

THE FEMALE VOLUNTEER;
OR THE
LIFE, AND WONDERFUL ADVENTURES OF
MISS ELIZA ALLEN,
A YOUNG LADY OF EASTPORT, MAINE.



ELIZA ALLEN

Being a truthful and well-authenticated narrative of her parentage, birth and early life—her love for one whom her parents disapproved—his departure for Mexico—her determination to follow him at all hazards—her flight in man's attire—enlistment—terrific battles of Mexico—her wounds—voyage to California—the shipwreck and loss of her companions—her miraculous escape—return to her native land—meeting of the lovers—reconciliation of her parents—marriage, and happy termination of all her trials and sorrows.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1851, by

H. M. RULISON,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the District of Ohio.

PREFACE.

IN presenting the following narrative of the varied and wonderful incidents of my eventful life to the public, it cannot be expected that in my delineations of history I can always be accurately correct as to all the details of every minute incident: for to do this would require a much more retentive memory than can be expected from one who was constantly involved in the most exciting and thrilling adventures; and whose mind and heart were occupied with her own personal desires and feelings too much to allow her to take note of, or interest in, the varied scenes around her, unless they were in some degree connected with her own private life; moreover, my design is not to write a history of the Mexican war, but simply to give a plain unvarnished detail of the most strange and wonderful adventures, scenes, and incidents connected with my own life, as they occurred.

Some may question the propriety and utility of my laying before the public a series of events entirely of a private nature; to such I would say, that I should have forborne this intrusion on the public sympathy—if I had not felt that it was my imperative duty to give something in the nature of a warning to parents to be more cautious than many are how they trifle with the peace and happiness of their children in the most momentous of all relations, the choice of a

partner for life. All are willing to admit that on this choice depends the happiness or misery of a life—it is therefore of the most imperative importance that children should consider well ere they take so important a step, that they should weigh well the opinions and advice of those who, by their experience and age are capable of advising and directing them in their choice of a companion. It is no less imperative on parents to pause and reflect ere they attempt to sunder the ties which bind two loving hearts together—for if they do attempt to exercise the authority given to them over their children, beyond a proper limit, the only result will be disobedience and misery.

If I succeed in averting sorrow and repentance from one loving heart—if I, by the story of my sufferings, should prevent a single instance of unjust and unfounded opposition on the part of parents to the peace and happiness of a child—I will not have suffered and written in vain.

AN AUTHENTIC
AND
THRILLING NARRATIVE
OF THE
LIFE AND WONDERFUL ADVENTURES
OF
ELIZA ALLEN.

PART I.

"Oh! did we take for heaven's above,
One half the pains that we
Take here below for mortal's love,
What angels we should be!"

I was born in the town of Eastport, in the state of Maine, on the 27th of January, 1826. My parents were respectable and wealthy, and it may easily be imagined that no pains or expense were spared in cultivating the mental and moral faculties of their first, and for many years, their only child.

The birth of two brothers, so far from depriving me of any means of improvement or happiness, brought additional sources of pleasure. Beloved and respected by my brothers; indulged by my parents, I appeared to be the center of all their enjoyments, the object of all their cares, and the hope and happiness of their lives.—Who, that had witnessed the happiness of our family circle, would have imagined that I, a young and delicate girl, an obedient daughter, and an affectionate sister, would ever leave a home of ease and plenty, where all was harmony, sunshine and happiness, to wander in strange attire into far distant lands—and undergo hardships, dangers and sufferings! but alas such is the waywardness of life, and the inscrutable ways of Providence: after experi-

encing such intense sufferings and such wonderful deliverances, I may well exclaim, that "it is not with him that walketh to direct his steps" but that "an overruling power controls our actions and shapes our ends."

I will not, however, anticipate, but proceed to narrate in detail the circumstances which dispelled my dreams of happiness, and destroyed my enchanting and romantic visions of future bliss and felicity.

A gentleman by the name of Billings moved into our vicinity, from Canada; he was poor, but respectable, and having quite a family, he was compelled, from necessity, to work at day labor for the sustenance of his numerous children, the eldest of whom was a son by the name of William, with whom I became acquainted by his frequently working for my father. Poor as he was, and so much beneath my former notions of equality, I became enamored with him—nay, I loved him, and could not avoid it. Smile not, dear reader, for it was something as unaccountable to me as my own existence, in one of which I had as much agency as the other; and wherefore should I deny it? This love, instead of being controlled by me, became my master—nay, it became my sovereign, and I its willing and most loyal subject. I, who, but a few days before, was so timid and delicate, could now brave any danger, and toil or privation, even death itself, if I could only enjoy him who had become the food of my existence—only be sure of the delicious hope of some day consummating my bliss in the full enjoyment of the society of him alone who had unconsciously smitten down and desolated a heart which beat only for its conqueror. And wherefore was I doomed to such torture, without the consolation of its being reciprocated? Was I not wasting my affections upon the desert air? Did he, who was lacerating a heart with the most painful agony, feel a kindred throbbing in his own?

As our acquaintance became developed, William, with great diffidence, sought my company, and made known his affection for me in the most fervid and feeling manner; and we, after several interviews, all of which were unknown to my parents, pledged ourselves to each other in the most solemn manner, confirming our vows by formally exchanging tokens of our mutual attachment,

which was only to be dissolved by death itself. He presented to me a ring, which, though of little intrinsic value, was inestimable to me. He had his name engraven on it; and when he presented it, he made solemn asseverations of true and devoted love. I gave him a miniature of myself, and a heart devoted to him alone. On exchanging the above mementos, we called our Maker to witness that we were irrevocably pledged to each other during life—that nothing should sever this solemn obligation but death itself; but, alas! in this solemn undertaking, we had reckoned without our host; we had not counted the cost; we had made no allowance for our friends to come in and relieve us of our affections, and disannul our contract; we had, in the simplicity of our own hearts, induced by the most holy and pure affections, made a free and sacred surrender of what we believed could neither be governed or controlled by any one else; we had done all this without that proviso which parents too often think is lodged with them.

And here, friendly reader, suffer me to offer a few reflections, which I do with great diffidence; and should not intrude myself upon your patience, were I not impelled by what I consider a most solemn duty. I, who have suffered perhaps more than any one ever suffered in a case of the kind before, may be permitted to speak unbiassed; for I can say, and that without the least hesitation or fear of digressing from the truth, that no child ever had more pleasure or satisfaction, in its obedience to its parents, than I had; and that nothing ever gave me so much grief and misery as that which I believed to be an imperative sense of duty, and which caused me to leave them in a case which seemed to me to involve more of my own responsibility and happiness than theirs; and which, I do believe, in my inmost soul, could not have been avoided without destroying the balance of my mind, and leading to consequences too fearful to anticipate.

I wish here to address myself to parents—parents who have children whom they love, and whom they would gratify in anything but this—this, the all-important point on which hangs a life of happiness or misery, and one of the most fearful obligations too which mortals are suffered to make, and one in which the parties to it are more interested than all the world beside; for I look upon

it, that where children are compelled or induced to marry against their wishes and choice, that they too often barter away, not only their own happiness in after life, but that of their friends, and even their own offspring; making that abode, where nothing but peace and love should dwell, a scene of wretchedness and woe—where, instead of the joyous notes of peace and quiet, you hear naught but jealous wrangling and wretchedness, crimination and recrimination, which often ends in crime if not in death.

I may be asked, if parents have not a duty to discharge in this matter? I answer, they have, and a solemn one; for I believe it to be the duty of every parent, when a child is about to enter into this most sacred connection, to examine well the choice, weigh it as for their life; and if they think the selection an improper one, to reason with them in a calm and parental manner, setting forth all the objections they have (which should always be strong enough to show the propriety of their anxiety), in a sober and temperate manner; but when all these fail, when reason, argument, and parental affection fail, you may cease; you have discharged your duty—go no farther—leave it then with them and with Him who superintends all things; never resort to threats or force, unless you would plant a thorn in your own pillow, as well as theirs, which you cannot extract, for it will yield you more remorse than consolation, while it adds nothing to their happiness; for in the multitude of cases wherein parents have interposed their authority, how few have succeeded, and what a large proportion of that few have been made wretched by acquiescence. Think well, then, parents, of the consequences, before you act.

When my parents were informed of our intentions, they, in a very feeling manner, took me to task; and after upbraiding me, in some excitement, for stooping so low, forbid, in the most peremptory manner, my having any further correspondence with him, or even seeing him under heavy penalties. While they reasoned with me, I had a hope that it would end in reason; but when they told me, in a very austere manner, that I must never see or speak to him again—that, if I did, I should be disinherited—that I should leave that mansion where I had seen so many happy hours, and never again be allowed to enter it—and that they should consider

me so disgraced that they would never again speak to, nor see me;—when all this was addressed to me in such emphatic terms as to prevent a doubt of their sincerity, you may judge of my feelings. It was like scalding lava; it wrung my heart to its utmost tension; for it seemed as if all the vials of indignant wrath were now mingled for my destruction, and would be drenched upon my giddy brain; for, to recede from the solemn vows I had made to my adored William, was not only against my inclination, but against what I believed to be my duty.

Here, then, was a dilemma, either horn of which was beset with frightful anticipations. To obey my parents, which, under any other circumstances, would have been my greatest delight, would now not only render myself wretched, but would destroy the peace and happiness of one who was as dear to me as life itself, and whose whole existence hung on the trying crisis of this gloomy moment. In the midst of this severe struggle between love and duty, as if conscious of the severe test on which I was called to be tried, in which he wished to share, if he could not turn aside its venom, I received the following note from him:

DEAREST ELIZA:

I have lately received information of the trouble and sorrow your attachment to me has already occasioned you; would to heaven that it were in my power to relieve your troubles and allay your sorrows by receiving the whole burden on my own head! but alas, this cannot be! I must either stand idly by, and witness the anguish and sorrow my love has brought upon you, without the power of soothing your griefs or comforting you in your distress, or I must fly far from country, kindred, friends, parents—all that the heart holds most dear and sacred. I must leave the scenes of our early love and happiness; and above all I must leave *you*, the idol of my affections, the object of my devotion, the source of all my hopes and dreams of future happiness. I must tear myself away from the presence of the only object of my love and devotion. Yes, I love you too sincerely and truly to remain here where my presence brings sorrow and misery alone to her whose happiness and peace are dearer to me than life itself.

After weighing every circumstance, after having carefully considered how I might best promote your enjoyment I concluded that my only

course was to depart; for when I, who am the unfortunate cause of the anger of your parents, have gone, peace and harmony will once more be restored to your family circle.

Having arrived at this conclusion, I hastened to join a volunteer company, and ere you have received this I shall be on my way to Mexico. It may be that we shall meet no more on this earth; that I shall never again gaze on that fair face, hear the music of your soft, low voice, or receive assurances of your affection. It may be that my body, enervated by fatigue, weakened by privation, and wasted by disease, will be left to molder and decay in that strange and distant land, or I may fall pierced by the lance of the fierce and bloody Mexican; but though I may fall, and be left exposed on the bare earth to die, with no friendly voice to soothe my last moments, with no kind hand to close my dying eyes; yet in the loneliness and gloom of that moment, your image—that precious memento given to me in happier days—will be there to cheer and console me; my last look will be cast on that image, my last thought and prayer will be for your happiness and prosperity.

If my absence relieves you from the reproaches and upbraidings of your parents, and restores to you the peace and happiness my presence deprives you of, I shall be amply repaid for all the sufferings and privations I may endure. If I could receive assurance that you, while surrounded by friends and relations, enjoying all the comforts which affluence and ease afford, sometimes remembered him, who for your sake has become an alien from his native land and a stranger to his relatives and friends, I should, however fortune might frown and fate prove adverse, be happy. Oh, yes! if I could look forward to a bright and glorious future, when I should be restored with honor to my parents and country; when I might without fear of refusal demand your hand from those who now look down on me with scorn and contempt; then danger, exposure and privations would have no terrors for me; I would bear the worst ills fate might heap on my devoted head with a smile.

But whether we ever meet again on this earth or not, be assured that the few moments of love and happiness I have enjoyed with you will never be forgotten; no, they will live forever in my heart, comforting me in my sorrow, soothing me in my distress, and cheering me in my despondency; wherever I may be your image will be present, rendering my thoughts pure, and my actions worthy; living, I shall ever remember and love you, dying, my last thought, my last prayer, will be for you. Your own

WILLIAM.

The above note, sealed, was handed to me about two o'clock in the afternoon, by a young man who had carefully sought an opportunity to hand it to me in the most private manner. As soon as he had placed the letter in my hand, he said: "Please pardon my intrusion, as I presume the letter will fully explain the reason;" so saying, he disappeared.

