



McCONNELL,

ST. LOUIS.

*Belle Peterson.*

ONE WORD, AND A TEAR;

—OR,—

THE WOUNDED DOVE.

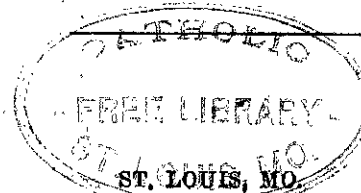
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THE STORY OF

Lenore Parolee.

3220

BY MISS BELLE PETERSON.



PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHORESS.

1875.

*Belle Peterson.*

## PREFACE.

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I NEED scarcely assure the Reader that the incidents upon which this book is founded, are extraordinary and strange; but they are true, and "Truth is strange—stranger than fiction."

The name and residence of Lenore Parolee are really fictitious, but, as to the narrative, there are thousands who will bear testimony to this true and interesting story. The author of this book is a native of North Carolina, and for some time has been a consistent member of the Presbyterian church of C——. She has cast her anchor in the "Future Great City, and now resides on one of our most popular streets. Our acquaintance with this young lady has been extremely limited, but bringing, as she does, many favorable recommendations, and exhibiting a marked purity of principle and character, we can make bold to assert, without the slightest apprehension of being contradicted, that she will meet with a liberal share of the public patronage, and that "ONE WORD AND A TEAR," will be fully appreciated by all those who read these pages.

The great object of the Author in presenting this book to the public, is to show the pernicious effects of infidelity, which wreck the happiness of thousands who fall beneath the poisonous arrow; to exhibit the gloomy agonies and hollow delusions of life; to contrast four of the most powerful passions that agitate the human heart—love, jealousy, ambition and revenge. In this case the

great struggle was between love and revenge. Love has an object and in this case, in the person of Lenore Parolée, it was pure and noble—and as the Reader glances over the light azure pages whose terms have been dictated by a sorrowing spirit, when she poured out her soul in tears for the one who betrayed her ardent love, may it never awake a pang in the heart, for hope will yet cast its glowing tints over the story.

Revenge has an object, and in the person of Lenore Parolee, it had a strong argument on which to sustain itself.

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## CHAPTER I.

## A CHILD OF SORROW.



Y dear reader,—if one I am honored with,—I do not present myself before the world as an authoress, but simply as a child of Sorrow;—and I fear the shadow that lies upon my heart will reflect upon this page of memory: for I am guarded by love and sorrow—my spirit treads silently the hal-  
lowed chamber of tears. And here I must crave your indulgence if I pass over the stormy and disastrous days of my wretched girlhood. Though I am unequal to the ornate style of writing, I can promise you will not find the story of my humble life devoid of the witchery of romance, or the excitement of stirring incident and thrilling adventure.

“But must I write to tell the tale?  
My tongue is feeble, weak;  
Oh! what can idle words avail,  
Unless the heart could speak?”

For no one can “estimate the depth and fullness of human love by sounding the yet untroubled pool of his own capacity for affection. A nicely strung, sympathetic instrument, may yield strains of melting woe, if the sigh of another's sorrows are wafted across its chords.”

I was left an orphan at the age of twelve. My mother's mind having become impaired when I was only seven years old, I was left alone to experience the cold charity of the world, while walking the thorny labyrinth of life, with neither father's nor mother's tender care—no one to guide my young footsteps aright; none to wipe away the falling tears which have so often stained my pillow.

Now let me give you a brief history of my mother. Her maiden name was McClain, cousin to Mary E. McClain, who so distinguished herself in the revolutionary struggle.

She was on the other side—Horton—first cousin to William R. Horton, Vice-President. From the McClain side she inherited a very high degree of patriotism and pride, a love of show and pomp, which would naturally create a love of money, though not amounting to avarice. She was an honest woman, and if you will visit the lunatic asylum at Raleigh, you will find a pure and noble hearted woman, though her hair has been silvered with the frosts of sixty-five winters, and trouble has left its seal upon her face.

From the Horton side she inherited an elevated sentiment, a love of justice and right, all that was admirable and noble, but with it, the awful malady, insanity, which, as I have before stated, left me at the age of seven ten thousand times worse off than if I were, in its true sense, an orphan child; not only without moral training, except the little I caught from observation, but subjecting me to the hardest trials and severest afflictions. Very often

we missed her in our unhappy family group, not knowing whether she had drowned herself or in some other way had committed suicide; while at other times my own life was endangered, being inferior to her in strength, and unable to manage her.

This constant dread and ever-present danger constituted one of the trials of my childhood. I have often thought: "Oh! how great are my misfortunes? While my companions are blessed with fathers, and mothers, and all in life to make them happy;—death to me would be a sweet relief." Then I would with Cowper, console myself by saying:

"God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform."

In 1861 I was sent to C—— College by my guardian, Mr. John R. Graham, who took a great deal of interest in my welfare. And here my feelings will not permit me to repress the sincere acknowledgment of the depth of my gratitude to my dear old guardian, for the many favors he has so generously conferred upon me.

I remained at college one year and a half. This was the happiest period of my childhood. But those days are gone, those sweet May days of life, when the halcyon built her nest upon the waves of life and the snowy sails were filled with odorous breezes. Mr. L. C. Elworth, principal of C—— Institute, was the orphan's friend; he was a faithful teacher, a man of remarkable modesty, delicate sensibility and retiring deportment—in the church, a bright and shining light—in the world, a ripe scholar

and polished gentleman. But his frail body, worn out with disease, has resumed its place in the earth, and his triumphant spirit, released from the encumbering flesh, has entered happily upon that rest which remaineth for the people of God.

It seems that I can even now see the smiles playing around his mouth, as the word "Perfect" greeted the eager members of the class. But God saw fit to take him from the children here below, and unite him with His children in heaven.

At the close of the session of 1862, we had a fine examination and concert at night, notwithstanding our country was then shaken by the storm of war, insulted by invasion, threatened with conquest, and we were preparing to resist its rudest shock. Darkly and swiftly gathered the sulphurous thunder-clouds from every quarter of the political horizon, charged with war and death, soon to fall upon our devoted land in a rain of blood. Brother against brother, father against son, hands were grasping swords destined ere long to stain with blood nature's placid face and unsullied garments. Fast and furious rushed opposing foemen, North and South, onward to the sanguinary field of civil strife. I then returned to my unhappy home to take charge of the domestic affairs which had been left in care of the servants during my absence.

## ORPHAN'S LAMENTATION.

I ne'er knew the bliss to have,  
A mother kind and true;  
To cheer me when I would be grave,  
Nor chide when I was rude,

I never felt upon my cheek,  
Her soft and gentle kiss;  
And remember not of hearing her speak,  
In tones of tenderness.

She never came at morning light  
To hear my waking sound,  
Nor when I lay me down to sleep,  
To close the curtain round.

She was never near me when I played  
Out in the open air;  
Nor when I knelt me down to pray,  
Beside my little chair.

I see other girls around,  
A mother's fondness prove;  
But I can never hear the sound,  
Of a fond mother's love.

I cannot think what I have done,  
I was ever kind, and true:  
Why can I not with others run,  
And kiss a mother too?

Oh! where is my mother gone?  
They say I have one too,  
And if she only had her mind,  
She would be kind and true.

But alas, she is gone from me,  
And I can never know her love,  
And she can never quell the storm,  
Beating down her household dove.

In yonder quiet burial ground,  
 Beneath a cedar tree,  
 There rises up a flowered mound  
 Beautiful to see.

My father's dust is lying there,  
 Beneath a sweet perfumed bed;  
 A monthly rose blooms at his feet,  
 Sweet carols at his head.

I lightly tread by his rural tomb,  
 And o'er it plant some gentle flowers;  
 Sweet symbol of his spirit's bloom,  
 In a far brighter land than ours.

I dried my tears as my fancy roamed  
 To the realms by angels trod;  
 I knew my father was thence removed,  
 To gather flowers in the garden of God.

I know he is an angel bright,  
 With raiment white and fair,  
 Who dwells in yonder cloudless land,  
 But I shall know him there.

## CHAPTER II.

### ORPHAN'S TRIALS.



AM not writing a journal of daily transactions, but rather throwing into a connective narrative such important incidents and events of my life as will be most likely to interest the reader, and conduce to the denouement of my story.

It was on the night of the tenth of April, 1864, that I was aroused from my slumbers by the roaring of fire and volumes of smoke which filled my chamber. It was about midnight when this disastrous scene met my gaze. I sprung from my bed in agonizing terror, and threw open the window blinds that I might get breath, for a huge volume of stifling smoke rolling in and almost suffocated me, while through it I beheld the lurid glare of flames thrusting their fiery tongues in every direction, and the heavens were lit up by the blaze of my mother's house. My first thought was bestowed upon my mother, who was in an adjoining room. "God help me!" I cried, as I darted through the forked flames to rescue her from a horrible death. I then ran for the servants, but to my great disappointment, found none upon the premises except women and children. We saved a few articles, and but very few indeed. The neighbors soon came to our assistance, but too late to be of any service. The



house fell in in a few minutes, and my dear old home soon crumbled into ashes.

Morning came, and the sun rose in its splendor and looked down as if mocking upon the ruins and its distressed inmates, while the old chimneys were yet standing as a token of destruction.

Imagine how I felt, a girl of sixteen, with the cares and responsibilities of a deranged mother resting upon my feeble efforts, without a roof to shelter us from the cold April winds, except the kitchen, in which we were very glad to take refuge. We remained in that situation for some time. At last we succeeded in fixing up a comfortable house to live in by moving some of the out-buildings which escaped the conflagration. And success seemed to crown our feeble efforts, and the God who had promised to be the widow's friend, and a father to the fatherless, seemed to lend a listening ear to the cries and wails of all the throng of orphans of our horror-stricken land.

Now we were stifled with the sulphurous smoke of civil war, and the hissing sound of hostile shots were whistling in our ears—fire and sulphur had burned the very earth, and its ashes were arid. The air of subjugation was dark and dismal, and all the rivers of plenty had been dried up by the invaders of our soil, who swept away the small portion that was not consumed by the flames.

Want, want, want! Cries, suffering groans; while crime was rampant all around us.

While the troops were wading through the country like

an army of locusts, destroying our property and laying waste our homes, there were many parties given in our neighborhood, to which I received pressing invitations, but with a true Southern heart and patriotism I refused to attend, notwithstanding the great displeasure it caused to many who were otherwise my friends; and not a few rough men clothed in the garments of the soldier, which of itself should create a gentleman, even threatened to pierce me with their bayonets, and to burn my mother's house, but I told them to burn if they wished to, that I had rather die in its flames than disgrace the Southern cause.

On a certain night when I expected to be called to attend one of these parties, I crawled in under the kitchen floor and lay upon the cold earth, taking for my pillow a small mound or bank of clay, and with visions of horror hovering near, with no light except Heaven's lamps shining out of the dark profound of heaven, I lay there and watched the sleepless hours roll round till morn.

As I had no other resort, I sought this wretched hiding place for the purpose of secreting myself from the ruffian soldiers who of course were to be my escorts.

"Ask me not what the maiden feels  
Left in that dreadful hour alone,  
Perchance her reason stoops, or reels;  
Perchance a courage, not her own,  
Braces her mind to desperate tone."

But to my great relief the Confederate troops came upon them, and they had to fly to their camp, leaving behind them a set of miserable girls who for a time had thrown off the Southern banner.

### CHAPTER III.

#### A TRIP TO VIRGINIA.

**T**HE war was over. When the danger was past and my system gave promise of recovering from the shock that followed in rapid succession, I set out to Virginia to visit my brother, thinking it would a relief to my storm-tossed soul. It was in early spring; and peace was upon the earth, as though the Arcadian age had come back, and sin, and war, and death had been forever banished by the sunbeam.

The rivers wearied by the fierce rains of winter, by intruding snows and ice, rolled slumberously murmuring their own lullaby. And the zephyrs still whispered to the flowers and trees, and the leaves basked in the spring sunshine, verdant with joy; and the cattle that had been compelled to make their retreat into the swamps and marshes to protect themselves from the musket balls of the hungry soldiers, ruminated lazily, and browsed indolently with a wondrous passive enjoyment in their great, placid brown eyes; the birds caroled estatically and were a rustling among the trees, as the gentle zephyrs wandered among them, whispering of the glorious summer day that was at hand.

After a week's journey, and much fatigue, I arrived safely at my brother's house in Salem, Va., and I have

often thought since that it was through the mercy of God alone that I was permitted to reach my journey. The car on which I was a passenger was crossing a very high trestle near the city of Lynchburgh, which had been burnt by the federal soldiers during the war, and had only been temporarily rebuilt. The engine had not proceeded far, when the great wooden structure with a crash came down to the earth, and the bold engineer and fireman, with eight other passengers, were crushed beneath its ruins. As it happened, the coach which the ladies occupied was the hindmost, which providentially became uncoupled and was left standing upon the track unharmed, while the passengers were in the wildest state of excitement, and whose screams of terror rang like death-knells through the cliffs of Virginia.

It is not my intention to detail the history of occurrences, or describe scenes that are calculated to fill the mind with sorrow, so I will go on with my story.

Upon my arrival I was very much surprised at finding my brother's house draped in mourning, while my brother and sister were seated near a table, and before them lay a manuscript blotched with tears, and others were making their retreat from their eyes.

"Oh! sister, too late, too late, why did you not come sooner? he is gone, he is gone," was all the information I could ascertain of the scene before me. As soon as I could release myself from the sorrow-stricken sister, I picked up the tear-stained sheets that were lying upon the table and read, which gave me sufficient explanation:

## OBITUARY.

"ALPHONSO PAROLEE—Only child of Cornelius T. and Ophelia M. Parolee. Died of brain fever on the 21st of May, aged five years, five months, and eight days.

Could the skill of the physician, the agony of the parents, or their unwearied watchings and devoted care have availed, he would not have died

Bright and beautiful was our cherished darling, possessing in an eminent degree all those qualities of mind and heart which belong so peculiarly to early childhood. Frank and confiding, all his little thoughts and feelings were poured with lovely simplicity in his parent's ears; truthfulness was stamped upon his noble brow, but ah, those lovely qualities only endeared him to us more; and the ways of Providence to our darkened minds seems so inscrutable, that this, the only household treasure, should be taken when his mind seemed daily unfolding some new beauty, some bright promise of future excellence; but God knew the adverse winds of earth would but blight the purity of this spotless flower, and he hath in mercy translated it in his garden of love. The mind of this precious child was early impressed with religious feelings; when his infant lips could only lisp the prayer at his mother's knee, he loved to hear about the Saviour. His painful and lingering illness he bore with the sweetest patience. The night before his death, when his anguished parents no longer controlled their grief, looking at them tenderly, he said "Good-by ma, good-by pa," and said he was going up to that other home, and repeated his prayer several times over, and received the parting kiss from his parents. At six o'clock in the morning, death was settling upon his lovely form; a halo of glory seemed to encircle his dying pillow, and we almost felt the presence of the angels as they bore his little ransomed spirit to the bosom of the Saviour.

We miss you, sadly miss you, precious child; your once happy home is desolate; its brightest light extinguished. No more will it resound with the joyous tread of your little feet, and our hearts are crushed and broken. The anguish of your parents is unutterable, when they think their bright and beautiful boy hath

gone from them in this world forever. Yes, we have laid thee in thy little grave, my darling. Warm hearts and gentle hands have borne you from us, kind strangers—Heaven bless them—clustered around your lovely bed, covering it with bright, fragrant flowers, sweet incense to your memory; but the eye of faith will follow you to your radiant home in Heaven. Yet, come to us dear one; come in robes of angel purity; hover over us with your shining wings; tell us of the blissful glories of thy beautiful home, of the golden harps now waked to heavenly music by the soft touch of thy gentle finger. Oh! lure the hearts of thy sad, stricken parents from this poor world:

"Till risen with Christ at last they'll be,  
Beautiful cherubs with God and thee."

As my eyes ran over the manuscript, my own tears fell and mingled with those of the bereaved parents.

My stay in Virginia was very pleasant, notwithstanding the dangers and excitements I had to undergo. I was very much pleased with the country, the people are very kind and hospitable. I had to lay over in Lynchburg several days, on account of the cars not making their proper connection.

Lynchburg is a beautiful and important place; the city is picturesque and pleasantly situated on the banks of the James River, and is in full view of the Blue Ridge. Any one who can stand on the balconies and survey the beautiful valley crowded with happy homes and busy marts, interspersed with green fields and blooming orchards, set in a frame of distant hills and woods, and overhung with the soft haze with which summer suffuses the landscape, without being filled with a noble joy, might stand unmoved in the halls of the seraphim.

I remained with my brother until September, and with it came thoughts of home and mother-like Alpine torrents upon my heart, and the touching words of the dying soldier, "Who will care for mother now," haunted me day and night, until my heart replied, "I will care for mother now;" and in a few days I was prepared to set out on my journey homeward. I was placed under the protection of the Captain by my brother, who was very kind and attentive, and to make a short story I arrived safely at my home in North Carolina.

What a charming word is home, it carries with it a kind of magic—a sacredness. It is a sound charming to the ear as the sound of the plaintive lute borne out on the still evening air. How true did the poet sing the sentiment of the soul in his "Sweet, sweet home!" He touched a chord which has vibrated in every clime inhabited by man. To the civilized, the barbarous and the enlightened, to all is home a sacred word; it is the place in all this world where hearts should be sure of each other. It is the place where we tear off that mask of guarded suspicious coldness, which the world forces us to wear in self-defense, and where we pour out the unreserved communications of full and confiding hearts. It is the spot where expressions of tenderness gush out without any dread of ridicule. Let a person travel where he will, Home is the place to which his heart untrammelled fondly turn. He is to divide all pain; he is to double all pleasures there. A happy home is a single spot of

rest which a person has upon this earth for the cultivation of their noblest sensibility.

First if you wish to make your home happy sow the little seed of love and tenderness. Endeavor to make all those around you happy by loving words and gentle manners, even as the sunbeam is composed of millions of minute rays, the home light must be constituted of little tenderness, kindly looks, sweet laughter, gentle words, loving counsel; it must not be like the torch-blaze of unnatural excitement, which is easily quenched, but like the serene, chastened light which burns as safely in the dry east wind as in the stillest atmosphere. Let each bear the others burden the while; let each cultivate the mutual confidence which is a gift capable of increase and improvement, and soon it will be found that kindness will spring up on every side, displacing constitutional unsuitability, want of mutual knowledge, even as we have seen sweet violets and primroses dispel the gloom of the gray sea-rock. If you wish to have a happy home,—

Sow this little seed my friends,  
Its fruit is rich and rare,  
Wherever it spreads its golden leaves  
'Tis summer always there.

And as the seasons roll around  
And chilling winds arise,  
I love to go and breathe where blooms  
This flower of paradise.

It is a gift that God has given  
To radiate our way to Heaven,

*Lenore Parolee.*

Wherever it sheds its curtain round  
Peace and harmony there is found.

The lowliest heart with love may beat,  
The humblest soul aspire  
And write on earth a record sweet  
That seraphs may admire.

In the little wood-vine cottage,  
Where this little seed is sown,  
There is music in each voice  
Of the loved ones at home.

It cheers the weary traveler  
To see such perfect bliss,  
It cheers the heart oppressed with care.—  
Who would not love a home like this?

## CHAPTER IV.

## THE TWO ORPHANS AT THE GRAVE.

**T**HE first to greet me was Edney, our good and faithful servant, who seemed more than rejoiced at my arrival, for she threw her arms around me, and dragged me out of the carriage as though I was nothing more than a bag of potatoes; at the same time exclaiming: "God bless you, Miss Lenore; I knowed you'd come, for I have prayed to the blessed Lord every night to keep you from all harm, and send you back to us safe and sound; and here you are, bless the Lord. I knowed you'd come soon, for I could not keep my mind off of you; I dropped the dish-rag a dozen times this morning, and I thought the old rooster would split his throat." I could not help smiling at Edney's superstitious remarks, and passed into the house.

My dear mother, who had been aroused from her reverie by Edney's loud laughter, rushed to me with open arms, to receive her little wanderer back again, while these words were whispered in her ear:

"Rock me to sleep mother, rock me to sleep." It was the first time since my mother's insanity, that she seemed to love me, or care anything for me; and that love was as a fountain of water to a thirsty soul, which

sent an eternal noontide of love and blessedness, flowing and re-flowing through my whole being. I loved my mother dearly, though I have never known a mother's love; that awful thief, insanity, had robbed me of its treasures.

Those who have never been deprived of that pure fountain—a mother's love, whose affectionate heart, whose tender look, and whose gentle motions were ever with them—can never know the bitterness to feel to be without a mother—that the gentle voice is silent forever; that that well in the desert of life—a mother's heart—is forever closed to us; that the protecting angel of our steps, is departed from us, never to return. We can never find an eye as tender, a hand as gentle, or a heart as kind as her's. No love will ever be so strong as that which she bears for us. It was she who nursed us in our infancy, and soothed with pleasure our feverish cries, when all other ears have grown weary of them. She cooled the aching brow, changed the heated pillow, and answered our countless calls, till the stars paled in the heavens, and yet no repining words escape her lips. It was her who watched over us in our childhood, taught our lisping tongue its first words, and our tottering feet to bear our unsteady weight. She was happy if our childish heart was full of joy; or if our brow was clouded, with loving words and gentle manner, she was ever ready to disperse it. In youth she guided the feet that were so prone to err, into the paths of peace and wisdom; and when we go forth into the world, if we are in prosperity, many

hearts will be thrown at our feet; but so soon as fortune frowns, these friends will desert us for one more favored by fortune. Then will a mother's love shine the brighter; and in the depth of her devotion make us forget that the world is cold and cheerless; that friends are false; that this life is full of disappointments.

I spent the most of my time at home with my mother during the winter months, but when spring made its appearance, with her serene and gentle influence, it diffused a more vivid spirit of enjoyment through all my faculties; and my young heart, like the season of spring, was resurrected from death, unto life and happiness; and my dreary and pathetic spirit, yearned for something more reviving than what it had received in the dull and weary hours at home with my mother and maid; so I went to my cousin Jasper Claton's, to spend a few months with my cousin Mento; and a ministering angel she was to me too; for amid all my sorrows and bereavements, none have proved more faithful than she.

She has stood by me with the fidelity of a mother; when the billows of adversity were rolling around me, and the dark and stormy clouds were gathering thick and fast, with none to soothe the anguish of my heart, none to cheer the hours of sadness, and whisper in my ear the gentle words of love and friendship, she has proved one of those ready, judicious counselors, and steady, untiring and devoted friends.

How few ever feel the value of a friend. When enemies gather around; when sickness falls on the heart;

when the settled sadness of the soul, like death itself, comes down; when the world is dark and cheerless, then is the time to test the value of a friend. The heart that has been proved like the true gold, redoubles its energies when a friend is in danger. He who turns from suffering or distress, betrays his hypocrisy, and proves his own self-interest. Yet the true friend feels that his kindness is appreciated, and has not been thrown away. Real fidelity may be rare, but it does exist, and its power is seen and felt. The good, the kind, the generous, are around us everywhere, if we would only seek them out.

I remained with my cousin Mento several months; I then returned home to spend the summer with my mother, as I felt it my duty to spend as much of my time as I possibly could with her, without injuring my own mind, or impairing my health; for my mother's mind was so much impaired, there was no pleasure or satisfaction in her company.

My home was desolate, and life was nothing but solitude and sorrow. I was isolated and alone, with no kind voice to whisper one word of consolation to my unhappy heart, my maid, only, excepted. My mother did not seem to love me, or any one that she loved previous to her insanity; and like all other insane persons, took her best friends to be her worst enemies. Once she imagined that I was not her child, and said that some one had taken her child away, and had put me in its place, and tried several times to take my life, but was prevented by my nurse, who always slept in my room,

One night she awoke, and my poor mother was bending over me with my father's pocket-knife open in her hand, and in the act of cutting my throat, while I was wrapt in slumber, unconscious of the horrible death that was hanging over me. Edney sprang up and took away the deadly weapon, and asked why she wished to kill her child. "It is not my child," she replied, "some one has taken my child away, and put her in its place," at the same time ringing her hands as one in wild despair.

This conversation aroused me, and as I opened my eyes, she thrust into my face the torch which she held in her hand, for the purpose of giving her light to execute this horrible deed. And even now, it seems that I can hear her calling for her darling little Lenore that some one had taken away, and see myself as I lay sobbing upon my little bed, with my hands clenched, and my heart almost bursting with grief, crying, "Mother, do not forsake me; I am your Lenore, your darling baby!"

My visits to my cousin Mento's were neither few nor far between, and it was there I met my cousin Dora Elworth. She resided in Alabama, and came to North Carolina on a visit to her relatives.

Dora was very pretty—a perfect brunette; jet black hair, sparkling black eyes, and rosy cheeks; and in olden times would have graced the courts of Solomon, and have the admiration of the wise king himself.

I had spent several days with my cousin, and was now on my return home, accompanied by my cousin Dora.

We had quite a gay time, and found a great many funny things to laugh at; yet there was a coldness existing between us—we did not like each other very well—and for what cause I know not. I did not envy my cousin Dora's beauty, and if I was not blessed with a fairy's form and an angel's face, I felt perfectly reconciled in regards to good looks. I was provided with a pair of big white eyes with a blue spot in the middle, and blue always struck my fancy. I felt consoled as I thought the matter over; if I was not pretty I had a good appetite, while my cousin had to pass through the dreadful ordeal in swallowing a wad of iron pills every day before dinner, that she might be able to devour one biscuit and a cup of tea.

All day we had been gathering honeysuckles and wild flowers, or chasing the honey-bees that were hurrying to and fro, delighted at the idea of finding a bee-tree, and robbing it of its treasure. But we did not succeed in our happy anticipations, and growing heartless and weary we turned our steps homeward. But instead of going home,—

Through my father's grave-yard's lone retreat,  
Our meditation led;  
We walked with slow unconscious feet,  
Above the sleeping dead.

And by his lonely resting place,  
We stood in waking dreams  
Of the pale cold form that slumbers there,  
Beneath those boughs of evergreen.

When tired of the scenes and strife,  
When weary of the daily care,  
I often seek this lonely spot,  
And fondly nestle there.

It is there I sometimes pluck,  
Flowers, sweet and gay;  
And often there my spirit dwells,  
When my frame is far away.

While gazing upon this hallowed spot,  
The dearest face I know,  
Seems to flit for an instant before my sight,  
As I had seen it years ago.

But before I can address him,  
Ere the word of love is spoke,  
Quick he vanishes from his place,  
And the shadow spell is broke.

It is a strange mysterious truth,  
That drives me to despair  
To seek my father to embrace,  
And find no father there.

After plucking a few flowers which I had planted to decorate the hallowed spot, the two orphans knelt in silence by the lonely resting-place of the the silent dead, showering a flood of tears at his feet, and watering the violets and buttercups that sprung in freshness above his last narrow dwelling-place. Then for the first time I realized that I loved her, for she was an orphan too. Her parents had been snatched from her side by the hand of death, and were lying beneath the sod; while she was in a land of strangers, and like myself, left to the cold charity of the world, with no one to look to for protection,



save the All-seeing Eye, who has promised in mercy to be the orphan's friend; for no orphan finds a heart so true, as the one over which the green sod is pressing.

And now we communed;—each unfolding with the utmost freedom, secrets in her own history, scarcely known to any but herself. And as we talked and let out the fulness of our hearts, every barrier melted away, and each felt that a valued friend had been gained in the other.

How long we remained in this hallowed spot where we had retired to hold this feast of friendship, it would be difficult to say. Time flies unheeded at such interviews, for the heart takes dominion, and interest, and dull formalities, and even rigid duty, for a while must stand aside.

We talked long and fervently, telling each other of the joys and sorrows of our past life, and sympathizing with each other in our bereavements, until the sun hid himself behind the western hills, and bathed them in his subdued splendor, with which he sets in spring.

Spring is the season dearest to the recollection of man, inasmuch as it is associated with all that is pure, and innocent, and beautiful, in the transient annals of his early life. There is always a mournful and pathetic spirit mingled with our remembrance of it, which resembles the sorrow that we feel for some beloved individual whom death withdrew from our affections at that period of existence when youth had nearly completed its allotted limits, and the promising manifestations of all that was

virtuous and good, were filling the parental hearts with happy hopes which futurity held out to them. As the heart, we repeat, of such a parent goes back to brood over the beloved memory of their early lost, so do our recollections go back with mingled love and sorrow, to the tender associations of spring, which may, indeed, be said to perish and pass away in its youth.

The evening was indeed a lovely one, it was one of these sweet May days, the brightest that some ever remember to have seen. May is in general a beautiful month; it has its squalls, and showers, and sometimes its chilly days, but it has a bright sun that sends gladdening warmth not only upon the opening flower, but even to the very heart of man. It has sparkling days, such as inspire hope, and love, and kindly feelings, they thaw away the frost of winter, and free nature from her icy chain. Few can feel gloomy on a bright, warm May-day.

After my cousin and I had plucked a few more flowers to make a bouquet for my mother we departed. The little birds had ceased their warbling, and as we closed the gate behind us each little one would hide himself in the leaves of the multiflora that were entwined around the grave. And we left them to repose with the dead.

