



"a Sans & Ponce"

GLEANINGS

FROM

FIRESIDE FANCIES

BY

"SANS SOUCI."

Nelly Nichols (Mrs. W. H. Nichols)

"I have long known that there is but one thing eternal in God's universe, and that is *Change*. Mutability is the sole permanence."—MRS. WARFIELD.

CHICAGO:

JOHN C. W. BAILEY, PUBLISHER,
162 & 164 Clark Street.

1866.

16741

MAR 7 1896

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1866,

BY J. C. W. BAILEY,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States
for the Northern District of Illinois.

TO
My Patrons and Friends

I DEDICATE THIS VOLUME

AS AN EXPRESSION

OF

REGARD AND ESTEEM.

PREFACE.

To the great heart of the world which ever knows how to love and pity those who suffer, do I come with this little tribute, asking a welcome. "Gleanings" from a girlish brain have been gathered into a bright sheaf of affection for those who have been kind to me, and if it awakens a smile, or dims an eye with one sympathetic tear, I shall feel that my exertions have not all been in vain.

The war, which brought devastation and desolation to so many homes in Kentucky, passed by Beechland with no unsparing hand; and its sad inmates wept over the desecration of household gods, and the blasting of bright dreams whose iris-hues had given radiance to the hallowed past. Trials unexpected,

*

almost insurmountable, assailed them,—sickness, sorrow, death subdued them.

As a member of that shadowed and grief-stricken circle, I was forced to resort to my pen, not only as a source of pleasure and ambition, but to stand in the breach, between those most dear to me and misfortune. That I have won kind and true friends, noble and generous patrons, I feel confident.

To my *editors* most particularly, do I give thanks for their assistance, rendered me in my silent struggle with adverse fate. Never have they hesitated to pause, amid their onerous tasks and duties in political and social life, to cheer and encourage me to earnest resolution and untiring perseverance; they buoyed my sinking heart with hope and trust. Their lives of usefulness have carried many beams of golden sunshine to shadowed homes, many bright dreams of success to despairing children of genius and aspiration over the length and breadth of the land. And their words have gilded the dim vistas of the future with glimpses of the most ravishing fruition; while their hands, ever strong and true, have guided the hopeless and timid into the broad highway of the world and pointed joyously to the distant yet attainable heights

of honor and renown. To them, and to my noble patrons of the North, and the far sunny South, I dedicate this volume, as a slight token of my regard and esteem, and if it wins a kindly welcome I shall be happy.

Gratefully,

SANS SOUCI.

BEECHLAND, KENTUCKY, 1865.

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WHY I BECAME AN AUTHORESS.

TOLD BY MISS HETTY DEWLY.

CHAPTER I.



O doubt a great many persons will smile at the title that graces this little history, and perhaps justly. But to those whose eyes are not shaded to a sadder light, and whose lips of humanity do not quiver when they have laid aside this sorrowful story I am about to write, and sitting in the ruddy glow of the fire, recall it all with a sigh of sympathy for the struggling, earnest woman's heart which, spite of its wealth of love and dreams, has yet seen every joy fade from the home circle, from her life-path, and who, *spite of all*, still struggles, still suffers; to such, I do not come for sympathy: but to those true, earnest natures that throb with a kindred glow for all who would be brave and strong and patient; who reach warm, firm hands to draw the woe-face raised so pleadingly from the waves of grief and disappointment, and who point the way on to the golden shore of success, I bring my little heart-whispers, confident of the encouraging smiles and gentle voices saying: "Welcome, Miss Hetty, welcome!"

For fear I may some day meet a contributor who may have read some stray spirit-warble of mine and fancied me beautiful, I shall give in this little history of my life a graphic description of my *personnel*.

There is not one person in a thousand who does not prefer a pretty woman to a homely one. Though quite aged now, I don't think I ever heard of but one instance, and that was a "Down-Easter," who married a hideously ugly woman, and, upon being questioned by an intimate friend as to why he committed such a breach of good taste, replied, "Well, you see, these pretty women are tricky, and Sarah Ann is too glad that I married her, ever to love any other man but me, and I love her from the plain fact that nobody else would!" I think if we never met homely faces, we would not be so justly able to appreciate the beautiful when and wherever we meet it. Therefore, with that opinion to speak in my favor, and the trite saying and true, *because* trite, "beauty fades like the flower, yet not, as it, to bloom again," I shall spiritually greet my friends.

I am just five feet seven inches *in my slippers*. I have not a superabundance of flesh, although a hearty appetite has always blessed me. My hands and feet are of *useful* sizes; my walk is quick, energetic and decisive, betraying in each step a will to go ahead and to do what is to be done. The color of my hair is commonly satirized as "sandy-red." My nose is decidedly *retroussé*. My mouth is inclined to be large.

The wrinkles *do* lie rather deep upon my brow and cheek, but then, everybody knows "old age is honorable." My voice may be "cracked and harsh," (the malicious often term it so,) but it *can be* soft and melodious. Some deem me repulsively homely; others, who, in the scintillations of genius, forget to care about round, graceful forms, fair complexions, and silver-luted voices, may find a charm in true womanliness and delicate feeling. My heart has ever thrilled too keenly with the consciousness that it has never been appreciated because of the want of those fading personal attractions. To end off my description, I am an "old maid,"—for I have just turned my fortieth year.

Yet, reader, would you believe it, I can remember, many years ago, when I was a little child, being called beautiful! Then my features were delicate, and my form, though slight, very graceful. However, I had a sister Miranda, who always threw me in the back-ground by her superior physical attractions. Oh! so often when we have been together, I have heard persons say, pointing me out,—“Pretty child, that.” “Yes; but the other is so much more so.” Invariably, Miranda's eager ear would catch the sound, and with a quick, expressive nudge of her elbow in my side, she would whisper: “Hear that, Hetty?” In consequence of all this, I became the student of the family and soon won the reputation of being very precocious. And my poor, dear father,

many years dead, used to praise and wound me in the same breath, by patting me on the head and kindly remarking: "Never mind, Hetty, you're the *smartest*, if you are the ugly one of the family." This was consoling in the extreme; but then Miranda had a winning way about her which I, with all my sense, could never catch.

Sometimes, for instance, I would tell a good story, and tell it well. Then the rich blush of gratified vanity would rise in my cheeks; my eyes would sparkle, and I would feel proudly happy, when Miranda, with her low, musical laugh, would turn to our mates and say, in a sweet, derisive way: "See now! Hetty thinks she has done something *extra*," and instantly the popular tide, which I had almost won, would recede from me quickly. The low, murmur of childish laughter would be all I could grasp of the vanishing ambition, and I would run away and hide my face, while the bitter, burning tears would fall, because I knew, with childish, self-accusing consciousness, that I *had* been trying to do "*something extra*."

My memory-halls are hung with just such picture scenes as these. From the first blush of my youthful years till the shadows of grief and age fell over me, I have been doomed to regret and disappointment. Years went on so, and each day I lost some old beauty, becoming homelier to the eye. But, oh! kind reader, stringing great pearls of price

over my quivering heart-chords that sent out a soft, silvery strain of love and music when the shadows of death fell around the sweet home-place and Miranda had forgotten us in a foreign land, where she roved thoughtless, beautiful and free, loving and beloved. Ah, me!

To me, in childhood, there came but few sunny hours of happiness in social intercourse with the world. I had but few associates. Shy by nature, I could not make advances of intimacy towards even Miranda, and therefore was almost wholly shunned. I had a yearning for books, strange in one so young, and I would sit dreaming all day long of the time when I would grow up and write beautiful stories about moated castles, and grand princes who would scale the tower walls and bear off the beautiful princesses in triumph. Yes; I was a dreamy, romantic, homely child. I revelled in Waverly, Byron, Moore and Shakspeare when I was scarce eleven, and friends, *old* friends I mean, who loved me "for my mother's sake," in spite of my ugly face, would say: "Some day I would write, and maybe become a star of genius in the world!" Then I would steal away all by myself, and sit with dilated eyes and crimson cheeks, longing, praying that that time would come, and very soon. And I would build air-castles of bright, glowing fancies beyond my years, and then I would come back to the tender, generous child-thoughts of what I would do for Mamma, and how I

would make heaps of shining gold for Papa. And black Mammy Sarah! Yes, she should have just as much tea and coffee and sugar as she wanted; and, oh! so many pretty, new dresses! Sweet child-hopes, child-dreams how I love you *all*! There is a tenderness and pathos about these old memories that rise in my heart, which even now, startle the great tears to my eyes, as they come back one by one, like ghosts of a long-vanished but beautiful past.

Oh! dear reader, this may seem very simple and childish to you, but way down deep in your heart, don't *you too* guard just such precious caskets of love and dreams? Guard them zealously, lest some unappreciative eye should peer in their sacred resting place and laugh that you should embalm such *follies*! Ah! to us all have come these hopes and fears, and though the world may crush hard thoughts of gain and glory down upon our graves of buried youth, from the mould and the gloom will spring sweet blossoms and when perhaps some day, the sunshine shall come again, *there will be memory buds and flowers there.*

CHAPTER II.

With the glorious summer time, when the sunshine lay matted in the long, green grass, like golden rifts of glory; when the leaves coquetted with the gentle, low-voiced breezes; when the rills rippled out a

musical murmur, scarcely heard amid the sweet-throated songsters of the wood; when the soft, white clouds floated like angel-wings unfurled, all over the bright, blue sky; when there was beauty everywhere; I was awakened from childhood to the entrancing joy that I was now a *woman*, with earnest resolve, glorious, untrammelled impulse, and heaven-born dreams of happiness that *might be* realized in the far-away land of the future. But the shadow came.

It happened thus: Miranda had been invited to spend the vacation with one of her dear ten thousand friends and she had gone, for it was tendered so pressing and Miranda was *so* eager to accept it, that father and mother yielded to her wishes. All the rich, old laces, all the old, family jewels had been placed at her disposal. Scores of beautiful gauze-like dresses had been purchased for her, and she with glad, happy smiles of gratification had left us, left mother busy and anxious about household cares, left father smoking his meerschaum, while the glad sunshine glinted over his silver hair that stole out in such reverend, beautiful curls from beneath his broad-brimmed straw hat; left me sad and lonely, my eyes full of dreary tears, my lips quivering, as with my hand shading my face from the sunlight, I stood at the front gate and watched the lazy stage coach roll through the pebbly branch and up over the sloping hills, becoming each moment more indistinct, until it faded entirely from my view. Then, I went and sat

down on the low, broad stone step, and clasping my arms about father's knees, I leaned my chin on them and looked up in his face.

"Father," I said, "Why did not God make me beautiful? I would have been *so happy*; for maybe somebody would love me if I were fair to look upon as sister."

"I love you, daughter, more than I know how to tell you," and softly his broad palm smoothed back the hair from my eager, flushed forehead, and taking his pipe from his mouth he bent over and kissed me. Oh! such a tender, sweet kiss! It thrills now just as when he gave it!

My voice wavered with great joy. "Father, tell me something to do for you, to aid you, that I may thus prove *how much I love you*. I long to make some *sacrifice* of personal pleasure to prove it. What can I do for you, father mine?"

A sad shadow fell over his brow as he answered: "Nothing, dear child, nothing. I *am* in trouble about money matters; but *you* could not help me. You see ———"

Just then, mother's calico sun-bonnet shadowing her calm, placid face, appeared in the doorway. She said: "Come in to dinner, husband, and Hetty, child; I am very busy to-day, and the table cannot wait." And so the confidence which welled up to father's lips as we sat in the golden, glinting sunshine was never spoken.

"Father, will you tell me some other time what it is that troubles you?"

"No, child, never mind, it doesn't matter." And we went in to dinner together.

* * * * *

Oh! those glorious, happy days! It is so sad to think such home-joys and pleasures will never come again to me! That now, like some lone, deserted bark, I drift on life's sea, and no eye will grow dim, no voice murmur, "I am sorry she is dead," when I sink beneath the waves! Even the little, curly-headed boy next door, who lisps "Mith Etty," will forget *me*, when another old maid comes here to live, and gives him gingerbread and apples as I do. God gave me some holy and beautiful impulses in this woman's heart of mine, and then for His own good purpose He has shut me out from the Eden-gates of joy, and I stand, *have* stood, through all these weary years, shivering in the cold gloom and despair, waiting, ever waiting for the reward which may yet strew sweet, perfumed flowers on my path, even though it should lead through the darkness where I may not see them in the "Valley of the Shadow of Death!"

Long, beautiful letters would come to us from Miranda, telling of the glad joys of her young life. And from the yearning depths of my own heart, that would leap like waves on a southern shore at her burning words, I felt that she *loved*, though I never dared give expression to the fanciful fear.

By and by, father and mother began to divine it too, and they would anxiously question one another as to whether Miranda's visit was not growing too lengthy; but each hesitated to seem suspicious, and therefore remained silent upon the subject that laid with such heavy weight against all our hearts.

At last, one evening, when we three were sitting on the front porch, watching the crimson and golden sunset clouds fading into gray, the post-boy came by with letters. One was stamped NEW YORK and directed in Miranda's handwriting. It was all the bag contained. I handed it to father without a word. His face turned that white, ashy hue that is so terribly fearful to see. He seemed to realize something wrong from the fact of the post-mark being changed. Mother peered over his shoulder, and horror-struck, they both stared upon the unbroken seal, as if to read *thereon* the contents they *felt* were enclosed. I took it gently from father's hand, saying: "Let me read it father. There's no bad news I hope. Don't anticipate evil." I broke the envelope open and read with great, anguished heart-throbs:

NEW YORK, Aug. 2, 1843.

My Dear Father, Mother and Sister:

I am so glad I am not near to see the gray shadows creeping up like gloomy clouds over your faces when you read the post-mark of my letter. I know better than any words of reproach could ever tell me, just how ungrateful I am and have been, for the tender

devotion and affection that circled round me in my dear childhood's home. But I am only human, and like all other women in the world, have found *my fate, the master hand* which has wakened all the life and beauty in my heart till it thrills even at the sound of his voice. As I write now he stands beside me, his hands fondly smoothing the curls that mother loved so well.

"I am married; yes, married. Mother, father, sister, I know you will blame me for 'running away,' but when George Meredith went like a man and asked for me to be his wife he was forbidden the house, and you know you would never have consented to my marriage with him.

"So we planned it all. I went to see Letty Moore, and was married at her home, and then came here to George's beautiful residence to live.

"Your hearts may all harden toward me, and if so, it will be very sad to think of myself as an alien from the hearthstone at home; but George's love will gird around me an armor of strength and happiness which will never fade. Hetty, I commend our parents particularly to your care. Be tender and watchful over them as unworthy *I* have never been. Try, Hetty, to make amends to them for *my loss*.

"Father and mother, I am sorry that I have grieved you, but happy that I have taken the irretrievable step, and that without any harsh words or tears, which would have been the consequence of our personal

pleading for the consent which you before denied. Now, good bye. George sends much love to all. Think sometimes affectionately of your loving but unworthy child and sister.

"MIRANDA MEREDITH."

"P. S.—We will spend the remainder of the summer at Niagara and the lakes. If you would write, I would be so glad. So would George. Good bye. God bless you all at the old homestead.

"MIRANDA."

My voice had wavered and choked many times as I read this letter, short and to the point, saying just what *had* to be said, and no more; no sorrow, no love, no sympathy. Mother bent her head down on father's shoulder and sobbed out:

"Oh! my child, *my child*, what a miserable, unhappy woman you have made your poor mother this day! Oh! Miranda, Miranda! I never believed it of you, my bonny pet—my beautiful daughter!"

Father never spoke a word. I turned away to hide my bitter, burning tears, for I loved Miranda dearly, and it seemed *so hard* that she should thus forget us! How the beautiful sunset of crimson and gold had faded away, and the shadows of gloom and darkness gathered over earth and sky! Just as the love, light and hope had faded from our weak, human hearts. At last, I controlled myself. I *would* make amends for the lost child, I thought, and once again I turned towards my grief-stricken parents. "Father, mother!

I am here yet—I love you. Great God have mercy!" I could not explain, in words, to my mother, and at her startled look of alarm I only pointed to father; *he sat dead in his chair!*

So sudden had been the shock, so intense and passionate his voiceless indignation, that he was stricken with apoplexy which had attacked him twice before. My blessed, noble father!

Many who read this little history will not appreciate the gloom that fell around us, for in the fashionable world, fathers and husbands are but *machines* from which to *grind and grind* the means of daily extravagance and nightly dissipation. What does it matter, *so the money comes?* 'Twas not so with us!

He was the sunlight, the hope, the joy of our homestead; and with the light dim in *his* eye there was little brightness on earth for our two wearied, grief-stricken hearts. How swiftly the home circle was lessening beneath the onward, oppressive march of days full-freighted with weights of woe and bitter disappointment!

* * * * *

After father was taken from us, for many, very many days we never looked out on the world; but, in darkened rooms, sat mourning over our loss. Mother was a weak, heart-broken woman. My strong, brave, patient mother. She had wound her tenderest dreams in life about Miranda, even more than father or me,—

who, with the glad flush of youth on her cheek, and the flash of love in her eye, had gone away with lips all brodered over with red laughter and smiles, and thoughtlessly torn off the fond yearnings garnered up around her, never hearing the weary wail of a broken-hearted mother's life-chords in her husband's musical words. Was it natural?

"This is a cold, harsh world, dearly-beloved, promising much, yet yielding *scarcely anything*," wrote a friend to me once, and, reader, young or old, you feel or *will* feel that each word is *truth—bitter, burning truth*. Aye—yielding *scarcely anything*!

And too truly was it proved to us that even human sympathy fades away as this heartless, hard-hearted world grows older in sin and sorrowful sufferings. For even while the gloom of death's shadowing wings hung over the old homestead, it was seized by creditors and sold, and mother and I were turned adrift without even a shelter. Nothing was left us save our clothes and fifty dollars!

Yet my arms were strong and willing, and my young brain active and bright, and so I worked—worked *anywhere*, that I might aid my mother. I stood behind the counter and pulled down and put up dress goods and boxes, wound and unwound lace, ribbons, etc., all day long for simpering misses and purse-proud matrons. I sat in the back rooms at millinery establishments and sewed until my back and eyes ached from very weariness, and my brain

seemed on fire, and still I sewed, conning over in my mind those heart-lines of Hood's:

"Oh! but for one short hour! a respite, however brief!
No blessed leisure for love or hope, but only time for grief!
A little weeping would ease my heart, but in their briny bed
My tears must stop, for every drop hinders needle and thread!"

And when mother's eyes grew dim with the shadows of the grave; when father's hand beckoned her to the spirit-world, I came here and took in sewing, and all night long would sit by her bedside, weary and worn, only sometimes bending my head to hide the struggling tears that wet my cheek. At last, mother went to sleep forever and left me alone, all alone in the world to toil and to suffer.

I wrote to Miranda many times, but she never answered any letter, until the one in which I told her mother had died blessing *her*, in spite of her ungenerous forgetfulness of us when poverty-stricken and homeless we battled with the world. Then she wrote back:

"Poor mother, she had a hard time. I hope you did your duty by her, Hetty, she deserved it, heaven knows! I suppose you are now adrift on the world, dependent upon your own exertions still. I feel sorry for you, hope you will succeed in all you undertake. Wish I could help you, but then our family expenses are *so* heavy, and I don't like to press dear George too hard for money just at this crisis. Good bye.

Your sister,

MIRANDA MEREDITH."

And so I found myself even deprived of the natural love of a *sister*, and in the wild despair of my breaking heart, I bitterly cried out, "Oh, God! why *was* I born to make my life such a miserable failure, when I've struggled so hard to be and to do good!"

Out of the vast stillness that followed the wail of my anguished spirit came a voice, low and sweet, like angel-music, "*Write.*"

Strong and hopeful I took up the task of life again, and over the world am I sending my dreams and hopes and fears, all the glowing idealities of my soul which I have treasured these many years, and the gentle words that are written unto me by those whose hearts are tender and true, send a balm and comfort to my aching breast I had never hoped to realize again.

The twilight is gathering around me, tenderly hiding my homely face in its soft shadows; yet I can reach out my hands and feel packages of letters heavy with bright argosies of love and friendship, and I bless God that to me, in my old age, there has come this great joy of loving and of being loved, by kindred souls, ugly, old and wrinkled as I am; and now I must say "good bye," hoping that when I come hereafter, I may be welcomed by a tenderer smile and a sadder heart-throb when you all know through what fiery furnaces I passed, before I could tell you *why I became an authoress*, and give you the history of romance and reality in an old maid's life.

LITTLE NED.

Fold ye the little hands
Calm o'er his breast;
Gently, sad mother,
Lay him to rest;
Pearl-white winged angels
Bear him above,
To bask in the radiance
Of Heavenly love;—
Dear little Ned.

Soft twining ringlets
Of warm, golden hue;
Eyes bright as summer skies
Sunniest blue;
Lie calm and still
Beneath the brown sod,
But the soul, angel-pinioned,
Has flown back to God;—
Dear little Ned.

Frigid the archéd lips
Of rosy, red hue;
Hushed is the baby sob,
Stilled the sweet coo;
For angels now lead him
In that heavenly home
Where his baby hands beckon
The loving to come;—
Dear little Ned.

A MORNING WITH MY LETTER BOX.



AM all alone this morning, save the companionship of ghosts of restless memories. I have drawn my little desk toward me and raised the rosewood lid to dive amid the sweet fragrance of long-ago. The whole room seems floating in an atmosphere of luxurious light.

The fire is burning ruddily in the polished grate; the golden-hued flames leaping and twisting and waving, like live serpents, about the red-hot iron bars; the rich carpet, with its heaps of bright-tinted, woven flowers rises gently about my feet; the deep, easy chairs court repose; the splendid grand piano standing invitingly open, whispers of fair fingers of magical-musical touch scaling the ivory keys with strains of luscious melody; and the fragrance of heliotropes and fresh-blown tube-roses floats upon the air like the balmy breath of guardian angels.

It is a sweet, sweet home, yet I am alone to-day and restless. This quietude does not soothe the surging billows of my aching heart, for it longs for the dear companionship that is lost forever, and only a gleaming radiance from the fadeless past can shut out the gloom of my soul at this present time. Memories

A MORNING WITH MY LETTER BOX. 19

come to me from Lethe's shores! I take up a package of letters and untie the scarlet ribbon that has grown dingy with much handling, and unfold the satin sheet of dainty Paris note. How the old days glint back like soft, amber-tinted sunbeams upon the gray gloom of my present life! Once again I stand with Nina Gray in the old school-house. Once again we con over our difficult lessons together, or wander up and down the narrow walk under the protecting shadow of Sehon Chapel, with eager wishes blushing upon the scarlet of our girlish lips; proud aspirations too—that are as second nature to every maiden-heart,—and dreams of conquering heroes, grown old, in it matters not how many wars; and granting queenly smiles to all the gallant courtiers who would bow before our shrines of beauty.

I dream on, and the school-days vanish and we separate; and weeks wear on into months before I hear of Nina again. I read the graceful chirography now; read of the clinging memories that wreath about her heart as well as mine; read of the gay times she is having, of her new friends and handsome admirers, and a jealous scorn curves my lip, until further down, I see that she is indifferent to all, loving only me, and the blinding tears make the fireflames leap and fall like thousands of tiny stars or shivered diamonds before my misty eyes; and I long to leave my country home too, and see the cities overflowing with the tumultuous beat of so many hearts. Ah!

Nina Gray, the longings are stilled now. I wish I had never left the shadow of the old roof-tree. I wish I had never shaken hands ungloved with the world, as I did with nature in the bosky dells and rugged hills, and wide, level meadows of my country home, where the blue-eyed violets and golden king-cups nodded to me from every shady or sunny hedge. I wish I had never known the light of glory-haunting eyes, that thrilled with tender passion-dreams. I wish I had no memories throbbing ever in my dreaming brain; of sweet words that fell from honied, crimson lips with the warm, glowing ardor of *first love*. I wish I might have lived on in the luxurious land of dreams, where Lethean rivers flow over the flinty realities of every-day life. But, alas! it cannot be.

I must tie up the heart-whispers I have gleaned from the Past, and put them afar off from my memory now; for here before me, from many others, I single out an old love letter, and I fairly smile at myself as the hot flushes of joy crimson my brow again, just as when I first read it. Ah! I do not love him now! His was a noble heart, but we were both too young to see aught but the sweet prospect the desert sunshine makes. *He is dead now!* He fell at Malvern Hill.

"Of all the sad words of tongue or pen—
The saddest are—'it might have been!'"

Envelope after envelope, with their precious freights of joy, love and happiness, gloom, despair and sorrow,

glide through my fingers till they pause above the first one I received at the beginning of my literary career in Kentucky. It is kind and generous. I can never forget how it thrilled me with pleasurable emotions when I received it, sitting alone, listening to the dreary sighing of wintry winds. My life was cold and desolate then, and the sunbeams of a generous heart flooded it with golden joy.

"LOUISVILLE, KY., Feb. 24, 1864.

Sans Souci:

Pardon me for complimenting you upon the success of your very pretty story of "Lily Lee."

"Though we may often meet through the columns of the *Journal*, we are, and probably ever will be, strangers. Still, I cannot refrain from over-stepping the bounds of conventional formality this once, and urging you to write often. You have talent, and it is your duty to use it for the benefit of your many friends and the human race at large. Please accept my congratulations upon your present success, and my kindest wishes for the future.

Sincerely, your unknown friend,

OLD SOLDIER."

Ah! Old Soldier, it is a true heart that throbs beneath your military garb, that leads you to the view of harrowing scenes of death, vengeance and despair. I know it; for you whispered brave words of cheer to a struggling woman and she a stranger. I bless you for them. I will never forget you.

There are hosts of other letters. They comforted and strengthened me too, but the offering of "Old Soldier" shone on me when the whole world was dark, and I knew no joy.

One package I lay away as too sacred for the public eye. The daintily-formed, singular chirography is very beautiful; but oh! the thoughts which they convey! Sweet angel-whispers in their spiritual loveliness are they to my fond heart. G. D. P., thou hast been the guardian of my young life; generous, gentle and kind, *how* kind, the angels and my stricken heart best know. From my earliest years, I have looked upon thee as great and wonderful in thy wealth of beautiful magnanimity! Age has but strengthened and intensified my devotion, now that experience has proven thee well worthy. And thy letters are like bright landmarks of glorious radiance in my chilly existence.

An hour has passed, and my hands have been lying listlessly upon my lap, and my eyes reading in the intricate mazes of the fire-flames the spirit-love of a vanished past; but the gray ashes are gathering over their sparkling light, just as the *duties* of life summon me from this sweet rest into the outer world again, to buffet with the rude waves of a frigid-fate sea, an inexperienced swimmer. But the golden shores of success, where the sunshine of hope gleams radiantly, smile on me in the distance, and eager hands would fain draw me lovingly from the cold gloom of the dark waters. *Nous verrons.*

I must close my desk now, with its argosy of bygone joys and tender memories. Some time in the future, it may be, I will raise the charmed lid, and smile upon the words that summon tears to-day, and weep over the joys that seem brightest in this the present time; yet they are *so few!*

It has been a delicious revery to me this morning over my letter box, and I feel stronger for the Future, now, that I have been wandering in the Past. Perhaps other eyes will smile upon these thoughts that may seem so trivial here, but oh! they are precious to *my* memory, and those who have, with tear-blinded eyes, traced lines sent unto them in magical love from the far distance, those who have sighed for the

"Touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!"—

will, I know, recall just such reveries in their own work-a-day lives—when bygone dreams beamed out from a lost life, alloyed with but little of what the world calls happiness.

Out to the dreary desolation of a path of duty, void of any blossoms to brighten and halo it, do I go, with the sorrowing wail in my soul, that thousands of loving hearts mourn over the length and breadth of our beautiful but desolated country—

"Break—break—break
On thy cold, gray crags, O sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me!"

MY TREASURES.

[INSCRIBED TO MRS. LUCY WRIGHT, OF COVINGTON, KY.]

Oh! how much of lonely hours,
Hopeless sadness, bitter pain,
Life-chords rent in quivering anguish,
Do those little words contain,—
“My treasures!”

Tears of passionate despair,
Dim mine eyes with scalding rain;
And my heart's low, sobbing cry, is,
“When shall I e'er meet again
“My treasures?”

And adown the shadowed valleys
Of my weary, aching brain,
Echo wakens silence, pleading—
“Give me back my lost again,
My treasures!”

They were all I had to love,
Save Lula, flower of tropic bloom;
Yet relentless Death has borne them
To the darkness of the tomb,—
My treasures!

MY TREASURES.

25

First he took my little Allie,
With her crimson, rose-bud mouth;
Hushed, for aye, the winsome laughter,
Like a balm-breeze from the South—
My treasure!

Then he called my baby Wallace
In the solemn hush of even,
While the angel whispered softly,—
“Yield ye up to God in Heaven,
Your treasure!”

And my anguished lips kept praying,
With the worship of a wife,—
“Spare, O Lord, my husband, though Thou
Crushest all my buds of life,
My treasures!”

Yet He hearkened not the pleading,
Of my yearning, woman's tone,
But gloomed out the brightest sunlight,
That my life has ever known,—
My treasure!

Lula yet is left to bless me,—
But the shadows come and go,
Where Allie, baby-boy and papa,
Lie sleeping calm beneath the snow—
My treasures!

And the weary years go leaning
To infinitudes of woe;
While my breaking heart is buried
In three graves beneath the snow,—
My treasures!

DRENNON SPRINGS, KY., Jan. 15th, 1864.

LINES.

Black eyes, flashing soft and bright,
As stars light up the ebon night;
Lips all red with "blood of June,"
Heart and life, and love in tune;
Voice the sweetest ever heard,—
Thou art as gleeful as a bird.

Thy path is strewn with fragrant flowers,
Thy days are notched with golden hours;
Thy dreams are all of hope and love,
Oh! may they never blighted prove;
And may thy heart forever keep
Aloof from woes that make us weep!

Oh! may thy life from youth to age,
Keep pure as truth each dainty page
Within the "book" which God hath given
To contrast with the one in Heaven;
And may each joy which Love grants thee
On wings of light come back to me.

WASHINGTON, GA., 1865.

NOT QUITE RUBBED OUT.



"UR *friendship* was not enough long-lived to need any burial *in memoriam*. It can simply be '*rubbed out*.' I could meet you as courteously and smilingly to-day as if there had never existed between us any unstable, capricious lie, misnamed *friendship*."

These words gleamed very cold and clear upon the cream-colored, dainty paper. No deep current of throbbing regret underlay those lines of biting sarcasm; and Bertha Bentley felt this as she read them over and over again. The tender tears shone in her blue eyes, as she raised her head which had been bent so eagerly over that long, bitter letter which Agnes Terrell had sent out to her, blighting all the beautiful flowers, now blossoming into fragrant loveliness, and making the rich valleys of her heart all drear, deserted wastes.

"Ah!" she sighed, "we are nothing to each other now; yet what a beautiful joyful dream it was! Now that it is gone—all gone—and I stand alone, I too can say: "Oh! friendship, friendship, thou fairest of earth's mocking delusions!" I think I feel the words deeper than Agnes does, for she has cast up an

impenetrable barrier between us, I scarce know why, and that without one sigh of regret, one tender allusion to the sunny past, a past *I* cling to, so fondly. Oh! it breaks my heart to lose her! She was all that proud Bertha Bentley loved, and now! like ships drifting to sea without rudders, we are separated in the Ocean of Life." And the little hands went up to hide the great grief-shadows creeping over that bonny face.

They had been friends—*spiritual* friends. Both were eager aspirants for literary fame. Hand in hand they were struggling up the steep, with alternate smiles and tears, joys and sorrows.

All through the dreary weather they clung unto the love which had hung their young lives with many fragrant blossoms of happiness.

Yet, in the golden June, a cloud of distrust overshadowed them; the rain of crushed dreams fell, and when afterwards hope's sun would fain have smiled promise-bows in the sky through the mist, Agnes and Bertha were not together to see them. And so their friendship had no *in memoriam* breathed over its blighting, in burning sighs and sorrowful tears. No! but as Agnes had said it, they turned the picture-faces in their hearts to the wall, and said: "the love they *had* cherished, with the memory, was completely *rubbed out*."

* * * * *

"I think when once we gain the heights of fame, and stand looking down upon the paths, rough and

rugged, in the past that we have trod, we feel there has been more of sorrow than of joy in our journey upward to the 'Castle of Cloud,' and we would fain put it all aside and lie down to rest." The voice of the speaker had a weary tone, and the listless tapping of the tiny white fingers upon the rosewood writing-desk, denoted that the inward spirit of Bertha Bentley was racked with the taunt of some bitter, fadeless memory.

She went on: "Here I am an old maid, almost twenty-three and not even a *woman's friendship* to brighten mine eyes."

Her glance fell on the packages of assorted letters that strewed the table.

"Oh, pshaw! I don't call those mocking, death-like things *friends*. Not more than two of the authors of their being have ever seen me, and then only as a casual acquaintance. They admire my 'lofty genius and playful fancy' they say, and commence a correspondence, but there is no *soul* in it. If I were to die to-day, they would forget me and write to somebody else. Heigho! I wish I had not been born an authoress. I wish Agnes' love and mine had not so soon been *rubbed out*." And the busy little hands went straying with tender caressings over a golden-brown tress of shining hair, braided and fastened to a card marked: "Agnes Terrell's friendship for Bertha Bentley; born Feb. 9, '52."

The sunlight lay on the window-sill smiling upon

Bertha as she smiled upon the old memories flooding over her soul, and thus tempted on by the sweet, fresh face, stole up, and kissing the scarlet mouth went glinting over her hair, and fading down in its shadows, whispered something in her ear. The breezes of summer, like mischievous fairies, ran helter-skelter over her manuscript and papers, and joining their strength, pushed some from the table, when others catching them up, jerked them hither and thither, rattling them defiantly, and scrambled under and over them on the floor.

Sunbeams, straying in, joined the spirit-revelry by chasing the gleesome elves, thus tormenting Bertha, and snatching quick, sweet kisses, caresses under the shadow of the manuscript leaves; and the revellers, taking flight, vanished the way the sunbeams came, brushing the curtain about in a pleasant wave in their eagerness to join their mates frolicking over the green grass and flower-plats with glad but noiseless tread. Still Bertha smiled and dreamed far into the twilight, and the stars peeped in on her, sitting just where the wind-sprites and sunbeams left her.

* * * * *

In a book-store! Strange place for such a meeting!

Yet Bertha Bentley thought not of it as she stood watching that face, the face of *Agnes Terrell*. Very much changed was it, she thought, as she studied the sad quiver round the proud, curved lips; the wan, pale cheeks, and the lustrous eyes, flashing and

gleaming and darkening as Agnes' eyes alone could do. She was talking to the apprentice. Neither noticed the entrance of Bertha.

"'L'Inconnue's Heart-Whispers.' This is something new, I see, and from the kind words George D. Prentice has spoken of it, I shall take it, knowing it is worthy of perusal. Do you know the real name of the authoress?"

"Really, Miss, I do not. I don't believe Mr. Prentice does himself. She seems a myth, for nobody knows her, and nobody can find out where she lives to learn to know her."

Eagerly, earnestly Bertha leaned forward, and as the lady passed spoke: "*Agnes!* I am 'L'Inconnue.'"

Over the pale face flushed crimson-tipped joy, and Bertha drawing nearer, nearer, whispered: "Agnes, darling, blue-eyed Bertha Bentley is not forgotten, I know. Is the old love *quite rubbed out.*" And Agnes, drawing her close to her heart, said, as she tenderly kissed her again and again:

"Let us turn the pictures on the wall to the sunlight of love once more, wee blossom, for they are *not quite rubbed out.*"

PARTED.

"With scorn on the lips—but love at the heart,
Thus madly we parted as enemies part;"
No action betrayed the painful regret
At the gloom-clouds in which our friendship had set;
Your glances were stern, and your words cold and few;
Oh! John, I ne'er dreamed I could thus part from *you*.

I thought that the fondness we each had betrayed,
Could never by absence be lessened a shade;
And that the glad flight of the swift, rolling days
Would strengthen and deepen love's wildering maze:
Alas! that our hands have unclasped on fate's shore
And friendship that blessed us, is dead evermore.

Yes, *dead evermore!* Fond mem'ries be still,
And come not to taunt me thus wildly! I will
Crush ye from out the depths of my heart
Tho' the life-blood should flow with maddening start,
Tho' my brain should go wild with passionate pain
And the scalding tears fall in woful heart-rain!

For my *pride is not dead* and not likely to die,
Tho' my love *is* borne down on the breast of a sigh;
Tho' joys *do* live again I once wooed with you
When the world was all roselight, honey and dew;
But the time has come when the radiant past
Must *bury* the joys ill-fated to last.

PARTED.

Bury them deep, for my life stretches on
Against waste of woe—and through it, alone,
Dreary and sad must I hopelessly roam,
My brain knows no rest, my heart has no home:
For 'reft of my trust in your faith and truth,
The dreams are all crushed that once brightened my
youth.

Yes; 'reft of the faith that was heaven to me,
All my fond hopes lie dead that were centered in
thee.

Each smile that I won, seemed a bright tinted flower,
That scented with fragrance my love in its bower,
And now when the blooms are all withered and lost,
I feel my life's woe and its *terrible cost!*

Ah! John, in thy roamings over the world
When memory has o'er thee her banner unfurled,
Thou shalt see a fair face bend from its cloud
As a death-angel smiles from the folds of a shroud;
And thou, too, shalt feel the soul-blighting burn
Of loving—and not being loved in return!

Till that hour shall come, as it certainly will,
I leave thee to joy and hope revels: So fill
High your tankard of bliss with a dream
Of love that will glow like a golden-tipped beam
Of sunlight from Fate's bright Lethean shore,
Where the ghosts of the sad past roam evermore.

Parted! with "scorn on the lip, but love in the heart,"—

Alas! that we two were thus doomed to part!
 Oh! by the deep thrills of passionate pain,
 By the memories that throng in my brain,
 And by the yearnings of hopeless regret
 I know I've not taught my soul to forget:—
 But the glance that you gave when coldly we parted
 Has proven me blindly, broken-hearted;
 Yet my love *has* been buried on Lethe's shore;
 Our hands are unclasped; *we'll meet nevermore.*

JANUARY 10th, 1865.

THE SECRET MARRIAGE.

PART I.



T was a warm summer day. The air rested on the blue hills in a snowy and purple haze very beautiful to behold.

The dreamy, golden sunlight stole into the shady porch of Merciful Minister's brown, moss-covered cottage, and on out upon the neat walks and borders; smiling on the prim rows of marigolds; stealing into the hearts of the stately sunflowers standing so firm in their lofty grandeur; and coquetting with the plain, homely hollyhocks that leaned against the wall in their scoloped skirts with such confiding and natural trust.

The little clock in the spare room, with its crown of feathery, asparagus sprays sparkling their pretty red berries joyously on the dead white cottage wall, chimed out "two," and then fell back into silence. Then the green window-blinds looked greener, the settees stiffer, and the straight, high-backed chairs harder than ever. The bed, with its soft, plump pillows and white counterpane, did not even take away the austere, old-maidish look; and one could well wonder how the asparagus sprays found their way in

such drooping grace about the little, round-faced clock, when they glanced at the other arrangements of furniture, and decoration.

Merciful Minister heard the clock-call, and starting from her nap she exclaimed: "I wonder why that girl don't stay in the house! She keeps me everlastingly uneasy about her. With Lauson Grundy, I'll bet!" and going to the door, she called in a loud, vexed tone, "You *Mer—cy!* Merciful Minister! Come here this minute! You know that town-boarder will be here directly!" But no answer came to her summons. After waiting a few moments, the hard-faced, prim Merciful Minister, senior, jerked up a sunbonnet that some careless, girlish hand had tossed upon a chair, and, muttering that "the young fellow was most too particular," she sauntered through the flower-garden and on into the orchard, where she was confident of finding the truant.

PART II.

"Why, *blue—blue eyes!* Of course I love you. How could I possibly resist you! And just to think, Sweet, to-morrow night you will be mine—mine only—eh?"

"Ah! Lauson, I almost fear to take this step. I feel as if we would both bitterly regret it. You might learn to love another, and then——"

"Then—away with such idle fancies and follies. I can never love any other but your sweet, charming self; and all your prophesies will be powerless to effect a change in the affection which thrills in my heart for you, guileless, beautiful, little Mercy;" and, with a fascinating tenderness, Lauson Grundy drew the graceful form close beside him, and kissed the pure brow again and again, as a seal to his avowed constancy.

"Lauson, I believe in you. I could not doubt you; but why do you desire a secret marriage?"

"Oh! Mercy, I have told you so often. I shall lose my prospects of a fortune which my father holds out to me, if it is otherwise. I love you, and would fain nestle you in my arms and call you wife—my little wife. But I cannot, dare not do this openly now! A few months will alter everything."

"Then, we had better wait."

"But, darling, I love you!"

"Lauson; if you love me, as you *say* you do, a few months will not lessen your devotion. If the waiting should lengthen to years, I will be true to you. Then when you can openly claim my heart and hand I will give them to you. You must not persist otherwise."

"But, darling, *I love you!*" And thus, with that old, ever new story, crimsoning his lips, he sat wooing, loving, and being loved, while the hours stole on until the sunshine lay in broad strips of gold along the fresh, green grass, and the sweet songsters of the

wild-wood trilled forth their music as they discussed the merits of ripe, luscious fruit all through the calm, slumberous summer day.

Lauson Grundy was handsome. That charm investing him, in addition to his fascinating, elegant manners and conversational address, it cannot seem strange that simple, little Merciful Minister should half worship him, when the fairest and queenliest of great far-off cities blushed in joy when he smiled upon them. He was of medium height, with great, glorious black eyes, flashing, and darkening and scintillating as the musical words thrilled upon his lips. His hair was of a rich, golden-brown hue, of which poets love to sing, and his mouth indescribably beautiful. They pained you with a sense of insecurity and insincerity when at rest; but let him smile, and a strange, sweet longing to kiss the handsome, curved, expressive lips thrilled all who looked upon him. A gay, dashing medical student, whose every wish in life had been gratified, he had grown old in the world's sins; each day deepening to a more fearful intensity the selfishness and arrogance of his uncurbed passions and undisciplined nature. And woe was the day when innocent, little blue-eyed Merciful Minister yielded her woman's heart unto his keeping! And yet, he loved her perhaps with all the fervor and depth of which his nature was capable. It could not be otherwise. Trust and innocence will melt the hardest heart, and allied to beauty and winning tenderness of

manner can not but be irresistible. And all these charms Merciful Minister possessed to a perfect degree.

And so through the bright beautiful days of sunshine and flowers he taught her the lessons of love that, once awakened, can never slumber with the dream-angels again; and *once crushed*, with the leaves and blossoms of woman's faith; once withered by the hasty footsteps which tread so ruthlessly over them with mocking taunts of vanished glory, can never hold up their smooth face for the kisses of hope's sunshine, but die out and be forgotten even by the star-beams and shadows.

From their beautiful reveries they were roused by the sharp, shrill tone of Miss Minister, spinster, calling Mercy to come to her immediately. Starting from the fond arm which encircled her waist, she said:

"These is Auntie. Oh! Lauson, she scolds so bitterly whenever she knows I have been with you. Please go away now; please do."

"Well, bye-bye, darling. Remember to-morrow night; I will wait for you under the shadow of the old front porch. Bye-bye." And hurriedly kissing her ere he sprang over the fence and disappeared from view, just in time to avoid the keen, shrewd glance of the old maid.

"With that fellow, Lauson Grundy, I suppose—down here among the apple trees. I don't like it at all. You had better remember Eve was tempted to

sin with such fruit; and this city gent is just another serpent. It bodes no good for country girls to receive such attention. *I never did.* With him, hey?"

"I am all alone, Aunt Mercy."

"Blushing mightily. What's that for?" The young girl's face dyed deeper crimson at the question, but bridling up, she replied naively:

"How could I do otherwise than blush when you talk so to me, Aunt?"

"Well, come along to the house, and remember, I don't like for you to be wandering way down here in the orchard. It looks romantic-like, and I don't want to see any more of it. Have you forgotten that the young parson who is coming here, is expected this evening?"

Together they wended their way back to the neat, little house, talking about what should and should not be done when the gentleman was domiciled at "Minister Cottage;" and to one heart, at least, the trysting-place was forgotten, but the other sang with a mournful yet joy-thrilling sadness, "to-morrow night."

PART III.

The hour had arrived, and Merciful Minister stood looking around her cosy little room for the last time as a maiden. Her heart thrilled with a deep, foreboding sense of sorrow if she persevered in this step

false to her maidenly delicacy, and false to her woman's honor. But, as it ever does, love rebuked such gloomy phantoms into oblivion, and when the gentle tap upon her window reminded her of her promised tryst with the hero-idol of her dreams, she softly, yet fearlessly, passed through the narrow passage, and, opening the door, stepped out into the mist and silvery light of a moon-lit night.

"God will bless you, sweet, sweet Mercy, for your love and kindness to me." And Lawson Grundy drew the now trembling girl close, close in his arms and kissed her, oh! so tenderly, a lover's kiss, thrilling, intense, an eternity of joy and passion compressed in an instant.

"Are you wrapped up well, darling? You seem chilly;" and he drew the crimson shawl closer around the little figure nestling to his heart.

"Yes, but let us go away quickly. Aunt might wake up, and oh! she is so harsh and cold; she would never let poor, little Mercy come in again, but bar the door, and leave her to faint and freeze and die."

"Never, precious one, while my strong arm can circle round you the glow of my manhood's devotion," and he straightened his lithe, elegant figure with conscious pride as he spoke.

"Oh! Lawson! —" but she shivered so she could not speak, and perhaps it was useless, for every argument she advanced in opposition to his will would have been borne down with sweet, clinging kisses,

caresses, and her woman's heart, so hungry for love and sympathy, would have yielded. Therefore, it was just as well that the words remained unspoken.

Hurrying on, they soon found themselves in the little village church, and without faltering they passed up the broad aisle and stood before the altar. There were no rays of light save round them as they stood, the lover, the maiden, the priest. Removing the shawl and gazing with eager admiration on the sweet, girlish beauty, Lauson Grundy, with the eye of a connoisseur in statuary, thought he had never before beheld so much exquisite loveliness in woman's form.

Her blue, blue eyes were gloriously brilliant with inspiration caught from Love's Court; her mouth, quivering with scarlet tenderness, was parted, displaying a regular row of pearly teeth; the golden halo of hair was wreathed around her shapely head like a coronet of glory, and a wreath of white jasmine nestled the star-flowers above her brow; her cheeks were glowing with intense excitement, and her shoulders, white as Caucasian snow-banks, rose from the soft folds of her pure muslin dress. "*Mine, all mine,*" he whispered in eager, passionate tones—and with strange solemnity she answered—"through life unto death."

Together they knelt there, in God's Holy Temple and vowed to cling unto each other for better—for worse. Just as the marriage rites were performed, the clock in the belfry above chimed out midnight in

solemn mystic strokes; and shuddering with a vague, indefinable dread and alarm, which even the strong arm around her could not wholly banish, Merciful stepped out beneath the light of stars, invested with a new beauty and sublime holiness. The glory of *wifehood* rested upon her head crowned with such few and tender years.

PART IV.

The winter was gliding over the earth in ghost-like garments of snow; pale and still, save for the wild, wailing winds that breathed out in their mourning spirit-voices the woe of human sorrows, yet to fall in gloomy clouds over some gay, glad heart, buoyant with life-joys; or else wailing of blasted hopes, blighted faith and tottering trust, that bowed some soul, passing a life on earth, bitter as the solemn, silent journey which each one must take alone through "the valley of the shadow of death." The little cottage, where we first watched the sunshine and the gay flowers in the glorious, golden June, stood gray and solemn amid its sleety walks, and its drear, deserted flower-plats, where only dried wisps of straw and withered stems, and yellow stubble grass were left to mock the vanished glory, and stand as simple monuments of the imperishable past and the resurrection of nature from this deathlike bondage of ice and

sleet which would melt 'neath April's tears, sweet May's smiles, and the high-sounding voice of gusty March.

A huge fire roared and crackled in the broad-mouthed chimney. The shining rows of delf and tin adorned the shelves, and the household gods were dismissed from the evening service. Strings of scarlet and green peppers festooned the wall above the dresser, side by side with neat bunches of sweet-scented thyme, useful sage and life-everlasting. Miss Minister and little Mercy sat in the warm glow, but neither spake a word, for care and anxiety pressed heavily on either heart and brain, and the tide of bitter memories swept in over either one alike, covering with gloomy waves the landmarks of life. For strange and cold, silent and unsympathizing as she seemed, the old maid once had human love, hopes and dreams of happiness bounding high in her heart, and it was not for the world a fitting duty to peer into the dark closet of her soul, or else sneer at her in her drear, deserted, lonely womanhood. And little Mercy had long since conned the bitter, bitter lesson, that, once learned, can never be forgotten, and which ever sears with a seething burn, "it is not all of life to live." But few, very few times had she met Lauson Grundy since the midnight when they stood in the village church and were solemnly united as a man and wife; for pressing business had called him away almost immediately afterward. The first days of his

absence were intensely lonely, but the mail-days brought her precious freights of love and tenderness, and she sang, with a new strange joy thrilling at her heart, "somebody to love!" As the days stole on into weeks, these little tokens of memory ceased to bless her. Weary months had vanished on the ceaseless wings of time, and no word of tenderness came to acknowledge her as a "wee, bonny wife." So the great shadows of grief had stolen the roses from her cheeks, the love-song gushing from her sweet lips, the elasticity from her frame, the spring from her light foot-fall, and now lay in meek woe amid the violet-deeps of her beautiful eyes, and left her a spiritless, broken-hearted woman.

While they sat thus, a rap upon the front door roused them, and they both rose with startled looks to answer the summons. A letter was thrust in from the half-frozen hand of the post-boy, who had not time to stop, and the door closed again on the dismal winter twilight. With a wild light in her eager eyes, little Mercy knelt before the fire-flames and broke the seal of the strange visitant at the cottage. She read, on, on, her head bowing lower, closer to the paper as she studied the characters that were all of fire to her burning brain. Her hands shook and grasped the letter with a strange, unnatural fierceness. A moan broke from her ghastly, pallid lips, and that was all. She had fainted. Miss Minister bent down beside her and took the letter, reading each word slowly and

distinctly aloud—entirely forgetful or indifferent to the senseless girl, for she partially suspected the *dénouement* which its contents would develop:

“WHITNEY, February, 1857.

Miss Mercy Minister, Jr.:

As I have committed the sin, mayhaps it would be better for me never to betray it, nor would I, did I not know how falsely Lauson Grundy had acted by your love.

You are not to blame. You are pure, pure as the angels in heaven, and the sin of the deed, done in defiance of moral law, does not rest on your innocent head, God knows. *You are not the wife of Lauson Grundy, and never have been.* It was a mock marriage that night in the village church, and *I was the priest as well as the summer boarder at Minister Cottage.* I was obligated by debt to Lauson Grundy, and went at his summons to *perform that ceremony*—first having obtained a written contract that I was freed from past debits.