So sudden and unexpected a visitor, so confused my mind, that I did not even ask him a single question, but immediately hastened to my chamber, to see what so singular an occurrence meant. Struggling with doubts and anticipations while breaking the letter open, imagine for a moment my feelings after reading its contents. Hope, which solaces the wretched in his gloomy presages, seemed now, with me, extinguished; the last lingering consolation that I had cherished, of occasionally seeing him, was now gone; and all the doleful anticipations seemed to say forever; for all the forebodings of danger in civil life were trifling, when compared with that of a soldier, in a sickly climate, amid a treacherous and vindictive foe, and all the dangers incident to a murderous battle.

While all these anticipations were passing in vivid array before my distracted mind, I shuddered at the thought of never seeing him again. Day and night I was racking my imagination to find something to assuage the grief of my widowed heart; and while no angel of mercy interposed to quiet the ravings of my burning brain, or quench that flame within, which was gnawing my inmost soul, I came to the determination, at all hazards, to follow him, to share with him through life each and every danger which he might be called to encounter.

But how was this to be accomplished? I, a tender and delicate female, brought up in the lap of ease and affluence, of a fragile and slender form, now to assume the rugged and turbulent character of the soldier! But with all these discouraging anticipations in full view, I was still resolved to make the attempt, as the only remedy to soothe my aching heart. I had read the life of Deborah Sampson, who served in the ranks as a soldier in the revolutionary army for several years, and was honorably discharged without her sex being discovered; I had also read the life of Lucy Brewer, who served as a marine in the Navy, in the late war with England, and who

distinguished herself on board of the frigate Constitution, as a top-man in several engagements with the enemy, and who served out her enlistment and received an honorable discharge without discovery; and why should I hesitate to emulate their example? I had equal, if not superior incentives to induce me to the undertaking. I therefore made up my mind to commence preparations to follow him in whom were all my hopes, and all that could make life desirable. It may well be supposed that it required no little ingenuity, as well as secrecy, to accomplish with safety so desperate an undertaking, especially since my parents had become alarmed at seeing me so much dejected and melancholy after William left, that they feared to trust me alone, which made it difficult to advance very fast in my preparations for elopement, which now absorbed all my thoughts. Many difficulties interposed, and, among the rest, my hair was one, of which I had a most beautiful and luxuriant growth, and to which I had formerly devoted great care and attention, and spent much of my precious time to make it show to the most advantage, but which now was an unwelcome ornament. As there was no other alternative, I resolved to cut it off, which I would have to do myself, when all my other arrangements were completed. Having fully matured my plan, I proceeded to execute it with all possible dispatch and secrecy. My first object was to obtain a suitable suit of male attire, which would be likely to be attended with no little difficulty. But in the midst of my solicitude and anxiety, a remarkable Providence (for so I must call it), intervened, by which all my difficulties seemed to be obviated.

An uncle of mine, my father's brother, who lived about eight miles distant, in the country, was suddenly seized with a violent fever, and my father and mother were sent for in great haste, to attend, as was supposed, a dying brother. The call being so sudden and urgent, they had but little time to think of less important matters. But they did not wholly neglect me, however; for, as they were about to leave the house, they called me to them, in an affectionate manner, and desired me to take good care of the house, keep everything in order, see that my brothers attended to their work, and when they came home, which they thought would be in a few days, I should be rewarded with some rich present, which I

should have the privilege of selecting myself. Little did they think that this was the last command that they would ever impose on their bewildered daughter; for, as soon as they were out of sight I began to make preparation to leave also, and with such pressing urgency and untiring zeal, that, by the next morning, I was nearly ready to start, and should have done so, if I had not heard that my uncle was so low that they could not leave him—a circumstance which seemed very much to favor my plans, and which I made use of to the greatest advantage; for it gave me time to complete all my arrangements with safety.

Having got everything ready against night, I took my bundle, which I had hid in the barn, in which I had an entire wardrobe of male attire, together with a pair of scissors, all tied up in a handkerchief, and proceeded to a small grove near by, where I deliberately cut off my hair, carefully rolled it up, shifted my whole dress, and, after a few moments' rest, which so extraordinary a change made necessary, I carefully rolled up all my former clothes, hair, scissors, and everything I had about me, that nothing should be left as a clue to what had become of me. I now, with trembling steps, proceeded toward the wharf, with my bundle suspended by a stick across my shoulder, in order to avoid suspicion. On the way, I met several persons whom I knew, and who were well acquainted with me, which quite alarmed me; but finding that they took no particular notice of me, I passed to the vessel, which I had learned was to sail that night for Portland. On going on board, I asked the captain, who was a little intoxicated, if I could get a passage. Being answered in the affirmative, I paid the fare out of means of which I had a bountiful supply. Always having been allowed money in a lavish manner, I had of my own nearly three hundred dollars, a great part of which I took with me, leaving a considerable sum in my drawer, as a blind, as no one about the house knew anything near what amount I had, so that it might seem that I had not gone far, or I would have taken my money.

Having succeeded thus far, I began to revive in my hopes, which well needed something to raise their despondency. I had forgotten, however, a very important item in my preparations, and should have been subjected to great difficulty, and probably danger, if I

had not accidentally overheard the mate ask the captain who that young man was who had just come on board; to which the captain replied: he did not know him nor his name, nor did he care whether he had a name or not, as he had got a good fat passage out of him; to which the mate replied:

"I must know his name, in order to enter it on my books; but as he has turned in, I will not disturb him until morning."

This conversation showed me that I had to have a new name, as well as a new dress, and that I had no time to lose in adopting one; and, after passing in review a list of several, I selected that of George Mead, which I have answered to ever since.

The vessel being now fairly under way, and beginning to pitch about by the agitation of the sea, I began to feel unusually sick, and not knowing what caused it, felt much alarmed, feeling sure that if I should now be taken sick, that an exposure was inevitable, and I should not only render myself ridiculous, but doubly miserable. I now began to relent my rash undertaking; for my sickness was increasing as we advanced, and I was compelled to resort to the side of the vessel to vomit, which the sailors, knowing that it was only sea sickness, made me the butt of what I thought very coarse jokes. On learning the cause of my sickness, I was somewhat relieved in mind, but not in body; for I consoled myself with the hope that it would soon be over, in which I was disappointed, for it lasted all night and a great part of the next day. We were, however, nearing our destined port, and the sea becoming smoother, my sickness subsided, and on the third day, I safely arrived in Portland.

I now took my bundle and went ashore, and was not a little perplexed to know what to do with it, as it contained an entire lady's dress, even to her hair; and should it by any means be discovered, might subject me to dangerous and critical suspicions, in which it would be difficult, if not impossible, to extricate myself, without exposure and disgrace. I should have thrown it overboard in the night; but having nothing to sink them, I did not do it, for fear of their being picked up and recognized. I soon, however, found a way to get rid of this trouble. I walked through the town, until I came to the outer verge, from whence I discovered a smoke in a



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wood adjoining, whither I repaired, and found an old log burning, where I deliberately reduced to ashes all the proud attire of my once loving self, even to my hair. I now returned to the city, and supplied myself with everything needed; went to a barber, an old black man, and got my hair trimmed as near to male appearance as possible, but could not but feel some misgivings at what fell from his lips while trimming my hair:

"You hab 'markable hair, fine as lady's," he said. He, however, fixed it up well, and was, I presume, unconscious of the truth of his remarks. Having fairly entered into the male life, my next object was to get advanced a little farther. To get into the army of Mexico, as a volunteer, was now my only ambition; but how to accomplish this was beyond my comprehension. Knowing the strict scrutiny observed by recruiting officers in mustering new recruits into the service, I did not feel like running the risk of such an ordeal; but it seemed there was no way to avoid it; and unless I could succeed in passing that critical point, all my labor was lost, and all my hopes blasted. I therefore attended several places where they were volunteering, and watched with intense anxiety every particular attending it. All seemed to be conducted with such extreme caution, that I was about to give up in despair of ever getting any farther, and was returning to my boarding-house, in a most dejected mood, when I was accosted by a young man who had just enlisted, and who was a little intoxicated.

"Young man," says he, "don't you want to go to Mexico? I have just signed the papers, and we only lack one more to make up our company; and we have got the best set of officers and the best men in all these diggin's. Come, pluck up courage, and go with us, and let us give them Mexicans h—."

I told him it was not for the want of courage or inclination that kept me from going, but that I feared they would not receive me, in consequence of a bad rupture.

"Now, stranger," said he, with an oath, "I got a man in to-day that was worse off than ever you are, and I can get you in without any difficulty at all."

I replied, that I could not see how it was to be done, for I saw yesterday several examined very closely, and two were rejected

"Well," says he, "if I don't get you mustered into the service without an examination, if you will go with me to-night, I will give you my ears."

I told him that I did not like to risk being rejected.

He told me to come along, and see for myself, and if I was not satisfied, I need not enlist.

I thought, perhaps, I might, by some fortunate accident, pass; so I concluded that I would go and see what the prospect of success might be. On arriving at the place of rendezvous, I discovered several officers, who appeared to be somewhat intoxicated, but otherwise of good appearance. The man with whom I went, stepped up to one of them, and said something, which I did not hear; upon which the officer advanced toward me, and asked me if I wished to volunteer. I told that I did not know as I did. He remarked that they had their company now full, lacking one, and he would be pleased to have me join them, which would make his company complete; that he was informed, by the man who came with me, that I feared I could not pass muster, in consequence of infirmity; but that if I was willing to enlist, and give him my word that I was clear of disease, and sufficiently able to perform regular duty, he would muster me in without any formal examination; with which I readily complied, and was regularly invested with the paraphernalia of the soldier.

On the succeeding day we left for Mexico; and now my hopes seemed to brighten with the prospect of seeing once more the object of my solicitude.

We had a pleasant voyage, save a turn of sea sickness, in which most of us participated. We were fifteen days from Portland to the mouth of the Rio Grand, from whence we were forwarded to General Taylor's head-quarters, who was busily engaged in making preparations to leave for Monterey.

I now eagerly embraced every opportunity of spying out William, but with no success. In every crowd I examined each individual with intense gaze, but no one answered for the one I sought. The army being now ready, took up its line of march toward the great city of Monterey, preparatory to an assault on that impregnable fortress; and, having become somewhat seasoned to my new life,

which seemed to be a dream of new visions, which were constantly passing in review before my excited mind, the drill, which all new recruits have to undergo, was painfully fatiguing, especially to one whose nerves had never been accustomed to any of the toils and hardships of life; but by dint of a dauntless resolution, and a keen anticipation of again beholding the one for whom I was making such unmitigated sacrifices, I was enabled to sustain myself against every obstacle. We were now steadily advancing toward a scene which, could it have been fully portrayed to our view, how many, even of veterans, in the profession of arms, would have shuddered at the appalling sight; but for wise, and to us mysterious purposes, the vast future is hid in obscurity.

Silently and slowly our little army advanced, seeming hardly formidable enough for an offering upon the altar of that magnificent and imposing castle, studded, as it was, with every conceivable magazine of destruction, and defended by a host triple in numbers to that which was about to invade it, and who were destined to wrench the palm of victory from its plumed defiance, in the great melee of death and carnage which was soon to follow.

Having reached the environs of this formidable barrier, our beloved commander commenced a most scrupulous reconnoissance; well knowing that the great disparity of means and force to those he was about to encounter, would require indomitable courage, as well as consummate skill, to carry on, successfully, a siege against such fearful odds. Every arrangement being completed, orders were given for each division to open the assault at their respective points; and I, who was, but a few weeks before, reclining on a sofa of exquisite ease, was now led up in that little but gallant band, to face a magazine charged with all the angry missiles of slaughter and death, which soon opened its realities, by belching forth its messengers in one continued blaze, which soon strewed the ground with its dead and wounded, while it filled the air with the shrieks of the dying. Our great leader, more careful of us than himself, was seen in the midst of this storm of iron hail, with a calm but fervid countenance, surveying the scene of havoc, dispensing his orders in cool and deliberate solicitude, inciting all, by his great example, to press for victory; while the eagle, the enchanting em-

blem of our country, perched its glittering form on Monterey's awful heights, and, with its most enraptured beauty, called with its well known notes of triumph, to Columbia's sons, to press through the fiery ordeal of surrounding death and carnage, and seize the palm of victory, which inherited her divinity. The well known notes of victory were soon echoed over that ensanguined field, and the sons of Montezuma's formidable hosts begged for quarter.