Dora spent several days with me, and then returned home to her cousins; I was then left, with no one but my deranged mother, and maid, for my companions. I was my mother's only daughter and had never been blest with a sisters love, that love which my young and forlorn

heart had so much yearned for, and would think it over and over again to myself, if I had only a sister how delightful it would be. The days would not be so long and dreary; life would not be so gloomy, and my whole existence would be a living poem. But, alas, I had been destined to travel my sore and rugged path alone; and I am often forced, in order to escape the pain of present reflections, to make a melancholy struggle once more to entrance myself in the innocent dreams of childhood.

In a few weeks I received an invitation to attend the celebration of the marriage nuptials between my new found friend, Dora Elworth, and the worthy Edgar Mansfield, of North Carolina.

The wedding day came, and a very large assemblage of guests was assembled at my cousin Jasper Claton's to witness the happy marriage. Every one was as merry as the marriage bell. She was escorted by the wedding guests to her new and happy home, where she was received by his mother, in the capacity of a daughter, with a warm and hearty welcome. We will here leave her to her happiness.

## CHAPTER V.

### FIRST LOVE.

"Oh, mirth where is thy joy?

Oh, pleasure how far art thou removed from real happiness."



T was on the morning of the 16th of September; in the fall of 1869, that I had returned from a gay party, and was seated at the window, that these sober thoughts came rushing to my mind. I sat for some time as one in a trance, buried in deep meditation; brooding over the gloomy prospects of life, that hung in thick masses over my head, and trying to penetrate the thick cloud that darkened my sky and shadowed the way along which my feet had to tread, the trials and hardships I had to endure, and the rugged path I had to travel, without a friendly hand-post to guide my lonely way, with nothing to depend upon except my education; for when the crash came that swept away the property which my father had left me, I was totally unprepared to brave the trials poverty always entails.

It seemed that the fate that ruled the mighty world had set its face irredeemably against me; for everything that I possessed was swept away by the war, and I was left penniless. I had been busy the day before packing my trunk as I was to take charge of a little school in a few

days some fifteen or twenty miles from home. I was young and unexperienced, but when poverty, that hideous monster, stared me in the face it strengthened my energies, and made me feel that I was capable of earning my living by the sweat of my brow; and I meekly bowed to my fate. Some individuals look upon labor as a curse, but how can that be so regarded which gives clearness to the intellect, vigor to the constitution, and strength to the nerve? Lost in amazement at the wonderful activity of all the creations of God, the wise man exclaimed, "all things full of labor."

The earth upon which we stand that seems so firm and immovable, is turning upon its axis with a speed of a thousand miles per hour, and making its revolutions around the sun at a rate of twenty miles per second, accomplishing its journey of more than 6,000,000,000 of miles in a single year; if we look upon the ocean with its untiring ebb and flow, with its swift under and upper currents, with its surface agitated by ten thousand keels, ruffled by the passing breeze, and lashed into fury by the storm, 'tis but a type of the ceaseless unrest above and below, behind and before, to right and to left, pervading all space and continuing for all times; the brook hastening to the creek, the creek hastening to the river, the river hastening to mingle its waters with the heaving tossing, never-idle billows of the sea; each too sings its song of labor as it hurries upon its allotted way, the noisy prattle among rocks, the roar down the cataract and the far resounding swell of the great deep.

The Christian heaven consist in untiring energy and perpetual activity in glorifying God, the throne of the awful Jehovah; even here there is no rest except from sin, sorrow and pain.

And they rest not day and night saying "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty," which was and is to come." "Therefore are they before the throne of God and serving him day a night in His temple."

This train of thought leads to the practical conclusion, that it becomes the creature to imitate the energy and activity of the glorious Creator. He Himself has proposed His own example to us. Because He worked six days in creating our system, He has left us the command: "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work." He who came to fulfill all righteousness said, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." And what shall we say of the spirit of God "brooding over all things, energizing, vitalizing—yea, even interceding for the slothful and wicked servant, with groanings, which cannot be uttered? Therefore let us not be so proud and presumptuous, as to be ashamed of that which our Lord and Master did.

Oh! that we all could view this matter as did the poet when he exclaimed—

"Domestic happiness, thou only bliss  
Of paradise that has survived the fall,  
Thou art the nurse of virtue in thine arms,  
The smiles appearing as in fact she is  
Heaven-born and destined to the skies again."

In a few days I took charge of my school, and I am happy to inform my readers that my first experience was crowned with much success; my scholars were very good and agreeable, and seemed to love me very much, and my employers were very much pleased with my progress.

During vacation I visited my friends and relatives, after spending a portion of my time with my mother. One among the circle of friends that I visited was a widowed aunt—wife of my uncle Samuel McClain, and who was formerly the widow Brandon. My uncle lived ten years after his marriage, and died leaving behind him two little boys, Charley and Esther.

My aunt seemed to think a great deal of me, and objected to my leaving her; and insisted upon my staying and teaching the children. Eventually I consented, and took the two little orphans under my charge for the salary of ten dollars per month, little dreaming that there I should meet my fate; there to learn the first lesson the world had to offer me: the perusal of that page, so sweet, and yet so bitter.

A mystery it is, how the sudden revelations of love come to us in this life. Clouds whirl by unnoticed and silent until an electric flash reveals the wonder of attraction. So with hearts, we pass and repass as strangers, until in each is lighted a ray which reflects upon the other.

My aunt had one son by her former husband whose name was Oscar Brandon. Oscar and I were great friends; for he was very kind to me, and did all that

was in his power to promote my happiness. He never refused one request, nor gave me one unkind word, and would talk to me with the fidelity of a brother. He noted every shade of sorrow in my face; and by a thousand demonstrations testified his unspoken sympathies. When souls communicate together in sympathy how blissful it is! When a secret attraction, as if by magnetism draws them together, how they gaze and love the more deeply the longer they examine! Nature has the same charm for both. The pure azure of the heavens, the balsamic flowers, the blooming landscape, the silver light of the moon, the lofty aspiration of the mind, spiritual beauty, odor, goodness, innocence, virtue, all these effect both in the same manner.

How delightful it is to them to unlock, to each other their innocent thoughts; how readily do they comprehend them; how speedily does each feeling find an answering emotion in the heart of the other. There is no great thought, no beautiful perception, no joyful hope, no noble deed that they do not share in common. There is no dissonance in the one which is not changed into harmony by the other.

But finally I could perceive that Oscar was dearer to me than a friend, and the love that we cherished for each other was something more than sympathetic feeling. It was love at first sight, and only love; casting its rosy spell over my pathway, and my heart was attuned to its exquisite melody; a love amounting to idolatry; and each brings its own retribution.

He had awakened every feeling of love my heart had ever known; and our hearts were woven together by a thousand unseen chords. Ah, I look back upon that fond tranquil time of my life, with bitterness in my soul, that bitterness of regret which is sorrow's crown of sorrow—the remembrance of happier days.

How swiftly the moments went by; how devotedly I grew to love Oscar Brandon; how proud I was to believe—alas, poor mistaken child that I was—that I, and only I, possessed his unbounded confidence; that to me alone, he was contented to show his hope, his aspirations, his hidden labors; that in my presence only, he laid aside his reserve, and spoke out of the very fullness and depth of his thoughts, hiding nothing from me, making me proprietor of every thought and passion that occupied his mind. But there came at last a time when this pleasant delusion was to be done away, and I was to learn—oh, by what a bitter experience—how far I had been from sharing the real secret of Oscar's heart. I was aware that the love that was existing between Oscar and myself, would never be extinguished, and would continue to grow as long as we remained with each other; and as I had considered and re-considered the matter, I thought it proper to separate, as I knew my aunt's disposition, and was confident that she would not hear to our union, for I was poor, and she was a lover of money, and worshiped it more than she did the true God. She held on with an iron grasp to every accumulating dollar; a selfish calculation in every plan; an absorbing interest in one only thought,

the shining ore, which builds around all human sympathies its walls of glittering adamant; which cares not for the love or hate of man; which never starts a tear for any joy or sorrow that its fellows feel, nor sends a wish beyond the glittering heap of shining dust.

One day I proposed to her that I should stop teaching; and excused myself by saying that I was tired, and could not bear the confinement. But as she was not aware of the love that was existing between Oscar and myself, she would not hear to my leaving, and insisted upon me staying with her, and teaching the children one more session; and said that the spirit of my poor dead uncle could not rest, and was hovering around me day and night, pleading with me to teach his little orphans. This intelligence created no little excitement in my nervous system; for I could not bear the idea of having the dead wandering around me with their grim faces; especially in the black and gloomy hours of night, when I was already afraid of my own shadow.

None of my intelligent readers, I presume, would feel disposed to charge me with any tendency to superstition. That I felt its influence, however, was a fact. On finding myself wakeful, restless, and uneasy, one dreary night at the hour of two, as the rain pelted the window-blinds, and the wind moaned among the trees that threw their shadowy branches over the house and gave a character of extraordinary gloom and solitude to the place, I began to experience that vague and undefined terror which steals over the mind from an involuntary appre-

hension of the supernatural. A singular degree of uneasiness came over me ; I coughed, hemmed, in order to break the death-like stillness in which I lay. I covered up my head, stuck my thumbs in my ears to shut out all sound, and tried to compose myself to sleep ; but this only increased my terror, until my hair fairly stood upon my head, and my excitement was nearly as high as excitement go, when I thought I heard a step, a heavy, solemn, unearthly step, that sounded as if it was approaching my bed. Without having the power to restrain myself, I followed with my eyes this symbolical tread as it seemed to approach me, although I heard the tramp, yet I could not for the moment see anything in the shape of earthly figure or form, from which I could resolve what I had heard into a natural sound. At length, as I lay almost dissolved in terror I thought that an indistinct or rather an unsubstantial figure in the shape of a woman was standing in a stooping posture at the foot of my bed. At the same time I was seized by a violent shaking of the limbs and the bed on which I lay shook as though an earthquake had rent the solid foundation. Upon this I arose and leaped into my aunt's bed which was some distance from my own ; I never was much of a hand for jumping, but at this instant every spring in me filled its office ; on reaching the bed I perceived my aunt crawling in on the other side. "Why what on earth is the matter?" said she, as I lay there with the quilt wrapped around my head, and panting for breath, while the perspiration bursted from every pore.

"Oh !" Aunt Fibby, said I, "I am frightened almost to death," and told her what I had seen and felt.

"Oh !" said she, "it is nothing but the spirit of your uncle Samuel ; he knows you are going to leave us, and does not want you to go, he wants you to stay and teach his little children ; you know your uncle thought a great deal of you before he died, and that is why he is so anxious for you to teach them." "I am confident," she continued, "that the dead know what the living are doing, and have daily communication with them ; and if mortal spirits ever were permitted to return to this earth, that form was the spirit of your uncle Samuel."

"It is nothing perhaps," said I, "but solitude and its associations acting upon my nerves ; thus enabling me I thought to see the very form created only by my fears, and which, apart from them, have no existence."

"Don't you believe that ;" said she, "it was nothing under the sun but the spirit of your uncle, and he will continue to follow you, until you consent to stay."

"It is strange," said I, "that Uncle Samuel should be changed into a woman after death, for if my eyes did not deceive me, this form was that of a woman."

I have informed my readers that I was not without a strong tinge of superstition ; but on reaching the bed and finding my aunt absent, I was strongly impressed, that the supernatural looking being did have existence, and was no other than the form of my aunt Fibby. However I concluded, that if teaching the children of my poor dead uncle would be the means of reconciling his roving and

restless spirit, I would do it at all hazards, and let it return in peace to its shadowy home. So I consented to her proposal. I gave the children one month's vacation, and went down to spend my leisure hours with my mother, and Cousin Mento, who only lived a short distance from my old homestead, with the hope of detaching my affections from Oscar. So we were parted for a while. I tried in vain to cease to think of him. His image was always before me, and haunted me day and night, and every minute that I was out of his company seemed an hour to me. But at last the weary month dragged itself along, and my vacation was out, when I was to return and take charge of my little pupils again.

My cousin Arthur took me up to my aunt's, who seemed much rejoiced at my arrival, and said it was worth the money just to have my company, as I was very lively, although a "smile" sometimes covers a broken heart.

I met Oscar very coolly, and continued to treat him so for several days. Yet I was always happy when he was by my side; and was thankful sometimes that he did not see the bright, tell-tale blood, which would rush to my cheeks, at the unexpected sound of his voice or foot-step.

"There are loves unlost, when they seem but dead,  
There are wounds unseen, that have often bled;  
There are griefs unknown, there are thoughts untold,  
There are hearts that beat warm, when they seem but cold."

As soon as my school was out, I was determined to exchange for some distant place, and carry away that sorrow none might ever know.

Although Oscar had never confessed his love, he had told me in every way but words that his heart was wholly mine. I loved Oscar, but, with a true woman's pride, I tried to conceal it from him, and shun his company as much as possible. I knew that I was poor, but I was proud. I inherited it from my ancestors. My mother was very proud and high-minded, and was a woman of refined sentiment. My father was also very proud, and possessed every principle and quality that made a gentleman. Truth, honesty, and charity were stamped upon his noble brow; his door was ever open to the poor. He was a man of warm temperament, bold, open, independent, honest, patriotic and pure in motive, noble in resolve, firm in purpose, and he lived an honorable and upright life, unspotted before the world. He never was known to do an unworthy act, and when he died, went down to his grave in peace with God and man. He is now lying beneath the weeping willow, whose graceful branches sweep the sod that enfolds the hallowed dust, unmindful of the storm that is beating down the fluttering wings of his household dove.

Sweet and blessed saint! Sleep peacefully in your decayed charnel house; rest quietly in your corroding sepulchre; but if it be permitted, descend and let your spirit be with me, to guide, to sooth and support me. Your task will not be a long one, beloved parent; from this day forth my only hope will be to join you. Impress me with that sweet consolation that the All-merciful Judge, through His only Son, our Mediator, has prom-

ised that those who love each other in a pure spirit upon earth, may meet again to tread the Elysian paths of Paradise.

## DREAMLAND'S GATE.

My weary eyes by tears are dimmed,  
They are falling while I write;  
The friends I loved are cold in death,  
And I am sad to-night.

I am lonely, I am lonely;  
And the memories thick and fast,  
Shadowy like, they cling around me,  
Telling stories of the past.

I am weary, I am weary,  
While my feeble fingers show,  
Long forgotten thoughts and feelings,  
Of the faded long ago.

Eager, my fainting spirit waits  
Rest from toil and pain, to win  
Open to me the dreamland's gate,  
And let the weary soul pass in.

To a maiden, pity show,  
Who seeks for rest but finds despair.  
Lift up your head, ye magic gate,  
And let the weary soul pass there.

And let me dream of childhood scenes,  
When swiftly flow the moments by;  
When I was free from grief and tears,  
This bosom knew no care to die.

In this beautiful land, the land of dreams,  
Let my sad spirit roam;  
For often through its shadowy bowers,  
I catch a glimpse of my childhood's home.

Although it is in ruins laid,  
Its fairest blossoms now are dead;  
Yet still their deep and solemn shade,  
Upon the waving grass is shed.

'Tis oft in the land of dreams I see  
The light of faces fair,  
There I hear musical voices  
Which never may fall on my ear.

Sometimes the dearest face I know  
Which the sod had hid in the grave so deep,  
Flit for an instant before my sight,  
While passing through the gates of sleep.

The father talks with his lonely child,  
Though he be buried deep,  
There I see my mother's smiles,  
While passing through the gates of sleep.

Around me the tall poplars towered still  
Seeming those light and fleecy clouds to kiss;  
And I drank from the clear chrystal fountain  
That flowed from the side of the hill.

The multiflora vine in the corner  
That embraced the sycamore tree,  
The bush that blushed in the garden  
Were all familiar to me.

The white rose bush that seemed to snow  
In the corner by the door,  
Was decked still in its snowy array,  
As I had seen it years before.

Oh, my childhood days!  
Their joys have still a spell  
To lead me from the passing scenes,  
Back with the past to dwell.



'Tis sad to wake from pleasant dreams  
Into a world of pain,  
Oh! let my spirit wander back  
To that beautiful land again.

## CHAPTER VI.

## A DREAM UNDER THE SNOW-BALL BUSH.



FEW evenings after my return, I was wandering alone in the garden; I had walked up and down, and all around it, trying to worry off the wretched feelings under which I had been laboring all day. At last I became weary, and feeling solitary and alone, I sought the shade of a beautiful snow-ball bush that stood in the centre of the garden, and threw myself upon the long grass beneath, with "Surrey, of Eagle's Nest," open in my lap; I intended spending the remainder of the evening in reading. There was nothing to disturb my quiet; all was serene and still; everything—save a robin that was shouting in a cherry-tree near by, half crazy with inspiration, pouring forth the exquisite rhythm of his being, in hallelujah chorus—tended to inspire tranquility of mind, and invite to serious thoughts.

The plaintive song of the nightingale, the universal song of the mocking-bird and the western wind, which came like strayed notes from the quivering chords of an archangel's harp, playing a summer tune among the simple daisies and waving grass that sprung in freshness beneath my feet, filled my soul with sadness, vague and sweet,

like that which steals across a heart listening to faint far off music at the midnight hour.

I began to peruse the contents of my book, but unable long to keep my mind interested in the tale, I closed it with impatience, and leaning my head against the bush, I was soon lost in thought.

The sun was just sinking in the west, and those mild gleams which characterize his setting at the close of June, had communicated to the clouds that peculiar soft and golden tint on which the eye loves to rest; but from which the light was now gradually fading.

While I was thus sitting beneath the bush which seemed to be snowing upon me all the while, I sunk into a deep sleep, and my spirit took a flight to the land of dreams. The bush was in full bloom, and its lofty heads were drooping over me as if they were trying to catch the faint whisper that I uttered in my sleep.

I dreamed that I was writing my journal, a history of my own life, and the title of this book was, "ONE WORD AND A TEAR;" while Oscar was kneeling at my feet, dipping my pen in my heart's blood, and whose confessions of love and infidelity, I traced in flaming colors upon the fair pages with the crimson current of my own heart.

This strange and mysterious dream made an impression upon my mind even in my slumbers; and I stretched out my hands towards the region of existence with an emotion that awakened me. I sat for some time rubbing my eyes, and trying to interpret my strange and mysterious

dream. I was somewhat bewildered, and caught myself uttering my thoughts aloud—"In the name of all that is good and peaceable why did I dream such a dream? I know that I shall never write a book, and it is strange, too, that Oscar should be connected with it, and dipping my pen in my own heart's blood. And why should it be called, "*One Word and a Tear*?" Is it possible that Oscar is going to dabble in my heart's blood, and cause me to shed those tears? The Lord knows I do not want to shed any more tears than I have already, for if they flow more rapidly than they have from my cradle up, my eyes might be placed in some great desert to water the famished camels. But nay, nay, never will I believe that Oscar would cause me to shed one bitter tear of sorrow; he did look so pure and innocent as he knelt at my feet. I loved him before, but now I love him better."

I began to look around me to see if any one was near, and had heard the words that I had uttered, when, for the first time I noticed it was night. Darkness had curtained our fair creation, and the fire-fly lamps were flashing and quivering in every direction; reflecting their light upon the bush that was still snowing over my head. The locusts were singing their doleful lays; the sunflowers half bowed their heads in prayer, and the sweet song of nature was peace and rest.

I arose and went into the house. Oscar met me at the door, looking somewhat surprised at me.

"Well, my little cousin," said he, "where have you been to stay out so late? Were you not afraid something

would catch you? We have been looking and calling for you an hour, and no one could give any tidings of you, so we thought you had run away and left us."

"I was in the garden," said I, and passed on into the house, as calm as if nothing disagreeable had happened.

"Why, I went into the garden and called you—why did you not answer?"

"I did not hear you," I replied, "I was asleep under the snow-ball bush, and did not awake until just now, and I was frightened nearly out of my wits, when I found myself in the dark among the snakes and frogs."

"Well, really, you had quite a rural resting-place. What a contrast, a rose among the snow-balls!"

"Yes," said I, smiling, "with a thorn at its feet."

I retired that night sooner than usual, to think over my dream, for it made a deep impression upon my mind; and it is now as fresh in my memory, as if it were but yesterday.

"I will tell Oscar about my dream, in the morning," thought I to myself; "no, no, I will not tell him either; for he might think that I love him. Well, I do love him, and believe that he loves me; but I had rather die than for him to know it, and he shall never know it if I can help it; others have hid the canker-worm beneath sunny smiles, and why not I? Well, well, I will not think about that wretched dream any more; but what is life itself, but a dream?—a dream of a feverish, troubled sleep, from which the soul will awake in the morning-light of an eternal day."

## CHAPTER VII.

### A PRESENT BY MOONLIGHT.

**I**N the evening of the second day after the scene under the snowball bush, I was seated upon the porch watching the "queen of night as she rode at anchor on the azure waves of Heaven, like a ship with its silver sails and majestic motion," pouring in a soft teeming flood of rich effulgence. The king of the day had whispered good night, and was making his departure to another world; yet in the west there could still be noticed the faint traces of his subdued splendor.

My spirit bathed in this serene and solemn splendor, as I gazed on its unearthly beauty and felt the dominant passion of the hour glorified by its influence and celestial attraction. The little stars were shooting their silver rays, and seemed to be dancing with new delight.

So calm, so gentle, was the decline of the god of day, that we might compare it to the exit of a Christian from time to eternity, and whose beams, like the Christian's, had been withdrawn to dawn gloriously on another world. So grand was the scene that the beholder was thrilled with an emotion of appreciation far exceeding that experienced beneath the influence of the broad rays of a mid-day sun. Its scorching influence being withdrawn, famished flowers

raised their drooping heads with hopeful emotion, and having received the gentle dews of Heaven, bowed them again, showering a flood of tears at their feet in grateful acknowledgment of the rich blessing.

We idly talk of nature as of a goddess, and say she renews her youth and beauty, and puts on the queen robe of spring, and the flowery mantle of summer, and autumn's rich and sheafy crown; but the energy of nature is only the reflection of His benevolence; and her bounty the overflowing of His ever-enduring love for the creatures He hath made. But wherefore repeat all this, everybody who has taken a moonlight walk, or any thing equivalent, can imagine it; and any one who has not, would find the details tedious.

I sat as one transfixed with my eyes upon the moon, my heart upon Oscar and my mind in a state of oscillation. My reverie however was interrupted by a voice near by.

"Dear Lenore," said the well-known voice, "what are you thinking about? Pray do not look so sad, and let me help you, on that tangled problem you are trying so hard to solve, wont you?"

"I have untied every knot but one," said I, "and you may help me to untie that one, or at least give me some information."

"Oh, I don't like to untie knots," said he, laughing, "I had rather help you to tie one, but any way let's have it."

"Well if you going to Ohio, which route would you

prefer—by the way of Washington City, or over the Chesapeake?"

"What! you are not thinking of going West, Lenore?"

"Yes, I intend visiting my brother soon."

"What! and leave me? Whom will I have to cheer my lonely hours? Whom will I have to talk to, and divulge all my secrets? I cannot bear to hear you talk thus, and I will not hear of it."

"Yes, Oscar, I am going away, but I am going to give you a present, to remember me when I am gone, I am going to give you yonder star that seems to be dancing around the moon, and when you look at it, you will think of Lenore."

"No, no, Lenore, you shall not go, you shall not leave me, but one of these days I am going to explore the fair land and will carry with me the idol of my heart if she will go, and that is my own dear Lenore. Will you go? will you be my wife? Give me a right to call you mine, Lenore, and this will be the happiest day of my life."

Would I go with him?—Yes, through joy or sorrow, riches or poverty, knowing nothing, caring for nothing; nay, supremely blest in the one fact that he loved me. For I had learned to love him, as a true woman only can love.

I gave him no answer, but hot tears dropped slowly from my eyes at first, and then like rain drops; the friendly twilight hid their traces from him and I did not try to stop them, for they eased my heart.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## SUNSHINE AND SHOWERS.

**I**T was a lovely evening on the twenty-second of June; the last rays of the sun were tinting the distant hills, and their faint and radiant glow were reposing upon Nature's breast. Yes, it was June, that bright and leafy June—and such a glorious day. There are evenings when it seems as though the angels at Heaven's portal had purposely left the adamantine gates ajar, that our cold earth and callous hearts might be revived and purified with a hallowed tide of light, and life, and love.

I had dismissed my little pupils for the evening, but had not retired from my schoolroom, for I had closed the door behind them, and was in an attitude of prayer and supplication to God: but not for the pardon of my sins, nor my welfare after death; but simply that my affections might be detached from Oscar; that I might not possess nor cherish one spark of love beyond that of a friend and relative. Although Oscar had confessed his love to me, yet a barrier deep as the grave, and which death only could remove, seemed to be between us forever in this life.

Whilst thus occupied, I heard a footstep, as if one was entering the room, and, naturally turning around, I be-

held the man whose very acknowledgment of love came over my spirit like an anthem of the heart, and whom I had prayed so fervently to God to keep me from loving. The surprise of each was mutual, for the scene was perfectly unexpected to him, and his presence to me. A deep blush over-spread my features, although the supplication that had gone up from the very depth of my heart, was a secret only between the suppliant and her God.

Oscar had come to ask me to accompany him in a walk. I accepted the invitation, for I thought a walk in the open air would revive my drooping spirit, as the room was very close and warm, with only one small window facing the garden, and I could see nothing all day except a patch of Irish potatoes and a row of garden peas.

We both left the house looking unusually grave. The direction in which we strolled was toward a calm and delightful retreat from the natural simplicity of the sweet but humble scenery around us.

Oscar was the first to break the silence. He paused, placed his foot upon a little pine root, and took my hand, which was placed passively in his, and whispered in a low, tender voice, that breathed the softest and most contagious emotion of the heart:—

“Lenore, I know you probably feel that my avowal of love ought to be linked with flowers, veiled over by the hypocrisy of language, disguised by the hackneyed forms of mere sentiment, uttered like the assertion of a coxcomb, and degraded by that tampering with truth, which makes the heart lie unto itself:—perhaps, Lenore,

you think that, because I fail to express what I feel in that spirit of ambiguity which a love, not confident in the truth, purity and rectitude of its own principles, must always borrow—yes, you may imagine, from all these reasons that my affection is not—but”—and here he checked himself—“but, alas, Lenore, you cannot even dream how inexpressibly dear you are to me. Without you, life to me will possess no blessing. All that I ever conceived of its purest and most exalted enjoyment, is centered in you. Now tell me, Lenore, will you be my wife? My happiness depends upon your decision.”

I gave him no reply at first, but looking up into his face with unbounded confidence, I thought him strong; then my eyes fell and rested upon the little root on which his foot was placed. I dreamed him true.

After some hesitation, I replied, “Oscar, my heart is yours. I love you, Oscar, but”—

“But what, Lenore?”

“I did not think it was right, and when you came in the schoolroom and found me kneeling by the window, I was praying to God to detach my affections from you.”

“Lenore, Lenore,” he exclaimed, “why did you do that? Why did you not want to love me?” and we both burst into a passion of tears—tears of joy and sorrow.

“Because I was poor, dear Oscar, and did not think that you loved me; and I did not want to love you in vain.”

Oh! why was there no good angel to whisper to the innocent child that she did love in vain?

“Dear Lenore, did you think that I loved you any the less because you were poor? If anything, I would love better, for the fact that you are dependent, and have no one to look to for protection. I do not care whether you have anything or not: I have plenty for both.”

“But, Oscar, you have a mother, and I am positive she will not hear to our union. She wants you to marry rich—and can she not have influence over you, Oscar? Will she not break asunder the links that chain our hearts together; and will she not chill that affection you now think so warm? I know that you love me, Oscar, and at this time would be willing to sacrifice your life for me;—but a mother’s influence is great.”

“No, no, Lenore; she can never change me, my mind is fully made up, and no one on earth can change it or cause me to forsake you. Let, however, one principle guide us—the confidence that our love is mutual and cannot be disturbed.”

“I shall ever be guided by that principle, Oscar; for whilst one spark of mortal life is alive in my body; whilst memory can retain the dreams of only the preceding moment; whilst a single faculty of heart or intellect remains by which your image can be preserved, I shall cling to that image, as the ship-wrecked sailor does to the plank that bears him through the midnight storm.”

From the hour I had pledged myself and my honor thus, there seemed to come a change over the still quiet evening-tide, and all the shrubbery was astir with an awakened sobbing wind. I passed out into another

world—into another life—with the man to whom I had promised all my future, henceforth to be my sole guide and companion.

It was a long hour ere we returned, yet it had seemed but the prolongation of a single minute; for the blooming flowers of love had swallowed up the footfalls of time, and each moment as it flew sparkling by, was only an indivisible part of that long, bright minute of love.

As we entered the yard, my aunt Fibby was standing at the door. I caught her eye—and may God ever preserve me from seeing those eyes again. I could see the scorn and hatred gleaming in them—they were dark and demoniac—and I would have preferred a seat among the hideous dead, in all their ghastly, loathsome putrefaction, or laid side by side with the sweltering carcass of the gibbeted murderer, than to have come in contact with them. For no individual of any penetration could look upon them without feeling that they were significant of duplicity, cruelty and fraud. And as I beheld them I imagined that she had overheard our conversation, and knew all about our engagement. The sunbeam vanished from my heart, and a dark and heavy cloud seemed to fall over my spirit. I felt that some day the King of Terrors would thrust his spear into that cloud, and it would send forth rain, and the “awful instruments of the Almighty would be darting in every direction.”

I went in and took a seat upon the porch. Oscar came in, in a short time, and was soon by my side. The heavens were crowned with wreaths of stars, and the sum-

mer wind, heavy with tropic bloom, stirred the forest sighs, and whirled the hazy drift along the sky, imparting a gentle languor to the senses, and lulling all troubled thoughts and cares into perfect oblivion.