Never until now, that I feel the passion and glory of loving and being loved, never did I recognize the immensity and depravity of the crime I committed, tempted on by a devilish fiend. Lauson Grundy is now about to marry a beauty and heiress here in Whitney. With sincerest and deepest regrets that you should suffer through unanointed villainy,

I am, your repentant and remorseful friend,

LUCIEN BINGHAM.”

“Curses, everlasting curses be heaped upon your head, base wretch—vile polluter of your father’s and my name. May you never live to greet the dawn of another day!” and, white with rage, that, like a simoon, swept over her with desolation in its track, Miss Minister clutched the fair, wan arm and dragged the lifeless form to the door, put it outside, and shutting it again, barred it, and left the lone, blighted orphan in the cold. She then sat down in the kitchen to curse the hour she ever was born, doomed as she had been to disappointment, disgrace and despair.

The cold, freezing wind blowing keenly against the pallid face of little Mercy, wakened her from her lethargy to the bitter realization of life; an aimless existence; an orphan; homeless; destitute of character in the cynical eyes of the world; blighted to the heart with an incurable disease. She could not look beyond her to a single ray of light, not even the halo of glory from the smile of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour, who blessed repentant Mary Magdalen, and bade her go and sin no more.”

PART V.

In Whitney! Yes, her woman’s love bade her defy the words that had been written unto her, blighting out her life; bade her seek the glorious face that had so often smiled on her, bade her plead for the

gentle words that once blessed her and, if he only loved her still, she would try very earnestly to forgive him the great wrong he had done her, and she would bless him with her dying, fainting breath.

Poor, little Mercy! like all other women who love, her deathless cravings for the lost joy of her life made her humble, weak, *very weak*. And so she had wandered on, gasping, begging, fainting, dying, until the twilight of a vanishing day found her on the outskirts of Whitney. Where should she go? What should she do to find her husband? Aimlessly she wandered on, shrinking in ghastly terror from the rude crowd which jostled her hither and thither. One man, attracted by her pretty face, with its great, glorious eyes, stepped up beside her and asked: "Where are you bound, pretty lassie?" "Please, sir, I am only a broken-hearted woman, bound for my grave, and a deathless sleep," And awed, he passed on and left her standing beneath the lamp-light, half frozen and alone. It was a sweet relief, and with a strange, whirling sense of her great desolation sweeping over her, she turned up a brilliantly lighted street, and crouching down close beneath the lofty windows of an elegant mansion, she prayed to God with a wild, longing earnestness, to let her die—*only to let her die, that this pain could cease!* Two shadows melting into one fell over her as she raised her eyes—and the handsome face of Lauson Grundy was smiling the old, bright smiles, in a fairer one, that, like the

gentian-cup, received the sunshine of his wooing, yet gave no return, while the crimson rose, with the golden heart, that had so eagerly drank up the sunbeams and tears of love, lay withered and dead, so near to them and yet so far—*so very far apart*. Yes, dead—for the crushed heart beheld too truly its *isolated desolation*, and with one wild cry to God for strength, was wafted before the pearly gates of Eden on wings of unseen angels.

Next morning, as Lauson Grundy, in his elegant dressing-gown and slippers, sipped his fragrant Mocha coffee and read the news, a burial was taking one number more from earth to the Great Tribunal, but that did not concern *him*—oh, no!—*was he not a man?* Later in the day, he lighted his cigar with a slip of newspaper, upon which was the following notice:

"FOUND FROZEN TO DEATH.—This morning, at three or four o'clock, Policeman S——, going his rounds, discovered a woman *frozen to death*, underneath one of the windows of Judge Smither-son's elegant mansion. She is very beautiful, though her features betray a gauntness which despair or hunger alone could give. She has no doubt seen better days:

'One more unfortunate
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate
Gone to her death.
Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young and so fair!'

She will be buried in the Alms House Cemetery at 9 o'clock A. M."

* * * * *

Little Mercy is forgotten by all who once knew and loved her. The homestead her presence used to brighten is not as it once was. The rank, tall weeds have shadowed out the less thrifty flowers. The tiles on the roof are gray with age; and the mould of dust and Time and dripping rain lies thick upon the door-sill where her light, trim foot will never fall again. The fragrant apple-blooms will blow and fade; the sunshine will die in the shadow; but Mercy's dainty figure will never glide in the wonted trysting-place again.

A wild, dark-browed woman is ever pressing her face against the dim window-pane, or peeping out of the door, calling querulously: "You, *Mercy!* Come here! Dear me! that girl half worries my life away!" But little Mercy never answers; and so the harmless maniac numbers out her days unloved and alone.

TO _____

In thy far-off Georgian home,
Where the sunbeams kiss the flowers,
Till their dainty, perfumed petals,
Close to mark the evening hours,—
Does not an absent face, dear one,
Lean to thee from gold-edged gloom
Wreathed in shad'wy, withered buds
Of affection's blighted bloom?

Does no yearning, tender dream,
Come in the twilight once again,
Drifting o'er thy soul a stream,
Of joy not unalloyed with pain?
Wails no voice in dreary sadness
Through the aisles of heart and brain,
Words that crushed out all life's gladness,
"We two ne'er shall meet again?"

Does no head of golden hair,
And blue eyes where the love-light shone,
Nestle close unto thy heart
When in the gloom thou art alone?
Do not two pallid, little lips
Quivering 'neath their weight of pain,
Part to whisper low and sadly
"We two ne'er shall meet again?"

Parted ne'er to meet again!
 And thro' the lapse of coming years
 My poor heart *alone* must drink
 The potion—of such *bitter tears!*
 For sunlit smiles of love will lure *thee*
 Into the cold world's glare again,
 While *I* have girt on life's armor
 And stand *alone* in the pitiless rain.

Aye! out in the *pitiless, freezing rain*
 Has your little elf-child wandered
 Claspings to her breaking heart
 Love-dreams of her young life squandered;
 Praying wild to God for strength
 To crash back all the weight of pain,
 Which yet *will* thrill on quivering lips
 "We two ne'er shall meet again."

JANUARY 22, 1864.

SALOME MERRILL.



T was on the 22d of February, 1861, when Salome Merrill put aside her girlhood, and stepped with a high-arching pride into the glorious, *womanly life*, where there is so much enjoyment; and where the golden sunshine of happiness rests over the soul like a benison from heaven! She was a beautiful creature, and her knowledge of her own attractions rather heightened than decreased her powers of fascination and perfection.

Of medium height, with a form gracefully and fully developed, she walked a queenly Diana among splendid women. Her eyes were "darkly, beautifully blue;" her hair, rippling in soft, golden-brown waves over her classic head, was worn half tangles, half curls; her complexion was perfectly wonderful in the exquisite blending of the rose and the lily; her mouth was rather inclined to be large with full, crimson lips, arched and expressive, parting over a double row of the smallest, most perfect teeth, white as the meat of the cocoa. Her mind was as cultivated as her form and features were perfect. And yet, with all this loveliness, there was one trait in her character

which might be possibly deemed a blemish. She was most inordinately ambitious; a sentiment few women entertain, when the heart and its untrammelled impulses may ever so lightly be brought out in opposition. Salome had had the misfortune to lose a most devoted father at an early age; and many deprivations assailed her and her beautiful mother, which otherwise they would have never known; *but they had risen from the gloom.*

We will go back to the day of her first advent into society, when she bade defiance to the world and vowed to conquer fate. She was sitting alone, enveloped in a deep mantle of brown study, and the intricacies of her mind's wanderings displayed themselves in low, murmuring words, which yet were distinctly audible. At last, she rose up and paced to and fro with rapid strides, talking on in an eager, earnest and passionate strain: "Yes, here am I, just eighteen, beautiful, talented, ambitious, born to fill a queenly station in the social sphere, yet forced by destiny to rank among the *parvenus*, or else go amid the *haut ton* upon suffrance, where I would have claimed an incontestible right, had fate been less scathing in the thunderbolts of wrathful misfortune she hurled upon my family. Oh! my father! my gallant, glorious father! Why, oh, why in the high-tide of success, were you stricken down, leaving your wife and child desolate, uncared for in this wide, wide bitter world? What great sin had you committed

that God should thus show his *justness* to erring humanity? Oh! my soul sinks panting in my breast when I think of the breakers that have dashed round us since you died! My poor, blessed mother, who loved you so, has borne the brunt of battle like a heroine; rising, as a star in the clear blue vault of heaven gives glory to the night, from the sea which would fain have swept her from the pedestal of her high estate. It rests with me to bring back the ancient richness and honor of our name and race. My heart! You must die to-day, because *to-night* I shall shun and forget you forever!" With a quick gesture, she clasped her hands over her breast and went on. "Yes," she said, after a moment's pause in speech and pace; "die to-day, because henceforth it shall be other than a heart's destiny which I will pursue. I shall *accept* the patronage and chaperonage of Mrs. Walters' to-night. I have views and objects to accomplish, and my pride —"

Just then, the door opened, and, turning quickly, Salome faced her mother, a sweet-browed, soft-eyed, graceful woman, who looked "every inch the lady." She advanced in the apartment, and spoke eagerly, while a glad flush tinged her pale cheek with rose: "Salome, you will appear to-night under charming auspices. General Seville has called and asked permission to escort you to the Walters'. He wished to see you, but I excused you under the plea of indisposition and he went away very much disappointed.

It will be a very distinguished honor to make *your* *début* with such an elegant attendant and a GENERAL too!"

"What did you tell him, mother?"

"Oh! that you would accept him, as a matter of course, and be grateful for the courtesy which he so gallantly and gracefully extended."

"That was right. I shall be worthy of my darling, politic, little mamma, one of these bright days, when we both wake up in a fairy palace!" and Salome took the happy face, where the wrinkles of care began to show, in her fair, soft hands, and kissed it reverently and tenderly.

As they stood together, one could almost wonder which was the more beautiful in form and feature--the mother, mellowed by the shadows of time, care and patience that fell with a softened halo of loveliness over her brow, or the daughter, with the warm life-blood of youth, pride, beauty and ambition, bounding, leaping, throbbing in her heart, flashing in her eyes, crimsoning on her lips, and moulding her form to faultless grace and symmetry.

The hours wore on in the still, quiet routine of the days at Salome Merrill's home, almost a monotony. The warm flush of noon passed off into the soft halo of sunset-clouds, glorifying the world and heaven with their Tyrian dyes; and then, when the cool, gray shadows of twilight and night fell over the earth, when the evening star shone like a real presence, the

manual day-labors were put aside with a little feverish sigh, and Salome submitted herself to her mother to be dressed for her *début*.

At last her robes were adjusted, the jewels were clasped, the cloak and nubia wrapped round her, and General Seville drew her hand over his arm, and led her out to the carriage in waiting, proud that for once he claimed her for his own, and that, too, upon the evening when other luminaries would grow less in the royal radiance of the princess of hall and banquet.

* * * * *

"Well, I declare! Will the wonders of this world *never* cease?" emphatically exclaimed Mary Quigley, as, with a little nervous excitement, she patted her dainty satin slipper down amid the soft-woven flowers that stole all noises from the feet, and her eyes went restlessly wandering over the couple that had just entered the drawing-room, and were paying their evening devoirs to their host and hostess, the Walters. They were Salome Merrill and General Seville; one looking well worthy the other.

The evening wore on in gaiety and festivity. Salome was undeniably the belle. Never had her wit sparkled so brilliantly; never had she proven herself so irresistibly attractive; never had she seemed half so beautiful. As worshippers at the shrine of an Eastern divinity, the lords of creation knelt with bowed heads and throbbing hearts before the omnipotence of her loveliness of form, feature and intellect,

that played its bright scintillations of electric radiance over them.

She wore a soft, glossy, green satin robe, that had been her mother's in her palmy days, but which had been altered to suit the fashion of the times, with a rich over-dress of quaint, fleecy lace. Its airy folds fell down around her dimpled elbows, leaving the lower part of the fair, graceful arms exposed, with the adornments of two beautiful bracelets of twisted pearls and the small, dainty hands which were encased in delicate Jouvin kids. The same rich lace was gathered from the shoulders up around the arching throat and fastened with an old-fashioned pearl pin; her hair was rolled up from her brow in gentle, undulating, golden-brown waves of light, and fell down around her shoulders in soft, massy ringlets. She looked indeed like a sweet sea-nymph from the coral caves, robed in emerald-hued waves with foam-crests of spray.

That entertainment decided her reinstatement into family position in the world. She became the belle of the season. It was singular too, that she should be the latter; for she only went out enough to make her face missed when she was away. One day the crisis came, as Salome knew it must, and she stood ready, armor-girded for the contest.

It was in the Spring of 1863, one quiet, luscious, dreamy day, when worldly cares slip off the human heart like broken gyves, and it soars up, up to the

blue sky, and beyond it to the angels' home and the presence of the Infinite. Salome had been reading very busily in the parlor, but, gradually overcome by the warm weather and fatigue, she fell asleep.

An hour, perhaps two, passed by, and still she floated on the calm, luxurious and dreamy waves of success, when the door unceremoniously opened, and General Seville entered. He paused speechless with admiration before the beautiful, beautiful picture!

The book had fallen from its upright position on her lap; one fair hand was resting above it, all rose and lily; her graceful, shapely foot had stolen from out the azure folds of her muslin dress; her lithe, elegant figure was displayed to perfect advantage by one round, pure arm which was raised above her head; and her cheek, flushed with sleep, rested lovingly against its beauteous symmetry; her hair had stolen from its confinement, and lay on her neck caressing it with luxurious fondness; her red lips were slightly parted, looking like ripe, cleft cherries.

Fascinated, he drew nearer, nearer, until he stood beside her, and then, as if fairly bent under some magic charm, he leaned over her and pressed his lips upon her forehead. Thrilled with some indefinable emotion, Salome started from her slumber, and opened her great blue, blue eyes, full of dreamy languor, to his face. He reached out his arms and drew her close, close to his heart, whispering in clear, low, liquid, loving music—"Salome Merrill, I love you—I love

you!" Her first impulse was to start away from him, but remembering the mother who loved and struggled for her, and who depended upon her now; remembering her vow to conquer fate and bear down her stern decree, she bowed her head upon his breast, to hide the bitter sneer upon her lip, the cold, hard light in her eye, saying softly, in a trembling, tender voice, that would, if he had only known it, have given him ample penetration into the depths of feminine deception:

"Edwin, do you love me truly?"

"Better than my life, darling. Only tell me 'tis not in vain, and make me happy, happy as I long to be!"

"'Tis not in vain." And the indescribable fascination of the beautiful eyes charmed him with glamorous glory.

Why go on? Reader, if you love, or ever have loved, you know as well as I of all the days of blissful joys, of golden sunlight and fragrant bloom; indeed, as Ik Marvel says, "My poor, crippled pen" is inadequate to the task of describing love, joy, and fascination that can only be felt.

If you love not, and never have loved, you will not, can not appreciate and understand all this, for it will seem extravagance to you. Not so though, thank heaven, to those who have found it is not all of life to *live*, but that there is a higher, holier fascination and joy than even the angels ever know.

Three weeks later found Salome robed in bridal costume, looking, as brides always do, lovelier than ever before, and her proud mother in a flutter of glad, eager delight at the success of her daughter.

Oh! mother-love! Oh! mother-pride! good, great and true as you are, it is not often that you glance beneath the surface to read the *heart*—*did* you, more loveless marriages would rise up over the length and breadth of the world than could be numbered in countless ages past.

Salome went to New York on her bridal tour, and when she came back to her old home once more, it was in an elegant carriage, with outriders in livery; with dashing, fiery roans decked off in scarlet tassels, silver-mounted harness; and General Seville, devoted and lover-like as ever, lifted her out, and, with tender grace and admiration, escorted her up the steps, where in the days of their happy, vanished courtship, they had whiled away so many pleasant, tropic-plumaged hours of golden and crimson evening glory.

Many, who in their dark hours scorned them, would fain have sought the sunlight of their presence in their palmy days of success; but it was not proud Salome Seville's nature to forget the past—and *not one* ever gained admission with the *crème de la crème* who graced the elegant, hospitable mansion of General Seville. It was *madame's* will that this should be so!

She outwitted fate, married a rich man devotedly attached to her, and if at first she did not love him so

well as she dreamed she might, and knew she could, she is just as contented and happy as if her spiritual partner, whom she has never seen, is not wandering over the broad earth, watching and waiting for the real joy of her presence, probably to end his career by marrying some woman whom God intended for another, but who, guarded by the decrees of *fate*, never will meet him until the heavenly days when there will be no marriage or giving in marriage.

WEE WILLIE.

[LINES INSCRIBED TO MRS. WM. MYERS, OF ST. LOUIS, MO.]

I.

The spring-breezes are blowing; the flowers in bloom
Float soft on the air their fragrant perfume;
The mellow-songed birds awaken the strain
Of life, love, and music, in spring-time again.
The silver-voiced rills ripple gladly along
Like faintest heart-echo of a dead mother's song.
And the sunshine darts arrows all pointed with gold
Amid the dark forests, on hillside and wold.
There is hope in the soft-attuned zephyr's sweet strain,
But I never can welcome wee Willie again!

II.

His bright eyes are sleeping beneath the damp sod,
But his soul-angel, pinioned, has flown back to God.
His baby-coos hushed, and stilled the sweet breath;
His baby-smiles lost in the gloom-cloud of Death.

In vain lists sweet echo for the musical call
Of his little feet patting along through the hall;
For silence shrouds all in sad garments of woe,
While shadows soft-tinted steal swift to and fro;
And I sigh as I list to the zephyr's sweet strain,
For I never may welcome wee Willie again!

III.

Amid the sweet blossoms of that heavenly world,
With glad, joyous song, and white wings unfurled,
My baby-boy wanders in beauty so bright
Thro' realms of eternal and fadeless delight.
An angel to plead for his mother in heaven,
That her life may be known by the bud she had giv'n
To bloom 'mid the lilies, on the great Eden-heights,
That open their hearts full of golden-hued lights;
Oh! one day, it may be, as I list for Spring's strain
I'll hear wee Willie's voice lisping "Mamma" again.

IV.

And a bright face will lean from the blue sky above
All beaming and thrilling with innocent love,
And the rose-tinted clouds will bend low in the west,
Like angel-wings guarding the home of the blest;
And my soul will rise on them with glad thrills of joy,
To greet once again my spirit-bright boy;
And when quick, eager footsteps trip over the hills,
And sweet echo answers the silver-voiced rills
Will the clover-buds blossom and sing the sweet strain;
"She has found and has welcomed Wee Willie again!"

BEECHLAND, KY.

IN DAYS GONE BY YOUR HEART WAS MINE.

In days gone by your heart was mine—
What can have changed you so?
You beam on me no smile of old,
Your words are cold and low!

I miss your cheerful, merry voice,
I miss your springing step:
I miss the soft clasp of your hand,
The pressure of your lip.

E'en when alone, you did not change;
Another claimed your heart,
And calm, cold smiles wreathed round your
mouth,
E'en though I said—"we part."

You turned away to meet the glance
And kiss that Anna offered,
And almost cast the friendship back
I had so fondly proffered.

But go!—another claims the love
I wildly fancied mine—
My heart in time will surely heal,
My coldness equal thine.

NEWCASTLE, KY.

A REVERIE.



IS midnight, and over the world there
rests a solemn hush, as if the flow of
life had ceased to ripple against the
shores of Time, and the turmoil and care
of humanity had been blotted out in the
void of countless ages past.

The sky bends cold and gray above the sleeping
earth that lies so calm and still wrapped in its robes
of purity; and the bare boughs of bush and tree are
decked with starry crowns of ice, that gleam like
diadems of fate upon the brows of withered joys that
oftimes stand beside me as monuments to mark the
blighting, onward march of years and memory. The
cold, silent stars look down from the dark, drifting
clouds that float hurriedly on to the horizon of the
west, like stern sentinels that keep watch and guard
over the dim and misty vistas of the unknown
Future. The lady-moon smiles silvery light o'er lofty
hills and rippling stream just as she shone when
Paradise first grew radiant with her loveliness; just
as she shone in times when kings in "crimson guilt
went down," and saints and martyrs died; just as she
shone upon our once glorious land, the pride and
hope of nations and of ourselves, but which now fast

linked to gaunt-faced woe and desolating war, who stand shrieking, and *will* stand till the blood-clotted gates of Janus open wide.

The winds are asleep to-night—and even the dark river sweeps noiselessly on through its snow-draped shores. The world is deep in sleep that is so near akin to Death, and still I count the driftings of Time o'er the dun sands of hours, and wonder that they ebb and flow so slowly. The rush of maddening thoughts whirl through my brain and tears start from their briny bed and like shivered pearls of tenderness drip down over my cheeks flushed with the glow of memories that can never die. The fitful changes of my life come glinting back to curse or bless me with their weight of woe or happiness.

My childhood wreathed in perfumed flowers comes freighted with glad joy and gleesome laughter; and then as steadier years put aside my infantile dreams the impulses that gave a glory to my young life are buried one by one till here I stand a *woman*, bearing the weight of weariness and woe impressed upon her heart and brain and which no after joys can e'er dispel, for the wounds of Time, and the World's harsh sneers have burned their taunting stings *too deep!* And yet, in wandering far and near, some knowledge I have gleaned that casts a halo o'er the Past the faded *Now* can never win.

Love has been mine that seemed to come unto my life fresh and glowing from the smile of God's

benison: Friendships I have known that seemed to *fill* my heart and light the path of my future. Words have been breathed, and bright smiles have glowed on lips passion-laden with love; and hand-clasps and caresses have thrilled me with strange longings for happiness and home, where I could *rest* and be at peace with all the world, "praising me afar off." But they have all gone glimmering amid "the things that were," and I am left alone to ponder o'er the joys that lost come not again.

What matter? Life is but a span; and whatever woe or disappointment lies wait in the coming years for me, it cannot deprive me of *past* memories. And while I have duties in life to lead me on to a goal of success I need not weary by the wayside, for

"Lives of great men all remind us
We can make *our* lives sublime
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of Time.

Footprints that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us then be up and doing
With a will for every fate—
Still achieving—still pursuing—
Learn to labor and to wait!"

BEECHLAND, January, 1865.

TO FRANC.

As violets golden seek the sun,
Or bright rills meet the sea
Where waves, foam-crested, melt in one,
So, Franc, my heart greets thee.

As sunbeams light the fragrant hedge
Where graceful hare-bells bloom,
So does thy friendship's smiling pledge
Dispel my soul's sad gloom.

As rose-lipped shells in murmurs soft
Keep singing of the sea,
So, Franc, in music-whispers oft
My loving heart woos thee.

As joy and love gild Life's gay morn
With Hope's bright, sparkling beam,
So are the happy fancies born,
When of thy smiles I dream.

And as the glow of memories fond,
Far down the Past doth shine,
So, Franc, I'll lean to hopes beyond
And give my heart to thine.

And all the joys that Time may waft
On sunlit waves to me
Shall brim the cup of love I've quaffed
In sparkling wine for thee!

BEECHLAND, 1865.

I LOVED THEE.

I loved thee, yes, I loved thee
With a passion deep and strong;
But thy heart, it was so fickle,
I *could* not love thee long:
Deep as were the fond hopes awakened
By thy smiles, thou Child of Song.

Like the rosy rainbow tinting
Of some gorgeous tropic-bird,
When the molten golden warblings
In its little throat are stirred,
Sang thy love throughout my heart-lands
Sweetest music ever heard.

Angels paint the clouds of sunset
Into gold and azure bloom;
And the 'broideries of twilight
That night's purple shades entomb,
And thy words were fairy weavers
At my fancy's subtle loom.

Like the sparkle of the fountain,
Like the froth upon the sea,
As the eagle loves the mountain,
Or as flowers woo the bee,
Faith and fancy offered incense
When my fond heart worshipped *thee*.

Yet thy smiles were strangely wanton
 As the April drops of rain,
 When they wake the slumbering blossoms
 To the sunshine's smiles again;
 Wonder 'tis that *I* could ever
 Hope their brightness to retain!

Think not that I e'er will blame *thee*
 For the lightness of thy love;
 Human hearts like ours could never
 To the same sweet impulse move,
 More than we would deem it *nature*
 Did the vulture wed the dove.

Paths like ours have different windings
 Though they both alike may seem;
 Mine with thorns, and thine with flowers,
 Skirt along Life's rippling stream;
 Let us clasp hands, ere we part,
I to work—and thou, to dream.

If we never meet again
 In the lapse of future years,
 All I ask thee to retain
 Are the memory-smiles and tears.
 I know I *ne'er* will love again!
 Half in pleasure, half in pain,
 Child of Song, I sigh—the knell
 To all my dreams, one word, Farewell!

INGLESIDE, Dec. 6th, 1864.

AUNT PATIENCE'S DIARY.



I sat alone in the parlor, where the cheerful fire, and soft, easy chairs wooed us to linger, Aunt Patience and I.

Breakfast was just over, and there was no excitement to rouse my interest as I listlessly studied the fire-flames, while my hands lay folded idly over my book, "The Interpreter," and my brain busily counted the rain-drops of autumnal sadness, that were falling outside the crimson-draped window-panes from the gray clouds that lowered in the sky, while their invisible feet kept up a ceaseless pattering, and the tapping of their spirit-fingers, and tintinnabulations of their musical voices, pleaded for entrance there.

The ceaseless *click, click* of Aunt Patience's knitting-needles annoyed me with their audible monotony. As some relief from the nervousness growing upon me, I turned to speak, but was awed into silence by two great tears I saw fall from Aunt Patience's eyes into the soft wool, like dew-drops on snow, so unnatural did they seem there. I had never seen her moved before, although I had lived with her since my mother died, and sent me, a wee, little babe, to be loved and cared for by her sister, my aunt, my cold, silent, old maiden Aunt Patience.

And I sat there, wondering in my own heart how many sad and sorrowful memories she had knitted into the meshes of her busy idleness, while I, in the ignorance of indiscretion, deemed her insensible to human love or hate, and I studied her face with a new and more tender interest I had never felt before, yet which thrilled me strangely.

She was not beautiful; yet she had been, for one could trace the loveliness and fascination which must have clustered around her in the bright spring-time of life's youth and happiness, in the elegant and still stately figure, sitting so calmly in the crimson chair, while the sober folds of gray silk fell around her, and the fair muslin lay plaited across her breast; in the shadowy gray eyes with their heavy-fringed lids, where love-light and sunshine once nestled; in the aquiline nose with its little, high-bred curve and delicately dilated nostrils, and the firm, beautiful mouth and chin.

Her face was colorless and thin now; and the soft hair that stole out from the snowy, frilled muslin cap, was silvery in its waves; and lines of care and suffering lay upon the once rounded cheek, where love-blushes flitted from the rose to the lily. For every woman, whether she goes down to her grave unloved and alone, or with sad, aching hearts to mourn the loss of her smiles and tender words, gives unto some *one* the choicest and fondest thrills of affection she can know, and *never but to one!*

Yes, I decided that Aunt Patience had been beautiful and had loved. And then I watched her more intensely than ever, wondering why she was alone; why she had suffered; why she was so still and cold, and never spoke of her past life as other elder ladies do, but ever lived on without a spoken memory of what she had enjoyed or endured.

She felt the depth of my gaze, and looked up, as all people do who are watched, and, scanning my now blushing face, queried:

"What is it, Blanche?"

"Nothing—I was only thinking."

She fell back into silence a little while and then spoke again:

"Blanche, you have often expressed a desire to look through your mother's chests and drawers, and I ever promised, on your eighteenth birthday, you should be licensed to do with all as you might choose. You will arrive at that age to-morrow, but the sun may shine then, and you will perhaps forget it; it is dismal and dreary to-day, and I am but lonely company for youth and gaiety, you can go up in the garret, if you wish to do so." And with this lengthy speech, the lengthiest I had ever heard Aunt Patience make, she handed me a bunch of keys, and then turned resolutely to her knitting work, as if she desired, without words, to intimate to me to ask no questions, but satisfy myself. So I sprang from my cosy seat by the fire and went up stairs in the garret,

where I had never dared to step before, although my childhood had been passed beneath the roof-tree, and I had been absent but a little term at school in all my girlish years.

It was a dismal place, not at all like the garret where dear, glorious Ik Marvel's immortal Charley and Nelly played; and I shivered with a dim, indefinable dread as I stepped in under the arched doorway, and stood silent and alone, with the shadows, the cobwebs,—the spiders busy at their looms,—the gloomy old sea-chests and hair-trunks, all studded with brass nails, and here and there worn with travel and mould.

Where should I commence, I wondered to myself, and with a childishness, queer and strange in one who had never been a child. I resolved to explore the contents of the sixth trunk first, whatever they might be; I counted on until I came to it, then I knelt down in front of it and taking the little bunch of old-fashioned keys from my pocket I tried one after another unsuccessfully till a tiny, brass one fitted in the lock; I pressed upon it, it yielded, the lid sprang up with a rusty sound, as if it had not been raised for years, and I was intruding upon a secret it had hid in its enduring heart unmolested, while the light of love went out from human eyes, and silver shadows stole in among the golden and brown tresses that haloed fair, beautiful faces, long since laid away to sleep among the brown sods with the sunshine and

clover-buds springing above them into life and beauty, and fading with the autumn leaves, many, very many times; or with the life-cares wreathing martyr-crowns yet to gleam in immortal loveliness when the good and ill are judged together before God.

Clothes, of linen, lace, silk and woolen, were disposed in neat piles almost to the depth of the trunk, and I laid them aside with a beautiful reverence for the angel-mother I had never known. At last, a fold of silver paper, carefully disposed over some precious package, and the soft perfume of withered sprigs of lavender, met my sense. I raised up the paper and a wedding dress of white satin, yellowed and wrinkled with age in spite of careful packing, lay like a ghost of vanished glory and lost happiness before me; a soft, fleecy veil of lace, with a crushed wreath of artificial orange blossoms nestled near it.

Sighing, with a tremulous sadness, I said: "Young as I am, I have learned that all things are artificial, and marriage the most of all," for, dear reader, I had my life-history too, though I must not tell it now. Then I lifted the dress from the trunk with care and laid it beside the other clothing; as I did so, a package of letters and an old journal or diary fell beside me on the floor.

I cared for nothing else now. This perhaps would tell me of my mother, and I eagerly grasped the package and untied the white ribbon from around it; it seemed so like death. Envelopes, yellow, blue,

pink and white met my view, all postmarked, "Glenfield, New York." They fell around me with a noiseless fluttering, and I noticed they were directed to "Miss Patience Graham, Portland, Me.," in a clear, Italian chirography, beautiful as singular. I unfolded one of the letters, and read the signature, "Hugh Stanley." It was my father's name. With an indefinable fear that some wrong had been done to Aunt Patience, I read on, believing that, if it had never been intended for me to see them, they would have been removed. I know now that Aunt Patience did not remember that the little, brass key was among the rest on the ring.

"PARSONAGE, Sep. 3, '37.

"My little Patience has felt her heart give way many, very many times when the mail-days have come and passed and borne no letter to her eager, fluttering hands—eh? You must forgive me, wee one, when I tell you, harum-scarum fellow as I know myself to be, and everybody else admits, I would not have forgotten my guardian angel, the sunlight of home, that joy of the village as well as the pride, had it not been that my pious, good brother Leicester was suddenly taken ill and sent for me to come and cheer him up with my glow of fun and spirit. I have been bound here by a thralldom firm as Styx, by huge, dismal looking volumes of sermons to read, and more solemn ones in prospective which I am doomed to write at Leicester's dictation and direction. Even now, I have

stolen out in the sunshine under the catalpa trees and am dreaming, loving and thinking of you. Wishing you were beside me, with that everlasting little work-basket, darning some rent, or sewing on some lost button, and I could read or talk to you, and you could listen in your sweetly silent, and appreciative way, and we would often times look in each other's eyes and be, oh! *so happy!*

"Oh! little Patience, you can never understand how much I miss your sweet, winsome self, for I can never tell you. Sometimes I half fear this new and beautiful holiness, my love for you, will glide off and leave us desolated and alone—sad, human life wrecks of that terrible 'might have been.'

"Pardon me, darling, if I wound you by such fancies and vagaries. It is from no doubt of your affection, nor yet a falling off of trust in my own constancy, only a gloom-cloud I have probably gathered from this dreary parsonage, and my solemn-visaged, invalid brother. I sometimes wonder how we could ever have claimed the same mother, Leicester and I, for he is so righteous and ministerial in his sublime dignity and erudition—I so gay, careless and frolicsome, without the gain of manhood's years crushing out any boyish dream or tenderness that ever thrilled in my heart. And I, too, possibly in my vanity, have wondered whether he, with his prayers and hymns, carries any more souls to God than I do, with the sunshiny, smiling *trust* of my nature.

"But these are queer thoughts to be penning out to my little *Patience*, for *she* will love *me* the best, I am confident, although she knows Leicester to be the better man; and that he has a deep heart somewhere, while mine is a leaping, laughing rill, that will run all away in a *river* some day and be no more left of it. Yes, it is such a pleasure to talk to you *just as I feel*. I do not think, darling, I could ever love any woman as I do you. There is such a sublimity of trust in my devotion! I know you feel so toward me, too, or is there a *something wanting*, *Patience*, that makes you so often turn away from me when we are together, and sit so still? It may be though that the great love of your heart dashes along in such bright waves that it dazzles you into speechlessness. Is this so my little one?

"Oh! it floods over *my* soul now, and I yearn with indescribable tenderness for burning words to tell what I feel!

* * * * *

"One hour later! As it is always the way, I was not much surprised that my soul-communion was interrupted by a hasty summons from my brother, who is worse to-day. I learned that Blanche, your sister, passed through here this morning on her way from New York. Kiss her for me. Bye-bye, darling. I will be with you soon, very soon.

"Devotedly, and ever yours,

"HUGH STANLEY."

Here I should have paused, but the demon, Curiosity, stood by me, and queried, "If he loved *Patience* why did he not marry her?" and so I read on through all the package of love letters, the burning words of tenderness and devotion, the soft spirit-coo of pet names, and the crimson flush on my cheek deepened as I studied my father's soul-heart, as I might never have done had he lived. Most fathers are so cold and indifferent now-a-days, that I have often wondered if the naturalness of my life, which Aunt *Patience* allowed to grow, might not have been crushed out, had father lived and been as other parents I have seen. Few men understand woman's nature, the welling, bright tenderness in her love, that *goes out entirely to such master-hands and hearts!*

What woman ever read a love-letter or a friend's letter, where sweet, affectionate words gleamed like sunshine, that she did not kiss it again and again, and hide it next her heart, caress it, and talk to it, as *if it lived*, so replete would it be with the spirit of the writer? There are many such soul-whispers hid away with sacred golden memories from careless eyes; and though loving lips may kiss her brow, and strong arms encircle her in human love, if the words thrill not, as the heart feels, she will sigh for them, and wish in a sad, hopeless way, that *he could tell what he felt!* She could answer him then. Demonstrative affection to a woman's life is what the sunshine is to flowers! All men do not understand this, and many who do,

grow careless and indifferent, never imagining the sad heart that throbs wearily on, longing, yet fearing to plead *once again* in music-murmurs for the smiles or childname that blessed her.

Is it not sweet Jenny Marsh who says:

"Call me 'little one:'
 Speak it gently—speak it low,
 And my spirit may not know
 That the present is gone.
 I am weary and would weep;
 I would lay me down and sleep,
 And I yearn for some dear spell
 That hath power to cast a gleam
 O'er a sweet and faded dream;
 And my memory knoweth none
 Like the whispering of those words,
 That for years I have not heard,
 'Little one.'"

* * * * *

The letters were finished, and I took up the Diary as a clue to the life, which as yet was but half a life. It commenced at the same bright period of hope and love:

"PORTLAND, ME., Thursday, Sept. 17, '37.

"A letter from Hugh to-day. Oh! how happy I am always, when these musical whispers of love and trust come unto me. *Patience Graham*, who dreamed all her life must be spent in *duty*,—cold, implacable duty, that has no end, only on, on, *to suffer*. I used to be calm when I recognized this dim life wavering afar

off, uncertain, yet sure, but now that *I love* with all the glory and passion of my *human heart*—when the bright creations of fanciful reveries have taken tangible forms, I look with a bitter defiance upon the hour when, perhaps, sorrow will blight out even *one bud* of my cherished and beautiful blossoms.

"I do so wish Hugh would not write about such brain-phantoms as inconstancy or death separating us! It brings up agonizing thoughts of the desolate future that would stretch out before me, even more than Hugh, for he is a *man*, and could find other employment to occupy his time and attention; but *I* could only live on in the routine of life I have followed ever since father died. If it is wearisome to me now, what *would it be without a future!*"

* * * * *

"Blanche is here, and oh! so beautiful is she that I hold my breath as I look upon her. She must have been like my mother, of whom I have heard so much, for she is lovelier than any creature I ever beheld. She is very small and slender, and withal stately as an Eastern queen; her eyes are *glorious*, and of that soft, shadowy brown, sunny hazel, once seen never forgotten; her face is colorless as marble; her chiselled lips of the brightest carmine, part over teeth miraculously white and beautifully even; and her chin rests beneath them like a pure white rose leaf; her hair droops round her in ringlets of a rich, deep auburn-brown, but she will persist in twisting them in

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her neck in a luxurious coil, this style gives a Grecian, classic look to her face which adds to its character, yet I think it rather takes away the *tender* look from it, I love curls though because Hugh does.

"Her hands and feet are of sizes never before seen out of Lilliput. And, oh! such a divine voice! She seems languid and indifferent to everything except music, and, strange as it would appear in others, she only sings deep, holy songs, and plays rich, full melody like Haydn's and Mendelssohn's, and, oh! I feel such a sad, solemn pain at my keen sense of utter unworthiness when she sings, that the tears *will come!* I *hope* she will love me, for my heart is full of tenderness for the little sister father bade me watch over and protect, and we are orphans, too, now, unloved and alone, save by dear Hugh: Oh! but I know he will admire and love my queenly Blanche, and maybe blush as he contrasts her with me. But I can be *Patience*—and I know he will love me, plain, drab-named little Patience Graham though I am. He will be here to-morrow, and then, hey! for hope and love and happiness!"

"THURSDAY, 28th, '37.

"I am very, very happy; my heart sings all day long, like a free and joyous bird. Hugh came day before yesterday, and I have been too busy to write regularly to my spirit-confident and friend, this dear old journal; but by and by, when we get settled, I

will resume my regular communion with myself, and strive to live and be better, and make each record of my daily life brighter and purer than the one of vanished pleasure or pain.

"Hugh and Blanche don't seem to like each other at all; they are strangely cold and silent. I told Hugh this morning it almost seemed as if they had known one another before, their aversion was so intense, he flushed up in such a strange, excited way, and said, 'You are mistaken, Patience, we have never met before,' and then he hesitated and stammered so I could but laugh, and yet it was very queer and inexplicable to me. I wonder if they have ever met before? But no; Hugh said they had not, and he would not deceive me for a moment, even in jest, and yet—but pshaw! I am getting really foolish. I wish they could be friends; it would be so pleasant to leave Blanche to take care of Hugh, while I could attend to my household duties, but they seem to avoid each other so pertinaciously that my arrangements are all tending to a focus of confusion as I find myself necessarily obliged to entertain Hugh, and at the same time am at a loss to interest Blanche; she is sublimely indifferent to my conversation, and stays in her little room almost all the time. I am afraid I shall be sadly disappointed in my sister, she is so cold and haughty, and fails to understand the great wealth of love and tenderness my heart holds for her; then, too, she looks upon our little cottage home with a stinging

contempt in her eyes; she does not care for it, because father and mother lived here, and were so happy together, as I do. Nothing seems holy to her because hallowed with memories of the dead. 'Tis so strange to me!

"I have been asking myself all day if I am not a happier and a better woman, because I have never been bound down and girt about with the fashionable follies of *society*, but have allowed my woman's nature to grow free and unconfined. I question if I have not made a great mistake in keeping Blanche so long in New York. She is very, very beautiful, and highly accomplished, but all the finer *home* feelings seem literally destroyed in her character. I meant to do right, God knows that, if I *have* erred. I shall be twenty-five to-morrow, and Blanche is only eighteen, I wonder if Hugh could not learn to love her better than he does me, if they would only know each other, for I am almost an *old maid*, and the bright years' path I have trod lies unexplored before her; and, oh! if she will only see it, each tree, and shrub, and tiny blossom bend with weights of love and fragrance before her beautiful presence; and then, oh! then, there is so much human devotion to circle around her, warm and enduring forever, if she does not crush down such impulses with icy barriers of reserve and chilling indifference."

"OCTOBER 9th, '37.

"Well! well! well! I have drawn my desk toward me in the sunlight, and taken up my pen with a glad heart and gay laugh.

"*Blanche and Hugh have made friends.* I don't know how, nor when, nor where; I never asked, for the whole scene took me so by surprise, and ended so suddenly, I did not think to do so.

"It happened yesterday. I told Hugh I must leave him in the morning, and that he must seek entertainment as he best could, for I had allowed my duties to go unaccomplished so long that they hung about me like a gloom-cloud of care; and besides, I had some shopping to do down in town; and Mr. Betts had returned from Boston and brought my dress and veil. So I tied my jaunty little hat on my head, and kissing my hand to him, went out. He seemed contented with the license I had given him; and just as happy as a bird I tripped away. The business to which I went to attend was finished sooner than I expected, and satisfactorily, and I came home gladly and quickly, enjoying the thought of surprising Hugh. So I stole slyly up to the parlor door, and saw Blanche nonchalantly reclining in an arm-chair, Hugh was beside her, talking on in his eager, musical voice. She made no replies, but listened, with her beautiful eyes raised to his face. How beautiful they are!

"When they saw me they both blushed and started, then Hugh took Blanche's hand, and leading her to

me, said: 'Kiss her, little Patience, for she and I are going to be such *good* friends!' and with the glad tears in my eyes, that the discord had at last melted into harmony, I put my arms up about my sister's neck and kissed her. She seems so different now! She is tender and thoughtful, and as desirous to gratify and please me, and though she has opened her loving heart to me but a single day, I trust so confidently and entirely in her. Oh! my precious sister Blanche, this new, glad trust is very, very sweet and strange to me, who have stood alone so long! Hugh says he thinks she is lovely, indeed, the loveliest woman he has ever seen, and this is certainly a very great compliment, for he has seen many very beautiful women.

"I cannot help but think how much more suited Hugh and Blanche would be to one another than Hugh and I. They are both so perfect in form and feature, both so lively, gay and talented, while I—well, I am only a poor little woman, with a heart full of glorious impulses and tender affection, a good housekeeper, and a true, devoted friend to those I love. I look in the glass, too, (I do not deny that I patronize it) and I only see a sweet, quiet, little face, with great, meek, shadowy gray eyes, rosy cheeks, wavy brown hair, and a mouth and chin, beautiful I will admit, with latent power, control, resolve and resignation slumbering there; a face that would grow in one's heart, but never dazzle at a glance; a face

that would pass in a crowd and attract no attention, unless a physiognomist might say: 'There's a woman with a mouth and chin which foretells the fortitude in her character that could endure many severities and much chastening of fate and fortune, and never fail!'

"I wonder why I am forever and aye thinking of trials and endurance; and wondering, if a grief-shadow gathered round me, whether I would have the courage to search through the gloom for the sunshine, or if I would sink 'neath the weight of woe and die! It seems to me that some great, gaunt terror stalks beside me, and when I am alone; I am continually battling with this adversary. I cannot explain it to myself; it is a lingering, clinging, despairing *doubt of something that I cannot understand*: I only know I feel bewildered, oppressed. There! I must cease writing now, I see Hugh and Blanche coming home. How handsome and happy they seem! Who would ever dream, to look at them, that they ever, even momentarily, entertained a mutual and almost unconquerable aversion for one another?"

"OCTOBER 23, '37.

"Strange is it that I have so many lonely, very lonely hours now, and only fourteen days have passed since I last jotted down time-notchings in gleams of sunshine!

"Perhaps I ought not to feel so; it may be unjust in me to even fancy I can note a change in Hugh's

manners,—that he is less devoted than of yore, and that, too, when I am so soon to be his wife, and illimitable confidence should exist between us! But I don't know so surely about the wedding now, for Hugh never talks about it, and he was so eager before he knew Blanche. *They* are always together, riding, walking, driving or sailing out on the bay. It may seem as if I can never be pleased or satisfied, for I was eager and anxious that they might be friends, so that I could see them happy and enjoying each other's society while I was engrossed with household duties. But *now* they never seem to think I am alone, and that a bright smile or cheerful word would be welcomed or appreciated by me! I don't know but some day I will go to Hugh and ask him if he would not prefer I should break off my engagement, and let him go free; and if his heart holds another's image; if the light of a brighter eye and a fairer brow thrills him with strange beauty, and lures him from his bygone troth-plight, he can win the jewel, and, wearing it, be happy; *I* would not care to claim a *divided* love; I want *all* the heart of my life-guide and guardian.

"Blanche is not tender as she was that *one day* when she made me so joyful. The olden indifference is growing upon her. Why, I wonder? I am confident I love her just as devotedly, and try to prove it to her, too, only she will not see it. * * * *

"Mayhaps I have been too quick in my despond-

ency about the falling off of Hugh's constancy. He and Blanche have been out walking, and they proved that they had been thinking about me, for they both brought their hands full of bright-hued flowers to me, nodding with sunshiny smiles, as they tell in their spirit language of another world, where pain and doubt forever cease. And they tell, too, that I am not fulfilling the mission for which God sent me here to earth, when I wrap around me such cares and clouds. Oh! bright blossoms, I will take your lessons deep, deep in my heart, and, girding on a strong armor, will press back sorrowful tears, and smile, brave, glad smiles!

"How grand and glorious these misty, hazy days are! Golden, crimson and russet-tinted showers of autumn leaves, like fallen kings, sweep on to their ignoble graves; and sunlight and shadow are busy woof-weaving up life's span of days, with joy-threads of brightness."

"OCTOBER 23, '42.

"Roaming around with a wild restlessness that comes over me like a tempestuous Euroclydon, I have found my old diary, which I used to keep in the long ago, with the dust of five weary, weary, *weary* years resting on its homely brown cover; and I have come again to this self-communion, which I *once* enjoyed: with great waves of defiant bitterness surging in over my *heart and soul and life*.

"I left off talking to the glorious autumn flowers, reading lessons of purity and holiness from their starry eyes, their dainty waxen petals and their golden hearts; but I commence *now*, seeing no beauty, no faith in them; the autumn days only make me sick, *sick* with the tide of bitter memories. I believed myself to be so strong, so brave, so *patient*; believed my heart to be a *Roman* heart, that sorrow's relentless wheels might roll over, yet *never crush*. Where is now my boasted strength? Alas! *tears* are the only answer my trembling, quivering heart sends up.

Fate knew what spot her stern grasp kept for future torture; she knew that nothing but *that* could make me the humble, trembling child I am to-night. Poverty could not humble; neither neglect nor indifference trouble the throbbing *vital* being hidden 'neath the stern armor of *Patience*. But, oh! there was *one vulnerable part, one portion* that fate's hand covered when she dipped me in sorrow's wave, and that was the secret chamber wherein dwelt *the love I bore Hugh Stanley*.

"Oh! it was hard, hard for every sweet dream of happiness to be crushed, when I had striven with a mighty strength to be and to do good, to dedicate my life to God. In vain have I bowed my head in solemn awe, to receive humbly the chastenings which the Most High sends down upon me, for the human cry of my *aching, breaking heart* will rise up in vehement anguish.

"I so loved and trusted Hugh Stanley; so earnestly strove to become worthy of his great, strong affection, and he proved false, false; and Blanche too, the sister to whom I was *so* devoted, whom I cherished, not only for her own bright, beautiful self, but because, when *father died* he bade me watch over and be tender with his darling Blanche, for *his sake and for angel-mother's*; and I tried *so hard* to do my duty, no matter what stern, rebellious struggles my heart had, *and always triumphed*; and then *his* love was the only joy and blessing of my lonely, lonely life.

"I'll go back over the past. Maybe I *am* firm enough to recall it now; five years have passed since then; yes, five long, *long years*. It was the twilight of the day when they brought me the fresh, beautiful flowers, I was sitting by my window, counting the misty eyes of the stars that wept heavenly tears of dew on the lovely blossoms of earth, when the murmur of voices, breathing my own name, attracted my attention, and honor yielding to inclination, I listened; the speakers were Hugh and Blanche: 'Oh! Blanche,' he said passionately, 'I cannot, cannot give you up, I love you *so devotedly*.'

"'Hush, Hugh, remember sister Patience.' Looking down, I saw two shadows melting into one, in the moonlight, as he drew her to his heart.

"'Patience is good and gentle, Blanche; she is very proud, too, and would not care to claim a divided love. Let us tell her all, and she will forgive and bless us. I feel confident she will!'

“No! no, *no!*”

“I heard no more; my head turned round and round about; my heart flowed like a sea. *Hugh did not love me!* I fainted. * * * * *

“How long I remained insensible I don’t know, but when I woke, the moon had gone down, and dawn, in her gray robes, was sweeping along the sky, sober and sad, to her smiling bridegroom, day; and the stars, like expiring lamps, but faintly twinkled through the gloom.

“I did not remember all at first, but it came back soon, too soon. The bitter, burning, passionate tears fell at last, and softened the great pain, that welled up from my heart in long, dreary, hopeless gasps of agony. I did not move, but lay there on the floor, thinking, thinking, praying for strength that I might go to him when the sunshine came, and say with clear eye and steady lips: ‘Yes; I free you, Hugh! give Blanche to you, and blessing you both, bid you go and be happy!’ *But the hour never came*, though the strength and fortitude *did*. I went down stairs, and drawing a cloak of deception over my agonized breast, I stepped around the house with a song upon my lips, I even opened the harpsichord and ran my fingers over the keys. The hours stole on. Breakfast was kept waiting until I feared it would become unpalatable, and still Hugh and Blanche were absent from their accustomed posts—for they were both habitually early risers, up with the sun. I called Lucy, the

help, and sent her to apprise them how late it was in the day, and she came back saying she expected they had gone out to take a morning walk, for both rooms were vacant. The shock came to me like a thunder-bolt, for I knew I had watched the new day in myself, and no one had left the house. *They must have eloped while I laid in a death-stupor!* I ran up stairs, and saw at a glance that neither room had been occupied the night before. Groping about, like a child lost in the dark, for some token they had left to warn me, I found a letter, and bidding Lucy go down, I took my seat to read it. It was from Blanche:

“MIDNIGHT, October —, ’37.

“Patience, I am but illy showing you gratitude for your tenderness and devotion to me. Yet I *am* grateful, in my own peculiar way. Hugh and I are going away to-night—far away over the sea, to sunny, smiling France, and you will never see us again. In this parting hour I humbly ask your forgiveness for him and me, because we are, in thus loving one another so devotedly, doing your good heart a great wrong. But it is better to be disappointed in your affections now, than live with a man, and be the mother of his children, and some day wake to the horrible consciousness that every pulse throbs and thrills at the *sound* of another’s name or presence, and *that other—your sister Blanche*. We knew one another before we came here; that is, we had *corresponded*, but never

met, and when we did we loved, though at first Hugh tried to crush it out and be faithful to you. Yet the struggle was too hard, and he failed, as well as I.