In all this murderous slaughter, I, although often deprived of my nearest comrades by death or wounds, escaped unhurt, which, when I reflect upon, I am hardly able to believe its realities. It seems like a miracle; for here was a strife which enlisted the soldier with all his fiery ardor, for not only his honor and country, but the safety and protection of his wife and children were at stake. When I hear, as I have often had the mortification to, and that from those whose position is too readily received for authority, that the commander-in-chief, instead of receiving the conditional surrender of that fortress, should have continued the murderous siege for an unconditional submission, it makes my very heart ache. With those who reason thus, I have no sympathy, and very little charity; for such can have but little judgment, and less humanity; for could they have beheld tottering age, harmless and inoffensive women, blooming virgins and helpless infancy, all devoted to one common destruction, from which it was impossible to escape, had the siege been protracted for such a result, they, unless possessed of the disposition of demons, would have rejoiced to honor a commander who was possessed of such a charm of mercy; and I do consider it one of the brightest laurels among the many which adorn the brow of General Taylor, that in the midst of such sanguinary strife, humanity was supreme.

After passing through such an exciting scene, we needed a little respite, which we were allowed to enjoy for a considerable time, although we were constantly drilled, which seemed to forebode further struggles, which proved but too true, for General Scott was preparing to advance toward the city of Mexico.

My first enlistment having expired without my realizing its object, I had again volunteered during the war, still in hopes of gaining some knowledge of the one for whom it was undertaken, which,

as yet, I had not been able to obtain, I, with many others, were now sent forward to join General Scott. In this I enjoyed a lively hope of succeeding in my wishes, which stimulated all my exertions, and rendered my situation more agreeable than formerly. My appearance also had so changed in every respect, that, with my tawny and bronzed face, disheveled hair, and enlarged and blistered hands—all of which I had purposely neglected, in order to hide the appearance of my sex—I was now unrecognizable. I had also succeeded in altering my voice to much coarser sounds; in fact, I was so entirely altered, that I question if my own mother would have known me. I had also acquired a considerable knowledge of my duty, and of the affairs of mankind. I had become enured to hardships, which, had I been told of before I left home, I should have either disbelieved or hesitated to undertake. But such is the hidden book of fate, that we are not allowed to see the following page until we read its realities.

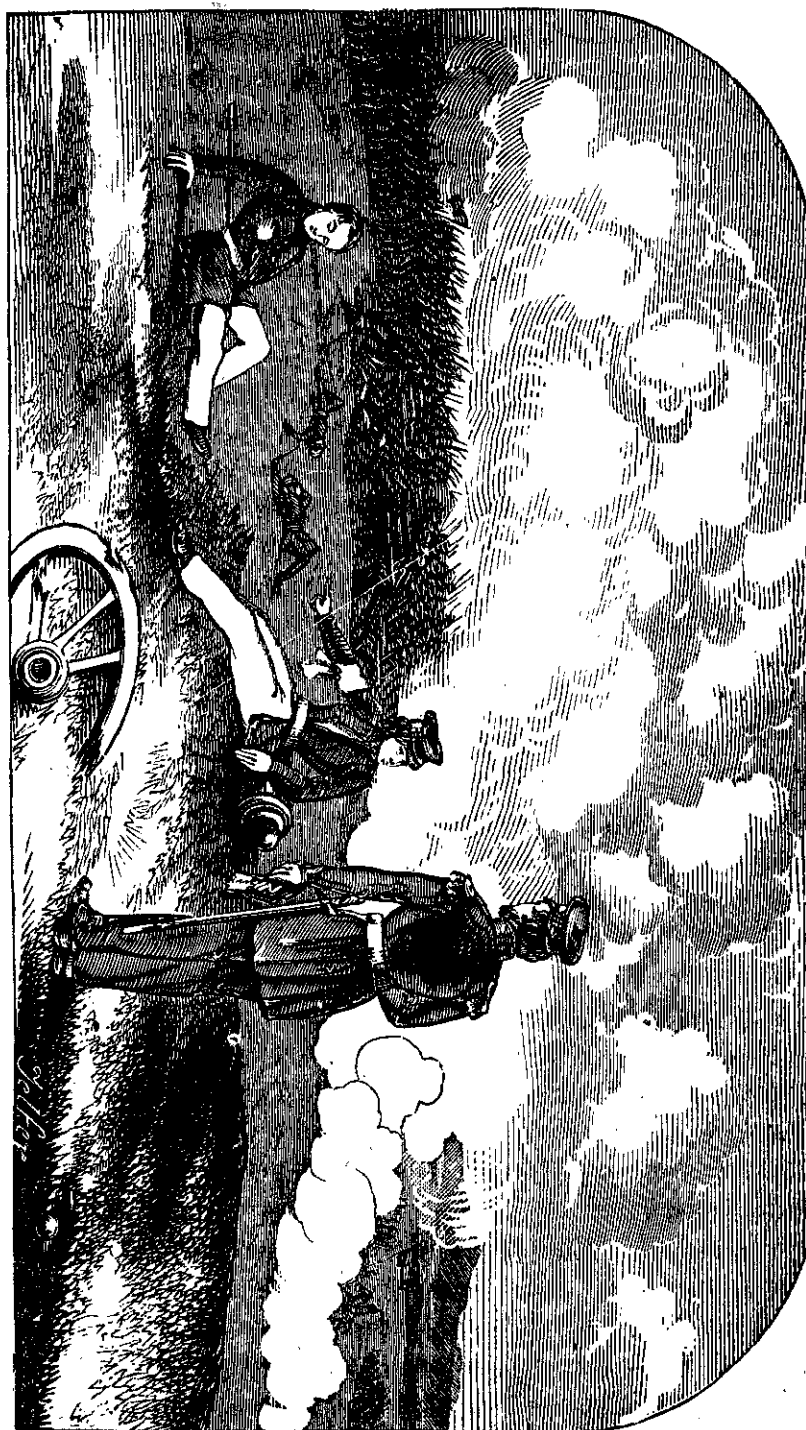
We were now put under marching orders, and started *en route* for the city of Mexico; which was attended with difficulties and consequences of the most trying nature and most serious results to many of us, myself among the rest. Our line being often beset with harassing guerilla parties, we were kept in constant motion, often having our men killed by these annoying squads, who appeared to be fighting on their own hook, and for plunder only; and they in return were brought to feel the unerring ball from our riflemen, who frequently made them bite the dust, where they were left to fester and decay without burial; for the Mexicans are very remiss in the rites of sepulture, often leaving whole fields of their dead unburied, as well as their wounded unattended—a striking contrast to the Americans, who often take pains to bring home their humblest citizens, and, with great solemnity, formally entomb them in the soil of their own country and homes.

I often had opportunities to see various regiments and squads of men on our march; and carefully examined every feature, but no one answered to my anxious hopes. Although we had several battles and skirmishes, yet I was in no one of moment, until we reached Cerro Gordo. There we were destined to purchase victory at its dearest rate; for here the tawny sons of Mexico, like the infuriated tiger

when he is roused from the den of his hungry whelps, had made their calculations to stay the onward tread of Columbia's chivalrous sons; here our proud eagle, as if to sanctify its destiny, was to be baptized in blood, and the palm of its triumph consecrated in a halo of glory; here, in a mantle of impenetrable fortresses, the Mexicans had resolved to arrest our further advances toward their sacred city; but here, again, the sons of freedom, led on by an Ajax, himself a host, were destined to wrench the bloody trophy from the tawny Mexicans; here, at the foot of Cerro Gordo's mount, his little band of devoted followers were led up against this magazine of death, which soon opened its bellowing thunder, and sent its messengers of destruction thick among the assailants. Our serried ranks, though constantly lessened by death and wounds, still advanced against this appalling scene, leaving, as they progressed, many of their comrades weltering in their gore; and I, who had been left nearly alone, by my companions being swept down in this torrent of carnage, now received a severe cut in the left arm by a Mexican sword, which so disabled me that I was obliged to retire for a few moments to staunch the blood. After wrapping a handkerchief around my arm, which checked the flow of blood, I heard the enchanting notes of victory sounded by the assailants over that ensanguined field, and saw our beloved flag, though dripping with blood, floating proudly over those formidable heights. The shout of victory, which was heard all over that bloody field, was soon hushed by a noise less welcome and more thrilling—that of the wounded and dying, who were now sending up their hideous moans for relief.

I was among the first who were carried to the eminence selected by the surgeons to give temporary relief to the wounded. The great loss of blood consequent on my wound rendered me fearful that I might be deprived of consciousness, and thus might become exposed. I requested one of the attendants to bind a cloth around my arm; as soon as this was done I was in a measure relieved; the loss of blood, however, had weakened me so much, and produced such a desire to sleep, that I could scarcely keep my eyes open. While plunged in this dreamy, half conscious state, in which I saw and heard all that was transpiring around me, but yet all appeared

"As he spoke he gave me a cordial, which in some degree restored my strength. I begged him to attend to the poor fellow he had just left. He returned to the wounded man."—Page 29.



more like a dream than reality—the sound of a voice, a short distance from me, inquiring whether his wound was dangerous or not, although I had not heard that voice before for months, I instantly recognized it—it penetrated to my very soul and brought me instantly to my feet. The surgeon noticing my wild and excited appearance, left the one I was most anxious he should attend to, and approached me, saying, “poor fellow, the excitement and loss of blood have been too much for him.” As he spoke he gave me a cordial, which restored to me, in some degree, my strength and self-control.—I begged him to leave me, and attend to the poor fellow he had just left, as he stood in much greater need of his assistance than I did. He returned to the wounded man. It would be impossible to convey the faintest idea of the agonized suspense with which I waited the reply of the surgeon to William’s inquiry, “whether his wound was mortal or not.”—At length the surgeon, having finished his examination, replied, “No, my good fellow, your wound is a severe one, but not mortal—it is in a dangerous place—but did not penetrate deep enough to cause death; in a short time, with proper care and attention, you will be well again.”

Oh, with what rapture did these few words inspire my mind! Suffering as I then was with my own wound, I was hardly conscious of any pain. The surgeon, having finished dressing the wounds of William, immediately commenced on mine, and, after closely examining it, remarked that it was not dangerous, but, in consequence of the sword with which it was made being used with such force, it had severed some important blood-vessels, causing great loss of blood. It would, he said, be some time before I should again be fit for duty, but, with proper care, I should soon be free from any pain. He then dressed it, and left me.

Here, then, after so much pain and anxiety to find, or even get any intelligence of my long lost William, and all but despairing of ever seeing him, behold in what a wonderful and thrilling scene he is placed before my astonished eyes, as if fortune was sporting with our affections. As if in doubt of their reality, it at one time severs us, as if in wrath at our insincerity, and condemns us to wander in wretchedness and despair; again, it brings us together

in one of the most terrific scenes of strife and blood, in which we both participate, and stain the same field with our blood; and then we have our wounds dressed at the same place, by the same surgeons. How mysterious! how astonishing!

Our army having completely routed the enemy, and driven him from his stronghold, proceeded on toward the city, while William and I, with a host of other wounded soldiers, were left to follow as soon as we should be able. Our surgeons, who were genteel and affable men, paid every attention to the wounded, and soon had many of them fast improving, among whom were myself and William, for it turned out that neither of our wounds were as bad as first reputed. His was a cut through the flank of the body, just above the hip, which, although severe, was not dangerous, and was soon in a healing state; mine was a cut on the left arm, below the elbow, reaching to the bone, but not injuring it.

Our army having proceeded on toward Mexico, the sick and wounded were to follow as soon as their health and wounds would justify, as it was expected that every one that could possibly stand fatigue would be needed in the great drama that was anticipated. My wound was slight, but being on my left arm, was considered by the surgeon to have enfeebled it so much, that it would require some time to restore it sufficiently for me to be able to take the field in active service; he therefore made me a sort of steward, or assistant, to wait on the sick and wounded, until I should acquire sufficient strength to perform regular duty. I was therefore attached to the corps composed of the most convalescent, who were soonest to follow the army. Accordingly, a heavy train of that description was soon ordered to move forward, and I was again so soon to separate from my idol; but, owing to my feeble situation, and the rapid progress of the army, I was in none of the hard-fought battles which succeeded, before we reached the city, and then in only a small street skirmish after the city had surrendered.

General Scott, after a brilliant succession of battles and victories had now full possession of the great city of the Montezumas. He commenced to organize his civil police, which, owing to the mad-dened frenzy of some of the Mexicans, was obliged to be sustained with much caution and some severity. As a guard against treach-

ery, with which the Mexican character abounds, he quartered a considerable number of his soldiers, by permission of the owners, in private houses, especially the sick and wounded. In one of these, a large elegant mansion, it fell to my lot to be placed, with two others, who were invalids. Soon after this, the rear train of the wounded arrived, who were distributed about among those who had preceded them; and, as if fate was trying its hand at freaks of incidents, William was sent to the house where I was quartered, of whom I had not seen nor heard since I left him, confined with wounds at Cerro Gordo.