In such an atmosphere of fragrance, softened light and bewitching sounds, an image was enthroned for an idol. There was a well-arranged moment of silence, as if of solemn self-examination, broken by the tender tones of an eloquent lover, followed by a sigh and a tear, and words of sacred meaning, while the wind laughed and the stars hid their faces for the shame of lightly spoken vows. In my happiness I forgot my aunt Fibby's evil eyes; for I thought neither time nor change could ever lessen the boundless love that was flowing and reflowing through the innermost recesses of my heart, and I wondered if, in this wide world, there was one so happy as myself. It was the golden evening of our lives; neither had, until then, actually realized how completely love had entered into our hearts, taking each so entirely captive, that no earthly strength, no after-time could ever wholly break the chain that bound our hearts together. Although the “links were woven with starry flowers, that sparkled with an Eden-like beauty, and yielded a fragrance that had been wafted from the unfading buds and blossoms of Paradise,” I looked forward with pleasure and saw the future bright. I had found one to whom I could express my past difficulties, my by-gone sorrows and trials, and whose firmness strengthened, and whose tenderness comforted me. And in trusting him, what a perfect dream

of bliss was life to me now. I had not a wish separate from him—not a joy but that whispered of him—not a hope, the realization of which could afford me any delight, unshared by him; my heart and soul asking for no higher good—forgetting, alas! in this fond idolatry, the Hand that gave the blessing, and worshiping in blindness more than the Creator, the creature whom he had made.

## CHAPTER IX.

## MORE THORNS FOR THE ROSE.

**T**HE summer days sped fleetly on and Autumn came with its gorgeous beauty, and the premonitions of chilly days. But, ah! there came also one with stealthy steps, who trailed her deadly poison across my sunny path. My aunt Fibby soon suspected our engagement for she could not but notice the evident affection Oscar cherished for me; and from that moment her love was turned to the bitterest scorn. She never gave me one civil look, nor one kind word; she was always out of humor, and I could do nothing to please her. The whole house was in a hurly-burly from morning till night. She scolded the children, dusted the furniture, and boxed poor Rose's ears until they looked like burnt pancakes. And to my recollection, I do really think she had the best set of lungs of any one I have ever met with; for she dusted the old side board, book-case, and mantle-piece with her mouth until it was blown out of all human shape and gave it a resemblance of something like a French horn.

Although she did not mention the subject to me, she would talk to Oscar and harass him day and night; she would say all manners of evil of me, and did all in her power to chill his affections for the one who would have



sacrificed her life for his sake. The whole dark and infernal machinery of her heart was in full work, scheming and planning some mean and unprincipled devices to accomplish her selfish, despicable and heartless designs.

There was a young lady in the neighborhood—Miss Gertrude Walden—whom she wished Oscar to marry, but Oscar said that he did not love her even if he should be fortunate enough to win her, and would not sacrifice his happiness to gratify his mother's vain desires.

Oscar tried to conceal his troubles from me for a while, but he could not do it, I saw it and felt it; he could not help perceive that my heart was breaking, and that some deadly poison was gnawing my spirit. He marked my altered looks and sad countenance; for my aunt's treatment of me was intolerable. The manifold insults and annoyances, and the violent struggles of my own undisciplined nature and strong will, rendered life unendurable.

She tried for a while to prohibit me from going to church, and even from visiting my friends. There was quite a revolution of every thing; the goblet that I had been honored with a few weeks before, was changed for a cup. At the head and foot of the table she would put a glass, which was for her honored self and her noble son, while at my plate was placed a cup, which was very mortifying to my taste, for I never relished water from a cup, and especially one that had been used to hold physic. And that cup was the one that Rose had squeezed Jerusalem oak seed in for the last six weeks, as my aunt had taken up an idea that she needed physic, and physic

she must have; nothing would do but Jerusalem oak seed, and Rose knew exactly what her task was every morning before breakfast.

One morning I asked Charley to bring me a glass of water which he did very readily; but before he entered the house, he was assailed by his mother, who threatened him severely if she ever caught him waiting upon me again; and said that I should not use her glasses, that a cup was good enough for me. My ears caught the words as she passed, and like the poisonous seed which is blown by the slightest breeze, they were destined to take root, and bear in good season. These words stung me to the very heart, and set my blood to boiling in my veins. I arose and went to the door with the spirit of resentment blazing in my heart, and for a few moments the very force of my indignation kept me silent; at length I spoke.

"Aunt Fibby, I am glad to hear you express yourself so freely, and only wish that you had done so eight months ago, that I might have been saved from all the torture that I have suffered since I have been under your roof. You say that you do not want your child to be a waiting-boy for me, I sincerely hope that the spirit of my poor dead uncle may not be disturbed in the spirit-land by seeing his child in the capacity of a servant. Also you say that you do not want me to use your glasses—that a cup is good enough for me; perhaps it is. But I want you to understand that I consider you just as far beneath me, as you imagine yourself to be above me; and when I

condescended to come to your house as a teacher, little did I think that I would receive the treatment I have from you. And I ought, at the moment I first consented to your proposal, to have been guided by the instincts of my own heart, which prompted me to recoil from your proposition. I know that I am poor, but I am not dependent upon you; and I would suffer death before I would remain under your roof any longer. You may slight me because adversity frowns upon me, and prosperity still seems to smile upon you, but there is an hour coming—'thou lover of the shining ore! it hastens on?—an hour when that heaped up treasure will hang out before thy sight such vivid sketches of these dreams in thy life's history.' And your unprincipled and inhuman treatment of me will prove the source of a retributive judgment on your head. Yes, fortune has lavished her gifts upon you, but not in consequence of your own good conduct, but by some accidental circumstances which in your own estimation have elevated you; yet I assure you, you are not elevated in the estimation of others but are considered little below the common level. And when my mother used to feed her house-servants in her fine goblets and silver cups, little did she think that her brother's wife, and especially one inferior to her in every respect, should refuse her orphan child a drink of water out of her ten-cent tumblers. Oh, I do not wonder at the spirit of my uncle being disturbed." Without another word or slightest token of respect or courtesy, I deliberately, and with an air of indignant scorn, walked back to my seat,

leaving my aunt Fibby in a position which I dare say nobody will envy her.

Oh! woman, born to be a mother, that thou shouldst ever be bereft of a mother, and thy infancy be thus left alone with want and suffering, sorrow and sin!—with nerves most delicately attuned to feel, to enjoy, and suffer most acutely; thrill and quiver at every touch of pleasure or of pain; sensitively affected by any rude contact, capable of the most self-sacrificing love, and always yearning for its smiles;—with perceptions keen and quick to understand and feel every tone, and temper, and motive, and manner of treatment;—thus in the spring-time of tender youth and innocence to be scourged, mocked, and abused! Well may thy cries be heard above the wails of all the infantile throng; thou art the frailest and yet the most sensitive of them all! And yet thou art the most sacred of them all; thou especially art of the "little ones" whom we are forbidden to "offend." Oh, angels! seek these helpless ones and lead them away from exposure, poverty and suffering ignorance, and vice of helpless orphanage.

The day passed away unpleasantly; night came on and found me very much out of humor. My aunt Fibby tried to apologize for her conduct toward me, but I would not recognize her, nor give an ear to anything that she said. The tumult of my mind resembled that of the ocean after the violence of the tempest had swept over it, leaving behind that dark and angry agitation which indicates the awful extent of its power.

Night came on, and little Rose, as usual, came in with her wheel and cards to spin her task before going to bed, and my aunt Fibby came in behind her. Would that my pen had the speed of her tongue! but when she came in, I made a retreat to the porch.

Oscar had been gone all day attending to some business, and came home later than usual; as he passed through the room, he looked around inquiringly, and exclaimed, "Where is Lenore?"

No one answered except his mother; but she did it from the depth and fullness of her heart, and rejoiced at the opportunity.

"I think you must be very much interested in Lenore," said she, "you don't seem to be satisfied only when you are in her company, and you don't seem to care for any one but her;" at the same time pinching up her mouth like a cork-screw, and nose as sharp as Cleopatra's needle.

Oscar did not reply, but walked out on the porch and took a seat some distance from me, and seemed to be lost in thought. He did not see me at first, for it was dark, and the clouds were flying fast across the murky sky, while strong gusts of wind at times, swept along from the east, bending the tall hickories, and stretching out the slender branches of the oak, and causing the forest to send forth a murmuring sound, as though spirits of evil were disturbing its lonely retreat. The moon had not yet made its appearance with its soft loving eyes to look down upon the two lovers bowed in silent grief.

Gentle reader, have you ever bowed under the burden of care? Has your spirit ever agonized beneath the load that was pressing upon it? Has the curtain of night—not starlight or sweet moonlight night, sparkling in beauty above, or spreading its mild loveliness in your path, or by your sleeping couch,—but night, dreary and fathomless, whose dark drapery has wrapped your soul in gloom, and filled it with uncertain horrors;—enveloped in such darkness, have streams of softest splendor suddenly darted through the gloom? Has some kindred spirit delivered your sinking frame from such a burden, and administered balm to your wounded spirit?—speaking to the heart, striking its finest chords, and waking a melody there, which lulled the sufferer to sweet repose;—then can you know what a change a few moments, a few short sentences, wrought upon the mind of the bowed form.

Oscar soon perceived that I was near, by the heavy sighing that was so familiar to his ear. My head was bent in silent grief, and my face was bathed in tears; for I had wept as though my heart were water. Oscar came and took a seat near me, but the drops did not cease to flow.

"Dear Lenore," said he, in a voice so low that none but a lover could have caught the accent. "What on earth is the matter? Why are you weeping so?" I gave him no reply, but the briny tears continued to flow. "Lenore, will you not confide in me, and let me help you bear your troubles?"

"Oh, Oscar," said I, struggling to repress the anguish of my heart, "would to God we had never met."

"Why do you talk thus, Lenore? Have I ever done or said anything to hurt your feelings, or to mar your happiness? If I have, tell me."

"No, no, Oscar, you have not, you have been all to me that a kind and affectionate cousin, and a faithful and devoted lover could be. Your mother has treated me most cruelly for the last few weeks, but I do not hold you responsible for her conduct. I know you cannot help it. I cannot bear such treatment from her, or anyone else. I am not going to teach any longer; the session is not yet closed, but I don't care for that. I am going to leave Monday, if you will take me to my cousin's; for I had rather die than remain with her another week. I have taken more from her than I would from any other woman, and all for your sake, Oscar, but more than I will ever take again. We will be separated for a while, but the parting will only draw closer the tie that binds us. I will be the same to you in time and eternity, and all I ask of you, is, to prove true and faithful to me as I will to you; and if we never meet again, I hope that we may be reunited in a better and higher land."

As I concluded, I wiped away the tears that were fast falling, and Oscar was so deeply moved that he could not restrain his own. We wept together, and our tears mingled with the dews of Heaven.

"There is one word, dearest Lenore," he replied, "but though short, it is full of comfort—hope."

"Alas, Oscar, I feel to-night that it has been blotted out of my life. I look for it; I search for it, but in

vain. In this world I cannot find it; I say in this, because now, all about me is darkness, and pain, and suffering; and I feel there is no consolation, only through the gate of the grave."

He told me his determination, that come what might, his word should not be broken. He besought me not to forget him in the brief time we were to be separated, declaring that, bereft of my love, life would be a burden.

I retired to rest that night, but I could not sleep; too many conflicting feelings rioted in my troubled breast; one bright spot alone there was, around which my affections loved to hover, but dark and troubled clouds keep passing over the beautiful vision.

Some may seek for diamonds rare,  
Of sparkling gems and pearls so fair;  
But there's a peerless gem on earth,  
Of richer ray and purer worth.

Boast not of the roseate hue,  
That's tinged with fresh and changeful shade;  
But give a heart that's warm and true,  
A flower that time can never fade.

A flower that is so seldom found,  
When mist and darkness close around;  
Changeless, fadeless, in its hue,  
It is the heart that's warm and true.

Ardent in its earliest tie,  
Faithful in its latest sigh;  
Love and friendship—God-like pair,  
Find their throne of glory there.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE PARTING.

**T**HE next morning I arose with the determination to leave the place where I had shed so many tears of joy and sorrow, and spent so many hours of happiness and misery, never again to darken its door. And I have kept my word—it was the last time. I sometimes pass the old habitation, and the thoughts of by-gone days come mournfully back to me.

It was Sunday, and Oscar and myself went over to spend the day with my cousin Lillian Horton; for I felt that I could not possibly spend another Sunday under my aunt Fibby's despicable, demoniac, and unscrupulous domination.

"Well, Lenore," said Lillian, a few minutes after I had entered the parlor, "I suppose you and that execrable aunt of ours have had a falling out." "I am not surprised," she continued, "as she is such a despicable libel on nature and common sense, and I can't imagine how you have remained with her as long as you have, for I think she must be one of the fallen angels, or the morning star of Pandæmonium."

"Well, Lillian," said I, laughing at her remarks, "it is to be hoped she will not descend upon me with more

force than she has for the last few weeks—if she does, she will soon crush me out of existence."

"Well, Lenore, what are her reasons for treating you in this manner? I thought you were all-in-all with her—and I know you were always Uncle Samuel's favorite."

"I can't imagine, Lillian," said I, blushing; "I have never refused one request, nor have I ever spoken an unkind word to her, and I know I discharged my duty as well as any teacher ever did. I have been trying to keep in with her, by doing my utmost endeavor to please her, and allowed myself to be imposed upon, until I resolved I would not bear it any longer, so yesterday morning I gave her a small portion of my mind."

"It is to be hoped that you are not going to remain with her any longer under such circumstances, Lenore! If you do, I think you must possess a great deal of patience and endurance, for in my estimation she is beneath all human contempt."

"No, no, Lillian, that I'm not; for I expect to take my departure to-morrow morning, and leave the dragon to rankle with her own conscience."

"I am quite sure that you would be happier in a hovel than with her, for she does not only annoy you, but you are deprived of social enjoyment; as your friends and relations will not visit you on her account."

"Yes, Lillian, that is true; for I asked Ellen Norman the other day to come and see me, and she remarked, 'If I were in my own house, she would visit me often; but that I need not expect to keep up the demands of eti-

quette in other people's houses.' And this is the reply of nearly every one of my friends. I was surprised when I learned she was so unpopular, I don't think she has a friend in the world outside of her own family, and I don't think they care much for her, for they never come near her, not even in the hour of sickness, for I have been there eight months, and have not seen a hair or hide of any one."

"Well, Lenore, you know our family is all down upon her, for the manner in which she treated our dear old uncle, and that is why they won't visit her. Poor man, he was tortured to death. I don't know what he wanted with the thing, nohow; I do wish somebody would go and marry her, and change her name, for she is not worthy of her husband's title."

"Yes, Lillian, I am sure that her conduct was the cause of Uncle Samuel's insanity, for she is enough to run any man crazy, and if I were a man, I would not marry her, if her head was gold, her body jasper, and her eyes set in diamonds. So you may know what a poor opinion I have of her."

"Ah, Lenore, I have had a poor opinion of her, ever since she knocked poor old Harriet in the head with an axe, and bursted out one of the poor old thing's eyes, and that without a cause, and you know she knocked down poor Uncle Samuel with the basket of keys when he was not able to walk across the room, for correcting her for some of her misdemeanors, and for many other causes too tedious to mention."

"She ought to have had her first husband," said I, "he would have killed her. I heard he shot at her once, but the ball missed her, and came near passing through her child."

"O, is not that awful, Lenore! I wonder what she had done."

"I heard she got angry at him for some trifles, and threw his fine hat in the fire; but I think he did wrong in shooting at her; he ought to have stuck her head in with it."

"See here," said my aunt Margaret Rayment, who came in as the words escaped my lips. "Did you know that it is currently reported that you and Oscar Brandon are to be married soon?"

"No, Aunt Margaret," said I; "but I am not surprised, as it is natural for such reports to go out, if a gentleman goes with a lady to church, once or twice, or pays her the least attention. I am innocent of that, for I am a stranger to Cupid's wiles, and know but little of the tender sentiment."

"Yes," said Lillian, "and it is very natural, too, for people to deny their engagements, when at the same time they are on the very brink of matrimony. You need not deny it, Lenore, as everybody knows that you and Oscar are loving."

"I would like to know how everybody became so wise," said I, blushing.

"Very well," said my aunt Margaret, "I knew it long ago, and spoke of it to Lillian, for he could not

keep his eyes off you when in your company, and would blush whenever your name was mentioned—and that is a pretty good omen of Cupid's wiles, as you call them. I was young once, myself, and know something about these tender sentiments." "Well," she continued, "if you love each other, I hope you will marry and be happy; but I reckon Fibby will have to be sent to the lunatic asylum, for she could not bear the idea of Oscar marrying a girl without money; she has such an ambition for the gold eagles."

To my great relief Oscar came in, and the subject was dropped. The day passed away very quickly, but by no means pleasantly. The time seemed short because the hour was drawing near when Oscar and I should be separated—to meet again, when, where, and how?—and perhaps never until we passed from this life into a higher existence.

We returned home that evening, or rather to that desolate and solitary abode, which I had been accustomed to call my home, though no longer mine. For just when that gradual withdrawing of darkness began to take place in the eastern sky, and which resembles the disappearance of sorrow from a heavy heart, and is a harbinger to the world of the return of cheerfulness and light, my trunk was already packed, and I was preparing to set out on my journey.

I bid my aunt Fibby good-by, and that without shedding a tear—and I don't suppose she shed one for me, for she rejoiced to see the hour when Oscar and I would be

separated. But I assure you there were plenty of tears shed that day, for they fell thick and fast. And let not the reader hesitate to believe me when I say that my heart felt touched with a kind of melancholy happiness as I passed the spot where but a few weeks before Oscar and I had pledged our faith and our honor. I covered my face with my hands, and for some minutes wept tears that were at once both sweet and bitter.

It was a lovely morning, and the road over which we traveled was lined with a profusion of our finest forest trees, all arrayed in those rich and varied colors, which shed such beauty over the landscape on a fine autumnal day—a perfect lullaby to its restless desires and disturbing passion.

How strong the contrast is, which is often presented between the moral and the natural world. The sky cloudless and bright, and the earth smiling in sunshine and loveliness, while the heart is sick and the soul looks forth with beamless eye upon the fair creation.

"Oh! my cruel mother," exclaimed Oscar, in tones of bitter agony. "How can she tear from me the idol of my heart. How can she separate me from the one I love so dear, and thus render her child miserable for life. She cares nothing for my happiness. She has been a wife, and yet a stranger to love. She married for wealth, and now wants me to follow her example, although riches do not constitute happiness."

"This is true, indeed," said I, "and in many cases it helps to destroy it. I would to God you were poor,

Oscar, that I might prove to you that I love you for yourself alone."

"Ah! Lenore, I know that already, for I believe your heart is too pure for any other motive."

It was late in the afternoon when I arrived at my cousin Edgar Mansfield's.

"Oh! I'm so glad you have come, Lenore," said Dora, as she threw her arms around me, and imprinted a kiss upon my cheek, "for I have been more than anxious to see you, and would have sent for you, but did not know your whereabouts."

I had told Oscar that when the time arrived for him to take his departure, I would not be present to bid him good-by, lest I should betray our love, as it seemed that the separation was more than I could bear.

Oscar spent several days with us, and then returned home. When the time of his departure arrived, I left the house and walked into the garden, and took a seat under the grape arbor. Never was a place so well fitted up for sorrowful meditation. Into that secluded solitude came no sight or sound which could distract the heart from pondering upon its grief; the leaves rustled only in the topmost boughs, and the clouds of heaven sailed unseen over its gloomy shade. Bough on bough swirled and sighed around, and here and there some light crispy leaves, withered by the touch of Autumn, fell quivering from the rustling canopy overhead, and lay motionless and death-like upon the gravel at my feet, and as I beheld them, they seemed to repeat the deep melancholy

gaze of the last watcher in the solitude. The silence deepened over and about me. I could hear the dull beating of my own heart grow and quicken; and at last, when with excited fancy I strained my aching vision to see more clearly, there came distinctly to my ears the words:—

"Tell Lenore good-by for me."

The words went to my heart with a noise which seemed to it louder and more terrible than the deepest peal that ever thundered through the firmament. Thus the heart-sickening spectacle hurried past, and as the noise of the rattling wheels was dying in the distance, the last glimpse vanished, the last dark outline dissolved in the distance, I felt that just so the joys of my youth fled away and left the prospect tame and wearying.

My brain was in a wild, maddening whirl; I could not weep—my eyes were dry and burning—my lips were closed, and suddenly the vesper star went down slowly, silently, and radiantly, as if its parting rays had caught the farewell lustre of my bright dreams, whispering as they vanished: "*One Word and a Tear.*"

"Stars of heaven I would not be you,  
Too dark are the scenes that you often see;  
Moon! I envy you not your light,  
It falls too oft on woe and blight."

How long I remained beneath the rustic canopy, I do not know; for grief such as mine, in the absence of the only one who entirely sympathized, has no dial to mark the hour.



Many drops of agony have fallen from my heart as I have looked upon blood-stained wounds and tattered flags, or while listening to the thrilling adventures of some bold chevalier, as he told of deeds of glory under the banner of cross and stars. I have stood in the midst of the dead and dying, and listened to the low, ceaseless wailings of pain and suffering that mingled together as they proceeded from the pale lips of the sufferers, until they formed that many-tongued, incessant, and horrible voice of multiplied misery, which falls upon the ear with the echoes of the grave, and upon the heart as something wonderful in the accents of God; or as we may suppose the voice of the accusing angel to be while recording before His throne the innumerable deeds of the sinners who have provoked the wrath of the Almighty. I have stood by my father's grave and heard the solemn sound of the elods as they fell upon the coffin lid, but none have sank so deep in my heart as the words that fell upon my ear: "Tell Lenore good-by for me."

At last, tears came to my relief, and my heart grew lighter as I looked beyond the stars and uttered a prayer that He, who holds His throne therein, would translate my miseries and sorrows into promised joy, strengthen the weak, soften the heart, and reconcile the rebellious. Then from the depths of my heart there came a voiceless, earnest supplication for one whose eyes had looked into my own, and whose voice had whispered in my ear one soft but ever-to-be-remembered word.

After my grief had somewhat subsided, and I had re-

gained my self-possession, I bathed my eyes in water to cool my aching brow, and rejoined my cousin, who was very flippant, and had a great many funny things to tell me, which dispelled some of my gloomy feelings, and I would now and then force a smile. "But how hard it is for the lips to smile when the soul is in despair." It was about a week subsequent to Oscar's departure that I wrote to him the following letter:

DEAR OSCAR—

"Daylight has shut her curtain down, and has pinned it with a star," while I have been musing on its fading loveliness, which has so often witnessed our social intimacy, and thinking of the past-gone hours of happiness.

Where are you, to-night, dear one?—in that lonely place, thinking of her who is far from you, and yet is ever near? I will answer, Yes; for I see you still in my dreams. Although we are separated from each other, yet our spirits meet in that mystic land, the land of dreams, and holds sweet communion there. And I hope the time is not far distant, and the happy days may soon dawn bright and sunny, when we shall meet never to part until we enter into the *sanctum sanctorum* of happiness.

Dear Oscar, I want to see you very much, for I feel sad and lonely. I am expecting you down next Friday according to your promise—but it will seem such a long, long time. Bring me all the news; I have a heap to tell you. As it is getting dark I will have to close.

From your true and faithful

LENORE.

MY OWN DEAR LENORE—

I have just arrived at C——, and have been to the office for my mail. There was several letters handed to me, but there was one that filled my heart with rapture when I recognized the fair inscription. With eager hands and anxious heart I broke its seal,

and you cannot imagine the exquisite pleasure it gave me at hearing from the one who is dearer to me than all the world besides.

Dear Lenore, you cannot think how anxious I am to see you; for it seems months since we were together, and yet it has only been a few days; but if life is spared I will see you next Friday evening.

You asked me where I was on the night of the 12th. I was in that lonely place thinking of the dear one who is far from me—for I never think of anything else. You are the chief object of my meditation. I received the piece of poetry you sent me—it is very sentimental. I will bring you all the news when I come, for I had rather deliver them to you verbally. May God speed the hours when we shall meet, and never part. And may His providence protect you from all harm, is the prayer of

Your true and devoted

OSCAR.

## CHAPTER XI.

### REVEALING THE SECRET.



HOW long the week is, it seems that Friday will never come," said I, half aloud to myself, a few evenings after the reception of Oscar's letter.

"Are you expecting any one, Lenore," said Dora, "that you are so anxious for Friday to come?—but excuse me Lenore for being so inquisitive, the reason I asked the question is, that if you are expecting any of your friends, I would like to make some preparation; as I wish to treat your friends with as much complaisance and civility as I would my own." "I want you to enjoy yourself when you are with me Lenore," she continued "and consider yourself at home in my house, for as long as I have a home you are welcome."

"Thank you, dear Dora," said I, as I wiped the tears of gratitude from my eyes which in spite of every thing I could do to hide them, would steal down my cheeks. "I have but one friend," I continued, "that I can, or do, expect, and that is Oscar Brandon. I received a letter from him a few days ago, in which he said he would pay us a visit next Friday; so you may put the little pot in the big one, and have a skillet stew." I uttered these slang phrases in order to unchoke myself, for there

appeared to be a wad in my throat as large as my fist. And in spite of all my efforts I could not hide the tell-tale blood which rushed to my cheeks when Oscar's name was mentioned.

We had been silent for about a quarter of an hour, when I broke the monotony by singing:—

"I have something sweet to tell you  
But a secret you must keep."

Then I paused and looked wistfully into Dora's face for some time without speaking, half decided to tell her my secret, for I felt that I wanted to unburden my heart to her, and tell her all that had happened since the evening we held the feast of friendship in my father's graveyard.

When the heart is sad, as well as when it is filled with some kindred spirit, its violent emotions crave relief by communion with those who can understand its causes of excitement; and its joys are heightened and its sorrows assuaged when that which lay concealed within can be whispered in the ear of friendship.

I had formed no friendship among the friends of my native home, that was stronger, or more confiding than Dora Mansfield. No woman ever possessed a warmer heart, or one more susceptible to the strongest ties of friendship.

"That is an old favorite tune of mine you were singing, Lenore, do sing it again, it makes me think of time past and gone," said Dora.

Again I repeated the words, but in a clear and distinct voice.

"I have something sweet to tell you  
But a secret you must keep."

"Excuse me, Dora," said I, "I have forgotten all of it, except those two lines, and I would not have remembered them had they not been the exact words I wished to say to you."

Dora looked up from her work-box somewhat surprised at my remarks, and the manner in which I spoke them.

"Lenore," said she, "you have well tried me on that point; and did you not find me true?"

"Yes, Dora, I have made you my confident in every respect, and I have ever found you true. You know I could never keep anything from you, in fact, you are the only one that I would trust a secret with."

"Well, do tell me what it is," said she impatiently, and looking no little curious.

After I had gotten her curiosity as high as woman's curiosity would go, I said,—

"Did you know that Oscar and I were going to be married soon?"

"No, Lenore; I knew you both seemed to think a great deal of each other, but did not know there was any thing beyond the ties of friendship. And yet I could see that you treated him very coolly at times, and especially the evening he left us. Just as he was about to bid us good-by, you took your bonnet and deliberately walked out of the house, and did not even come back to tell him good-by. I thought it very strange, Lenore, and do not understand it yet, for had it been me, I would have told

him good-by, by all means. Suppose I had treated Edgar in that manner after we were engaged, I don't think he would have ever come back, or seen me any more."

"Ah! Dora, Oscar understands me better than you do. He knew that I was going out before I did, for it was an understanding between us, I told him that I did not want to tell him good-by, for I knew I would be sure to cry, and then I would betray myself, and I did not want you to see me crying."

"Well, well," she said, laughing, "who would have thought of such a thing, you are a perfect novice. But when are you going to get married?"

"In January."

"You are going to remain with me until then, wont you?"

"Such was my intention, Dora."

"Well, Lenore, there is nothing that would give me more pleasure, than to have your company; and if you will stay with me until you get married, I will give you an elegant wedding. I know Edgar will do all in his power to make you happy, for he thinks a great deal of you, and has often expressed to me his sympathy for you, and besides he is one of the best husbands that ever lived, and will do anything that I request of him."

Somebody has said with bitterness, but it is partially true, that "marriage is a cure for love." Lovers are apt to be blind to each other's faults and marriage soon proves an awakening; then unless there is mutual forbearance, unhappiness is inevitable. In many instances

of wedded life, you will find the hearts that once beat for each alone, are not so devoted after marriage. Too often, married men echo everybody's thoughts but their wives', and many married women wish, if they do not say, that their husbands would be like Mr. So-and-so! Before marriage, it is mutual devotion; afterwards, very often mutual indifference. The lover who would have gone into agonies of grief at the illness of the young lady to whom he was engaged, mutters about "sick-wife," "ill-luck," etc., when marriage has taken the fascination away, and family cares have furrowed the brow once so smooth, and made the steps heavy and slow, that were once so gracefully light.

"I have not the least doubt, Dora, that the love of many men is a tender exotic which needs the most beautiful watchfulness and skill to keep alive. But is it not in some degree woman's fault, if she fails to retain the affection she has gained?"