“‘*Patience*, good-bye; there was never that sympathetic link between our hearts that would have made us happy, yet going out on the untold mysterious future-lands to-night, I would fain put my arms around you, and *kiss* you ‘good-bye,’ but I may not.

“‘Your sister,

“‘BLANCHE.’

“Oh! it was a *bitter, bitter trial*. And I lived on for one dreary year, without going from my little room, for the paroxysms of grief that shook me weakened me almost to death’s door. At last, one day, when I had sadly stolen out in the warm, spring sunshine, and heard the little brooks laughing just as they did when I was young with life and hope, and the gay birds singing their ceaseless roundelays, a dark, foreign-looking woman, with a babe in her arms, stepped up to the gate and asked: ‘Dosh de Mam’selle Paysens Greeam bide in dis chateau?’

“‘She does,’ I replied, when she opened the gate and came in handing me a letter. I took it and read:

“‘VINCENNES, FRANCE, —, ’39.

“‘*Dear Sister Patience*:

“‘I send you my little Blanche as a peace-offering for the past. May she be the blessing to you that I

failed to be. I *cannot* leave my winsome darling alone in the world. My days are numbered. *Patience*, I now lie on a sick bed from which I never expect to arise.

“‘Six months ago, Hugh was lost at sea, and it is grief that is killing me—grief that will soon bear me to him in a world beyond the grave.

“‘Pray for me, sister. God bless you.

“‘BLANCHE.’

“I looked at the woman and the child and did not speak. The hard-faced tempter, Sin, was standing beside me, and bitterly jibed me with the thought, ‘In life you nurtured and tended *her*, and she turned like a serpent and *stung* you. Now, in death, she sends you her treasure to guard. *Don’t do it!*’ I was about to bid her go, but the babe cooed and held out its tiny dimpled little arms, and the glinting sunshine kissed it. The *father* spake in the child. The latent mother-love in my heart sprang up to the little one, and I took it from its nurse, and blessed it. She was paid her wages when she delivered her baggage, and then went away. The babe is a beautiful child of four summers now. I am cold and still. I shall not allow myself to love it much lest I am doomed to lose it, but I’ll do my duty by it. It shall never hear a harsh or bitter word from my lips, nor memory of the days when I was young, and its mother and father wronged and deadened my trusting, loving

heart. Oh! those bright, bright days! Hugh! Hugh! you *were* mine!—it is not sinful to love you—no * * *

Here the Diary ended. Tear-stained and yellow, faint and illegible were the lines. My poor Aunt Patience! my beautiful, erring mother! how I pitied them! Who shall say their spirits will not meet and blend in love and forgiveness one day?—and who shall say where my father will stand on the Day of Judgment? Is it strange for such deeds to be committed *now*? Does a morning wear to evening but some heart breaks? Are not women's hearts now-a-days gordian knots everybody has the privilege of *attempting* to untie? and aren't those of men, adamantine substances, nobody can break, but *everybody* may try to?"

"Oh! mother, mother," I sobbed from out the fullness of my surcharged heart, "I thought you were so beautiful and perfect! Mother! mother!"

I sat there. The hours, solemn and still, crept on, each moment drawing me nearer the grave, yet I noticed not their funeral march, for my heart was bowed down in sorrow. Poor, dear, faithful Aunt Patience, I know now why the great tears stole down her wan cheeks, it was the anniversary of my parents' flight from the homestead! Sadly, softly, tenderly I laid the bridal dress, and veil and flowers, which had never been worn, back in the folds of silver paper, and the letters and the diary, too, as ghastly-guardians of a

vanished spring-time of life, and put away the other clothing with them. I did not care to search farther, so I locked the little trunk and went down stairs. I had been absent all the morning, and yet Aunt Patience "thought I had been gone but a little, a very little while; was sorry I could find no entertainment about the quiet little cottage, but she was growing old, and forgetting her youthful ways."

"Oh, Auntie, darling Auntie, I don't want anything on earth but your love. I know how you have suffered, and would fain partially atone for my parents' sin in my devotion. Only love me, Aunt Patience," and, overcome by my feelings, I knelt beside her and buried my tearful face in the soft, gray folds of her dress. She did not answer, and I raised my head. She was pallid as death, and gasped out:

"The key, *the little brass key; did you have it?*"

"Yes, Auntie, and I know all."

"I never meant that it should be so, child. God knows I never meant it!"

"It was best so, Auntie darling, we know each other now."

"Let the dead past bury its dead, Blanche, we will never recall it. *It is best so.*" And she drew me up to her heart close, close, and kissed me, a lingering, thrilling, pure, holy kiss. Oh! my blessed Aunt Patience, you have won your reward in the Kingdom of the Most High. Many, very many times have the clover buds blossomed and faded over your shadowy

grave, that was made under the broad-armed catalpa tree, where you used to sit and smile in your sad, still way, when the sweet perfume from the feathery sprays was wafted down to you, or the snowy blooms were scattered over you by the wind-spirits! Poor, faithful, fond Aunt Patience! no white hands are uplifted from the gloom; no wailing, reproachful voice floats on the breeze that waves round your tomb; the crushed heart lies *still*! None miss you save your old maiden niece, Blanche Stanley, who has lived through the dreary days that have strode on into years; the silver threads have long since mingled with the brown and golden tresses; the lines of care have fallen round my bright eyes and rosy lips just as they rested on your face when you sent me up in the garret and I read your life-history.

That old garret! I have never been in it since, save once, and then I went to the same hair trunk and took out the bridal dress, veil, wreath and letters, and shut all up again as before, for Aunt Patience had asked me to shroud her in them and lay the letters on her heart, and a few, very few days after that, she asked me to draw the curtains close round her bed, that she might sleep. I did so, and resumed my watch beside her. Hours passed by, and she lay so still, I grew alarmed, and going to her, found she had turned her face to the wall; her cheek rested on her hand, and tears were on the long, shadowy eye-lashes. Aunt Patience was dead!

People wondered, with their eyes, the few who came to look upon the grave, quiet Miss Patience Graham as dead, why she was buried in the wrinkled, old white satin dress, and bridal veil and wreath, but they never spoke of it, and I never told them, but followed her to her grave with a pained and aching heart, that the long, long years have never calmed or soothed. I am living out my days with a weary longing, for the world holds no joy for me; the seasons come and go, and I note no change. The spiders have all these years been living and dying, weaving away at their looms; the shadows have stolen in the garret, gloomy and still; friends and neighbors, lovers, husbands, fathers, mothers, wives and maidens, have stepped about in the pride of health and happiness, and have been struck down in all their beautiful glory, and counted with the fading, falling leaves, yet the current of my life has flown on through still, gray banks, with no rapids or falls to change its flow, and no devastation to mark its onward course.

I may not live long, and to-day, the fancy came over me to tell how I have lived since I read Aunt Patience's Diary, and to copy it all down just as I remembered it. It has been a pleasant and sad task for me. When I die, the green trees will nod, the sunshine brighten and the weary world-cares plod on just as if I lived. Aunt Patience waits for me from the golden Eden heights. We loved in life, and in death we will not be divided.

TWO SHADOWS AT THE WINDOW.

Two shadows at the window
Soft melting into one ;
Two hearts that throb together
In love beneath the sun ;
Two voices whisper gently,
And lips of scarlet meet ;
And glances fond and tender,
Four eager eyes do greet.

"I love thee, Jennie darling,
Thou art the light of life ;
I would win thee to my heart
As a sweet and gentle wife.
Wilt thou come unto my home
And bless it with thy smile,
And each gloom-cloud of woe
To hope and faith beguile?"

And the proud head was bent low
To catch the whispered word,
Which Jennie breathed so softly
That the wind was scarcely stirred.

TWO SHADOWS AT THE WINDOW. 101

Two shadows at the window
Soft melting into one ;
Two hearts that throb together
In love beneath the sun.

* * * * *

Two shadows at the window,—
But the moonlight lies between
Like the sea that binds the Past
To the Future-land, I ween.
Yet silent as they fall
Along the window-sill
Then softly melt together
As the Past and Present will.

A low voice murmurs softly
As dim eyes look far away
To a moss-grown grave that lies
In the church-yard still and gray ;
" 'Twas here, just thirty years past,
I wooed Jennie for a wife,
And *here, to-night*, I feel, child,
I'll yield my lease of life.

Nay, weep not so, my daughter,
That my star is on the wane ;
Not for all the wealth of Ind
Would I be young again !

Jennie was the world to me
 And these twenty years or more
 I have been without her smile
 Or her footstep on the floor.

And I am very weary
 To meet her soon again
 In the Lethean land of rest
 Where there's never any pain.
 You are a woman now, Maud,—
 Be patient, brave and true;
 God holds *hopes* for *you* in life,
 But I've nothing left to do.

My eyes are growing dim
 And my breath it fails me fast—
 Jennie! is it you, dear?
 Thank God, '*tis you at last!*'
 * * * * *

Two shadows at the window
 Soft melting into one:
 One life has just waned out
 The other just begun;
 And yet their shadows fall
 Together on the sill—
 Sire and child, life and death,
Past and Present still.

BEECHLAND, Jan. 21, '65.

GOOD WISHES FOR BABY HENRY.

Let me, while thy features viewing,
 Breathe to Heaven a silent prayer;
 Every worldly thought subduing,
 Makes an interest for thee there.

Not for riches, rank, or beauty
 Shall my hope's ambitions rise;
 More essential is the duty
 Which a Christian's heart should prize.

May that cheek, now soft reposing
 On thy tender mother's breast,
 Health and innocence disclosing,
 With *modesty's* sweet tint be dressed!

May those lips of sweet caressing
 Rival the carnation's hue;
 Ask betimes a heavenly blessing
 And to *virtue* e'er be true.

May those eyes in slumber closing
 Ne'er with tears repentant flow;
 But a generous heart disclosing
 Weep a fellow mortal's woe!

May those hands, now soft and tender,
 Never grasp the bribe of shame,
 Nor to vice assistance render,
 Branding with disgrace thy name!

May that dimpling smile of pleasure
 Never with deceit be fraught!
 Nor calm content, thy bosom's treasure,
 Be by guilt or treachery bought!

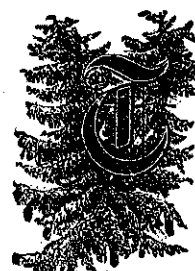
May those little feet ne'er ramble
 From that sure and glorious road,
 Which, though fenced by briar and bramble,
 Leads thee to a bounteous God!

May thy parents live to guide thee,
 Step by step to virtue's shrine,
 And no blessing be denied thee,
 While an upright heart is thine!

BEECHLAND, 1862.

ALL ABOUT PUNS.

[A STRAY LETTER WRITTEN TO THE LOUISVILLE JOURNAL.]



THE small occurrences in our daily existence prove generally to be like pivots, upon which the momentous occasions for great sayings and doings revolve, and to some fast spirits of the age, swiftly heroical or heroically swift, as the intellect may rank and the occasion merit.

After this trite observation, I shall proceed to inform you of the incident which gave rise to the subject article, and which I would fain toss from me in a coruscation fatally brilliant. I wish this heartily, though, I know, hopelessly.

The other day, as I took a little sail up the river on the pleasant packet "Wren," it was my good or ill luck to become acquainted with a young man bearing the euphonious title of Green. A widow lady, by the name of Post was also aboard. Some one present remarked that she was singly blessed, whereupon the young hero—a fine looking youth he was, too—waved his hand with a gesture worthy the spirit of the tragic stage, and in a sepulchral voice spoke aloud to the

audience gathered around him in wondering expectancy: "Her position is one which few could so creditably fill; she may be considered an *ex-commandant of the Post*. Don't you think so?"

Shouts of laughter greeted his wit, and, though generally averse to punning, my voice mingled with the rest, possibly because he was handsome and irresistibly attractive in his manners, and the latter go a great way in winning attention and admiration from the ladies.

I told him he should see that rare scintillation of genius in some *stray* corner of the *Journal*, and I send you this little article for publication, partly that I may redeem my promise, and then because he is no doubt on the lookout, and each Sunday morning finds him eagerly scanning the dear, familiar columns, instead of going to the "Try Member Society." Nevertheless, clever young man that. Don't you think so?

But through compliment to the fair recipient of the pun, I trust he will not be so *green* next time as to become blinded to the *etiquettical necessity* of postponing his witticisms before *women-critics*. They are often severe and many times wield a pen as well as words mightier than a sword, that never wavers from its bent. I went to bed early that night, and instead of sweet, pleasant dreams wreathing my face in slumber-smiles, as the gentle, lulling motion of the packet, cutting her way through the rippling Ken-

tucky waters, should have won them to do, I laid there staring blankly out in the darkness, through the little window at the foot of my berth, thinking of the many restless longings that had faded off into quiet calm; of the many proud aspirations doomed to fade as the golden dreams of young enthusiasts ever do; thinking of *you*, dear *Journal*, with tear-dimmed eyes, as I recalled all your kindness and tenderness to the poor, wearied heart that turned to you in the hour of need, and *found* you—strong, faithful, valiant, gallant and true. And then, with the strange incongruity of ideas which these reveries of the heart and mind ever bring, I compared my fate with the fates of those around me, and amid the rest marching in volume, unbroken line before the mirror of darkness, came the Green-one, brave perpetrator of a pun. Then I forget all else to think of *punning*, so common to the intellectual faculties of gassy young Americans!

And this is the sum and substance of it all; for the future benefit of those who may read and think, I transcribe it here. Punning is a *habit* of low wit, to which many are addicted, *and which all may acquire*, not from any desire to render themselves disagreeable, manifestly the contrary, but simply because they have taught themselves the art (?) of *playing upon words*. This only bears the appearance of daring, by contemptuously tossing back in the speaker's face his or her own ideas entirely divested of their *original*

meaning, and clothing them instead with an address which renders them laughably ridiculous in the extreme.

The ladies, in a great measure, are to blame for the extent which this vulgar wit has attained; for when some dandified counter-hopper, or young sprig of the law flaunts his odious punning impertinences before them, they laugh, clap their hands, and call Mr. So-and-so such a "duck of a fellow," and Mr. This-and-that such a "dear, darling of a wit." As for *officers*, I retreat vanquished from the storm of German diminutives breathed from the overwhelming and intense tenderness of their souls' admiration. Oh! dear! oh! dear!

Especially is this practice indulged in by maidens and lassies turning thirty-five and forty, and who patronize "Nicholas' Great Wig Emporium," and dental offices, and apothecaries' "Bloom of Youth," who embroider smoking caps and slippers, and simper invitations to tea, where they hint their devotion to sonnets, moonlight, poetry and love! Pshaw!

It is seldom, however, that punsters receive admiration or appreciation (?) from any other than this, their own particular clique. And, to do the deserving ones justice, I will add, this unpopularity arises in a great measure from the cause and effect of their failure to pay due regard to the indistinct, yet invincible lines in the social world; for they indiscriminately tread upon other people's toes without any deference or

forethought, to their knowledge, that the great, great grandparents of the great, great grandparents of the parents of the Browns, "over the way," could claim a judge or a general, a martyr or a saint in their branch of the family, one side or the other, they did not know which, but they "had heard the old folks talk about it." Hence, they jerk up their conventional lines, indiscriminately snubbing their neighbors' noses, while the punsters just as indifferently tread upon their toes.

And so they win enemies from the shoddy that have accumulated shiners enough to dazzle the *shiniest* eyes in Christendom, when they might have won friends, and thus made one more stride toward popularity, did they not so assiduously strive to prove themselves gifted in such a remarkable degree with the "gift of gab." Yet even in what is evil we find good. Therefore, in this one instance at least, I say, Bravo! to *deserving punsters*! And then, too, if one will only look at it in the true light, the puns now-a-days are not one in a thousand worthy of repetition, nor their inventors of reputation, which is precious, however small a bubble it may be.

I don't remember ever having heard more than one or two, unless they proceeded from a generation back, a generation deemed too *outré* to be quoted by progressing posterity, and they have faded away to give place to lesser luminaries, that fly about like "Will-o'-the-wisps," not darting, brilliant, flashing, racy and

vanishing, as the meteoric flashes of wit in bygone days, but they come and come again; here, there and everywhere, not with varied radiance, only the same dull, old puns which their authors deem "*too good to be lost*." So, like worn-out war-horses, they trot them out for show, even though sneered and jeered at by an *ennuyé* audience; or else like a "belle" in her fifth season and only in moderate circumstances, they occasionally come out in their faded finery, but never surprise with anything new, and are only *tolerated* because of past popularity.

I enjoy excessively repartees that put those *studied wits* upon their guard, for they are so soon disarmed and thrown from their poise on the pedestal of self-conceit! If the "Giftie" would indeed only give some young men the power of seeing themselves as others see them, possibly they would become respectable citizens of society and smile back with a sneer upon their punning days, as old men do upon the "wild oats" they have sown, when they spring up tares. Good bye, till next time.

SANS SOUCI.

WE'LL NE'ER FORGET.

We'll ne'er forget, we'll ne'er forget
The glad, gay hours we've spent together,
In red-tipped laughs, and converse sweet,
Thro' one bright week of sunny weather.

The days have flown like bright-wing'd birds
Of tropic plume, and gorgeous dye,
And we, like leaves on Life's great sea,
We two, have drifted—*drifted* by!

The nights, ah! like a balm from Heaven,
Or angel-smiles they've sped away,
Unto the fadeless Past that's given
To guide us through Life's clouds of gray!

The fair moon silver'd all the world
And golden star-rays richly gleamed,
And o'er us on the old, front porch
Their glory-radiance softly beamed!

Blue eyes, blue eyes have gaily flashed
And thrilled and thrilled again,
As violets sweet drink up the sun
When no more falls the summer rain!

Our hearts in fancy's car have sped
Thro' realms so strangely, wierdly fair!
Alas! our human dreams were proved
But myths of midnight's mystic air!

And yet we'll cling with tender smiles
To all the joyous, vanished hours,
Tho' fate should cast our honied hopes
On wrecked life-barks, in lieu of flowers.

In years, when darker shadows fall
Around the hours when first we met,
Our hearts will thrill with bygone joy,
We'll ne'er forget—we'll ne'er forget!

LOUISVILLE, July 29, 1864.

GLEN MARY.



IN the County of H—, about forty miles from the city of L—, there stands, and has stood for many years, a long, low, dark looking house, with narrow peaked windows, shadowed by creeping vines, and moss-grown caves, where the sunshine gets entangled, when the days are bright and warm. Many grim oaks, and poplars that stand like straight sentinels to guard the mystery of the place, throw their gloom over the paths that are grass-grown, and shut out the light of Heaven from the rarely-beautiful flowers, that still struggle with the rank weeds. There are no signs of habitation there, although one old decrepit woman, of English descent, is left to keep together the remnants of a once bright and beautiful home.

Not many months ago, while riding by, I reined in Romeo, (my favorite steed,) and dismounting made my way into that portion of the house where the old woman lived, resolving to request her to tell me the cause of the wreck which had laid waste the homestead. She was not garrulous, and I knew full well no little policy would be necessary to induce her to

accede to my inquisitiveness. I had met the old lady once or twice in my wanderings about the place, for it possessed a strange fascination for me, and a little kind of cold intimacy had sprung up between us. "Good morning, Mrs. Barth," I said, opening the door and advancing without hesitation into the room where she was sitting idly smoking, and crooning to herself.

"Good morning, ma'am, and sure I h'am glad you 'are come over to-day; for I feel lonesome, h'and more h'inclined to be sociable-like than for these many years!"

My heart bounded gladly, and I answered quickly as I held out my eager hand: "If this be so, Mrs. Barth, I am doubly rejoiced that I called over, for I feel in a sociably inquisitive mood myself!" and I took the chair which she had proffered me.

"Sure, and I 'are wondered these many times, if you would not want to know h'of me why nobody lived h'at Glen Mary," she exclaimed.

"And you will tell me, Mrs. Barth, I know you will!" I answered, smilingly.

"I might, h'only—" she paused, and thoughtfully studied my face.

"Oh, there is no danger!" I said, seeing doubt of my power of secretiveness expressed in her almost immobile features. "It will be like burying in the grave." I did not then think of publishing a book, dear reader!

She was silent a little while longer, then rising and moving her chair nearer to mine, she took my hand, and commenced to tell me the story which I lay before you, pausing many times in its recital to gain breath and shake off the horrible memories which pervaded her being at almost every word she spoke.

I give the story in our American dialect, because it is more musical to the ear, and will absorb less space.

MRS. BARTH'S STORY.

"You must know that some twenty years ago, my lady, Mrs. Eustace lived here, and although she did not mingle much with the people of the neighborhood, she always was gay when Mr. Lorimer Eustace—her only child—came home in vacations. She was sure to have two or three merry-makings before he went to college again.

"Their circumstances were not so good as they once were, but the world never knew it, for my lady stinted herself even in comforts to make her son appear well, and to make the ends meet when she invited young folks here to see him. Everybody looked up to them, as above other people by a long way;—and they were, too!

"Mrs. Eustace was a proud, cold woman, and never unbent to commoners; but Mr. Lorimer was just the opposite in his disposition, gay, lively, and cheerful as the singing birds when the spring is coming. Everybody loved him, but of course none so well as his stately mother.

"By-and-by Mr. Lorrimer stopped going to college, and came home, and my lady was smiling and happy. All the world seemed bright to them, because they were so free and joyous.

"Now it happened, too, that in the neighborhood lived a sewing girl by the name of Jenny Hight. She was pert and pretty as could well be, and everybody made a fuss over her, till it almost turned her head. She was proud and fierce as a queen when she was wronged, I tell you, and never smirked even to my lady. But for all that she liked her mightily, and she was here at the Glen when Mr. Lorimer came home the last time, doing up some fancy sewing for my lady. Mr. Lorimer seemed taken with her pretty black eyes, and she showed that she loved him from the very first time she ever saw him.

"My lady didn't seem to notice this thing till it had been going on for two or three months, and then she found it out by Jenny blushing and sighing one day when Mr. Lorimer went into the room where they were sitting together. She was terribly displeased, and frowned at Jenny, but Mr. Lorimer didn't seem to mind her anger one bit, and said teasingly: 'Hasn't she the most beautiful eyes in the world?' 'You can go to your room, Jane Hight,' said my lady in a cold voice, as she levelled her glance at the girl, whose face was dyed with happy blushes at the compliment. She went away, as she had been told, but the smile didn't die off her pretty face when she looked back at

Mr. Lorimer before she shut the door, and he smiled at her too! 'I hope Lorimer,' said my lady, 'that you will not attempt to trifle with that girl. She is below you in social position and should be treated accordingly.'

"'Trifle with her? Why, mother, are you becoming demented? I would not do so for the universe,' laughed Mr. Lorimer, as he put out his hand and took hold of his mother's that lay idle on her lap.

"'I am glad to hear you say it, for were you to do so, I should be excessively displeased,' said Mrs. Eustace in a cold voice, for she did not more than half trust what the handsome fellow was vowing.

"'I speak truly, lady mother. But now, honestly, hasn't she the most beautiful eyes in the world? so black, so brilliant, so expressive!'

"'I never observed anything remarkably attractive in her eyes, and I have known her a long while. If you have, you had better forget it!' answered my lady, 'for, Lorimer Eustace, were you to ruin that innocent girl, it would kill me; but'—she rose from her chair when she said this, and her face turned white as a snow-ball in March—'were you to marry her, I would *kill you!*'

"'Don't grow tragical, lady mother, I haven't any idea of doing either thing at present; though if I had, fear and threats would be alike ineffectual to prevent me!' said Mr. Lorimer, rising and making a motion to leave the room, but turning at the door he spoke

again, 'while you treat Jenny Hight kindly, and as an inmate of Glen Mary should be treated, you need not fear me; but harm her, or dismiss her from the place she so well deserves, and I *will* marry her!' His face was very cold, and white as his mother's. There seemed to be a deeper current of feeling in his heart than his first gay badinage disclosed.

"'Very well, Lorimer, we understand one another perfectly now,' said my lady, and her teeth snapped as she closed her lips, when her son shut the door and went whistling through the hall.

"She kept close watch on Jenny Hight, and gave her to understand one day that she was there on a suffrage that would not last long. 'It shall not last longer than to-day, Mrs. Eustace,' said Jenny, bridleing up and walking away to her room; but once there, she gave way to tears. I went in a good while after that, and she was sobbing as if her heart would break.

"'Well, Jenny,' I said, 'this is poor occupation, girl. You'd better be up and busy. I know all about it,' as she commenced to explain, 'and its wrong in you to try to divide mother and son. They seldom had a cross word till you came; and now it's almost a constant dispute about you. You've had little to do, little to do!'

"'It was not my fault, Mrs. Barth,' she said, chokingly, 'he would say he loved me; and when I loved him, too, what could I do but listen?'

"'Go! I have no patience with you, girl! Do you think Jenny Hight, the sewing girl, is any mate for Mr. Lorimer Eustace, descended without a break in the ancestral lines from the purest nobility of England? Shame on you, Jane Hight, shame on you!' And so I talked on to her, and after a while made her understand that there was a difference between them which even love could not overcome. And she changed so that my lady forgot all her anxiety; engaged Jenny to live with her all the next year, and the girl was glad to obtain the situation.

"In the winter, Mr. Lorimer went away again and was gone a whole year, then he wrote to his mother that he had met an English lady and her daughter who were traveling in America. The lady was an old friend of hers, and the daughter was very beautiful; he loved her, and, being accepted, would bring his bride to Glen Mary in one month from the date of the letter. My lady was delighted, and called us all up to hear her read the news; and Jane Hight was the only one who did not seem to be glad, and when she heard it she fell over in a dead faint. My lady turned pale and said in a low voice, 'I did not know it was so bad, indeed!'

"When we brought the poor creature to consciousness again, nobody mentioned what had happened, for my Lady Eustace had forbidden it. We were all very busy after that, for it was necessary to do a great deal in a little while, and we had few spare moments.

The house was repainted and almost refurnished, and every room was decorated with flowers. This last was left to Jenny Hight, 'because she had taste in such matters,' my lady said. It must have been sad work for her, for many times when I happened in the room where she would be busy, I noticed that her eyes were red with weeping. She never said anything but once, that was when she was arranging the new bride's room, when she sobbed out: 'Oh, Mrs. Barth, it is so hard that I, of all others, should arrange the bright flowers for *her* to admire!' I made no reply but 'Pshaw! Jane Hight, didn't I tell you, long ago, that you were no mate for Mr. Lorimer? You know it now!' Yet I felt sorry for her down in my heart.

And so at last the day came when they were to arrive, and everything was prepared for an elegant reception. My Lady Eustace came out in all her grandeur, in a claret-colored velvet, with rich old 'point d'Alençon' and diamonds, and we all said the bride could not be half so beautiful as our own noble mistress.

Just as the lamps were lighted, the carriage rolled up to the front door, and Mr. Lorimer Eustace sprang out and turned to assist his wife. My lady stood in the hall, and as they came up she went forward and kissed first her son and then her daughter, saying: 'Welcome to Glen Mary!' We stood in a respectful line on either side of the hall. Mr. Lorimer introduced his wife to us, and her voice was so sweet and

and soft that we all loved her from the first time she spoke. She wasn't so queenlike as Jane Hight, and I could not help thinking so when she said to the poor girl some time afterwards: 'And this is the pretty Jenny Hight that Mr. Lorimer told me about, eh?' 'I am she,' said Jenny, and her voice was so curt and bitter, that it brought the blood to the little lady's cheeks; but she did not reprimand her for her rudeness, only turned quickly away and went into her mother's room.

"Mr. Lorimer seemed very happy with his wife, and was much devoted to her. But he was changed, too, somehow, from what he was before he went away from Glen Mary; he was prouder and sterner, and never laughed or chatted as he used to do.

"My lady sometimes grew very grave and silent when she noticed this cloud on her son's brow, but it would fade away when Celeste, as her new child was named, came near her. She was fond of this daughter from the very first, and I often wondered which she loved best, this new comer at Glen Mary or the son of her name and her blood! And to this day I have never been able to tell.

"The bride was a bright, pretty little woman, with hazel eyes and aquiline features, and a beautiful figure that made one look and long to turn and look again after they had passed her. She seemed to carry sunshine into every nook and cranny about the Glen, and all day long her gay voice, laughter and

songs, rippled like music through the great gloomy rooms of the old house.

"Jenny Hight changed wonderfully after they came; she grew curt and cross, and would sometimes go all day without opening her lips to say one word to anybody. She performed the tasks which my Lady Eustace set for her to do, but when these were finished she would go off to her own room, or out in the woods where it didn't seem likely that she would meet any one. She grew thin and white, and her mouth had a blue, pinched look, that made my heart ache with a dull pain somehow, and her black eyes glowered at you, as if she had some evil intent about her.

"When the bridal pair had been there about three months and had been invited everywhere, my Lady Eustace said she would give a grand ball in their honor, and a week beforehand invitations to meet Mr. Lorimer Eustace and lady went forth from Glen Mary, sealed with white wax and stamped with two cooing doves. The evening of the entertainment, before any of the guests had arrived, Mrs. Lorimer Eustace sent for Jenny Hight and said pleasantly, 'Jenny, you have so much taste in arranging drapery, I wish you would assist me in dressing to-night, will you?'

"'Certainly, madam,' said Jenny, with more genial warmth than I had seen about her since Mr. Lorimer's marriage. They went up together into Mrs. Eustace's

room. I was in the habit of waiting on my lady and after she had completed her toilette and entered the drawing-room, I thought I would go up to see how the bride was dressed. I mounted the stairs hastily, and opened the door softly, that I might see without being seen. There stood the bride all robed in white lace and shimmering satin, with the pink moss-rose buds falling in a half wreath from her tapering waist to the hem of her dress; her bright hair hung in airy curls over her shoulders and arms, and were held back from her brow by a circlet of ruby stars. 'Do you think I am all right?' she asked gaily, as she viewed her beautiful reflection in the pier glass to which she was advancing softly as if half charmed with herself.

"'Not quite!' and Jane Hight's voice was so unnatural that I started and almost stepped into the room as if to preserve my young mistress from some imaginary harm, but something seemed to hold me fast where I stood. Oh, me!" The old lady hid her face in her hands as if to shut out the horrible scene that her memory conjured up! After a while she went on in a quick, hoarse voice: "There she stood, the sweet, sweet lady, who had never harmed any one, and she was so young to die, with a gentle smile upon her face. Jane took a candle from its holder and stepping towards her with a strange glitter in her black eyes, said: "I will perfect the picture," and stooped as if arranging the folds of the beautiful dress; she did not hesitate one moment, but holding

the candle in the lace folds set fire to it; and as quick as a gleam of electric light the flames flashed up and wrapped the sweet lady in its fiery embrace, sweeping over the bright hair and the gleaming rubies to the horror stricken, pallid face!

"Oh, Jenny! Jenny!" she shrieked, and dashed past me, for I had thrown open the door and shouted as loudly as I could:

"Stop, Jane Hight, stop!" Away she bounded, the flames wrapping her closer each moment.

"Jane Hight caught me by the arm, and hissed through her pallid lips. 'I have done it! Hist! you needn't shout, for I am ready to die!' and before I could secure her in my hold she, too, bounded past me.

"Oh, Lorimer! Lorimer!" was all the charred lips could say when I went down stairs; and all night long they wailed 'Lorimer! Lorimer!' until day dawn, when the voice was stilled and agony slept.

"That night the carriages rolled away from the gate, and pleasant voices were lowered to a solemn key, as 'Horrible, most horrible!' was whispered by those who realized indeed that death was in the midst of life.

"The next night there was a grave filled up just beneath that clump of poplars. Mr. Lorimer and his mother shut up house and dismissed all the servants but me, and went to Europe to the bride's mother. They have been gone these many years, almost ten, I believe."

"But Jenny Hight," I questioned as the old woman ceased speaking.

"Well, I never told what I had seen, because I believed Mr. Lorimer had kinder wrought her up to it, and she went off to E——, and I have never heard anything of her since. This is why Glen Mary is deserted."

"I am so obliged Mrs. Barth," I said, "for your kindness in telling me what I so much wanted to know. It is growing late and I must go home now, but whenever you feel lonesome come to the Grange, or send for me and I'll come here. Good bye."

And I went away, pausing by the clump of poplars to read the inscription on the low marble slab,

"CELESTE SLEEPS SWEETLY,"

and with a sad heart I mounted Romeo and rode homeward.

OLD MEMORIES.

Amid bygone scenes once more
I find myself to-night,
While all the world is haloed
With wan and silvery light;
Vanished forms come trooping back,
Old smiles and dreams agone,
And glide about my memory-hall
With olden light and tone.

The crimsoned embers peopled
With visions of the past,
Shine forth in realms of fairy
Too beautiful to last;
And tender tears are falling
Like mournful autumn-rain
Which weeps above the flowers,
That may not smile again.

The crushed hope-buds that faded
And dropped off ere the bloom,
Float on the air around me
A faint and sweet perfume;
And eyes of bygone splendor,
And tender lips so red,
Lean softly from the shadows;
Alas! their smiles are dead!

A girlish face bends nearest,
With fine spun hair like gold,
The girlish face I fondly loved
In winsome days of old;
But, like the rest, it left me
To tread thro' life alone,
O'er stones and thorny pathway,
Where joy-light ne'er hath shone!

Ah! cousin Julie Marshall,
Our childhood can't come back!
Or blossoms spring or sunbeams smile
O'er life's deserted track!
Afar our paths have parted,
Our hearts more worldly grown,
And shadows dark have fallen
Where love and light once shone.

Our aims are different too,
In this cold world of ours:
One lives among neglected tombs,
And one among the flowers;
One gathers all the sunbeams up,
To wreath her brow with light;
One longs to drink the Lethean cup
And seek the grave of night.

Your life the radiant picture here
And mine the darker one;
For you the blossoms ever seek
While I their beauty shun;

For I alone have sorrow known,
While no corroding care
Has o'er your glad heart cast a shade,
Or dimmed the fragrant air.

The olden chords are severed
That once their music played,
When gladsome elves together
In woodlands wild we strayed ;
And sadly now I strive
To wake a magic strain—
Our childhood days are dead for aye,
And may not come again !

And yet, in future years perhaps,
You'll sigh for vanished hours,—
For Nelly, love, and Beechland shade,
For sunshine and the flowers ;
Therefore, with tender smile I'll gaze
Upon your face so sweet,
Which softly bends from out the gloom
Where shade and firelight meet.

BEECHLAND, Oct., 1865.

IN VAIN.

I.

In vain do I bow at thy beautiful shrine,
And pour out the love that thrills in my heart ;
In vain do I vow that forever I'm thine,
Tho' sorrow and fate our life-paths should part.
Thou art cold and calm and icily chill,
As the snow on the glacier's crest,
And as well might I pine for a spirit-love,
As repose on thy passionless breast.

II.

In vain do I cull thee the rarest of flowers,
And in softest love-melody sing ;
In vain do I shun all the gay scenes of joy
Whose glad pleasures regret could but bring ;
The fair blossoms wither unnoticed by thee,
The lyre of my love makes discord in thine ears,
And the solitude wooed to win thy sweet words
Is gloomier made by the fall of my tears.

III.

In vain do I search in other soft eyes
For the glory which brightens thine own ;
In vain do I listen in other fond words
For the music which breathes in thy tone ;

I am blind to the glances and deaf to the voice
For thine, love, alone fills all the world's space
While I recklessly pour the wealth of my soul
In the light of thy fair English face.

IV.

In vain do I vow I'll love thee no more,
And haughtily cast on my heart a proud scorn;
In vain! for at evening I fondly adore
And bow at thy presence as light of the morn;
While each thought of my brain to thee doth belong,
'Tis useless to struggle with passion unpent;
As well strive to hush the sea-siren's song,
Or swerve the glad cycle of years from its bent.

V.

I'm doomed to love on through Time's lapse of woe,
I'm doomed to see shadows of life come and go;
I'm doomed to watch smiles of golden light shine
Tho' never one answering smile will greet mine!
And to hear the low words that are not meant for
me;

Oh! *why* will my love claim no master but thee?
And *why* do I bow at thy beautiful shrine,
And yield up my soul to this passionate pain,
When I know not one throb of thy proud heart is
mine

And my worship and tears alike are in vain!

BEECHLAND, 1865.

THE MYSTERY.

CHAPTER I.

THE DARK DEED.



WILDLY shrieked the winter winds, pressing with maddening vehemence against the closed doors and windows of a little stone cottage that stood in bold relief on a prominent cliff which jutted o'er the sea. Defiantly the foaming waves splashed their furious spray against the rocks which had for years repulsed the storm. Blindly the lightning flashed, brightening up, with electric wonder, the desolation of the scene, while the thunder rolled in majesty over the steel-clad clouds in the sky.

Within the cottage were seated an old man and woman conversing in low tones as they cowered over the fire: "Nanny, I dinna like the wark, it be's too muckle weird for an honest maun to do." And the old man shook his head gloomily.

"Peace be wi' ye, maun, 'tis goold that you want—'tis goold that he gies ye—what muir would ye ask?" the female replied fiercely, as her glowering eyes studied his sad countenance.

"Nothing—nothing—I dinna ask nothing—on'y it seems sae hard. She is a sweet creature, and the bairn has such winsome wee pranks. She weeps while she smiles over him. I ken that maun ha' done some wrang to her guid heart."

"If he ha' done a wrang deed, the sin is his ain, and we dinna ha' to answer for't. If ye ha' sae weak a heart as ye ha' a head, I'll do the wark mysel', and niver quake a bit. I fear nothing but starvation." And again her glowering eyes bent fiercely on him.

He cringed as if struck, and, turning away, looked steadily in the coals. No other words were spoken. The tempest still madly moaned and howled around the old house.

The hours stole slowly on till the little painted clock over the chimney numbered twelve strokes, with a doleful, wheezing whir. The old man was cowering over the fire still, the old woman watching his countenance, when three distinct raps upon the low, broad door which looked out upon the sea, made them both spring from their seats and with startled eagerness listen for the sounds again.

They came, three distinct raps upon the outer door. The old woman advanced and opened it. A tall form, muffled in a cloak, entered, closing the door quickly behind him. Holding up his finger in sign of silence, he advanced into the middle of the room and paused, listening eagerly, with his head inclined in the direction of another door opposite the one by which he

had entered. "Has she asked for me? Been depressed to-day?" he inquired in a whisper.

"Nae," answered the old woman, "she seems dull like, sits all the time crooning over the bairn on her lap, weeping, but she asks nae question, kind or ill, of onybody."

"Good," the man replied, "now is the time. One hundred pounds in gold to do the deed, and so many more in silver to keep the peace;" and he touched the crouching figure, by the fire, upon the shoulder. "Rouse you, man! One would think you were a coward."

"Aye! muckle muir could they say, if they see'd me now; but in fair fight—none can find a braver or honestest man than this same Davy McGuire. I dinna like this dark wark! But for the gold I do't. The lass ha' been wi' us a fortnight, an' ha' ne'er spake one ward but to her bairn, puir lassie, all dinna gone weel for her I fear," and with a sigh he rose and looked around. "Ye ken nothing, and fear nothing neither, Davy McGuire," said the woman in a low voice, as she clutched her husband's arm, while she studied the dark stranger's countenance. Just then a sweet, low voice was heard above the wail of the storm, crooning a nursery melody to a child that seemed restless with pain:

"Rest, baby, rest,
On thy mother's breast;
Father will come to us soon.
Lullaby."

It is impossible to describe the tender soothing of the voice. None but a mother's love, a mother's heart could understand the rhythm. After a while it ceased, and the door suddenly opening, a young girl stood before the gloomy, eager group; her night-black hair and dress bringing out the wild, dreary eyes and deathlike pallor of her face with startling distinctness. The stranger turned half away, as if to hide from observation, but it was too late, she had recognized the proud, stately figure which even the muffled cloak could not disguise.

Springing forward she fell upon her knees, and clasped the cloak in her trembling hands, crying: "Ferd! Ferd! have you come for me? Your little Adele was not forgotten then! You will take me away from this gloomy place, where the winds and the waves howl and shriek like demon sprites, and the dark woman frowns upon me when I sing to our little one? Oh! he is a beauty, Ferd!" her tones full of pride and a mother's love. "His eyes are blue like *yours*, but he is too young to look love yet—ha! ha! ha! You will take me away! Ferd, let us go now, to-night. I am so weary and lonely for my beautiful home. Come!" and springing up with earnest eagerness, she caught his hand. Sternly he gazed upon her, until her face paled again from the quick crimson flushes that had darkened even her proud brow, as she talked, and she sank pleading once more at his feet.

"Oh! Ferd, why are you so dark and still? Have pity on little Adele; she needs it, all your sympathy and love. Don't be so harsh. I have never sinned save to worship you more than God."

"Peace, wanton, peace!" he cried in thundering tones, while the blood purpled his face and the veins swelled like cords in his temples. "'Never sinned save to worship me more than God!' 'Tis false—you forgot my honor, and for it you shall die!" and he brought his face close to her awe-struck one, and hissed the death warrant through his clenched teeth.

"Oh, God! My husband, unsay those terrible words! I am true to you, have ever been. Don't bring me here to die a horrible death. Ferd! Ferd! unsay those terrible words! Pity your virtuous young wife!" And she imploringly clasped her hands and looked up at him with an intensified gaze of agony and horror, perfectly indescribable. Springing away, she caught up her sleeping babe, and, returning, held it out to him, sobbing brokenly as she kissed it:

"Not true to you? Let my pure, innocent babe, our boy, Ferd, bear witness that I have never sinned against you, even in thought. Heaven is just! It will lighten my name of its stain one day, when it will be too late for you to regret what you have said to your loving, trusting wife! Oh! my husband, unsay those terrible words! Take pity on me; gather me close to your heart; tell me all; who first

breathed this calumny in your ear? Oh! Ferd, I have so loved, so worshipped you!" and she drew near to him, and laid one eager hand upon his arm, clasping the babe with the other.

Sternly unwavering, he pushed her violently away, spurned her from him with his foot, as one too vile to touch without pollution, the woman he should have cherished with his offspring at her bosom. They fell together, the mother and child, crouching on the floor of the humble fisherman's cot by the sea.

The babe awoke, opening its bright blue eyes wide in infant wonder. The little ringlets of soft golden hued hair rested against the mother's pallid cheek.

"Mama—mama,"—it lisped. But she heard it not. Her great black eyes were intently watching the husband who was cruelly wronging her.

The little red lips quivered "Mama." The baby tones thrilled her heart. She had something yet for which to live, and she clasped the little one closer in her arms, but spoke not. The wildering maze of doubt and despair hung like a mist over her mind.

Ah! woman, you and God alone know how much injustice, bitterness, and contumely are cast upon you! You and God alone know how you suffer in uncomplaining silence, until the grave reaches out to you nearer, dearer than your hopes of Heaven even, for there is oblivion. Some day the angels will read aloud the register of good and ill, and your reward will not be forgotten. Patience.

"I'll come again to-morrow—let the work be done," said the stranger, turning to the old woman and speaking in a low tone—"let it be *well done*." Then beckoning the fisherman aside, he drew from his pocket a large leathern purse, tightly filled with shining, sordid lucre, adding, as he did so, "I'll double it to-morrow;" and without again noticing the bowed figure clasping the beautiful babe, he went out in the storm closing the door safely behind him.

"Come, my gude lassie, cheer up—all will go weel we' ye"—and the old woman, with a devilish gleam glancing over her hard face, caught sweet Adele Launcelot by the arm, and, as easily as a man could have done, placed her on the bed and laid the child beside her. Shivering under the rough touch which grasped her, the lady nestled her babe in her arms and turning her face to the wall, lay perfectly still. The old fisherman, with the leathern purse still in his hand, stood looking at her, his mind a prey to two conflicting emotions, compassion and ambition: compassion for the helpless, touching innocence of the young creature cast upon his mercy, and dependent upon his protection; ambitious to secure the power, wielded through the omnipotence of gold.

"Bright and yellow, hard and cold
Price of many a crime untold."

"Come, Davy, ye dinna ha' time to waste in thought. To wark, maun, to wark!" said the evil wife, touching him sharply upon the arm, and starting him from his revery.

"Weel, weel, bundle up the lassie and the bairn weel; it is a blustering, dark night, and a darker deed to blacken it." And he sighed as he watched the old woman wrap a coarse shawl round the dainty figure of the lady, and then put the infant in her arms, while she stood non-resistant, her black eyes only looking far away, as if she were dreaming. Pushing the two towards him, the old woman hurried them out into the storm. Shading her eyes from the bright fire-light, she watched them move out of sight, and stood listening there, until the sound of their retreating footsteps splashing in the pools of water died away. Then closing the door, she sat down upon a wicker stool, beside the hearth, where the fire-brands blazed ruddily.

Half an hour slipped by, but still the old man did not return. Rising, she went to the door, and looked uneasily out, muttering as she did so:

"Davy seemed bewildered; I would nae wonder if he gang in the waters alang wi' her;" when a wild shriek, unearthly in its heartrending anguish, rang above the night-winds and the storm, again, again, now fainter, but once again!

Shuddering and pale, she listened; then retreated within the room, her evil heart trembling at the foul deed, while she watched with acute ear for her gude man's return.

In a little while the old fisherman entered, and, throwing himself in a chair, buried his face in his hands, and groaned aloud:

"She was such a winsome creature, and the wee bairn was sae bonny. Puir lassie! puir bairn!"

"Ne'er mind, Davy, ye ha' got the goold," said his evil genius, coming up beside him, with the purse in her hand, forgetting, as she looked upon its gleaming contents, that life was lost, and her hopes of Heaven crimsoned with blood.

"Yea, yea—I hae got the goold, but where is the lassie and the bonny bairn?" and the old man turned towards her with a strange glitter in his eye.

"There, now! Davy, be a brave maun—ne'er quake at trifles! We'll nae starve *now*, Davy."

"Gang awa', Nanny—I munna talk muir, now; I muckle think."

The wife looked in his face, and, turning away, went into the next room, leaving him alone.

"Aha! I ha' got the goold, but my hands, my brawny, maun's hands, are red wi' a weak woman's blood. I did nae wish to harm the wee, wee bairn, nair the pale, woe-faced lassie, but the goold made me do 't! Ah! her wild cry was shriller than the sea-gull's. She is still now. God be wi' their souls and mine. Puir lassie—puir bairn!" and the old man bowed his head, and moaned aloud.

Down amid the waves sank Adele Launcelot without the time to say a prayer, without one call to God for mercy, save the frenzied shrieks which she cast up to the dense clouds and beetling, gray crags above her. She sank amid the waves of the wild sea, to be

seen no more by the old man and woman of the cot beside the foam-dashed cliff.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER THE STORM.

The morning sun rose clear and serene, smiling brightly down upon the wreck of nature all along the sea-girt shore. Immense tree-trunks, shivered and splintered by the lightning, lay around with their leafless boughs here and there, half buried beneath the sand; and rocks, crumbled, and rolled into huge, gloomy masses, by thunder shocks, and the Wind-God, as he shrieked and howled all the long weary night before, over the wild, bleak hills and sandy coast, lent desolation to the scene. The waves had spent their fury, and lay, far off as the eye could see, reflecting the sunbeams and blue sky, placid as a silvery mirror. Further down on the beach, where the water rippled laughingly, kissing the sea-shells all blushing rosy, and where its music forever sang its echo in their hearts; where the golden, brown, crimson and white pebbles played "boo-peep" with the sunshine and spray all day long; where the green-sea-weed grew rankest, lay a human figure. The long, black hair, which like a gloomy cloud lay half imbedded in the sand, betrayed the sex, as did the little hand, so dimpled and fair, that grappled with the sea-weed which persistently wound round it. There was no babe with laughing blue eyes and soft, silken

ringlets of gold, pressed to the mother-heart now. There was no cooing, sweet voice, ever to lisp "Mama" again; no tiny baby fingers to steal in with magic touch and lie above the heart which now throbbed so faintly; no baby-laughter, no baby-smiles. God pity those to whom they never come! who, when the shadows of sorrow and age gather round, like twilight, over the grave, cannot reach out their hands for a child-clasp, cannot remember child-talk and the patter of little feet. No gloom in life so dense but what the ripple of child-joy could make it sunshine!

The sea, the calm, placid sea held her treasure. The nymphs in their coral caves won it from the passionate, death-like clasp of mother-arms, and never, until the day of final reckoning before the Great White Throne, could she claim her own again. Only the desolation of life, only the woe, despair and hopelessness, were left to her. For her there could be no more sunlight—no more love-light—only frost and blighting pain.

All this, and more, Adele Launcelot thought, as she lay on the sea-shore half-lifeless, while the sunbeams and blue waters sparkled and flashed over and around her. Her memory came back, sharp, bitter almost stifling her faint, painfully drawn breath. God for some wise providence, had yet, on the very confines of death, recalled her to the bitterness of life again. She could not ruthlessly toss it from her. She was not ready to die, and so she lay there thinking, thinking strangely, deeply.

Slowly she drew her feet from out the playful waves; unmatted her hair from the glittering sand, and wearily staggered further up the bank, where she fell again exhausted.

She knew she could appear before the world, and summon her husband as her would-be murderer. She did not remember anything after he told her she should die, and struck her, until now, when she found herself half lifeless upon the sea-shore, with the rays of the sun glaring fiercely upon her. Her babe was gone; if she was found there, God only knew what might be her doom. For her there remained one thing, *revenge*; and even then, as she lay there, the bitter, *human* thought came into her heart, "How can I repay him?"

Who blames her? A young, devoted wife, for a mere *suspicion*, put far away without a question of right or wrong!—bitterly reviled, and at last, ruthlessly tossed into the sea, with her pure innocent babe in her arms! It was gone! Who blames her for revenge?

Again she returned to the waters, and bathed her brow, and wetting her hair, shook it out to the sun. Her clothes, dank and humid, hung round her, but it mattered not. So, after resting a little while longer, she commenced climbing the steep. Once at the top, she could see, on one side, the stone cottage, which had been her home for the past fortnight, and on the other far away, the gray tiles of house-tops in a little

sea-port town. There she must wend her way and reach it ere she was discovered. There might be some friend who would aid her. Surely God would not desert her in such an hour of need.

As rapidly as she possibly could she walked on; yet the darkness of night finally overtook her about two miles distant from her starting place of the morning. Exhausted she sank down to sleep, and in the deathlike oblivion, forgot life's cares.

Oh! what a relief to the weary, aching brain when there seems naught for which to live; when this beautiful earth holds no joy; when the glorious sunsets with their rose-tinted clouds, have no beauty; when our life-barks seem drifting ceaselessly on, and we are powerless for good or evil;—oh! what a relief to lie down, and closing our eyes, to *forget it all*. To feel that at least while we slumber, the scorpion-sting of memory is robbed of its poison, the goading, burning lash of human thought stayed. But then comes day-glaring again, and so it goes on the bitter end.

