thy side.
 I loved thee when thy manly tones
 Rang forth in warlike strife,
 And when 'mid sword and plume you led
 A soldier's martial life.

And on the blood-red battle-plain,
 When fire and ball flashed by,
 And the heavy smoke of the red campaign
 Shadowed the cloudless sky:
 When shout and groan alike were heard
 Of victory and of fame, —
 And the foeman with his falchion bold,
 Laid thee amid the slain.

'Twas a death wound — and you came to die
 Upon my throbbing breast —
 To bless me ere you calmly slept
 The soldier's dreamless rest.
 I marked that brow grow pale and cold —
 I marked those eyes grow dim —
 The lustre of their proud light hid
 By Death's cold glassy film.

I marked the blood flow from thy side,
 And knew 'twas wasting life, —
 But yet you bid me not to weep —
I am a warrior's wife!
 You say that tears do not become
 The wife of one who fell
 Where stately plume and banner proud
 Bent with the battle spell.

You bid them shroud thee in thy cloak,
 And lay above thy breast
 The helmet and the falchion
 That thy hand in battle pressed;
 You bid them with the muffled drum
 And the cannon sound thy knell, —
 But you say that tears should never flow
 When a soldier breathes farewell.

Alas! I cannot keep them back —
 Unconsciously they flow,
 And like mute angels, seem to soothe
 My heart's unspoken woe.
 Thy martial cloak shall be thy shroud,
 And the cannon's roar thy knell;
 But Oh! let tears, like angels, soothe
 The warrior's last farewell!

THE DEAD PET.

My pretty bird! my bright, beautiful canary, with its twinkling eyes of jet, and its velvety feathers of pale, whitish gold! he lay quietly in my open hand, and closed his tiny eyes never to open them more.

My darling bird! how fast the tears rolled down my cheeks as I watched him die. To be sure he was nothing but a bird, but then for years the little creature has been my pet, cherished and loved, because his life depended on my watchful care. His golden warblings have many months made sunshine in my sick room, cheering its loneliness, and making the dreary hours pass less wearily. He was given me by a darling brother, and I loved him the more fondly for that dear one's sake. His pretty songs carrolled so sweetly in the sunshine, seemed almost like the voice of the absent one, and as they fell on my ear, they awoke pleasant memories of hours which have faded in the shadows that fall from the broad wings of time. All through the long days, when the sunlight played over the floor and when the dark storm filled the room with gloomy dimness, his merry voice rang through the house making music for our hearts, and driving away every shadow of gloom.

Is it a wonder that I wept when I saw his sparkling eyes grow dim? Is it a wonder that my heart grew

sad with grief when I saw him lying in my hand, silent and dead ?

Dear little pet! his cage hangs in its accustomed place, but it is empty. The golden form that sprang so gracefully from wire to wire will flutter there no more. The music voice that floated on the air in melody, that mingled with the children's gleeful songs, and rang forth with new sweetness when they caressed him with loving words, will never more make sunshine in the house. My sick room hath lost the charm that soothed its silent weariness ; it hath lost the golden tones that made it bright and sunny. Sweet little pet, thy songs are ended ; thy cherished form will grace its little cage no more.

Take, take the empty cage away,
The bird will sing no more ;
He hath charmed my ear for many a day,
He hath blessed my heart with each dear lay,
But all his songs are o'er.

The sunshine will not gleam again
Upon his pretty head ;
I'll hear no more the golden strain
That bound me in its sunny chain ;
My little pet is dead.

THE LAST WISH.

Let me hear the song of the summer birds,
That is hushed in the wildwood now,
Let me feel the touch of the summer breeze
Once more on my heated brow.
Let me feel once more through my lattice come
The rose and the violet's breath,
Let me see the flowers and the springing grass,
Ere I sleep in the arms of Death.

The wail of the northern wind goes by
With a cold and dreary sound,
And the winter's sheet of glistening snow
Lies white on the frozen ground.
But the summer I know will soon come back
With its sunshine of birds and flowers,
And oh ! I long for its gentle breath,
long for its quiet hours.

The crimson flush is on my cheek,
The brightness in my eye,
The dark seal set upon my brow
That bringeth death's cold sigh.
But I know the Saviour's open arms
Will take me to his breast,
And his gentle smile beam on me there
In the land of eternal rest.

I know that His mansions are bright and fair,
That His tones are peace and love,
And while I sigh for the home on earth,
I long for the home above.
My heart beats fainter each passing hour,
My dream of life is o'er,
And I shall soon be in that better land
With the loved ones gone before.

But I long to hear the pleasant sounds
Which the wildwood warblers pour,
And to gaze on the soft blue skies again
Ere I go to return no more.
I long to see the violets bloom,
The wild rose and the thyme,
To hear soft winds go whispering by,
To die in summer time.