"I have no doubt, Lenore, very much of the fault is woman's. Men who acknowledge this alienation or indifference, attribute it to a negligence on the part of woman; that she has grown unmindful of the tastes and wishes she once sought so diligently to please, or evinces selfishness or unloveliness in some way, is too often true. They wish to indulge their caprice, and have them and all their weaknesses and follies patiently borne with; they are not willing to be, or make the effort to appear to be, the angels they were before marriage, and men forget that very often just such little incidents in themselves, may

have been a first cause of their appearance in the wife's character or habits."

"Well, Dora, it is generally the case that people always put the bright side of the marriage state out, but it seems from your unsparingly descriptions, that you have given me the dark side," said I, laughingly.

"I think it is always best to give the dark side, Lenore, and leave the bright side to find yourself, for if you never find it, you will not be so badly disappointed. 'Blessed is he that expecteth but little, for he shall not be disappointed.' Though I do not pretend to say that there is no happiness in a wedded life where congenial spirits are united, where two hearts beat as one, where every thought is echoed, and every wish anticipated, I want to impress upon your mind, that when you marry Oscar Brandon, you will not marry an angel, nor must you expect to glide into an ocean of bliss, as you might enter a state of possible happiness, and—"

"Probable sorrow," I interrupted.

"That is just what I was going to say, Lenore. Alexander Cooper says—

"Man trusts in God, He is eternal,

Woman trusts in man, and he is shifting sand."

"Dora, I know happiness would be inevitable with right views of God's over-watching care, and a companion perfectly congenial. And I know Oscar and I mutually adore each other, and should be wretched to be separated for ever from each other, and I cannot believe that any of those changes you described so unsparingly, will ever come to a nature so warm and true as his."

"God grant they never may, Lenore. I hope you may be as happily married as I am; I do not wish for a better husband. Do you remember the conversation in your father's graveyard, Lenore?"

"Yes, Dora, and I have often thought of it. For it was there the bright flame of love and friendship was kindled in our breast."

"I have often thought of it myself; and the verse of poetry you repeated, while kneeling by the grave, made a deep impression upon my mind.

"O, would that I could share thy sleep,  
I then from sorrow would be free;  
Wild tears within my breast are stirred,  
And I long to be with thee."

"Your soul addressed me then; and from that hour we were no longer strangers."

"Yes, Dora," said I, "let us hope that this bond of love and friendship may never be severed."

The conversation languished for a while. Dora lost in thought over her work-box, and I trying to work out my web of destiny.

After the silence had lasted about an hour, with no sound save the low dull beating of our own hearts, and the continual ticking of the old clock upon the mantle-piece, Dora exclaimed,—

"I forgot to ask you, Lenore, whether Oscar's mother consented to the marriage or not."

"O, no," said I, "she will not approve of it when she finds it out; she does not know it yet; although she has

suspected it, and has given Oscar several lectures, and told him if he did marry me, or any other girl that could not equal him in fortune, he should never enter her house again. So I guess when she is informed of the fact, she will turn the earth 'up-side down.' Most assuredly I am poor, I have nothing to offer him in return—nothing to give but my humble self—and this, Dora, has given me a great deal of trouble. I have wished a thousand times that he were poor."

"Do not let that trouble you, Lenore, if you love each other, that is sufficient. And if you look at it in a proper light, you will find that you have an abundance of wealth to bestow upon him. Give him a gentle and loving heart, and make him a kind and affectionate wife, and it will be far better than all the wealth fortune could lavish upon him. And what if you are poor,—you were not brought up in poverty—you were once surrounded with all the opulence of wealth, and never knew a sorrow, or aught of grief that wealth would not shield you from. But are you not afraid that his mother will prevent your marriage when she finds it out?"

"No, not in the least, Oscar is as firm as a rock, and will not be moved an inch."

"Ah, Lenore, we are all liable to be deceived sometimes."

"Well, Dora, I know that, but I know that Oscar Brandon will never deceive me, for if there ever was a perfect man, I believe he is one; were he to do it, I would never put confidence in another man. And if he ever does, I

hope that I may lose my senses, and may the lunatic asylum be my home. Perhaps if I were insane, I would not be sensible of my troubles, and would not be accountable for anything that I would do."

"Lenore, I think it is wrong for you to speak in that way. Notwithstanding the fact that you love Oscar Brandon devotedly—and I reckon it would be one of your greatest troubles—I don't think any man's inconstancy would cause me to become deranged, and destroy my happiness in this life. This life has gloom and sadness enough for all the purposes of moral discipline without our making any effort to impart any more of it in our experience."

As the subject was becoming unpleasant, we dropped it, not to be again resumed.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE EVENING WALK.

**T**HE week passed slowly away, and Friday came at last, though it seemed like an age to me. The nights were short, and the days long; I thought they would never come to an end. Every one was talking of how long the nights were growing, and how the days were decreasing; how sadly mistaken I thought they were. I worked, sang and played, and did everything to make time fly.

It was a bright lovely evening, and the waning sun had emerged from the golden gates of the east, and was sinking fatigued in the west; herons sported in fitful dances over the grassy plains and tangled thickets; the bowing forest was filled with odorous breezes, and the valleys were rocking and rolling with unique joys and tide of bird songs, shaking out a wild strophe to the departing summer. The oak-leaves clapped their tiny hands in glee, the tall cedars nodded their heads above the chimney tops, gently swaying in the wind of early autumn, and the silver foliage of the aspen trembled with delight as together they whispered their evening prayer. The foliage of trees, shrubs and creeping vines, so soon to be cut off by the chilling frost of winter, assumed a more

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lively and pleasant hue than even young Spring with her magic pencil could possibly impart.

The world to me, was indeed a Paradise; I was happy. That evening I should see my heart's most cherished idol. No one was gayer or happier than me as I sang "The Bluetail Fly," and "Grasshopper sitting on the Sweet-potato Vine," all day.

"Come, Dora," said I, "and let's take a walk, it is such a lovely evening."

"No, Lenore," said she, "I cannot go this evening, the baby is fretful, and I am trying to get it to sleep; but you can go, and perhaps you will get a ride back."

I took my hat and walked up the lawn, and lingered for some time upon the brow of the hill, with my elbow resting upon my left hand, and my chin propped with my thumb and finger, gazing up the road and watching the sunset over the distant hills. At last, feeling somewhat disappointed, I turned to retrace my steps homeward. I was walking slowly along and deeply meditating:—"This will be Oscar's first visit—but I wonder if he will come. It is time he was here, for the sun has already hid himself in the tree-tops, and no Oscar yet. But I will not give him out, for he promised me faithfully he would come, if life was spared, and I know he will not deceive me. Hark! I think I hear the roar of wheels, and a voice behind me which sounds so familiar." I turned around, and I was not mistaken, it was Oscar. It is beyond the power of the pen to describe the joy of that meeting. A flood of joyful tears expressed the feelings of my enrapt-

ured soul, with an eloquence unknown to words. He came up with a smile and held out his hand to assist me into the buggy.

We did not speak for some time. Words could not convey the fullness of our gushing hearts; it was the hour of love in all its rich and trusting sweetness, without one alloy to taint its bliss.

The eyes of each were dampened with tears, and we wept together once more; though they were tears of joy, and which terminated into a peal of laughter. He looked down into my face just as a big tear was making its retreat from my eyes, and said mischievously—

“Why, Lenore, what are you crying for? Are you sorry that I have come? I thought you would be glad.”

“No, Oscar,” said I, “I am crying because I am so happy. But you need not talk about my crying, for I see a tear standing upon your lids.”

“Yes, Lenore, I could not keep them back. But what are you blushing so for? Have I stayed away so long that you have become bashful of me?”

“No, Oscar; but look at Dora standing at the window yonder, laughing at us.”

“Well, let her laugh,” said he, “I guess she is thinking of her’s and Edgar’s courting days. How have you enjoyed yourself?”

“Most excellently, for Edgar and Dora are so good, and kind, and generous, that any one who has a heart, could not be with them without enjoying life, if they were ever so gloomy.”

“Alas, Lenore,” said he, “you do not know how sadly I miss you. Life seems nothing without you, and home has no charms for me now. I feel isolated and alone. With no kind voice and sweet laughter to greet me after returning from the toils of the day; I did not know how inexpressibly dear you were to me, until I felt the sting of separation. Your place is vacant at the table, and nothing greets my eye except mother’s continual frowns and harsh looks, and I am always glad when the meal is over. The old school-room, which once resounded with the joyous tread of little feet and sweet laughter, looks deserted and forsaken since its mistress has flown; and its din, bustle and monotonous murmur, all banished and gone like the pagentry of a dream.”

“Has your mother said anything more to you in regard to our engagement, Oscar,” said I, wiping away a tear, for I felt all the springs of affection and tenderness open, as it were, in my heart, when I saw how deeply he was affected.

“She has;” he replied, “she has worried me nearly to death, but she might just as well be talking to the Amazon, and bid its waters cease to flow, as to try to break our engagement. I am firm in my resolution, and I am determined that she or any other person shall not interfere with my plans. I do not stay at home much now, since you have left, for I am miserable when I am in her company. I have been to W—— and succeeded in getting into business, and will commence on the first of January.” “Then,” said he, taking my hand, while a smile



mantled his face, "I will take my Lenore home, where nothing but death shall separate us."

By this time we had arrived at the house. "I knew," said my cousin Dora, as she came out to meet us, "that Lenore was anticipating a ride back."

## CHAPTER XIII.

### AUNT FIBBY'S LETTER.

**T**HE shades of evening had settled down, at last. The windows and doors were closed and a moderate fire was burning in the large open fire-place, and two lamps were throwing the light of their united rays upon the wall and the pictures which stood upon the mantle-piece. It would make earth too pleasant in its fleeting state;—too much like Paradise, did every circle present the same beautiful aspect, and live in the same pure atmosphere of love that floated around that little band—the family of Edgar Mansfield. "There must be an end to all earthly scenes whether of joy or sorrow."

"Oscar," said I, whispering in a low and tender voice, at the same time forcing a smile which only passed over the corner of my mouth, and was off in an instant, "I was very much surprised when I received your mother's letter."

"What," said he, looking at me with a mingled feeling of surprise and wonder. "I did not know she had been writing to you." And lighting a cigar, and throwing himself in his chair, after a few violent puffs, he held the smoking thing in his hand, and looked into the fire with a serious cast upon his countenance, which none who

had witnessed his smiles and jest that day could have supposed that face was ever troubled with.

"I knew you were ignorant of it, Oscar," said I, and laughed freely; for at the first glance I perceived that his countenance was unusually grave. "I have answered it," I continued, "but I would not mail it, until you came, for I did not want to do any thing that would hurt your feelings. Here is the letter, and my reply, and if you think she deserves such an answer I will send it; if not, I will abide by your decision.

LENORE—I want you to come up and have a fair settlement with me, as I do not consider that I owe you any thing at all; for you have flaunted around with Oscar's horse and buggy, enough to pay for what little teaching you have done, so I think you have gotten enough out of us already. And I want you to understand that I have your uncle's two little children to raise and educate. And also I have not authorized Oscar to advance you one cent, and if he does, it is all void; so you need not expect any thing from me.

MRS. FIBBY McCLAIN—

I received your defrauding and ungrateful letter, and it is enough for me to say, that it was beyond all human contempt. You wish me to come up and have a settlement, I can have the matter settled very easily without going to your house, as I do not wish to come in contact with you any more. I have just released myself from your jaculated tongue, and I don't think you will have the pleasure of lashing me with it any more. It seems that you have decided the case entirely by yourself. You certainly must be ignorant of the laws of the land, if so, let me advise you, before you are exposed. Pay me the money you justly owe me, or the account will be placed in hands of an officer, and you

will have to squeeze out another dime or too for the cost. Pay it for the sake of my uncle who is in his grave, and who never condescended to an unworthy act, and also for the sake of your children. Never let the world know that your heart is black enough to defraud your husband's orphan niece out of her honest labor, while you have plenty of money at your command, though you are too stingy to enjoy it, and would "skin a flea for its hide and tallow." This is the thanks I get for teaching your children eight months, for I never received a dime from you in my life, and know that I discharged my duty as far as any teacher ever did.

Nothing more, only I hope you will not annoy me any more with your letters, but will send me the money immediately.

Respectfully, LENORE PAROLEE.

After Oscar had perused the letters, instead of his rebuking me, he said that I had done right, and wished I had given it to her a little stronger; that she deserved every word of it, and more besides. He said that he would take the letter up to her himself, and pretend that he had taken it out of the office; for he knew better than to let her know that he had seen me, or had ever thought of me since my departure.

Oscar took the letter to her, and in a few days I received every dollar of the money, though it was like "drawing her eye-tooth." My Aunt Fibby was a very unscrupulous, and preposterous woman. She had been rich, but had never been loved by any one beyond the circle of her own household. She was stern in her manners, unstaple in her dealings, and unfriendly in all her acts. Like the rain which turn to ice upon the sturdy oaks, was the affection of human hearts on her forbid-

ding temperament. She was about the middle size, somewhat straggling and bony in her figure, her forehead was neither good nor bad, and the general contour of her face contained within it no single feature with whose expression the heart of any one could harmonize. She was beetle-browed, her eyes were sharp and piercing, and reminded one that the deep-seated cunning which lurked in them was a thing to be guarded and avoided. She carried a very anxious and timorous look, and always seemed to be in pain, for there was an everlasting scowl upon her brow except when in the act of eating or drinking; the corners of her mouth was diabolically screwed up; her nose appeared to have been designed for a long member, but either in its original cast or by some mishap in her youth, it had become squatted down, and spread out, and then run up again, marring whatever of good appearance she might otherwise have possessed. Her manner of dress was not remarkable for anything, except her peculiarity of wearing her first husband's old dress-coat of which the tails had been torn off, and which she wore invariably buttoned close up to the neck. So long had she worn it, and become so identified with it, that the coat and Fibby McClain were synonymous terms.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## A TEAR AT THE WEDDING.

**I**N the neighborhood, there was another young lady, soon to be married, and who was a very particular friend of mine. We proposed to go to W——, to furnish our bridal wardrobe, as my cousin had promised me an elegant part—of course my wardrobe was to be furnished complimentary to the occasion. We invited Oscar to accompany us, which he did very readily, and took us around shopping.

I was standing with my elbow upon the counter, gazing at a beautiful wreath to which I had taken a particular fancy, while my friend was looking over some article of dress.

"Well, Lenore," said Oscar, coming up to the counter, and looking into the show-case as though he was trying to find the object which had so attracted my attention, "have you filled your bill?"

"Yes," said I, with a deprecating look.

"Are you sure," said he, "that you have everything that you want?"

"Well, no," said I, "not exactly; there are several little articles I would like to have, but—"

"But, what, Lenore?"

"I am not able to get them. I have spent all my

money, except some which I have reserved to pay an account in C——; for I must pay my debts, whether I am satisfied or not. *Ut quimus, quando ut volumus non licet.*"

"No, Lenore, you shall not go back dissatisfied. Get whatever you want, and I will pay that little account in C——; it is a matter of nothing."

"I am very much obliged to you for your kindness; but I don't want you to do it. I don't want it to be said that you had to pay my debts before—"

"Now, stop," he interrupted, before I could finish the sentence; "I do not want to hear any more of that nonsense, and I do not want you to feel a delicacy in doing what I request of you this morning." And then he whispered in my ear, "What difference does it make?—you will soon be mine, any way."

We both laughed heartily, and there was nothing more said about the matter, as I was under the impression, too, that I would soon be his. So I concluded my purchases, and we took the cars, each one feeling as happy as a sunflower.

Oscar remained with us several days, and then returned home. I proposed to him that I should visit my mother and Cousin Mento, and remain with them until the time of my friend's wedding, which was to come off in a few weeks. Oscar consented to my request, and came after me the preceding week.

I remained with my mother, spending a good portion of my time with my cousin, until December, when I re-

ceived my expected invitation to the wedding. The lady of whom I speak, was a sister of Edgar Mansfield. Oscar was also invited and took me down in company with my cousin Arthur and Hubert Claton, who was also one of the wedding guests.

It was an extremely cold day, and it drizzled all the way, which was about thirty miles. That morning I felt merry and happy—so much so, that I could not eat any breakfast, for I was anticipating a delightful time.

But, alas! we should never imagine ourselves happy, nor be animated by the moving pictures of enjoyment and mirth, for we are sure to be excited by some short-lived disappointment. How vain are human expectations. In the morning, we dream of happiness, and before evening we are really miserable.

"True happiness is not the growth of earth,  
The soil is fruitless if you seek it there;  
'Tis an exotic of celestial birth,  
And never blooms but in celestial air."

"Sweet plant of Paradise, its seeds are sown  
In here and there, abreast of heavenly mold;  
It rises slow, and buds, but ne'er was known  
To blossom here—the climate is too cold."

"Well, Lenore," said Oscar, a few minutes after we had started, "I was down to grandfather's last week, mother had me to take her down, and made it convenient to get the whole family together in order to work upon my mind, and try to break our engagement; they said everything they could imagine or think of; they thought

they would chill my affection for you, for the only reason that you are poor."

I did not reply, for the torrent of my feelings burst forth and I wept as I had not done since I was a child upon my mother's knee.

Oscar wiped away the icy tears from my eyes, and tried to console me, for my tears would freeze as they trickled down my cheeks.

"Dear Lenore," said Oscar, "if I had thought that you would have taken on in this way, I would not have told you for the world. Why, Lenore, you know I do not care for anything they say; for I know they will use all their exertions to break our engagement, and if they can't succeed by fair means, they will try by using foul ones. But darling, they can never do that. So make yourself easy, for nothing on earth can ever separate us, or un rivet the chain that links our hearts together. I know you think perhaps they can effect a change in me, but *tempus omnia revelant*."

"Oscar," said I, after I had wept until I had no power to shed tears, and my mourning was hushed to a quiet low sob, "if my heart was made of stone I would not weep, but it is enough to melt a heart of stone, much less a true woman's soul, to be treated in the manner that your family is treating me, trying to crush my heart; and destroy my happiness, just to gratify their vain desires, and carry out their fiendish and diabolical plans."

"Lenore," said Oscar, "when I engaged myself to you, before I asked you to be my wife, I had made up

my mind to meet with these troubles, as I was sure they would come, knowing my mother's disposition. And now I want you to do the same. So, that I prove true and faithful to you, there is nothing more required. I fully considered the matter, and was confident that I loved you well enough not to be shaken by any one; for well did I know, if I engaged myself to you, and then deceived you, it would be a sore trial to you. But never will I be guilty of such an unworthy act. It shall ever be my humblest prayer, and it shall be my earnest endeavor, Lenore, not to disappoint your trusting love. So wipe up your tears, darling, and do not think about it any more; everybody will know that you have been crying, your eyes are so red. I want you to look your prettiest to-night, I reckon the next wedding we go to will be ours, don't you?"

"I don't know, Oscar; I don't know what the future will bring forth."

"Well," said he, "don't look so sad and cast down. I am sorry that I told you what I did; you seemed to be so cheerful before, and now you look as if you had just as soon die as live."

"Yes, Oscar, death would be preferable to this despondency;—would that I had the wings of an eagle, that I might fly away and be at rest."

We arrived at the residence of the bride's mother at sunset. The ladies were all decked in their snowy array, and all but me seemed to be happy. I tried to be gay, but my gayety was only a mockery to my feelings, for

beneath a bosom so white lay the shrine of a broken heart; and those glossy curls, which seemed so unconscious of the storm that was raging beneath them, were but a few hours before dampened with tears.

My eyes were unsteady, my manners uneasy, and my whole bearing indicative of hope, doubt, and despair, all dipping across each other like clouds in a sky troubled by adverse currents, but each and all telling of the turmoil going on within me. I remained in the parlor but a short time after the marriage ceremony was performed. I excused myself by saying that I had a severe headache, and retired—not to sleep—but to think. I threw myself on the bed, and the year-long tears which had been struggling all the evening for expression, found a channel in a shower of tears; for all the soothing words of a dear friend had no effect. I was miserable, and the merry peals of laughter seemed to add but another pang to my misery. And as the deep tones of the piano voiced a love in my ears I felt as if my own sorrows were waited across the divide, and the light winds which sighed around seemed to whisper, *My Love and a Tear.*

## CHAPTER XV.

### DO YOU DOUBT HIM?

Tell me, tell me, King of Day,  
That makes the heaven's bright—  
Know ye a hope that dawns,  
And doth not find its night?

Know ye a sinless one  
That doth not act deceit?  
Know ye a loving one  
Whose joys are not fleet?

Tell me, O fair Queen of Night,  
Proudly sitting on thy silver throne—  
Know ye a happy heart  
That doth not weep and mourn?

Know ye one that has never  
Loved and been believed?  
Know ye one that has never  
Trusted and been deceived?

Tell me, tell me, twinkling stars,  
All in your glittering train;  
Know you a spot on earth,  
Where sorrows never reign?

Do hearts on earth o'er love  
With feelings that will last?  
Will passion ever come,  
That is not swiftly past?

O tell me, lofty mountains,  
 Bathed in the rainbow's dye—  
 Did ever a heart, tried and true,  
 Upon thy bosom lie?

Yes, tell me, lofty mountain,  
 Are joys not all as fleet,  
 As sparkling gems of sunshine  
 That play around thy feet.

Tell me, maiden, has there ever  
 A sunbeam round thee played,  
 That did not take a darker hue  
 And creep into the shade.

Tell me, O loving heart,  
 Does not thy mind oft see,  
 The love that is thy life  
 Turn silently from thee?

Tell me, O passions warm,  
 That doth my being fill,  
 Why doth a doubt creep in  
 And turn my heart to chill?

**I**T was about three months subsequent to the interview which I had with Oscar on the day of the wedding, that which I am about to relate took place. We were on our return home from visiting a friend in the neighborhood, on whom Oscar and I had called to spend a few hours.

"Well, Lenore, I have something to communicate to you this morning—and yet I hesitate to do it."

"Why do you hesitate to tell me, Oscar?" said I, with a broad gaze of wonder and dismay as I turned my scintillating eyes and flushed cheeks up to him, and eyed him

as if from a new point of view, or as if something sudden and exceedingly disagreeable had struck me.

"You know I never keep anything from you, and if there is any evil awaiting me, I pray you tell me, that I may be ready to meet it. Don't keep me in suspense one moment; for one hour of reality is not to be compared to the tortures of one moment of uncertainty and sad forebodings."

"O, Lenore, do not talk in that way; you make me feel as if something awful has happened, or was going to happen—when there is nothing. I have only been disappointed in some of my plans, and it distresses me to think that I will have to disappoint you again; but I hope it will be for the last time. God knows it was not my intention; for we would have been married in January, as I promised you, had I not been disappointed myself. But it will not be long, I hope—no longer than the summer, any way."

"Well, Oscar," said I, "if that is the case, I am going to teach school. I cannot be idle; I must do something to occupy my time and support myself. I do not intend to be dependent on my friends for support, as long as one spark of faculty or intellect remains with which I can earn my living. I would have been teaching all the while, but you led me to believe that we would be married in January, and go to housekeeping. But I see now that I will have to depend upon my own resources. I am going to write to Cousin Jasper and apply for a school, and if successful, I will go to teaching right away."

"Well, Lenore, you can take a school, if you wish to, and by the time the session is out I will then be ready to take you home, dear one, and a home of our own. You do not know how it hurts my heart to see you alone in this cold world, Lenore, struggling and trying to support yourself, when at the same time I have plenty, and could afford you a happy and a pleasant home. And I will do it—it shall not be long either. I am going to build upon my lot at W——, right away. I have everything ready, and nothing to do but to employ the workmen. I did not want to get married until I had built—and I want an elegant house when I do build."

"Well, Oscar, I know it would be better to have a home of our own," I replied, "but, Oscar, you seem to be so procrastinating, and this makes the second time that you have postponed our marriage. Yet, if you had told me in the beginning, you could not have married me under two or three years, and not had me living all this while in suspense—and you know too my nature; you know I cannot bear suspense—I would have waited patiently. But you have appointed the time so often and deceived me, that I have almost become doubtful of your sincerity."

"Lenore, I have never deceived you in my life—nor ever expect to—and all I want is for you have confidence in my truth and honor."

"Yet, Oscar, when you make a promise and fail to fulfill it when you could have done it, you have deceived; it matters not how small a matter. And when

we once deceive, it is almost impossible to restore confidence."

"Well, well," said he, "I guess you are right, but we will not quarrel about it any more. We will soon be to your cousin Edgar's, and then I will have to leave you, and I want you to get in a good humor before we part. I will be up in a few weeks, and if you wish to go to S——, I will take you up. Three months will soon pass away, and we will then be no longer separated."

"Yes, Oscar, to you, enjoying constant change of scene, but to me—lonely and sorrowful, in your absence—it will appear an age."

"I know it's true, Lenore," he said, as he assisted me out of the buggy, "and it shall not be so long. Everything will come right—depend upon that."

I bid Oscar good-by, and glided into the house, took off my hat and shawl, and went into the dining-room, where my cousin Dora was preparing some pies for dinner.

"Where is Oscar, Lenore?" said she.

"He has gone home."

"Why, I thought he would be here for dinner. Why is he in such a hurry?"

"He is going to take the cars for W——, this evening, and he was afraid if he remained here for dinner, he would not make connection."

"Well, Lenore, I hope you will not think me too inquisitive, but when are you and Oscar going to get married?"

"I don't know, Dora, he has postponed it again."



"What is his reason for postponing it so often, Lenore, and putting you to so much trouble and expense for nothing? He pretended he would marry you in January, and after you went to the expense of buying your wedding apparel, he put it off. And now he has done the very same thing over—and if I were you he might go for what he would bring. He should never have the chance to put me off again in that way. Were I you, I would have a fair understanding, for he is just as ready to marry now as he will ever be. He would not be the first man that married without a fine house—if that is what he is waiting for; and it is the opinion of most people that he is going to fool you."

To describe the conflict of contending thoughts and feelings, is impossible. The effect produced by those words was that which often fills the soul when, amid the roar of the elements, an awe pervades it that hushes all other feelings into silence. My heart had never wavered. I had taken his word as perfect truth. Amid all the surmisings which had been scattered thickly around me, I retained my confidence unshaken by a single doubt.

"Dora," said I, after my tongue found utterance—and the color deepened, until my very temples and forehead were burning red—"let me beg of you never to use that phrase—'other people,' or 'they say'—to me again. The very words sound hideously in my ears. I care not for the opinion of other people; I care not for public sentiment, and I care not for all the world: it is not my idol—I do not worship it, nor shall I ever do so.

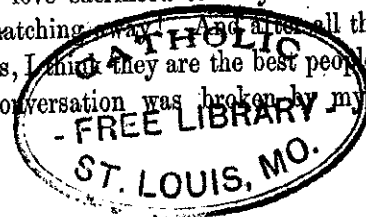
I wish to guide myself by the voice of my own conscience, by a sense of what is right and proper, and by the principle of Christian truth. And I think it is very essential that every one should attend to their own business, and keep from meddling with the personal affairs of others—unless they have a specific reason for so doing. If I never marry, it is nobody's business but my own; and I don't know that it is any disgrace to die an old maid, either."

Dora saw that I was deeply moved, and she seemed mortified at the pain she had caused. Had her spirit been about to take its flight into another world, it could scarcely have left a more bloodless cheek; while I was sitting before the fire, with my arms thrown up over a chair, as I was wont to do in childhood, and tears were fast falling—such tears as a true woman sheds when her pure and trusting heart meets the cruel thorn where it had hoped to find a holy resting-place.

"Oh, Lenore," said she, forcing a laugh; "don't think of living an old maid—the title is so obnoxious, and they are the most selfish creatures in the world."

"No, Dora," said I, "that is not true; for we have seldom met with an old maid in whose early history, upon the pages of memory, there was not some love-tale inscribed—some story of unrequited affection—of betrayed hopes of love sacrificed to duty—or of the grave's untimely snatching away. And after all that is said about old maids, I think they are the best people in the world."

Our conversation was broken by my cousin Edgar,



who came into the room and handed me a letter. I took the letter, and stole away to my room, and breaking its seal, I found within a little scroll where a few lines were traced, bearing no signature, and reading as follows:

DEAR LENORE—

A wolf is lurking in your path, clothed in sheep's garments; and it is no other than Oscar Brandon. You imagine yourself happy in his affections, when he has placed them upon another—although his affections are considerably limited, except for dollars and cents. He is a chip of the old block, and understands practicing deceit to perfection. I heard the other day that he was engaged to Gertrude Waldon, and I have every reason to believe it, for he is capable of anything but acting the part of a gentleman. And I think it would be the best thing that ever happened if you never marry him, for he is an asp in a basket of flowers. I write you this, dear Lenore, that you may be prepared to meet with the disappointment, which will surely come, and which will be a blessing upon your head.

From one who loves you as tenderly as a sister.

May God be with you, and give you strength and comfort to bear under this and every other trial.

A FRIEND.

The feelings which rioted in my breast would be impossible to describe, for all the physical powers of life within me seemed as if about to suspend their functions—my brain was full of confused images and unsettled thoughts, and in my heart was a tranquility of agony; for many things which my tormentor had said, I felt to be true.

"Oh! would to God that we had never met!" exclaimed I in the bitterest agony, pressing my hand to my heart to still its wild beating. "Though I could live

without him, and it would be happiness enough for me to love him—yet, could I endure that he should love another?" and my reverie turning into prayer I uttered, "O God! have mercy upon me!" Throwing myself upon the bed, with my flushed cheeks pressing the pillow, still the one reverie prevailed—the reverie of the ideal made palpable—dissolving from time as before into the devout petition, "O God! have mercy upon me!"