We are alike in this wicked, human world. Let us strive as we will to soar above it, at last it all comes back to us, human hearts full of passion, love and beauty; full of sin, sorrow, and suffering; the world overflowing with good and ill. Sometimes in life our value is appreciated, and we can claim true, affectionate friends; meet with lofty, generous souls, whose very beings thrill with distinctive love for the whole human race. But mostly we are not understood un-

til the flowers, and shadowy green grass, bloom and fade above us, and we lie mute below!

CHAPTER III.

THE FRIEND FOUND AT LAST.

Just on the outskirts of the little village towards which our heroine had looked so longingly, stood a dilapidated, low, log hut. Summer and winter a thin cloud of blueish smoke ever puffed from the tumble-down, old chimney; but beyond that no sign of habitation was outwardly visible, save an old gray cat that would sometimes purr and mew around the door, which was always closed, unless it opened momentarily to admit the entrance or egress of some visitor. The inhabitant was never seen.

"Who could visit there?"

Well, dear reader, many who felt impatient to peer into the future; many who did not suffer or enjoy enough in the present, sought the mistress of this humble hovel, the far-famed fortune-teller of Leesburg. And here, just as the twilight of another day was wrapping chilly folds of shadow round the earth, Adele Launcelot paused footsore and weary.

Two days had she been without food; two nights been chilled to the heart; and now, when the goal was almost won, she felt she could go no further. Just on the confines of civilization she must pause to die, because she was *starving*. The house seemed uninhabited. She would enter, at least it would shield her from the night dew, and she could die there,

instead of being found upon the highway a houseless wanderer. She raised her hand, it could not quite reach the latch where she lay prostrate on the step; she staggered forward; she clutched it; she pushed against it, it resisted her weak strength, and a human voice, querulous with age, called out:

"Who's that at my door this time o'night?"

A human voice! Oh, a rescue from the seething flames; a strong hand to guide her from the gurgling waters; the cool, limpid ripple of a spring and green grass to the dying wanderer on the sandy desert. A human voice! Life sparkled freshly and vigorously, yet her joy made her almost speechless.

"'Tis I," she cried faintly; "for God's sake open and let me in."

Footsteps hobbled across the floor, and as the latch was lifted and the door opened Adele Launcelot fell across the threshold. She had fainted. The realization was too much. A weird looking old woman, bent almost double with age, peered out; her tawny yellow skin was shriveled to her bones like parchment; her gray hair streamed over her shoulder in a silvery veil; a scarlet cloth cap, with a long black plume, was perched on top of her head; a scarlet cloak enveloped her whole figure, save her too long, bare, skinny arms; one fleshless hand held a pine torch, while the other caught the lifeless lady and dragged her within the hut, shutting the door quickly and drawing the bolt violently after it.

"This is what comes of taking houseless wanderers into my house at night, a dead girl on my hands," and, sticking the torch in a wooden socket protruding from the jagged arch of the fireplace, she bent over the lady then, with an exclamation of surprise lifted her up and placed her on a low bed in one corner of the room, while she went to work to bring her to sensibility again.

The room was low and square built; the floor bare; two rush bottomed chairs; a little table with a deep drawer; an iron kettle swinging on the hook over the fire, which burned ruddily; and a double row of shelves filled with bottles of dark, queer looking liquids, a few dried herbs, an old broken plate, a cracked bowl and pewter spoon, a string of rattles, and a skull, with a rickety couch, comprised every piece of furniture in the miserable hovel, where one would imagine humanity could scarce exist a moment without pollution. Yet this was a sweet haven of rest to Adele.

After again and again applying restoratives, almost fruitlessly, Adele opened her great black eyes and looked with weary gratitude upon the aged face so curiously bent above her.

"Oh! you're so good to me," she said.

"Never mind now," said the witch woman; "we will talk about that after a while. Drink this," and she held the old cracked bowl to the pallid lips. Adele obeyed her, and almost immediately sank into a deep sleep.

The old witch took down her death's head and commenced marking on it. She put the rattles round her neck and sat down beside the invalid. She would occasionally smooth her hand over the fair, pure face, and as often as she did so the eyelids would quiver and the beautiful lips break into a sweet but plaintively sad smile. The hours wore on with only the singing and hissing of the fire and the sleeper's deep breathing and the old woman's gibberish to break upon the monotony of the scene. At last Adele awoke, looking calm and refreshed. Raising herself on one hand, she reached out the other and laid it upon the withered, brawny palm of the old woman's; her eyes were so deep and earnest, her voice so pleading and passionately sad: "Madam."

"What is it?"

"I want you to be my friend."

"*I am your friend*, beautiful and unfortunate one. I feel for you deeply, truly, for *you have suffered*. Remember, I am your friend so long as we both shall live," and the weird woman spoke in a deep, yet excited tone.

"Oh, thank you! I am so grateful! I am all alone in the world now, and to you I want to lay bare my life-history."

"Speak on."

Adele related to this woman all that I have told you so far, my reader, and more. Tears flowed, and lips quivered, while she went on. Ere she ceased, the

sun was mounting the "gray stairs of dawn." The old woman said to her:

"I am growing old. I choose you as my daughter of science; I will impart to you my magic art. I am growing old and I need but little; the gold that I have hoarded for years is yours on one condition—that you will swear to be revenged on this man just as I shall say. Swear!" "I swear," said Adele solemnly, earnestly. The old woman rose, and, turning up a corner of the bed, displayed a perfect sheet of gold pieces, which she commenced to gather up and put in a leathern bag, which, being filled, she handed to Adele, saying:

"I trust you. You have my fortune, and now for my art and your revenge!" And she talked on, in a wild, strange, excited manner, while Adele leaned eagerly forward, drinking in each gesture and each word. The scene closed with the rattles about Adele's neck, one hand upon the death's-head, the other clasped in the brawny palm of the old woman, and her eyes, deep and dark, looking far off in the dim future.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MYSTERY—THE LOVERS.

It was a strange apartment, and well might it be called the habitation of The Mystery. Well might Marion Stanhope shudder as she found herself within the four walls, the door closely barred, until such time

as the fate unto which she had surrendered her freedom should say: "Open, Sesame," to the sable slave without. Heavy velvet curtains, embroidered with strange silver and gold and crimson devices, and hieroglyphics, covered the walls. No ray of light made any object perfectly distinguishable; only one small lamp swung from the centre of the ceiling, with a crimson globe which cast an ominous glare over everything. A death's head rested on a round table with a deep drawer, and round it was wreathed a necklace of snake rattles. A large, black velvet chair, with a canopy of gold cloth above it, was raised upon a little platform, which was also draped in black and gold. Another chair was placed for the visitor, and into this seat Marion Stanhope sank, half exhausted with fear and excitement. The black velvet curtains were drawn back and flashed over the observer a flood of brilliant, scintillating light; the eye could scarce brook the dazzling radiance; they closed almost instantaneously again, and The Mystery stood upon the throne, silent and motionless.

The presence seemed but the shadowy mist of a silver veil. From out the sheeny folds, a voice, low and breezy, almost inaudible, questioned:

"What wouldst thou?"

"O! Spirit!" murmured Marion, leaning eagerly forward, utterly carried away by some inexplicable fascination, "I would know my future."

"Wouldst thou know it, good or ill?"

"Good or ill."

"Beware! ere it is too late."

"I fear not," replied Marion, breathless with an indescribable excitement, only understood by those who have yielded to similar influences.

Slowly the death's head commenced to revolve, and the rattles to wave in and out in a ceaselessly curious way, while all over the death's head small crimson devices appeared.

The presence was stationary, and again the voice spoke, no longer breezy and low, but cold and clear, cutting against the ear like some sharply-edged instrument of torture. Marion shuddered with indefinable dread.

"You love,—love unwisely and too well,—love sinfully and passionately; for it you must reap a reward, bitter in the extreme, unless you turn from the temptation ere it is too late. You have been wilfully enticed into sin. You expect to marry; I bid you, with the voice of prophetic warning, beware of the bridal ring. Beware of the bridal day. Beware, above all, of the perfidious bridegroom, or the remorse of sin be upon your head. There is an impassible barrier between you and your lover. *He is not free.* There is a wild, sea-girt shore, where a storm rages fiercely, and the furious waves engulf a woman's form, and *yet she lives.* Beware of your bridal day. Seek to know no more!"

"O! God!" and Marion Stanhope sprang forward

madly, passionately, but the velvet curtains parted, the light flashed dazzlingly over her again. When she raised her eyes, the silver Mystery had vanished, and the sable slave held the door open. She went out scarce conscious.

* * * * *

"Darling! Marion! come to me precious one! Tell me why you are so cold and shy to Ferdinand. Don't you know how dearly, how devotedly I love you, say, sweet Marion?"

And Ferdinand Launcelot held out his arms in a half-pleading, half-commanding way to Marion Stanhope, who stood with her figure turned from him; yet her face, white and strange, was watching his own, longingly, wildly, earnestly.

There he stood, beautiful, glorious tempter, that he was. So handsome, so king-like in all his wicked, irresistible fascination.

Oh! how women worship physical beauty in a man; how god-like, how great it seems! mind and heart fade into contemptible littleness in comparison with perfect physical development! At least, to such natures as Marion Stanhope's; eager, ardent, beautiful herself, she could not but bow before such qualities in Ferdinand Launcelot. His hands reached out to her. Oh! how she yearned to go to him. The warning words of The Mystery held her back: "Beware of the perfidious bridegroom; he is not free." The tempter, inspiring, ardently, making the rich,

warm blood flush to her temples, and then crimson back to her heart with blushes, leaving even her lips pallid.

"Marion, *my* Marion, come!"

"O, O, Ferdinand, *don't!*" broke wildly from her lips, "*don't; you hurt me!*"

He smiled, a bewitching, fascinating smile; his hands still reached out to her, as he rose from the seat into which he had suddenly thrown himself; his head was inclined forward; his lips apart; his beautiful, shadowy blue eyes reading her very soul; his voice was purely liquid with wavering, trembling love-music.

"Marion, *my* Marion, once more I say, *come!*"

She clasped her hands, as if scarce knowing what to do, how to act. She looked away from him, he tempted her so with his glorious face. It was impossible. She looked at him but once again; the smile was fading from his lip, from his eye; but he still held out his hands.

With a glad cry, like a murmur of music, she sprang to his arms; and clasped close to his heart, she turned her bright, young face, like the flower to the sunlight, for the tender, passionate kisses he pressed there with his loving, beautiful mouth. "Why do you do so, darling?" he whispered. "Don't you know it wounds me inexpressibly for you to treat me so coldly or with distrust? I love you so much more dearly, if possible, when you *trust* me. Why then

ever stand off and look at me, in that shy, indifferent way, when you know the welcome my *heart* always gives you? Say, little one?"

"O! Ferdinand, I had my fortune told by The Mystery, and she told me you wanted to marry me; told me how dearly I loved you; said it was sinful; bade me beware of you, of my bridal day, or I would bitterly repent it; *said you were not free*. O! Ferdinand, do you love any one but your little Marion? Are you not free?"

"Yes, sweet one, free as air, save for the links which your love binds about me. And I do not, assuredly, love anybody but my own little Marion, beautiful vision that she is!" Closer he nestled her to his heart ere he spoke again. Then raising her face in his hand, so that he might read her thoughts. "I loved you, angel Marion, *even before I had a right*; loved you when my first wife, Adele, was on earth, and you never knew it."

Still she sat beside him, his arm around her, drinking in the poison with the sweet, only because *he* held the draught to her lips. O! woman, woman, weak, frail woman! Even as in the days of Paradise thou art tempted and yieldest to temptation ever!

Marion Stanhope, so sweet was the realization that her hero-idol loved her, noted not the last sentence. She was intent upon the one all-absorbing thought, *he was free*. "Now, darling, for fear The Mystery may have you entirely next time you endeavor to penetrate

the future by the Black Art, tell me when I may call you *my wife*? Marion, when I may make *our* future joyous?"

"Ferdinand," and she clasped his hand all the firmer, that she was about to express a doubt, "that Mystery told me something about a storm, a foam-dashed cliff, a drowning woman, *who still lives!* Was that *Adele, Ferdinand?*" Like a thunder-cloud grew his brow. The blood faded from his crimson mouth, and he stroked his moustache in token of fiery anger. She shrank away from him, but with a quick, passionate gesture, he caught her close again, and then seeing how his vehemence alarmed her, he said:

"Never express any doubt of me, Marion, *my Marion*, if you would have me love you. All I ask is obedience and *trust*. Now, good bye; I'll go see this Mystery which seems to have shattered your nerves. Bye-bye," and he waved his hand in tender adieu.

The pleasure of seeing The Mystery was denied him then, but near, very near at hand, when her presence would send the blood curdling to his heart in frozen horror!

CHAPTER V.

THE BRIDAL.—THE MYSTERY UNVEILED.

The soft haze of Indian summer rested on the purple and blue hills. The sighing autumn breezes sang with a solemn glory over the sad fall of the crimson,

russet, and golden leaves. The sun smiled over all. The day was beautiful. Just such a day as wakes the slumbering soul to the reality that "life is real—life is earnest;" when every human heart thrills with a quicker throb and a deeper glow—*to be and to do good*. And such was the bridal-morn of Marion Stanhope.

In the grand gloomy church of Wiltonby, the sunshine stole through the shadow of ivy leaves that clustered about the windows, glinting with a mocking glory the fair maiden face bent blushing before the minister, standing in such solemn majesty behind the crimson altar-cloth. The silvery sheen of her bridal dress waved in soft, rich folds around her little, graceful form. The fleecy cloud-veil shadowed her person. The pure wreath of orange blossoms floated there a faint, sweet perfume. Ferdinand Launcelot, grander, more handsome than ever, stood beside her, drinking in the sight of her beauty with the intoxicating delirium of delight that then, even *then* they were breathing vows which bound them together.

Solemn and deep the minister's voice rose through the aisles, and floated to the arched roof of the dim old cathedral. "If any man can show just cause why they cannot be lawfully joined together let him now speak, or else hereafter forever hold his peace."

He paused. Again rose his voice, his eyes reading each countenance with fearful scrutiny.

"I require and charge you both—"

"Hold!" a voice rang out through the solemn stillness like a clarion, and awe-struck faces were turned towards the figure, which passed up the long aisles without the echo of a footfall, and paused beside the bridegroom. A soft, silvery veil fell entirely around it, but the heavy velvet folds of drapery and the graceful stature betrayed the womanhood. The minister stood silent, horrified. The guests leaned forward, eager, anxious, expectant. The bridegroom turned toward the apparition fiercely as he threw his arm around his pallid bride, the cords of anger swelling and purpling in his darkening brow.

"Who forbids?" he questioned, sternly.

"*I do!*" the voice replied; "*I do!*"

"What, oh! The *Mystery*—a fortune-teller. What hast thou to do with me, sorceress? We have no mysteries now. Unveil thyself!" he thundered.

"Yes, I will; but listen all and let your hearts almost cease to beat, as ye harken to the *Mystery*, ere she unveils herself, dooming a bride to misfortune, and a bridegroom to the—gallows!"

Every vestige of color fled from Ferdinand Launcelot's countenance. He stood so still, he seemed made of marble. The Presence went on calmly, and yet with a smouldering fire burning in the intonation of her voice—

"There is a rugged, gray cliff where the winds and waves make music when the days are fair; but they are not always so. Wild storms rage, and thunders

roll, just as the tide of human sin blots out all beauty in life. On that cliff there stands a stone cottage in which once lived an old fisherman and his wife. They are both dead now. They were rude and ignorant. Starvation overtook them, and one day their evil genius came, came in the form of a man, with a trusting wife nestling to his heart, a babe at her bosom. Under pretence of business, he left his wife and child there, and went away. What he said to the old couple rests between them and God; but one night, when winds shrieked and howled, and hail and rain fell, the husband came back, and the wife startled them plotting her destruction. She knew it not. Her only joy was that her husband had returned to take her to his heart again. But when her womanly love sprang in fond words from her lips, he hissed in her startled ear her death-warrant, and a doubt of her virtue, his pure, young wife, pure as an angel, save in her love for so base a fiend. She plead with him, and he struck her down, and spurned her with his foot, his wife with his golden-haired boy in her arms. She knew no more. That night the mother and child were tossed in the seething waves that lashed the rugged rocks furiously."

"Fiend! Sorceress! What art thou telling?" yelled Launcelot, springing toward her.

"Hold!" she said; and, fascinated, he paused; that wicked, handsome Mephistopheles paused before a *Mystery*. She went on. "The waves bore away

the babe, the golden-haired, blue-eyed boy :—bore him away to lull the storm to sleep with baby-cries for his mother. In vain. Morning found her, scarce alive, upon the sea shore. She has lived, with God's aid, for this one moment of sweet revenge."

"Devil! Fiend! Who art thou? Ha—ha—" panted Launcelot, throwing his hands wildly aloft, as he again sprang toward her.

"Who am I? Your wife, ADELE LAUNCELOT!" and the silver veil fell back. The Mystery stood triumphant, avenged.

No person moved; the very stillness of death reigned around. Marion Stanhope had been leaning eagerly forward, her eyes dilated, lips breathlessly apart; and now, awed, fascinated, she glided softly up beside Adele Launcelot, and paused, reached out her hands as if to touch her, failed, and sank at the feet of the avenged wife insensible. This wakened the guests from their lethargy, wakened Ferdinand Launcelot to a sense of his great danger, did he not now defend himself.

"Frenzied devil!" he shouted—"thou art *no wife of mine! I know thee not! 'tis all false—false as hell!*"

Another figure now entered on the scene, the old fortune-teller of Leesburg. All started with amazement and alarm at her weird presence.

"Stop," said she, in a solemn voice, "*I bear witness against thee, for I rescued her for the sweet revenge*

of seeing *her*, the woman who ever claimed your affection and *you*, suffer for the wrong you had done my foster-child. Ha! ha! ha! *You thought I was dead.* But, no! I waited—*waited for this!* The world was not so wide but what *I could reach thee; and now I am contented!* What oh! guards;" and at the sound of her voice, three policemen, who had been waiting without, entered, and one advancing, laid his hand on Launcelot's shoulder, in sign of arrest, and produced his warrant in the other. With a frenzied blow, Launcelot laid him at his feet. Immediately he was grappling with the others, writhing, bending, twisting like a madman, but being overpowered, he was borne from the church, leaving the bride supported by her guardian, while the triumphant Nemesis looked on with an avenging smile.

The scene closed in the wildest confusion of doubt and gloom. O! woman, thy heart is tender and true; thy love devoted and passionate, thou canst and dost endure—and endure more than the world can ever know; thou and God best fathom the deeps of misery, sorrow, and despair to which thou art often doomed. But when at last the human heart is stung and tortured to the quick by injustice and cruelty; when the frenzied soul resists in bitter defiance; when the natural springs of affection and trust are dried, and the sandy deserts of life stretch afar off, without even the sweet prospect which the sunshine makes; when there is no promise of the glorious

"Eureka" of joy and peace held out to thee; when the motherhood, the wifehood, by torture are cast from thee for aye and for aye, like a grand dark Nemesis, cold, glittering as the polar frosts and snow, thou canst avenge thyself with incomprehensible, intense cruelty; thou "canst smile and smile" upon scenes which would have curdled thy blood in the days when the hope of love and heaven was bright in thy heart. O! thou enraged Pythoness!

CHAPTER VI.

THE MYSTERY ENDED.

It was a gloomy place, in spite of the smooth shaven lawn, the regular plats of gay flowers, the walks winding in and out amid the shady trees; gloomy, because that solemn, great house was a lunatic asylum; gloomy, because so many wild cries went up to God and the cold, silent stars, and no dawning pity came; gloomy, because there was suffering, despair and death. And still the managers smiled and bowed.

There was no tenderness, there were no loving whispers, no heart smiles for the sufferers. Poor, benighted souls! only harshness, unkindness, and neglect were their portion, save where the glittering gold could tempt the awakened duty. The day of which I write was in July. Hot and sultry, not a breath of air waved the tiniest blade of grass nor the most delicate leaf. The aspen almost ceased to quiver. The

sere earth, with parched face, looked pleadingly, despairingly up to the sun that so fiercely glowered down.

A slight figure in black walked hastily the long, front walk, ran up the gray stone steps, and rang the bright brass bell. A waiter answered the summons.

"Is he worse?" was the anxious query.

"He is, madam; will you walk up?"

Along the dreary halls they stepped quickly, past cells where fiendish faces with glaring eyes were pressed against the iron bars, and bitter curses, demoniac yells, and heartrending sobs greeted them, and long, thin fingers wildly, vainly grappled to clutch them. At last they paused in front of a low, broad door, opened it and entered the room.

There were but two occupants, a dying man and his nurse.

Both faces were familiar—Ferdinand Launcelot's and Marion Stanhope's.

"Is it she?" he asked, eagerly, yet faintly, as the lady entered.

"Yes, 'tis she," Marion replied.

The lady raised her sombre veil, and the pale, worn features of Adele Launcelot were exposed to view.

He held out his hand; she stepped up beside him and clasped it in her own.

"Adele"—he raised his eyes imploringly to her sad face,—“I have made my peace with God for my many transgressions. Are you unrelenting?”

"No, Ferdinand; we have all done wrong in the past. I forgive you, my husband, and bless you in this your last, bitter hour," and Adele Launcelet, all a woman again, knelt beside him.

"Marion—*my Marion* even in death—come to me—let me feel your tender kiss last upon my lips. Good-bye, darling; good-bye, Adele." No other words were spoken, and soon after Ferdinand Launcelet slept the last sleep.

Sinful, wicked beyond comprehension, he had yet a heart soft and tender to the one whom God had marked out for his wife, but whom the laws of life separated from him everlastingly, eternally, in expiation of his heinous crime; a father the murderer of his child; the husband a would-be-murderer of his wife. When we left him he was on his way to prison, where he was tried and sentenced to death. The night before the execution he became hopelessly insane; and Mr. Faran, Marion Stanhope's guardian, at her request and the now repentant Adele's, obtained a reprieve, and he was confined in the lunatic asylum, where he raved ever for the touch of Marion's hand, a smile and kiss from Marion's lips, till she in the mad devotion, the passionate idolatry, which yet throbbed in her heart for him, spite of the murder on his soul, spite of all his villainy, became a nurse in the asylum, where she had remained until the day Adele Launcelet, who had been sent for at her husband's request, (for he in his last moments was sane,) came and met her there.

"Adele," said Marion, "I have a letter for you, which Ferdinand wrote yesterday; will you have it?" and she held it out to Adele Launcelet. She took it, and through blinding tears, and bitter heart-throbs, read:

"LUNATIC ASYLUM, July 23, 1844.

"ADELE LAUNCELOT—*My wife*:

"When you read this letter, it will be beside my dead body, or perhaps my grave, for I shall request Marion to give it to you there.

"I have made my peace with God, and now, to you I come to confess a history of my life—one of which you have never dreamed.

"It is black with heinous crime, with woful sin, and you will shudder, very many times, when you read it. And yet I know your heart is too essentially human not to pity me, even as much as you once loved me.

"MY CONFESSION.

"My father was an Italian, dark, fierce and passionate. At an early age he came to America, settling down amid the wilds of Florida. He was not scrupulous in his notions of honor. He never paused at the horror of a crime, if it would consummate his designs by the accomplishment of it. He became wealthy, traveled North—there met a young girl whom he loved, devotedly, madly—and it occurred to him, as to

many, when he proffered his heart and fortune, he was refused. Not with coquetry—not with idle scorning—but with a true woman's honor. She did not, could not, love him; another claimed her heart. It hurt her to confess it to him, but she did so because she admired and valued him as a friend. He did not appreciate it—from the moment of his rejection, his love turned to hatred, his smiles to sneers, his philanthropy to scorning. He swore to be avenged.

"Many men are so; they do not appreciate the delicacy which would prompt a true woman to reject them, when her love was another's. He returned home and married.

"In the balmy groves of orange blossoms I was born. My home was not pleasant. My father and my mother lived very unhappy together, and so I grew with the winds, the sunshine, the storm, the flowers and weeds. I was a wild creature, and yet my mother worshipped me. So did my father in his way; *he* loved me because I was one day to be the instrument of his revenge.

"There was but one creature in the world that I loved—*Marion Stanhope*. She was a glorious child and I revered her then and now!

"The choicest fruits and flowers I ever culled for her. The brightest shells, the sunniest fish, the most beautiful songsters of the wild-wood, I laid at her feet as trophies of my love and devotion. She became my queen. I was never happy save when by her

side, and so it came to be, we grew up to love with the affection of youth and maiden, and my parents smiled upon us. She was an orphan.

"About that time the Northern lady, whom my father loved, came down to Florida, a widow, came to my father as her best and earnest friend. So ably had he played his part, she never dreamed of the bitterness in his heart which the years had only strengthened, and which now burned fiercely.

"With her, she brought a weird witch-woman, who was foster-mother to her child, a beautiful, graceful little sylph, who no longer needed a nurse, but who clung with such affection to this woman that none had ever had the heart to separate them up to that time. The child was three years old, I thirteen. Young as she was, she loved me. She would follow after me all day long; her little feet never wearied pattering, while she was beside me.

"Strange to say, this devotion never touched me. I rather felt a repulsion towards her, because all my soul was wrapped up in Marion Stanhope.

"I was sent to college. I became dissipated and involved in debt. Years went on so, each day involving me deeper and deeper, until I was twenty four years of age.

"I returned home. I confessed to my father all my misdeeds, and he refused to aid me only on one condition: I must marry the child that loved me so well in the years gone by, and who was now a blooming, beautiful maiden.

"I refused. Disgrace and the penitentiary stared me in the face. I yielded—I married that girl; it was you, Adele Leslie. I married you without affection. How basely I deceived you, you and I best know. I believed that in your deep, ardent affection, I *might* learn to forget my *Marion*, whom I felt, even while I hoped, that I loved with a mighty, deathless love. I knew not my own heart. I abhorred your presence; and when, with your fair, sweet face, and round soft arms, you would glide beside me, striving to woo me with tender caresses and loving words, to smile on you, I would loathe you while I embraced you; longed to *curse* you while I called you darling, little Adele, because I felt another should have been my wife, wife in *nature*, as in name, and that other stood afar off from me with sad, sorrowful eyes, full of tender shadows of crushed dreams, and rich, crimson quivering lips that it maddened me to look upon.

"My father was *avenged*. He had doomed the child, the worshipped child, to misery, and thus he wreaked vengeance on the doting mother. God has long since summoned him to his reckoning; and he and I will stand at the Tribunal Bar together—and the parent shall answer for his son, as the tree for its fruit!

"The days glided on. The sweet spring-time—the golden summer, the glorious autumn, and chill winter. When the spring blossoms came again, you gave me a little babe, a boy.

"Shudder to your inmost soul, Adele; I despised that child in proportion to your love. I longed to smite it when you would hold it up, with its cooing baby-notes and blue eyes, for me to take it, "Our boy, Ferd."—longed to smite it, *because you were its mother!*

"I would sometimes see Marion—seldom though, for fear I might shock her with the sin of a confession of my wild worship for her; and each time that I left her presence I hated you more and more; yet, Adele, you never knew it.

"No lover could have been more devoted outwardly. I never betrayed myself. The days glided on, until your child cooed 'Mamma' and 'Papa'—oh! how I cursed you both, that the shadow of years was creeping, and *I was bound, and Marion free*. One day I went to see her, and met there an old college friend. A wild thought entered my heart. I would kill you, kill the babe, and thus be free to take Marion to my arms, to my home as my wife, ere another man could win her from me.

"I remembered that lone cliff that jutted over the sea, where I had often been as a boy, and where Davy McGuire lived, and there I bore you and the babe, under the pretence of your taking a pleasure-trip, and I to attend to business.

"As you well remember, after we put out to sea, I was harsh, curt and cross, and I left you at the cottage, and went away without telling you good-bye.

"I went back in mourning—deep, inconsolable mourning. I had lost my wife at sea and my idol-boy—my blue-eyed, golden-haired darling—and was saved myself by the merest chance.

"The story told well. I remained at home a fortnight, and then returned to the cottage to consummate my designs, ostensibly to wander near the waves where my wife and boy went down.

"I hired Davy McGuire to drown you during the first storm. I paid him well. I struck you that night, Adele; and it was the most indescribably exquisite sensation I ever felt when I *spurned you with my foot*. It told so well how I hated you. I hissed a doubt of your virtue in your ear, only because I knew it would add one more torture to your soul while you yet lived. Call it fiendish; I know 'twas so. I believed you dead. I murdered Davy McGuire and his wife then, that the story might never be betrayed. It would rest only with me.

"I forgot the witch-woman, your foster-mother, who haunted your foot-steps, and whom you never remembered, for she had displeased your mother and had been dismissed soon after you came. But she never forgot you, and I suppose she rescued you from a watery grave, even though your child went down.

"I sought Marion. I told my love over again. I confessed that I had married you to become free from debt, and she forgave me; and oh! as I write, how the bliss of those days when we first told each other

as man and woman of our love, floods ever my soul. Your vengeance was sure, ready and *bitter in the extreme*. God never blessed me with the joy of claiming Marion as my wife on earth, but in Heaven it may be we will meet again a little while at judgment, and to have her near me will be so sweet a consolation, that the torments of Pandemonium will be frustrated; for I will be content in dreaming of her as an angel, joyous and happy.

"Adele, good-bye. I know I have sinned against you. I ask your forgiveness, now that you have been so amply revenged, and only pray, when we are both asleep beneath the sod, we will not mingle in dust together, and our grave clothes may never rustle 'gainst each other, for I will wait for my Marion there. Good-bye; I have made my peace with God. Love Marion—my Marion—for me.

"Your husband,

"FERDINAND LAUNCELOT."

Adele folded the letter and looked long and sadly upon the face of the dead. He had sinned, and she forgave him. Marion was kneeling beside him, her face bent on his hand. Adele called her; she spoke not, moved not; Adele raised the bowed head; Marion Stanhope was dead! Who shall say his spirit called not her's away?

Their souls at last mingle in one. They were buried side by side. Surely this world is all a mystery.

TO AGNES LEONARD.

Thy sunny face I yearn to meet
With love and tenderness replete;
And long to hear thy spirit words
Trill in my heart like singing-birds
Whose echoes thro' its vales are heard,
When wind-harps by the notes are stirred.

My spirit lyre I fear to sweep
Because its wailings make me weep;
And yet beneath the soft moon-light
That floods the earth and sky to-night
I fain would give the fancy vein
That bears me back to *thee* again!

My aching heart grows wild with pain
In dreaming of *earth-love so vain*;
And sad tears fall like autumn-rain,
In list'ning to the plaintive strain,
Which mem'ry sings, unto my brain,
Of joys, that lost come not again!

Thy gentle words with nameless thrill
Waft hope to me—thro' distance chill,
Till sunbeams flash sky-blessings down
Amid these earth-shades dim and brown;
Oh, sainted One! may angels guide thee—
And no life joy be denied thee!

BEECHLAND, March 22d, 1864.

A RHYME OF THE WAR.

CANTO I.

I.

“Up from the rich plains of the South,
O'er mountains near and far,
A shout was borne from mouth to mouth,
And echo answered WAR!
Then the proudest rallied bravely
To the standard of the right,
And swore a solemn oath to stand
Where warriors dare to fight.

II.

“The hills and streams and valleys fair,
That smiled beneath the sun,
Ere long but marked the battle-spots
Where fields were lost and won;
And peaceful homes lay smouldering low,
In ashes, ere the morn,
Because the *free* 'gainst despots rose,
And laughed their chains to scorn.

III.

"Because true women buoyed them on,
And mothers, at their prayers,
Asked God to nerve their sons to strike
Till victory should be theirs;
And 'mid the battle-flags they wove
In bars as red as blood,
They mingled Dixie's thirteen stars
Where thirteen free States stood.

IV.

"The days are dark and Freedom furls
Her banner in the sky,
While to the winds the Yankee flag
Unveiled so flauntingly
But ere long it is doomed to fall
When Northmen bite the dust,
For Southern hearts have *iron* turned,
Their wrongs have gathered rust!"

V.

So spake a haughty rebel girl,
With trembling voice of ire,
While thro' the crimson of her cheek,
There flashed a dauntless fire:
Her proud head poised, her form erect,
Her arm was raised on high,—
Her very air bespoke a heart
That dared to do and die.

VI.

Before her stood a Northman stern
With hair and eyes like jet,
Whose very glances seemed to burn
The azure eyes they met;
He towered up above her now,
With kingly grace of mein
As one who walks on thrones might look
Upon a rebel queen.

VII.

His voice was slow and very deep,—
Each sentence measured too;
And tho' it was a foeman spoke
He thrilled her through and through;
Till blushes crimsoned her cheek,
Then left her marble cold,
That she should voiceless hear such words
To scathe her very soul.

VIII.

"It makes my heart weep tears of blood
To see my nation's woe!
Alas! that Treason for the trust
Should bend her pride so low!
Alas! that Southern women boast
Their hearts have turned to steel!
Thank God! our Northern lassies yet
Are not too proud to feel!

IX.

"Our cause so just and great and true
 Triumphant yet must be;
 For warriors fill our serried ranks
 Whose cry is *Victory!*
 They dauntless meet the lurking foe
 And strike in Freedom's name!
 Oh! nobler far, if *you* would teach
 Your braves to do the same!"

X.

He strode away with princely air
 Nor backward even glanced
 Upon the rebel girl, who stood
 As if she was entranced;
 Till turning at the door he bowed
 With easy, mocking grace,
 And raised his flashing eyes to meet
 Her blushes, face to face.

XI.

His heart relented;—backward then—
 He trod a step or two,
 And once again the eyes of jet,
 Flashed down in those of blue:
 "Oh, Katie—let this not seem harsh!
 A true man's soul it moves
 To hear the cause of treason praised
 Upon the lips he loves!"

XII.

"Nay, nay! they seem not harsh to me;—
 No Yankee e'er was born
 Whose words could wound tho' like thine own
 They breathed the breath of scorn;
 I'm 'Southern Rights' down in my heart,
 And love the Southern cause,
 And yet will prove what I can do,
 Though I defy your laws!"

XIII.

"I loved you once—before the War—
 But do not love you now;
 And never to a *Northman's* will
 Will I allegiance bow:
 I still am proud to boast my heart
 Is made of rebel steel;
 And tho' 'tis 'foul with treason's blot,'
 Its loss shall make you feel!"

XIV.

Then sweeping past with haughty step
 She glided through the door,
 And to the Northman's burning gaze
 She showed her face no more;
 The blood dashed thro' his veins like fire,
 His lips were close compressed,
 As if his scorn and scathing ire,
 His will alone repressed.

XV.

" 'Tis thus she dares to trample on
 The heart she deems her own !
 The lute of love lies shattered now,—
 Forever lost its tone ;
 She yet shall strive with loving touch
 Its broken chords to string ;
 In vain ! its notes shall ne'er to her
 Their wealth of music bring !"

XVI.

So murmuring, with the noble air
 Which marked him in a crowd,
 As knightlike 'mid his fellow-men,
 His head erect and proud,
 He strode from out the lofty hall,
 And passed adown the street,
 To mingle in the eddying throng
 Of restless, eager feet.

XVII.

Oh, Love ! thou little god of guile,
 Who sittest 'mid the flowers,
 To tip thy darts with golden bliss,
 To while away the hours,—
 When wilt thou be content to pause
 From wielding the control
 That e'en with winning glance can fix
 The arrow in the soul ?

XVIII.

Poor human hearts so doomed to bleed,
 In very bliss to die,
 As smiles or frowns from thee shall teach
 Their hopes to fall or fly !
 When will the Age of Wisdom come
 And break thy magic chain,
 Which binds unto our very lives
 So much of joy and pain ?

XIX.

When in this world can we again
 Win lofty heights of fame
 Unless we wave thy banner gay
 And give the winds thy name ?
 E'en Freedom, in her noble strength,
 And War, as Time will prove,
 Forget their creeds, and gaily throng
 To thy bright Court, oh ! Love !

CANTO II.

I.

The night had fallen o'er the field
 Where dead and dying slept,
 And comrades o'er their fallen friends
 In tears of anguish wept ;
 The pallid moon looked sadly down,
 Where heroes in the fight,
 Were called before the Bar of God
 While battling for the right.

II.

Each soldier moaned some loved one—
 A brother, sire, or mate,
 And oaths were sworn that for their deaths,
 In blood they'd quench their hate.
 But now from white tents stretching far
 Into the distance dim,
 Sadly the wail of voices rose,
 Chanting a battle-hymn.

III.

The foemen in the distance paused
 To wait the early day,
 When to the fight they'd haste again
 Without the time to pray:
 Their camp-fires gleamed beneath the moon,
 And thro' the long, long night,
 The sentinels trod their wearisome beats
 Around the flickering light.

IV.

Away from the camp, away from the field,
 Out in the leafless wood,
 His head bowed down, his heart depressed,
 A Northern soldier stood:
 His thoughts were filled with tender dreams
 Of joys which he had known,
 When sunshine and a cloudless love,
 To life gave magic tone.

V.

And Katie Keith, the rebel girl
 Once wont to own his heart,
 In every drifting dream of joy,
 Was sure to claim her part:
 Her dainty feet, her hands so small,
 Her figure lithe and grand;
 Her rosy lips, that silent gave,
 A smile for a command.—

VI.

Her kisses, songs, and loving words,
 Like blossoms moist with dew,
 Came back as little spirit-birds
 With bonny eyes of blue:
 Then o'er his aching heart would drift
 A sea of grief and pain;
 For Katie Keith unto his life,
 Could ne'er be aught again.

VII.

Her own mad will had made the break
 Which now a gulf had grown,
 And ta'en away the little hands
 He used to call his own:
 And now along their dreary paths
 Unguided and alone
 They wander hopeless on the shore
 Where waves of memory moan.

VIII.

No option of his own was it
 To sever all fond ties,
 Forgetting loving words he'd breathed,
 And all her sweet replies:
 But *she* had willed that this should be,
 When madly she had vowed,
 Before she would to Northman yield
 Her veil should be her shroud!

IX.

This was the message sent to him
 When, noble to the last,
 He wrote a letter long and said:—
 "Let all harsh words be past,
 And come to the heart that loves you,
 Queen of his life's whole fate,
 Come like a woman loyal and true
 And not a '*rebel* Kate.'"

X.

Her scorn had severed every link
 Which bound their hearts in one;
 And never in life could she again
 Undo what she had done.
 Like two deep seas that flow apart
 On to the Ocean Time,
 They might not mingle, ebb and flow,
 Nor hear the heart-bells chime.

XI.

His country claimed his right arm now
 To strike foul treason low,
 Tho' dim should grow his flashing eye
 And crimson life-blood flow:
 And he was proud to give that strength
 With heart, and will, and soul,
 "To quell and crush the restive South
 That brooked no law's control!"

XII.

But sometimes in the midnight hour,
 When comrades round him slept,
 His very soul cried out to God,
 In woe, and then he wept:
 Yes; with tears his eyes were dimmed
 When old days lived again,
 And writhed were his haughty lips
 And white with pallid pain.

XIII.

While thus he stood all bound in thought
 A shadow dark and grand,
 Fell like a cloud of densest gloom
 Above the moonlit land:
 He noticed not that near and far
 Its darkness seemed to spread,
 Until it wrapped its mantle round
 The living and the dead.

XIV.

The picket-firing, now and then,
 Seemed not to break the spell,
 Tho' some proud hearts had ceased to beat,
 Whose brave deeds none would tell :
 For picket life no glory wins,—
 Its heroes claim no fame,
 And only angel-records keep
 Enrolled the soldier's name.

XV.

At last the clouds were rent with shouts
 Of victory and of death,
 And with a metal-ringing sound
 Each sword did spring its sheath ;
 And 'neath the pallor of the dawn
 Both friend and foemen met,
 And once again that battle-field
 With gore was doubly wet.

XVI.

Like lion, loosened from its leash,
 The Northern soldier sprang,
 Amid the serried Dixie ranks,—
 And like a clarion rang
 His cry unto his comrades all
 To rally to the fight,
 And keep the starry flag afloat
 "The standard of the right."

XVII.

Upon the foe with sword in hand
 He swept in vengeful wrath,
 And only gory, fallen forms
 Marked his resistless path :
 And horse and man in terror shrank
 Beneath his flashing eye,
 As on he pressed,—his brandished sword
 All wet with crimson dye.

XVIII.

Scarce had the hot-breathed wind borne on
 His shout so clear and loud,
 Before the misty wreaths of smoke
 Became the hero's shroud :
 For from the rattling musketry
 Across the bloody field,
 Death-warrant went, and to its might
 His life was forced to yield.

XIX.

One moment's pause to note his fall,
 By friends and foemen too,
 And to the battle-shock they spring
 Like soldiers tried and true :
 Then with unfettered might they met
 Above the fallen slain,
 Where now a monument doth stand
 With slab marked "Rufus Drane."

XX.

His comrades wept his bloody death,
 For he was true and brave,
 And hard it seemed that he in war,
 Should win the voiceless grave,—
 When many would have gladly died
 To save him from his doom :
 Alas ! the nation's heart did mourn
 Above his honored tomb !

XXI.

And now, though years have flown since then,
 And thousands o'er the land,
 Have silent grown, whose lips were wont
 To shout the bold command,
 Fond eyes will moistened grow with tears
 In calling back again,
 From out the solemn days now gone,
 The death of Rufus Drane.

XXII.

And never while the heart can throb
 Or memory claim her throne
 Will generations cease to tell
 Of deeds of valor done :
 And while the hearthstones gleam in light
 Will song and story tell,
 Of how he fought on battle plain
 And for his country fell.

CANTO III.

I.

Within a home of light and love
 Sat rebel Katie Keith ;
 The sky of life was blue above
 The world was fair beneath,—
 But in her heart a solemn wail
 For days of long ago
 Had blanched the carmine from her cheeks
 And left her pale as snow.

II.

She had been sternly proud, and cold
 As Greenland's icy world,
 Till from her pedestal of scorn
 Her heart was madly hurled ;
 And shattered with the deadly blow
 Each radiant joy was riven,
 From out the throbbings of her life
 Which had so wildly striven,—

III.

To put aside in haughty wrath,
 The master hand which love
 Had swept along her living lyre
 Its harmony to prove ;
 Each silver cord was broken now,
 And might not wake the strain,
 Which through the world its echoes rang,
 The name of Rufus Drane.

IV.

Since that sad day when she had cast
 Aside the worshipped heart,
 Whose every throb was heaven to her
 And calmly vowed to part,—
 The smiles had withered on her lips
 Like bitter Dead Sea fruit,
 And, like rich flowers void of perfume,
 Became forever mute.

V.

In vain fond memory plead with her
 To love the living past,
 She scorned each dream of buried joys—
 In gloom their radiance cast,
 And vowed anew her burning faith
 In Dixie steel and cause,—
 And in the face of armed men
 Proclaimed she loved its laws.

VI.

Until the day the dread news came
 Of one in battle slain,
 Who won the victory by his deeds,—
 That one was Rufus Drane;
 Of how they wrapped the starry flag
 About his stalwart form,
 And laid him down to deathless sleep
 Amid the battle's storm.

VII.

'Twas then the light fled from her eye,
 The roses from her cheek,
 And left her speechless with a woe
 Of which she could not speak;
 For she had loved the Northman brave
 More than she ever knew,
 Until the silence of the grave
 Lay death-like 'tween the two ;—

VIII.

And gladly, would have bowed before
 The mandates of his will,
 Had he but yielded first to her
 And vowed he loved her still;
 But never in life might she again
 List to his gentle voice,
 Tell of the past, the mutual haste,
 And bid her heart rejoice.

IX.

The Southern cause fell from her life
 Like blighted, tropic bloom,
 Or as a star, from azure-dome,
 Might drop into the gloom;
 And wild regret was left to cling
 About the shattered dream,
 As clinging mosses sometimes creep
 Along a rocky stream.

X.

And every wind that wailed among
 The harps in tasselled trees,
 Bore to her heart some by-gone strain
 All rich with melodies,
 He used to sing so long ago,
 Before the gloom-cloud fell,
 When every heart-throb bore a joy,
 Upon its crimson swell.

XI

The breath of morning-shades, of eve,
 And purple pall of night
 All radiant with the starry gems
 Of soft, celestial light,—
 Would bring again, upon their wings
 The healing balm of love;
 But e'en their beauties and their smiles
 Could not her passion move.

XII.

Above a memory fair, yet cold,
 She leaned with yearnings fond,
 And prayed for light to guide her safe
 Into the world beyond:
 Her heart soon ceased to throb in life,
 But withered in its glow,
 It floated on to Death's dark shore
 All girt with ice and snow;

Before her God and lover true
 Her soul unshrived went—
 And o'er her tomb no tears were shed,
 No shine and shadow blent;
 But sad and solemn, cold and chill,
 She slept death's sleep—so dark and still.

HOPELESS.

Drifting swiftly, drifting slowly,—
Like the surging of the sea,
Love that once was mine is lost
Forever more to me.

No mercy dawns from God above
No hope-stars on me shine;
Dreams that revelled once in love
Can never more be mine.

My soul is dark with bitter thoughts
Mad-whirling in my brain;
My future-path is hopeless,
The *past* is blighting pain.

My life is sad, and drearily
The days unnoticed pass;
The hours lag on so wearily
To my poor heart, alas!

'Tis sad to think some hearts will break
With ties we're forced to sever,—
Ties we dreamed in happier days
Would bless our lives forever.

I have no hope or dream of rest,
Beyond the final grave;
A Lethe for my memory
Is all the boon I crave.

INGLESIDE, Dec. 5th, 1864.

FOUR CHAPTERS OF MY LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

MY GIRLHOOD—A LOVE-DREAM.



Y home was in the country, a wild, beautiful woodland home, with a large house, great wide halls and rooms airy, and, in many respects, even elegant. Flowers of dainty petals and fragrant perfume nodded everywhere; roses climbed round the porches and the windows, their coquettish sprays peeping gaily at the sunlight and riding in the breeze-cars; blue grass and sweet-scented clover-buds and blossoms made soft tuft even to the river's edge; sunbeams all golden, and soft, purple shadows floated everywhere; birds warbled like joyous songs in life's young spring-time; and the rippling waves rolled and gurgled on ever between the lofty hills. It was a sweet, *sweet* home!

I was not the only child, I had two sisters and three brothers—Lizzie, Fanny, Charles, Louis and Jules. There were gloom and discontent amid the inmates oftentimes, but, like the rainbow after a storm in summer, the gold and blue of life blended harmo-

niously again. It is so in every home. The days sped away in minglings of joy and sorrow, smiles and tears, gladness and woe, but ever unto the day was the evil thereof sufficient.

I grew with the luxuriant nature around me, untrammelled by social conventionalities or worldly motives, with my heart light and free and high-bounding with impulse and enthusiasm. And yet, to me, as to every woman, came the awakening to the necessity of staying my eager, skipping footsteps to more sedate and sober motion; to quell the rising blush that I might abolish *mauvaise honte*; to smile while I suffered; to sing and dance when I would fain seek solitude and weep. In short, I learned to live for the world; learned to simper, dress and deceive; but it took a sad, bitter lesson to initiate *me*, a simple, ardent, country girl, into the formulas of society, and the association of fashion's votaries. But *I was a woman*, and gradually, from experience of sorrow and disappointment, and necessity of deception, I became an apt scholar in the arts and wiles of worldlings.

The greater portion of my earlier years I spent at a boarding-school; of all places on earth the most chilling, and best calculated to cut down and crush out the primitive sweetness and beauty of female character, and alienate that fresh, pure modesty so charmingly graceful in the conversation and deportment of budding womanhood, and the earnest, true

eagerness of childish life. I formed many friendships which I deemed lasting, when, with quivering lips, aching heart and tear-stained face, I parted from those who had shared many of my joys and sorrows in the long, dreary months when I knew no home-comforts or sympathies. But "Time, the tomb-builder," had decreed that now I shall number nearly all as dead leaves of the forest, or as sweet, sweet breath of flowers of long ago, for they have fallen, faint-hearted on life's arid highway, or left me to seek the sunshine and shadow of new hopes and dreams, and I can only look back upon the glad, vanished years, as scarce a realization. Yet, when I was passing through the experiences that once gone by seemed so trivial, the cares of the senate, all combined, could not have fallen weightier upon my young shoulders. 'Tis so with humanity, I believe; what we possess we scarcely ever appreciate, until lost beyond redemption, when our hearts suddenly awakening to the void in our lives and vocations, we experience a sensation of regret and sorrowful abandon, for which no other treasure can wholly compensate us hereafter.

At fifteen, I returned to Dingly Dell, and found mayhap not the devotion of which I dreamed, and for which my young heart so yearned, but a queer kind of disagreeable interest which now, in remembering it, does not seem wholly without enjoyment and affection.

My sister Lizzie was a young lady; Fanny a wee

bit of a child. Both were idols and pets in the home circle, yet in the hearts of Louis and Jules I think my image was most indelibly impressed, for they seemed to appreciate the clinging tenderness of my nature as no one else ever did.

The old homestead was crowded with strange faces all that vacation, faces cold, calm and calculating, faces beautiful with the rosy freshness of youth and the bright impulse of unconfined *naturalness*, which constituted their greatest charm; and many, very many faces shadowed with the dawn of manhood's years, and the sternness of the world which pursued them even in the ambrosial shade of summer woods and woman's brightest smiles.

Gay equestrian parties, with waving plumes and flowing skirts, with graceful laughter and curvetting steeds, displaying the proud ease and beauty of their riders; boat-rows on the rippling waves of Kentucky's silvery stream where music-words mingled soft with the gurgling of the waters; dreamy wanderings through the by-paths of the woodland, where bright-winged warblers sang all day long in the thickly interwoven beechen boughs overhead, where the golden glinting sunshine cast checkered radiance through; promenades upon the rose and jasmine-wreathed porticos, where moonlight glistened like angel-smiles upon bowed heads, bright eyes and flushed cheeks, and scarlet lips of winning, vascillating coquetry; voluptuous mazes of the dance, where thrilling, cling-

ing hand-clasps, and wild abandon of movement wooed on the dazzling, deep, cold, calculating flirtations; these constituted the country *pastimes* of the Dingly Dell guests.

As a matter of course, and therefore not to be denied, fresh from boarding-school, with the woman-nature fully developed, even in my girlish years, with an eager longing to love and *be* loved, as I had often dreamed I one day might be, amid all the gay cavaliers, I singled out *one* upon whom to lavish my fond devotion. I could not resist the bewildering fascination of his society, and more especially as, by a thousand little tendernesses which only men of the world can assume with any success, he wooed me in my eager, ardent impulse to *demonstrate* my heart.

By some manœuvre best known to him, I found myself launched in the gay and brilliant society around me. The young men opened their eyes at my premature *début*, but with too much politeness innate to permit such a breach of etiquette they refrained from any comment or query. But women, as they *always do* when an opportunity to carp and criticise appears, were continually endeavoring to detect and display some *gaucherie* in my deportment. Therefore, I shrank within myself more than ever, and was consequently soubriqueted "Willis Burkford's bright, particular star."