At his unexpected appearance, I was not a little surprised, but, fortunately, was enabled to overcome it without any one noticing my embarrassment. He had got nearly well of his wounds, and appeared somewhat cheerful, although, for the most of his time, he was dejected and silent—so much so, that I was exceedingly anxious to know the cause, but did not dare to converse with him, for fear of discovery. I at length had my curiosity gratified in a most singular manner: The gentleman with whom we stayed, and who owned the mansion, whose name, we learned, was Don Alfonso, had, for his family, a wife (a very lady-like woman) and two daughters, exquisitely beautiful for Mexican ladies, aged, as near as I could judge, about eighteen and twenty, who appeared to have enjoyed superior advantages of education and refinement, and were heiresses of a princely fortune, as everything appertaining to them amply showed. They had, it seemed to me, taken a deep interest in my welfare and comfort, by anticipating and supplying my simplest wants—so much so that, at times, I feared they suspected my sex, which gave me great uneasiness, and which was noticed by my fellow-comrades, even to jealousy, who, I was satisfied by their jokes, had no such mistrusts, for they would frequently joke me about my being captured by these charming senoritas, and feared they would have to leave me behind when they left for home. This, I feared, might be carried so far in some way as to lead to my exposure, for my great anxiety was to keep as far as possible from attracting the attention of any one; but here was a kindness, which I could not account for, but which was soon revealed to me in the following circumstances: Their atten-

tions appeared to be getting, as every one could see, interesting even to fondness, which, by its peculiar modesty, showed that it was a grand mistake that Cupid had made with these confiding young ladies, by sending his dart into the hearts of them for one of their own sex, as what follows will show.

One afternoon, while we were brushing up to take a walk, and when all had left the room but me, the father of the young ladies entered the door, and wished me to walk into his room. So unexpected and singular a request quite disconcerted me; but the invitation was so polite and friendly, that I could not well decline it. I therefore reluctantly followed him to his room, which was a spacious and costly apartment, filled with the richest furniture, in which his lady was reclining on a brilliant sofa, and beside her their two daughters, decorated in all the magnificence of an Eastern Court. The scene was so dazzling, that I hardly knew whether I was in the body or out. His lady, seeing my embarrassment, arose, and, taking me by the hand, led me to a seat, remarking (for they could all speak English) that I need not be alarmed, for I was among my friends. What was to be the result of this extraordinary farce (for I can call it nothing else) was more than I could divine, although its consequences I greatly feared. After a few moments' pause the old gentleman took a seat near me, and addressed me in as nearly the following language as I can recollect:

"My young friend," said he, "our respective countries are at war, and, as dutiful citizens, we are compelled to defend the rights and honor of our flag; but between you and I, as individuals, I presume and hope there is no unfriendly feeling. With me there is none, but, on the contrary, I have been pleased to have it in my power to render your stay as congenial and happy to your feelings and wants as possible, and would be happy if I could by any honorable inducements, secure your sojourn with us for an indefinite period. I am blessed with ample means to secure you comfort and competence, and no pecuniary consideration shall be withheld which would render your rank and happiness complete. If you could be induced to stay with me a year or more, and take charge of, and manage my affairs, you shall be rewarded by whatever sum you may please to name; and when you have fully considered of the proposition, and

made up your mind, you will please to make it known in a letter, which you may hand to either of my daughters (pointing to them, who were still in the room), and at all times you may consider my house your home, with full liberty of ingress and egress."

Here was a dilemma, and the great difficulty was how to escape it without being caught in its meshes. That the daughters had had some hand in all this could not now well be doubted, and to come out of such a difficulty unscathed and untarnished, and retain the confidence and good-will of my friendly host and his family, was, I feared, not easily to be done; but as I was allowed time for consideration and reflection, I concluded to use it to the best advantage. I therefore thought it best, for the present, to appear as friendly and sociable as formerly, and see what effect it would have on the daughters, and if they made any particular advances, to meet them with answers that would induce them to believe that I was otherwise partially engaged. I soon found that the solicitude of my interesting senioreta was keenly excited in my behalf; so much so, that they made bold to ask me what I thought of their father's propositions. I told them I thought them very generous and friendly, especially to a stranger, but that my situation was such, that I feared it would be out of my power to embrace them without dishonor, and that I knew that neither they nor their father would desire me to do anything dishonorable, to which they both readily assented; and, if they had stopped here, I should have felt much relieved, but they had quite a curiosity to know what the great obstacles were. I told them that I was young, and had left my aged and loving parents, who would sorely grieve if I did not return. But all this did not seem to do. Was there not some lovely senioreta, to whom I was more attached than to my parents? An answer to this I purposely evaded, hoping by this to excite a modest sympathy—acknowledging, at the same time, the great respect I had for them and their parents, for the many kind attentions I had received at their hands; and if there was anything in which I could serve them, in return for their goodness, consistent with honor, it would be my greatest pleasure to do so: telling them, moreover, that I knew a young gentleman, now staying at their house, of the most amiable and lovely disposition, a perfect model of

honor, integrity and virtue—one whom I thought a queen might feel proud to honor with her hand. This seemed to have some effect, and, to excite their curiosity to know whom I meant, I told them it was the young gentleman they called William. One of them immediately replied, that she had thought very highly of him ever since he had been at their house, but he appeared so still and reserved, that she dared not speak to him. I told her I would, with great pleasure, introduce him to her, in whom I thought she could not but be delighted; and, if it would be agreeable to her wishes, I would give her an introduction that evening, to which she modestly nodded her assent. Accordingly, after supper, the young ladies having retired to their room, which was an adjoining one to ours, I said to William:

"Let us walk in and see the ladies; I believe they have some fine fruit, and I think we might share with them in some of their luxuries."

William, naturally unassuming, did not seem inclined to go; he thought it would be an intrusion. I told him not in the least; that I thought, if we were civil, we would be quite welcome. He asked me if I was going. I told him I was, and would like his company. He replied, if I thought we should not be intruding too much on their goodness, he would be willing to accompany me. I told him that I would risk all that, and requested him to lay aside all fears on that account. I started toward the door, which was a little open. William reluctantly followed; and, as we entered the room, the young ladies arose, and, with great politeness, met us. I formally introduced Mr. Billings to the Misses Don Alfonso, who wished us to be seated, and with much pleasantry, entered into a social chat. After sitting until I had got William into familiar conversation, I got up, and remarked that I would go in and see the old folks a few minutes, which I did in order to leave them in full possession of their prize, and to keep him from thinking that I had returned to our room. After having been some little time returned, I stepped William, who appeared not a little surprised at finding me there, and accused me of playing a trick upon him. I told him that I intended no disrespect to him; that I believed the young ladies to whom I had introduced him to be as fine, virtuous and respectable ladies as any in the States; in addition to

that, they were wealthy; and I believed that any young man who could have a proper affection for them, would do well to get one of them for a wife. To which he replied, with some warmth, that he would think himself degraded in his own eyes, and in the eyes of all honorable and virtuous people, if he could be guilty of such abject baseness as to trifle, not only with their affections and happiness, but with his own. Having now excited his feelings as far as I dared to venture, I inquired why he would think himself degraded by paying a little attention to one of these beautiful *senoritas*. Had he left behind him any one to grieve for his inconstancy? To which he, with an emphasis, replied, no, he had left no one who would doubt, for a moment, his fidelity, or who would grieve for anything but his absence and safety. Then, I presumed, he had left some lovely *senorita*, who, even in this foreign land, held a place in his affections that eclipsed the charms of these wealthy beauties.

To this he rejoined, in a very serious and feeling manner:

"George, believing you to be a candid and honorable fellow, and not disposed to cause me any unhappiness, I will confide to you a secret known but to myself, and the one now doubtless pining in lonely grief. An attachment, as fervent as it is real, exists between me and as lovely and beautiful a young lady as ever inhaled the air, and who, if you could behold for a moment, you would own should be a sufficient guard against the danger of becoming enamored with any other. Between her and my unworthy self exist the most solemn vows of affection and constancy, never to be severed or canceled but by death itself. Now, what would you think of me—nay, what could I think of myself—if I could be capable, on account of distance, or any other cause, of trifling with such vows, with such perfection, in which not only my own happiness is involved, but hers who is to me so precious? No, never; in prosperity or adversity, in my own or a foreign land, can I for a moment entertain the most distant thought of any other; and thus, I confide this secret to you, in the most confidential manner, with a hope and trust that you will never again entertain a thought that my mind can in the least waver, nor even anticipate, as many find it convenient to do, that I have the least fears of her fidelity. I hope,

in future, should we chance to continue together, that your generosity will spare me the pain of even being joked about any other. However exalted or beautiful they may seem to you, to me they can have no charms."

This, which had grown out of seemingly a fortuitous accident, afforded me the keenest joy. My great regret and pain was, that I could not reciprocate and share in it, by presenting to his bosom the object of his lofty affections; but, denied this, I could only enjoy the sweet satisfaction in silent emotion.

For some time, General Scott and others, authorized by the President, had been making overtures of peace to the Mexican authorities, which were at length crowned with success, and the joyful news of peace was soon heralded to the army, which was received with the greatest demonstrations of rejoicing, not only by the American soldier, who viewed it as a harbinger of happiness, in which he would share the honor and welcome of a speedy return to his home and friends, with the rewards of all his toils and sufferings in the cheerful smiles and embraces of those who were waiting so anxiously for his return, but by the Mexican, who was relieved of the annoyance and disgrace of an invading and conquering army, who were holding possession of the capital of their country.

Our army was now all bustle, in making preparations for their departure for home, in which I felt the deepest solicitude. How I was to get back, assume my proper sex, and accomplish the all-absorbing object of my heart, and for which I had risked so much, was hid in the womb of the impenetrable future. Having addressed a note to the young ladies, politely declining the generous offer of their father, I and the rest of my comrades took up our line of march for the seaboard, from whence we took passage to New Orleans, and from thence to New York, where we were regularly discharged and paid off.

And now I began to contemplate upon my future prospects, and, how to realize the hopes I had so long and painfully indulged in, and which now seemed to promise a speedy consummation. After being discharged, and getting our money, it was proposed by some that we should go and take a parting drink, as a token of our

friendly separation. To this I felt a great repugnance, but could not well avoid it, as I felt anxious to see William on his way home, in order to shape my future course of conduct. The liquor was produced, as I shall ever believe, by some designing villain, who had mingled some hidden substance in it, to excite an unusual glow of feelings, for, after they had all drank of it save myself, every one seemed to be taken in the wildest enthusiasm. Even William, who had always been so modest and reserved, was now, with the rest, excited to frenzy, and was repeating my real name in the greatest ecstasies. He stepped up to me and said:

"George, we will soon see our sweethearts. What makes you so down? Come, give us a toast to yours."

I told him I did not feel like it just then. While this scene was going on, I noticed two genteelly-dressed men in the room, with very flattering manners, who sat down to a table, and began playing cards, which soon attracted the attention of this excited crowd, nearly all of whom, as I presume is generally the case with soldiers and sailors, were acquainted with its games, and now thought themselves invincible. In this evil and portentous hour, the destroyer came, as if to dash to the ground my every hope, and leave me bereft of every earthly prospect; for William, with others, was induced to stake money on his skill, while these demons seemed cautious of betting, at least any large amount, letting the others win until they had fully entrapped them, and satisfied their excited credulity that they were great hands in the art. This induced William and others of our company to make larger bets; and, thinking he could make a large sweep, and triumph at once, William staked a hundred dollars, nearly all he had, on a single game. And now my fears and anxieties were wrought up to the highest pitch, for I believed it to be a snare laid to swindle them out of their money, which proved too true. The game was played and William was filched out of all his dear-bought earnings. The accomplished villain had won the stake, and was stuffing it into his yawning pockets, the sight of which seemed almost too much for my giddy brain to bear, and so confused me that I had almost resolved to go to William and disclose to him my whole history, and risk all consequences. Again, I feared that it would only disquiet him,

and make my case more hopeless, and render my ruin inevitable. Here was a trial, which called for my greatest fortitude. I concluded to wait, and see what would be the result, for I found some half-dozen more of the soldiers had shared the same fate, whose pockets had been emptied in the same way, all of whom were now returning to a sense of their situation, and began to reflect with severity on the scoundrels who had robbed them of their all, and who now, as a matter of personal safety, left the house. Various conjectures were now had as to what course they should take. To return home without money, after so long an absence, they could not think of, and to stay here, they had not the means hardly to pay a week's board. Some proposed one thing, some another; and, among the rest, one proposed to go to California, where there was plenty of gold, and where they could soon retrieve all their misfortunes, and return with a load of riches. This was a chilling sound to my ears, and I interposed every objection—the dangers of the voyage, a sickly climate, and want of means to get there; but all did no good; for, driven to desperation, without money, they were ashamed to return in rags to their friends. William seemed unusually dejected at his situation, and I would gladly have relieved him if I had dared; but, finding they had all determined on a trip to that far-off land, in which William was as resolute as the rest, I could see no way to prevent it, without great danger to my own safety. I was doomed, therefore, to grieve in silence. Trial and adversity seemed to make me a target of its most wanton sport, overshadowing me in its clouds so deep that I could not discern its wrath until it burst upon me; and now the misty future was veiled in impenetrable gloom. What course to take I knew not. Submission to fate, alone, was all that offered any consolation.