The trembling heart, which had committed its choice treasures to one whom I fondly thought could appreciate them, and from whom I expected a rich return—not in gold or silver, not in land or bonds, not even in such things as many think the female heart peculiarly delights—costly furniture and costly dress—began to feel that its warm affections would be trampled beneath his feet, although Oscar had written often during our separation, and his letters were painted in characters of fire, breathing of love and unchangeable fidelity.

It was on the evening of the fifth day following, when I wrote to Oscar.

DEAR OSCAR—

It is night, and I feel sad and lonely. With what meditations shall I amuse this wasted hour of darkness and vacuity? I will endeavor to dispel some of my gloomy feelings by answering your letter, which I received this morning. When I tell you I am sad, Oscar—I am not only sad but miserable. And, to-night, as I sit before a ruddy fire, indulging my fancy in waking dreams, a flood of the past, the present, and the dark future, rolls out before me and steepes my soul in utter gloom.

Do you believe in dreams, Oscar? Oh! I wish I could not,

for I had one the other night, and it made such a deep impression upon my mind, that it is ever lingering around my heart. I know you will think me foolish, weak and superstitious. But it is not my dream alone that throws around me such a gloomy spell. I will tell you all when I see you; and I hope the time will not be long, for I cannot enjoy one moment's rest until I see you, and impart to you some of my wretchedness; for I know you will share my troubles with me, and not let me bear them alone, if another is to share your happiness.

From your true and faithful,

LENORE.

MY OWN DEAR LENORE—


Who has made you so unhappy? I know some designing wretch, who had private views and private ends to answer, has imposed upon your credulity. But, darling, do you think me capable of so base an act as to destroy your happiness and peace of mind? I thought you had a better opinion of me than to entertain such fears. How is it possible that you should harbor the least suspicion of my fidelity? when my affections have never so much as wandered away from you. In you are centered all my hopes of felicity. With you only can I be happy, so let me beg, dear Lenore, that you will lay aside all those unnecessary scruples which only serve to make one unhappy, who is already struggling under all the anxiety of real and genuine love. I will be up in the course of a few weeks, if nothing happens.

From your true and devoted

OSCAR.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LOVER DREAMS AGAIN.

PRING had come again, with the singing of birds, and the waking up of blossoms, with the new blessed vitality throbbing through the heart of nature; the sky was deep and azure, and the woodland songsters rejoiced at the return of the bright golden weather; the atmosphere was laden with delicious perfumes, for myriad of gorgeous-hued flowers were blossoming.

Ah! me, that spring! but it is all over now. The wind tossed the flowers, the untimely frost spangled the leaves with a fall's beauty, and time swept everything away but the gloomy waste; and that remained as cold and stark and dreary, as though no bright flowers had ever burst through the grassy carpet, or green leaves and young buds had ever sprung or bloomed under the bright sunlight of Heaven.

Yes, it is all past now, and I can recount it with calmness and stoicism, notwithstanding all the grief it brought me—grief through which I have often since wondered that God let me live.

It was indeed a lovely evening, and the sun, about to bid adieu to the clouds which were clustering still around his path, threw back upon them such a flood of rays that

they seemed like a golden vesture, which he had left behind to bless the earth awhile with its light and beauty, when his quickening beams could be no longer felt—when Oscar made his appearance.

Words cannot express the mingled emotions which agitated the hearts of the lovers. The meeting can be better imagined than described. It was not merely life from death; it was light, love and joy, and the heart's richest emotion.

"Why, Lenore, what on earth is the matter? I never saw you look worse in my life," Oscar exclaimed, as I met him at the door.

"I presume I do not look any worse than I feel," said I; "if I do, I must be a fright, though I have seen trouble enough, to make me look like a ghost. But, Oscar, do you love me any the less, because trouble has set its seal upon my brow?" I tried to smile, but he saw my lips quiver, and he knew my heart was full of unshedded tears—tears which affection in its hour of deepest emotion calls to aid.

"No, dearest, you are all that my eyes desire to rest upon. What could I wish for more? I would not have you changed for the world. But something is troubling you again, what is it? What are these tears for, Lenore? Will you not tell me?" The pathetic spirit of tenderness and devotion that breathed in his words caused a pulsation in my heart, and a sense of suffocation about my throat, that for the moment prevented me from speaking. "Let me know," he said, "what has oc-

curred since our last interview to occasion this deplorable change—this awful spirit of despair, that I read in your face?"

After I had gained sufficient composure I related all that had happened since our last meeting.

"Where is the letter, Lenore?" he exclaimed with a startling and exciting look upon his face, which appeared to produce a feeling of the character of a disagreeable dream, that slightly disarranged the faculty of his thoughts, and which placed him in a position where novelty, in general the source of pleasure, was here associated only with pain.

"I threw it in the fire," said I, "as I did not want Dora to see it, for she, too, believe that you are deceiving me, neither did I want to see it any more; it was one of the most tormenting things my eyes ever beheld; and I do would rather witness the spectacle of the very brow of perdition with all its boiling, bubbling—scalding, roasting, frying, scorching, blazing, burning, the whole dark infernal machinery in full operation—than to take another glance at that which has blighted my joys and hopes."

"Lenore," said he, "you are too easily excited, and must not allow your mind to be so imposed upon by the fraud, deceit, jealousy, and treachery of this world; for it seems that the awful machinery you have so unsparingly described, is at full work against us both. But we must have patience to bear with these trials. You know that it is some of my enemies who wrote that letter

and if I were you, I would not worry my mind about it ; it will only tend to make you miserable."

"But Oscar I had a dream the other night which helps to add to my misery."

"What did you dream, Lenore?"

"I dreamed that you had forsaken me and had married another; but you were not happy. If you only knew how my poor heart has suffered, you would not be surprised at my bad looks."

"I wonder if you are so silly as to let a dream trouble you?"

"Yes, Oscar, I can't help it, it has left such an impression upon my mind, and I can't help from thinking that some great trouble is going to befall me, for I am impressed with a presentiment that this will be our last meeting."

"Coming events cast their shadows before."

"You foolish child," said he, laughing lightly, "to allow yourself to be troubled, by dreams, and sad forebodings. Drop all those unnecessary scruples—they are only meant for weak-minded people. When shall we start for S——?"

"I would like to go this evening, but it is too late now, though we can go by and stay with Lillian, and complete our journey to-morrow."

"Very well, I can carry you by if you wish too; but we had better start for it is getting late."

So we bid my friends good-by and took our departure. I could perceive that there was a great change in Oscar.

His laugh became less frequent, he looked thoughtful, and at times even sad. He tried to talk but his mind seemed to wander. I tried to talk to him, but my "tongue would cleave to the roof of my mouth."

"Lenore, why don't you talk?" said Oscar. "I have been trying to get you to say something ever since we started; but I might just as well be talking to a statue. You sit here like a disembodied spirit and have not spoken for the last hour—and me rattling away all the while."

"My head aches, Oscar, and I don't feel like talking, I can't think of anything to say."

"Then I presume you are not very anxious to see me," he said angrily. "I went off and left you in a pet, and when I came back I find you in another. I thought you would get in a good humor, and would be glad to see me after staying away so long. But I believe you get worse instead of better; for you would talk to me then, and now you won't talk any. I don't know what I shall do with you," he added, forcing a smile.

"Well, Oscar," said I, looking him straight in the face; "I am going to ask you one question, and I want you to give me a satisfactory answer, be it good or bad. But let it come from your heart."

"Well, Lenore, I will do it, if it is in my power."

"It is in your power, Oscar, and yours alone. Do you intend to marry me?"

"Certainly I do, Lenore, that has ever been my aim."

"I mean at that time you spoke of, when we had our last interview; you know the promise you made. Do

you intend to fulfill that promise?" On hearing the question, he paused a little; but the pause did not proceed from any disposition to answer it.

"No, Lenore," he said, after some moments of hesitation; "it will be impossible. I can not get ready until next winter."

"Well, this is your third putting off, Oscar, and I am under the impression that it is your intention to put it off forever, or until you get the chance to marry some other woman, some one perhaps that will please your mother's eye. For I can see that you are becoming dissatisfied, cold and indifferent; and if it is true, I want you to tell me, that I may try to forget you, and banish your image from my heart. For to cherish it there would be a sin." "And I shall struggle hard to do it," I added, "and may God give me strength to bear up under every trial and comfort me in the hour of darkness. Yet I feel I do not deserve his pity, for I am an idolater, I worshiped you, as the heathen did the 'golden calf.' I loved you better than I did my God; and He will surely punish me. But is not the punishment that I am receiving now sufficient for the crime?"

The very fountain of my heart seemed to have dried up, for I found it impossible to shed a single tear.

Oscar had his gaze fixed upon me all the while, and when I ceased to speak he grasped my hand and pressed it in his own; and with a faltering voice exclaimed,

"Lenore, if I do not marry you, I will never marry any one, but, darling, if life is spared you shall be mine."

These words were uttered just as we arrived at my aunt's. Night had already shut her curtain down, and my aunt and cousin were in at supper.

"You are just in pudding time," said my cousin Lillian, as we came in. "So walk into the dining room and join us in a cup of tea, or coffee, which ever you like," she added laughing. "But you ought to have come sooner and had your name in the pot, as it is, you will have to play a chance game."

Lillian was very gay and flippant; talked about picnics, tableaux, protracted meetings, etc., besides drinking three cups of coffee, while it was a burden for me to swallow down a half of one; and I drank it with as much reluctance as if it was a dose of medicine. As for Oscar I think he ate six biscuits, and drank four cups of coffee.

I remained only a short time in the parlor after supper. I played off sick, and retired. Yet, it was true, I was sick; sick at heart—a disease beyond the power of physicians to alleviate. I retired, but could not sleep, my emotions were swelling at each moment, as wave after wave came rolling in from that ocean of love and interest in which my heart had once bathed with such delight, and from which, of late, only dark and forbidding clouds had swept upon me. While the whole household was wrapped in slumber, I was thinking of the dark future, which rolled out before me—a cold, dreary bleak. The golden sun that had brightened my life, had given place to a deep gloom. "Oh! that I knew Oscar's heart this night," thought I, as I laid there with a tranquillity of agony in

my heart. "What would I give? but ah! I think I know it, I believe he is deceiving me; for my sad forebodings have been too well verified, and the great truth is too legibly written upon his face. He has changed so much since he went to W——. Would to God he had never gone. It is strange some people can't bear promotion. But how can he prove false to one who has been so true, and would be willing to lay down her life for his sake. Oh! that I could recall the happy days we have spent together—days of joy and sorrow; that I could clasp to my heart the little root on which his foot was placed when he asked me to be his, and listened to those loving words that ever greeted me, and which my heart fed with even new delight. But alas! it was all too bright to last long. Earth was like a paradise, but now it is as one wide sepulchre. If I could only weep it would ease my heart a little, but I cannot, I must not, for Lilian might hear me, and inquire into my troubles, and what could I tell her? I cannot say that my lover is false; that he has deceived me; he has not, and his last words were, 'Lenore, if I do not marry you, I will never marry any one. But, darling, if life is spared, you shall be mine.' Then how can doubt him for one moment? how can I accuse him of being false to me, after hearing those sweet words? And yet there is a heavy weight at my heart, and for what cause? Alas! I must bear it in silence and alone."

And then all that I had heard would come back with painful freshness, and across my agitated mind dark vis-

ions were passing, which would have filled one less determined with gloom of despair.

It was a beautiful night above, the stars shone with unusual brilliance; and as my agitated feelings could not be calmed to rest, I arose, and sitting by the window, looked up into the bright canopy above. The Hand that held those radiant orbs, and marked their path through space, would direct me through life, and bear me up through this and every other trial.

SILENT GRIEF.

'Twas such a grief, too deep for tears  
That aged my heart for more than years,  
How old it seemed e'en when 'twas new,  
Backward it stained life's pages through.

And ere another leaf I turned  
On all my past its impress burned,  
My happy days a mockery seemed,  
I had not lived, but only dreamed.

And then when first I wished it done,  
Life seemed for me but just begun,—  
Begun in bitter unbelief  
That time could dull the edge of grief;

Could give me back my hopes and fears,  
Or bring me any good, but death;  
'Twas but a moment, yet to me,  
It seemed a whole eternity.

I felt how gray my heart had grown,  
Its plastic wax was changed to stone,  
When misery there its signet set  
Impressing lines which linger yet.

On each fresh leaf of life I find  
The shadow of this woe behind,  
For though the page at first appear  
Unsullied by the mark of tears,

They'll blister through 'til 'tis red,  
A real grief is never dead;  
Its faint fingers stern and dark,  
Leaves on the face and heart a mark.

As quickly cut—as plainly told,  
As that the die stamped on the gold,  
Though read aright, perchance alone,  
By those who kindred grief have known.

Like mason's signs, which seem but naught,  
Although with deepest meaning fraught;  
The grief which kills, is silent grief,  
For tears like words will bring relief.

Husband and wife, from each conceal  
The wounds which are too deep to heal;  
But when hope and faith seem dead,  
While many a page must yet be read.

And in despair the heart doth sigh,  
And wish then it too may die;  
Remember that no night so dark,  
But can be seen some little spark.

And when the sky, in darkness shroud,  
There is a silver lining to every cloud;  
And patiently wait, till dawning day  
Shall its red lines of light display.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE BOTTLE OF ETHER.

**T**HE next evening we started for my cousin Jasper Claton's. Oscar seemed cold and reserved, more so than I had ever seen him. And his manners were as stiff and as ostentatious as a peacock in the spring of the year. His boots seemed to cramp his feet; his coat seemed to fit him more snugly; his shirt-collar stood more erect, and his neck was gracefully bowed, which gave him the resemblance of a gander that had been choked with cold potatoes. He assisted me into the buggy with the air of a prince, making a tremendous bow to Lilian, who screamed at the top of her voice,—“Well, Don Brandon, I see you have caught the town fling; don't it make you sorry for we poor moping creatures in the country?”

“Ah! Lilian,” said I, “he is not the same Oscar Brandon that he used to be, since he left the country and went to town.”

“Yes, Lenore,” she said laughing, and winking, “that is always the way with these parvenus just entering into the beau monde.”

Oscar did not reply to Lilian's last remarks, as they were spoken in French which he could not translate; so he cracked his whip, and Frank knowing his master's sig-



nal obeyed his command at once, and in less than two hours he stopped in front of my cousin Jasper Claton's house.

The afternoon was fine; the sun, though sinking, was brilliant, and the cloudless throne of heaven seemed to reflect his flood of mild effulgence, which poured down from the firmament. The air was sharp and pure, with scarcely a cloud visible over head to dim the beautiful half moon hanging in the eastern heavens. The golden rays of the sun streamed through the forest trees, and gave a metallic lustre to the gray moss that hung in fantastic loops from the tops of the giant oaks, and lighted up with a silvery gleam the long feathered sprays of the graceful pine trees, waving gently and slowly, as the soft breeze passed rushing among them, and they wandered among the dark glossy foliage of the tall groups of holly, and twinkled like stars upon their stiff pointed leaves. But Oscar was too much absorbed in his own thoughts to notice the loveliness of the evening, or to apprehend a tear, that now and then would steal down the cheeks of her who was by his side, counting every stroke of his heart, and trying to penetrate his deep and far-away thoughts.

Oscar remained with us until after tea, and then went to C—— to visit his mother, which was only half an hour's ride distant, and whom he found almost in a state of insanity; for if any one had seen her a few minutes before Oscar came, they might have supposed her to be seized with hydrophobia. Some one had seen us pass and

had informed her of our arrival; and to make the matter worse, little Charley came running in, and said, "Ma, did you know that big buddie and cousin Lenore was married?"

"No," said she, "they are not either."

"Yes they are," he persisted, "for Jack Perkins told me so just now."

As the scene cannot be described, the reader is left to imagine the outrage, the clamor, and the scurrilous yelling of the enraged woman, after hearing this. It had been reported a few days previous, that Oscar and myself were married, and this report had reached my aunt Fibby's ears; but she only puckered up one corner of her mouth, and said, "It is not so, and you needn't believe it. If Oscar was to marry that good-for-nothing poverty-stricken Lenore Parolee, he should never darken my door again—I would smash him into a thousand giblets."

It is not my intention to give my readers any lengthened description of my aunt Fibby's scurrility when she got the information from Jack Perkins' own lips. He had met Oscar and myself on the road, on our way to my cousin Jasper Claton's, and there was no doubt in the world but we were married.

There was in her heart, anger, hatred, sickening pain, a burning desire of revenge, a vindictive determination to do she knew not what. Words could hardly describe the convulsive vehemence of the feelings that tore and shocked her soul. The old Greek fable—of men possessed by the furies—seemed realized in her.

"Give me that bottle of ether, Charley," said she in one of her hysterical convulsions, "I believe I am going to have another one of those bad spells. Run Rose, as hard as your heels can fly, and bring a chunk of fire and heat me some bathing water."

"Miss Fibby, please mam, give me a match, they always laugh at me when I go after a chunk of fire," said Rose.

"No no; run along and get it, I hate to strike my matches when fire is so near by."

By this time Oscar had driven into the yard. So there was nothing more said about the hot water, nor the bottle of ether; for the moment Oscar entered the house, she began to explode, which made the poor fellow stagger back and turn pale as though he had met a ghost. He was almost dumbfounded, for he had no idea she was aware of his taking me to my cousin's, but got out of the awful dilemma by denying it, and saying it was Miss W. he was with, which brought balm to her wounded soul.

The bottle of ether was put up, the chunk of fire soon came, and the bathing water was turned into a pot of hot coffee, and a plate of fritters was fried, which was to be sopped in the best of molasses. "For this her son was dead, but now is found; was blind, but now he sees." Therefore all the family was sent for, to rejoice over the lost son. And he had grown to be such a big man, too, since he went to town.

It is certainly true, there is more joy on earth as well

as in heaven; at the bringing back of one strayed sheep, than keeping in order the rest of the fold.

My aunt Fibby had a brother by the name of Haytie, whose appearance was anything but prepossessing. He was a long, big-boned, coarse man, with black greasy hair cut square at the ears; high cheek-bones, flabby cheeks, broad staring eyes, and a nose like a dropsical sausage.

Although time had left his impression upon the general features of his face, it had not discolored a single hair upon his head, which was as black as ebony. He seemed to be always straining at something between his jaws that was hard to bite; or as though the sun was throwing his dazzling rays immediately into his eyes. He was indeed a very dark and rough-looking man.

A man ought not to be judged too harshly from his looks; and yet it requires sometimes a great deal of faith to believe in the pure morality of one who carries about with him a visage personifying mischief, but having a sanctified expression by the sheer force of religion.

Brother Hay, as they called him, was law and gospel. He always went to town on his father's raft, and sold his tar and turpentine; he also churned the milk for his mother. He never was fond of doing hard work, although his hands were coarse and strong, and the joints of his thick fingers were knotted either by age or disease; but, at all events, they indicated a rude and unfeeling character. He was doomed to live the life of a bachelor, which made him more popular in his home circle; of course

the property would all go back into the family. He was stake and rider, and was always the one to give advice when there was any needed.

Therefore, he was dispatched to come and see Oscar, to which request he made no delay. And as the serpent wound his coil about, he smiled to see the work progressing so silently yet so sure.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE OLD CHURCH-YARD.

**I**N a few weeks I took charge of my school, which was pleasantly situated in the grove of Oak Dale Church, about two miles from my cousin's. The walk was very fatiguing at first, especially for one whose heart was a burden to carry.

When friends prove so false; when weak hands have to toil; when the hire is so meagre and the task so heavy; when the weary brain can see no stars through the dark clouds; and when the heart is so bruised and mangled—is it?—oh! is it worth while to live?

So often did these disconsolate thoughts come to my mind, that I almost sunk beneath their influence; for there was a ponderous load at my heart which seemed to weigh me down to the earth. But I struggled; I would not give up in despair; for I knew I had to depend upon my own labor for subsistence, and the hand that toils cannot afford to wipe away continual tears. But labor sometimes brings sweet repose to the mind, and the weary spirit may recover its tone, when the responding mind will resume its strength and its hope. But it brought no relief to my poor lacerated heart—that heavy weight continued to oppress me. There was a bitterness of anguish

in my heart which seemed to drink up the very fountain of my life, and I could feel my strength decreasing day by day, and my spirit sinking deeper and deeper into the vortex of wretchedness. Ah! me! if that dear old church could speak, perhaps it could help me to express that which my pen is feeble to describe.

At noon, when the children's merry peals of laughter would echo over the hills and through the dales, I would wander around the old solitary church or through the sleeping grove, where the food of my girlhood was so familiar, and pass through its very shadows—coming, as they did, from objects that I had looked upon as the friends of my childhood, before life had opened to me the dark and blotted page of suffering and sorrow. There, murmuring slumberously, was the transparent brook, to the left below me, where I had taken many a stroll with groups of my light-hearted companions.

And when I spoke to its dancing and sparkling waters, and asked the question: "Where are all those?" they seemed to say, "they are all gone, some dead, others dispersed—all vanished and gone." A little further on, I could see, without difficulty, the old gray mill, and the white cascade tumbling over the flood-gate, and remark its bright scintillations that looked under the light of the sun like masses of silvered ice, were it not that such a notion was dispelled by the roaring, dashing, and continuous murmur of its waters, which in days of yore I had been plunged into in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

At times my fancy would lead me to enter the walls of the old church, and walk up and down the aisle, or wander among the seats where I had sat so often and listened to the voice of those who had wooed me to enter the path that leads to peace and everlasting happiness. Then I would ascend the pulpit, and there repeat over and over again to myself, Christ's Sermon on the Mount, as I had heard it there in my young days.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.

"Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

"Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Then I would kneel down, and with the palms of my uplifted hands pressed reverently together; would try to

pray, but my prayers seemed not to avail. Heaven's gate seemed closed as I looked, with that ponderous load of adversity which was crushing me, through my blinding tears, to that one Great Source of strength and comfort.

I had lost sight of the farthest star, the last glimmer of light was quenched in utter darkness, and the agony of despair every moment increased my misery.

I now sometimes visit the old church, and those wretched days float back upon my memory, which almost make me start and turn pale.

"Those days that are past so long ago,  
That now their memory seems  
A strange, confused, unreal thing,  
Like things we see in dreams."

To those who have done or suffered much, the days of their childhood seem at an immeasurable distance—for, when our hearts and hands are busy, we know nothing of time—it does not wait for us; but as soon as we pause to meditate on that which is gone, we seem to have lived long, because we look through a long series of events which remind us of a mountain that, being far off, is yet nigh.

O, BID ME NOT RECALL THE PAST.

O, bid me not recall the past—  
Too many joys with it have fled,  
And many hopes which once were bright,  
Like Autumn leaves, lie crushed and dead.

O, say not that it's sweet to think  
On hours we ne'er again can see;—  
The memory of the scenes and friends  
Of other days, is sad to me.

How many hearts, congenial, true,  
And forms too fair, too frail to last,  
And sunny smiles and joyous scenes,  
Lie buried in the gloomy past.

Then say not that 'tis sweet to think  
On happy hours forever flown;  
But rather teach me to forget  
The joys I once could call my own.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### MY LAST DAY AT THE OLD CHURCH.

**L**ENORE, when did you hear from Oscar last?" asked my cousin Mento, who had been watching, from day to day, my haggard look and sad countenance.

"I have not heard from him since he went to W——," I replied. And I would rather have died than to acknowledge the sad truth.

"Why, I thought that you and Oscar were regular correspondents, being you are engaged."

"Oscar has been very punctual in writing to me heretofore, and I don't know why it is he does not write, unless he is in a pet and is trying to worry me."

"What have you done to vex him, Lenore? I did not know there was any difficulty between you, although I could see a great change in you that I could not account for."

"I have said nothing, Cousin Mento, but what justice demanded of me, and I am not sorry for any thing that I have said, and I would say it again were it necessary."

"You did not discard him, surely?"

"Well," said she, after I had related the conversation between us, if he is gump enough to get miffed at that, let him go; there is as good fish in the sea as ever was

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caught. He only wanted an excuse that he might play off, and I have had that opinion for some time, for the evening you came, I could see a great change in him, and your cousin Jasper also spoke of it to me. Did he tell you when he was coming?"

"Yes, he said he would come in June, but the month has now expired and he has not made his appearance."

"I reckon his mother gave him such a fright the evening he brought you up, that he will hardly come back any more."

"No, cousin Mento, I can't help from believing that he is more honorable."

"Ah, my child, as you grow older you will be impressed with the sad truth that, 'all that glitters is not gold.' Yet, I don't think Oscar Brandon is capable of dazzling the vision of any one; and I can't see why you are so carried away with him, for in my estimation he is nothing but a lump of dross."

"Cousin Mento, I know I have not been gifted with that strong sense of propriety which many have, and I may have been less on my guard against the faithlessness of man than many of my age, but I had a free and guileless heart, I thought no evil, and I feared none. Every attention on the part of Oscar I received as an expression of his affection and love toward me. I accepted them in good faith, and as these tokens of his feelings were neither few, nor far between, they worked upon my heart. He became more and more associated with happy spots in my existence; his presence seemed to be necessary to

make every occasion of joy just what it should be. In every vision of beauty that flitted through my mind, he was a conspicuous figure. In my dreams by night, and in those livelier and more entrancing dreams by day, in which my spirit loved to lose its present realities and bathe in delight of its own framing, he was one—the principal one—whose virtues, as my mind painted them, gilded the whole scene with rays of beauty. And around my susceptible heart he has cast a chain whose links hold my ardent feelings in an embrace firmer than the iron clasp that holds the criminal to his cell. And if he does deceive me, it will take my life; and I hope it may. I do not wish to live any longer; dear Mento, I am very unhappy—I am wretched. Yet this is wrong; for why should I add my sorrows to the weight of misery? it is selfish and ungenerous to do so.”

“No, my child; whatever weight of grief or misery which we are forced, perhaps for wise purposes, to bear, it is ordained, for purposes equally wise and beneficent, that every act of sympathy with another’s sorrows, lessens our own. Your heart will soon become light, and better spirits will return; and I trust, Lenore, you will be happy yet. ‘When the dispensations ripen, then comes the harvest of the blessings.’ It is not from the transient and unsteady, and too often painful incidents of life, that we should attempt to draw consolation, but from a fixed and firm confidence in the unchangeable purposes of God. And, Lenore, you must not look, as most young persons like you do, upon the trials you are at present forced to

suffer, as if they were the sharpest and heaviest in the world. Time, my child, and perhaps other trials of a still severer character, may one day teach you to think that your grief and impatience were out of proportion to what you then underwent. May He who afflicts His people for their good, prevent this ever should be so in your case, but, even if it should, remember that God loveth those whom He chasteneth. And above all things, dear Lenore, never despair in His providence.”

“Well, Lenore,” said my cousin Arthur, who had just returned from C——, “I have a small bit of news to tell you. Oscar Brandon is in C——, just returned from W——. I invited him home with me, but he said that he could not come this evening; it is probable he may come to-morrow evening, and you must have on your best bib and tucker.”

The next morning I made my way to the school-house, although I felt as if I should never reach the spot. And it was such a long, long day. I gave the children short lessons, and long recesses, and to speak plainly, they done pretty much as they pleased that day. To my great relief evening came at last, and it was the last day I ever taught at the old church, although I had dismissed my little pupils with the expectation of joining them the next morning.

I started for home, but did not feel like walking two miles, for I had not eaten a mouthful since dinner the day before.

“I wonder if Oscar will be there,” I murmured to my-

self, as I walked slowly along. "No, no, something seems to whisper he will not be there."

My heart was heavy with undefined fears, while little Birdie was chattering along all the way, asking me so many questions, that I always answered, but at the same time not knowing one word of what she said. At last, weary and fatigued, I came up to the house, for it seemed to me that every step added to the weight at my heart; and that shade upon my brow told too truly what a wrestling there was in its secret chambers. The sun was sinking low in the west, and the evening breeze, rippling the waters of the brook, stirred the luxuriant foliage of the ancient sycamore trees that bordered the pavement.

"No, no, Oscar is not here; the buggy is not at the gate, nor is Frank in the stable."

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE WOUNDED DOVE.



I WALKED up to the piazza and took a seat on the steps, with my face upon my arm, which rested against one of the posts, at the time when light is divided from darkness, and there is that reflection from the sky upon the earth, which enables one to see an object against the horizon. A bird flitted by into the shade of a tree, and directly poured out the dismal hooting of an owl.

Terrible anticipations of evil stirred my unshed tears; like sentinels at the portal of grief, they stood ready to leap forward at this gloomy cry of the sad-omened bird of night. Weird imaginations crowded upon my already crazed brain; the trembling rays of the rising moon threw the window panes into ghastly coffin-shaped images upon the floor at my feet, and the quivering shadows of the wood-vines penciled themselves into dark and swiftly-changing hieroglyphics, as they played upon the ground. I shook with awe, and wondered why all nature was so calm, so happy; how flowers could bloom and stars shine, and the moon sail so peacefully upon her sparkling azure sea, when such agony was oppressing my heart.

"Has the soul," reflected I, "no power to give, from its high regions, consolation to a miserable human life?"



While in this position, motionless as a statue, I heard a footstep, and raising my eyes I perceived that the intruder was no other than my cousin Jasper Claton, who took a seat by me, and said,—

“Well, Lenore, Oscar Brandon has been up visiting among his relatives, but has gone back to W—— without even giving you a call. What do you think of that?”