This, very naturally, wounded me deeply; but Willis apparently enjoyed it, for he would almost encour-

age a demonstration of the kind, believing, as I have since thought, that such a course would but nestle me closer to his love for comfort, courage and support. He would go nowhere did I not claim, or rather fill, a prominent position in whatever pleasure was in vogue.

Mamma smiled at this, and Lizzie frowned, while I, poor, misled, passionate child, reveled in an Elysian sweeter than my miserably crippled pen can ever describe. Only participators in such joy can understand my inability to delineate what is ever only felt by every nerve of the human heart, a sensation of trust, of repose, whatever the ills or storms of life.

Willis Burkford was handsome, bewilderingly handsome; not exactly the style which a *blonde* would idealize, but with the contrariety of human and woman nature, *I did*. His eyes were blue as summer skies, and thrilling and flashing, darkening and *softening* like the purple-blue pansy of spring-time; his form was firm, stalwart and graceful, with a well-poised head upon his broad, deep shoulders; his voice was singularly sweet and pleasingly mellifluous to the ear. Then, too, his manners were so thoroughly *au fait*, that, like gallant Hotspur of old, he was indeed "the glass wherein the noble youths did dress themselves."

Willis had told me by everything but *words*, that he loved me, child as I was; and I, uninitiated in the cold-hearted gallantries of the great world, never dreamed of the possible necessity of doubting his de-

votion, or questioning the truth of his vows—for, as woman ever loves, I gave no thought to past or future, but yielded myself up, with a feeling of exquisite delight to the infatuation of the holy, brief, beautiful Present.

September, with her glories, was decking, with sweet blooms of incense, the royal garb of summer, and mellowing the shadowy, verdant freshness of hill and plain with her rainbow-tinted brush, and golden kisses of luscious harvest-time, before the gay party at Dingly Dell even whispered of a return to the city. Even then they were to take a pleasant jaunt to Crab Orchard Springs before they domiciled themselves for the winter. I longed to go with them, and Willis, as a privileged favorite, plead eloquently in my cause and "his own," as he whispered low to me, but to no avail. Mother's refusal was positive, but polite and suasive: "She could not spare her darlings both at once. The whole *coterie* were anxious for Lizzie to go; and besides, Cleona was not in society; she had only been permitted to join in the gay amusements because it was *in the country*. She knew the poor child would be confined again in the fall to the dull school-room, and she believed the little recreation would send her with renewed vigor to the prosecution of her studies that she might sooner herself become a participant in the bright hours, and drink with a zest of the bewildering wine in the cup of life's joy she had as yet but tasted."

It was a long speech for mother to make, and when she had finished I knew it was useless to plead any longer, and with tear-dimmed eyes I turned hopelessly away. Ah! Mother, Mother, yours must have been a happy life when, at forty-nine years of age, you could talk of "bewildering joy-wine," and never quiver when you thought of the fresh, red lips, yet to fade to pallor 'neath the purple tinge, and the cheek's rich roses to ashen at the taste of bitter, *bitter dregs*. It was a respite, a brief respite from pending woe, that refusal; that was all, mother, for the shadow fell at last, as it does, sooner or later, over every human heart.

It was the night before they went away. Oh! how the ceaseless drip, drip of the mournful Autumn rain fell from the gray eaves down on the sombre portico, where the deadened vines of summer roses clung with hopeless yet deathless rigor! Everybody indoors was gay and light-hearted, not even Lizzie seemed to feel the gloom of pending departure so natural when one leaves the home-circle where so many of life's loves are garnered; for the reaper death, in absence, *might* strike down bud or blossom with his sickle keen, regardless of the *heart's tears* which the blow might cause to flow.

I could not, with my aching heart, smile and sing. I was not a worldling then, only an impassioned child of nature, and I had so few to miss my departure from their happy midst that I stole from the parlor unob-

served, and, throwing a large shawl around me which I found upon the rack, I went out on the portico and noiselessly commenced to promenade to and fro. Many times had my untiring footsteps traced the length of the porch before two hands reached softly out from the shadow where the gloom of night hung thickest, and drew me to the side of Willis Burkford, and his low voice whispered: "Little Cleona—*little Cleona*—I'm going away to-morrow. When will we two meet again?" What thrilling of prophecy spoke out from my soul's depths through burning sighs and quivering sobs as he caressed so gently and tenderly my brown, braided hair:

"Willis, Willis, why ask me? You know it will be never!"

He started, then regaining himself he spoke rapidly, excitedly, as though impelled on by some irrepressible impulse: "Not so with my will, precious little one, for I love you, Cleona, with all the ardor of my heart. Your fresh, pure impulse has won me as no glittering star of fashion ever could have done; and, Cleona, I know you love me just as tenderly, just as truly."

It is impossible to describe the music of his voice, the passion of his manner, the flash of his eyes, which I felt burning me through the darkness. But, dear reader, to understand, if you are a woman, you need but recall the vanished love-hour of your whole life, *it never comes but once*, when the master of your soul's destiny proved you dear and necessary to

human happiness. If a man—well, recall all the trusting maidens whose lips you have pressed with crimson, impassioned kisses; whose hearts you have won; whose argosies of life's hopes and joyful dreams you have ruthlessly wrecked for the sweet, idle triumph of the hour, and you will feel as Willis Burkford did perhaps, for oh, man! man! glorious, brave and stalwart, as you are, you are constitutionally faithless. You are too great a devotee to flirting—a pastime which every honorable mind deems the amusement of a vitiated taste, and a shameless prostitution of the affections given us for a holier purpose.

The bliss-moments vanished and bright-winged joy followed swift after. Dingly Dell grew lonely. I went to school again and my first life-chapter closed never to be erased in time.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHICH I AM FLIRTED BY WILLIS BURKFORD.

Stern, icy-fettered winter passed swiftly by to me, because my heart was full of bright dreams, and warm golden-hued hope-pictures of the future land. And then too, almost daily the packet of letters in my little mahogany writing-desk tested all the length of its crimson ribbon, by adding another to the many garnered there, for Willis wrote often and secretly. This latter act I did not deem wrong then, and my opinion is unchanged *now*. Yet why I concealed it, I did not,

could not explain, even to myself, for mother did not suspect such a thing, nor any member of the family, and I would have been the last one in the world, about whom they would have hinted even the probability of "falling in love."

I do not think I did wrong, for this reason: I knew my own heart, and its necessities, best, and, in a harmless and beautiful correspondence, an outgoing and intermingling of souls, there was no sin. Yet I felt I should be condemned as guilty of some unpardonable crime if I was discovered; for mother had destined all of her children for wealthy marriages, and this quality Willis did not possess to any excessive degree. I think parents oftentimes err in such matters strangely and unaccountably. Possibly *ambition* can answer for much; and a love and longing to see their offspring, upon whom they have lavished so much pride, care and attention, surrounded by opulence and elegance, blind them to the natural duty and good of their lives, and the natures, impulses, and affections of their children. I can understand and appreciate all this, but deem it unpardonably wrong to persist in frustrating the very measures which would constitute happiness.

Children are commanded "to obey their parents in the Lord," but I think it is a false impression though so general, to believe such a commandment betokens sacrifice of honor, duty, principle and happiness, merely because a father or mother has other designs

to accomplish, which they deem best for their children to adopt, even though it leads to misery in the *denouement*. Surely a just and wise God never intended it so. As if, following the laws of nature and society, age can understand youth, its necessities and impulses. It is impossible! Therefore, as dear Ik Marvel says, "let vanished years take care of themselves, and do not strive to stand in a rank of social soldiers where you are not known—and where your age and opinions sit ill upon you, but keep to the progressive in nature, and let youth take care of itself. Memory of the past in every mature life proves that fancies will be contracted and dissipated at will in life's young spring-time." So wrote Willis in one of his letters to me; and I, having made unto myself an earth-idol, believed in it, and his impressions about matters and beings in a synopsis, and made no query.

I only know when the birds came back from the sunny South, when the violets, bonny-blue hare-bells, dainty star-blossoms and delicate anemones smiled joyously up in the sun's bright face, and weeks passed by, and the accustomed treasures of remembrance never came to bless me, that I grew almost despairingly wretched. Brother Louis began to suspect me, I think, and one day he invited me to ride with him to the office—"it might be we all had letters there." With a "nameless longing and vague unrest," I went with him. When we arrived the mail had preceded us by two hours, and we did not dismount, as was the

custom, but merely inquired for letters. One was handed to Louis for me. Oh! *for me!*—and the dear, familiar hand, too! Wildly the impulsive, impetuous blood dyed in a crimson, tell-tale blush my before pallid face. Louis knew then and never said a word. Oh! he was a brother!

Home again! how glad I was! And bounding up stairs almost two steps at a time, I gained my room. Springing in I bolted the door, and, taking a seat in the same haste, I drew a long, contented breath of relief, and burst into tears, the letter receiving a shower of kisses all the while. Possibly to many this will seem simple extravagance. Well, let it be so, then. If old, you have forgotten the halcyon past. If you never have yet been blessed with such soul-offerings, I do not expect you to appreciate any of my story. But oh! sweet maiden, happy in the pride of your first admirer and your first love-letter, is it not all natural? Aye! by your merry laugh and conscious blush, I know you recognize yourself in my life-picture.

* * * * *

It is just as well that I have paused, perhaps, to gain breath, for the tide of bitter memories press heavily on heart and brain alike. And I may not ruthlessly perforate, even with the delicate lance of my own thoughts, the olden, painful wound, without a pause to strengthen me in my unaccomplished task, even though I eneroach upon the "wee, sma' hours beyant the twal," ere I finish it.

Reader, did you ever, in the high-tide of life and hope, have any one dear to you stricken down without one moment's warning? Did you ever love and lose? If so, then you know how my heart fell to woe and despair; how it cried out in bitter anguish against God and the world—for I may not tell you even now! I only knew that Willis loved me no longer, that he "did not know his own heart when he said he did!" Oh! studied cruelty! Oh! ruthless, black-hearted wrong! For hours I sat there, dry sobs of heart-crushing anguish, passionate wretchedness, quivering my young form as a tempest gust—as a wrecked life-ship, as a *panic-stricken* woe; then Louis came and tapped gaily on the door.

"May I come in, little Cleona?"

Oh! the hated name—how *he* used to whisper it low in my burning ear—"little Cleona!"

"Not now, Louis, not now, please."

How strange and cold my voice sounded. Was I the same girl full of life and love, who, eager and earnest, entered that room not long gone? No! only now a broken-spirited woman; yet full of pride, with crimson lips bowed for arch Cupid's loving kisses, ready to smile cold, cutting words that were strangers to them that mourn,—yet which must henceforth be second nature.

Louis bounded down stairs again. He at least noted no change, and I firmly resolved that no one else should notice it.

I opened the little desk and took out the letters, the treasures, beautiful letters. I dared not read them, dared not look upon one endearing word lest my heart and will might fail me. A woman's heart is *so weak* when she loves—weak in its very fortifications of defence! I took out the withered flowers—aye! they too were reft of fragrance, life, and beauty—sending out only a sickly, faintish, dead perfume! Poor flowers! your ghastly faces spoke in spirit language to me, words that in my misery seemed comforting: "We are crushed, *all crushed*, and were once fresh and beautiful; we saw you too, in your love and joy, and remembered you. But you forgot us. Yet we are together again in desolation and woe, each knowing what the other has been." The faint perfume died away, and I laid the dead mementoes of a happy past beside the letters. Underneath all I found a lock of his beautiful hair and his picture. I had not been woman had I put it aside without one glance, one deathless, clinging kiss, passionate enough to thrill into life the ideal lineaments before me. I took the curl and wound it around my finger, took it off and looked at it, and at last, with a kind of desperate, despairing woe, I parted it and laid one half away in the desk again, shut it, locked it, and put the other beside the flowers. Lack of pride, do you say, dear reader? I bound them all together, and wrote on a slip of paper—

"Yes, Willis Burkford, you are free, and forever dead to the heart and memory of

"CLEONA."

Oh! lock of hair! be still in your golden-brown radiance—he never knew I kept thee! I gave the package to brother Louis, and laughingly bade him put them in the office, and let me send them back. "I was tired of keeping the silly things." That was almost my first worldly lie. Reader, don't you know it was a bitter one? And yet I laughed so naturally that I deceived Louis, and he, dear fellow, kissed me, discountenanced coquetry, and went his way, putting the package in the office, never dreaming his Cleona was flirted. Oh! glorious triumph! and that he left her even then a hopeless, broken-hearted woman.

I did not ask Willis to send me my letters back, for, in some moment when he thought of the past, I wanted their beautiful, holy impulses to sting him deep. Aye! and they did, I know! None can grow so worldly and indifferent that they may *always* successfully resist the scorpion-sting of memory which sometimes lashes the dormant soul to wildest fury. And whatever the mean disposition of Willis Burkford to trample over the untutored heart of a girl of sixteen, he most undeniably had impulses and talents which, if retained in proper guidance, might have made him a shining light in the world. But to what good was it that the soil was fertile, if noxious weeds crowded out and overshadowed the less thrifty

flowers, which if freed from their evil presence, would fill the air with fragrance, the garden with beauty, and the heart with joy.

CHAPTER III.

PROVES HOW TIME DEVELOPES THE WOMAN.—SOCIETY MAKES CHARACTER, BUT THE HEART IS AN INDEPENDENT SOVEREIGNTY.

'Tis strange but nevertheless true, that when a woman loves, it is *forever*. It matters not how Broffant may deny it—he was a Frenchman. She may marry, most generally does; may have fancies even before or after she does, but the memory of her first love, rising above all, will be deathless and clinging as the bitings of remorse or the ceremonies of the grave. And even though the man of her final choice as *compagnon de voyage* through life, is all that desire could claim, or fancy paint for admiration's gaze, in the still watches of the night when "only the moon, the cold silent stars, and all-pitying One above," are near to read the inner heart-life, there will come trooping back over waste memory's track, ghosts of former joys and fond imaginings of the glad, vanished years, that no stern resistance can force into the soul's dark closet again, or conquer, for they are indomitable arbiters of Fate. Helpless and hopeless, there is naught left to do but remember, be stung by a scorpion-lash, and suffer as *only a woman can*. Low, tender words will be breathed again in ears that thirst

for loving notes. Crimson kisses will press on soft, sweet lips again and again. Hands will clasp with a nameless thrill. Eyes will speak in a voiceless rapture unto eyes. Passionate caresses will send the heart-blood back in a quickening start that yields exquisite delight, and such delight as *first love* only can ever give; and then over all again will come the memory of coquetry, perfidy, idle scorning, unrequited devotion, and the gray shadow will fall like a funeral pall over life.

Oh! woman, woman!—how often do you, with a wild recklessness, search out “the stone in the flower-bed,” when you might ever remain insensible of its existence! How often do you throw away the pearl of a priceless love on a golden shore, and in after life be ever powerless to gather such jewels again!

Aye! turn your face to the wall, and moan in that sobbing woeful pain which remorse only can bring. Shut your eyes to banish the sweet, yet ghastly visitants from your shadowed heart-lands. You will find it of no avail; for there on the floor, on the wall, floods the silver moonlight, and the spiritual images glide by in solemn, awful calm. You shudder! Ah! God pity you, and “pity all who vainly the dreams of youth recall.” What matters it to you that gay laughter and wreathing smiles for your red lips await you in the morning! Are they not wreathing and ghastly with pallid pain now?

Oh! I know it all! Like a Chaldean of old, I read

it in the stars, the stars of after-thought and experience. Mine was a bitter, busy life after I sent back Willis Burkford's heart-treasures, yet none knew or dreamed I suffered, for I was wildly, brilliantly gay. I was devoted to light pastimes, put aside my books, would be a woman, and mother, perforce, yielded and let me go. There was no pleasure party, no amusement imagined or desired but *I* led the van. The position which Willis Burkford through his social influence in the world had given me, a child, to further his study and facility of conquering the human heart, and becoming an adept in searching its deep-hidden wells of devotion and impulse, I afterwards maintained through pride, and succeeded ultimately in my plans of success, because my will was in the cause. Contempt—that most godless of all human passions, held the *suttee* for my dead love's ashes, and I went on, striving to forget Willis Burkford, his fascination, his winning tenderness, his deep devotion, and oftentimes grovelling in the dust of despair when the past, like a simoom of bitter memories swept in over my soul.

Yet this could not always be so. Tired nature yielded, and for days and weeks I was confined to my room, not with any malignant disease, but a giving way of the system—a debility of mind and constitution, moral and physical, from which I was utterly unable to rouse myself. The physician proposed change of scene and quiet. The first I assented to; the last

I vetoed. All I wanted was excitement, life, anything to make time vanish without my cognizance as to how I had employed it—for good or ill. Mother eyed me sharply, and said :

"Surely, Cleona, you have completely changed your nature, shifted it off as a garment, and donned another."

"Well, mother dear, Lizzie is engaged," I answered, "and I don't want to be prosy and retired. I want the world and enjoyment all in a blaze."

"Come, you are too young to talk so indiscriminately. There are boundaries to everything."

"Mother, let me go! I am as old as you were when you married, and when sister Lizzie made her *début*. You had better let me get acquainted with men, and become accustomed to their society, lest I go "*fall in love*" with some Don Sebastian De Oviedo, or Monsieurs Fernando, Moustachio, Whiskerando. Now, mother, there's logic in it, as Shakspeare didn't say. May I go away, anywhere—so that I can get out of *these* boundaries?"

"Well, yes; we will all go to Newport this summer. I will let you have a loose rein just to see how far you will go your own way," and laughing, she bade me "get well quickly."

This was fresh impetus. Surely at Newport, dear, delightful Newport, I *would* find the Lethean River in which to drown my memory and regret forever and for aye!

Lizzie was married soon after this conversation, and two weeks later found us domiciled at Newport. With indescribable relief, I threw myself into the heedless, gay whirl revolving ever there. I became the reigning belle of the season. Even "Cleona Quadrilles" were danced.

Suddenly there came a pause to my content. One evening mother came to me and roused me from heavy slumber by a sentence, that sent the shocked life-blood crimsoning back to my heart, leaving me pallid and speechless.

"Cleona, it is almost tea-time. Get up, child, and look your prettiest. Willis Burkford is here, and I understand he is decidedly the catch everywhere. The whole house is in an uproar about his arrival."

I sat up in bed with flushed cheeks and dilated eyes.

"Mother, when did he come?"

"About an hour ago. Jump up, now, and I will send Mary to you immediately. You know this is the grand ball night."

"Mother—" my voice wavered with intense excitement—"you need not send Mary."

"Why?"

"I will not go down to-night, and—"

"*Not go down to-night?* What folly! Are you mad or crazy, Cleona?"

"Neither, mother—only I will not go down, and—"

"And what?"

"I want to go away in the morning."

"Well, you'll not do it! I have made my arrangements to remain all summer to please you, and now for a sudden whim I will not yield to you again. Why will you not go down to-night?"

I hesitated one moment, then almost breathlessly replied, the words choking me—"I do not want to meet Willis Burkford."

"And why not, pray? I thought he was a favorite of yours."

"That was before I was a woman, mother."

"Well, even taking a change of opinion into consideration, why should it alter our arrangements for summer? If you don't like him you can shun his society."

"Mother, I could not shun him."

There was a dry agony in my voice. She came nearer to me, and, laying her hands on my shoulders, turned my face to the light, and, gazing with indescribable commiseration on me, asked:

"Do you love him, Cleona?"

Again that passionate wretchedness.

"I did once, mother."

"And—?"

"And he flirted me!"

She took her hands from my shoulders and walked away to the window, where she stood for a few moments statue-like in her stillness, then she came back

to me, and drawing me to her said—(oh! can I *ever* forget the hopelessness of voice and eye!)"—"I suspected as much, Cleona. You have suffered, and *so have I*. I pity you, my poor, poor child!"

Then she turned to the door to go out.

"Mother!"

She paused.

"We will not refer to this again?"

"No, and we will go away in the morning, Cleona."

And in the morning we went away; went back to Dingly Dell, and settled down in a calm routine of life—deathlike in its monotony—and I did not shun it. It occurred to me that with my self-allotted banishment from Newport, all desire for excitement vanished, and I did not half-way care whether I lived or died if I only could forget remembrances that began to burn again.

I shut myself up with my books and commenced to write, and in my mind's employment, which I had renounced because of solitude, I found the forgetfulness for which I had so long sought in vain. Louis, Jules, and Charles went in the army. Lizzie developed into a devoted and tender wife, studious for her husband's pleasures and comfort, beyond all my imaginings, when I beheld her coquetting with hearts, with apparently no depth to her nature. We are so often deceived by semblances. Well, Lizzie came to live with us, for the house was so changed from its olden gaiety before the war, that it was sometimes

unbearable, and, then, we were all naturally uneasy about Louis and the boys.

One day in the cold, winter time, the "Sea-Gull" packet landed at Dingly Dell, and, John Wallenstein, Lizzie's brother-in-law, came up, like a ray of summer sunshine, to bless us in our lonely sadness. We welcomed him from our hearts. Days glided by with a joyous radiance. John was everywhere gladsome and free hearted as a boy, and he grew into our very lives with his winsome tenderness. We thought John handsome, although less partial judges pronounced him homely; but the soul, the life, the love, was there for us, that the world could never win. No wonder we knew so well how to appreciate him! I never dreamed I might again take so much interest in a man; but, with John, the harsh thoughts I had nurtured melted like icicles in the sun, and the "milk of human kindness" flowed again.

CHAPTER IV.

JOHN AND I.—A DENOUEMENT SUSPECTED LATTERLY BY THE READER.

Spring—blue, violet-eyed spring—with gusty March, impulsive April, and red-lipped, coquettish May, came to us with whole breeze-loads of fragrance, and eye-fills of beauty, and still John lingered at Dingly Dell. I sought not to fathom my own heart, to question why a sharp twinge of painful regret

startled me whenever he talked of his "city engagements;" and never wondered why I should feel so anxious to know all about the ladies he admired, and what qualities in a woman were best adapted to win his commendation and regard. It grew upon me so irresistibly and naturally, that almost before I knew it I—I—loved him:—not with the soul-absorbing, wild, bewildering worship of an undeveloped intellect and passionate-natured child, (for I was little more.) No! for *that* was sacred to the memory of perfidious Willie Burkford. But I loved him with the calm, deep, reverential respect, the tender, devoted interest of a warm hearted, affectionate woman! Just such a love as could bind us by ties stronger than death in their faith and truth. At last John received a letter from the city, calling for his immediate presence, and we were forced to give him up. His actions of tender deference had betrayed the emotions of his breast to me beyond a doubt; yet never by word, sign, or deed, did I prove to him that I understood or appreciated his sentiments of affectionate regard. So much for the wise teachings of experience!

He bade all good-bye at the house out on the front porch. I was gathering flowers, and he went down and stood beside me, took the basket of fragrant buds and blossoms, and asked, as timidly as a girl would have done—(I knew then that he loved me; and, maidens, let it be a criterion in heart-affairs from which *never* to swerve; when a man is timid in

breathing his devotion, *he is in earnest*, and *the heart* is in question; but when he can tell, in easy flowing, mellifluous whispers, his soul's worship, go blow his love, with the thistle-down, to the winds, for it is as light and as transient.)

"Is this important, Cleona?"

"What, John?" I asked, with a little mischievous malice in my tone, for I knew well to what he referred.

"The culling of these flowers, Cleona?"

"No."

"Did you know I was going away in a few moments?"

"So soon?"

"Yes; the boat has been heard to blow her whistle, I must tell you good-bye now."

He held out his hand, I placed mine in it. "Good-bye, John," I said unwaveringly. "I hope you will come again soon. Dingly Dell will be lonely without your cheerful voice and winsome ways."

"In earnest?" He leaned down and looked eagerly, anxiously in my face, softly and pleasantly shadowed by a black lacefall on my gipsey. I smiled; the action was so boyish, the motive so manly.

"Yes; certainly I am in earnest."

"Cleona," said he softly, "why this annoying formula between us? We know each other's hearts, I'm sure we do! I have wanted to tell you a secret, which, I doubt not, in my great anxiety I have be-

trayed, but my opportunity has not been available yet. Come, Cleona, go with me to the river; I want to tell you good-bye alone."

He had never released my hand since I had placed it in his own for "farewell," and he now drew it unresistingly through his arm, and we went off, silent and embarrassed, as if we were school-boy and girl in love and afraid to tell or acknowledge it. (Indeed, it was that way truly, almost.

When we reached the river, I took my seat on the mound high above the bank-road, which was shadowed by broad-spreading boughs of the green-leafy beech. Gentle breezes played there. The flowers blossomed all around us, some paling like the snow-flakes, others blushing faintly or rosily-red, as the sun showered golden-rayed, and warm, passionate kisses on their dainty and delicately perfumed petals, and the waves rippled languishingly toward the sparkling, sandy shore. The magic loveliness of the scene floated like sweet incense around us. My love sank down in the deeps of my nature, and, as John placed himself beside me on the green sward, my enthusiasm and admiration seemed strangely dead. I longed for it to thrill me again as it did when I walked beside him only a few bright moments past, but the impulse had vanished on the wings of memory; for there, even in our present positions, Willis Burkford and I had sat loving and being loved many, aye, very many times in the buried "long ago."

It was a favorite haunt of mine, and when I seated myself there I little recked the influence the reminiscences of lost love would exert over me. I looked away over the hills, mellowing to shadow in their beautiful, hazy mantle of purple gloom, and thought of the joys I might once have won, but which rested now beyond my human graspings, hopings and yearnings forever. The distant "puff, puff" of the Packet became each moment more audible, and still the secret remained unspoken. I turned toward John with a quick glance, supposing he, too, was engrossed with sad and tender dreamings, even as I had been, but met, instead, his full-poised gaze bent on me with an intensity of love and devotion perfectly indescribable—but, oh! I felt it. It shocked me back to impulse and enthusiasm again. His beautifully curved and proud lips were parted, the white teeth glistening through the shadowing moustache, smiling irresistibly on me in their crimson passion; and soft and tender, like the drifting of distant melody, his whisper came:

"Cleona, kiss me."

Without a question of unmaidenly promptness in obeying that which was given in a half-pleading, half-commanding way, I put up my mouth and kissed him reverently, tenderly. He took my hand, looked at it longingly, then at me, drinking in my presence; then back on the hand lying in his own firm, true palm, nervous and weary, as if seldom accustomed to affectionate caressing; and holding it up to his

lips, his brow, his cheek, he asked me, gazing steadily in my blushing face:

"This little hand! Cleona, will you save it for me?"

I turned away, scarce daring to trust to so much new found joy, so much illimitable happiness.

The "Sea Gull" came in sight, and I answered with the commonplace for his heart-pleadings:

"John, there's the boat rounding the bend."

He sprang up, pressed my hand with passionate disappointment, looked with hungry eagerness in my face, murmured regretfully, "Good-bye, Cleona, *good-bye*," and bounding down the steep, waved his handkerchief in token for the boat to stop.

Ten minutes later found me standing alone, watching the silvery ripple of the waves caressing the sandy shore, and the purple hills shadowed me, while the golden sunshine and blue sky shone afar off from me. John was absent. How did I know but the change of omnipotent Time might decree that we should never meet again? I know not why it is so, and yet I feel the impulse ever controlling me. In all my story I have lingered upon the sad sorrow that fell upon me, and blighted me, in preference to putting it aside as an unworthy grief, and smiling bravely upon the future years that stretched out in rich, untrodden lands before my hoping gaze. 'Tis always so with womanly nature, I believe: when she loves, and the reality becomes worthy of her contempt, with a death

less longing she clings to the ideal whose beauty once blessed her by a semblance of reality. It was my doom ever to remember Willis Burkford.

The days stole on into weeks and still I remained enveloped in a haze of purple dreams at Dingly Dell. John wrote many, very many times to me, long, beautiful letters, full of quick eagerness and passionate beauty, just like his own ardent, glowing nature. He opened his heart as a volume, and I read the mysterious lore of love therein, and was happy; yes, happier than when, in mad idolatry, I believed in, and trusted the truth of Willis Burkford's devotion.

Men seldom realize the great woe they sometimes visit upon natures yet undeveloped, save in their native passion, by nameless little gallantries which it pleases them to bestow, that they may study the rapid changes from blushes to smiles, of the grateful recipients of favors. The regret, though, is oftenest visited upon themselves, wrapped in their natural jealousies, for there is not one man in a thousand who does not marry a woman who has been caressed and loved before, and the memory of that devotion does not visit her, even when she nestles in confiding tenderness in his arms, and listens to the throbbings of his great, manly heart. It is a fact, undenied or acknowledged as it may be. How few women but can recall such golden pasts when they sit down in the twilight of memory. Child-laughter and prattle, even, at such times cannot wholly crush out scenes and smiles and

caresses, once treasured dear as life itself. She is ever thankful for tenderness, but oh, woman-like, there come hours of despair never even in sunlight to be forgotten.

There is no joy, but sorrow follows after or precedes it. There is no life unclouded in its bliss; and oh, how well did I realize it when the gloom fell over me, from which I never hoped I might recover, or see the sunshine of existence again. I have sometimes thought human natures of sensitive impulses and affections were doomed to see their pleasures fade when just within their grasp, doomed to woe and disappointment. Oh! reader, have you, too, not cried out in agonized despair against God and a decree which seemed so undeservedly bitter to you in your grief?

One day I had received an unusually long, affectionate letter from John, and had gone down to our favorite woodland seat where we had idled away so many, many happy hours, that I might review once again the tender words he had written to me, unseen by all, and unheard save by the great warm throbbings of my heart. Again and again did I peruse the eloquent, burning words of passionate devotion, until, fairly laughing at myself, I thrust my treasure in my bosom and resolutely drew a newspaper from my pocket. By some strange intuition, I felt a sudden shock thrill me, and, as I unfolded the sheet my eyes, horror-gazing, rested upon a paragraph that froze the life-blood back in my heart:

UNFORTUNATE.—John Wallenstein, a citizen of Louisville, was

waylaid five miles from the city, last evening, and most cruelly murdered and foully robbed by a band of guerillas, whose only object seems to be molestation of property and murderous warfare. The young man was much admired and beloved, a promise of future national benefit and the pride of many friends, who are left to mourn his untimely end.

How I ever succeeded in finishing the paragraph, I cannot tell. No word issued from my pallid lips. I sat down and gazed upon the wasted life before me; yes, spent before I had won any but a living death-goal. I had seen each joy fade from my life's path, and not one blossom of tender, sympathetic affection was left to bless me. The winds sighed through the trees; the sunshine was white, ghastly and glaring, and the moss beneath my feet seemed withering to a sere, brownish yellow. The beauty of nature had grown strangely dead since Hope had fallen by the wayside. It seemed as if I *must* call out or die. My throat was burning, my lips purple, parched. I gasped "John! *John Wallenstein!* have I lost *thee, too!* forever? Oh! God, let me only die!" and I sank on the ground, while my sobs of agony shook my shrinking form as if tempest-tossed.

"Darling! Cleona, Cleona! Here I am, safe beside you, dearest. Be still, Cleona; rest on my breast, for I love you, and will never be lost if you will let me win you."

The sudden reaction brought the tears in a copious flow over my cheeks, once more blending the rose and the lily.

"But, John, how did such a report ever get in the

paper," I asked a few moments later as we were walking towards the house.

"I don't know; something of a practical joke, I guess. I saw it, and was perfectly indignant. Of course, I had it refuted immediately, but felt anxious about you, fearing that you would get that information before you received the refutation, so I hastened here to relieve you and found you grieved, because you loved me. How are all here at home?"

"All well; and oh! so happy, because you are among us again."

LINES WRITTEN IN AN ALBUM.

A stranger, I caught up your book
And carelessly turned o'er each page,
To scan all the bright-wingéd thoughts
Embalmed there by poet and sage ;
But ere I came to the last one,
I laid it down with a sigh,
And wondered if thus on life's page
Our friendships were all doomed to die :—

If memories fairest and sweetest,
That playfully round our hearts twine,
Must yield to Time's dreary shadows
That over our brightest hours shine :—
And I prayed that no dark cloud would droop
O'er thy young life in gray pall of gloom,
But that glad, onward years in their flight,
Would wreath thy pure brow in their bloom.

SALISBURY, N. C., 1865.

MY SPIRIT-SISTER.

Fast amid the shady upland
Of my heart there thrills a dream,
And the sunlight to the shadow
Is a maiden, Lelia Meem.

Soft as moonbeams on the water
Are her loving, sunlit eyes,
Where the golden visions nestle
'Mid the blue of summer skies.

Glad as gleesome, singing birds
That my dreamy heart beguile,
On her melting, rosy mouth
Gleams the arch and sunny smile.

Round her white brow sweetly cluster
Rings of nut-brown, waving hair ;
And within their silken meshes
Sunshine's caught, and lingers there.

While I watch the shadows creeping
O'er the hills and rippling stream,
Thus thy fair face bends above me,
Spirit-sister, Lelia Meem.

That no shadow e'er may darken
 All the love-light ling'ring there
 But fade as golden clouds of sunset
 Is my tender, fervent prayer.

And as rippling stream doth wander
 Through the darkness into light,
 May thy future reap glad harvests
 Promised by thy life-star bright!

And when we reach the mystic shores
 By mortals termed "The Isles of Dream,"
 I yet will clasp thy hand outreaching,
 Spirit-sister, Lelia Meem!

MOUNT AIRY, SHENANDOAH VALLEY, NOV. 29, 1863.

TO MY SISTER FANNY.

I am dreaming, idly dreaming,
 Of our childhood, happy hours,
 When we wandered in the wildwood,
 Hand in hand in search of flowers:
 And, within the mirror-brooklet,
 Laughing in our gladsome glee,
 Peeped to see our shadow-faces;
 Ah! two winsome elves were we!

Knowing naught but life's sweet sunshine,
 Gentle zephyrs—singing birds;
 Pleasure, Hope and Love all clustering
 Round our mother's music-words;
 Ne'er one care, or *thought* of sadness,
 Shadowed our young brows with gloom;
 All was trust, and truth, and gladness,
 In our home of tropic bloom.

I am dreaming, sadly dreaming
 Of the change the years have wrought;
 How the gleesome joys of childhood
 Have been lost in deeper thought!
 How the hand of War so sternly
 Stamped its mark on heart and brain
 Crushing out the fair peace-blossoms
 Ne'er to bloom for us again.

How along the old front porches
 We would walk and dream, and sing,
 Leaning out with *restless longing*,
 To the joys the years *might bring*;
 How the gloom-clouds gathered denser
 Shading earth, and sea, and sky,
 Dimming white and dun, and azure,
 While our life-barks drifted by.

I am dreaming, sweetly dreaming
 That *you've* won the promised land;
 Though for *me* I see naught gleaming
 But *sun-prospect on the sand*!
 Yet I smile on it half-fondling
 While my sad heart softly sings:
 "Oh, a sorrow's crown of sorrow
 Is remembering happier things!"

Life for you has dawned in earnest;
 All is radiance, love, and flowers!
 Dead to you—aye! *dead forever*
 Are the thoughts of *bygone hours*:
 Bless you, darling, and in mercy
 May the sword of care be sheathed,
 And bright scarfs of golden sunshine
 'Round your *wedded* life be wreathed!

COVINGTON, Feb. 17, 1864.

NAY! TURN NOT COLDLY FROM ME THUS!

Nay! turn not coldly from me thus
 With pale scorn on thy brow!—
 Is there *no* memory in thy heart
 Of other days than now?
 Are there no words you used to breathe
 When loving hopes throbbed high?
 Oh! think of this—and give *one* glance
 Before you pass me by!

I'm so *alone* in this wide world;—
 I have *no* friend but *thee*!
 My heart will break in very grief
 And hope far from me flee.—
 If you forget how I have loved
 With all my woman's heart;
 If you can crush me thus to earth
 And *thus* can calmly part!

Oh! would to God you ne'er had seen
 That fond, bright, oval face
 So full of placid witchery
 So soft in smiling grace!
 I then might hope to win again
 The love I feel *she's* won;
 Might cease to pray for endless night
 And cease to curse the sun!

I hear the echo of her laugh;
 I hear her footsteps fall
 Beside your own—as mine once did,
 Adown *another* hall:
 And yet, this may not be again;
 God! does the world move on
 While I sit numbed with maddening pain
 And all my life's love gone?

Oh! by the heart he once held dear,
 By hope's mad ebb and flow,
 He's gone!—I see his shadow fall
 Upon the sparkling snow!
 He turns, his eyes look up! but, ah!
 They give no smile to me!
 Lost!—lost—*forever lost!*—
 An unbridged gulf's 'tween me and thee!

An unbridged gulf! Oh! horrid fate,
 For love as true and fond as mine!
 I had not dreamed that woe would sate
 Her vengeance in my soul—and twine
 About my burning brow the thorns
 That goad with piercing sting;
 My heart grows wild with grief, it *scorns*
 To weep!—it *cannot* sing.

I love thee still! and pride must die
 Before that glance so calm and cold;
 To think—that ne'er round me again
 Will those dear, fond arms fold!
 That never can I count in joy,
 The throbbings of that heart,
 And know that I possess the power
 To make the proud blood start,
 In crimson flushes to your brow;—
 On! 'tis so stern and pallid now!

He's gone,—and I alone
 Must feel this bitter, gnashing pain;
 Must list her laughing tone
 Tell sweetly that “he'll come again!”
 Ah! yes—he'll come again
 But *I'll* not be here to greet him,
 I'd rather sleep within my grave
 Than thus again to meet him!

I'll leave him to her witching grace,
 And to the magic spell,
 Which she has lightly woven in
 With arts that none can tell:
 And in a vast, deep solitude
 I proudly will forget,
 That I have *ever* wildly loved
 Or that we ever met!

JANUARY 2d, 1865.

MUSINGS.

I.

Sunshine on the window-sill,
No sunshine in my heart ;
But the shadow that flits along the wall
Is of myself a part :
No joy in life,
No dream of a future bright,
Only the hopeless present,
And beyond it, the darkness of night.

II.

Ah ! golden, gleaming sunbeams
Dance o'er my head and hair,
But the frozen heart beneath it all, —
There is no sunshine *there* !
My dream of love is o'er,
And there throbs now, only a pain,
Which tells of Hope's faded flowers,
That ne'er may bloom again !

III.

Thus in the gloom
Of my dreary room,
All mantled and stern in my pride,
While the hours pass by,
Do I sit and sigh
Apart from the world outside ;
Crushing the dream-buds as they bloom
Sitting and sighing alone in the gloom.

IV.

I have loved and lost,
At a bitter cost,
In this world of *to be and to seem*, —
And the quickening start
Of my burning heart
When waked from its haunting dream
But tells of a hope in the bygone years
Undimmed by the dust of sorrow and tears.

V.

Another now smiles
In the eyes all my own ;
Another now lists
For the love attuned tone ; —
While I, sad, silent and chill,
Sit by myself in my cheerless room,
Watching the ghosts of the past
That flit about in the gloom.

VI.

The shadow has softly chased
 The sunshine from the sill,
 And into the autumn air it has flown,
 Sparkling and brilliant still;
 Aye! flit to him in his beautiful home,
 As he smiles on his glad, young bride,
 And tell of the maiden you saw in the gloom
 Bowed down by memory and pride!

MOUNT AIRY, SHENANDOAH VALLEY, VA., }
 October, 1863.

LILY LEE.

CHAPTER I.



HE silver moon-beams fell with softened light on the brow of Lily Lee, as she wandered out to the summer-house and looked longingly up the dusty road, while she almost impatiently pushed the dark, brown braids of hair from off her pure, white, forehead, as she sighed laughingly, "I wish Harry would come!"

Scarcely had the words whispered their last airy echo to the roses, ere a strong arm was thrown round her, and a gentle hand drew her blushing face close to a broad manly bosom.

"Waiting for me, darling?"

"Yes, Harry, and jealously. I know not why it is, but I feel to-night as if some heavy cloud were hanging over me, about to shower upon my unoffending head its deluge of woe. I know you think it strange in me to speak in this manner, but I cannot resist the powerful sway of my feelings. I almost wish Sylvia Clifton would defer her visit to cousin Minnie this summer, for she and you are connected by some invisible link with my unhappiness. An

intuitive presentiment warns me of this,—forgive me for the doubt!"

Harry Hastings curled his beautiful lip rather contemptuously; his arm was withdrawn from its embrace, and he stood apart, looking her fixedly in the face for a few moments, then spoke, and his voice had a sarcastic ring to it, which caused the warm blood to flush in a crimson tide over Lily's neck, brow, and arms.

"*Jealousy*, Miss Lilly, nothing more. Really I did not think you were of such a fiery temperament. Don't anticipate a happy married life, if you nourish the 'green-eyed monster,' even at this early date. You must not endeavor to bind me in my social intercourse. I will be unruly if you attempt it."

"Harry—" that sweet, love-laden voice was trembling 'neath the weight of unshed tears—"I pardon you for your speech, and only because I love you. Now, if you think there is a possibility of my ever losing the affection I claim as mine, tell me so. I did not speak in that manner from the bitterness of distrust, as you seem to think, but because I felt sad, and wanted somebody to say to me in my loneliness of spirit, '*I love you.*' But let us conclude a discourse so unhappily commenced for both of us. Will you not come in the house and see Mr. Mason and cousin?"

"No, thank you. I shall return home. I *had* anticipated a pleasant evening in your society, but

shall not delay longer now. I thank you for the termination you gave to our conversation. I must bid you adieu"—and he was turning abruptly away when she said:

"Harry, don't leave me thus. Believe me, you will regret it. Why are you so passionate? I have done nothing, said nothing intentionally to offend you. Bear with me, and don't be angry; but never mind—good-bye."

He could not resist that pleading face. He held out his hand, she placed hers in it, and laid her feverish cheek upon it. As she did so a hot tear fell upon his hand. He started; slowly she withdrew hers from his tightening clasp, and murmuring "Good night," left him.

"Lilly—" the word was almost whispered as if he hesitated to recall her. She did not hear him.

Harry Hastings watched her graceful figure as she quickly sped along the walk; watched her with a longing earnestness, as if he would fain thus translate all the chaotic thoughts that wandered maze-like through his mind. Why was it that he sighed as he mounted his horse and rode toward the village, all his happy thoughts of an hour ago "clinging like cements" of mourning and regret over a tombstone of some cherished hope to his sad heart? Why was it that Lilly Lee, on bended knees, with a wildly beseeching abandon besought Almighty God to strengthen and sustain her under an unseen but surely

and swiftly advancing blow, which was to crush the pedestal that supported the idol of her girlish dreams? Alas! we know not! 'Tis a mystery inexplicable to all alike. We only know and feel the shadow in the air, ere it darkens our paths, and obscures the bright life-giving sunshine.

Lily Lee was a lovely, pure flower, nurtured by a most devoted brother, her only surviving protector. Laurence Lee worshipped his sister. No wish was denied her. He was lavish with his wealth to surround her with luxuries; and a nobler, more generous heart than his never throbbed in manly breast. He fancied that the buoyancy of her young life grew stagnant in the dust and turmoil of the busy city, for possessing the delicate constitution of her mother, if the rose for a day faded from her rounded cheek, he would tremble for her safety. Therefore, using all his persuasive eloquence, he had induced her to visit their cousin, Mrs. Mason, during the summer months, under promise that he would hasten the settlement of his business and join her as soon as possible. Three weeks had passed swiftly by in Mrs. Mason's country home, and happily too, in the society of devoted relations—and Harry Hastings.

A cloud now marred the beauty of their charmed existence in the shape of a letter to the hostess, from an old friend and school-mate, Sylvia Clifton, a renowned beauty and a belle. She was coming, she wrote, "to see dear Minnie, and judge for herself

whether she was as infinitely charming in the character of wife as maiden." The morrow would bring her to Mrs. Mason's affectionate embrace of welcome, who was in a fever of delight even in the anticipation of the approaching meeting. But amid all this joy was one sad and dreary heart, because of an unseen but foreboding trouble that made her tremble for the deep, devoted woman's love she had entrusted to another's keeping. Alas! that the reckless and changing impulse of fickle, human nature should blast so many happy dreams and fond hopes.

CHAPTER II.

Morning dawned, and with its rosy radiance, bright sunlight, and flowers, all besprinkled with dew, came Sylvia Clifton. Warm, soft kisses of joy at her arrival brought the quick flush of pleasure to her face, accustomed as she was, only to fashionable, perfumery greetings, and the weary but satisfied smile lit up her dark, bright face as she glanced round on the beaming countenances of her friends. A sense of gratitude, with a great longing to be worthy, filled her soul, but, like the deadly breath of the upas tree, marking out an arid waste, came back the remembrance of the station she had destined herself, years before, to fill, queen of *haut-ton* society, which would admit of no loves, no friendships, only *ambition* and sickly sentiment. Alas! that aspirations so pure and

holy should be fleeting as the edge of flimsy gold which tinges the light clouds of a summer's sunset!

After quite a lengthy chat about old times, Mrs. Mason observing her apparent languor, insisted upon her retiring instantly to her apartment, in order to refresh herself by rest. With a grace unequalled, she rose, and, in the cold, stately tone she used toward the court-throng, she said, as Mrs. Mason offered to escort her: "If you would be so kind;" and followed her hostess from the parlor.

Preceding her, gaily chatting all the while, Mrs. Mason at length paused at the end of the great hall up-stairs, opened a door and smilingly remarked: "This is *your* room, Sylvia." Truly it was a pleasant nook. Pretty cottage furniture well arranged; a bed-spread with snowy counterpane and tempting pillows, thus silently speaking of ease and rest; soft, white muslin drapery at the windows, fixed tent-fashion and looped back by gilded doves bearing the olive-branch in their beaks; and on each end of the mantle tulip-shaped vases laden with the delicate treasures of the wild wood. All these appurtenances charmed the eye of the weary fashionable, and she gratefully expressed her thanksgiving for such delicate appreciation of her taste.

"Sylvia, you must not get lonely, for I can offer a great many inducements. I have my cousin Lily Lee from New York here, spending the summer with me, too. She is a very lovely and loveable girl, and I hope you will find the society of one another mu-

tually agreeable. You may have met her? She made her *début* last winter."

"I am acquainted with Miss Lee, by representation—not personally. I often met her casually, at parties last season, but, strange to say, never received an introduction to her. Though retiring in her manners almost to seclusion, she was, I believe, very much admired. By the by, any one in the village now? Repton used to be quite a fashionable resort to an exclusively select *coterie* years ago; is it so still?"

"Well, I think so, though not to such a great degree as formerly. There are a great many there this summer, and, among others, an old acquaintance of yours, Harry Hastings. Ah! old girl, you blush! Do you mean to tell me you still remember all Harry's *petits soins* when you were children?"

"Ha! ha! ha! What an idea! But tell me, what change has time wrought in him? Is it for better or worse? He used to be quite handsome. Is he attentive to any one now?"

Smiling at the pointed query with which Sylvia ended, and but too plainly reading her heart in her eyes, Mrs. Mason replied: "He is at present very much enamored of Lily."

"Any engagement?"

"Yes, I think there is. Lily is very shy, and although Will has plagued her about Harry's devotion, she refuses to acknowledge to him that she observes any difference in the attention he bestows upon her

and others. In fact, she has never made any overtures of confidence, even to me, though it is a well-known fact every where."

"Well, well—how does Mr. Hastings look?"

"Time has most decidedly improved him. You used to call him handsome, but you have little idea *how* handsome he is. You would scarcely recognize in the tall, well-developed man, the gay, good-looking college-boy you parted from four years ago. He is tall and elegant, with a figure I have rarely seen equalled in any gentleman; easy, graceful, and dignified in every movement, and in disposition the same good-natured, whole-souled Harry you used to know. And he is remarkably fascinating in conversation and address."

"Is Miss Lee here now, or in the village?"

"Here. She complained of head-ache, and I bade her remain perfectly composed, and after awhile the pain would leave her. She is very delicate. I must go see her now!" and Mrs. Mason left the room, saying she would order up Miss Clifton's baggage, and some refreshments.

As the door closed, Sylvia, with a passionate movement, dashed the bonnet and mantle she held in her hand upon the bed, and impatiently paced the floor, as she muttered between her clenched teeth:

"So, simple Lilly Lee has won the heart I treasured more than life. She can boast of wealth greater than all the fabled gems of Eastern palaces, the love of

Harry Hastings. Oh! he has been my idol since I first knew I had a heart. It has been my aim in life to win him, and to this day I have most signally failed. All the charming grace that lured worthless love and passion to be sacrificed at my beauty's shrine, has been lost upon him. Now, I do swear that henceforth I will bend my whole soul to the task, and when the proud eagle's wings flutter in the dust—I shall smilingly scoff at and reject him. '*Agnus Dei qui tollis peccata mundi*'"—she added, bending her knee and looking upward in devout earnestness worthy of a better cause. "Mayest Thou welcome me and place me at Thy right hand, or curse me with hopelessness and despair, as I keep or break this vow!"

Scarcely had she arisen to an erect position, when a rap at the door announced the appearance of attendants with refreshments and trunks. When again all was quiet, she changed her traveling dress for a *robe-de-chambre*, and loosening her hair, which fell far below her waist in rich clustering ringlets, threw herself restfully in the arm-chair and became lost in reverie. The soft breeze, as it gently waved the curtains to and fro, the scent of the flowers, the drowsy hum of bees, and the musical rustle of the oak leaves as they kissed and whispered soft nothings to each other, all combined to lull her into a deep, dreamless slumber, from which she woke with a start and sigh to find the sun gilding the tree-tops on the far-distant hills.

Feeling in her heart that Harry Hastings would be

out at Oak Hill that evening, she devoted unusual care to her toilet. Just as the soft folds of a canary-colored muslin were arranged around her superb figure, with each glossy ringlet falling smoothly and caressingly around her, a smile upon her lip, and her fair hand clasping a richly-cased bracelet of coral and gold upon her arm, a gentle rap was heard on the door, and to her answer "enter," it opened and a delicate, ethereal, fairy-formed girl, robed in white, stood before her. She seemed almost too pure to be aught earthly. The saddest brown eyes she had ever seen were raised to her beautiful face, and one little hand was extended as she advanced toward her, and voice so musically flute-like, that she started and said:

"Good evening Miss Clifton—I am Lily Lee."

A plain sentence it was—and simple without any hidden meaning, yet Sylvia Clifton repeated it over to herself as if not half understanding it. Somewhat surprised at her silence and earnest look, Lily began to fear she was *de trop*, and was about to apologise for her intrusion, when regaining her self-command and stilling the dread at her heart as she gazed upon her, Sylvia replied in her blandest voice:

"Excuse me for my apparent impoliteness, Miss Lee, but your voice and appearance seemed to me so strangely familiar, that I forgot for an instant that we had not met as acquaintances before to-day. We have enjoyed the glow and flush of a "season" to-

gether though personally unknown. Memory was deftly touching the musical chords of my heart, sending out a sweet strain of harmony, reminding me of by-gone days. I trust that we shall be *friends* ere we leave our pleasant sojourn with your charming cousin!"