A vessel was soon found, nearly ready to sail for that remote and unknown country, which sent up nothing but forebodings of despair to me. They, being unable to pay their passage, had agreed to assist the crew on the voyage out; and, after arriving in the gold region, each one was to work until he had obtained five hundred dollars, beside paying for their board, and after that, they would be at liberty to work for themselves. On the third day from the time

they first formed their determination, the vessel sailed, and I had the bitter pang of seeing fade from my view that ill-fated vessel, in which were all I held dear on earth, bound to a port which she and a great part of her unfortunate inmates were destined never to reach, while I was left behind, in despairing agony.

PART SECOND.

"Had Heaven but tongues to speak, as well
As starry eyes to see,
Oh, think what tales 't would have to tell
Of wandering youths like me."

BEING now left destitute of everything on which I could hang a hope, by the departure of the one in whom all my happiness was staked, to return home would be defeat and disgrace; to stay here was certain destruction. I therefore, day and night, was racked with the most intense suffering to know what course to take, and finally came to the conclusion, that, as I had already been much exposed to difficulties and dangers, and had so far escaped, I might as well go a little further, and, if lost, it could be no worse—for the mourning for me was past; the bell had sounded its last solemn dirge, and I was, to all but my William, numbered with the dead. These thoughts and visions so haunted me, that I finally resolved to follow the track of him I had so long pursued, and, in accordance with this resolution, I sought the wharf, where several vessels were then fitting out for the Pacific, and soon concluded a bargain with one to take me as a passenger, by paying two hundred dollars down, and acting as steward of the vessel on her passage out, and serve a stipulated time, or pay the Captain three hundred dollars within sixty days after our arrival at California, with the privilege of taking a certain amount of freight, at a fair price, of such articles as I thought I should need after my arrival at the mines. Having concluded these preliminaries, I set about preparing myself for this uncertain enterprise.—I laid in a plentiful supply of provisions, clothing, boots, shoes, &c., with several pairs of blankets and mattresses, a good lot of cooking utensils, and some tools to work with. Having made all the purchases of things that I had got a gentleman

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to give me a memorandum of which I was able, and thought I should need, and had got them on board of the vessel, which was a brig of about two hundred tons' burthen, we set sail, having on board, in all, forty-three persons, viz: the captain and mate, eight hands as seamen, a cook, who was a black man, a steward and cabin boy, who was, I think, the captain's nephew called him uncle, and thirty passengers. Having got out to sea, we were many of us visited with sea-sickness, which, however, was soon over, and only served to make us the healthier after it ceased. We laid our course south, and were soon again receding from our native land, and tossing about upon that stormy element which has its own peculiarities of storm and calm; but nothing remarkable took place until we reached near the equator, where we encountered a severe gale, losing one of our topmasts in its fury. We were now again stretching our course with rapid flight, and as it increased the distance between ourselves and friends, it also increased our anxieties for them. We were now approaching the southern verge of this great continent in trying to double whose cape many a brave tar has found a watery grave. Situated in a high latitude, and where two great oceans meet, and are constantly battling for supremacy, it is almost incessantly attended with terrific storms and desolating tornadoes. We were now about to try our puny bark in this unequal strife. Twice we entered the conflict, and as often had to retreat, for it seemed as if the elements were now making a last desperate struggle for the mastery. The wind seemed to have broke loose from the fiat of the Almighty, and was raising its bellowing shouts of victory. The ocean, as if conscious of its innate strength, and enraged at its formidable rival, was sending up its howling shafts, as if determined to lash the winds into subjection. Our captain fearing another attempt to double the cape in the present agitated state of the sea, concluded to try a passage through the Straits of Magellan, into which we entered; and when we had got, as we supposed, about half way through, we came in sight of a wreck. On approaching it, we found it to be the bark "Omo." She lay with her stern about a third out of water, with her head and midships completely submerged and out of sight, and on the shore, at a considerable distance, was a lonely

group of what proved to be the remnant of her ill-fated crew, who were making every effort to attract our notice. They were so famished and worn down by hunger and distress as to be unable to approach us, or make noise enough to be heard. We now came to, and sent our boat ashore to see what relief could be afforded to these distressed sufferers.

And here was a sight that defies description! Here were twelve only, out of sixty-two, left to tell the tale of agonizing woe, almost as painful of themselves as of those who were sleeping the sleep of death in their watery graves. Although they had met death in its most horrid form, yet they were quiet in its arms, and beyond the vicissitudes of mortal strife; while those who were left, as if singled out for wretchedness and misery, were calling on its kind embrace to put an end to their insupportable suffering. And here, among this haggard crew, was William, hardly conscious of life, or a desire to enjoy it. Here, again, my fortitude was put to a trial which cannot be described, to see the one so dear to my heart all but in the throes of death, from famine and fatigue, and whom I dared not relieve—dared not single out with any marks of kindness or attention from the rest—lest I should expose myself. All being carefully taken aboard of our vessel, they were asked many questions, which, from excitement and weakness, they were unable to answer; but one of them held up four fingers, and gave us to understand that there was that number more on the shore. We sent a company of twelve men, well armed, in search of them, who were gone several hours, and who returned late in the evening, without being able to make any discovery of the men, or even a trace of the course they had taken. It was therefore concluded to lay by until morning, and take an early start, and make a more thorough search. Accordingly on the following morning, twenty men, well armed, left our vessel, in search of these unfortunate men, who divided into two companies, and took different directions, in order, if possible, to learn something of their fate, with orders that, if either company should make any discoveries, to discharge a gun, as a signal to the others. About one o'clock one of the companies fired a gun, having come upon some bones of the human body near a valley, and, on searching around, and descending into the ravine, found, as they

supposed, nearly all the scattered bones and limbs of the four lost men, which seemed to have been stripped and devoured but a short time before, by what kind of animals they could not determine; but, from every appearance, it must have been by animals of inferior size, as some of the smaller bones were whole. It would seem, as the greatest probability, that these unfortunate creatures had wandered so far, in their anxiety for food, that they had got bewildered, and took the wrong course, and, being overtaken by night, had descended into this hollow for safety and shelter, and not being able to ascend the high ground again, were doomed there to perish; or that they were attacked by wild animals, and were unable to make any defense, in consequence of their weakness. Our other company, not hearing our gun, did not come to us, and, fearing we should be late getting back to the vessel, we collected all the remains we could find, and covered them as well as we could, and left them to molder in this remote and dreary land, and hastened back to our vessel, which was discharging guns to let us know our course, which was of great service to us, as it was some time after night before we reached it, the other company having arrived before us. Thus perished a part of that ill-fated crew in the most agonizing of all deaths, that of starvation, and whose flesh had satiated the less hungry maws of devouring animals in a remote land. Those whom we had taken on board were carefully attended to; and here my position as steward became one of great delicacy, and required all my prudence to manage without discovering a partiality; for these unfortunate sufferers had been so long without food, that it required the utmost care to administer it to them with safety, for, if left to them to take what their burning appetites demanded, they would soon suffer a death as horrid as that of starvation. They had to be nursed and fed like the emaciated patient whom fever has brought to a ghastly skeleton, and whom the cautious physician dares only to gratify with the smallest morsels at a time. But, by great care and attention, they all began to improve, and the second day, in passing among them, William looked to me in astonishment, and exclaimed:

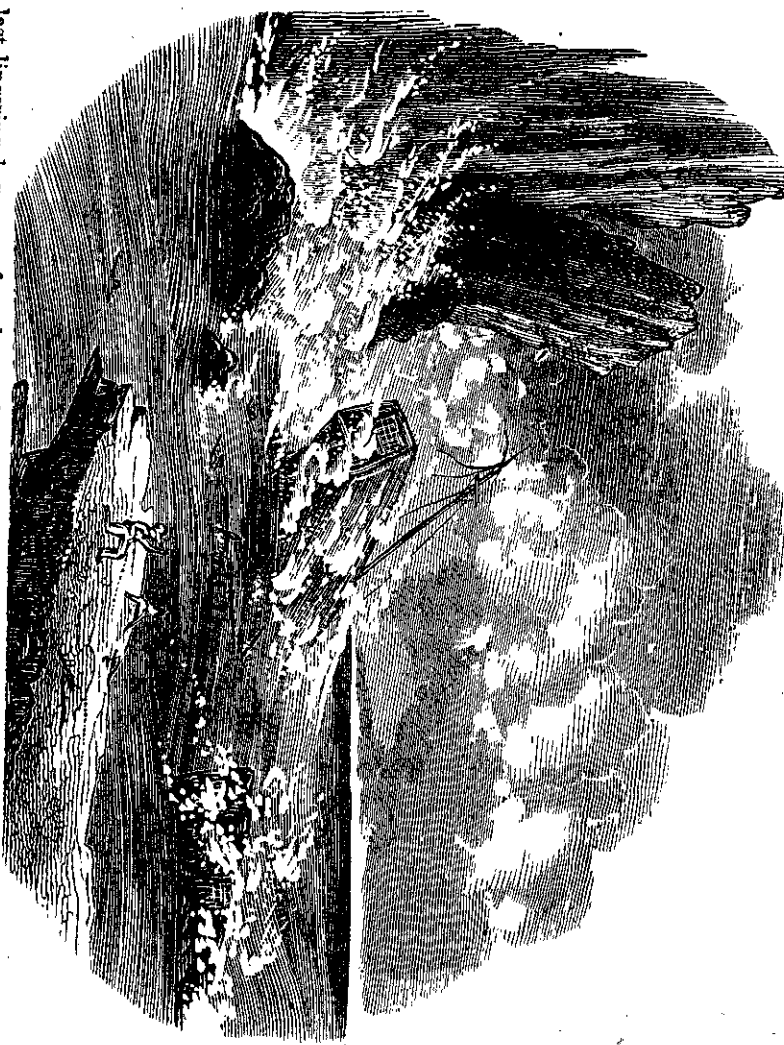
“Why, George, where did you come from? How, in the name of heaven, came you here? Oh, George, I know you are my

friend—do, for heaven's sake, give me something to eat!—give me only a little! Oh, George, do, and I will serve you as long as I live."