How wildly the waves of disappointment and despair rolled through my storm-tossed soul in that wretched hour, can only be imagined by those impassioned beings who have staked their heart's most cherished feelings on the throw of a single die, and like myself lost. Never, perhaps, had a more sudden and terrible storm swept over a human heart: it was like a hurricane of the tropical regions, blasting the rich bloom their burning sun had called forth.

“Oh! Cousin Jasper!” I exclaimed, “I feel my heart is breaking, and that I must die; I cannot bear it any longer. Oh, God! take my soul to rest, and mingle not my miseries with the fiery tortures of hell, for my punishment on this earth is as great as I can bear.”

And the wounded dove folded its wings, dropped its head upon its breast, and sank upon the floor.

“Lenore, Lenore, my child! you must not give up in that way,” said my cousin, as he raised me from the floor, “I should not care for the d——d rascal; he is not worthy of your love; he is not worthy of the love of a true woman. He is a false traitor, a mealy-mouthed hypocrite.”

When the heart pours out the first wails of its agony; when dire calamity in its most cruel form first strikes the appalled senses—there is such an utterance to the horror of the soul—such an outbursting of the spirit's pang—such a heaving away of all barriers by the rushing floods of passion—that any heart which stands within the bounds of sympathy, is drawn into its whirling current.

At length, by a violent effort, I recovered a little and went staggering to my own room, murmuring as I went, “My God! my God! hast thou forsaken me.” My day-book fell from my hands, and I groped my way as one blinded.

“The strongest impulse in the first anguish of my my most bitter pain, was to hide myself from every one. No need for light. I extinguished it; and had I had the power, I would have reached forth and stricken out the lights from heaven. With what exultation would I have reached out my hands and torn them from their spheres! how I would have shouted over a world howling in utter darkness! I gnashed my teeth in blind and impotent rage at my own weakness. The little Paradise, which a few moments before I had lived in, had been swept away, and I felt that God had flung me at once from the heart of joy, delight, and happiness, into the uttermost abyss of mortal misery and despair.

I threw myself upon the bed, and uttered a scream of agony, which rings in my ears to this day, and often makes me shudder as if it was the shrieks of one in extreme agony.

Large drops of perspiration rolled down my forehead, as I lay with my hands clasped to my throat, as if to repress the choking sensation which seemed to deprive me of my breath.

I thought my heart was breaking, and I felt miserable—dying—dying of a broken heart. Death was perched upon my chamber window, in search of its prey. A sullen, wrathful, and despairing cloud hung over me, charged with thunder, and streamed over with blood.

But, my dear reader, I do not wish to try your patience in giving an account of my mortal pains.

All night long I lay weeping and moaning, and my cousin Mento, like a ministering angel, watched over me through the night, and tried to console me with sweet words of comfort; but I refused to be comforted, and prayed only to die.

There are moments of bitterness in one's life, when, like the companions of Job, the lookers on in the sad drama feel that all the consolation their words can afford, is to the sufferer's heart but the sighing of the idle wind. "Words, however soothingly spoken, have no power to console, and the hand that would attempt to bind up the shattered and quivering fragments of the heart, would only torture it with the proffered kindness." We will not be comforted, but linger around the valley of sadness—the pall of blackness. We can see no joy in the heavens—no music in the very sound of melody—until Time's healing ministrations have cicatrized the wounds which, however, are yet to be ere long opened afresh.

The next morning my good angel came into my room to bring me some nourishment, and with the hope of finding me wrapped in slumber. But, no, my spirit refused to take its flight into the land of dreams.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE LAST REQUEST.



MY dear reader, words cannot express the miseries I suffered during that wretched night, yet I shall try to give you a faint description of them, that from it your soul may conceive what I must have suffered.

There sometimes happen during our lives, incidents so strange and startling in their character, and so deep and lasting in their impressions, that we can never think of them, even after the lapse of long, long years, without an involuntary shudder, and a reverent thank to God that it is all past.

Sometimes indeed, we bear away as a legacy from scenes of imminent peril, something to serve, through the coming years, as a continual reminder of the time when we stood helpless and friendless upon the verge of destruction, and had not the arm of Him who "holds the world as water in the hollow of His Hand," been outstretched in our defense we might now be numbered among the things of the past.

And to-night, as I sit before my ruddy fire, indulging my fancy in waking dreams, a flood of remembrance come sweeping over me, and with it, the recollection of the hour—the very memory of which is so painful, that

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I turn from it with a shudder, and endeavor to forget it amid my books. 'Tis all in vain, owing to some strange cause—a problem for metaphysicians alone to solve.

There are certain times, when the mind, unable to resist the intrusion of disagreeable reveries, will entertain in an unwilling manner, that which it cannot dismiss.

The second day after the scene which has just been recorded, I experienced a stupor amounting to a complete unconsciousness of existence, except an undying impression of some great evil which had befallen me, and which lay like a grim and insatiable monster, tearing up my heart. I had, in fact, lost all perceptions of my individual misery, and a mortal gloom, black as night, seemed to hover and mingle with those fiery tortures which were consuming me. My memory gradually grew weaker and weaker, until I could hardly account for what had taken place.

While in this wretched state of mind, I thought: "Why linger here in this world of sorrow, of anguish and pain? The lamp which shed its brightness upon my path is extinguished; the star of Hope has sunk in darkness, and my cup of bitterness is overfilled. I have nothing to live for now. Oscar is false—my lover—my promised husband—the one idol of my lonely and loveless life is gone from me—he to whom I have given the love, the strength, the life of my heart. I am a wreck upon the tide of life: he has scattered my happiness, and has blighted my only joy. Oh! why was I

ever created to love and then torn away from the object of my affections? Would to God that my life had gone out ere this great sorrow had fallen upon me. Had death robbed me of my idol while I believed him to be true and noble, calmly might I have given him to God: feeling that he was mine in heaven, true, true, even in death. But no, he is false to his plighted vow; I am deceived. Alas! that I should have trusted so implicitly, that I should have loved to repose such perfect confidence only to have become a victim to the perfidy of man. And where—oh! where—is the pride which should sustain me in this hour of humiliation, which should rise against this cruel deception?

“Must I bear it in silence and alone? Must my heart writhe in agony under a mask of smiles, which is but a mockery to my feelings? No, I will put an end to a weary existence. I will put a period to this wretched life of mine, and try the reality of things.”

I asked for paper and pencil to write to Oscar the following letter—my last on earth:

DEAR OSCAR—

I write to you once more, and for the last time; and should these be the last lines ever penned by her who was once your Lenore, “may the memory of her never awake a pang in thy heart, but linger around it like the aroma of precious flowers.” And if we never meet again on earth, I pray we may meet in heaven, where there will be “neither marriage nor giving in marriage, and where the weeping of orphans is heard no more.” And there I will meet my dear father, and he will take his poor distressed child to his bosom, and there will give her rest.

Do you remember the little song we used to sing? “Shall we know each other there.

Dear Oscar, I want you to visit my grave when I am gone. Before you come back, the earth will be lying over me, and perhaps the grass and wild flowers will be growing green above my grave. Although you are so far away, I take a strange pleasure in feeling that you will one day be so near me. It is pleasant to think that you will kneel down beside me, and put away the grass and dead leaves, and whisper my name, even though I shall not know that you are so near, nor hear the familiar sound of your voice.

I die for you; I love you next to God, and every echo seems to say, farewell, farewell.

Oh! need I ask thee, wilt thou then,  
Upon each bright and pleasant eve,  
Seek out the solitary glen,  
To muse upon my lonely grave?

And while fond memory back shall steal  
To scenes and days forever fled;  
Oh, let the veil of love conceal  
The frailties of the sleeping dead.

Perhaps a thought of former days  
Will cause a tear to dim thine eyes,  
And fragments of forgotten days  
May wake the echo of a sigh.

Oh! wilt thou then forgive the tear,  
Forgive the throbbing of my heart;  
And point to those blest regions where  
Friends meet, and never, never part?

LENORE PAROLEE.

As I concluded, a fresh flood of tears suffused my burning cheeks and fell, mingling with the drops which here and there stained the written pages.

I placed the letter in an envelope, and directed it, and sent it to the office, and then proceeded to execute the horrible deed. But before I committed the bloody tragedy, across the tempest of my soul there came a low whisper as if from Heaven, saying, "Lenore, Lenore, art thou going to destroy the image of thy God, and plunge thyself into an everlasting hell? What right hast thou to take that which thou hast never given? Did I not plead that thou mightest live? Did I not pour out my blood in death for thy redemption? Look up, and see me hanging on the cross, bleeding that thou mightest be saved. And have not I promised to be thy Guide and Support; and whatsoever thou shalt ask in faith and in my name, I will give it thee? I have kept thee thus far; can not I preserve thee to the end?"

I fell upon my knees in prayer and supplication to the merciful Redeemer, who withheld me from defacing his image, and redeemed my soul from an everlasting punishment. Although my prayer was but a feeble one, yet God heard it, and answered it.

"O, Heavenly Father, look down with an eye of pity, and give an ear unto the cries and supplications of a destitute and broken-hearted orphan. Have mercy upon me, and help me to understand the ways of thy precepts, and make me to walk in the path of thy commandments. Open to me the gate of righteousness and incline mine ears unto thy testimony. O, God! touch my heart with a feeling of resignation, and may I recognize the dispensation which thou hast seen fit to visit upon me, for

loving the creature more than the Creator. And not for myself alone would I invoke a blessing, but for him also who has brought all this sorrow to my life—forgive and bless him; and I pray thee, O, God, that this great trouble may prove a glory to Thee and a blessing to us both; that through a gentle chastisement, we may be brought to a knowledge of the truth. Give me a forgiving heart, and help me to forgive my enemies and pray for them that have cruelly destroyed my happiness. Help me to imitate the example of thine immaculate Son, who closed His earthly career, praying His Father in heaven to 'forgive his murderers, for they knew not what they did.' O, take not thy presence from me in this my hour of need; leave me not nor forsake me, but gently lead me near to thy side, and soothe the anguish of my broken spirit. 'Hide me beneath the shadow of thy wing.' 'Keep me as the apple of thy eye.' Consecrate my sorrows into perpetual happiness, crown me with thy love, and kindness, and tender mercies, and save me at last through Thine only Son our Mediator, into a heaven of perfect peace and happiness, where there will be no more weeping, neither sighing, nor sorrow, nor pain."

THE TWO PILOTS AT SEA.

Alone I paced my daily round,  
Reminded by each scene,  
The sorrows of my former days,  
But still in memory green.

*Lenore Parolee.*

Till depressed with care I wandered forth,  
 Some shady spot to seek;  
 The sun was shining bright in heaven,  
 Its rays the sky did streak.

Through many a narrow path I pressed,  
 Till, 'neath an ancient tree,  
 I saw an aged man at rest,  
 And lost in reverie.

Upon his venerable brow,  
 Deep thought had set its seal,  
 And I, with a respectful bow,  
 Did thus to him appeal:

"Old man, you seem contented,  
 While my heart is heavy laden;  
 Can you tell me what is best  
 For a discontented maiden?"

"What is the best for me to try,  
 Contentment to secure;  
 What will my many wants supply,  
 And happiness insure?"

Looking up with tearful eyes,  
 The old man did thus respond,—  
 "My child you seek perfection here—  
 'Tis nowhere to be found.

"Earthly anticipations bright,  
 However freely they are given,  
 Bring never unalloyed delight;—  
 There is no peace this side of heaven.

"Religion points the only way  
 To charms so truly great;  
 The honest Christian surely may  
 In peace those charms await."

*The Two Pilots at Sea.*

I then my own little chamber sought,  
 And knelt there down and prayed,  
 That God would give me courage,  
 The sea of life to wade.

Then upon my couch I sank,  
 My troubles to forget,  
 And soon to the land of dreams I roved,  
 And there two pilots met.

Upon a ship I seemed to ride,  
 Whose sails were blacker than the tide;  
 Upon its ghastly deck I stood,  
 And gazed upon a sea of blood.

As I gazed upon the lonely deck,  
 Two hideous figures came  
 To steer my phantom ship across  
 The dark and stormy main.

Upon their heads they wore a crown,  
 Whose signature was written there,  
 And as I gazed on them I found  
 'Twas Doubt and Despair.

Oh! those awful, hideous figures,  
 O'er me their forms were bowed,  
 And o'er their face was wrapped a mantle,  
 And robed as with an angry cloud.

"I'll give you a crown," said Despair—  
 "A crown a queen might proudly wear,  
 Whose leaves and stems with matchless sheen  
 Of emerald seems superbly green."

And upon my pallid brow they placed  
 A wreath of thorns instead of flowers;—  
 Then came the mocking laugh—"Ha—ha,"  
 As they gazed upon the brandish bowers.

I, then, with bitter anguish flung  
 Myself beneath the darkening sky—  
 So black the clouds that o'er me hung,  
 I laid me down and prayed to die.

But vainly rose my feeble prayer—  
 The King of Terrors came not there;  
 The wind swept on in ceaseless moans,  
 And mocked my prayer with hollow tones.

"Now, come," said Doubt, "and dwell with me,  
 There is no one that cares for me;  
 For there's naught but grief and pain—  
 Hope and prayer are all in vain."

"Oh, no," said I, "you cannot be  
 The friends that I would wish to see.  
 I spy another ship afar,  
 Whose pilot is the evening star.

"And from that ship I hear a voice  
 Saying, 'Come ye unto me,  
 All that's weary and heavy laden,  
 And I will give you passage free.

"No storms disturb our peaceful isle,  
 No tempests wreck our happy shore;  
 All is calm, repose doth smile,  
 And there is peace forever more."

With drooping wings and bleeding heart,  
 I sought, alas! the peaceful ark;  
 And the weary dove found a place of rest,  
 Reposing upon her Saviour's breast.

Then where dark clouds so late had driven,  
 And rolling thunders so fiercely spoke;  
 Now sunshine through the gates of heaven,  
 In streams of softest splendor broke.

Upon a ship so passing fair,  
 With hope and joy I landed there;  
 Where glow-worms drop in shining showers,  
 And my thorns were turned to orange flowers.

## CHAPTER XXII.

### THE GOOD OF ADVERSITY.

**A**MONG the mingled sounds of mourning and lamentations that go up from the earth to pierce the heavens, none are so sadly mournful, so overflowing grief-fraught, as those which burst from the bleeding bosom that has been bereft of the heart's cherished idol.

But how comfortable are those words of St. Paul: "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, shall work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

By affliction the mind becomes humble and the will bent, and our strong grasp of the world is broken. The vanity of its enjoyments, and their insufficiency to meet the wants of the mind, are fully displayed.

Afflictions serve to lead us to value the blessings of Christianity, and to hold in the lower estimation our own unworthiness. The heart is often softened and opened for the admission of truth, and disposed to seek a portion from above.

It is good for the billows of adversity to roll around us, both in respect of ourselves and others. In the former, as affording a means of becoming wise and happy, and in the latter as furnishing an advantageous season of

being useful to others. The most blessed result of adversity is in its softening effects upon our nature. Let us experience the forms of adversity, let sorrow harass our circumstances, and trouble oppress our mind, we are glad, we are earnest to find rest in Christ. We will soon be converted into humanity, and learn to melt at the sigh of another's sorrows.

"In prosperity we see everything through a false medium. The world smiles upon us because fortune does, and we know nothing of the realities of life.

"People are apt to be puffed up, and forgetful of themselves, they begin to look upon their fellow creatures as being of an inferior nature. Old friends are forgotten, nay, even those who have conferred benefits upon them in their less fortunate days; and often trample the most sacred principle under foot.

"But while abiding the storm of adversity, we have all things presented to us in the unflattering realities.

"When everything goes on smoothly, and nothing to interrupt the present enjoyments; if our path is always strewn with flowers, and every want supplied, and every wish gratified, and live bountifully amid the luxuries and blandishments of life, we unavoidably become selfish and egotistical, and forget the God that made us, and grieve with unparalleled assurance, 'Who is the Almighty, that I should serve Him?' until into the howl thunder terrible peals, that move the heart to contrition, and recall us to a sense of our obligation to Him.

"At first He will endeavor to win us back by a gentle



chastisement, but we will not heed to his entreaties, and disregard His blessings, that, still in love, he is forced to deal out a bitter poison."

"Chastisement is the rod that is given  
To draw reluctant feet to heaven."

"As often as we fix our affections immoderately upon any of the fading objects here below, we are certainly guilty of sacrilege to the divine goodness of God, and we are commonly punished by the very thing we doat on."

And this has certainly been my case.

During my engagement with Oscar Brandon, I would often be troubled in mind, but never once bestowed a thought on the Saviour, who was standing with open arms and entreating me to fly to His bosom. No, I had placed my confidence and hope in my earthly idol, saying, "Oscar is my comforter, my guide and protector; in him I will put my trust. I will rest my weary head upon his bosom, and bury all my sorrows there."

Alas! he has broken the foundation upon which my foot rested, and has scattered my hopes to the wind. But, thank God, they are placed more surely upon the rock of ages; and I can now say, "Thy will be done." And through the bitter cup my loving Father has given me to drink, I have learned to know the good from the bad, and the false from the true; I have learned that no pleasure or pain, no sunshine or shadow, no gayety or grief, comes to us without its lessons of good. And, oh! what would I have done, had I not been permitted to cast my burden upon Christ, while passing through this great ordeal?

But I heard my Father's voice, saying, "come unto Me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give ye rest," and I hastened to fall down upon my knees before the merciful Creator, who took pity upon me, and who, at the intercession of our Redeemer, I hope, may pardon all my sins. And in my darkest trials, when my enemies were hurling at me their poisonous arrows, in every direction, I was made to rejoice in my afflictions, knowing they were working out for me a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. God is my comforter now; in Him I will put my trust, He will give me peace, joy and consolation.

He can make a dying bed  
Feel soft as downy pillows are,  
While on his breast I lean my head,  
And breathe my life out sweetly there.

Oh, that every one would cast their burden upon Christ, from the rich to the poor, from the lofty to the lowly, and all those who have been forced from the sunshine of prosperity into the cold shadows of adversity, and enjoy the warm light from heaven.

Oh! homestead over whose blessed roof no sorrow, even of clouds; across whose threshold the voice of sorrow is never heard; built upon eternal hills, and standing with thy spires and pinnacles of celestial beauty among the palm trees of the city on high—those who love God shall rest under thy shadows, where there is no more sorrow, nor pain, nor the sound of weeping.

Let us therefore resolve to submit ourselves to the will

of our Heavenly Father, and chose our place where Mary sat—a lowly, loving listener at her Saviour's feet, and who has so decreed, that our way to everlasting happiness should be through the wilderness of affliction.

## TAKE UP THE CROSS.

Greater the cross, the nearer heaven,  
Godless to whom no cross is given;  
Blessed are you dear children of God,  
On whom he lays the cross, the rod.

Full many a garden dressed in vain,  
Where tears of sorrow never rain;  
In fiercest flames the gold is tried,  
In grief the Christian purified.

'Midst crosses, Faith, her triumph knows;  
The palm tree pressed, more vigorous grows,  
Go, tread the grapes beneath thy feet,  
The stream that flows, is full and sweet.

Crosses abound, love seeks the sky;  
Blow the rude winds, the flame arise;  
When hopeless gloom the welkin shrouds  
The sun comes laughing through the clouds.

The cross makes pure affections glow,  
Like oil that on the fire we throw.  
Who wears the cross, prays oft and well—  
Bruised herbs send forth the sweetest smell.

Were ships ne'er tossed by stormy wind,  
The polar star who would care to find.  
Had David spent no darksome hours,  
His sweetest songs ne'er been ours.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## THE GUIDING STAR.

**D**OES this star ever appear to you, O, ye, who mourn in agony of soul, over the loss of some idol, treasure, some dearly loved object of care, tenderness? Does it ever throw its dazzling brightness around your pathway, sparkling and dancing like the chrystal waters of some pure fountain? Suppose you are suffering the pang of bereavement; that some rushless hand has plucked the jewel which shed its lustrous brightness over your whole being, and your poor heart is quivering, in its great agony, bleeding from the cruel wound; friends will gather around you, and endeavor to pour the oil of consolation upon your bruised spirit; they will pity you, and sympathize with you so far as they are capable, but how can they comprehend your grief?—how can they understand your feelings? They know you are suffering; and wish they could do something to console you. And though you are surrounded by sympathizing friends, you will feel lonely and forsaken; their sweet words of comfort have no power to calm the troubled waters of your soul. This makes you feel doubly bereaved, and you turn away in darkness and despair. But listen! gentle as the falling of the dewdrop upon the soft petal of the tender flower, bright as the

pinions of an angel's wings, falls the ray of this little star—the star that came and stood over the manger where our Saviour was lying, as a guide for the good shepherds; and when they heard the joyful news, echo reverberated the soul-cheering message over the hills, and through the dales of Bethlehem. The Hebrews bowed in aboring reverence, when they saw the bright cloud of light rest over the Ark of the Covenant; they knew that Jehovah was there!—"the first born of man and of beast was sacred to the Lord," and light was the first of all created things. It is God's own chosen symbol—light, the swift-est of all created things.

"The Lord God is a sun and a shield." "He is the father of light with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." "He is clothed with light as with a garment," etc. God, manifested in the flesh said, "I am the light of the world."

Heavy clouds may hang in fantastic  
Forms above our heads, and—  
These clouds will burst, and the lightning flash,  
Down rush the flood of beating rain;  
While billows caught the roar, and dash  
Their thundering echoes back again.

But we must not despair: look to Him who said to the raging billows, "peace, be still." And after a night dark and tempestuous, a little star will shine, like a diamond in the mire, which will send a ray of light and comfort into our hearts; and we will look for another, and

another, as each little one dart out from behind the cloud, and take its station in the heavens. Finally this dark cloud will be turned inside out and the silver linings will appear, dipped in the dyes of the rainbow, and the gentle vapors will descend and bathe our heads with the dews of heaven. And the bright beams of daylight will come; and the rising sun flash on the hills, and its golden rays illuminate the valleys. It will seem as if an angel overshadowed the fields with diamonds, and hung a brilliant on every blade and leaf. The little star unhastening; yet unresting, will move on. Let us follow it; it will light us through every labyrinth in the wilderness of life, "glide the gloom that will gather around us in a dying hour, and bring us safely over the tempestuous Jordan of death, into the heaven of promised and settled rest."

I do not speak of the radiance of the natural sun and stars with their cheering beams, but of the more splendid radiance of the sun of righteousness, spreading, far and wide around us, celestial glory, such as beams from the throne of God. That sun will shine through darkness and storm, when all other suns and stars shall pass away. It will beam on our path, and conduct and cheer us through the midnight gloom; "snatch from death the poisonous sting, from the grave the boasting victory, and point the soul to its crowning glory, a blissful immortality beyond the sky."

## WILL YOU ACCEPT MY LITTLE RAY ?

A little star stepped from its silver throne,  
And peeped cunningly at me ;  
With the brightest little eyes,  
That ever I did see.

Said he, " the sun is in the west,  
Its twilight rays are gone ;  
Will you accept my little light,  
To guide you through the gloom ?

" I am burning high in heaven,  
But my beams are mild and bright ;  
Sparkling from my cloudless throne,  
To illumine the lonely night.

" Will you accept my little ray ;  
To make your path way bright ?  
My silver beams shall be your lamp,  
Through the folding glooms of night."

## A REPLY IN OBEDIENCE TO THE STARS.

I will accept thee, little star,  
In thy bright silence seem the power,  
For thou hast watched me through the night  
In my dark and lonely hour.

O, ye, little star of night,  
How often you have seen my tears,  
And have given me your wonderous light  
And banished all my doubts and fears.

Oh, ye, stars of Bethlehem,  
Who send your light, alike on all ;  
Brightness and majesty spread o'er the land  
Wherever your little rays do fall.

Thou art a gem of beauty, wandering  
All lovely, and alone,  
'Mong the myriad stars a glimmering  
Around your sapphire throne.

Little star, is not your being pure,  
That beckon the soul with cheerful ray ;  
Can sin, can death, your light obscure,  
Can years have power to limit your away ?

No ; sit ye on the throne of night,  
Darkness is turned into light by thee ;  
Time, cannot conquer thee, with all their might  
Years have no power to limit thy away.

Though bright you shine all lovely  
Amid your glimmering train ;  
A beacon to the sailor boy,  
When he plows the stormy main.

To the wanderer on the foaming sea,  
Thou, bright and beauteous star,  
Bringest back the fond loved memory  
Of his native land afar.

Thus, thou shalt be forever  
To my soul that germ of light ;  
And though the world may sever  
The bonds that did unite—

My ever hope of joy to thee,  
Though they may all depart,  
Like a rainbow on a summer sea,  
And leave this dreary heart.

Yet shall thy memory wear a bloom,  
That never will decay ;  
And light me through life's lonely way  
With thy enchanted ray.

*Lenore Parolee.*

The idol of my youthful love,  
 Thy smiles alone shall be ;  
 Thou, beauteous star of light and love,  
 That heaven of bliss to me.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

## OSCAR'S LETTER.

**T**HE third day I felt more composed, although I was very weak. My frame trembled, my eyes were sunk back in their sockets—the glow had left them, and they bore a ghastly, deathly look. My cousin Mento brought me a cup of tea and a slice of cake. I drank the tea and ate a few mouthfuls of the cake, which revived me very much, as it was the first that I had eaten since the evening of my conversation with my cousins Mento and Arthur, and for three days and nights I had neither eaten, drank, or slept. But few minutes that day, that my weary eyes were not imprisoned beneath their watery lids, for a tear was resting there ; and it appeared that my rest had been broken. My cousin could observe that I must have been weeping in my sleep, as my eyelids were surcharged with tears that had not yet had time to dry. But when I awoke, I seemed as with a new spirit. The dark mist had cleared from before me, and though the wreck of my love lay at my feet, I was endowed with a new strength. Thought and reason came back to me, and I felt like one that had been shipwrecked, and was heaved on the shore by a wave.

It was the severest trial that I had ever gone through,

and nothing but the hand of God could have carried me through such visitations. All that had made life happy to me was gone. The charm was broken, the cord that tied me down to earth was cut asunder, and the idol that I had so unwisely worshiped, was but a tabernacle of common clay, and had fallen shattered at my feet.

A few days after that eventful night, I received a letter from Oscar, but the words which should have brought balm to the wounded soul were cold and constrained.

DEAR LENORE—

I received your letter this morning and hasten to reply. I wrote to you a few weeks ago, and I presume you did not get my letter; but I will give you its contents as near as I can, as I think it is always best to be plain with you, Lenore. You remember when I saw you last, you said that you wished me to be plain with you, that you might forget me and banish my image from your sight. Now I hope you will not think hard of me when I comply with your request, for I think it would be wrong to hold you in suspense any longer. I expect to see you before a great while, and I will explain the matter to you. I will not tell you now what has been the cause of all this; but some day when you and I forget each other I will tell you. Don't take it too hard; it will not be long before some pretty little fellow will come along and make you happy.

And I hope you may marry a kind and affectionate husband, who will treat you as you should be, for you are worthy of any man. I shall be glad to hear from you at any time, and hope you will not treat me coldly when I see you, for I am sure I will be all to you that a true and devoted cousin should be. Friends a plenty, I know you have, and I will ever be one to you.

Yours truly, OSCAR BRANDON.

How fair and bold were the pen strokes! I almost fancy that even now I can see the firm and strong hand that had clasped my own but a few short months before, with such impassionate vows of unchangeable love—of unwavering fidelity.

These words silently burnt their way into my heart, and traced themselves upon its fair pages—a record which no future could never wholly efface.

No tears fell from the sad blue eyes and blot the strokes that had been penned by the paw of a wolf arrayed in sheep's garments, and who was now about to reveal himself. I sat for some time with the letter lying at my feet, where I had thrown it with a look that my cousin Mento mistook for regret, while it was meant for one of contempt. Gathering it up silently, I replaced it in the envelope, murmuring almost dreamily as I looked at the fair inscription—"it is well,—

"Let him pass, I'm not too much  
A woman not to be a man for once,  
And bury all, my dead like Alaric."

My school at the old church was already broken up, and my little light-hearted pupils had dispersed and each one gone to its respective home. I told my cousin Jasper that I could not possibly teach another day, but he would not allow me to stop teaching, and insisted upon my taking another school nearer home. So I gathered up a squad of little children and settled myself down for the summer. My school-house was setting back in a little black jack thicket on the margin of a

whortleberry marsh, without even a shade tree to protect it from the sun. It was then August, and a very hot one at that, for it seemed that the sun would bake my brains brown, as I went to and from school, and felt more like an erratic than a didactic.

Thus the days passed, and the well noted days into weeks, and weeks into months, and I could hear no tidings of Oscar, except a word now and then that I would catch from his uncle's wife, who was gossiping, and who came at my cousin Jasper's, loaded with curiosity, trying to get all the information she could to convey to her sister Fibby, who, ever since she moved to town, was a God-send in the family, for they always made it convenient to call on her when they went to town, and especially at meal times. But it was known they never visited her when she lived in the country—not even in the hour of sickness.

My aunt Fibby had rented out her farm, and had gone to C—, for the purpose of educating her two little boys. But after she had moved to town, she concluded that she would teach them herself. Fashion was up, and together with the other town expenses, it necessitated a complete revolution in everything. The children had to have new hats and shoes, and Rose a new dress, and many other necessary things had to be bought.