"I trust so, too," replied Lily, in a voice so low as to be scarcely heard by Sylvia Clifton, yet a happy flush overspread her countenance at the murmuring sound; for it proved to her quick penetration that Lily did not have confidence in her own power of attraction, and she felt she had thus gained an advantage which promised success to her enterprise.

It was a motive of revenge that moved her now, not love, yet ere long passion would lash to turbulence the waves lying so calm, dark and still beneath this beautiful surface. Thus are many deceived by semblances.

"I have been idling the day away in dreamless slumber, giving refreshment to myself, but making little demonstration of politeness towards my friends," she remarked as she snapped down the top of her jewelry box, nonchalantly.

"We did not call you sooner for we knew you must be weary by your journey. The days are so excessively warm. Will you go down now?"

"If you please," said Miss Clifton.

"Oh! girls, I was just coming after you; tea is waiting. Sylvia, child, I do believe you have grown

more beautiful since we parted! You look charming this evening. You, too, my spiritual Lily-bud." And Mrs. Mason affectionately embraced the young ladies as she met them in the hall.

Chatting gaily, the trio advanced into the tea-room where Mr. Mason awaited them. It was a large, airy apartment. A table was placed in the centre of the floor, glittering in sumptuous damask, cut-glass, silver and china, and laden with every dainty that could tempt the appetite of the most fickle *epicure*. Strawberries sparkling out in their ruby beauty from amid glossy green leaves, nestled down in a beautiful cut-glass bowl; golden-hued butter printed in the shape of a bunch of grapes, gleamed from a silver butter-cup, wreathed in roses; amber-tinted cake, peeping out from its white frost of sugar; fragrant Mocha coffee, and tea made to Leigh Hunt's taste, stood steaming in their chaste urns; light rolls, rich cream waiting in frothy silence to pour its pearly stream over the luscious berries placed in juxtaposition; and the most delicate and daintiest of spring-chickens rested on a gilded dish, with their pedals, which but lately stalked in imaginary security around the barn-yard, folded almost complacently over their breasts, which, in their rich, French browned crust, seemed to invite the touch of the glittering blade lying near. The pure evening air entering through the Gothic windows, tempered the warmth of the room and gave it that yielding Southern languor so delightful in tropical climates.

It was a most delectable repast to all but Lily Lee, who sat silent, scarcely tasting a morsel, but sadly gazing out on the distant landscape, gleaming brightly in all the splendor of a summer's sunset. Gorgeous glowing clouds floated over the western horizon, where the sun was fast sinking to rest, with all the golden and royal purple of his kingly couch closing around him.

Sylvia Clifton sang gloriously. Her voice trilled merrily as any bright-winged warbler of the green wood fluttering in mid-air, as half an hour later she swept her hands, sparkling in jewels, over the full toned harp, in the spacious country parlor where the family were grouped. The proud beauty was happy in the consciousness that the man she loved better than life itself, bent over her in an attitude of devotion, while his expressive eyes spoke the passionate admiration which his proud lips refused to utter, and that man was, Harry Hastings.

CHAPTER III.

Harry Hastings, after he had parted with Lily Lee, angry with himself at his quick temper, slowly wended his way back to the village, the subject of their dispute constantly appearing before his mind. He remembered how bewildering beautiful she was as a child, as a maiden. What must she be with all the polish of three winters at the French Court? He used to love her, but never said so, for fear she would

take some mad freak and flirt him—although he strongly suspected that she loved him. Would she do so now? Oh! how his soul chafed with the idea that he was bound to another by ties dissoluble only by pride and dishonor. But then the remembrance of Lily's tender beauty and glowing affections. He even recalled all Sylvia's flirtations, but to no avail. His heart made apologies for any course of conduct she chose to pursue. Too truly did he feel that he had no love for Lily, or this thought of a coquetish friend he had not met in years would never have made the fabric of his devotion tremble as it did.

Sylvia Clifton was a coquette; any one could read it in the glamor of her soft, dark eyes, so wondrous in their magic beauty; in the pearly teeth glistening from under the parted, crimson lips; in her tender, winning ways, and her silvery laugh. That laugh in itself was enough to fascinate the most callous woman-hater that ever existed. Yes; Sylvia was a coquette. Knowing she was beautiful, conscious of her power to charm, how could she be otherwise? Reared in luxury, surrounded from early infancy by the baneful influences of a fashionable boarding-school, where her fascination, grace, beauty and accomplishments were daily drilled into heart and head, how could she be otherwise? On entering society her glorious face and superb form, and never-wearying conversational and intellectual powers, drew aged and youthful as worshippers at her shrine of mental and physi-

cal loveliness. Coquetry was to her a goddess Calypso. She had been weaving her spells around her, and bewitching her with her incantations since her eyes opened wide enough to see the flowers of her wreaths and the beauty of her smiles. Won by the sparkling waters, the nodding blossoms and gleaming sunshine, Sylvia gaily stepped away over the path redolent with perfume and beauty. Little did she dream how soon the bright flowers would die, and the gleaming waters that sparkled in the sunshine would sink away, leaving but a sandy desert, void of verdure. Had she known it, her young life might not so soon have been withered, or love's binding garlands broken and their fragrance melted into air. The wanderer over the desert would not have touched his lips, parched with the fever-thirst of ambition, to a glamorous pearl in her heart, when he sought for water, cool, limpid and pure, far down the distance she might have beheld the Ithaca of a good life which God intended for her. The duty-path, as it wavered and gleamed far off like the sweet prospect that the desert sunshine makes, might not have been seen so dimly. The chains might have been thrown aside forever and her feet shodden for the journey onward. But why philosophize over impossibilities?

With head bent down, and brow knit in deep meditation, Hastings rode on. At last, entering the village, he paused in front of the cottage which he had rented for the summer season. On looking up he was

much surprised to see a gentleman seated in his great arm-chair, which had been rolled out upon the verandah, quietly puffing a cigar. He hastily alighted and advanced nearer, when the stranger, observing him, rose and said, as he removed his "pastime" from between his lips, in a low, modulated voice:

"Good morning, friend Harry!"

"Why, Phil. Ethbridge, where *did* you come from? I am very glad to see you. Any news from the city?" and they sat down together.

"Really, I am unable to inform you, as I have been absent now about six weeks."

Thus questioning and replying, they sat together probably two hours when Ethbridge asked: "Have you seen the arrivals this evening?"

"No; I have just returned from the country. Any one I know?" and Hastings turned away to hide from the keen eyes of his companion the interest he felt in his reply, but he turned too late.

"That incarnation of evil, Sylvia Clifton, is here, at the Ormsby House. She is at present contemplating a visit to Will Mason's wife, I believe, and I don't know my own mind if she does not bring misery on that family as sure as she goes there."

"Come, come, Phil, you are entirely too harsh. Sylvia is a friend of mine, and you are too hasty in your expressions of dislike. She could not, for a moment, harbor a thought of sowing seeds of dissension any where, much less at Mason's, where she is

loved as a friend and a sister, I know. *I* think she will be quite an acquisition to our clique—just the element which will prevent it from growing wearisome. Suppose we call on her this evening? right now?"

A deep shadow had fallen over his friend's handsome face at the commencement of this reply, but ere he finished speaking it had concentrated in a look of hatred and despair. Springing from his seat and raising his arm on high, he exclaimed:

"*Call* on her! May God never forgive me, may He curse me to the uttermost bounds of His wrath when *I* call on, or cease to pronounce anathemas on her name and her life! Oh! Harry, Edith was the bright joy and sunlight of our home, and we lost her. Who was the cause? Sylvia Clifton. Noble Alf. has left us and gone to sea; why? Because of the memory of his second worship for Sylvia Clifton! Oh! may *her* life be *one* blank of all that makes it glorious, joyous and happy! May *she* love and her heart's treasure be lost to her eternally and forevermore! May she live in misery, even as she has made others do, and die without penitence or hope of Heaven!"

Sinking back in his chair perfectly exhausted with this gust of passion and burying his face in his hands, Philip Ethbridge wept, wept like a child in his wild abandon of grief. In mute amazement Harry Hastings stood by, silently watching his friend. A

profound stillness followed, when Philip Ethbridge, controlling himself, rose impressively, and laid his hand upon Hastings' shoulder. His lips were quivering with their late storm of passion unpent which had flown over them, but his eye was one of unstirred and surpassing beauty, for the tears were all gone now.

"Harry, we have known and loved each other from almost infancy. We have shared together many pleasures and disappointments, yet in that time I have never sought to influence you but to good. I have never spoken advice but it proved advantageous to your interest. Have I?"

"Never; and I am and will be ever grateful Phil., for your friendship."

"Well, believe me, then, when I tell you I would have remained away from Repton this summer. I would not have intruded the presence of my great unhappiness upon you, did I not cherish you so devoutly. I learned casually one day last week that Sylvia Clifton would rusticate here this season, and knowing that you were here, and had not met her for four years, I resolved to warn you even at the expense of my own feelings. Now, mark what I say well. Just so sure as you yield to the vixen sway of the Circe, Sylvia, you are a ruined man. You are too *human* to prove yourself a grand Ulysses, and resist the honied wine upon her lips and the magic in her glamorous eyes. If you ever feel the bitter morti-

fication of a rejected suitor or the pangs of a disappointed lover, then, I ask you to remember that your friend warned you of your danger ere you precipitated yourself in the unyielding vortex. If you forget it now, I must go back to my old haunts, for I have done my duty to you Hal.—*remember this!*"

Hastings mused a moment, and then said:

"I thank you kindly again, Phil., for your advice, and the warm interest you entertain for my welfare, and I sympathize with you in your bereavement with my whole heart. You are not really going to-night! I cannot think of allowing you to do so. Accept a share of bed and board beneath my hospitable roof. I proffer this to you in the name of our long friendship. Come, summer evenings are very short, and we have a great deal to talk about."

"No; I am grateful for your extended courtesy, Hal., but I cannot accept it—now. I but left my business to-day to warn you from danger. I must leave Repton to-night."

"Let me insist upon your remaining."

"No; we must part, Harry, and it may be for years. Good-bye—God bless you, old boy!"

"Good-bye, Phil. I wish I could induce you to stay with me."

The friends parted to meet again in the last Great Day, and not till then. Parted—one with a sorrowful heart, while he thought of the man he was leaving behind him, a slave to his impulses, strode on with

hasty steps, as if his feet would spurn the pavement they trod. The other retired to his room, but not to sleep for many hours, haunted as he was with disagreeable thoughts of his friends, Lily and Sylvia Clifton. The latter he believed was judged too harshly by Philip Ethridge. He was confident she had changed in four years. It took time to mature the worth of a character like hers. All girls are more or less coquettish, and it was the exuberance of her girlish spirits, the gratification of her natural vanity and not intentional wrong that made her cause so much trouble. Restlessly his mind counted over the *pros* and *cons* of his sense of justice and his newly discovered passion, as he watched the pale moonlight casting weird shadows over the walls of his apartments, and silvering the poplar leaves that rustled ceaselessly outside his open window. Day dawned to his weary eyes that had not closed in slumber.

CHAPTER IV.

Evening at last fell softly over the earth, and the bright, golden stars began to peep out from their clouds of pearl and gray. In a feverish excitement, Harry Hastings mounted his mettled steed, which stood impatiently pawing the earth, waiting for the customary whistle which announced his master's readiness for departure. On they went, the spirited horse and brave rider, and soon reached Oak Hill

mansion, which was at no great distance from the village of Repton. Alighting and leaving Rover in the stable-boy's charge, who stood in readiness to receive the reins, Hastings wended his way to the house which stood some fifty yards from the entrance to the well-laid off grounds. As he neared the front door he paused a moment, listening to Lily's melodious voice, warbling "Sweet is pensive evening's hour," and in the twilight he felt inspired with its delicious loveliness, while the soft, baptismal fragrance of the woodbine blossoms of coral and gold showered over him. The voice ceased, and Hastings, after a moment's longer delay in the hall to lay aside his cap and riding-whip, entered the parlor just as Sylvia Clifton had placed herself before the harp, her attitude fully defining the graceful outline of her elegant figure. Her glorious eyes were veiled by the jetty lashes which fringed her swiftly-changing cheek. She commenced her song undisturbed, as if not aware of an added presence to the trio audience, a presence for which she had so longed. Her heart throbbed painfully, a faint smile flashed over her proud face, her voice quavered a little, a very little, once, yet she sang on. Too well did her womanly instinct teach her how to thrill the listening heart, whose throbbings she craved, with delicious, olden memories of a time past in both their young lives.

Lily observing him in the doorway, bowed quietly, and advancing stood beside him, but did not speak.

"Lily forgive me for last night," was trembling for utterance on his lips, but Sylvia's song could not be interrupted, so he held the little hand in his firm, warm clasp and remained silent. The song was one he used to love: "*Je t'aime de tout mon cœur!*" He wondered if she remembered that; was thinking of him, deeming him absent. Releasing Lily's hand he advanced slowly, smiling and bowing to Mr. and Mrs. Mason all the while, with his finger on his lip to keep the silence, until at last he stood behind the chair of the fair enchantress. Her eyes were looking afar off through the open window at some imaginary picture glowing in the evening sky. Unconsciously to herself almost, her voice took a dreamy tone of weary sadness. He touched her; with consummate tact, she started, in feigned surprise:

"*Why Harry!* Oh, Mr. Hastings, pardon my apparent negligence; but, really, I was not aware of your presence," and she held out her hand in graceful salutation.

Harry took it, pleasantly remarking: "I am so glad to meet you again, Miss Clifton, though I think I would hardly have recognized you among strangers."

"Why! why?"

"When I last parted from you, you were scarcely in society, and though very beautiful then, your loveliness was not developed as it is now!" and his eyes expressed even more genuine admiration than his lips dared openly to utter at so early a renewal of their

past acquaintance, as he released the hand which still rested in his genial clasp.

After quite a lengthy desultory chat, Mr. Mason called for another song, and Sylvia complying, Hastings turned resolutely to Lily.

She was just leaving the room, an air of dejection and languor pervading her whole appearance, while a world of grieved tenderness shone in her eyes. The flattering compliment it paid to Hastings's power and influence did not escape him, so stepping toward her he said: "Lily, do you mean to absent yourself and leave me to die of green and yellow melancholy?" at the same time taking her listless hand, and leading her to a *tête-à-tête*, where he placed himself beside her. Mr. Mason was engaged with Sylvia's song, and Mrs. Mason had vanished on household deeds intent. Nothing could be more opportune for an explanation between them. "Lily"—his voice seemed to caress the name—"I am a thousand times ashamed of my heartlessness and bearishness last evening. Have you in your tender mercy forgiven me ere now, or may I ask pardon and hope for success?" and slowly, softly came the hand she loved and clasped her own. What woman living can resist persuasion when it comes from the man who wields the sceptre of her heart's destiny? Lily was no exception to the rule over the length and breadth of the land.

"Yes, I have forgiven you, Harry, although feeling and knowing, as I did, that I had said nothing

intentionally to wound you ; indeed, not at all ; I was hurt by your coldness, your anger and sarcasm. It made my poor, little heart bleed, Harry. *Mais n'importe*, we will never recur to it again. Yet we must both remember not to be so like children who quarrel in order to make up again, for, believe me, if the *renewal* of affection gives pleasure, the withdrawal gives pain ; at least, I found this so." Ere he could reply, Sylvia called on him for a tenor, and he only said, as he rose to go : "We will finish this when we take a ride together out on Repton pike to-morrow morning early," and smiled down in the eyes now dancing with joy that were raised to meet his gaze. Lily nodded assent, gaily peeping over her shoulder at Mr. Mason as she went out of the room, who, noticing the crimson warm on her cheek, said to himself, "only a lover's quarrel."

Ah ! never having had cause to test their bitterness, he could not appreciate all the deep wells of pride and passion hidden beneath the little word *quarrel*. Only a lover's quarrel ! to be made up again with tears, kisses and repentance. Just so. Too oft do they mar life-times. Too oft do they shipwreck hearts as true and fond as Damascus blade is keen and sure ; and all because sometimes pride fails to yield and passion to cool. Oh ! young hearts throbbing, bounding, thrilling with joyous life and love, beware of dissension ! there's death, misfortune and despair in it ! Catch the sunshine while you may, shadows fall soon enough, and darkly too !

Sylvia Clifton, though apparently unobservant, saw each movement of the two persons most important to her in the world, Harry Hastings and Lily Lee. She saw her spell was not broken over the coveted heart, although absence and the light of other smiles had bent the links and loosened the cords, and she determined at any cost to regain her evanishing influence, and in time win the prize. Not that she cared for it now, but no other woman should triumph over her in the possession of a treasure she had always coveted. And by little actions she commenced to solve the problem of her power. A flash of triumph glittered in her eyes when she saw Hastings rise from his seat beside Lily to obey her summons. She knew politeness and natural gallantry moved him, yet she turned it to account. The song finished, she found him beside her still.

"So you think I am changed, do you ?" she said, looking up inquiringly in his face, and then round the room. They were alone, Mr. Mason having followed Lily out on the verandah.

"I do indeed, gained a perfection, I deemed almost unobtainable. You were so perfect *before*," replied Hastings, bowing low and graciously.

"Time has not left you unchanged in appearance, or manners either," answered Sylvia, a bright flush suffusing her clear, rounded cheek, and Harry fancied he saw a tear dim her dusky eye. "In the latter you have lost the tender friendliness that marked our in-

tercourse in days of yore, although you have gained all the royal, court gallantry."

"How so? I have not changed in feeling or sentiment, I am sure."

"Once you called me Sylvia. It used to sound musically sweet to my ear," (and she gave a peculiar, little emphasis to that *my*), "now, 'Miss Clifton' seems strangely cold."

"If *that* denotes the change, I will give you the true reason for my so doing. Didn't you call me *Mr.* Hastings? Was it not a necessary duty for me to mark my own conduct by yours? Believe me, I feel the same, as in bygone days, unless separation and a maturity of passion have *deepened* my sentiments of admiration," and he bent his head down nearer her own, and almost unconsciously modulated his voice to a more lover-like, expressive tone.

Sylvia raised her glorious, bewitching eyes full upon his ardent, handsome face and murmured softly:

"If I erred, Harry, and played false to the impulses of my heart, I did not mean it," and the passionate, crimson lips seemed to reproach him in their voicelessness, for slighting the great love of her life which she had by actions proffered him, and by actions had been denied. After a little pause, she said, archly and earnestly:

"Harry, I want to ask you a question!"

"What is it?"

"I have been informed, and by good authority,

too, that you were engaged to Miss Lee. Is this so, Harry?" There was an eager little flutter in her sweet voice that completely charmed Hastings, and brought back all the regret which had filled his heart the evening before when riding towards Repton, after his stormy interview with Lily. His reply might have proven unjust to his honor and the woman whose affection he had won, if her merry laugh, like liquid silver, had not echoed through the Gothic windows, for at the sound, memory threw the glow of tenderness over his face and meted his reply:

"She is the most perfect woman I have ever known. Gentle and amiable; generous-hearted, almost to a fault; bright, beautiful and intellectual, she can completely bewitch one out of his wits without any fascination except her unconfined *naturalness*. A songbird of heart and home, she will wreath any man's life, who is fortunate enough to win her, with sunshine, fragrance and joy. I have never met her equal."

"I am answered, and with a most potent eloquence. Excuse me if I seemed too inquisitive," replied Sylvia; a momentary pique in her tone, and then with infinitely graceful tact she changed the subject of conversation. With a versatility which charmed him, she spoke of science and literature, art and nature. After passing an hour or more in her truly delightful society, he rose to depart, observing the lateness of the hour, and gallantly expressed his gratitude for the

pleasure which she had bestowed upon him, which she quite as graciously reciprocated.

And where had our Lily been all this while? Sitting out on the old front porch beneath the honeysuckle blossom's fragrance, singing songs to the accompaniment of her guitar. Many times had Hastings wondered why Lily absented herself from the parlor so pertinaciously, and was at a loss to decide whether it was a spice of feminine jealousy which actuated her conduct, or a generous desire to give the two old friends unrestrained communion of kindred spirits. Indeed, Miss Clifton had observed his abstraction, which, spite of his contrary endeavors, betrayed itself several times, when the breeze bore to their ears some plaintive air which Lily sang. And once he commenced even to propose that they should join the songstress, but ere he could frame the sentence, some gay witticism lured him away, until the old hall clock finally broke the charm. Fancying some tender love-scene at the adieux, Sylvia, even at the risk of being *de trop*, accompanied Hastings to the door gaily conversing on indifferent topics. Lily rose as they approached with her guitar swung over her neck by a blue silk cord, troubadour-fashion, Hastings caught one of the tassels with which her dainty fingers dallied with an irresistible familiarity and commenced gently striking and drawing it over the tensioned chords as he asked playfully:

"Were you afraid of a scolding, enchantress? and

because of this did you absent yourself from us this evening?"

"No, oh, no!" she answered smilingly; "I thought you and Miss Clifton had so many old times to talk over. And then, you know, this is my usual evening resort, Harry. Are you going so soon?"

"So soon? I was but just now weighing the probable necessity of saying *au revoir*, in lieu of good-night. It is so very late. And then, too, I anticipate rousing you so early in the morning to take that ride. I can come for you, can't I?"

"I'll be ready," she replied, understanding with her gentle, womanly appreciation that he was endeavoring to atone for his past unkindness, and she was happy in her perfect confidence in his love and devotion. Blessed credulity!

Next morning, true to promise, Hastings rode out with Lily, and vowed to cherish her with all the fond devotion of a lover, and one day, a husband. No doubt he meant it when he said it, for he was much surprised that Sylvia Clifton had not completely enthralled him at their first meeting, as Philip Ethbridge had predicted, and with renewed zest as well as from a sense of duty he avowed his devotion to his lady-love, as sweet and winsome a fay as ever brightened and haloed a fireside and home with the sunshine of her smiles. Deluded mortal! Days passed on, and he did not feel the golden gyves that fettered him, nor the silken net which eventually imprisoned

him in its web, until too late to recede; until the thought of the renunciation of his idol was death and despair to his adoring soul. For his very soul did bow down in worship to Sylvia Clifton; Circe that she was to woo him with the magic-wine of loving on her scarlet mouth! Suddenly, but surely as the blending of the lightning's flash, his heart betrayed itself and its sinful passion. Sylvia became his life, his hope and his dream of happiness!

He never noticed Lily's failing health and spirits; although more watchful friends marked with untold anxiety the flushing cheek, the glittering eye, followed by paleness and languor; and none so keen to note that change as the syren-charmer, Sylvia Clifton. One evening he had been unusually careless towards Lily, when talking in a love-tender *tête-a-tête* with Miss Clifton, he suddenly raised his eyes to meet those of the young girl fixed on his countenance; a deep and sad light gleamed in those unfathomable depths of feeling with burning tears which she in vain strove to suppress, when like shivered pearls of tenderness they fell upon the stainless pallor of her cheek. She went from the room, leaving the shadow of her silent sorrow drooping over his self-reproaching conscience. He turned to see if Sylvia too noticed her grief, but she seemed utterly wrapped up in her own thoughts, for once in her life, regardless of the presence of Hastings. Her memory wandered back with quickening steps to one short year ago, when she

had used all her arts and wiles to win Morgan Gray, the betrothed husband of Edith Ethbridge, simply for the pleasure of conquest. She thought of the young life which turned to God in all its woe, seeking *His* mercy, *His* comfort. And He granted her prayer, for soon she won the quiet restfulness of her grave, as all who have found life feverish at times have longed to do, and who at times have not? She remembered but too well how Edith's slight form had grown slighter; how the hectic flush crimsoned the wan cheeks and added lustre to her brown eyes, till in December they laid her away to sleep the long, last sleep which knows but one awakening, and the first winter-snow wrapped the new-made grave in its soft white winding-sheet. She, too, had noticed Lily's long, sad look at Hastings, and she shuddered. But her heart was not softened to remorseful tenderness, resolved, as she was, that she would accomplish her vow, whatever the attending consequences to suffering humanity! And Harry? *could he, would he give her up?*

A blush rose to her cheeks, and a soft, tender smile played over her caressing lips, as she raised her eyes to meet the ardent, earnest gaze of the impassioned Hastings. That night, a wailing cry went out on the broad earth:

"Come to me, brother Laurence, come to me, and take me home. Home and you, brother Laurence, my poor, worn heart only craves! Come, and come quickly, to

"SISTER LILY."

CHAPTER V.

'Twas the twilight of a vanished day; the breeze of summer, faint and laden with perfume, gently wafted nature's nurslings as they slumbered. The leaves of the aspen and silver-poplar shimmered and glistened, while the moon shed a clear light down from the fleecy clouds that wrapped her face in their snowy folds, as if she wept at sight of the grievous scenes she watched over. The Oak Hill summer-house stood white and still, gleaming up at the sky, as if fain to repulse the soft wreaths of roses and gentle twinings of green sprays around it. Beneath that latticed bower a perjured lover swore vows of constancy, but not to the trusting, bright-eyed maiden of yore. A proud, passionate woman sat beside him, fiercely quelling the whisperings of her heart, as she muttered over to herself, "My vow!" In a distant part of that same spacious garden, where dark yews waved grimly, wandered a lady. Her head was bent low, but did not hide the worn features that seemed still thinner now that the beautiful curls and glossy braids were all gone, and the rich, sunny tresses were put plainly back. Her cheeks were marble white, her hands clasped tightly over her breast, and a listening ear might have caught the despairing prayer: "Oh! Great God! I pray Thee let this bitter cup pass from me! 'Tis more than I can bear!"

So delicate and ethereal did she look that one could

almost fancy her a visitant from another world, scarcely realizing that joyous Lily Lee and this sad-faced lady, youthful in form, but with woe-shadows on her brow years could scarce trace, were one and the same. On she went towards the summer-house, nearer, nearer, as if to her own doom of destruction. She was disturbed by the sound of voices, and turned to go down another path, but, fascinated with horror, she paused. She heard low, tender tones, which she knew but too well, breathing vows of idolatry to another, and then came the soft, melodious voice in reply:

"Ah! Harry, did you not love Miss Lee with the same enthusiasm for a little while? Did you not swear the same vows to her you are now swearing to me? Have you not heard enough to burden your heart against me? Do you not fear unhappiness if I become your wife?"

"Sylvia, say what you will, do what you will; here, take my heart, burn it, seethe it. I am yours, a slave to your will. You are my idol, my bewildering joy, my beautiful dream, mine, mine! My only true love; tell me, may I hope?"

As he clasped her in his arms, her beautiful head, with all its wealth of raven-hued ringlets, rested on his bosom, and her blushing face turned there to its shelter, its resting-place, hiding from the shower of burning kisses, pressed on it from the passionate, loving lips of Hastings. Did no memory obtrude itself

then of another head of clustering, sunny curls which rested there once? No! not one thought of the heart he had broken, or the love with which he had so basely trifled. Men have strange ideas of honor!

Lily paused to hear no more, but with a noiseless step glided away down the woodland walk and became lost in the embrace of the forest-trees' shadows. The blow was too heavy, and ere she had taken many steps, she fell, with the spasmodic cry upon her lips, "too late, too late." The pale moonbeams played over that sad, troubled, young face, throwing a halo round the pure, innocent brow, something like the silvery sheen of angel-light when fluttering round God's throne.

The lovers in the fading glory of that summer night were happy; and forgot, in their own intoxicating delirium of joy that it would prove another's woe. And that other lay almost lifeless on the damp sod, so soon to cover her in her final earthly home, while the life-blood slowly oozed from her ashen-hued lips. When she opened her eyes they rested on those of her brother Laurence. Taking his darling in his arms he bore her gently towards the house. "Laurence, dear brother Laurence, I knew you would come! I am so home-sick! I die here!" whispered the poor, stricken bird, as she convulsively clasped her arms around her brother's neck and again became unconscious. That night Lily Lee hovered between life and death; not a feather weighed in the balance.

A few days after, Sylvia Clifton returned to the city, regretting the circumstances which forced her hasty departure and gracefully expressing her gratitude to her old friend for her unvarying kindness and hospitality. Hastings accompanied her, because she would stop a day or so with his mother before she returned to her own home.

A long, severe illness followed Lily's attack of hemorrhage at the lungs, and ere she was pronounced convalescent the dying glories of Autumn surrounded her. Sometimes when she sat beside the window, with her wan hand clasped in that of her brother, she sighed as she watched the crimson and gray hill-tops, for the dreary sense came to her that she too must die like the beautiful leaves. But to her, as to them, the glorious, infinite resurrection would dawn and she would be blest amid the blessed in the kingdom of God.

When the first December snow fell, the brother and sister returned to their home in the city. For some time after their arrival there they kept up the tacit silence about the cause of her illness, which they had preserved at Oak Hill. Lily, fearing to tell how all had happened, would probably never have broken it till Laurence verbally noticed the cessation of Hastings' visits but for the following event: She was alone one evening, before her brother came in from his office,

Alone, alone! that worn-out word,
So idly spoken and so coldly heard!
Yet all that poets sing or grief hath known
Of life laid waste knells in that word, "alone!"

The twilight had fallen over the city. She sat wearily gazing in the fire, where the golden-hued flames, flashing out from the jetty coal, cast ever-changing shadows on the parlor walls, and the heavy, velvet drapery, the windows loomed dark and sombre in the back-grounds. She thought of her young life, how it had withered away ere it had blossomed, and overwhelmed with memories sweet and bitter in the past, she sprang from her seat, and with clasped hands paced the floor. Suddenly she paused and looking upward, exclaimed: "Oh! God, lengthen not the days of my misery, I pray Thee! Great God hear me! I loved him so devotedly! My heart is breaking, *breaking!* I feel that I am sinking beneath the weight of wasted hopes, fainting trust, and tottering faith! Give me strength, my Heavenly Father, to say, 'Thy will be done,' " and she dropped upon her knees and bowed her head in her hands, while the bitter tears fell in scalding rain, through her wan, thin fingers.

A strong arm raised her, Laurence was beside her. He took his seat by the fire, placed Lily trembling on his knees, drew her head down on his bosom, and as he smoothed her hair tenderly, whispered:

"Tell it to me, little sister. Read to brother Laurence the dark pages of your life, all the troubles which weigh down your young heart, and let me comfort you if possible. Shall it not be so, darling?"

And as Lily leant in that quiet resting-place, the

wild throbbings of her heart grew still, and her mind calm, and she breathed in her brother's ear the tale of woe which, since the luscious summer-time, had darkened her young existence. Then as the tide of stern invectives against the dastardly offender and betrayer of his sister's affection, unpent burst from his pallid lips, she checked him. "Don't grieve me by such bitterness, brother Laurence. My race is almost run. What matters it if I do suffer for a little while? I have always been happy before, and does not the great poet tell us—

"Into each life some rain must fall,
Some days be dark and dreary?"

It was even so; and Lily contemplated death more calmly than many whose lives have been all martyrdom, and whose brows have been crowned with thorns of disappointment and despair, yet who still cling to life for the sake of life. The sweet voice ceased, and they sat thus together in loving silence till the fire died out, and the white ashes glimmered among the gray, charred coals, that here and there with a crimson spark spoke in mute language of life amid desolation.

CHAPTER VI.

It was a gorgeous sight. The thousand lights of rainbowed chandeliers shed their softened splendor over the satiny shoulders of lovely ladies, and the

sported broadcloth of gentlemen in the spacious hall below. Gay jests and sparkling *bons mots* were freely circulated, and bright eyes grew brighter, and softly-blushing cheeks grew deeper in their dye, as fair ladies listened to low whispered words of devotion. But, queen of the festive scene stood Sylvia Clifton, in a white satin of glossiest sheen, embroidered with gold, and the cold cutting flash of diamonds glistened on neck, brow and arms. A large bouquet of diamonds in the dress berthe grew beautifully small and less by degrees, until it reached the point of her stomacher. Never more wildly beautiful, never more fascinating than to-night.

Leaning on a large marble pillar, stood Harry Hastings, eagerly drinking in her every word and action, though apparently unseen by her. He soon left his self-allotted station, and wandered into an apartment divided off from the grander hall, by heavy amber-hued satin curtains, looped back by golden cords and tassels. Rich and rare exotics threw their fragrance lavishly out from immense crystal vases placed in different portions of the room, and one large astral lamp swung by gilded cords from the ceiling, which cast a soft, luxurious light over all. Here Hastings paced restlessly up and down as if impatiently awaiting some expected person. Ere long his anticipations were realized, for the curtains were drawn further back, as if to give free scope to some one's observation, and a low, musical voice

questioned: "Here Harry?" and then the curtains dropped round the graceful figure of Sylvia Clifton.

"Come at last!" said he, advancing and taking her hand. "Why do you try me so, Sylvia? Have you forgotten you were to answer me to-night?"

"No, no! Oh! Harry, I dared not; for when I did, I knew I must tell you that though my love was devoted as yours, *we must part forever*. Come out on the balcony. 'Tis too stifling here, so like the burning, bitter world!"

"No," said Hastings, sternly, "I will *here* learn the cause of your conduct. Have I not risked my soul, my life, my honor, dearer than all for you?—and now?"

"Oh! don't speak so coldly!" said she, in a low, quivering voice of entreaty. "Be gentle with me!—'tis not my fault!"

Pitying her agitation, he drew her to a secluded seat, and passing his arm around her, he bent his head in a listening attitude.

"Now, darling, tell it to me."

"Oh! Harry, I love you so that I scarce dare tell you; our marriage can never take place. We are both doomed to misery through everlasting time!"

No words, no exclamations, only a firmer compression of the lips, white and firm as chiselled marble now, and a sterner light flashing and gleaming from his splendid eyes. She endeavored to continue, but the words died upon her lips; at last she gasped:

"I am bound to—to—Mr. Craddock. Father threatens to curse me if I marry another. His only hope depends upon me. The bank has broken. Mr. Craddock offers to put him afloat in the world as he was ere this catastrophe for—for *me*! Shall I marry you, and let my gray-haired sire go down to the grave in disgrace for debt, to brand shame on the name of Clifton—or shall I sell myself? Speak, Harry, for God's sake, speak!" cried she, passionately.

"Sylvia, can you hesitate? Think you that it is true parental love, or gloating, avaricious *selfishness* that tempts a man to sell his daughter?"

"I cannot decide. Tell me what to do."

"No; I leave you to the promptings of your own heart. If *it* weighs the balance betwixt avarice and love, I am indeed lost."

"Go with you and leave my father? No, Harry, I cannot. Whatever he may be, he was and is my father."

"Then, farewell, Sylvia. Life of my life, soul of my soul, farewell. No hope for me in the future! Blankness and despair! Would to God we had never met!" and he raised his eyes, wild witnesses to heaven, took her face in his hands, bent and kissed the ripe, crimson lips, one long, last kiss, and was gone!

Sylvia sprang up to call him, but the name died unuttered on her tongue, and murmuring "my vow, my vow," she sank back in her seat, giving way to the sorrow in her heart, for a moment, with over-

whelming abandon. But the white lips grew firm again, stilling beneath their smiling the bitter human cry, and the eyes were merry with sparkle and vivacity. Raising her head, she beheld Mr. Craddock standing before her, a cold, passionless old man, whose hair was gray as her father's; and who, when he spoke, so coldly, so slowly, froze the listener into muteness; a polite, punctilious *old* man. And such a man, Sylvia Clifton, proud, glorious, beautiful Sylvia Clifton was to marry; and *gain* was the luring bauble which tempted her to this sacrifice, and won her over the pleadings of manhood, nobility, affection, honor and truth. She rose to greet him as calm and impenetrable as the ocean deeps.

"Alone, Miss Clifton?"

"I am, Mr. Craddock."

"Can I have a moment's private interview with you here? I wish to speak ——"

"Speak on;" her arms were folded, her face stern and haughty as Juno's in its indomitable pride.

"What has been your decision in regard to my proposition to your father?"

"I have decided to accept you as my future husband, Mr. Craddock."

"Dear Sylvia," and the old man put out his arm as if to take her to his heart, but she waived him aside majestically, saying, coldly:

"My agreement to accept you as my suitor does not license you to be familiar. I desire to return to the saloon."

With a bow, frigidly polite, Mr. Craddock offered his arm which she accepted, and was led back in the ball-room. She had learned to still her grief beneath a calm eye and unswerving front, and well did she act her part, when, five weeks later, she stood before the altar, in a white velvet robe thickly embroidered with seed-pearls; and point-Vincennes lace veil and accompanying wreath of orange blossoms well became the proud beauty, who looked little like a bride, and more like a draped statue, as she knelt in Trinity Church, and in a cold, measured tone, repeated the vows, which bound her to a man she despised. Some marvelled at the strange match, and some even "wondered if she'd be happy," but, by-and-by, began to say and think "it was very delightful to marry rich and float on the crest of the topmost wave of New York *haut ton*."

And here we must leave Sylvia Craddock to tread out for many weary years the path she has chosen, and go back to Lily Lee who lies dying in the arms of her brother, while Harry Hastings kneels by the bedside and sues for forgiveness.

"I do forgive you, dear Harry, even as I hope to be forgiven," said Lily, as she gently laid her hand on his head. Then all was silent, save her labored breathing, for near an hour, when she gasped, "I—am dying—now—Harry,——Lau—rence!—"

The little hands made an effort to place the palms of the two men together. Her brown eyes wandered

restlessly to their faces, and then paused, pleading what she had no strength to speak. Each man simultaneously clasped hands with the other, and a peaceful smile haloed her sweet face. The waxen lids closed 'neath the spell of death, and Lily Lee's pure soul was numbered one more amid the angels in heaven. *Requiescat in pace!*

Laurence Lee, with a strange and woeful calmness, bent and kissed her brow. Withdrawing his hand, which still rested in the clasp of Hastings, who was weeping convulsively, only as strong men *can* weep, he said: "In mercy to you, and the wish of the dead, I do not curse you. Yet, now and forever, we are strangers; and believe me," he added, in a lower, deeper voice, "'tis best that we never meet again."

Hastings rose, and bent, too, to kiss the calm features which still wore that beautiful smile, "Sully not the dead; depart!" said Laurence Lee.

With one long look at the purest lily that ever grew with a golden heart, Hastings paused, and raising his head, he spoke: "I have done wrong. I have injured you and an angel on earth; but if a life of deep and lasting repentance will, in a measure annul the crime, then, I, too, can hope for heaven."

"Repentance comes too late to avail aught to me and mine; depart!" sternly replied Lee; and with slow step and low-bowed head, Hastings left the house. When Laurence Lee turned again to his dead the smile had vanished from the beautiful face, and a

shadow fell over his life. The next ship sailing for Europe bore Harry Hastings over the broad ocean a self-expatriated American. Alas! vain hope for forgetfulness! Death alone can silence the hammer and anvil of thought and brain.

CHAPTER VII.

Thirty years had winged their flight. 'Twas an eve in Autumn, and Laurence Lee, a morose, stern man, was slowly wending his way to a gravestone which bore only a broken lily carved upon its smooth surface. Supported by his staff, he tottered on. A man was half-lying, half-leaning against the tomb. He was bronzed by exposure to the sun on the burning deserts of Arabia, yet in that darkened, prematurely-aged countenance, Laurence could trace some likeness to the once princely and handsome Hastings.

"Do you come even *here*, to tempt me to curse you, as I promised not to do!" shouted Lee, as he raised his cane, and glowered down on the prostrate man.

"Laurence! pause! for *Lily's sake?*" gasped Hastings. The sound of that name so loved, even though breathed by accursed lips, the stern stoic had not heard for years, and it broke the spell of bitterness which had bound him so long. Kneeling down beside his old enemy, the tears fell over his face, wrinkled and seamed with time and sorrow, as the soft and gentle spring-rains fall on the desolate fields of Autumn where stern, unrelenting Winter crushed

out into gray and dim lines of decay the crimson and golden glory of the year.

Faintly reaching out his hand toward him, and gazing pleadingly in his face, Hastings whispered, "Forgive!"

"I do forgive you, even as I hope to be forgiven, as Lily said, long years ago," and, bending, Lee kissed the pale brow of the repentant man, which was damp with death-dews.

"I shall die happy!" sighed Hastings, raising his eyes with tender gratitude to the face of Lee.

Three hours later Lee returned to his home with the form of the perjured lover of his idolized sister leaning upon his arm almost as weak as his own, for support. Not many days after he was laid to rest in the quiet of the grave. Thus died the betrothed husband of Lily Lee, the discarded suitor of Sylvia Clifton, who came to his native city without a friend in the wide, wide world—

"Oh! it was pitiful!
Near a whole city-full
Home he had none!"

And Laurence Lee, the man whom he had wronged, whose home he had desolated, alone followed his body with bowed head to its final resting place in the tomb. Ere two more years the bent form of Laurence, too, was gathered to his father's house, where many mansions be, and the memory of the sad old

man who used to live in the handsome brown stone front by himself, and always wore crape on his hat, died from the very "friends" (don't think, reader, I place any than a just estimate upon the expression!) who had in other days accepted his hospitality, and received and reciprocated his courtesies, yet who, in the days of sorrow, forgot and deserted him.

But Sylvia Clifton! How has Time dealt with her? Ere we close this faint glimpse in the history of human hearts, let us visit the queen of other days. 'Tis the afternoon of a day in blustering, bleak November. (I say it *is*, because the scene is vivid to me now, as *then*!) We pass up the streets one after another, until instinct and sight bid us pause before a grand, palatial residence on Fifth Avenue, with "Craddock" on the gold door-plate. We enter. A handsomely furnished apartment, with two occupants: an old lady of haughty and dignified aspect, and a young girl, so much like the Sylvia Clifton we once knew, that we almost imagine Time's wheel is revolving and recalling again the belles of ancient days to step into the ranks with the beauty-reigners of 1862. That girl was Lelia Craddock, the offspring of an unloved marriage, the heiress of immense wealth, left by her sire years ago, and willed solely to his darling, his daughter Lelia, leaving her proud mother dependent upon her filial bounty. Listen!

"Mamma, did you not once have an admirer by the name of Harry Hastings?"

Silence about her, for no reply is vouchsafed to her query.

"Say! Mamma!" and down comes the newspaper, and the dark, bright face, with its shadow of raven ringlets, confronts the old lady who sits rigid and white. She does not seem to hear; her hand all the while spasmodically grasping and ungrasping the arm of her chair, but the dark eyes opposite are watching her. So controlling herself, she questions calmly:

"Why, my daughter?"

"Because," innocently came the silvery voice, "I remember once, when I was a wee bit, bonny lass, papa said some harsh things to you about 'Hastings,' which I could not understand, but I can never forget how white you turned; oh! *so white*, and left the room. The notice of a man's death in the paper, bearing the title of 'Harry Hastings, an old citizen of New York, yet who has not touched his native soil since his youth,' made me think they might be one and the same, and so I mentioned the scene which it recalled so vivid — Mamma! *mamma*! What is the matter?" and Lelia Craddock sprang forward in time to break the fall of her mother who has risen from her seat and seems vainly grappling with vacant air. Alas! it is densely peopled with ghosts of undying, unrelenting memories of the fadeless past to her. She faints!

MIDNIGHT! An old woman, robed in white, stands

before the window, with her proud, aged face pressed close to the pane, and her black eyes, that have lost none of their youthful fire, burning through the darkness. Her faded, withered lips move. Hark! What says she?

“And the raven never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,
On the pallid bust of Pallas, just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon that is dreaming,
And the lamp-light o’er him streaming, throws his shadow on the floor,
And my soul from out that shadow, that lies floating on the floor,
Shall be lifted, nevermore.”

Such is Sylvia Craddock, and such the effects of a summer’s flirtation. Age may dim, and time destroy all but the sweet romance and affection of the heart. These we may strive to crush out of our lives—oh! mother, brother, father, son, sister, maiden, lover—but like the inevitable fate which revolves the cycles of years, days and hours, overflowing with sweet and bitter remembrances, they will come again; and to forget them, would be to forget the God who made us; to doubt the virtue and holiness of our blessed mothers. It would be to deny their very *existence*. Alas! for the iniquity and regret. Alas! for the bright hopes and fond aspirations doomed to fade over the length and breadth of this changing world of ours!

IN HAPPY DAYS OF LONG AGO.

In happy days of long ago,
When roseate crowned flew by the hours;
When my young heart throbbed light and free;
And life seemed one wide world of flowers,—
There came a stranger from a land
Where royal summer never dies,
With gentle voice, and radiant face,
And orbs as blue as Eastern skies.

He came as twilight’s dream to me,
And vanished as a falling star;
But with him bore this heart of mine
To follow in his wanderings far:
Oh! would death had been granted me
To *sleep* away the bitter pain!
Alas! he roams in foreign lands
And we shall never meet again.

Another now he calls his bride,
Who lived beyond the sapphire sea,
While I am left to mourn the pride,
That made the breach ’tween him and me;

Oft in the watches of the night
That radiant face bends close to mine,
When dreary pilgrimage I make,
Unto my lost love's mem'ry-shrine!

Though lost forever to me here,
There still remains a sweet hope bright;
Beyond the skies we'll meet again,
Beyond the purple gloom of night;
And as we gladly soar above,
We'll leave all taint of earth below,
And flutter in the light of love
E'en as we did long years ago!

1861.

TO MISS L____ W____, OF LOUISVILLE, KY.

I met thee in the crowded hall,
With smiles and grace replete,
And thought I ne'er before had seen
A face one half so sweet;
When in the mazes of the dance,
Thy fair hand laid in mine,
Thrilling beneath its gentle touch
My soul went out to thine:
And yet thy red lips never breathed
One single word to me!
Unknown—unsought I wandered on,
But left my heart with thee!

I met thee in the busy street,
Calm 'mid the jostling throng,
While the words on thy sweet lips,
Stirred gentle waves of song;
And "I marvelled that the strangers
Paused not to hear thy voice,"
For it was so full of music,
The birds 'twould make rejoice!
And I listened with a keen joy
Almost akin to pain,
For never in this world it might
By me be heard again.

Then I met thee in thy beauty,
 In a bright and glorious hour,
 When thy dark eyes glanced upon me
 With a soul-entrancing power;
 And I revelled in thy sweet smiles,
 Though never meant for me,
 And when you vanished once again
 My dreams were all of thee;—
 Thy angel-face bent close to mine,
 When I was bound in sleep,
 But if I broke the magic charm,
 I'd wake to woe and weep.

As well might star-beams cease to glow,
 Or flowers to bloom in Spring;
 Or mem'ry-waves forget to flow,
 Or song-birds never sing,—
 As I in fancy dare to hope
 You ever think of me;
 Yet still thro' life I wander on
 And know no dream but thee;
 In the sunshine and the shadow,
 Alone or in the throng,
 My heart is haunted ever
 By the "empress of my song."

JANUARY, 1865.

OUR PARTING.

Oh! that sad, sad night of parting,
 How it cometh back to me!
 How it floods my soul with mem'ries
 As the starlight floods the sea!
 Once again I hear the rain-drops
 Pattering down amid the flowers,
 Like so many tiny watches
 Ticking, ticking out the hours.

In this dimly-lighted parlor,
 Where the shadows softly fall,
 All along the sunny pictures
 That lean nestling to the wall,
 Side by side we sat together,
 Peering out upon the night,
 Shuddering at its purple blackness
 Without ray of cheering light.

Side by side sat we together,
 With your arms around me thrown,
 While your manhood's lips were pleading
 In their music-haunting tone,—
 For the golden-clustered blessings
 Which my life could give alone,
 For I was the one ideal
 That your heart had ever known.

Left me, O my darling, left me !
 And we may not meet again ;
 Yes, I say it, though the tear-drops
 Fall in bitter, scalding rain,
 On my sad and shadowed heart-lands,
 With a sobbing sound of woe,
 Yes, your country called you, darling,
 Could I less than let you go ?

* * * * *

In dreams I hear your footsteps fall,
 Firm and stately, as of yore,
 All along the echoing hall,
 Pause before the open door ;
 Just as you paused last August eve,
 Ere you went into the night,
 And said : " Remember, Nelly dear,
 I go to battle for the right."

Closer in your arms you clasp me,
Closer to your throbbing heart,
 Press upon my lips your kisses,
 That will nevermore depart.
 Alone ! and still I hear the raindrops
 Pattering down amid the flowers,
 Like so many tiny watches,
 Ticking, ticking out the hours.

BEECHLAND, KENTUCKY RIVER, 1864.

TO _____

Dreams come drifting o'er my heart,
 As sunbeams kiss the sea,
 While the trembling tear-drops start
 As memories rise in me,
 Of gladsome days now dead, my friend,
 And radiant fancies flown,
 That blessed us in the happy time,
 When hope-stars o'er us shone.

Thou art not by me now, my friend,
 And drear wastes stretch between,
 And wailing winds sigh over them,
 " Alas ! it might have been ;"
 And weary eyes look longingly,
 To see the distant land,
 Where girt about with pleasure
 And bright-eyed joy, you stand.


The gloom-clouds are about me,—
 No fragrant blossoms bloom,
 As all alone, I watch above
 My heart's neglected tomb ;
 And lean across the memories
 That bridge thy heart and mine,
 And weep, for o'er my future years
 No golden sun will shine.

Yet in the calm of evening's glow,
 When fire-flames leap and fall,
 The shadows soft will come and go
 Upon your office-wall;
 And blue eyes that you used to see,
 Blue eyes so fond and true,
 And lips apart with scarlet glee
 Will bend from shade to you.

It may be, *then* a dream will come
 Of happy days long past,
 Full-fraught with smiles for you and me,
 And joys too sweet to last;
 And in your heart a glad dream born
 Of love will live forever;
 And what you do, or where you go,
 The ties you ne'er can sever,
 That bind you through all time and space
 Unto the heart that claims that face!

FEBRUARY 7, 1865.

FANNY STEELE; OR, LOVE-STRATEGY.

ERBERT FONTAINE, it is useless to attempt to exert your power of control at this early day, for you will fail to a certainty. I am not accustomed to brook such authority!" said Fanny Steele, turning from the window with flashing eyes and flushed cheeks towards a gentleman seated near her.

"Fanny! Can this be my gentle, affectionate Fanny?"

"Yes, sir; it can be and it is! The idea that you should attempt to *govern* me before you have a right, naturally arouses my indignation. You! to dare to do what none else ever dreamed might be accomplished."

"Fanny, you are getting over-heated. Take care that you say nothing which in after moments you will have cause to regret."

"I mean all I say and *feel* more than I express, even as *you* are doing."

"Fanny, my little Fanny, don't, I pray you, think any personal motive of malicious jealousy prompts

me to speak so plainly to you! It is because I *love* you, Fanny, and your interest is dear to me as my own life."

"Oh, yes; that is the old story, that every man, afflicted with the green-eyed monster, has advanced since the sentiment has been prevalent. I claim my own friends and admirers independent of you and yours, and shall always do so. I know Rowan Robinson to be all that is desirable in friend or lover. Still, you say he is no fit associate for me! We shall see!"