Such moving entreaties, especially from him, seemed more than I could endure, but I was obliged to disobey. By these precautionary measures, they were all, in a few days, able to be up and take care of themselves, and to give an account of their awful disaster, which was minutely taken down by me, and which was as follows, as related by one of their number, named Thomas Acron, a seaman, all the officers having been lost at the time the disaster occurred:

"We left New York in the bark Omo, bound to California, with sixty-two souls on board, in all, and, after a tolerable run, made Cape Horn, as near as I can recollect, about two weeks ago, when, as it was blowing quite a gale, and the captain not being a great seaman, concluded not to go round, but to try a passage through the Straits of Magellan. As he had heard of vessels going through them, he thought it the safest course; and, after two days' struggling with a boisterous sea, we were proceeding with a fair wind, when we struck a reef of rocks with such violence, that it prostrated all on deck, and, leveling our masts fore-and-aft, we went on the breakers. In the forepart of the day, our bows seemed to have passed over on a high sea, which immediately fell, before we had time to clear the reef, and she settled down her stern upon the highest part of the rocks. Her bow, being stove in, immediately filled and went down, leaving her stern in the position she now is. The next sea made a complete breach over her, and swept the deck of every man on it. How many were below I know not, but presume that all, whether few or many, are still engulfed in her awful tomb. Of those who were on deck, and washed overboard, sixteen only reached this inhospitable shore. Being cast upon this dreary coast, without food, or any implements by which we could help ourselves, or a rag of clothes, save what we had on, we examined the wreck, to see if we could procure anything from that; but soon saw, with the keenest despair, the last lingering hope forsake us, for the vessel had gone down bow-foremost, and gone to pieces, all except the stern, which was lodged on the rocks out of the reach of

"Our last lingering hope now forsook us: the vessel had gone down bow-foremost, except the stern which was lodged on rocks out of reach of the tide: our boats having gone to pieces, we were completely cut off, and left to anticipate with horror, a fate of starvation or massacre by the natives."—Pages 40, 41.



the tide—so that she must have gone on in a very high sea at the top of high water. Our boats being all stove to pieces, our access to the vessel, even if we could have got anything out, was now completely cut off, and we were left to anticipate, with horror, a fate of starvation, or a massacre by the natives, if any there should be, and to serve as food for the inhuman cannibals who are known to inhabit these regions. In view of our gloomy situation, and the fearful prospects before us, we concluded to look about, and see if we could discover any inhabitants, or anything that we could procure for food; but, not daring to venture far, we could see no traces of any human being, nor anything which looked like animal life, save a few rabbits, and these we had no way to get. Having spent the day in fruitless toils to find something to allay our hunger, we fixed, as well as we could, a place to lodge in. By raking up trash, in imitation of the hog, we collected some fuel, and by means of some matches, which one of us accidentally had in his pocket, we raised a fire, which we found necessary in the night, for, although the days were warm enough to be comfortable, yet the nights were quite cool, it being in the month of February. Our hunger, which, by the next day, had become acute, we tried to allay by every conceivable means, but all to no purpose. We thought of trying to procure fish, and built a little wing-dam of rocks along in the edge of the water, and felt the greatest joy at seeing some fine fish in our trap, but when the tide fell, it took them all with it—so we had the mortification of seeing them all disappear, when we thought them almost within our grasp. Finding our hunger too painful to wait this uncertain process, we started out, in hopes of finding some game. We succeeded, by turning up stones and old wood, in getting some toads and snails, which we carefully divided by pulling them in pieces and eating them alive. We again returned to our stopping-place, and passed another sorrowful night. We concluded, for the sake of safety, to keep a watch, by turns, for fear of some surprise or accident in the night. At length, day dawned upon our miseries, and we immediately started in quest of food. Water we could find in abundance, which we often indulged in too freely. We now ransacked the shore in search of something to

stay our hunger, and sometimes one would find a clam, another a crawfish, another snails or worms; but all were so scanty that they did not seem to satisfy our craving appetites, for, on being equally divided, they seemed to be hardly a taste. We continued our searches and sufferings, getting perceptibly weaker every day, until our raging appetites became so painful, that we began to fear the consequences, and concluded we would start out, the following day, in companies of four each, and take different directions, and see if we could not either find something to eat, or some inhabitants. Accordingly, early in the morning, we divided into four companies, of four in each company, in different directions, enjoining upon each other to be careful not to get lost, or go so far that we could not get back by night; and after mingling our most anxious prayers for success and safe return, we separated; and alas! one of our little companies, for causes to us unknown, never returned. Whether they got so far off that their feeble strength could not bring them back, or whether they had been met and killed by savages, or what had been their fate, was, and probably forever will be, unknown. After the other companies had returned, and waited some time, we set to hallooing with all the strength we had, hoping they might hear us, and answer us, or come to us, but no one answered or returned. The next morning was a sad and melancholy one. We held a consultation what to do next. It was finally concluded that we were doomed here to perish, and that it was our duty to prepare for the sad event, as far as in us lay, by prayer to Him who only could save. After this solemn appeal, we concluded to go out, each company a short distance, and see if we could find any substance that would mitigate our sufferings. We started, but were so feeble we concluded to return, having taken nothing but water. After returning to camp, we found ourselves too feeble to stand watch, and were obliged to risk our fate in the arms of sleep, which the gnawings of hunger often disturbed. In the morning, we found ourselves fast sinking, and did not attempt to leave our place of lodging for the day, expecting some, and, perhaps, all of us would be numbered, before morning, with the sleeping dead. In this, however, we were permitted to be disappointed, for the day again

came, and found us all alive, and before it closed, we had our present merciful deliverance, having been, as near as we can calculate, about ten days since our vessel was lost."

And now, having got through the Straits into the great Pacific Ocean, without any further difficulty, we stood down its coast toward our destined port, having, in addition to our own crew, the unfortunates we had rescued from destruction. Nothing remarkable occurred in this last part of our voyage, and we safely arrived at San Francisco, and anchored in its harbor, among the thousands already there. Soon we began to prepare for digging gold, and, as I had plenty of provisions and tools, and was situated similar to William and two others of those we had saved of the crew of the Omo, and having an anxiety to keep as near to, and assist him in every consistent way that I could, without discovery, I proposed to one of them, Thomas Acron, that, as he and several others, by their late disaster, were now destitute, and were now fully absolved from all obligations to the vessel they had sailed in, that, if they, to the number of three, were disposed to join with me, and help to discharge the obligations I was under to the captain of the vessel which I came out in, I would furnish tools, provisions, and everything I had, against it, and that we would, after paying that debt, share equally in whatever we might obtain afterward. To which he replied, that he considered it a very generous offer, and, on his part, would gladly accept it, and had no doubt but that the others would be equally thankful, whom he would see, and consult immediately. Soon after, he came with the other two, William Billings and Isaac Cown, and stated to them what I had proposed, both of whom, with the utmost gratitude, embraced the contract, and we now began, in good earnest, to prepare for gold-digging. As the vessel, on board of which my things were, would be likely to stay in the harbor some length of time, we concluded to take some provisions and tools, and make a small reconnoissance in the gold region, before landing it all. Having provided ourselves with some provisions, sufficient to last several days, together with some tools, we started early in the morning for the gold region, and, with sanguine expectations, we traveled up and down, over hill and dale, in search of the glittering deity, digging at every place which to us

looked like the place where the idol treasure was hidden; but alas! we failed to be greeted with any of its charms, and, after spending the whole day, without even stopping to eat, we had the mortification of being obliged to take up our lodgings as poor as we started in the morning, and much less sanguine in our anticipations. We struck up a fire, and made our evening meal, and laid our weary limbs upon the ground, which the fatigues of the day soon overcame with sleep. Early on the following morning, as soon as we had taken a little refreshment, we were on the alert, and again wandered the whole day, with the same success as the previous one; and, for three successive days, we rambled with the same result. We now came to the conclusion, which it would be wise in many others to adopt, that gold, even in California, was not quite as plenty as dust, and that, in the great battling and scrambling for it, the chance of drawing a prize was only about one to every hundred. We started again, somewhat wiser, and better prepared for disappointment, concluding to spend this day in a more sober and rational effort, and, if we did not succeed, it would be necessary to find out whereabouts we were, and try to get back to where others were digging, and learn something from experience. By this time, our provisions were pretty well exhausted, and our visionary dreams nearly subdued—so that we could use some little reflection. We now examined things more closely, and suffered reason to take the place of imagination. Finding that we were but about thirty miles from the principal diggers, we resolved that, should this day prove as inauspicious as former ones, we would try some other course to obtain the great object of our solicitude.

In our travels and experiments, we came to a ravine, in which we found a small stream of water, which quite elated our hopes, for here certainly must be the very place we had so long looked for; and, after digging like a pack of hungry tigers, for several hours, and throwing up dirt enough for a small fort, we were doomed to despair of seeing anything to reward us for our trouble, which rendered some of our company almost reckless, threatening to return home, cursing the voyage, and every one that undertook it, which had been nothing but disaster from the start; that they

should have listened to the advice of George, who had cautioned them against undertaking it; while others retorted, that George's advice was nothing, for he had, after advising others of its dangers, undertaken it himself. Not wishing to hear these useless criminations, and keenly reflecting on our ill success, I concluded, before leaving the place which was about to decide our undertaking, I would go down to the water, and make a careful examination. Accordingly, I descended to the stream, unmoved some of the sand in its bed, in which, after washing, appeared small particles of an unusual brightness, but, for fear of unduly exciting my comrades, I repeated several pans-full, until I was satisfied it was gold. Then I called to them to come down to me—that I had found something which might prove to be what we were hunting; but they, from discouragement, or fear of disappointment, were rather slow in coming. William, at length, came, and on beholding what I held up to him in the pan, exclaimed:

"Oh, boys, here's gold!" which brought the others to the spot with a rush.

And now, as they had been before desponding, they were doubly elated, and threw off their caps and jackets, and made the valley resound with joy: and, although it was near night, it was with difficulty they could be induced to quit. Darkness, however, compelled us to desist, and in this small space of time, not exceeding two hours, we had collected about a pound of the precious dust.

In the course of the night, which was spent almost wholly in plans and schemes for the future, it was concluded to send two of the company to the vessel for provisions and other things, which we were now in need of, while the other two were to stay at our mine and dig; and now came a scene which it would be difficult to describe; for it was decided that, as Thomas and Isaac were the stoutest and most able-bodied, they should go, which would leave us two at the mine. And here, in an uninhabited waste, remote from any human being, were left two whose hearts and whose destinies seemed united. Fate seemed as if trying its skill at daring incidents, by bringing us together in the most trying scenes, vailing the knowledge of one from the other in dense obscurity, while vividly painful, the other was called to endure the constant fellow-

ship of one it did not dare to own. Might not some casual accident lead to the fatal secret? My anxieties were intense, and seemed, at times, sufficient, of themselves, to expose me, for, while lying on our pallet, side by side, he, filled with the happy thoughts of his Eliza, as he would call her, would say to me:

"George, you know what I told you in Mexico. I would give all the gold in California if I could but see and embrace her but for a few hours!"

How painful, how killing such sounds were to me, cannot be imagined. They so overcame me, that they caused me to weep, and even to sob, so that he noticed it, and replied:

"George, I can sympathize with you. I know you weep for some lovely beauty you left in the States, who there grieves for your return; but never mind; I hope we shall yet live to see them, if we can never enjoy them."

Such touching remarks almost drove me to distraction; but, at length, our comrades returned with a full supply of provisions, and some bags to save our treasure in.

We now prosecuted our labors with zeal, and were daily encouraged by our mine improving in richness as we got deeper into it, for, in the space of a little more than three weeks, we had dug and washed, as near as we could judge, two hundred pounds of clean gold dust. Our labors had been so incessant and fatiguing, that our health began to give way, and we were obliged to desist. William was so unwell, that he had to quit entirely, and all of us were too feeble to do much—so that it was thought best to try to get into the settlements as quick as possible; but our enfeebled state, and the burdens we would have to carry, seemed to forbid the attempt. This being, however, the only alternative, we, on the following morning, packed up our loads, and set out for San Francisco. William, who had suffered much during the day, became so exhausted, that he was unable to proceed, and we stopped until the next morning, having got but about seven miles. During the night, he continued to get worse so fast, that I got quite alarmed, and, in the morning, proposed to send one on to the city for help, and the others agreeing, we sent Isaac forward to get a doctor, and some vehicle to take him and our plunder to the settlements, who, after

proceeding a few miles, fell in with an Indian, on a mule, with whom he made a bargain to assist us on. They came to us, loaded our bags on the mule, and put William on, and two of us walked, one on each side, to keep him from falling off, in which way we proceeded about fifteen miles, when night overtook us, and we were obliged to lay up. We were not a little alarmed for our safety during the night, being, as we supposed, about twenty miles from the town, with a stout and savage Indian for our companion, and we all enfeebled by disease, with about forty thousand dollars in gold dust, which he knew all about by the weight of the bags and our appearance.

Would not he, if we should fall asleep, dispatch some of us, seize our gold, mount his mule, and leave us; or slip off, and raise others to assist him, which might be still worse? With these fearful reflections, I was so haunted, that I never shut my eyes to sleep during the night; and when the others would get drowsy, I would make some disturbance to arouse them. We, however, were not molested by anything, save the paroxysms of William's fever, which, at times, were very alarming. He was no better in the morning, but, if anything, worse. We again started on, as we had the day before, and a little before night, reached the town, and called in a physician, who pronounced his disease bilious fever, with which he suffered, attended with the most dangerous symptoms, for ten days—at times bereft of his reason. During his paroxysms, he would call for me, who, though constantly at his bed-side, he supposed to be thousands of miles from him. On the eleventh day, his fever took a turn, and he began to mend, and was, in about a week, able to sit up a few hours in the day, and, in a little over two weeks, was able to be about, and we began again to talk of our future course.