The old coat which she had been wearing for so many years, and which seemed like a part of her own self, had to be laid aside, and a new gown bought in its place; and the old ticking pants which she had worn for the

last twenty years had to be changed for a chignon. Her washing and ironing had to be hired, which she thought was an unpardonable sin. But she asked no odds of anybody, and she done her scouring at night, while Rose held a hand-torch, as it was too expensive to burn a lamp, and—

All day long, from morning till night,  
This poor woman was doing her might;  
Her wheel melodious tunes it sang,  
While her loom went bing-de-bang.


The treadles flew, the rods cleared back,  
While the batten played the tune pit-de-pat,  
In goes the shuttle, out it comes—  
Would that my pen had the speed of her tongue!

She cares not for fashions,  
She cares not for fame—  
All she wants is money  
She has money on the brain.

There is one thing more I have to say,  
If you will listen to my lay  
That poor woman will lose her soul,  
If she does not cease to worship gold.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### KNEELING BY THE LITTLE ROOT.

T was a quiet afternoon in early autumn that my wandering feet chanced to stray by the desolate and solitary dwelling of Oscar's mother. Though it was uninhabited, and a death-like calm had fallen over the whole surrounding country "like thick night over its course," there was the well remembered school-room, the familiar garden, and the bush still snowing in the center, underneath whose boughs I had dreamed my destiny. The garden was overrun with elder, and grass of idle growth; the railings before and around the dreary dwelling were broken and decayed, and the entire place presented an appearance of utter gloom and desolation. Scarcely a whole pane of glass remained to keep the wind and rain from beating through the shaking, rattling casements; and the doors, all shattered and almost hingeless, shook and groaned as the winter blast went whistling by.

The waning sun was shining faintly through the thin white clouds; the air was warm and still; and the peacefulness of the lonely country were overshadowed and saddened by the influence of the falling year. Nothing was heard except the croaking of frogs, and the melancholy cries of the screech owl, which made life seem more dreary.

### *Kneeling by the Little Root.* 173

I lingered for some time around the old building, and then wandered to the spot and stood once more beneath the old pine tree, where Oscar and I had breathed together the warm and fragrant air of summer evenings;—where he had made such passionate vows of unchanging fidelity; and where we admired together the myriad combinations of shade and sunlight that dappled the ground at our feet.

I looked over the wide monotony of the forest, and the place where we had idled away the sunny hours, was as lost to me as if I stood already on a foreign shore. And the empty sound of the old pine struck cold to my heart, as I listened to the dreary echoes, one's voice returned through the desert waste, to enter the temple and find nothing but ruins and desolation.

The wind's voice shrieked aloud, as if in wild despair; then it sank into a low hollow moan, and died away amid the treetops as if it was mourning for the sorrowful heart, whose dismal wailing was like its own.

The fire-fly lamps were flashing, and the flaming banners of the Lord were unfolding and waving in the mel-low twilight, and then furling again as if by unseen hands, or gradually dissolving into airy nothings and fade away; the innumerable shades of scarlet and purple, silver, amber and gold, ever blending and changing in fantastic shapes and infinite varieties; kaleidoscopes on which the angels looked with awe and wonder. I stood for some moments, with my hands folded upon my breast, and tears streaming from my eyes until overcome by a deluge of grief, I sank upon the ground, and kissed the



little root on which Oscar's foot was placed when he asked me to be his; and I murmured, "oh! thou little root, hast thou forgotten the sweet words that were whispered in my ears on a certain twenty-second day of June, as we two stood with clasped hands, while you offered yourself as a foot-stool, that you might catch the falling whisper. If you have not forgotten them, breathe them into my ears once more, and beneath your cold damp bed, bury the shrine of a broken heart; and if Oscar sometimes chance to stroll by this hallowed spot, say to him, "*ego amo te adhuc*."

"Darling, darling," echoed a voice, but hoarse and faltering. "I am here! drifted back on the wreck of early hopes, to the old familiar spot. A hundred times I have been tempted to seek you, and throw myself at your feet, and bathe them with my tears, and there seek death, or your forgiveness. A mortal chill freezed my courage; my knees trembled, but dared not bend; the words expired on my tongue, and my heart could find no assurance of your forgiveness. It was too well aware of its guilt, and yet I could not avoid it—crime and remorse walked conjointly upon it—and without knowing what my fate would be, I floated about in an insupportable doubt between the hope of clemency and the fear of chastisement. Punish me; it is your duty; but if you are not beyond the reach of mercy, I implore your forgiveness. Will you give me back the heart that I have so much wronged; and the affections which I have so basely crucified?"

I raised my eyes dreamingly, and the speaker was kneeling before me. A quick vibration of light, cold and dazzling as the night gleam of the aurora borealis passed over his features.

"Oh! Oscar," said I, "have you come to torment my soul unto death? Mock me not in my despair, I pray you, but leave me alone to my grief."

"No, no," said he, "I have come to heal the wound, and bind up the broken heart of my poor wounded dove. I often visit this spot myself, and to-day I chanced to be strolling in this direction when I heard the familiar sound of your voice, and—and—saw you kneel and kiss this sacred little root, and I thought, unworthy as I am, one spark of love and forgiveness might perchance be hidden in your bosom. And yet, no matter how unworthy I may have been of trust, my love for you at least has never faltered or changed. You can never understand what I have suffered in standing afar off, and daring to advance a claim which I had so justly forfeited."

I bowed my head on his nerveless hands, and my nature took on her new allegiance; the very sound of his voice, low, and slightly tremulous at times, vibrated through my whole being as no sound either of speech or music had ever done before.

I felt the power won from the electric shock of the clashing chains of Cupid's wiles, which rendered every faculty of my being as responsive to his will, "as the key of the lute to the master's player."

The odor of the muscadines, the murmuring streams,

the clouds that flaked the heavens, the plaintive song of the nightingale, that enchanted the silence of the hour—all rose up to witness the scene. Glorified by the shine of falling tears, that fell and glistened, was the little root, as the two lovers knelt with clasped hands to renew the broken vow, and linked again the chain that had been torn a sunder.

Was this all that had witnessed the scene? No! The first sound that came after the heavenly peace, rustled faintly like a passing breeze over the grave of buried hope; though no longer buried; it had risen and broken the bars of death.

It was a peace like that, one sometimes hopes to find in the silent grave, when weary of the jar, the tears, the trials, the sorrows of existence. The storm had done its worst; sails and mast, and pennon had been torn away from the graceful bark in the struggle with the elements, till at last it had sunk fathomless deep, out of the reach of storm, or wind, resting peacefully at length amid the coral shore.

The third speaker came tripping out through the dark silver-edged foliage of the forest, throwing her arms around us and passionately exclaimed: "God bless you my children, and may no earthly power ever again break this solemn vow."

"Oh! Dora," said I, for the intruder was no other than Dora Mansfield; "I am happy once more, but how came you here? I am bewildered with thoughts—I must be dreaming—I am too happy, for it to last long."

"Yes, my child," said my cousin Hattie. "You are dreaming, and your dreams must have been mingled with pain for you have been sitting up in bed holding on to my hands and crying as if your heart would break. But pray tell me, Lenore, what you were dreaming of?"

Oh! I was dreaming, I was dreaming,  
Of joys I once could call my own;  
Dreaming of eyes that met my gaze  
Through the dusky shadows of by-gone days.

Dreaming of words that filled my ear,  
When the form of a lover lingered near;  
Dreaming of words he said to me,  
While standing beneath the old pine tree.

Dreaming of vows so solemnly spoken;  
Dreaming of vows that now are broken;  
Dreaming of lovely woodvine bowers;  
Dreaming of pathways strewn with flowers.

But now I'm waking, oh! I'm waking,  
To another day of toil and pain;  
But there's a thought that cheers me still—  
A thought that night will come again.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE WOUNDED DOVE IS BLEEDING AGAIN.

**L** SUPPOSE Oscar Brandon is up again," said my cousin Jasper. "Did he not write to you that he was coming to see you, and give you an explanation?"

"Yes, he did, but he does not seem to be up to his word."

"It takes a man with honor to come up to his word," said he huskily—"not such a cowardly hyena like Oscar Brandon, whose aspirations tend no higher than to ingratiate himself into a woman's affections, and after he finds that he has won her, trample her beneath his feet—though I think it will be the best thing for you if you never marry him; and I am really angry at you, Lenore, for giving way to your feelings as you have. The rascally cur should never have known that you cared so much for him, for he is beneath the notice of a good yard-dog; everybody looks down upon him with contempt since he treated you in this manner—and he was not appreciated very highly before, I assure you. If he did not have any money, he would stand a poor showing—and that wont keep him up long, for, from what I have heard, it is nearly gone—and I would not give him fifty cents an acre for his land; and whoever marries

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Oscar Brandon for his money, will surely be disappointed. I heard this morning that he was to be married soon to a Miss Waldon; but she is perfectly ignorant of his engagement with you—but I guess when she finds it out, she will send him afloat."

For an instant the room reeled before my eyes and grew blank. I felt as if an earthquake had rent the solid foundation. I was fast forgetting where I was, what had happened, what was to follow; my senses seemed to be failing—but something came to my aid. I must not surrender. It was a sharp agony that followed, like that experienced by those afflicted with certain vital disease, which last but a breathing space, since flesh and blood could not endure another second longer.

Nobody had observed me. I was quite myself, now, and I spoke without hesitation.

"Well, he is at liberty to marry whom he chooses; but I am going to have an interview with him before to-morrow night, for he has to explain to me why he has treated me in this manner: justice demands it of him. If I had ever given him any cause to treat me in this manner, I would have borne it in silence, and alone, and spent the remainder of my wretched life in solitude; but I have never given him any cause whatever, and it is more than I will stand."

At the hour of twelve, silence had spread her mantle over the whole household, save the shrill, small winding horns of the insects that roam the still night; but sleep had not yet brought her blessed dew to seal the eyelids of

all beneath that roof. It was indeed a sleepless night to me, and I spent it in walking my chamber, and now and then would kneel down and pray. Long after midnight I was lulled to sleep by the dismal and melancholy mourning of a screech-owl, whose wild and wailing cries seemed indeed as sad and despairing as my own.

When morning came, it found me firm in my resolution; and in a few hours I was seated in the carriage and on my way to C——, where I called in at Mrs. Peabody's, who lived in the outskirts of the town and was a near neighbor of Oscar's mother.

"Bessie, is Oscar Brandon in town?" said I to Mrs. Hartford, the married daughter of Mrs. Peabody, who had just stepped in to pay her mother a call.

"Yes, Lenore," said she, "I think I saw him as I passed the house."

"Well, Bessie, my object in coming here, this morning, is to see him—and how shall I do it?—you know I do not visit his mother."

"Well, I'll tell you what you can do, Lenore—you can send for him to come over here, if you wish to see him."

"Will you go for him, Bessie?—don't say, No; for I must see him before I leave this place."

"Yes, Lenore," said she, looking at me curiously.

"Well, go," said I; "tell him I want to see him once more, and I will never ask to see him again"—and I burst into a fit of weeping.

"Dear Lenore," said Bessie, who seemed very much moved at my distress, "why do you weep so? Dry

your tears, and tell me what is the matter, and then I will know better how to proceed. Is your marriage broken up?"

"Yes—yes; his family has gained the ascendancy over him; he has deceived me—I am a victim to a conspiracy."

"I thought it very strange, when he refused to pay that little account of yours the other day, after promising the merchant that he would do it—and I am surprised yet, for I did not think that he would do such a mean trick—and everybody in town knows it, too."

"Account? what account, Bessie?"

"Did he not promise to pay an account of ten dollars for you?"

"Yes, yes; I had forgotten all about it. It was the time Kate and I went to W——, to supply our bridal wardrobe. I did not have money enough to fill my bill, after reserving ten dollars to pay an account here, so Oscar told me that I need not reserve any to pay that account, that he would pay it himself, and to get whatever I wanted. And now he has refused to pay it, after proposing and promising to do it. Well, well, poor man, has he lost all the honor he ever had?"

"Ah! Lenore, he never had any to lose, and it is to be hoped that you do not love him now, after treating you in that manner."

"Yes, Bessie; it is something—I don't know what—I can't explain it. I love him, and yet I hate him; I adore him, yet I loathe him; I could kill him, yet I

could die for him; and on the whole I am one of the most miserable human creatures that ever lived."

"No, no, Lenore," said she; "there are thousands who would consider your position happy to what theirs is. You have only been a little disappointed, and you will soon get over that; but I had better go before he leaves—he was speaking of going into the country, to-day."

In a few minutes I saw Bessie entering the house, as I walked to and from the window to the fireplace, awaiting impatiently the return of my messenger.

The minutes seemed to spin themselves into an indefinite length; moments seemed to multiply themselves as in geometrical progression.

Bessie returned in a few minutes, and brought the sad news that he could not come; that his mother would be watching him through the window; and that he wanted to see me, and yet he did not want to see me.

When these tidings reached my ears, that I was no longer to see the only one that I had ever loved, I felt as one stricken with lightning; a cold shiver seized my frame; my heart recoiled in my bosom, and I felt as though the hot August atmosphere had suddenly changed into an icy wind.

I seemed to be riding upon a tornado of destruction, a whirlwind of sorrow and of anguish, which seemed to drive anything like order from my mind. My hands were tightly clenched, my heart was on fire, and again reason was driven from its throne.

I arose, thoughtless and reckless, and started with precipitate steps, to venture into his mother's house, and beg him to take my life, for it seemed to be nearly spent—but I was prevented by the family, whom I afterwards thanked for their kind consideration; for all my pride had vanished—had died with my hopes.

I had indeed prayed and struggled to be weaned from Oscar and the world; yet still my affections tied me down to earth. Heaven had still a rival in my heart, though I tried earnestly to forget him, and fix my eye upon the eternal world. But I viewed it at too great a distance. I had deceived myself; I fancied I had borne my troubles so well for the pure love of Christ. But I have since found it was only a faint ray of hope that I still entertained. I cherished a hope that Oscar and I would meet again; that our separation was not final; and that the angel of terrestrial light might yet dip the tip of its wings in the ocean of bliss, and baptize me with the fluttering of his pinions. And that hope had too great a share in reconciling me to my troubles.

Hope, indeed, is a sweet siren, and when it fixes its abode in our bosom, the sad aspects of life are blotted from the sight, and the eye catches bright glimpses of the morrow; the heart flies to it when oppressed by sorrow, and with a smile bids the rude tempest cease. Its anchor is the anchor of peace. Its heavenly light can make every shade of sadness pleasing to the eye, by fixing the sight upon future bliss, and changing anguish to ease.

It bids the thoughts of the poet to aspire; it breathes an

influence over his verses, and adds to their celestial fire. It bids the anxious bosom of the ambitious to glow, by holding on to him prospects of climbing the steep ascent of fame. Its magic power can calm the grief of absence. It charms the lover's eye with dear delusion, and strews upon her pathway flowers she thinks too bright to die. It soothes her pensive breast with fair visions, and removes poignant sadness from her aching heart, to supply its place with a gay smile and dazzling happiness. To all classes, and in every scene of life, hope is radiant sunshine to the soul.

## BLIGHTED HOPE.

Upon my brow Hope had a seat,  
And gentle zephyrs played around;  
And birds of fairest plumage sang  
Their ministerial song.

But oh! how sadly changed the scene  
My youthful fancy painted bright;  
A cloud obscured that happy dream,  
And sunny days were turned to night.

The vision soon did pass away,  
And ministers of dark despair,  
Like spectres from the shades of hell,  
Did place within a viper there.

My hopes were high, my spirit free,  
Anticipations bright;  
But sorrow came and dimmed my sky,  
And turned my fairest day to night.

The flower of hope did wither,  
It's was but a brand;

The leaves faded from my view,  
And turned to ashes in my hand.

Weary are the passing hours  
That once to me were bright and gay;  
For now my hopes, like faded flowers,  
No longer bloom, but fade away.

Thorns and thistles there did spring,  
And pierced the heart that once was gay;  
Despair was written on my brow,  
And darkness seems to crown my day.

Alas! alas! I might have known  
That vision was too bright to last;  
The golden dream at last has flown,  
My earthly hopes of peace are past.

Great God, dispel this awful gloom,  
And let not this grim visage last,  
And forbid it, Great Jehohah, Lord,  
That the future should be like the past.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE LITTLE CHAIR.

**D**URING this painful scene, Colonel Rayment, a cousin of mine who resided in the village, was sent for.

"Lenore, Lenore, my child," said he, coming gently up to me, and unclasping my hands that were convulsively clinched together; "you should not, and must not, yield to your feelings as you do, for if you continue in this way your mind will be totally ruined. You know that insanity is one of our family's great misfortunes, and indeed a sad propensity. And you should try to avoid it. Oscar Brandon is not worthy of you, and I think it is one of the greatest blessings that was ever bestowed upon you that you lost him, and you ought to bless that Providence which permitted him to break the contract. Had you married him, his ill-usage would have caused you more trouble than his infidelity, and I would not destroy my happiness for a man with as little principle as Oscar Brandon; as for me, I had rather follow you to your grave than to see you married to him now. I could have told you this long ago, but I knew you were like all other girls when they get in love; old scratch could not make you believe but Oscar Brandon was a lump of perfection. But I trust, Lenore, this trouble will

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prove to be a great benefit to you in the future. It is an old but true saying, that "experience is a dear teacher." And now I want you to make up your mind that you won't allow yourself to feel disappointed, but rather be rejoiced that Providence has saved you from a miserable life. There is a way to make Oscar Brandon suffer, and if I were you, I would do it—your friends will sustain you, and I will stand by you till the last. So just wipe your tears now; and if you will take my advice you will one day be happy: if you don't, you will be miserable. We all have our troubles, and have them to bear, and there is no way to escape them only through the gate of the grave."

His words of kind encouragement sank like a sunbeam into my heart, and my overwhelming grief was calmed into a gentle flowing of tears, and those tears washed away the last of my bright dreams.

Hast ever seen a withered rose  
Beneath some foot-step crushed?  
Hast ever seen a harp-string broken,  
And its silvery music hushed.  
So looked the lonely Lenore,  
When the fearful mood was past;  
Those sweet tears were blessed things,  
Although they were the last.

The Colonel was one of those individuals who knew nothing of the up-stairs self-estimation which is often felt by some weak, ignorant persons. He never forgot a familiar face, or neglected to give a kind word, even to the humble, and possessed the merit of good principles. He

had a manly form, but in his heart was a woman's sympathies; he was ever ready to wipe the tears and smooth the path of his fellow creatures. He wiped mine away as I told him my sad story, with "A Word and a Tear." I saw myself in the large mirror that adorned the mantle-piece, and felt for the first time as if all this was some dreadful dream. I felt calm, cold, and apathetic. In me there was a tranquillity of agony—a quiet unresisting submission—a gentle bowing of the neck to the stake.

I was lying on the bed trembling as one with ague, and sharp pains darting through my head, while around it was a large white towel which my cousin had dipped in cold water and applied to my head to cool my aching brow.

I heard a footstep, and the next moment little Rose came tripping into the room and said, "Here is a note for you, Miss Lenore."

I took the note and read it. It was from Oscar's mother.

Would not the reader be pleased to know the contents of that note? I suppose so, and therefore will tell you, but I hope not to weary your impatience.

During my stay with my aunt Fibby, she and Oscar visited some of their relations, and were absent for several days; when my aunt Marian Norwood, together with my cousin Ralph Horton, remained with me until they returned.

One night that Ralph had gone out to spend a few hours with one of his friends, my brain being full of mis-

chief, I proposed to my aunt, to have some fun. So my aunt Marian, who was always up to something funny, or to something that she thought the young folks would enjoy, sanctioned the motion.

My aunt Fibby had a little chair Oscar used to sit in when he was a baby, which was about twenty-five years ago. We took the chair and wrapped the table-cloth around it, and set it upon the gate-post to frighten Ralph when he would come back. In a few minutes we were apprised of his arrival by the firing of his pistol. He had shot the ghost.

"There now, cousin Lenore," said little Charley, "I told you so. And if you had put yourself in place of the chair as you intended doing, you would now have been dead."

"Yes, Charley," said I, "you are a little lump of providence any way, and if I had not followed your advice, I would now have been as dead as a hammer, for I had no idea that Ralph would shoot; but "a miss is as good as a mile." And we all sailed out to see the fun, and met Ralph laughing over the victory he had won.

"Well," said he, your ghost has received a mortal wound, and I expect old Fibby will cut up didoes and double extras when she comes home and finds her chair shot."

"Well," said I, laughing, "if I were her, I would not care if it was shot to Halifax, for they say it is the very chair old Brandon knocked her down with, when she threw his fine hat in the fire."



After examining the chair, we found that Ralph had exaggerated. It was not mortally wounded, for only one ball had passed through its leg, and shivered off a small piece, but the chair was not injured at all.

The reader will no doubt be surprised when he is informed that the contents of Aunt Fibby's note, was an account, sent in Oscar Brandon's own handwriting, charging me three dollars for the chair which was then twenty-eight years old, and had been shot for over two years.

I told Rose to go back and tell him that I did not have any money to pay for the chair, but he should not lose it; that I would send him my bridal wreath and he could sell it and keep the money. "It is well worth the chair," said I, "it cost me five dollars."

Just at night I could see little Rose come tripping back.

"Well, what will you have now?" said Mary, the house girl.

"Miss Fibby sent me after a chunk of fire," said Rose, who seemed mortified at the thoughts of telling her business, for the other servants had insulted her dignity by giving her the title of a fire chunk.

"Here is some matches," said Mary, looking somewhat displeased, "you must not be carrying fire over town so much; you will set things afire."

Rose took the matches and scampered off. The next morning Rose was back again after another chunk of fire.

"Why, are you back again after more fire. Didn't I

give you some matches? What have you done with them?"

"Miss Fibby took them and hid'um, and said there was no use in striking matches when fire was so near by."

"Well, well," said Mary, as she turned Rose out at the door with her chunk, "I do wish the good people of the town would fling in and buy the poor woman some matches; if they don't, one of these nights they will wake up and find themselves too warm."

As soon as my feelings permitted me, I returned home and took charge of my school. My love for Oscar Brandon was now vanished and gone, and another passion usurped its place—ambition now "walked the chambers of my soul, and made love its vassal."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE FLIGHT.



FEW days after Oscar Brandon received the message, he showed himself into my aunt Margaret Raymond's residence.

"Good morning," said he, as he walked into the room with a fiendish smile playing around his mouth, and lips as white as ashes.

My aunt and cousin gave him a very cold good morning, and he braced himself back in a chair without an invitation, at the same time asking "the news of the day.

"I have no news that would interest you," she replied, coldly, "I heard some this morning, but I presume they would not be interesting to you, nor would they be very pleasant to your ears."

"What is it?" said he, as the doughy whiteness of his face changed into a scarlet.

"I presume, sir, your conscience has told you already what I am about to say; or, are you, sir, made up without a conscience? I think you must be, or you would never have treated Lenore Parolee in the way that you have. I suppose you have deceived her after being engaged to her for two years, yet I am not at all surprised, for I had been looking for it all the while, as you always

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*carde premunt, aliud ore promunt.* I knew you too well, and if Lenore had known you as well as I did, she would never have engaged herself to you."

"Yes," said Lilian, "I am surprised at Lenore for engaging herself to you, for she might have known how it would have turned out. But, poor girl, she loved you, yes, loved you with a love that you are not worthy of. You ingratiated yourself into her love by months, and even by years of attention; you won her heart; and then, when in all its purity, it rested on your honor, you mocked its sacred affections, laughed to scorn its virtue and its truth."

"Well," said he, "one's mother can have a great influence over them."

"Ah! that is no excuse for you, Oscar Brandon. You know that you had a mother when you engaged yourself to Lenore Parolee, and you know, too, what kind of a woman she was. You knew that Lenore was poor, and that your mother would not consent to your marriage, yet, if you had married her, you would not have stooped, for if there was any condescension—in the estimation of other people—it was on Lenore's side. Everybody knew you, Oscar Brandon, but Lenore Parolee, and it is a strange thing that she did not find you out sooner; but I suppose her love for you hid all your faults, notwithstanding, we all have our false nature more or less. But, Oscar Brandon, you have acted the wolf's in sheep clothing to perfection, and any man that would act as you have, would pay no regard for an oath,

and I say, sir, I would not trust you with my smoke-house keys. You engaged yourself to her, merely to gratify your vanity—a brutal gratification, indeed, the triumph over the weakness of a woman, whose greatest fault was that she loved you.”

“Yes,” said my aunt, “and you, or any other man that would treat a helpless orphan, as you have Lenore Parolee, deserve to be hung like a dog. I say helpless,—as she is—for she has no father or mother to look to for protection; if she had had a father, you would not have treated her in this manner. Poor thing, I would not be surprised if she were to commit suicide; if she does, your soul will be stained with her blood.”

“Yes,” said Oscar, “when I left C——, she was screaming and crying as if her heart would break, and it seemed that it would take my life.”

“Listen to what I tell you, Oscar Brandon,” said she, “justice will overtake you and your conspiracy, and retribution will surely come upon you. You will yet cower under the vengeance of the Almighty God.”

And Lilian, who had been sitting in silence while the conversation was going on between my aunt and Oscar, rose from her seat in a high passion. Her eyes sparkled; her complexion was scarlet with passion, as she exclaimed,—

“You are her murderer, Oscar Brandon! and her blood will rise against you on the day of Judgment—the black catalogue of your own guilt will sound the terrible sentence of your condemnation at the last awful hour.”

And she threw herself back in her chair, and covered her face with her hands, and burst in a passion of tears. “Poor girl, poor girl,” she murmured, “will her troubles never end? I hope that God will sustain her—and I believe he will. I believe there is something in store for that pure and noble-hearted girl, and you will yet see the day that you would be proud to claim her for your wife.”

“Lilian,” said Oscar, “I love Lenore Parolee, and I expect to love her as long as I live, and I never expect to see her suffer.”

“Suffer! suffer!” exclaimed Lilian Horton, sarcastically, “do you think that Lenore Parolee would receive a favor at your hands? No, not to save your life. She has too much of the McClain blood coursing through her veins. You may crucify her affections, you may mangle her heart, and perhaps take her life, but you will never quench the pride and ambition she inherited from her ancestors.”

And the conversation was dropped. Dinner was announced, of which Oscar ate very heartily, and took his departure. That night he made his appearance in C——, but no eye saw him save his mother’s. His expectations however, were not realized, for he was under the impression that he would either hear of my death or insanity, and felt very much disappointed in finding that neither had happened, for he was almost confident that one or the other would take place. Then he could triumph over one victim; he could boast that he had laid one

fair form on the bleak shores of the Great Hereafter. But finding that the wounded dove had hushed its mourning, and had folded its wings in sleep to dream of the bitter past,—assisted by his mother, he speedily made his arrangements, and in a few hours was on his way to W——.

## THE BROKEN CHAIN.

Fare thee well, deceitful man,  
Our life-paths widely apart may lay;  
But my prayer for you will ever be,  
Where'er your wandering feet may stray.

I trusted once, and loved you dearly,  
My heart had never loved before;  
But now I see my error clearly,  
And you and I must meet no more.

And here our paths diverge forever,  
Parting now can give no pain;  
Fare thee well! and if we never  
Chance to meet in life again,


Some day, mark me, thou'lt remember,  
Where your roses scattered lie;  
In thy life's cold, bleak December,  
Her you spurned in days gone by.

Go thy way; thy smiles deceitful  
Will never again distract my brain;  
And the hand once burnt in touching,  
Never plays with fire again.

Fare thee well; thou hast deceived me;  
Well, indeed, didst act thy part.  
Once I trusted and believed thee,  
Now I cast thee from my heart.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

## DO YOU BLAME ME?

OUSIN Jasper, can I have the use of your horses and carriage, this morning?" said I, a few days after the events related in the preceding chapter.

"Certainly, Lenore, and I am glad that you have taken a notion to go in company once more, and be like yourself again. 'Hold up your head, if you die hard,' that is my motto. But you will have to tell me where you are going, for if you are going on another Oscar Brandon expedition you can't go," said he, laughing.

"I never wish to see Oscar Brandon again, nor I ever expect to see him any more until I meet him face to face at the bar of justice."

"Ah! that sounds a long ways off."

"Not as far as you suppose," said I, "I do not mean the bar of God; I mean the bar where law offenders of our terrestrial globe are arraigned. And if there is any justice in the land, to it I will appeal. At its sacred altar I will seek revenge; and I hope the majesty of a sin-avenging law may be sustained in the sight of God. Though I do not want Oscar Brandon's money—and I would not have it—were I win it, I would either commit it to the flames or give it for the benefit of the poor. I seek revenge

alone, and I am going to have it, if my life has to pay the forfeit. And I presume by the time he goes through the process of a breach of promise suit, he will spend as many sleepless hours as I have."

"Well, Lenore," said he, "you are more spunky than I thought you were. That is right; give it to him—I don't blame you; he deserves it, for it is no more than right that he should be made to suffer. Go ahead, you have a plenty of friends, and they will sustain you."

"Yes, Cousin Jasper," said I, "I know that I have some steady, untiring, and devoted friends, who will cry with cheering voices, 'God speed you with a happy voyage, and safe port,' while there will be others who will try to crush me beneath the wave. But I will 'buckle on my armor of faith' and battle with a brave heart, and may the breeze of heaven fan my victory."

In a few hours I was at C——, seated in my cousin Fred. Chesterfield's parlor awaiting the arrival of my counsel.

"Lenore, are you not excited?" said my cousin Lorena Chesterfield, who seemed to be sympathizing with me in my calamitous situation.