Ere Herbert Fontaine could reply, she had glided rapidly past him and vanished through the open door. He sat there a few moments in deep thought, his gray eyes darkening almost to black as he bent his gaze upon the spot where pretty, passionate Fanny Steele had stood a short time since.

He was not handsome, this Herbert Fontaine, but oh! he was a *powerful* man! His form was well-developed in manly strength and grace, but his features were irregular and of sharp angularity, relieved a little, however, by a heavy suit of dark brown whiskers. His mouth was large with a firmness of will betraying itself in every curve. His nose was prominent and of an undecided form, as it combined Roman and Grecian together. His eyes were the light and soul of his countenance, and withal peculiar in their changeable gray and mournful expression and depth. His voice, in its mellowness, seemed characteristic of his heart.

"She defies me," he said at last. "We shall see which conquers," and with a resolute air he rose and left the room. At the rack he paused, and a crimson flush went up over his face and he bent down his head as if to hide the consciousness of it, even from himself. 'Twas there that he had stolen so many sweet, thrilling kisses and caresses that made the sunlight of his weary, work-a-day life. Now they were all gone. Would he ever win them again?

He caught up his cap and with an actual tear of disappointment dimming his eye, went out into the busy world again with a blighting hope in his heart, while Fanny, impetuous Fanny Steele, nurturing a most unjust and unholy bitterness, stood watching him until he turned down the street. Oh! if each had only known the other's heart! But vain regret, fate willed it otherwise.

The days sped on with their burdens of joy and sorrow, smiles and tears, but no reconciliation between the lovers occurred to brighten their life-paths from a gloomy storm that ever overhung them like a mournful omen of pending misfortune. Herbert Fontaine no more visited the sunny-haired, brown-eyed Fanny Steele, and the ring, pledge of affection once existing between them, was hidden far away down in his trunk in a packet of his own letters returned, which had been sent back one day with a verbal message, that "the past was a memory."

At last they met again, and the unasked explana-

tion occurred which indeed made the past a memory and the future a dream.

As May Morrison had just returned to Belville after two years' absence it was decreed by presiding geniuses, that no pains or endeavors, or wealth should be spared to welcome her once again to old friends and admirers. So a perfect round of balls, pic-nics and parties enlivened the usually quiet village of Eddyville for weeks. Herbert Fontaine was not there, a circumstance universally regretted, for he was a favorite with both sexes. Some rumors were rife that "the little coquette, Fanny Steele, had murdered his peace with her beautiful eyes," but the gray shadow that crept over her bonny face, even amid her gayest smiles, belied the truth of the suspicion, whenever referred to in her presence. Rowan Robinson was devoted as ever; nay, even more so. She undeniably showed him more favors than had ever blessed another man, and he proved his appreciation of the partiality by a tender and beautiful deference that only men of the world can ever command with success.

Fanny determined to give a party and devote herself, too, to the common cause of pleasure, and in her exertions to outshine all past endeavors. She was a proud, ambitious little creature, was Fanny Steele. Well, invitations were given out a week beforehand, and everybody was on the *qui-vive* to know what everybody would say and do at Fanny Steele's grand

party, when by a sudden manœuvre of fate the entire stream of curiosity was turned into another channel. Herbert Fontaine came back to Belville and with him brought a lady. Her form was very beautiful, but her face was closely veiled and none could tell or guess what she looked to be or was. They stopped at Herbert's own home, and though many had called immediately and tried to flank the generalship of his mother, her polished sword of sarcasm had driven them from the field and left her queen of her defences and her secret. She did not tell the name or insinuate the relationship of the fair incognito.

Fanny was in a perfect fermentation of love, jealousy, doubt, curiosity and fear. She wanted to know and was too proud to ask any questions, and her *hauteur* kept guard over her impulses so well that no one cared to or dared broach a subject about which she was so evidently indifferent. Fanny's party was to take place on Wednesday evening, September 28th, 1861. The Sabbath beforehand everybody in the village expected their curiosity to be gratified by the appearance of the incognito at Belville Chapel. In a measure their anticipations were gratified, for the Fontaines certainly did go to church in their handsome carriage with its outriders, splendid bays, and silver and gold mounted harness, and with them certainly went the incognito looking irresistibly beautiful in a white grenadine braided with blue and a basquine to match, and a most exquisite Parisian bonnet, made

of white crape and ornamented with clusters of forget-me-nots, while a sweet, sweet face with great shadowy blue eyes looked out in angelic beauty from a halo of soft, clinging, silken ringlets of golden-hued hair. One felt purer and better for looking at it for a little while. There was no earth-loveliness there, it all told of heaven.

I question if Fanny heard much of the sermon that day, or if she understood what she did hear. Her mind was full of the stranger—Herbert—and—and—little blue-eyed faces with white bonnets trimmed with pansies—kept nodding and smiling between her and the minister, and rosy red lips would laugh out, until her heart-lands trembled with echoes—“Herbert’s mine—Herbert’s mine!”

At last it was over, and they stood up to receive the benediction. Then Fanny, with flowing skirts and haughtily-erect head and full-poised figure, swept past the Fontaine pew. She could not help raising her eyes as she passed by, and meeting Herbert’s polite and smiling bow of recognition—“just as if he had not been flirted,” she exclaimed indignantly, *sotto voce*—and she could not help being prevented from going on by the crowd, and having to stand still and hear the incognito say, “Oh! Herbert dear, *do* tell me who that beautiful, *beautiful* lady is!” There was a childish eagerness in that fresh, young voice that charmed Fanny, for she was independent of vanity; and she could not help hearing Herbert’s

reply, low though it was spoken, “That is Miss Fanny Steele, beautiful in the cultivation of intellect as in perfection of person. I never met her equal until I knew you, Pasquelle.”

The crowd gave way, and Fanny swept on queenly in her misery, for she was miserable. As she walked on towards her home old Mrs. Busy and Mrs. Impudence came close on her footsteps, chatting volubly to each other. Again she was forced to listen:

Mrs. B.—“There aint a doubt ’bout it, in my mind, certain.”

Mrs. I.—“Nor in mine, neither; and Mrs. Petit, who lived next door, and peeped through the side shutters, said she seed ’em kiss in the back parlor two or three times, and heerd him call her his darlin’, and then smooth down her shiny, yaller curls. I do think, in a Christian country, sich conduc’ is shameful ’mong young or old unmarried folk!”

Mrs. B.—“That’s my ’pinion, too, shure; and I b’l’ve it’s all gospil truth what Mrs. Petit says, ’cause tew-day, when they went in the carriage, I heern him mysel’ ax her, ‘Darlin’ Packseller,’ or some sich outlandish name, ‘how did you like the sermon?’ and he smiled in her eyes mighty husbin-like, I’m tellin’ you.”

Mrs. I.—“Law sakes! so that’s a fac’; I heern it sed afore, but did not b’l’ve it, but I know it now. They’s married, that’s the joke.”

Just then the conversation was interrupted by

M*

rapidly rolling carriage-wheels, and the Fontaines dashed past in their splendor. This time there was no bow or smile for Fanny, for Herbert was leaning forward trying to clasp a gorgeous bracelet upon the strange lady's beautiful arm which was gracefully extended towards him. He was talking to her, his eyes raised to her face, and Mrs. Fontaine and the Judge were smiling on them. Fanny saw it all through tear-dimmed eyes, and thought she had never seen Herbert look *quite* so handsome before. Yes; they were married already, or would be soon, she decided in her aching heart. And *she* did not care. The beautiful lady had only won her cast-off lover, after all the glitter of her magnificence. Oh! Fanny—Fanny Steele!

Wednesday evening came at last, balmy, beautiful and soft, and languishing as the first love-flush. Fanny was in her element, society. And as she stood beneath the full-blazing chandelier, receiving her guests in company with her uncle, (for Fanny Steele was an orphan), one could scarce imagine a more beautiful picture than she presented to the view. Her dress was composed of driftings of soft, rich, white lace over glossy white satin. The style of fashion was remarkably becoming. Groupings of pearl-sprays caught the lace on the bosom and sleeves. Pearls glistened on her snowy neck and arms. Her auburn hair was caught away from her pure white face in braids and curls, and a tiara of the same jewels

made her look like a queen of the fairies, even as her beauty shone pre-eminent among lovely women. She held in one kidded hand a fan composed of feathers of the most gorgeous hues of tropical splendor, and a bouquet of white roses gleaming out from their green leafy surroundings as stars of after-thought gleam out from memory-clouds. A close observer might have noticed the wierd wildness in her dark, flashing eye, and the restless expectancy of every movement with the quivering red of her arched lips. But none were present only world-gazers, who pronounced her "brilliant," "remarkable," and never dreamed she had a thought beyond the gilding of fashion-gates, or a heart which could throb and thrill to breaking agony.

"Oh! breaking heart that will not break!
Oh! unwept tears that never come!
Oh! unsaid pain that never goes!
Oh! weary life that knows no rest!"

Fanny Steele, Fanny Steele, there are *so many* who suffer with you, poor misguided, impulsive hearts! and still they wander on even to the deathless sleep of the grave, with *pride* as a bulwark against regret.

Tender, loving eyes watched Fanny unseen by her, at a later hour, and as anguished thrills, like gray clouds, drifted over her face that gleamed hopeless out from their shadows, lips unused to quiver with unseen tear-weights, whispered: "The test is too

harsh on my darling, now; I will break it to-night, lest I lose her forever!"

It was Herbert Fontaine who, uninvited and unnoticed, mingled with the guests. His desire was to see Fanny alone, and yet he dared not seek her in the crowd lest her bitterness should betray itself. He knew her disposition too well to doubt for an instant that she treasured it. At last the gods favored him. He saw Fanny turn from all attention with a mournful weariness, and step through one of the Venetian windows out upon the portico, and stand there in a hopeless, yet expectant attitude. He immediately made his way to the portico too, and stepping softly up beside her, laid his strong, gentle hand upon her fair, soft shoulder. She started, and looking up in his face, discovered the intruder upon her solitude. The crimson cheeks and flashing eyes confronted him. "To what may I ascribe the unexpected honor your visit confers upon me, Mr. Herbert Fontaine?" she asked, in a cold, icy voice, as she imagined, but which, instead, thrilled with trembling, intense feeling. Poor, simple Fanny, Herbert saw it all, and loved you!

Without noticing the chilling constraint of her manners, he took her hand and said tenderly, "I would talk to you, Fanny!" and led her unresistingly to the unfrequented portion of the porch, where the moonlight glimmered and the clinging vines grew most luxuriantly. He drew her down beside him on

the rustic seat. "Fanny, little Fanny, my darling," he said, bending his brow down upon her sunny curls and braids, as if inhaling their beauty and fragrance, and stealing crimson kisses from the arched neck and gracefully drooping shoulders, "we have both suffered; been hasty and impetuous in the past. Let us mutually forgive and be happy again. Will you, Fanny?" In a trance of joy that she was not miserable and forgotten, she sat silent, not resisting his passionate kisses and caresses, rather in placid beauty wooing them. But his voice roused her to consciousness again, and her mind, with magic rapidity, went wandering over the past—the long ago—and the past but a few days dead, the past with the *bitterness* in it,—and she sat silent still. "*Oh! me!*" Herbert sighed with intensely weary pain, as he raised his head, and let his arm fall lax to his side, "I am hopeless." Then suddenly clasping her close in his arms, he impetuously kissed her, and said in a voice thrilling with passionate disappointment, "Fanny Steele, I *love* you. You are my very *life*. I have waited and hoped you would yield to what is now your own better judgment and come back to me, but I find you my little Fanny no longer, a heartless, relentless woman. You will regret this when buried with the past that comes not back again. Good bye," and releasing her, he rose and strode hastily along the portico, and yet his footsteps longed to linger there. Down the steps he went, unsummoned back. Down

the white-shelled walks and past tinkling fountains. Once he fancied he heard Fanny's voice call "Herbert, *Herbert!*" but he would not stop, for his heart was growing frozen, too. He was angry. Just as he gained the gate, he felt himself caught by some one, who evidently had been hastening after him, by the quick, hurried breathing. The grasp was weak and clinging. He looked down and saw two white arms reaching around him from out of driftings of lace, satin and glimmering pearls. They were Fanny Steele's. Her face, pleading and white, looked up in his own, and her voice, love-laden, whispered from out her quivering, scarlet lips, so tempting in the moonlight:

"Herbert, don't leave me forever! My heart is breaking, Herbert. Only forgive and *love me!*" And she hid her eager, trembling face on his breast. It was unexpected, this entire yielding on the part of this passionate darling, and it unmanned Herbert Fontaine.

"Oh! my little one, wee Fanny," he said, showering tearful, quivering kisses on her face, which he held up to his glad eyes. "God has blessed me with *so much happiness*. He has given me *my* Fanny back again. He has purified and strengthened us both for the future. He has given us mutual confidence, the only *true* happiness."

"And the lady, Herbert?" said womanly Fanny, half an hour later.

"Is my niece, coadjutor in bringing my precious rebel to terms," and a kiss withered her reproof.

Why should I go on farther. As a matter of course and, therefore, not to be denied, let us all jump at the same conclusion:

They were married.

TO A FICKLE FRIEND.

We stood in the shadowy parlor
Where the crimson draperies fall,
And the fire-flames flashed up their gold-light
On the calm, white face of the wall;
The words were few that you spoke to me
As my hands lay clasped in your own;
Yet I thrilled 'neath the glance of your eye
And the love that mellowed your tone.

You said you could never forget me
Though billows of ocean should foam,
And mountain tops hide in the cloudlets
'Tween you and your manhood's bright home;
Though age like a mantle should shroud you
And mem'ries of "lang-syne" have fled,
To the past-land so mystic and wierd,
Where angels keep watch o'er the dead.

For my face on your heart was engraven;
And my spirit-words sang in your brain,
As wild birds make music in summer
When sunbeams smile down thro' the rain;
And tho' the hour of parting had come
And our eyes dimmed with sorrowful tears
A hope like a bright bow of promise
Spanned over the arched dome of years.

In the future again we would meet
And renew the fond ties fate had broken;
Then you passed from my sight, and alone
I recalled each sweet word you had spoken;
And I hid them far down in my heart
There their beauty to guard and to keep,
And when dark, dreary hours stole on
To bend softly above them and weep.

Scarce a fortnight had drifted along
In musical rhythm and rhyme
Past the gray, gloomy banks of my life
To the broad, rolling ocean of Time,—
Ere you forgot we ever had met
And whispered of friendship and truth;
For ties contracted and severed
Are pastimes of pleasure in youth.

That I mourned you, I will not deny,
When I thought of the vanished past,
Of the days we had spent together,
Of the joys too radiant to last;
Of the hopes that leaned from the future,
Of the rose-tinted dreamings now flown;
Alas; that your light, fickle love
Their hollowness clearly hath shown.

But now I gaze with strange coldness,
On the tokens I once held so dear,
And wonder I e'er could have loved thee,
Or let fall, at our parting, a tear;

A trifle by nature and art, .
 A scoffer at all things divine,
 You know not the worth of a heart,
 And can ne'er claim a fond throb of mine;
 I scorn you as fickle and light
 As the froth that floats on the stream
 And an insect as puny and slight
 As the mote that plays in the beam.

1865.

FAREWELL.

 TO HIM WHO CAN BEST UNDERSTAND.

Farewell! I had not dreamed
 That e'er to thee that word I'd breathe!
 I had not dreamed the love
 I did with gentle fondness wreath
 About thy heart could knell
 Its own death-hope and cold unsheathe
 The sword to strike! Farewell!

And yet I say it now,
 Calmly as though I ne'er had loved;
 As tho' this throbbing brow
 Was surely by some earth-pain moved;
 And did not madly swell
 To bursting when its woe was proved
 In murm'ring that "Farewell."

I cannot this regret,
 For willed I not that it should be?
 That our love-sun should set
 On even thro' Eternity?
 Why then may I not tell
 This grief unto myself—and see
Beyond that word—"farewell!"

It is an idle hope,
 And one I dare not take to heart,
 Lest madness might grasp scope,
 To drive me to despair! Why start,
 These tears? Oh! Fate! the knell
 To my one earthly, deathless hope,
 Is that stern word, *Farewell!*

OUT ON THE WORLD.

Out on the world with sad, throbbing heart
 Steer I my life-bark freighted with woe;
 While the mad waves upheavingly start,
 On their dark driftings wildly I flow—
 Shrieking aloud in maniac glee
 As winds press me on—*out in the sea!*

The sky bends dark and gray above me,
 The waves reflect its sombre tone—
 On land or sea there's none to love me
 Out on the world I'm *all alone!*
 And still I shout in maniac glee
 Drifting ever—*out in the sea!*

The winds are my brave and true seamen!
 And the stars, God's footprints of light,
 Are the faithful pilots that teach me
 To steer my lone bark thro' the night.
 And still at the helm, in maddening glee,
 I shout, as I drift on—*out in the sea!*

Grand ships all about me are sailing
 With waving pennons fair and gay,
 Yet like mine own some slowly floating
 Keep in the shadows dense and gray;

But none have ever noticed me
Drifting—drifting—*out in the sea!*

I have seen them, too, wrecked on the waves
That smiling shone beneath the sun,
The stern, cold waves of silver spray
That tossing foam, then melt in one—
And I have shouted in maniac glee
Drifting, drifting—*out in the sea!*

I never fear the white caps of foam
That dance upon the azure waves;
Where Naiads often float and roam
When wand'ring from their coral caves:
But when I see them I shout in glee
Drifting and floating—*out in the sea!*

"Success," is the name my good ship bears;
'Tis steeled 'gainst the wind and the wave,
And tho' the crest of the storm-king rears
It never scoops it an ocean grave.
And I wildly shout in maniac glee
Drifting—drifting—*out in the sea!*

And yet I travel to foreign ports
And see full many a changing scene;
And hear gay songs sung under the sun
By lips from every clime, I ween.
But I and my love are always free
Drifting—drifting—*out in the sea!*

My flag has never been unfurled
On the waves where I float so free,
For it is only the *weary world*
That opens its marts to me;
So still must I drift on life's cold sea
Till my heart-fate sailing goes with me
And my banner of "Fame" can be proudly
unfurled.
When I drift no longer—*out on the world!*

1865.

MAG WHITE.

Stately as an Eastern queen,
With a noble, graceful mien,
Never very often seen
Is my winsome friend, I ween.

There's a grave or gay surprise
Flashing in her sunny eyes,
Where love 'neath the fringed lid lies
And gay mischief's bright dart flies!

Smiles are ever on her lips;
Cupid there his nectar sips;
And his rosy arrow dips
Pink as dainty finger-tips.

And her voice is low and sweet,
As when summer zephyrs meet,
Or the rain-drops' tinkling feet,
Dancing down through sunbeams fleet!

Egypt's bride ne'er claimed such charms;
Juno ne'er possessed such arms;
Venus e'en might feel alarms,—
Every heart unto her warms.

True as moon unto the sun,
When the glare of day is done;
True as needle to the pole,
Is the worship of my soul:
Ne'er was fairer woman seen,
Than my friend Mag White, I ween.

MY LIFE IS ONE DARK WEIGHT OF WOE.

My life is one dark weight of woe,
Without a joybeam bright,
To flash a golden glow along
My soul's unfathomed night;
My heart, in dull, low throbs beats on,
My brain is dreaming still,
But oh! there's such a dearth of love
That even *thought* grows chill!

Oh! why is it that I must wear
A crown of purple thorns,
And put aside each radiant hope
Which life's drear path adorns?
Oh! why is it, that I, who cling
To all things bright and fair,
Am doomed to see my cherished dreams
Evanish in the air?

Why is it that each thing I love,
A bird, a scene, a heart,
Is first to die, fade, and forget?
Loss leaves a rankling smart!
Why is it that the friends I've won
Drop off like flowers in bloom,
And leave me desolate with grief
To weep 'mid waste and gloom?

How have I sinned that this should be
 A blasting curse from fate?
 What have *I* done that thus despair
 On me should cast its hate?
 If thus I'm doomed to blight and woe
 Wherefore to earth be born?
 Oh, God! how far from Thy "White Throne"
 I'm driven by thy scorn!

Far off amid the distant hills,
 There rests a soldier's grave,
 And o'er its sloping mound of earth
 The verdant grasses wave;
 Birds sing in the thick boughs o'erhead,
 The blue sky smiles above,
 At once sweet requiems for the dead,
 'Neath canopy of love!

I miss the form—the springing step,
 The laughter in his eye;
I miss the gentle music-tones,
 And wish that I could die.
 There is no tie, no hope, no dream,
 Which binds me here below,
 I only feel a maddening grief
 And life's dark weight of woe;
 For all I love to God is given
 A new made *grave*'s my earthly heaven!

VIRGINIA, 1865.

KATIE MORELAND.



LUTIE, Lutie, press your hands firmly
 down upon my throbbing, burning brow,
 that this wild pain may flee beneath the
 magic of your touch. There! 'tis easier,
 even now! Lutie, I am only twenty-
 seven; beautiful and talented, receiving
 the adulation of an admiring public; yet for me
 there is no rest but the grave. I have proud aspira-
 tions and golden dreams, but they are never realized.
 Poor enthusiast, I can only dream on, and vainly
 grapple for the glorious sunlight of realization which
 ever lies *just beyond*. I have suffered and endured
 much, yet none, to see me robed in the tinsel of the-
 atrical costume, skipping the boards with wild abandon
 of movement, can realize that I ever had a heart pure
 and untrammelled, ambitions and hopes above my
 station, and avocation in this weary, work-a-day life
 which I have embraced.

You have often asked me why I devoted my time
 and talents to a consummation so utterly distasteful
 to me, and I promised sometime to tell you. It is a
 sad story, full of want, woe, sin and suffering; yet,
 to-day, as I lie here in my darkened chamber, the

thoughts have come flowing to me, and the tide of memory has at last over-run the banks of my heart-lands, and goes onward out to you. While the moments tread wearily along ere I am summoned to the green room I will tell it you, and you will pity me. Yet I ask it not. I need *love*, not commiseration, *that* does not lighten my burdens, only weightens the agony!"

"It has been a long, long time since I knew a mother's love. Many hours of bitter despair and wild upbraiding might have left unmarred, a life God intended to make happy, had I had her tender, strengthening spirit to lean upon and trust in for encouragement and support. But this was denied me at the early age of seven, when I most needed her love and attention; so I grew like a wild, uncultured vine, hither and thither, as the sunshine and sweet breezes drew me. Yes; Lutie, I think God intended my life should be happy, else why did he endow me with beauty, graces and talents which bow down the world before me? I love to believe this, because it comforts me. As a friend wrote me the other day in reference to my past trials: "God fits the back to the burthen, and when He appoints a path of duty, He bestows the strength to walk rightly therein, provided the heart is pure and trusting. 'Cast all your cares on him. *That anchor holds!*' No true confiding soul ever yet sank from the genesis of the world down

to the days in which we live. Be assured of this truth. It has no negation or exception: His strength is more potent than a mother's love and a mother's guardianship, and He sticketh closer than a brother. Sustained and soothed by an unfaltering trust in God, the issue cannot be doubtful. These are the terms of that sublime and infallible syllogism the conclusion of which, inevitably, is *achievement* and *fruition*."

From my seventh year until I numbered fifteen summers, there was no vice or degradation of which I was not perfectly cognizant, for I witnessed scenes and heard oaths and curses which even now paralyze me to remember. I was tempted to sin many times, but the memory of my dead mother always saved me. Oh! if all mothers would only be gentler and kinder, so many who fall might be saved! Of my father I knew nothing. That he sinned against the girl who loved him more than life and honor, I subsequently learned from a taunt of Mrs. Burdett, the woman who took me to raise and who lived in a room next to mother's in the dilapidated wreck of a house, where so many horrible creatures lived huddled together in filth and confusion, every human sense crushed out, or else in a stagnant flow, impelling to deeds of blood and crime. Mother, after her desertion, finding herself barred from every means of respectable livelihood, sought refuge there with me, then a little babe. For seven years she dragged out a miserable existence here and there doing odd jobs of work for persons

generous enough to accept her services without inquiring into her private history. Thank God! she never sinned but once, for the woman's love in her heart throbbed on enduring and true, though in that time she never met the man who had doomed her to disgrace and dishonor, and never received word or token. But the struggle killed her, and the roses have bloomed on her grave with the tangled weeds for many, very many years.

One night, when the stars, like sad-eyed sentinels, looked in one little attic window, and the great hum of the city was stilled, she drew me close in her arms and whispered sweetly: "Little Katie, whenever sin and wickedness tempt you, remember mother, and trust in the Lord for he will keep you."

I was sleepy until then, but this roused me, and for a long while I laid nestling in her arms with my eyes studying the darkness, as I listened to the clock chiming out the hours, and the night watchman's shrill "All's well."

When I awoke next morning, the embrace around me was one of chilliness. *Mother was dead*, and I was an orphan and friendless in the wide world that held no charm for me. How I wept and struggled and plead for them not to put her in the dark ground, where she could never again talk and sing to her little Katie, it is useless to tell you, for never having lost your own life-guardian, it would, mayhaps, seem simple extravagance.

I went to live there with Mrs. Burdett, who was very good to me in her way; that is, better than any one around her, even though she cursed and beat me, and these same dimpled, graceful limbs bear now marks of her insensate cruelty. I never sunk to the grovelling level around me, although I became inured soon enough to the roughness and harshness of sights and sounds from which my poor, dead mother had guarded me so carefully and successfully. Oftentimes, when shrinking from an oath or blow, I would drag my weary, quivering body off in the darkness, and weep, pray and long for the time to come when I could steal away from Mrs. Burdett and never go back any more.

And so as the days glided on into years, I grew up without any knowledge of the good and beauty of the world; seeing only and ever the false glare, the mockery, the bitterness, and deceit and poverty; never claiming or even dreaming of the light and joy of pleasant companionship, with the sweet interchange of human hopes, aspirations and loves which friendship ever brings in its golden wake. At fifteen I was a prematurely aged woman, with a heart fast becoming sere and callous to the grace and perfection of a virtuous character. My angel-mother seemed too far off to understand my wants and appreciate my cold, cheerless life, and my heart, tempted by starvation and brutality to sin. Her image grew fainter and fainter in my memory, though I could not quite forget

the words she breathed to me the night before she died: "Trust in the Lord, for He will keep you." As my path grew more intricate I clung to them as a drowning mariner grasps a broken spar, and they cheered me, made me truer, braver, purer.

I determined one day, when Mrs. Burdett struck me, that I would resist her authority. She had no right to bind me, and I could no longer virtuously live amid such criminal scenes. My resolve once taken and my plans formed, I was not slow in consummating them. So when she, as usual, drove me out to beg, I went to the flower-stalls around the market-house, because I remembered a pale, meek little woman who used to give me change whenever I asked her, always adding, as she placed it in my outstretched hand, "Better be earning a livelihood, little one."

When I reached the place of my destination, there she stood, just the same placid, humble struggler as when I passed by her weeks before. She smiled when she saw me, such a sad, solemn smile, and said: "Nothing to give you, this morning, but a bunch of violets. My trade is going down hill."

"Why?" I questioned abruptly.

"Well, you see, I used to sell flowers around the hotels and such places, but I am too weak now, somehow."

I caught her hand eagerly, looked earnestly, wildly in her face: "I am adrift on the world now. I want to work, to be good; *please* help me! Let me sell for you!"

Tears sprang to her eyes and trickled down her cheeks. She could not restrain them; and I caught her softly murmured words: "She might be tempted to sin; one word may save her. If needless kindness, God will know my heart throbbed right." Then to me: "Katie, it shall be as you ask me. Here! take these two baskets, and let me see how brisk you can be to-day. I will be here waiting for you at six o'clock, when you may go home with me to-night, and we can talk it all over."

With a heart too full of thanksgiving for words, I left her, happier than I had ever been since mother died, and I was a wee, little one. The flowers I carried looked so fresh and beautiful, with the sunshine peeping in on them and turning the dewdrops to diamonds, that I was successful in my morning's wanderings beyond my brightest anticipations. A song was on my lip and a tear in my eye as I threaded the long, mazy streets, regardless of hunger or weariness, for the silver coins in my hands counted more and the blossoms in my basket less. Six o'clock found me promptly before the market-house, and my pale, quiet friend anxiously awaiting me. Oh! so many souls would be saved, so many lives made purer and happier, Lutie, if more kind words were spoken, and more risked on trust. Her countenance brightened up in such a beautiful smile when she said:

"I knew you would come, Katie, for such a face could not deceive!" She took my hand, and we

walked along, talking of everything but ourselves and the new interest binding us together, until we at last reached an humble, little two-roomed cottage, with a garden of flower-plats fresh and bright around the door, whence were gathered the sweet blossoms I had been selling to eager hearts and hands that read in their perfume and beauty sad and tender memories of homes far away, where loved hands tended the culture of flowers, and eyes brightened in their light. And this was home!

Molly Myrtle, divine heart-poetess, treasured for her goodness here as well as in private life over the length and breadth of the land, told me how I felt in her sweet, spiritual "Future's Rainbow," and often when sitting in the twilight do I say over to my soul's tender admiration:

*"Home, sweet home! my heart runs gladly
In an eager, joyous beat;
Smiles and tears make gorgeous tinting,
As when rain and sunshine meet.
Home, sweet home! I've heard them sing it,
As I turned to hide my tears,
Gushing for the home I cherished
In the glad, vanished years."*

We entered, and Mrs. Newman, bidding me stand still, groped her way through the gloom to the press, where she found a candle and lit it, then turning,

welcomed me, saying: "I am childless, and so long as you are worthy, you shall be mine. You will be so always, I am very sure."

I only clasped her hand, it was enough to tell her how my heart felt. Then she bade me shut and bar the door, while she procured some edibles, for she "knew I felt quite as hungry and tired as she did."

I have partaken of repasts delicious and sumptuous, but never one that thrilled me with such calm content and unalloyed pleasure as my first meal with Mrs. Newman, wondering, as I ate, and dreamily listened, why she had noticed a poor beggar like me, and whether Mrs. Burdett would hunt me out and send the police to take me to the guard-house, where Jane Glegg was put one night, and about which she told such awfully frightful tales; and I shuddered with indefinable horror.

At last supper was over, the dishes washed and put away, and then Mrs. Newman, taking up the light, bade me follow her into the bedroom. I did so. It was so neat and cosy there, so much as mother used to make her room look, even with shabby, broken odds and ends of old furniture, that the great tears came welling to my eyes, and I sobbed out from my full, full heart: "Oh! mother, mother, if little Katie was only dead beside you, she would never suffer any more. Oh! mother, mother," and I trembled with the vehemence of my old, yet ever new sorrow.

"There! there! don't cry, child, nor wish you were

dead just now, when I promised to be a mother to you myself. Then you will have two; don't you see? one here and one in heaven. Come, come, *don't* cry; I want to talk to you about what we are to do hereafter, but if you take on so, you'll not give me a chance," and Mrs. Newman patted me kindly on the shoulder.

Gradually the tears ceased; the sobs grew less and less frequent, and I raised my head and said:

"I can listen to you now, ma'am, and am ready to tell you all about my life. But please tell me first what made you like me and be so good and kind as to take a poor beggar in from sin and disgrace to be your child, when you did not know but what I was rebelliously wicked?"

"Well, just this; you are like a friend I had once, a long, long while ago. We were both fixed in the millinery trade quite nicely, but *she* fell, poor darling, and then she would never go back to the shop where we worked together. Though I tried hard to learn where she had gone, she evaded me, and I have never met her since. Ah! me, maybe she is dead now. You look so like her, save that your eyes are gray, and hers were such great blue, *blue* eyes, that looked way through anybody somehow. Your manner and motion are so like hers, that it made my heart ache every time you used to pass my stall, and I always wanted to help you, for I thought you were begging, and maybe want might tempt you, and I

could perhaps save you. So I took you away from contamination, and I know we will both be good and patient always."

"What was your friend's name?" I asked, gazing earnestly in her face.

"Katie, your names were alike, too, little queer that was."

"Katie, what?"

"Katie Moreland. What is your surname?"

"The same! It was she—it was she! My mother—my poor, blessed, angel mother!" I cried.

"I felt it! I felt it!" said Mrs. Newman, half-sobbing. "God told it me when you came to me to-day. My own dear darling, I am indeed your mother. I remember Katie in life and in death all the same!" and she eagerly kissed and embraced me.

After our excitement was over, I sat down beside her, and told her all about mother as far back as I could remember, and then on, on, through my own short but eventful career, interrupting the story many times with choking tears I had never before allowed to flow. We were bound together through all time then, for memory and hope clasped hands around us, and we stood within a charmed circle of love and unalloyed happiness, each clinging wholly and solely unto the other, come weal or woe.

Spring and Summer passed—oh! so swiftly away. Autumn too, leaving the brown woods naked and sere, gasping, dying in the stern, cold hands of grim,

hard-faced Winter, and burying all the beautiful flowers in their tiny graves, till Spring's breezy voice could claim her own again in the sunshine of the bright New Year.

Mrs. Newman now took in plain sewing, and I was occupied some hours in each day at Madame Lapelle's Fashion Emporium. I was not needed there all the time, and when at home, instead of allowing me to aid her, she encouraged me to study. I availed myself of the opportunity, for I felt how backward I was when brought in comparison with other girls of my own age, and I never allowed any obstacle to impede my progress. My perseverance and unflagging industry soon won its own reward, for I mounted resolutely the path of "Excelsior!"

I grew beautiful, too, in the light of home-joys, smiles, comforts, pleasures and sunshine. And I knew it, though it never occurred to me that it was advantageous, rather the contrary, for people stared at me, and it abashed and annoyed me; and, strange as it may sound to you, I have often wished I had been homely, and oh! I longed for it mostly *then*. One day, I remember so particularly, I was passing by the theatre, going on an errand for Mrs. Lapelle, thinking all the while of Mrs. Newman, so lonely and gentle at home, ever ready to welcome me with a kiss and sweet smile; of my dead, angel-mother, most of all, when an exclamation of admiration startled me, and made me look up quickly:

"Is she not exquisitely beautiful! What a foot! What a form!"

The voice came from a young man of perhaps my present age. He was standing upon the portico of the building, with an arm languidly thrown over the shoulder of an elderly gentleman beside him, but his face was all aglow with excitement and admiration. I turned to see what interested him so intensely, but none were near save myself. Blushing and annoyed, I hurried on, yet caught the words, "You should not be so precipitate, L'Estrange, she is utterly unconscious of it."

The last voice was not quick and excited, but low and clear, and it seemed as if the very tone had a power to quell the wild fear which had risen in my heart.

January found us patiently struggling on, smiling brave smiles, when we talked, hoped, and dreamed of the coming spring; yet the intense coldness of the atmosphere and over exertion confined my foster-mother to her bed, and I worked on alone. I was happy, because my maintenance was honest and honorable, but the white roses blanched the crimson in my cheeks, and the glad boundings of health left me, too; yet I never despaired, for I felt how blessed I was in possessing my honor untarnished, after having passed through such a fiery furnace to clear it of its dross, and in sometimes winning a kind word from my employers. I had Mrs. Newman, too, kind, true

and tender as my mother could have possibly been. How seldom human friendship clings through good and ill!

The clouds came at last, and barred out the sunlight of my life for a long, dreary time. Though poor, I was so happy that God sent the chastening lest I should forget him as the Giver of my joy! It happened cruelly, and the blow came with such terrible force that I almost lost my reason. Childhood, girlhood, left me then, and never came again to bless me, for when I wakened from my woe, I was a woman passionate and affectionate, deep and thoughtful beyond my years. There is no school like that of misery, want and sorrow to develop the impulses and intellect of humanity. One week's experience of woe and necessity teaches more than a life-time of luxury and ease.

Mrs. Newman had been unusually well one day; had sat up all the morning and finished off some sewing, and pronounced herself well enough to take it to her employers that afternoon. At this I demurred, but to no avail, and we parted at the gate with mutual promises to meet again in two hours. Almost before I reached Madame Lapelle's, a slow, drizzling rain commenced to fall. I continued on until my business there was accomplished, yet Madame insisted upon my waiting until it was over. Madame was good and kind to me, and in my experience, I have ever found more sympathy and generosity in the business class

of people than all the aristocracy I have ever known. The hours, leaden-footed, crept along, and still I waited, impatiently patient, but all in vain, for the clear drops still continued their drip, drip from the gray clouds above, and the tide of human life despairing of sunlight, commenced pouring down the muddy streets again. The inward cry of my soul bidding me hasten onward, onward only to get home, overpowered me, and grasping my bonnet in my hand, I ran out of the store bare-headed, heedless of Madame's imperative call, "Katie! stop!" heedless of the astonished faces turned ever towards me as I fled along, panic-stricken at some unknown horror, yet which was even then, around, above, below me, shutting out sight, sound, all except the one idea of getting home swiftly and safely. Just at the corner of Gray and Brook streets, I paused. A great crowd of people prevented me from advancing farther. It seemed to me, too, as if my haste was no longer necessary, for the goal of misery had been won; and yet this indefinable dread had no obvious cause. Still I pressed forward, eagerly questioning, "What is the matter? Why may I not pass on?"

A man noticing my wild, excited manner, replied gently—and oh! how his tone even then touched me! "A woman run over by the cars, Miss."

"A working-woman?" I gasped.

"Yes, she had a bundle of sewing. It might be she is akin to you?"

"How was she killed?" asked a bystander.

"Her foot slipped, and she fell, while attempting to cross the track, not noticing that the train was coming. The car was under full headway and could not stop. Same old story—always true."

"Let me go to her! *let me go!*" I pleaded.

And immediately I felt a passage-way made through the crowd by the strong arm beside me, and I stood over it, the bleeding, crushed mass, with only a bit of the neat, calico dress, and the calm, dead face, with its soft, gray hair, all clotted with blood, hanging round it, adding intensely to the seal of pallid horror which a knowledge of her doom, and the impossibility of escape or assistance, set there. Oh! Lutie, Lutie, it was terrible! to remind me of what had been so pure, good and true. And it had all passed away from earth, leaving me once more desolate and alone.

"Oh! God, let me die, too!" and with helpless abandon, I threw myself down beside it upon the track, and yielded to my grief and agony. Yet I never wept, and it would have been such a relief. How long I remained in that position I cannot now tell you. It seemed years, I know now it was only moments. I remember a hasty exclamation, then a draft of fresh air blowing over my face, and a pair of strong arms encircling me and bearing me to a carriage. Then all is blank. Again I can remember hearing voices, and one, a woman's, said: "Poor child, she is very young to have suffered so. Harley, she is beautiful, too!"

"And we must keep and befriend her, my mother," answered a deeper voice.

Then a long, long deadening pain ached through my brain, and I know nothing of my life, for when I wakened from my trance I was so changed that I could scarcely recall a remembrance of my own identity. The turning point came and vanished, and I knew not my danger until it was almost passed.

* * * * *

It was an exquisitely luxurious apartment! Full flowing curtains of rose-colored satin-damask draped the windows, flooding the air with a cool, breezy light, like the flush of sunset in summer woods. Soft, tapestry-carpet, woven of bright-tinted flowers and green-golden mosses covered the floor. Deep, easy chairs and downy cushions made the scene like the luxury of some Eastern palace. Divided from this large apartment by floating curtains of gold-wrought and fringed rose-satin, was a smaller room containing a bed, a miracle of art, made of ivory inlaid with gold and mother-of-pearl; linen and lace and satin covered a white silk mattress, and clouds of gauzy lace caught up with gold and rose cords and tassels to the fluted arch above fell entirely around it all. A marble stand, also draped in lace and satin, was strewn in artistic confusion with the ten thousand nameless cosmetics, perfumes and powders necessary to a great lady's toilette, and surmounted by a dressing-mirror in a curiously wrought and chased silver frame, rested

near the foot of the bed, and opposite to a still smaller division containing a bath-tub, supported by two marble nymphs standing amid rose-lipped sea-shells, and constantly pouring from parian vases perfumed waters into the receptacle below, the fragrance of which floated through the air in sweet incense. The floor was mosaiced in black and white marble.

I noticed all this as I lay there, slowly drifting back from death to life, and tethered by pain and weariness. I questioned not at my transition from cottage to palace, the supremacy of some great *fate* having decreed that it should be. That was the death of Mrs. Newman. Yes; that awful, terrible *it!* and I fainted, overpowered by weakness and horror. When consciousness came back to me, eager, anxious voices whispered near me, the same that spoke that eventful day when I was placed in the carriage, and the deeper one was the same which had spoken upon the theatre portico so long ago. I listened quietly, and without opening my eyes.

"She has fainted from excess of emotion, Madame L'Estrange, and I cannot answer for consequences if she is not kept under the strictest surveillance of quiet. Rest is what she needs most at this crisis," and the speaker came and stood beside the bed, placing his hand softly upon my brow, and counting my faintly-throbbing pulse. While in this position, I opened my eyes and looked upon him, thinking, as I did so, what a fund of love and attraction he must

possess within himself. He was tall and full in figure; his brow was lofty and fair as a woman's; his hair falling around it in silver and brown waves; his eyes were splendid, dreamy, flashing, scintillating, *black!* with heavy lashes and straight brows curving to a delicate taper; his nose was proud and high-arched, and his mouth tender and firm, sweet and bitter in its outline, which was wholly discernible from his English-cut beard.

All this which it has taken me so long to describe to you, I comprehended at a single glance that day, then closed my eyes again. There was mesmerism in his touch, I slept. When I awoke, Mrs. L'Estrange was beside me, and with no slight degree of interest I gazed upon her calm, sweet face, freer from the traces of exhausted passion's fire and devastation than any physique I ever beheld. "Where am I?" I asked querulously, I was so very weak.

"At home, little one," answered the gentle voice, and two soft hands smoothed the pillow, and fresh, sweet lips pressed close to mine parched with fever. This demonstration of love strengthened me as an angel's blessings might have done.

"Have I a home?" I whispered, the tears starting to my wearied eyes.

"Yes, *petite*, with me. I have no daughter, and intend to claim you. But we must not talk now, Dr. Trudo has forbidden any excitement."

"But Mrs. Newman? I must know!"

"Gave you to me a day or two before her sad death, I was then on my way to claim you as my adopted child when the accident occurred."

"Who are you?"

"I am the mother of Harley L'Estrange, the owner of Parkhurst Theatre, and the celebrated dramatist. You will share my honor as his adopted sister. There, now be quiet, we will talk more when you get better."

The days of my convalescence were heaven-born dreams to me. I never imagined all the happiness which wealth could bestow. I believed myself happy and contented with my kind foster-mother. But with the devotion and admiring demonstrations which my adopted parent and brother lavished upon me, I realized how many chambers in my being had been closed in the grade in life which I at one time occupied as a beggar and as a shop-girl later in years. With an indescribable love for luxury, I yielded myself up to the elegancies by which I was surrounded, and almost forgot that I had ever known misery and want, and earned my own livelihood.

I had not been many weeks in the society of Harley L'Estrange before he betrayed his passion for me. It was a palpable fascination which he exerted over me, for never having loved before, I inhaled the intoxicating fragrance of the roses that floated over the sunny uplands and shady valleys of my heart, my passionate, loving, tender woman's heart. Mrs. L'Estrange had become devoted to me, but while she

did not discountenance, evidently did not approve of the increasing affection between me and her son; and one day, when he had positively disclosed his intentions, and avowed his desire to make me his wife, she very candidly assured me, in his presence, that I would not be happy, but if it was Harley's choice she welcomed me to her heart as her *own* daughter. I asked what could deter me from always wandering in a world of joy, and she solemnly answered me:

"Katie, there is a scorpion called jealousy, and its sting maddens."

Before many days her assertion was too bitterly verified. As his *affiancée*, Harley assumed the same authority over me as if already my liege lord. He dictated the list of my acquaintances even. Now, it happened, that since he had loved me, his dislike to Dr. Trudo had become an intensity. I have since had cause to believe it was only because I admired him exceedingly. He requested me to deny myself to Dr. Trudo's society, and, finally, forbade me to receive his visits or acknowledge his acquaintance. He did this playfully at first, then with pertinacious seriousness. All of which I laughingly but positively resisted as unnecessary tyranny, retaining Dr. Trudo as my friend, in spite of Harley's efforts to effect an estrangement between us.

Days of golden sunshine and purple shadows crept on, and I revelled in the sweet Elysium of love. I was happy, happy with earth-joys, for then I seldom

thought of heaven, and never of my mother and Mrs. Newman. My life was too full of selfish enjoyment to be hallowed by the holy presence of angels. It was *Harley* now; *he* was my heaven, my heart! If he smiled, I longed to die with the beautiful radiance beaming on me. If he frowned, and he sometimes did, my very soul ached with an indescribable passionate wretchedness which I felt tingling through my veins, even after the light of affection came back to bless me. Extravagant do you think? Ah! Lutie, you have never *loved*, or you would not say so. Or possibly your nature is cold and calm. Mine never was, is not now; and, therefore, like all impulsive affectionate persons, I gave *my all*; and that without *hauteur* or restraint. When I loved, I *worshipped* with a blind devotion; when I disliked, I turned from the object with loathing abhorrence. I pampered, fondled and caressed; basking in the sunlight of absorbing idolatry, forgot that I had budded into the fragrant loveliness of childhood in grovelling scenes of sin and crime, and blossomed into the glorious grace of perfected womanhood amid the humblest walks of life. I! Oh! the inconsistencies of humanity!

I had a mad passion for the stage. Night after night found me a devotee at the shrine of histrionic art. Day after day, courting the society of the master-spirits of the stage. L'Estrange gladly brought them about me, to win my smiles of approbation, and low-voiced words of appreciation and enjoyment of his

kindness. We were married in the fall, and I retained Dr. Trudo as my friend. Harley often rebelled against what he termed my indifference to his wishes. We had been very happy together in spite of this one little stone in the flower-bed, until one day he released the pent-up venom in his heart. He spoke bitterly, jealously; I defiantly, stormily. Oh! how well I remember it all, how handsome he looked standing before me with the stern light of disapproval in his eye, but the love-quivering of sorrow round his mouth! "Harley, *dear* Harley!" I said, "Mr. L'Estrange, I am very weary of this life with you, and do not care to endure it much longer. If your confidence in me has been annihilated, in justice to yourself we had better live apart. I can love you—and *have* done so—but submit to your tyranny, I cannot, *will* not."

"I have no desire to tyrannize over you, Kate," he replied, "I am ready to forgive."

"Forgive!" I sneered sarcastically. It goaded him to madness.

"Yes, *forgive*, for though those stern, unconquered lips have never plead in words, their luscious sweetness *has*, and your eyes have talked me into forgetfulness when I knew but too well that you deserved such censure as a husband is often justifiable in giving."

"Harley L'Estrange, what mean you?" I almost shrieked.

"I mean this, Madam Kate, if you prefer that I

should be more explicit. While you receive the courtesies of Dr. Trudo in direct opposition to my commands, your conduct is more fascinating than wise."

"Sir! you say more than you mean."

"Just the opposite. I mean more than I say. Search your own heart and ask yourself if my reproof is unmerited or unjust." With this he left me, and I never wanted to see him again. I *hated* him because he had no faith in me when I had been true. This then was the man whom I had loved with such soul-absorbing idolatry! This was the man who had claimed me as the "last best gift of heaven;" had languished upon my caresses, and known no joy save in the sunlight of my smiles; who had surrounded me as some princess with every luxury and elegant art of enlightenment; who had summoned about me fairy exquisites of toilette, never contented unless bestowing some prodigal expenditure of his almost illimitable wealth to prove his devotion to me! I sat there gazing through the open door out into space. Sunlight, shadowy twilight, dusky night floated around me; still I sat there just where my husband left me, my heart swelling with bitter defiance. We had often disputed before, but never, until that day, had he exposed the rankling jealousy in his heart. Confidence was forever crushed between us, and *without confidence* there is no happiness between husband and wife. It matters not how often they may swear eternal and mutual fidelity, for memory bears a scorpion-sting

which lashes the goaded heart to madness when she claims undisputed sway in hours of silence and solitude. The rich, luscious, purple wine of love once wasted, leaves but the bitter dregs diluted in bitterer tears for after potions, during the life-driftings of humanity's ocean of turbulent storms, deceptive calms, melting, musical ripples, and hollow murmurings of despair.

Though a woman smiles and suffers in silence, the wound, away down deep, rankles and poisons, slowly and surely. And never, no *never!* though she strive to the death, though she denies it to the world and to the iniquitous worker against the peace of her soul, can she forgive or forget unkind or insulting words from her husband. She and her own conscience best know this. Men seldom believe it till experience teaches them. I thought all this, sitting there, and though I have had years of suffering to shadow me since then, I feel and think the same now.

Harley came back home at midnight and found me apparently asleep in a large arm-chair which I had rolled into my dressing-room, that I might talk privately with Mrs. L'Estrange in regard to the final separation from my husband, upon which I had determined. She had over-ruled my resolution, and only asked me to make "*one* more trial to be happy," and I had promised. Scarcely had we separated before Harley entered. He walked over to me and looking down upon me kissed me and smoothed the hair off

from my heated temples, sighing, "Katie, Katie, why can't we be happy together? We were so once. Oh! for those vanished days!"

I did not speak, but he roused me, and the dispute was calmly discussed, and I said, "No, Harley, those days can never come back again."

"Not even a semblance?" he plead.

"*That* may be possible, if you consent to act out your *rôle*."

"Will you try, Katie, will *you* try? You know my passion makes me say harsher things than I mean!" He was holding my hands, gazing eagerly in my face.

"Yes, Harley, I will try once again, but let one shadow of jealousy mar the sunshine of our loving, and I will go away from you forever. Do you understand the exact condition of this armistice to plan our future peace?"

"Yes, little Katie, yes," and happy in this hollow mockery, he laughed.