By some, it was thought best to go back to our mine; by others, a return home was recommended. William was inclined to the latter. As we had procured a sufficiency, if well taken care of, and the risk of sickness so great in a climate so fickle, it was agreed by all to leave the country as soon as possible. We now set about preparing to return, and, as a great part of the provisions I had taken out were still on hand, it was agreed that, for my kindness

in what I had done for them, I should be entitled to what was left, together with what I could make out of the mine we had left, which promised to be very rich. I went to the captain of the vessel which I came out in, to whom I owed for my passage, and proposed to sell him all the provisions, tools and cooking utensils I had brought out with me, and also the privilege of the mine which we had left. He offered me a generous price for all but the mine, and said he would go and see that, and if it was as good as I represented it, he would give me a hundred ounces of gold for that. The next day, he and Thomas Acron went to the mine, and returned on the following day, well satisfied to give me what he had offered, which was no object to me; but, in consequence of his kindness to the sufferers of the ill-fated barque which was cast away, I freely gave him our claim, from which, I have no doubt, he will reap a rich reward, which I shall never begrudge him.

Having completed all our preparations we embarked for Panama, from whence we crossed over to Chagres, where we found a vessel bound in a few days, for Boston, on board of which we embarked, with our baggage, and again steered our course toward our native land. We arrived in Boston on the 14th day of September, 1849, and took lodgings at what is called a sailor's boarding-house. And here it seemed that I was to be tried in the crucible of misery, to see what I could bear—to see what wretchedness and woe a frail mortal could endure, and not despair. As if to try me, to the utmost verge of human endurance, for my temerity, I was doomed to go through an ordeal of suffering at which a stouter heart well might shudder. It was my intention, when we arrived here, to get our gold-dust immediately converted into good convenient funds, and proceed on home; but, having got into that part of the city inhabited by the most depraved and abandoned of human beings, who soon learned that we were from California, and, of course, must have gold, the inmates soon began to feast and flatter us with the utmost attention. They showered upon us the greatest attention and seeming kindness; nothing we could anticipate but what was readily at our service, and a great deal which we should have been better off without, for I soon discovered that there was a de-

sign in all of this show; that they were supplying liquor in flowing quantities, which I knew some of our company could not well resist. I saw the snare most fearfully laid, and warned the others of its frightful danger, and of the necessity of our immediately closing up our business and leaving; for, knowing that William was of a confiding and unsuspecting nature, who was not disposed to deviate from the path of rectitude, but whose diffident and kind disposition could too easily be abused by designing and corrupt associates, I felt the greatest solicitude on his account, but could not well single him out as a special object of my anxiety. I therefore had to make my cautions general; but all seemed to be unheeded, and began to be unwelcome, for the inmates of the house had succeeded in enlisting the credulity of my companions, and were now sure of their prey. Having succeeded in their first attempt, to stupefy them with liquor, they now resorted to the next, which was to swindle them out of their money with cards and dice. When I saw the commencement of this game, so near allied to the one practiced in New York, my heart sunk within me, and my whole frame shook with terror. I asked them if they would take a walk with me, to which they assented, and, after walking a short distance (as I supposed, out of the hearing of our boarding-house, but in which I was mistaken, for they had become suspicious of me, and had sent some of their watch-dogs to listen), I related to them all that I had seen and heard, and the belief I had of what was intended by all of their seeming kindness, and that, if they valued their peace and happiness, or that of their friends, I would advise them, by everything they held dear, which I considered now at stake, to leave the place and go to some respectable house, and close up their business and leave the city—reminding them of their fate in New York, and its sad consequences. To this they listened with some attention, especially some of them, but finally thought they were in no danger, saying that they had had a pretty hard time of it for the last two years, and only wished to take a little social time before they parted. Finding that I could not arouse their fears, I told them I should take my own chest, and leave them, for there I could not, and would not stay. By this they seemed a little moved, all except Isaac Cown, who said he

thought they were capable of taking care of themselves, without my assistance. I told him that he had seen the time, when he was glad to receive my assistance and advice both. To which, the wretch, after all I had done for him, as well as what I now wished to do for his own good, replied, that he had assisted me as much as I had him, and he felt under no obligations to me whatever, and called to the others to go back to the house with him, to which they assented, and followed.

When I saw William following this ungrateful, and, as I believed, doomed company, who seemed to have got almost entire control over him, it wrung my heart with bitter grief. I felt now as if my last hope was about to leave me. I knew that, the night before, they had lost large sums, and were getting all their gold changed through the agency of the inmates of this house and their vile accomplices; and William, who seldom tasted liquor before, I discovered, was taking it quite freely. I went back to the house, with a determination to remove to some other place, and see if I could not bring about something which might save at least one of their company; but, when I entered it, they were already at cards with a stranger, and a heavy stake before them, and some quite in liquor. On my entering, Isaac Cown, who was the most intoxicated, said:

"George, come, sit down, and be sociable with us; don't be so womanish; we are only taking a little spree, and calculate to take a trip on to the hill to-night."

This last expression rent my heart with maddened grief. To think of him for whom I had suffered and endured so much, and now so near, apparently, to the consummation of all my wishes, to be torn so ruthlessly from me, and led astray by those whom I had saved from death. How could I contemplate the scene and live! I would not, I could not, endure the thought. It was a punishment like that of Cain's—it was greater than I could bear—for, if they should go on the hill, that sink of filth and lewdness, that brothel of Sodom, what might—nay, what would be the consequences? Everything now seemed to be rapidly tending to a fearful crisis. The yawning gulf of destruction seemed ready to swallow up all my hopes, for, should they once go on the hill,

whose very approach is destruction, of which I had heard such loathsome and horrid accounts, from which so many young men had been stripped of their all—money, character, and life itself, while others, less fortunate, had contracted that hated and loathsome disease consequent upon their criminal indulgence, and been doomed to a life of wretchedness more intolerable than death itself; should he, for whom I had suffered such unwonted trials, be led on by those demons, under a guise of friendship, and immolated on this altar of crime—this brothel of wretchedness—this vortex of infamy—it was more than I could anticipate, without the most vivid realities of despair, knowing, as I did, that I had imbibed the feelings of the others against me, for taking an interest in William's welfare more than theirs, and that they would do their utmost to accomplish his destruction. In this momentous crisis, what was to be done? Had I done all I could to save him? Had I discharged my whole duty? If I had not, and failed in this trying hour, and he should be lost, my misery would be accomplished. If I faltered in its full discharge, however hopeless, my ruin would be complete. I now set myself about a remedy in good earnest. Everything was surrounded with gloom, big with events on which my all was staked. Past and future would be but a blank in my existence if I was now doomed to defeat, well knowing that, if they succeeded in enticing William into this dismal haunt, they would persuade him to take large sums of money with him, and, in the whirl of refined dissipation and crime, it would all be filched from him; and, after he had once entered this sink of vice, it would be all but a miracle if he escaped being engulfed in its awful vortex; and when he found himself stripped of his money, and benumbed by dissipation and remorse, he would again be induced to try other adventures, to retrieve his losses, and I should again be left a monument of wretchedness, to assuage my bitter lot, as best I could, in silent grief. And how to ward off so dreadful a calamity absorbed all my mind; for, if they should go on the hill, as was talked of, all would be lost—the remedy would come too late. But, it so happened, that the leaders of this plan got so intoxicated, that they did not go at this time, as was talked of, which gave me a little relief, and more time to mature a way to

save from destruction the one who had so long engrossed my solitude. Various plans I thought of, but none seemed to favor a safety and success to be relied upon. At one time, I thought I would go to him, and make known my real character; then, again, I concluded that it would only disgust him, and subject me to ridicule and disgrace; and, if I did not do something immediately, it would be too late. But, seeing no other possible way, I concluded to take a course of less hazard to myself, but which would take time to accomplish, and which, to every appearance, would cause a delay, which would inevitably end in the ruin of both, but which seemed the only course within the grasp of my fevered mind. I therefore told him, the next morning, that I was going into the country a few miles to visit a relative, and should probably be gone two or three days, and that I wished him, as a friend, to see that my chest was not disturbed, as I believed that the people about our boarding-house were bad enough to do anything, and that I would consider it a great favor if he would stay there until I returned. To which he replied, that he did not think as badly of our boarding-house as I did, and could not believe they would disturb anything I left with them; that he would be security that all I left, and he knew it was a large amount, should remain there undisturbed until my return. His seeming confidence and indifference added not a little to my fears for his own safety. To see him so confiding only increased my alarm; but the crisis was momentous, and I must meet it.

Having got all of my gold converted into good bank paper, excepting two thousand dollars in American eagles, all of which I had, unseen, taken from my chest, putting the paper into my pockets, and tying the gold up in a shirt within a handkerchief, I proceeded up town, with a heavy heart. I went immediately to a store, bought a good trunk, in which I placed my bundle and money, took it to a hotel, and left it with the landlord. I now proceeded to a dress-maker's, and purchased an entire lady's wardrobe of rich and costly materials. Having furnished myself with an entire dress of female attire, together with a gold watch and jewelry, I next bought a gentleman's fine cloak and a fur cap, which could, at a moment's notice, be changed, so as either to appear as a

gentleman's cap or a lady's traveling hat. Having completed my purchases, and safely lodged them in my trunk, I went out among the hackmen, and, after being beset with a dozen of them to take a ride—and which way did I want to go?—I told them I just wanted to take a ride—I did not care which way, so that I got a good ride out about ten miles, to some good tavern on a railroad. Of course, several knew of just such a place—some in one direction some in another. I inquired to know what time the cars would be coming in from the various places, for I wanted to have the pleasure of riding back on one of them; to which various times were named, in which each would be passing the various places designated, on their return to Boston. The one which seemed to suit my case the best was the Providence train, which would arrive at the designated tavern at about eleven o'clock at night—so I made a bargain with a hackman to take me and my trunk to that place, where we arrived at a little before sundown. I had my trunk taken in, and dismissed the hackman, who immediately left for Boston. I asked the landlord what time the cars would be along going to Boston. He replied at eleven o'clock. I told him I wished him to be sure and call me, as I wished to go to Boston that night. He replied, I should be sure of a passage, as the train always stopped there. I now called for a private room, for the purpose of adjusting my clothes, and was shown into one. I had worn my cap and cloak, which I carefully wrapped around me, so that he would have been puzzled to have qualified to my sex, had he been called on for that purpose.

Having now got into a private chamber, I locked the door, and proceeded to divest myself of my male attire, and resume the habiliments of my own sex. The transition was almost as odd as the one I had experienced nearly three years before; but when I had completed my new dress, which seemed so strange that it made me feel awkward and unnatural, and, viewed myself before the mirror, I could not but be astonished at the sudden and striking change. I made every effort to fix my hair, which I had suffered to grow ever since I left California, in order to be ready for the change that I was anticipating, and which had obtained considerable length. I now sat down to struggle with the emotions that were whirling in

my mind. In the midst of these painful reveries, the shrill whistle of the cars notified me that I must be off. I now adjusted my cap and cloak, and a sudden rap at my door summoned me to it. A black fellow caught up my trunk, and bade me follow. We were soon at the cars, which barely gave me time to hand the boy a quarter. Having purposely thrown open my cloak, in order to reveal my sex, I was conducted into the ladies' car. The cars were immediately off again, and in half an hour we were at the depot in Boston, which was thronged with carriages, wishing to know where each passenger wished to be taken. I gave the token for my trunk to one, and told him I was a stranger, and wished to be taken to some respectable hotel; and he soon landed me at the Revere House.

I stepped up to the clerk with my cloak thrown open, who said: "Madam, will you be conducted to a room?"

I told him, I wished a retired and private one. He replied, very politely, that I should be accommodated, but wished to know my name. I took the pen, and wrote my name "Eliza Billings," and told him I would like, if not too much trouble, to have a cup of tea and some toast. He said I should have it brought to my room in a few minutes; which soon appeared, being the first food I had tasted during the day.

Having partaken of a cup of tea, and a few bites of toast, and being left alone, think for a moment what painful fears and imaginations tortured my heaving heart. Had I, after all my toils and trials, to be doomed to despair? Had he, in whom was all that could render life desirable, been left in an evil hour to consummate my wretchedness?

I found on a stand, in my room, pen and paper, and sat down and wrote the following lines, with a heart filled with grief, and frenzy:

Revere House, Boston, September 22, 1849.

DEAR WILLIAM:—

You will, doubtless, be much surprised on receiving a letter from me dated at this time and place, and it may be, that you will be inclined to doubt its authenticity! but, be assured that it is genuine,

and that it comes from her to whom you once proposed constancy and fidelity. If you still retain as vivid a remembrance of the happy days of the past; and if your heart has continued as true to her during the long and dreary hours of absence as hers has to you, you will not fail to call immediately, on receipt of this, and relieve the anxiety of one who has so long prayed for your return.

In order to obviate suspicion I registered my name, Eliza Billings, at the same time informing the clerk that I expected my brother to call on me—you will please, therefore, inquire for your sister.

Ever your affectionate,

ELIZA ALLEN.

Early on the following morning, I hired a young man to take the letter to where I had left William the day before, with instructions to give it to no one but him in person, and as privately as possible; and if he could not find him, to bring it back. You may well imagine what a moment of anxiety this must be, suspended between hope and despair, trembling with fearful emotions of his having fallen into the fatal snare which had been laid for his ruin—again hoping that some friendly angel had interposed and prevented his fall. But my suspense was soon terminated, by the return of the messenger I had sent, with the intelligence that he had been to the place where I directed him, and could find no one there that would answer his description; but was told, by a woman, that there had been four young men boarding with her for some time, but that they had all gone out, one yesterday morning, and the others last evening; and, she indignantly added, that she neither knew nor cared what course they took, but supposed they would be back when they got through their frolic.

This intelligence shook my very frame, and caused every joint to tremble. The last link in the chain of hope was now severed—my most painful anticipations were realized—and I was doomed to wretchedness and despair. My William, for whom I had suffered and devoted such painful solicitude, was now doubtless reveling in the embraces of heastly debauchery, as loathsome as it was criminal; whose confiding heart had been betrayed into it by the ruthless and envious malignity of his guilty and treacherous asso-

ciates. Torn by distraction, and giddy with grief, a flickering hope, even against hope, that something might interpose to assuage my insupportable woe, I requested the young man to go back and wait until he could learn something that would lead to a knowledge of what had become of him; and again I was tortured with hapless agony, with the assurance of my fate; for if he should be so fortunate as to find him, it would be in a state of inebriety and filth too disgusting to behold. In the midst of these painful reveries, I was summoned to breakfast. Though my body was suffering with abstinence, my appetite almost loathed the sight of food; but concluding to go down and drink a cup of coffee, in hopes it might assuage my burning brain, I reluctantly followed the servant to the dining-room. And now pause and contemplate for a moment the dizzy freaks of giddy fortune, which seemed bent on making our lives a series of the most astonishing incidents; for, on entering the room, and casting my eyes wistfully around, who should I behold among that varied throng, but the loved one of my heart, seated at the table, nearly opposite to the seat I was to occupy. This shock I cannot describe: so unexpected, so thrilling was the sight, that it so overcame me, that I was borne back to my chamber in a state bordering on insensibility. After laying on my bed a few minutes, and receiving a stimulus of cordials, my consciousness returned; and I remarked to one of the ladies who had conducted me to my chamber, that it was only a faintness, from which I had now fully recovered. They returned to their breakfast, ignorant of its cause. I now walked the room in the greatest anxiety, and almost delirious; and, on looking out of a window facing the street, I saw the young man, whom I had sent the second time, returning, who came immediately up to me, and handed me the letter, saying, he could find no trace of the man it was directed to, save that he had, the evening before, in a fit of madness, taken his own chest, and another belonging to the young man who left in the morning, and departed in the most abrupt manner; but of where he had gone to, no one had any knowledge. I told him I had been more fortunate than he had, for I had found him seated at the breakfast-table; and, after describing him as near as I could, desired him to go down, and when he left the table, to watch an opportunity, and

privately hand him the letter. My hopes now began to overcome my fears—my prize seemed almost within my grasp, and my heart was fluttering with intense emotion, in contemplation of the scene which was about to ensue, which those only can imagine who have been placed in a similar trial.

Having accomplished his object, the messenger reported to me the fact, for which I gave him five dollars, as a reward for his fidelity. And now opens a scene which my pen fails to describe. I heard the sound of his well-known footstep approach my door, with timid and trembling hand he knocked, and the next moment the object of all my cares and solicitude stood before me.

With hardly strength enough to articulate "William," I approached him, and, in trembling accents, asked him if he knew me?

He, with a wild and vacant stare, accompanied with swimming tears, exclaimed, "Can this be you? Can this possibly be my own dear Eliza?" and with an embrace as thrilling as it was sacred, and which overpowered utterance, we wept in silent joy too exciting to explain—too powerful to relate. Here was the happiness of years crowded into the space of a few moments. It was the ecstasy of two mutual hearts rejoicing in the embrace of long-deferred happiness, too powerful for utterance.

After this gush of joy had subsided, William, as if unable to believe that it was not a dream—a vision—which was only mocking his imagination, and would disappear and leave him in hapless misery—requested me to give him some evidence of its reality, that it was his own dear Eliza, whom he had left so long ago in the east. I asked him if he would know a certain ring which he had bestowed on her. To which he quickly replied, that he would, for his name was on it. I then produced the ring, which he took; and, after closely examining it, "This is certainly the ring which I gave Eliza Allen." I then asked him if he had lost the miniature which she gave him. He replied, with an emphasis, "No!" and quickly drew it from his bosom, and, looking at me with great attention, said:—

I see the lovely features of her I so much admired; but how changed from what they then were!

I told him of all the varied scenes which I had been through since he entered the army—how often I had been at his side—and how recently I had left him: and the object of all my sufferings was now in my arms; and if he had been as devoted and true, I was now fully rewarded for all my sufferings and sacrifices;—that I was the one in disguise whom they had called George, but in fact the one he now held in his arms. I told him that he would recollect how George had entreated him, but yesterday morning, to stay and take care of his chest until his return from a short visit to friends in the country. After listening to all this with intense emotion, he exclaimed:—

“My God! can I be worthy of such an object? You have been my guardian angel—you have saved me from perdition; and how shall I, how can I, ever reward such love and devotion? After you left me, yesterday morning, something unusual seemed to attend me. I fell into a reflection about what George had often said about the inmates of the house where we were stopping, and the particular charge he had given me when leaving, among others, to take care of his chest, in which I knew he had a large amount of money; and should I go away, and it be robbed, how could I ever meet him again—he who had shown me so much kindness, and to whom I was indebted for all I had myself? These reflections seemed to haunt me so vividly, that I could not banish them from my mind; and the others having all gone out, I concluded to take a stroll myself, and see if it would not enliven my feelings. I sauntered down to the wharf, and from that to what is called the “North End.” I suppose I was absent about two hours; and what was my astonishment, when I returned, to find my own chest broken open, and nearly all the money I had gone; and still worse, on examining George’s chest, I found it had been forced open, and all his money abstracted. Maddened to desperation, to see the wreck made of all my treasures, for which I had toiled and suffered so much, together with that of the one which had been left in my care, and for which I had pledged my honor, after being fully cautioned by its owner against what was now too real, it overwhelmed me with mortification, even to madness. I hunted, I inquired, but could get no satisfaction. I was now fully convinced

of all he had told me about these people; and, after venting my curses against them, I resolved to leave; and seeing a cartman passing, I called to him, and hired him to move me. He asked where I wished to be taken to. I told him I did not care where, so it was to some good honest tavern. He loaded on my chest and George’s, and brought me here, where I have remained under the bitterest reflections ever since. And now what is to be done about the money which was lost from that chest, as I suppose it must be yours? I have it here just as I found it, when I returned from my walk.”

I here interrupted him, and told him not to be the least troubled about that, for I had so little confidence in the people about that house, that I had, before leaving, taken all my money out of my chest, and had it now in a trunk in this room; at which William threw up his hands, and exclaimed—

“Is all this possible? Is it—can it be that all I see and hear are realities?” for it did not seem possible that such a shower of unexpected bliss could be real.

I told him it was all real, and hoped it would be as lasting as it was real; to which he replied, that nothing which he could do should be wanting to make its enjoyments as unsullied as they had been unexpected; and wished now, if I could think him worthy, to consummate our former vows, in immediately marrying. I told him I could not object to such a proposal, but wished to write to my beloved parents, and obtain, if I could, their approbation. I should feel much satisfaction in the reflection that I had sought their approval; even if I did not obtain it I could but try, and whether it was granted or not, I should feel that I had acted the part of a confiding and affectionate child, and should ever after be controlled by his desire; to which he cheerfully concurred—and I sat down and wrote the following letter:

Boston, September 24, 1849.

MY DEAR PARENTS:

You will be much astonished on receiving a letter from your long lost daughter, who, since leaving your house has been through many strange and wonderful scenes: having served as a volunteer

in the army throughout the whole of the Mexican war; made a voyage to California and back, without ever having betrayed her sex; all for the sake of one who now sits beside me, and in whom are centered all my hopes and anticipations of future happiness.

Your consent to my marriage to him who alone can secure my happiness, and render my future days full of peace and content, is now all that is required to complete my felicity.

Having gained in our voyage to California ample means of living, without being in any way burdensome to you, our only prayer is that you will forgive your erring daughter and sanction the choice of her heart.

I need scarcely add that I shall await your answer with the greatest impatience, nor urge you to write immediately, on receipt of this and relieve the suspense of

Your affectionate daughter,

ELIZA ALLEN.

Having mailed the above letter we sat down to discuss the various incidents, and strange adventures we had passed through: this, to us, was a much interesting and exciting subject. On examining our money we found we had, after all our losses, nearly thirteen thousand dollars; and we began to make preparations for our intended union. We made purchases of rich clothing, and began to vie with the *elite* of the town. I was constantly returning to my former appearance, which as much interested the one I was now so happy with, as myself. The only obstacle which marred our enjoyments, was the solicitude we felt for the fate of the letter I had sent to my parents; but at length our suspense was terminated by receiving the following happy epistle:

Eastport, October 1, 1849.

DEAR, DEAR DAUGHTER:—

Well you might think we should be surprised at receiving a letter from you, whom we had long since in our hearts, consigned to the silent tomb, and now only remembered to be grieved for. On our return from our sick brother, where we were when you left, and who had so far recovered, that we left him the next day after your

absence, we were thrown into the deepest gloom at your mysterious disappearance. Every search and inquiry were instituted and persisted in, until sickened by the effort, we had to abandon it in despair. Not the least intelligence or trace could be found that could be tortured into hope. We have, therefore, been left in the sickening mazes of grief ever since, and should as soon have thought of one rising from the dead, as of receiving a letter from you; and could hardly now be made to believe it, were it not from the well known hand of the writer.

And, dear daughter, you ask our consent to marry the one, we presume, who was, with your parents' imprudence, the cause of your exile and sufferings. Be assured, dear daughter, that we take the greatest pleasure in being allowed the happiness of granting you a full and affectionate pardon of all the grief you have caused us; and also our entire consent and approbation to marry the young gentleman you name, William Billings, on condition that you will agree to have it solemnized here, under the roof of your affectionate and loving parents, who have so long grieved your absence; and to William, we feel bound, in duty and friendship, to make, as we now do, our proudest acknowledgments for the painful sacrifices we have caused him to make; and now request him to return with you, and receive from us all the rewards and blessings that his meritorious fortitude and forbearance deserve, and which we feel anxious to bestow. Write immediately, and let us know when our anxious hearts can once more greet the sight of their long lost daughter.

From your affectionate and loving parents,

GEORGE H. ALLEN,

SARAH ALLEN.

Mr. William Billings and Eliza Allen.

It may well be supposed that our hearts leaped for joy on receiving such an affectionate and indulgent letter; and we now, with glowing hearts, commenced preparations for our speedy return. Finding a packet would sail in a few days for that place, we wrote to my parents, informing them of the prospect of our being at their place in the course of a week; and on the 12th of October, at 11

o'clock, P. M., we arrived in the harbor, from which I had stole away nearly three years before, and were immediately taken to my father's mansion, in which all the inmates were wrapped in profound sleep, except my youngest brother, who, hearing a carriage drive up, and anticipating our arrival, sprang up and shouted, "Eliza's come!" which brought the family to their feet. I had burst out of the carriage, and plunged into the door, and broke out in a flood of tears, at entering once more that long-grieved home.

Having conducted the reader safely back to the home of my childhood, and the scenes of my early days of happiness and innocence, I will close my recital; for it would be a vain and futile task to attempt a description of the joy and rapture with which my parents and brothers welcomed home the long lost, but not forgotten wanderer. I will only add that my parents, seeing that my love for William was as enduring as it was violent, and having learned to appreciate his many good qualities, willingly gave their consent to our immediate union. I will not weary the reader with a detail of our wedding festivities, or of the serene days of pure and unclouded happiness which have passed since then.

Surrounded by relatives and friends, possessed of ample means to secure all of the necessities, and most of the luxuries, of life, the troubles and hardships of the past are forgotten, or remembered only to inspire our hearts with gratitude to that All-wise Being who has conducted us through so many dangers and trials to this haven of rest.

THE END.