* * * * *

It was false, all false, Lutie, and time proved it so conclusively. One day I went away from home, my elegant, luxurious, miserable home, and left a letter lying on Harley's desk, telling him good-bye forever; that he need not search for me, as his endeavors to find me would be ineffectual; that henceforward our paths lay far apart, and mine, away from him, could but be a path of peace, whatever the difficulties which

beset me. I went to Paris, and immediately became the opera-dancer at Fauberg Theatre. You know as well as I can tell you how strangely I have moved and did then move the hearts of the people who beheld me. Years passed swiftly by, bringing deeper gloom to my heart, growing so calm in its cold life, but giving no shadow of added age to my form or face. American women at twenty-seven are generally broken in spirit and constitution; I have but developed into more voluptuous grace. I danced, oh, Lutie, with the poetry of motion. Sometimes I astonished myself at my ease, grace and agility. The first bloods of the land have knelt at my feet in homage to my power, but the fires of memory never ceased to burn. I never heard of Harley during all that time, and I never wanted to do so. My heart did not soften in absence, but became callous to grief and only throbbed on in defiance and wrath. I made tours over Europe and was everywhere greeted with applause and admiration. Wealth was lavished upon me by the generous hands of fortune and fame, but the first sweet freshness of my life was crushed. When the flowers of adulation, knotted with gems, fell around me in showers, I wept over their fragrant leaves of vernal beauty and dainty purity, to think I was once even as one of them, sinless and beautiful; and I have tossed them far from me and laughed at the purple stains the blow would mark upon their sweet freshness, because my soul was colored deep

with the crimson stain of sin. I made an engagement here at home in Old America, for my fame had flown over the ocean; made the engagement at Parkhurst Theatre, with L'Estrange, that I might see if he recognized me, and if he still loved me. I went and danced five nights. He never recognized me. I determined, upon my sixth and last night, that I would betray myself, and then be off like a bird on the wing, to some city in the South. Alas! that the God of Heaven thwarted what I madly called my revenge, just as though I had not chosen the separation. The house was crowded to overflowing to bid farewell to the renowned *danseuse*. I determined to excel. I wore a rich crimson satin, heavily embroidered with seed pearls, and here and there groups or sprays of flashing diamonds. The same jewels flashed in my heavily-braided hair, and burned upon my neck and arms. Showers of rich and rare exotics were falling around me, with gems sparkling amid their perfumed loveliness, when raising my eyes to the dress circle, smiling and bowing, I saw Dr. Trudo, who had risen from his seat and was leaning far over the railing which he tightly grasped. He immediately recognized me as his old friend, and glided from the circle; L'Estrange, just beyond, never dreamed that his wife danced before him, the Katie whom he had loved, caressed, indulged, and made miserable with petty, contemptible jealousies. To him I was only the bewildering, fascinating Opera *danseuse*, Cleophas.

I was overjoyed. It exhilarated, inspired me, and throwing off all restraint, all set motions, I moved about at will, wondering at my airy grace, inventing new figures, never heard of before or since. The Orchestra became excited. They threw their souls into the music until, fairly carried away with my triumph and impulse, I sang, as I waltzed, wild warblings of passion and music. The audience rose, as with one movement, and called out with fascinated enthusiasm, "Cleophas forever!" I paused and was about to make my retiring bow when the shout of "fire! fire!" awed me into stilly calmness. My enthusiasm was gone. Death stared me in the face. I turned to fly; the scenes behind me were in flames. I looked towards the audience, they were pressing forward, eager for self-preservation, leaving me as forgotten as if, already, I were not. I threw up my hands with the wild abandonment of despair, and shrieked, "Aye! aye! 't is Cleophas forever!"

Lutie, they paused, awe-stricken and powerless. No doubt I looked like the fire-fiend of the disaster, standing as I was, enveloped by flames, yet unharmed. There was a wild wail of heart-rending misery in my voice. I saw Harley, far on in the crowd, pause and look at me; recognize me and turn back, and my very soul stood still in awed admiration at the love I believed stronger than death. He won the first line of seats in the dress circle, held out his arms, called, "Katie, again we are one," and sprang in the hottest

of the flames. I saw no more—not a struggle—and heard no cry. It was the subtlest refinement of cruelty. I fainted. When I woke, which must have been very soon, my eyes opened on the night beneath the quiet stars, and I was held tightly to the heart of Dr. Trudo. Harley had seen him in the smoke and flames gallantly fighting his way to me, and even in such an hour, after years of separation, his jealousy made him utterly reckless of life. I turned to free myself from Dr. Trudo's embrace, which grasped me like a vice. I could not,—the man was dead. He swallowed flame, they said. I mourned his loss deeply, keenly. He was a true friend, and from the very rarity I valued my possession of his admiration and interest.

I lived with Harley's mother, loving and beloved, until she died some months past, when I resumed my theatrical life which had become a very existence to me in the years when I embraced it as a profession. Hark! did I hear the bell? Yes. Help me, darling. There, I'm ready. My head is better; my heart lightened from its weight of misery, which I have shared with another.

Yes, it was a sad story, but it is finished now, and we will never revert to it again in our two life-times.

A REFUGEE STORY.

DEDICATED TO MRS. TOOMBS AND HER DAUGHTER, MRS. DU BOSE,
OF WASHINGTON, GA.

I.

'Twas not an hundred days ago,
When April-blooms were sifting snow,
When flowers were nodding in the breeze
And air was rife with melodies,
Three weary travelers wound their way
Towards a town at close of day,
Where happy homes, all wreathed in bloom,
And sunshine, birds and sweet perfume,
Lay smiling fair beneath the sky,
And tempting these three passers by
To bow their heads in grief and tears,
For cherished homes in bygone years;
When round a ruddy hearthstone's gleam,
Life's woe to them was all a dream.

II.

The world was then a waste of flowers,
And each day notched with golden hours;
But, ah! the gloom of grief would fall,
And wrap its mantle round them all.

Their happy home was desolate;
 Their hearthstone's bright fire had grown dim,
 And the gay songs were hushed forevermore
 To the wail of a funeral hymn.
 For phantom death with ghost-like stride,
 Struck down their joy and love and pride,
 And sent them drifting o'er the world,
 With hope's glad banner closely furled.

III.

Thus bowed in heart, with wearied brain,
 They roamed o'er hill and verdant plain,
 From Old Virginia's loyal lines
 Down thro' the State of lofty pines,
 And South Carolina, proud queen
 Of freedom, with such royal mien,
 Amid her sons and daughters seen,
 To Georgia—where heaven showers
 Its choicest gems of fruits and flowers.

IV.

And yet scarce one kind word was breathed
 Where God and nature fondly wreathed
 These tender blooms of spirit-love,
 Their faith and gratitude to move:
 For seldom refugees from home,
 When forced by cruel war to roam
 Down to the South, whose fight for life
 Was dear to mother, sister, wife,
 Could see a smile, or hear a voice
 Amid the gloom, bid them rejoice;—

V.

But murmurs cold, from lips compressed,
 Fell like the snow on glacier's crest;
 And sunburnt hands or snowy white,
 Would point the path out in the night,
 And bid them journey on their way,
 "For in their homes they could not stay."
 Tho' plenty blessed their happy store,
 They had "no room for any more."
 And hearts all bitter towards them moved,
 Still farther South from those they loved,
 Whose strong right arms were raised to kill
 The "dastard foe" that dared to spill
 The crimson life-blood that for years
 Had filled the veins of cavaliers,
 Who fought, thro' days and nights of toil,
 To keep their very homes from spoil;
 Whose owners, had so harshly hurled
 Their own heart-idols on the world.

VI.

And this same spirit, in each breast,
 Refusing e'en one night of rest
 To age and youth, to dame and child,
 In crowded haunts and country wild,
 Will *crush* the South, when dark clouds lower
 And place her in the foeman's power;
 Will leave her shorn of wealth and pride,
 A blighted land that worlds deride;

Her homesteads desolate and burned ;
 Her traitor-sons to foemen turned ;
 Her nation's heart all drenched in blood ;
 Her children crying out for food ;
 Her daughters smiling on their foes,
 All heedless of her bitter throes ;
 And all the blood their sires have spilled
 Will be with false-lipped treason filled ;
 Her slaves set free, her heart depressed,
 Oblivion alone will grant her rest !
 For tread upon a worm, it writhes,
 And never dares resent the blow ;
 But crush a *serpent's* head in dust,
 Its deadly venom lays you low !
 'Tis so with Southern hearts that feel ;
 Tho' 'gainst their foes, as well-sprung steel,
 They all resist oppression's heel,
 Yet let a comrade traitor turn,
 The blasting feuds forever burn ;
 They rather would to foemen bend
 Than claim a Tory for a friend !

VII.

But, to my rhymings' soft refrain,—
 I now must journey back again,
 And tell of what was said and done,
 Within the town of Washington ;
 When at the close of April day,
 Our weary travelers made their way

Adown its shady public street
 Where no sad face did welcome meet,
 No cheering voice ; no hand was given,
 To waken faith and hope in heaven ;
 But staring eyes of scoff and scorn,
 Made them forget that Christ was born,
 And almost cry against the God,
 Who raised them, *human*, from the sod.

VIII.

From house to house they sent request
 For but a single night of rest ;
 But *no*, was borne on every mouth ;—
This in the sunny-hearted South,
 Where all are welcomed, glad and free,
 As birds of her nativity !
 Talk not to me of noble deeds,
 Which daring valor proudly won ;
 Talk not to me of Southern worth
 For years bequeathed from sire to son ;
 Of soft-voiced women, calm and mild
 As evening breezes on the coast,—
 It is *Kentucky blood alone*
 Such wealth can ever truly boast !

IX.

At last as angels sometimes waft
 Oblivion in a wine that's quaffed ;
 Or sunbeams kiss a frozen rill
 And make it bright tho' frozen still ;

A word was borne from mouth to mouth
 Once more redeeming all the South ;
 "Come and be welcome in my home,
 Sad wanderers, I bid you come !"
 Weary and worn, with tearful eyes,
 And lips all brimming o'er with sighs,
 They wound along their mournful way
 Thro' Washington at close of day,
 Till pausing 'neath a shady oak
 The eldest of the trio spoke :
 "This is the haven we have found."

X.

The wagoner sprang to the ground,
 And holding up his honest palm,
 He spoke in words so kind and calm :
 "I'm glad at last you've found a home,
 And that you need no farther roam ;
 At least, until you find some rest
 Within this region of the blest ;"
 So saying, with a grace profound,
 He helped the ladies to the ground.

XI

The house, like fairy-palace, stood
 Half-skirted by a verdant wood.
 Its front was one wild waste of flowers,
 Long winding paths and rose-twined bowers ;
 And out amid this world of blooms
 There stood a lady, Mrs. Toombs :

Her genial face was wreathed in smiles
 Like those which red-lipped love beguiles ;
 Her hands outstretched, and laughing eyes
 Bade welcome to this Paradise.

XII.

The weary wanderers had no voice
 To bid their fond hearts to rejoice,
 And rest within this kindly hall,
 Where charity and faith ruled all ;
 Cold pride had granted them reprieve,
 Consenting for a time to live
 Upon the gracious bounty-store
 Which welcomed them and many more.

XIII.

Scarce thro' the open doorway tall
 Had sunbeams danced upon the wall,
 Before a lady-queen uprose
 Who bore the noble name, Du Bose,
 And bowing with a royal grace,
 She met the ladies face to face,
 And like a song by angels sung,
 Whose echoes thro' the heart are rung,
 She gently welcomed them again
 Till pleasure deadened all their pain.

XIV.

Each dainty touch of regal taste
 Throughout this home with wealth made waste,

No gem, *vertu*, nor painting rare,
 But could be found in wandering there;
 The velvet tapestry richly hung,
 From casements, and its shadows flung
 A wild, deep languor o'er the scene
 In Eastern palace-style, I ween:
 The frescoed ceil, with pendant light,
 To nightly flash in radiance bright;
 Madonnas with their wistful eyes
 That plead for far-off Paradise;
 Soft summer-scenes, in gilded frames,
 And river-gleams of Rhine and Thames;
 Ancestral pictures 'midst them all
 Made life smile down from every wall.

XV.

Marble vases, Parian and silver, too,
 Were filled with flowers wet with dew,
 And violets floated fragrance there
 Upon the mellowed, golden air;
 Piano, harp and lute all strung,
 Upon the breeze their music flung;
 Trained slaves in magic silence moved
 As thro' the lofty halls they roved;
 It was a home where angels dwell
 Charmed down to earth by magic spell.

XVI.

At eve was brought a sweet repast,
 This dainty treat the best tho' last,

Seemed brimming up each silent wish;
 For on the board was every dish
 Which taste could dream or *cuisine* make,
 From fragrant tea to golden cake.
 That night they rested calm and still;
 When morning came they rose at will;
 And thus for days they roamed around,
 In voiceless joy, for they had found,
 Each comfort which this earth could give,
 And felt that they again might live
 Amid this world of smiles, and roam,
 As free as in their far-off home.

XVII.

At last when turning towards the gate
 To follow in the wake of fate,
 Each eye was dimmed with tender tears
 Which still must fall in coming years,
 When memory o'er her weary track
 Will sometimes bring the wanderers back,
 And bid them smile upon the faces,
 Which still must lean from life's bright places.
 The *one*, they saw 'mid April-blooms,
 The gentle, smiling Mrs. Toombs;
 And she who like a queen uprose
 Who bore the stately name, Du Bose.

WASHINGTON, GA., 1865.

NAY! ASK NOT WHY MY HEART IS SAD.

Nay! ask not why my heart is sad,
Nor why the shadows drift along,
And cloud the brow that once was glad
With love's bright smile and faith's sweet song!
For tears would only tremble down
And dim the flushing of my cheek,
All scarlet with the memories
That make my womanhood so weak.

The memories of sun-bright hours,
Whose flight I've gladly watched with thee;
Replete with dreams of golden joys,
And happiness that *could not be!*
Impulsive, fond and womanly,

My heart some true love madly craves,
As rose-lipped shells when far away
Keep mourning of the crested waves!

As flowers bloom in young spring-time,
When birds sing glad on bush and tree;
So does my brain in music-rhyme
Wreath fancy's fragrant blooms for thee:

NAY! ASK NOT WHY MY HEART IS SAD. 355

And yet, thou art so cold and calm,
My words die voiceless on my lips;
Is *this* the joy life holds for me?
Is *this* the nectar Cupid sips?

I know I step from out my sphere
In breathing this impassioned strain;
And yet! — its very wildness soothes,
And lulls to lotus-dreams my pain;
For trembling 'neath thy bright eyes' glance,
And listening to thy deep-toned voice,
I keenly feel my spirit's trance,
And fain would weep when I rejoice.

For I am naught to thee or thine,
While thou art all the world to me,
And while the golden sun doth shine
My master-fate will ever be!
'Tis vain to strive against the will
Which binds my soul in passion-chains!
For 'neath thy slightest glance 't will thrill
While aught of life to me remains.

Thou art so great, and grand, and true,
I can but bow beneath the spell,
Which flashes in your eye's bright blue,
Whose magic charm *you know too well!*
But *once more* clasp my hand in thine —
A friendly parting — that is all —
Then o'er my aching heart I'll draw
In gloomy folds, woe's purple pall.

In days to come, when far away,
 I'll strive to conquer this mad dream,
 Which o'er me holds such tyrant sway,
 And learn to live and *only seem!*
So soon the dreary miles will stretch,
 In voiceless grief along life's plain,
 And then! Oh! *bitter*, wildering woe,
 I *feel* we shall not meet again?

AUGUSTA, GA., 1865.

A GREETING.

TO THE PORTSMOUTH, VA., SERENADERS.

The midnight hour had stolen on
 Along the voiceless shores of night,
 And mellow moon-beams broader grown
 In radiant bands of silver light;
 The star-kings from their sky-crowned thrones,
 Smiled down upon the sleeping earth,
 While myriad angels' seraph tones
 Proclaimed Aurora's rosy birth.

The breath of perfume on the breeze
 Came wafting o'er the misty hills;
 And moonlight kissed to laughter
 The tinkling, crystal rills.
 The scents of jasmine and of rose
 Were floating round fair Southern bowers,
 Commingled with the fragrant sweets
 Of many thousand flowers.

It was the holy time to raise
 All chastened hearts to Heaven,
 And mingle with kind Nature's praise
 A prayer to be forgiven;
 A time when smiling angels bend
 Above the wearied brain,
 And crushing out the present gloom
 Give back the sunny past again.

A maiden on her couch reposed,
 While dreams of love sang thro' her brain,
 A symphony so low and sweet
 It seemed an angel's soft refrain ;
 Half smiling from her sleep she rose
 And paused, her breath almost entranced,
 Then towards the opened casement's light
 Her eager footsteps quick advanced.

"Am I in Heaven?" she whispered low,
 And glanced about the moonlit room,
 Where naught was plainly visible
 Within the cloud of hazy gloom ;
 The angel-song she heard in dreams
 Had left its echo on the breeze,
 And now its music seemed to float
 Along with morning melodies.

Up thro' the open window came
 A chorus grandly deep and strong,
 Which rose from lips of soldiers brave
 Upon the mellow tide of song ;
 And while the thrilling anthem swelled
 Out on the rosy morning air
 She smiled, and softly said again,
 "If not *in* heaven, I'm *almost* there."

WASHINGTON, GA., 1865.

MONODY.

[SALLIE CARNES.]

She has gone, she has gone,
 As flowers in fall,
 At Winter's stern summons,
 And shade of his pall.

Her dark eyes they gleam not
 With sadness or mirth ;
 They droop in sweet slumber
 Beneath the cold earth.

Her soft voice is stilled now,
 Her lips smile no more,
 That warbled gay music
 In glad days of yore.

She sleeps a calm, still sleep,
 While drear days glide by ;
 Unfelt is the world's care,
 Unheard the sick sigh.

God wounds deep to heal us,
 When passions we quell,
 And quivering lips pray low,—
 "Our Father, 'tis well."

And fond faith looks upward
 To glad, golden lights,
 Where angels bend smiling,
 From far Eden-heights.

Then mourn not that Sallie
 Has joined the glad throng,
 And swelled the sweet choir
 Of heavenly song.

Mourn not, though we bend
 Above her as dead ;
 For glory of God's love
 Around her is shed.

ROGERSVILLE, TENN., Jan., 1863.

TO CLARENCE.

Clarence, Clarence, poet-lover,
 Tears are shivering o'er my face,
 As I read your music-poem,
 Full of beauty and of grace !
 And along the sunny uplands
 Of my dreaming woman's heart,
 Many golden hopes and fancies,
 In unbidden sweetness start.

April-tears, they tell us, Clarence,
 Come into the lives of all,
 And as sunbeams thro' the raindrops,
 Smiles are mingled with their fall ;
 Smiles that bridge the dreary distance
 Flowing 'tween thy soul and mine,
 Smiles that over after-joys
 Memory's golden sun will shine.

Yet thy fond words thrill me strangely,
 With a sweet unwonted power,
 As I bend above their loving,
 In this bright, prophetic hour ;
 And the mystic angels hovering
 O'er my glad heart's dreamings sweet,
 Whisper fondly—"In the future,
 Poet-lover, we will meet !"

And the friendship-garlands woven
 From the buds of love's fair flowers,
 Will, with joyous, gleaming sunshine,
 Mark the flight of radiant hours:
 Smile not then that tears *will* fall
 O'er the flushings of my cheek,
 When the fond hopes that arise
 My lips may never dare to speak;
 But bend low and in my face
 Sweet love-poems you may trace.

FEBRUARY 21, 1865.

THE FROZEN HEART.

There is a frozen land with hills and plains of snow,
 And o'er its dreary wastes no silver star-beams blow;
 No streams of sparkling waves play there their ebb
 and flow.

No balmy zephyrs sigh tho' flowers sometimes bloom,
 Scentless and as pallid as sunshine on a tomb,
 And o'er all bends a sky of gray and purple gloom.

No gay-winged warblers flit from bush to tasselled
 trees;
 There is no fragrance there, no hum of busy bees;—
 This land is wholly void of nature's melodies.

Some bleak winds sadly wail o'er its deserted round;
 Some gloomy shadows lie along the frozen ground,
 Where gravestones of the past may here and there be
 found.

This land of ice and snow was once unbound and free,
 And every hill and plain were rich with shrub and
 tree,
 And all the air was rife with sweets and melody.

And fond dreams angel-winged, radiant and rare
 As mother-smiles, or baby-curls of sunny-golden hair,
 Lived in the gleaming sunshine bright, so fleeting and
 so fair.

Yet all this waste of love and bloom in one dread
 night,
 Was shut from heaven, and every hope and life-joy
 bright
 Was buried 'neath this land of frost and dreary blight.

It is a heart that's bound beneath this icy spell,
 Where radiant dreams of love in bygone years did
 dwell ;—
 A heart whose weight of woe no pen can ever tell—

For tho' countless ages roll and silver star-beams blow,
 The song-birds sing, the flowers bloom and sparkling
 rivers flow,
 Gray gloom will ever bend above this land of ice and
 snow.

1864.

BIRDIE BOONE.

Soft and still the twilight falls,
 In many a shadowy fold,
 Mantling the sky in draperies
 Of amaranth, crimson and gold.
 Gently the cold, city gloom
 Floats up in clouds of pearl-gray,
 Kissing the royal sunset,
 Till it faints and fades away.

Once in the summers long fled
 With sunshine and shadow away,
 I saw gloom fold o'er the city,
 The same sad mantle of gray ;
 Watched the light fade from the sky,
 And hope sink back in the gloom,
 Just as I watch it to-night
 From this same old familiar room.

'T was then Birdie stood beside me,
 Breathing words of friendship's truth,
 Which in the frost of keen distrust
 Seemed fleeting as my sunny youth.
 Her fingers gently linked again
 The silver chords of life in tune,
 And woke the touching magic strain
 Of love and faith in Birdie Boone.

As I listened to the words
 That from her rich crimson lips fell,
 And read the deep hearts' earnest glow,
 In her graceful bosom's swell,
 I felt for me life's joyful dawn
 Had ripened to its golden noon,
 When I could clasp the friendship-hand
 Of one so true as Birdie Boone.

The sunshine of life's waning day
 Grows fainter with the twilight gloom,
 That gathers over all the world,
 Just as it shadows thro' my room;
 Friends I wooed in sunlit hours,
 Wooed them 'neath the silver moon,
 But none was e'er so near my heart
 As brown-eyed, red-lipped Birdie Boone.

Ah! Birdie Boone, my spirit friend,
 Down Time's stream we'll drift together,
 With clasped hands of fervent truth,
 As we've sailed in sunny weather;
 There is no cloud of dark distrust
 To mar the love of by-gone years,
 The love that shone a beacon light
 Through sadness, gloom and bitter tears.

INGLESIDE, Feb. 22d, 1864.

TO COL. S. P. C.

The friendship-words I fain would breathe to thee
 Are voiceless, oh! thou great, grand nobleman
 Of nature and of truth! In reverence
 Too deep for aught but genius-hearts to feel.
 My woman's lovely faith bows down to thee,
 And unto thee I proudly bend the knee
 Of social and universal homage.
 No grief that falls in gloom-clouds on the world
 Of memory and the past, but thy sweet words
 Can assuage woe, and lead the mourning soul
 Where a bright day of eternal blessing
 Will dawn upon the worthy and the good!
 No joys in life, that ever gently bloom
 As sweet-breathed violets in a young spring-time
 Along thy path, can hush thy noble heart
 To grief not all thine own.

Thy wondrous soul
 O'erflows with tender pity for the world
 Which has given thee the fond devotion
 Which the world ever gives to one who looks down
 From lofty heights of genius and renown,
 In careless scorn to see its puling strength.
 Strive to draw the great to its level low,
 And finds its struggles vain.

As the calm sea
 Reflects the light of some far star that smiles
 From its golden throne, built in the blue vault
 Of Heaven, do I receive the radiance
 Of thy genius in my heart, and even when
 Wild passion in its fiery glow glares down
 Into its holy depths, thy smiles dispel
 Each ruffled wave, transforming all my life
 Into loveliness and light !

In peace and war
 Thou art the mark at which the universe
 Doth level its golden-tipped shafts of love,
 Thou noblest work of nature and of God !
 Thou pride and hope of family and of state !
 Bending applause of nations to thy will
 For a nation's future weal. Its reverence
 Is thine thro' all the coming years !

To foes
 As just as unto friendship ever true,
 I behold thee the hero of thine age,
 And prince of gentlemen !

The midnight hour
 Has drifted to the voiceless stream of time
 Unknown to me, for the moments fleeting
 Have been enshrined in my heart in bright wreaths
 Of memory-blossoms in my thought of thee !

NEWBURY, N. C., April, 1865.

SONG.

Go! take your golden circlet back,
 I care not now to wear it.
 Another claims the heart once mine,
 And I would *scorn* to share it!
 The gentle smiles that blessed my life
 Now light another brow;
 Yes, go! since all the charms you loved
 Are dead, or faded now.

The rose-lit blooms of love, that wreathed
 The future-land for me,
 Droop *withered* on the boughs of youth,
 Uncared for now by thee:
 The fragrant sweets that floated soft,
 Upon the balmy air,
 Are scentless now as blighted hopes
 That e'en in death seem fair.

The little hand, whose lightest touch
 Could wake a nameless thrill,
 Will never clasp thine own in love,
 Tho' I *must* love thee still.
 The voice, whose faintest sounds could once
 To silence charm thine own,
 Will never breathe one word to thee
 Of days forever gone!

Yes, go; thy perjured vows are naught,
 Tho' once empowered to bless;
 Go! since thy faithlessness hath wrought
 A voiceless wilderness
 Of grief; a dreary waste of pain,
 Whose echoes only sleep
 To wildly wake to woe again,
 When o'er dead dreams I weep.

Those other hands caress thy brow,
 And smooth thy rich brown hair;
 Those other lips oft touch thine own,
 To press love's blessings there;
 That other form now glides along
 Where I was wont to glide;
 And perjured vows are breathed to her
 When wandering by thy side.

My heart is human, and must throb
 With maddening weight of pain,
 When memory o'er its blackened waste
 Wails soft some lost refrain;
 But do not dream that I will sigh
 For love you can deride!
 Nay! tho' my grief grows deeper still
My master is my pride.
 And I would scorn thy heart and thee,
 Tho' heaven itself were lost,
 Ere I would share its tenderness
E'en when 'twas needed most!

IMPROMPTU.

Oh, fate! he comes not, and still
 With vague longing for his face,
 I lean far out in the night
 Gazing blankly into space.
 Listening with a fettered sense
 To the sad and solemn strain,
 Wailing thro' my aching heart
 To the patter of the rain.

No star-beams bend above me;
 No gleams of radiant light,
 Dispel the gathering clouds
 That gloom the brow of night;
 Like bitter thoughts that haunt me,
 When my heart grows dead to pain,
 And I can tearless listen
 To the sobbing of the rain.

The world is full of darkness;
 And the shadowing of years,
 Seem wept by nature o'er us,
 In these solemn Autumn-tears:

And the mournful patter, patter,
Of the rain-drops on the roof,
Weave many dreams and fancies
Of a sombre warp and woof.

No sunshine can e'er dispel
The sad purple pall and gloom;
For pain and passion woven
In with buds of blighted bloom,
Have sternly stamped their death-mark
On my dreaming heart and brain,
In voiceless woe I listen
To the patter of the rain.

Bright eyes now upon him smile;
Fond lips breathe their magic spell;
While alone I watch and wait,
Listening to the dismal knell
Of rain-drops sadly falling,
With a sobbing sound of pain,
O'er withered leaves and blossoms,
That can never bloom again.

Must I hopeless moments count,
Of this lonely, dreary night?
Hark! hear I not a footstep,
Firm and free, elastic, light!
'Tis Antonio—come again!
He ne'er forgot to love me,
Tho' amid the fair and gay,
Charm him with their minstrelsy.

His arms are about me now,—
Burns his breath upon my cheek;
And his eyes glow with the love
His lips may never speak!
Ah! sad, Autumn rain, drip on,
And weep your fading flowers,
My heart has no dreary pain,
And now counts the golden hours.

LOUISVILLE, Sept. 7th, 1864.

DEAD LEAVES.

Leaves of crimson, russet and gold,
Bright emblems of life's fleeting day,
Doomed to fade in earth's brown mould !
Golden to-day, to-morrow gray,—
Thus fades young love from life away.

A mournful sadness in my heart,
Thrills till quickening tear-drops start,
For of this world *I form a part* ;
And though my life is fraught with bloom,
It yet *must* sink within the tomb !

Though rose-lit dreams of hope I spin,
On Fancy's whirling wheel, and win
Some purple tinge of royal hue,
On flowers sweet with sun and dew,
I yet must Death's gray ashes strew.

Above their fragrant, fairy bloom,
And in a moaning memory loom
Must weave the web which I have spun,
Must seek the *shade*, and leave the *sun*,
And claim *a grave* when life is done !

Dead leaves ! dead leaves ! *dead leaves* !
So withered, sere, yellow and old ;
Hope no lily-leaved dream now weaves !
Faded, crimson, russet and gold,
Dead leaves ! withered, sere, brown and old !

LOST IN A SNOW-DRIFT.



WAY off in the mountains of West Virginia, girt about with idlewilds of forest and underbrush, there stood a little log cabin, humble in outward appearance, yet not devoid of comforts natural to civilization and refinement, though everything was marked by the severest simplicity. It was twilight, the month, October, and already had the earth been wrapped in the mantle with which Autumn hides its approaching dissolution, and like the dying dolphin deepens the radiance of her glory and grandeur as her life-space lessens in its cycle of time. The hardy mountain vines that had been trained about the door, were beginning to droop in the chill of coming blasts, and the stubble-grass looked bare and brown. Household surroundings seemed to betray the presence of culture which one would not expect to meet in an almost desolated wild, and it had the consequent power of exciting great interest and wonder among the casual traders who stopped there to deal when *en route* for their journeyings farther south, but nothing could ever be gleaned from or about the owners of the homestead.

The family consisted of three persons only, one a woman who had pertinaciously followed the adverse

fortunes which befell an elegant, aristocratic family, who now managed to obtain support from her unwearyed exertions to keep up an appearance of impoverished gentility. The mistress, a confirmed invalid, was a type of elegance and refinement never surpassed, but bowed down with a deep and settled melancholy which, in the wilderness, sometimes made her shut herself up in her room in solitude, for days.

The daughter, a bright-eyed girl, numbering probably eighteen summers, had grown like the mountain flowers, and though her heart often yearningly reached out to the great world, of which she had only read, not one glimpse of character and life had been blown over the purity of her soul. She had never beheld human faces save those of "Maum Celia," her mother, and an occasional trader. Still had she hoped, and dreamed, and wondered. And now, when my story opens, she stood out on the mountain-slope, her eyes flashing with the lambent fire of genius; her lips glowing and apart, and her delicate nostrils dilated as she breathed inspiration from the scenery, like those of a spirited stud that scents the blood of battle afar off, and champs the curb bit restively that holds it in from the fray.

Royally bent the sky above her, clouds of gold and purple and rose, melting into an azure sea, hills drifting away, line upon line, until, lost in the distance, they mingled with the illimitable, the ash, and maple, and oak, showering their gorgeous memory leaves

down upon the melancholy grave of the dead summer, the foaming streams, dashing with mad precipitation over the rocks and stones that jutted from crag to crag and waking in their fall the echoes of mimic thunder,—all these met her eye. The glory of God-light seemed to have descended amid the hills, and the young girl stood awe-struck at the presence of the Infinite.

While bound thus by the spell of beauty with which nature haloes her worshipers, a voice from the humble tenement called her: "Elloie! Elloie! come in from the shadows of the mountain; the sun is setting, and your mother misses you." Slowly, almost reluctantly, she turned and scrambled down the hill towards the sound which had so disturbed her heaven-born reverie, and soon stood in the kitchen beside her old nurse. "Maum Celia, I am here, ready to help you with the chores," and rolling up the sleeves of her neat, gingham frock, displaying her round, white arms, she tied on a cook apron and, taking down a bread-tray, started towards the pantry to get out the ingredients necessary for a loaf, when Maum Celia advanced towards her, and untying the apron took it off, and replaced the tray upon the table, saying: "I called you in from the mountain because your mother missed you. I'll do the chores this evening alone. You go in and stay with her."

With half-fearing, half-guessing wonderment, the young girl obeyed her, by unquestioningly stepping across the narrow entry and opening the door which

stood opposite the one through which she had just passed. A sad, low voice greeted her—"Is it my little Elloie?"

"Yes, mother dear, it is I."

"Come sit by me, my child; I am not well this evening as usual, and want to talk to you very seriously and earnestly about your future;" and she took the young girl's hand in her own, and drew her towards her until she knelt beside her couch.

"How old are you, Elloie?"

"Eighteen, mother dear."

"Eighteen—and you have seen nothing of the world, have no friends, no pleasures, such as those that youth loves. Your's must be a desolate life. Don't you feel very lonely? Don't you long to leave the mountains and go among the haunts of men?" and the mournful eyes turned full upon the young girl's face.

"Yes, mother," she answered. "I do long to see the world, to win friends, and move amid the nations of the earth. There is a great, solemn earnestness in my soul which tells me there is work to be done, lives to be benefited, thoughts to be spoken, and they all wait for my coming. Yes, mother, I long for the time to arrive when I may leave my mountain home, dear as it is to me. But not without you, mother, oh! no, never without you." And she put her arms up about the lady's neck caressingly, and leaned her brow upon the wan, thin cheek, whose hectic flush betrayed approaching dissolution.

"Yes, my child. But in anticipating your future life it must not be in connexion with me, for you know, Elloie," and her voice softened, "I can not be with you always."

"Nay, nay!" said the young girl, bursting into tears, "talk not to me of death. You will, you must live, my mother, for I would indeed be desolate without you; and why should God make me miserable, who have never sinned against heaven, even in thought?"

"Question not the wisdom of your Creator, Elloie." And the lady turned away with a pained expression upon her patient face.

"Forgive me, mother; I love you so!"

After a few moments' hesitation the mother spoke again, and this time hurriedly, as if forcing a task upon herself to do so. "My life, my child, has suffered under many mournful vicissitudes. I know you have often wondered why your habitation and mine was chosen so far from the world in which I was once wont to move, an acknowledged queen. But I have never felt, until now, able to satisfy your curiosity, or more properly speaking, natural interest in my past history. Except with a knowledge of my few days of life, I might still refrain from explanation, for I necessarily must cast deserved blame upon one who, being your father, claims that respect to his memory at least, should be shown," and her lips quivered painfully.

"You must know, Elloie, that I was once young and beautiful. There was no hope or dream of my life but found its realization. I lived in a world of joy until my seventeenth year, when I met your father, Percy Ruthven, and loved 'not wisely but too well.' Earth seemed one wild waste of flowers, and each day notched with sunbeams of gold. He was not handsome, Elloie; but bore a *distingué* air about him which marked him as an accomplished and elegant man of society. And he was! No man ever before so thoroughly understood the *petits soins* which win woman's heart, and no man ever wielded them with such unfailing success as did my lover. God pity me! He was thirty-seven, I seventeen; a broad difference, and save in rare cases, far too wide for happiness. Motherless, my father worshiped me, and I ruled with royal sway each inmate of my palace home. Never had my father contested a point of action or desire with me, until Percy Ruthven asked my hand in marriage. Then he raved, ordered my lover from his sight, questioning defiantly his presumption in thus stealing away the richest jewel in his casket. Percy was studied in his elegant composure, waited until my father's passion lost force of expression through utter exhaustion, and then gently replied to him with the voices of love and passion rolling mellifluously from his musical tongue. Glowingly he promised faith and ardent devotion, pleaded not only for his own happiness but mine, and at last asked that the option might

be left with me to decide the momentous question. If I declared my life independent of his he would harass him no more. Diplomat as he was! well did he know that every pulsation of my heart was but an echo of his own. Well did he know that each smile on my face was but a mirrored reflection of those he bestowed upon me!

"My father yielded, summoned me to him, gave me the voice of decision; and weeping joyfully, I cast myself in the embrace of Percy Ruthven, smiling fondly through my happy tears upon my father, who was very much affected by my preference and the demonstration of my devotion. Giving us his blessing, he went out and left us alone. I have revelled in bliss since then; been down in the depths of misery, too; but never have I felt the cup of happiness brimming up as on that day, when I possessed the heart of my lover and the sanction of my father. I feared not the exploration of life because of unknown dangers. Nay! I longed for the time to come when I might make some self-sacrifice to prove my love. God pity me! The time *did* come! We married. For a few brief months my husband was all my fancy painted him. Then he became jealous, bore me from place to place, never remaining long enough at any one point for me to form even an acquaintance; and if by chance I did so, he was a perfect maniac in his jealous frenzy, man or woman, it mattered not to him.

"Celia was my maid, and often plead with me to

leave him and return to my father, but I resisted her appeals, for, in spite of his cruelty, I loved him, and was foolish enough to dream, aye! *believe*, his passion was a manifestation of his devotion. A woman will suffer and endure the very tortures of the Inquisition before she will resist or separate from the man to whom she gives all she has to give, and *more* than she *can* grant without dashing every drop of joy from the chalice of life. This existence wore upon my constitution terribly, and when I went home on a visit, my father noted the change in my appearance with much anxiety; but when I told him how happy I was in the love of my husband he grew more contented, though he parted from me most unwillingly when Percy avowed his intention to take me to a new home in Virginia. And *this* was the new home! Better now than of yore, because my faithful Celia followed me, and has worked unsparingly here. Once or twice upon the rough journey I complained, and he said, tauntingly, 'if I loved him as a *true* wife ought to love, I would not believe the world held hardships while with him.' I never mentioned another annoyance, whatever I might have thought.

The time passed wearily on until God gave you to me. I had fondly hoped, even at the time of my bitterest trials, that when he realized how much I suffered for him, when his parental affection was aroused by the presence of your pure baby-face, that he would curb his mad passion, and even yet we might be happy

in our forest home. Alas! vain chimera, which lured me on. He grew jealous *of his own child*, and threatened to bear you from my sight forever, if I did not cease to lavish such devotion upon you. Lest he might do so, I scarcely ever noticed you. God only knew, my Elloie, what a sacrifice of personal feeling was made, when I obeyed the mandates of his tyrannical will, and yielded you to the tender care of Maum Celia. At last, one day when you were about eighteen months old, I was sitting beside him in the door of that little entry, and happy in his affection, which had been unusually demonstrative, I made some reference to olden times, and expressed a hope that we yet might one day return to Boston and mingle in social enjoyment with our friends. Unhappy thought! unfortunate moment! He cast me fiercely from him, heaped upon me jealous abuse and fiery suspicions. '*That* was why I was so quiet, pacific, yielding, loving. *That* was why I was so beautiful, modest, and elegant. I panted for the public eye. Naught to me was the joy of home, and the passionate love of a husband, but I must forever pine for *social friends* and gay scenes. Might his soul sink to eternal perdition in the regions inferno, if I *ever* saw the light of a city while *his wife*!'

"Seizing his hat he went out from the house, and I saw him no more for three long, weary days and nights. When he came in he was gaunt and ghastly with hunger and exhaustion. He looked towards me as he

entered, expecting that, as I usually did, I would advance towards him, tenderly regretting that he had been annoyed, and ask his forgiveness for some imaginary wrong. But I sat leisurely reading, not exhibiting the slightest interest in his approach. I had to exert wonderful control over myself to act out my *role*, but I did so, successfully. I was resolved to try to conquer his jealousy if possible, if I failed, to return to the parental roof-tree.

"He seemed to comprehend my resolution, and confined himself to my society, each day inventing some new mode of tyranny to test my patience and my love. But I was unwavering, and, his courage failing, his despair conquered. One morning,"—here she paused and her form fairly shook with the abandonment of emotion—"One morning I woke bathed in blood, and with a dead husband beside me. In a freak of frenzy he had cut his throat, and left me crimsoned with his life-tide. I was almost mad with grief. God pity and forgive me if what I deemed his fault was his misfortune. Soon afterwards, when I thought of returning to your grandfather, Celia discovered a letter from him to me, written the day before his suicide. In that letter he made it a 'farewell request' that I would not only linger out my life, but that I would rear *you* here. Blaming myself for his death, I resolved to fulfill his wish. I have done so. For years I have held no communication with your grandfather, who no doubt is long since dead. Now, how-

ever, as you have grown to womanhood, and my race is almost run, I will not require that your life shall be that of a recluse. After my death I want you to return to your aunt in Boston. Before Elloie could reply to her mother, a footstep sounded in the entry, and a cheery voice, strange and deep, called out to Maum Celia, in the kitchen:

"Good evening to you, my good woman. Is there any chance for me to find a shelter here to-night? I am fairly lost in the wilderness of these mountains, and it is impossible to find my way to Gladesville before to-morrow," and with an easy grace, yet all respectful, a young man dropped his game-bag upon the steps, leaned his gun against the wall, and entered the kitchen.

"I am not the head, only the help, in this house, sir, and must first see my mistress. No doubt she will give you rest, and food, and drink;" and wiping her apron over a dustless chair, as if by force of habit, she asked him to be seated, and went out.

"Mrs. Ruthven, a stranger asks rest and food. He waits in the kitchen. What is your answer?"

"I will entertain him with pleasure. Though in the wilderness, I know the rule of hospitality. You will light the lamp, Celia, and bring the gentleman hither."

Celia bowed, and going out fulfilled the command, and after a short delay, re-entered, followed by the stranger. As he made his appearance she concisely remarked, "This is he."

Halfway rising from her reclining position upon the sofa, Mrs. Ruthven received her uninvited, yet welcome guest. At the sound of her voice he started as if scarce giving credence to some fancy, which had floated through his brain, exclaiming:

"Can it be—or *do I dream!* No! it *must be true!* Are you not Mrs. Percy Ruthven?"

"I am, sir."

"I was confident there never was but one voice so sweet. In me behold the son of your old and devoted friend, Mrs. Sarah Pierson."

"Why, George, my dear child!" and overcome by her emotion, the lady burst into tears as she held out her arms to bid him welcome to her heart. The excitement of the recognition over, Elloie was introduced and more than once during the evening the young man's eyes wandered from the pale, refined features of the mother to the sweet, angelic face of the daughter, who without any regular feature, possessed the charm of a most beautiful and intellectual expression. It is useless to assure the reader that George Pierson did not go away the next day, nor the next, nor very many days afterward; indeed, not until the blushes of Elloie Ruthven betrayed her new and strange emotions. Then, when Christmas festivities set in, he went to Mrs. Ruthven and asked her for Elloie as a Christmas gift, and she answered, "Not now, George, but in the coming year. *Next* Christmas come for her, and you will find her constant and true to the holy vows she has given to you."

In vain the lover plead for a shorter delay. Her resolution was implacable, especially as her daughter entirely sanctioned her decision. So he went away, and Elloie whispered at parting:

"I shall watch for you, Christmas. If you fail I'll believe you have forgotten me, and will die." And she kissed him again and again, with passionate abandonment.

The winter wore on and Elloie was very happy. Her mother's health seemed improving, and she looked forward to the time when she might, in another home, hallow her with olden enjoyments and loving friends of refinement and cultivation. All these social advantages were denied her in her forest home. Spring and summer drifted by like songs in life's young time of love, but with the fall of the autumn leaves, Mrs. Ruthven's strength rapidly failed her, and ere November blasts were heard among the hills Maum Celia had summoned the nearest mountaineer from his home, fifteen miles distant, to perform the last sad rites of the dead.

Elloie did not yield to grief as she might have done one year before. But she changed much after her mother's death, and when Maum Celia, to rouse her from the apathy of voiceless sorrow into which she would sometimes fall, referred to the coming of George Pierson at holyday, she would shudder and moan dismally: "No, Maum Celia, he will not come. We have met our last time this side of the grave."

Nevertheless, as Christmas approached she seemed to revive somewhat, went about the house with a light footfall, arranging and re-arranging with delicate tact the little minutiae of household furniture to present the best appearance to her anxiously expected lover. This eager, morbid craving to meet him again deepened as the days progressed towards the close of the year, and Maum Celia trembled for the effect of a disappointment upon the now highly-strained nerves of the young girl's excitable, impulsive, womanly nature. Well she might! The nearer the days approached towards the appointed time the more feverishly restive she became. At last it was Christmas, the time he bade her expect him. The hours seemed leaden-footed, they crept on so slowly, but not one moment dropped amid the countless sands of time but she noted its fall. Twilight fell over the earth, and when darkness palled the mountains, her excitement grew to be almost frenzy. She stood with her face pressed against the window-pane, with her eyes staring afar off up the snow-capped hills, where the white mass blocked the pass down the mountains. At twelve o'clock Maum Celia, with tearful face, went in to her, and putting her aged arms up about the rounded shoulders said, coaxingly:

"Come, dearie, come, now; it's time to go to bed. You won't be able to sit up to-morrow, and then when Mr. Pierson comes he will be disappointed. Come, now!"

The staring eyes, the fixed features, met her gaze. "Don't talk that way to me, Maum Celia. *I can't sleep*, for I shall never see George again this side of the grave."

"Why not, honey?"

"Something down in my heart tells me so."

"Yes, you will; yes, you will. He's on the way; I feel it. But the night is dark and the road terrible. Then, too, we must remember that he can't come by the regular pass, but must skirt around the Black Tarn. You had forgotten this."

"The Black Tarn? Oh, God! Maum Celia, tell me what to do! *He* knows nothing of the pass, he'll be dashed in pieces. Oh, God! oh, God!"

And with a face ghastly with anguish, and hands clenched and rigid, before the old woman could prevent her, Elloie sprang away from her, out and on through the snow and darkness. Maum Celia attempted to catch her but failed, and stood there in her age and infirmity, wringing her hands, and moaning as the fierce anguish of the cry, "Oh, God! oh, God!" came back to her on the snow-freighted night-blasts, the fierce Euroclydons that swept desolation and death over many mountain-homes that terrible night.

Careless of danger and cold, remembering only the peril of her lover, Elloie battled with the storm and pitch-gloom, pausing only to draw breath, and find some landmark by which to cast about for the Black Tarn. At one of these moments of pause, a cry, a

supplication for assistance, came like the wail of a lost spirit from the mountains above her, "Help! oh! Elloie! Elloie!" The blood curdled in her veins, and again and again she endeavored to shout, but her voice had forsaken her, and her speechless lips only parted!

* * * * *

The sun shone out with a smile upon a snow-crowned world, and each drop of frozen water flashed back the rays of millions of radiant gems. Every tree and shrub bent beneath the feathery weight, and even the rough beetling crags, as if ashamed to look so gloomy, hid their faces in the same cold mantle of purity. A figure, kneeling on a cliff, looking downward over the Black Tarn, was discovered by some travelers two days afterwards, with eyes of stone, and a despairing agony frozen on the dead features. It was a woman. They took her to the nearest house, which proved to be her home, where Maum Celia sat in her room, foolishly crying for her "strayed lamb—Elloie!" When the corpse was carried into her presence she fell upon it with lamentations and weeping! The humane journey-men buried the body of the unfortunate girl near the Black Tarn—a deep precipice—where George Pierson had gone down from his happy Northern home to find a grave.

Who shall say his spirit called not to hers in its flight towards heaven? And that their souls, so strangely parted, met not above? Strong in her deathless love her heart could no longer throb when his had

ceased to live. "Elloie," was the simple name written upon the pine-board which marked the spot of her final resting-place; and it may be discovered now near the Snow-top mountain of Southwestern Virginia. The old woman, Maum Celia, was taken to Abingdon and lived but a short time after her removal from her home amid the hills. The citizens becoming interested in her, just about the time of her death, buried her with solemn honor to the dead.

"'Tis meet to find a tear for sorrow's tear,
For earth, alas, hath need of many now,
The blight of grief and melancholy dear,
Hath left its signet full upon the brow!
And many a heart hath marked its own slow wasting,
As soon its dreams of joy and beauty died,
The waters sweet of Hope's bright fountains tasting,
Till each fair drop had shrunk away and dried.
And, oh! the gush of bitterness that swept
Its lava-tides upon a first young love;
And o'er its desolation darkly wept,
Like clouds that hang upon the blue above."

LINES.

I've looked upon thy lofty brow
With thought and grace replete,
And in thy liquid eyes' bright depths
Where love and passion meet;
I've watched the crimson kisses play
Around thy flexile mouth,
Where breath-like clover-perfume floats
Or balm-breeze from the South.

I've marked the stately queenliness,
Of thy regal form and air;
I have counted every ripple
In thy brown and golden hair;
I've thrilled beneath the softest touch
Of thy dainty finger-tips,
And with a wild, strange passion,
I've pressed them to my lips;

And longed for burning words to tell,
How in tender homage true,
My woman's heart bowed gladly down,
In reverence to you:
Ah! I may to thee not whisper,
All the worship in my heart,
But in dreams may *angels* tell thee
How dear to me thou art.

LOUISVILLE, Oct., 1864.

You Say that "Change" is the Axis.

You say that "*Change*" is the axis
On which your fond life-dreams revolve?
Is *that* the way nature commands you
Her beautiful problem to solve?
Have you no higher ambition,
Than to float with a butterfly wing,
From each flower of radiant light
To the fragrance *another* may bring?

Is there not a God above us,
Who notes each soft whispered word?
Who counts at its falling each leaf?
And hears the sweet songs of each bird?
Art thou not indebted to Him
For this beautiful life of thine?
For the blossoms of fragrance that bloom,
And the sunbeams that goldenly shine?

Oh! how can you then lightly nod
At such pure and holy emotion,
As *constancy*, fresh from our God,
In the strength of woman's devotion?
Go! glean up more true, noble thoughts
In the golden cords of your heart;
Give a broader sweep to your soul,
And *little less* touching of *art*!

NEWBURY, N. C., 1865.

MY MOTHER.

My Mother! oh! blessed name that doth breathe
In music cadence all life's purity!
As I whisper it the sweet memories
Of a glad vanished past flood my soul
With paly-golden and rose-hued waves
Of liquid melody;

And fragrant blooms
Of radiance and bird-songs that blest me
In my glad childhood's days, come glinting back,
And my dreaming heart revels in sunshine
And silvery starbeams, till the present
Yields, with its restless shadowings of woe,
To the bright and beautiful argosies,
Floating from the dim crypt of by-gone years.

My Mother! from the grand mausoleum
Of the "long ago," she softly rises
Before my dimmed and yearning gaze of love;
I see her once again, the regal queen
Of social throngs, where gay and careless meet;
I hear her gentle voice in music-words
Glide on the waves of song and charm all hearts
To wondering muteness.

In the charmed precincts
Of home she doth seem a heaven-blessed angel
Bound down to earth by loving, human ties;
Now beside the sufferer's couch she bends
With healing in her eyes and angel smile
Which seems to kiss her arched and crimson lips
As sunshine sleeps upon a new-made grave,
So softly, sadly tender is its light.
Her brow is seamed with lines of thought and grief,
Banded by ebon braids where silver lines
Are intertwined like past and present dreams;
And clouds that float in silence to the West
Are not more grand than the majestic pride
Of her love-moulded form, which would add grace
To robes that royalty alone doth wear.

Anon a shadow falls athwart my soul;
And rising from its sombre gloom I see
A picture I fain would blot from memory,—
A darkened room, all draped in solemn white,
And 'neath a pall a rigid form is laid
Robed as in vestures for the grave;

The lids
Are closed above the loving, azure eyes;
And death has set his seal upon her brow:
The lips are cold as chiseled marble now,
And snowy hands of dainty touch are laid
Above the shroud that mocks their whiteness.

All,

All is still; the great heart ceased its throbbings;
Above this form I bend, too dumb for tears;
They tell me *she is dead*, and still I'm mute;
To me she lives as in the hallowed past.
Though her smiling grave is dust, my fond heart
Leans beyond this world, and looks above
Where memory is love!

Oh! my Mother!

Sweet guardian of my life's brightest hours,
And comforter in all the solemn griefs
Which my young life hath known,—in reverence
Too fond and deep for simple words to breathe
I bow before thy spirit-shrine of love!
Whate'er the future holds for me in life,
Far down the stream of thought will mem'ry turn,
With longing eyes, to days I've lived with thee;
And the mellow radiance which thy love
Hath haloed o'er my fondly-waiting soul,
Will, like the golden glow of old time's sun,
Never set at all.

collated. printed. 11. 1899.