"No, Cousin Lou," said I, "not in the least, I feel more composed than I have for months, for I have seen so much trouble, and my heart and soul have been so lacerated, it would take a volcano to move me. My heart has become perfectly consolidated, and it make no difference to me whether I live or die. But I would prefer death, if I could not avenge my wrongs; yet there

are some wrongs that cannot be avenged, and this is one. Oscar Brandon can never be made to suffer as I have."

"Do you think you will gain the suit?"

"Yes, I am confident of that, but whether I will recover anything afterwards, I am not able to say. I know one thing, I will run him to all the cost I can. His money is not what I am after, it is revenge, and I have no way to get revenge only by depriving him of his peace of mind, his sweet repose, and the idol that he has been trained to worship."

"Well, I don't blame you; for he has caused you a great deal of trouble, but it is not right to cherish such feelings, and you ought to have a more forgiving heart."

"Ah! cousin Lou, revenge is sweet, thought it has been justly said that 'revenge rest only in the bosom of fools, and its fruits are bitter;' 'that by kindness and forgiveness we may obtain a far more glorious and triumphant victory over our enemies, and enjoy the unspeakable happiness of obtaining the precepts of our blessed Redeemer.' But it takes something besides kindness and forgiveness to touch Oscar Brandon's heart, and if there is anything trying to his soul it is the touching of his pocket-book, and if you don't believe me, I will give you an illustration. He rode five miles one night to a party in the neighborhood, and on his arrival, he was informed that he had to buy a twenty-five cent entrance ticket; so he wheeled about and started for home."

"Well, well," said she, "I knew Oscar Brandon was tight, but I had no idea that he was as stingy as all that,

and I guess it will go pretty hard with him. But don't you reckon it will kill his mother?"

"No," said I, "she will never lose sight of this earthly world, as long as she can see the eye of an eagle on a quarter of a dollar."

"Ah! Lenore, I would not be surprised if you and Oscar did make friends and get married after all."

"No, Cousin Lou, never, never. There is nothing that would induce me to marry that man now. For I hate him beyond all expression. Respect once lost dethrones love, and mine for him is buried too deep for resurrection."

By this time my counsel had arrived; I felt somewhat embarrassed at first, though it did not last long; and as soon as my gaze met the face of those two noble and amiable counselors, every unpleasant feeling vanished away; for in their face I read feelings of the most profound respect and sympathy. Never did old "Solomon, when, on some fair spring morning, his mild broad disk arose upon our Godly earth, shine with more complacency," than did these two noble advisers—Colonel McKay and Parson Stewart. And feeling that I was striving in a just cause, I chose in my heart a wiser and better counselor—the Great Counselor of the world—whose omnipresence is over all.

"All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body nature is, and God the soul;  
That change through all, and yet in all the same,  
Great in the earth, as in the eternal frame,

Warm in the sun, refresh in the breeze;  
Glow in the stars, and bloom in the trees;  
Live through all life, extend through all extent,  
Spread undivided, operate unspent.  
Breathe in our soul, form our mortal part  
As full, as perfect, in a hair as heart,  
As full, as perfect, in vile man that mourns  
As the rapt seraph that adores and burns,  
To Him no high, no low, no great, no small,  
He fills, He bounds, connects, and equal all.

I felt that the Almighty's arm would sustain me, and I prayed as David did when he prayed for the confusion of his enemies:

"Plead my cause, O, Lord, with them that strive with me, fight against them that fight against me."

"Take hold of shield and buckler, and stand up for mine help."

"Let them that are my enemies wrongfully rejoice over me: neither let them wink with their eye that hate me without a cause."

"Judge me, O, Lord my God, according to Thy righteousness; and let them not rejoice over me."

"Let them be ashamed and brought to confusion together that rejoice over me."

"Let them be clothed with shame and dishonor that magnify themselves against me."

"Render unto them, O, Lord, and recompense according to the work of their hands."

After a short interview with my counsel, I returned home in better spirits. They pledged their honor to

plead my cause, although there was an obstacle in the way. What evidence had I to testify that he had deceived me? He had never told me that he was not going to marry me, either by letter, or in the presence of any one. I did not know at that time that he had made an open confession of his infidelity to my aunt and cousin. What should I do? Of course I followed my lawyer's advice, and wrote to Oscar immediately, without making known to him my intentions, and asked him to tell me plainly his determination, and I would never mention the subject to him again; or I would have an interview with him if I had to go to his boarding-house to see him, that Justice demanded an explanation. In a few days I received an answer in flaming letters, which was cut in all sorts of darts, dashes, dittoes, semiquavers, extraordinaries, and fluradiddles. And this met my approbation.

**COUSIN LENORE—**

I have well considered the matter; I do not love you, and I hope you will consider me only as a cousin. I don't wish to correspond any more on the subject. You can write me friendly letters, if you feel disposed to do so.

Yours Respectfully, OSCAR BRANDON.

"Full oft have letters caused the writer  
To curse the day they were inditer."

## CHAPTER XXX.

### WOMAN'S MISSION.



AS the rib taken from Adam's foot, that man might trample woman beneath his? Or was it taken from his head that she might rule over him? No. But it was taken from his side, that she might be his equal. What is the meaning of equality as here used? Is it intended to convey the idea that the soul of woman has an equal interest with man in all those great events which have marked the dealings of God with His intelligent creatures on our earth, from the hour in which Adam awoke from a deep sleep, and found beside him the companion of his sinless and happy life, to the present moment, when the sin-stricken and sorrowing soul of man, echoing the Divine conviction that it is not good for man to be alone, still seeks in woman his "help-meet" in labor, the trials, and sufferings of mortality?

Are we to understand from it, that woman, equally with man, had a trust committed to her by the Judge of all, for the fulfillment of which she will be held responsible?

Can these things be matter of doubt? Were not Mary and Martha loved, as well as Lazarus? Did not the soul of Anna kindle with as Divine an inspiration as

that of Simeon, when she held in her arms the infant Saviour?

Or is the question, whether woman exerts an equally important influence over the character and destinies of our race? This can scarcely be a question to one familiar with the records of Paradise and Bethlehem. Although she was tempted by the father of all evil, violated the law of God, and caused her husband to violate it, whereby he lost his seat in Paradise, and doomed his descendants to toil, and suffering, and death—yet if she was first in transgression, she was first in the breach. She stood by the expiring Saviour when boasting Peter and the other disciples had forsaken their Lord and Master. She was last at the tomb to embalm his sacred body, and first to discover that He had burst the bars of death.

Oh! the priceless value of the love of a pure woman; and yet her loveliness is uncrowned, till piety scatters around the sweetness and power of her charms.

“Great, indeed, is the task assigned to woman.” But not to make laws, not to lead armies, not to govern empires—but to inspire those principles, inculcate those doctrines, to animate those sentiments, which generations yet unknown, and nations yet uncivilized, will learn to bless. Soften firmness into mercy, allay the anguish of the mind by her tenderness, disarm passion, visit the couch of the tortured sufferer, the prison of the deserted friend, the cross of the rejected Saviour—these are the theaters on which her great triumph has been achieved.

Oh! the love of a pure woman!—time cannot mar its brilliancy, distance strengthens its influence; bolts and bars cannot limit its progress; it follows the prisoner into his dark cell—she loves him yet, though the world has turned coldly from him. Still, as disease lays its hand heavily upon the strong frame and sorrow wrings the proud heart of man, she, the help-meet, if faithful to her allotted work, is at his side, teaching him to bend to the storms of life, that he may not be broken by them; humbly stooping herself, that she may remove from his path every stone of stumbling, and gently lead him onward and upward to a Divine Consoler, with whose blessed ministrations the necessities of a more timid spirit and a feebler physical organization have made her familiar.

The couch made by the hand of the loved one is soft to his weary limbs; the pillows, carefully adjusted by the same hand, bring repose to his fevered brain, and her words of kind encouragement revive the sinking spirit.

It would almost seem that God, compassionating woman's great frailty, had planted this jewel in her breast, which like a tender flower, expands its fragrance to all around, till transplanted to bloom in the Paradise of God, where immortal flowers forever bloom, and crystal waters gush forth from exhaustless fountains.

“O, say not woman's love is bought  
With vain and empty treasures;  
O, say not woman's heart is caught  
By every idle pleasure.”



## CHAPTER XXXI.

### THE WANDERING SPIRIT.



UGUST with its parching suns and poisonous breath has passed away, and October, wistful-eyed and scarlet-crowned, trailed her gorgeous garments with queenly bearing, and the frost-king in its train was beginning in silence to forge fetters for the running brooks, and the gentle current of life that flowed through the veins of the forest, kissing the tender leaves, searing them for the tomb, and severing them from the parent tree. Drifted to their destiny, they breathed forth a sound as of spirits whispering from another world, and died away beyond the present in a low wail of sympathy for blighted doom.

Every plant and flower, every shrub and tree, were arrayed in their autumnal robe of green and yellow.

It was on the night of the tenth of October, when the nights were cool and pleasant, and the pure air made the whole face of creation fresh and pure, that I was alone in my chamber, perfectly calm and tranquil in mind, where but a few weeks before I almost felt the sting of death.

I lay upon my bed absorbed in thoughts, living in the past by a knowledge of its history, and in the future by hope and anticipation.

“How sweet the pillow! how sacred the midnight hour! how suited to calm the human mind for holy contemplation and prayer!”

It is there the world is shut out; there reflection enforces attention, there we analyze our plans of business, and judgments are more settled; we discover what is wrong, and abandon it, and are more strongly confirmed in what is right; the wicked are often conquered by reflection, and nobly resolve to forsake their wickedness; it often cools burning revenge, and drives anger from the heaving bosom.

At all times, night is the emblem of repose; but to me it invited to serious thoughts.

The old clock upon the mantel piece, and the chandelier's shrill crowing were telling the hour of midnight, but I had not yet closed my eyes for sleep.

The Queen of Night, attended by her starry host, moved proudly through the arching vaults of Heaven, and cast her mild radiance over a scene so lately wrapped in awful gloom, and tranquillity again reigned, where the elements waged terrific battle—and the wounded dove had found a pleasant retreat from the tyrant rays of the tropical sun.

The noisy world was hushed in sleep, and riot had reined its weary head.

“Is it not a good time to drop a word and a tear?” I thought. Acting upon this, I sprang out of bed, but what could I do?—I had no matches in my room—no paper, no ink. So I unlocked my room door very softly,

and tip-toed out of the room, for fear of disturbing those who had been asleep for hours, with the intention of stealing noiselessly to my cousin Mento's room for a match. Yet I believe I made more noise than I ever did in my life, for I knocked down several chairs, and came near splitting my head against one of the posts in an adjoining room, that was not completed, as I had to pass through several rooms to reach my cousin's.

After much pain, and a great deal of racket, I succeeded in getting my match, and if any one had been passing the house, they might have told a terrible ghost story.

I then had to go up stairs after pen and ink. I done very well while going, and did not make a particle of noise. I got my pen and ink, and started to descend, but it did not take me long to get down; I missed my step and went head foremost down stairs; just as I reached the bottom, my head struck the end of a flower bowl, that was lying at the foot of the stairs, and which had been carelessly left there after the disposing of its contents. My pen and ink flew in every direction.

"Well, well," said I, rubbing my head and elbow, "if I keep on this way, there will be more blood than tears, for some one of the household will shoot me for a ghost, or say I am crazy."

I gathered up my writing materials, and retreated to my room. Going to the book case, I took down an old blank book, and cutting out the leaves that had been written over, I seated myself comfortably, and com-

menced writing my journal. My heart was full of fancies, and the pen did not linger upon the paper; but as I went on, my face saddened and brightened alternately with every shade of feeling, whose confession I traced upon the page. And at the same time hoping that my good readers will excuse its inferiority after receiving such a blow, which scattered my faculties so badly, I only collected a few of the shattered fragments.

My first was a piece of poetry, entitled "One Word, and a Tear."

I write as the dove mourns, when it loses its mate, because its heart is gushing over with sorrow and desolation. I write as a child that has been wronged by its companions, because while relating its calamity, its little heart is so overflowing with grief, it drops only one word, and then a tear.

#### ONE WORD AND A TEAR.

I am lonely to-night, as I sit by my window,  
All things are hushed, and no one is near;  
But a soft gentle voice unto me now is speaking,  
Thou shalt tell the story of "One Word and a Tear."

Yes, I am lonely to-night, as I sit by my window,  
The stars one by one in the blue dome appear;  
And I list to no voice, save the wind's gentle murmur  
Which seems to whisper, "One Word and a Tear."

Will you listen unto me, while my story I relate,  
Perhaps 'tis a story you would all like to hear;  
I pray don't get weary, but patiently wait,  
For I'll tell it with a word and a tear.

Once I had a dream, under a snow-ball bush,  
Which made my heart quiver with fear;  
My lover dipped my pen in my own heart's blood,  
For me to write "One Word and a Tear."

He looked so pure while kneeling there,  
Beneath the little snow-ball tree;  
But little did I think the time would ever come,  
When I'd tell it with a word and a tear.

Perhaps you may think that I am jesting,  
But listen, my story you shall hear.  
I dreamed that I was writing my journal,  
And the title was "A Word and a Tear."

'Twas after that, our love was linked—  
And linked as I thought for life;  
One day he whispered in my ear,  
That I should be his wife.

But there came one with stealthy steps,  
Who poured abroad her wrath,  
And trailed her deadly poison,  
Across my sunny path.


My lover forsook me and turned to another,  
And his name my heart can no longer revere.  
He said he would still continue my brother,  
And this is my story of "One Word and a Tear."

I am tired now, and lonely, too,  
And my wings are nearly furied;  
My life does seem so sad and dreary,  
I'm glad to quit this unfriendly world.

And when my soul has taken its flight  
Far, far beyond each starry sphere,  
Who'll remember the awful night,  
When I told my sad story with a word and a tear?

## CHAPTER XXXII.

## THE MESSENGER.

ENORE, your cousin Edgar Mansfield has come," said my cousin Mento, "and I am in hopes he will cheer you up. Why don't you go down and see him?"

"Who? Edgar Mansfield?" and I bounded out of the room, and down stairs in a transport of joy—glad to see my dear old friend once more, one in whose keeping I had trusted all my secrets; one whom I had loved as a father, and who had watched over me as though I were a daughter. But, alas, his grave face soon brought the past to my memory, and there flashed across my memory, like the coruscations of a southern night, the happy hours that Oscar and I had spent together under his paternal roof. And then came over my heart, like a deluge of cold, wild waters, all that I had suffered since the evening Oscar took me from his house as his betrothed bride.

"Oh! may oblivion come along and sweep away the sad memory of the past."

After tea Edgar requested a private interview with me, so we walked out on the piazza and took a seat, but my cousin Mento, who had heard a part of the conversation, and who was keen and shrewd enough to make any lawyer hunch up his shoulders, and scratch the back of his

head, would not comply with the demands of etiquette any longer, and came bouncing out of the room, and took a seat near enough to choke it back, if I happened to say anything that she had any idea would go against me in the suit.

"Well, Lenore," said Edgar, "I have come after you. Will you go home with me?"

"Edgar," said I, "I am sorry to say that I cannot go this time, as my business affairs demand my immediate attention. We are now preparing to send mother to the lunatic asylum, and will start with her in a few weeks."

"Well, I am very sorry you cannot go, but as you cannot, I will deliver to you the message that was intrusted in my care. I suppose you and Oscar have fallen out."

"You can call it what you please," said I, "but there has been no falling out on my side. Oscar Brandon is the traitor, he has deceived me, and has trampled my sacred affections with remorseless power beneath his feet."

"I was very much surprised and grieved at your misfortune," said he pityingly.

"Misfortune! do not call it a misfortune; for I deem it a blessing, and thank my stars, and bless their lustre that I was withheld from marrying such a man."

"Well, well," said he, leaning back in his chair, "I would not for the world this had happened. He is at my house now, and seems to be in a great deal of trouble—and upon my word I believe that the man will go crazy. He says that you have sued him for breach of promise,

but the writ has not been served on him yet; he only knows what was rumored to him, and is in hopes that it is nothing but a false rumor. He is afraid to come to C——, and begs to know your determination. He also requested me to advise you to drop the suit; and I do think that it would be best for you both to make up and get married. God knows if I had my way I would bring you together before to-morrow night."

"No, Edgar," said I, "that will never be; for I would suffer death rather than to marry Oscar Brandon now. Tell him that I said, that when I sent for him to come to see me; when I prayed for the privilege of seeing him once more—and perhaps for the last time on earth, as I then thought—he sent me word that he could not come, that his mother would be watching him through the window. And tell him if he wishes to know whether he is sued or not, to come to C—— and he will soon find out. You will also tell him that his mother is yet standing at the window, and I am sure she will not let her boy get hurt. But, Edgar, you, whom I took to be my warmest and best friend, seem to have turned against me, and are taking sides with Oscar Brandon."

"No, Lenore," said he, "I am not taking sides with him, I am no advocate in his cause, and if you think so, you wrong me; for I love you as tenderly as if you were a sister, and all I want is a reconciliation. I want the thing compromised if there is any way to bring it about."

"But, Edgar, he does not want the suit compromised;

he only wants me to drop it and have nothing more to do with it, that he may go like a brave fellow and wear the laurel crown. But never will my humble efforts relax until the crimson current ceases to flow through my veins. For my resolution is firm; and I am determined that my enemies shall not triumph over me. And, Edgar, remember that you have a daughter whom you love as dearly as your own life; and you do not know how soon you may be snatched from her side, leaving her to struggle through the world alone. You do not know how soon her young and innocent heart may be crushed and broken by some ruthless hand, and she die bleeding from the cruel wound. Just think for a moment, Edgar, if such were the case, would you not wish to rise from your grave and avenge her wrongs?"

"Yes, Lenore, certainly I would."

"Well," then, let your reflections wander back to me, a poor orphan girl, with no mother's eye to pity, no father's hand to stay; then you will no longer be an advocate in this unjust and unholy cause."

"Lenore," said Edgar, who seemed to be very much mortified, "you accuse me wrongly, and, as I said before, I am no advocate in his cause. All that I have done was through a pure motive, and I would not do you a hair's breadth of injury, to save my own life, and if you knew my heart, to-night you would not entertain any thought of my being prejudiced against you."

"Yet, Edgar, your sympathy seems to lean toward Oscar Brandon; you pity him, and call him a poor fel-

low, and say that it makes you sorry for him; you speak so compassionately of his troubles, as though some one had most atrociously imposed upon his decorum; and have not for the first time, mentioned my sorrows, nor given me one sympathetic word—I, the very one to whom sympathy is due; and not to that profligate wolf, whose greatest ambition was to destroy my peace and happiness, and who, in the hour of my most bitter pain, when I could no longer control my grief, nor conceal the arrow with which he had pierced my heart, wrote to me and told me not to take my troubles too hard, and laughed to scorn my sacred affections."

"Well, Lenore," said he, "you know I do not know anything about it, and all that I know, I got from Oscar's own lips, so you see I have only one side of the story. He had me under the impression all the while, that you discarded him and then sued him for breach of promise; and I thought if such was the case, it would be better for you and your bondsman to drop the thing."

"Edgar," said I, "you have known me long enough to know that I am not capable of such a fiendish, unscientific and unprincipled act."

"I was greatly surprised, Lenore, when I heard it, for I had every confidence in your significancy; but after he showed me the letter he said you wrote to him, I did not know what to think."

"Letter!" said I in amazement; "what letter do you speak of?—and what kind of a letter?"

"Well," said he, pulling a letter out of his pocket,

"there it is, read for yourself." I took the letter and read it, I knew it was a letter that Oscar Brandon had written himself.

"I know nothing of this letter," said I, "it is one that he has written himself, and any one familiar with Oscar Brandon's handwriting, will know it."

"Yes, Lenore, since you have mentioned it that is certainly Oscar's handwriting."

"I see exactly what he was up to; he thought that he would send this letter to me, and I, being in a state of excitement, would acknowledge the letter, and he then, could have you for a witness. But tell him that I have not entirely lost my senses; although they like a heap of being bunched, yet I have enough left, at least, to battle with him a while longer. And tell him to be honorable about it, and not try to get out of the scrape by forging letters, and perhaps it won't go so hard with him. And tell him not to take it too hard, any way."

I then got all the letters Oscar had written me since the wolf began to disarray himself, and showed them to Edgar, which gave him sufficient explanation.

"Well," said he, "I am perfectly satisfied, Lenore, and I am sufficiently convinced who the traitor is. I don't blame you now in the least for the step that you have taken; and if you need any assistance call on me, and I will help you all I can. I hope you will not think any the less of me for coming, as I did, for I came as a blind man, yet I came as your friend, and ever expect to be as such toward you."


Edgar Mansfield was distinguished for his remarkable candor, his generosity, and hospitality. Truth, honesty and charity were the ruling passions of his soul. He always done more for the good of his neighbors than he did for himself, and was ever ready to contribute to the relief of his suffering fellow creatures.

"And to the houseless child of want  
His door is open still;  
And if his portion is but scant,  
He'll give it with a free good will."

And that evening found us all together, holding such sweet converse, and enjoying such rich scenes of social intercourse, as none can know but those whose unselfish spirits, blending in harmony, taste the bliss of pure friendship.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### LIGHT AND DARKNESS.

NE evening I was seated at my work-table, finishing a dress for my mother, when my cousin Jasper entered the room, with a look of disappointment on his face. He took a seat near me, with his chin resting on his hand, and looked as if it was a burden for him to deliver his message. And indeed it was, for he knew that my troubles were as great as I could bear, and my cup was then full to the brim. But finally he said,—

“Well, Lenore, more bad news. Col. Rayment has just received a letter from Dr. Grisom, and says there is no room for your mother in the Asylum—the vacancies are all filled, and a hundred applications ahead.”

My hands fell powerless upon my lap, and my needle refused to make another stitch.

“Dear God of all goodness! is my weak and worn-out heart capable of bearing this returning tide of disappointment? Oh! what shall I do? what shall I do? alone, alone, in this cold, wide world, with a poor, deranged mother, and no one to look to for protection. Oh! what shall I do? what shall I do? I am sick at heart, and almost distracted. It seems there is nothing for me but gloom, disappointment and despair.”

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How dark and impenetrable are the clouds that envelop us. How often our hearts sink within us, by sad and bitter disappointment. When life's crowning joy seems almost within our reach, then a dark and lowering cloud will hang over us, and our spirits will be depressed. A strange presentiment causes us to feel there is something terribly awful in the mysterious future awaiting us.

The torturing suspense is at times hardly endurable, and dread realities would be preferable in the midst of this despondency. Some cruel fate will suddenly snatch the cherished treasure and silently bear it away to unknown regions. But we must not expect our lifetime to glide away through sunshine and brilliancy. The golden threads of life are woven with those of sorrow. In our pilgrimage from the cradle to the grave, clouds cast their broad shadows over our pathway. None are exempt—the young, the old, the rich, the poor, have their trials. The little child, full of life and joy, buoyant with happiness, has its sorrows: but it soon dries its tears, and sees brighter things in the distance. The youth, who has just entered upon the journey of life, begins to ascend the hill of science with a light and joyous step, and he has not proceeded far before temptations and difficulties obstruct his path. But he is determined that nothing shall daunt him—that he will overcome all obstacles and obtain the good. Hope paints in gorgeous colors the anticipations of the future, and trusting faith looks forward to their realization. After surmounting his difficulties, the clouds will disperse, and light will burst upon his soul—

that light which enables him to pursue a glorious future, and have his name registered upon the scroll of fame.

Then why murmur and repine at the lot which Providence has cast for us? "There is a silver lining to every cloud;" the dark cypress is always woven with the bright laurel, and for a "night of weeping is always promised a morning of joy." The bivouac is cold and dreary, we know, for some; but, "after the night, the morning; after the judgment day, the New Jerusalem."

I arose and retired to my own room—my little hiding-place, where I had shed so many bitter tears of sorrow. An uncontrollable foreboding of evil oppressed my mind, and I could only obtain relief in committing my mother to the care of her covenant God. I closed the door, and sank upon my knees, and tried to pray—but I could not. There seemed to be a load at my heart which prevented me from speaking. I clasped my hands reverently, and raised my eyes to heaven, and uttered a few words in broken sentences:—

"Lord, thou hast promised to be the 'widow's friend, and a father to the Fatherless;' and wilt thou, O Lord, help me to take care of my poor mother?—for 'vain is the help of man.' O, Lord, thou rulest in heaven and earth, and thy power is not limited. Thou hast turned rivers into a wilderness, and the water-springs into dry ground. Thou has turned the wilderness into standing water, and the dry ground into water-springs. And I ask thee, O Heavenly Father, in the name of thine only Son, to use thy mighty power, and inculcate upon the

mind of the Principal of the noble institution of the insane Asylum a flexible influence, and that their inflexibilities may be rendered flexible; and our effete efforts in the behalf of my dear mother may be made propitious by thy directing power, and that she may yet be accepted under its protecting care. Thou hast a mighty arm; strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand. Thy mercy is great above the heavens; and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds."

In a few days I called to see Col. Raymont, who was a nephew of my mother's, and who had taken an active part in behalf of her welfare, in regard to her calamitous condition. For the servants had all left her, and she was boarding with a family whom I had employed to take charge of her; but I was not able to pay the amount demanded of them. Her farm was rented out; but it was not sufficient to satisfy the demands; and, besides, she was defrauded out of half of its income by the tenant who had it in charge.

I met my cousin on the street, and was surprised to observe an expression on his countenance which spoke of hope and happiness; and my serenity gradually kindled into a radiance, that might, in the "hands of a painter, have expressed the joy of the Virgin-mother on finding her lost Son in the temple," and which was soon lost in a gush of joyful tears.

"Well, Lenore," said he, "I have good news for you."

"What is it?" said I; and my heart leaped in its resting-place.



"Why, I have just received a letter from Dr. Grisom, this morning, which informed me that there was a vacancy for your mother in the Asylum, and to take her immediately; but she would have to pass a physical examination. But I had that attended to several weeks ago; she passed an examination before Dr. Brizzel, the most prominent physician in the place; so you can see there is nothing to do but to take her there immediately; and I expect to start with her Tuesday morning. Be sure and have everything ready. Will your cousin Jasper assist me a little in this matter?"

"Yes, certainly; he will do all in his power."

"Well, tell him to take his horses and carriage Tuesday morning, and take Aunt Elmira out to the depot for me; and be sure to be there by eight o'clock. I shall meet her there, and take her to Raleigh myself."

I took my cousin's hand with heart-felt gratitude and joy. "Our first thanks are always due to God," said I, "and to him my heart offers them up;—but, oh! how feebly! Thanks to you, my dear cousin, for your kindness—I know not how to measure my obligations to you."

"Oh, I won't have them measured," said he, mischievously—"I will take the whole bolt."

"Well," said I, laughing, "I generally retail them out, as I have so many customers; though I guess I will have to let you have them at wholesale. But this will never do, if I stand here all day, I will not get mother ready for the journey, as I have a great deal to do yet—so, good-by."

I returned home and went to work again; but not until I had fallen down upon my knees and given thanks to God for his blessings. And I have been convinced that "no circumstances are so depressed that Providence will not relieve them. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you."

Tuesday morning found me seated in the carriage with my mother and my cousin. Col. Rayment met us there according to his promise, and there I bade my poor mother farewell! perhaps never again to see her face—to hear her voice.

Dear reader, my pen is too feeble to describe the anguish of that moment, as I looked through my blinded tears at the smoking engine, as it bore away the form of my dear mother. I could only commit her to God, saying,—

"Lord, take my poor mother into thy protecting care—and should we never meet again on this earth, oh! may we meet on the celestial shores of the Great Hereafter, where the weeping of orphans is heard no more."

ALONE IN THE WIDE, WIDE WORLD.

Alone in the wide, wide world, I wander  
And weep, for my heart is so full  
Of dreary and desolate shadows  
Shrouding my innermost soul.

The bright world is beautiful—very—  
With its flowers and streamers;  
But my heart has grown weary,  
And sighs for a world unseen.

But I listen to musical voices,  
 To voices of seeming truth,  
 And my credulous spirit rejoices  
 And dreams of returning youth.

But a glittering serpent has coiled  
 Itself in each beautiful flower,  
 And a traitor Judas has spoiled  
 All trust in my heart's green bower.

So I fold up my wings and grow weary  
 With this spirit of unrest and strife;  
 And I wander alone and query—  
 Is this wearisome thing called, Life?

Though I seek for the pathway of duty—  
 That path so seldom sought—  
 Are its avenues shaded by beauty?  
 Are its bowers with emeralds fraught?

For my pathway is rugged, and briars  
 Grow thick with each coming day;  
 The road is of stone, and tires  
 My feet in their toilsome way.

So I wearily wander, and wander,  
 Through a thicket with sharp thorns rife—  
 And think I to myself, as I ponder—  
 What is this wearisome thing called, Life?

When the burden of living, wearies me,  
 And I wander alone and sigh,  
 Then a glad thought comes and cheers me—  
 It is this—that I can die!

That the heart's pulse wide repeating,  
 So throbbing in my breast,  
 May silence its anxious beating,  
 And quietly take its rest.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

## THE MEETING.

**T**HE soft blue sky with its wandering white clouds and their rosy sunset tints, the low music, the faint perfume of gentle blowing zephyrs, the emerald wreaths and open buds of spring, had given place to the richer glow and luxuriant warmth of summer. Summer had in turn yielded to the dreamy beauty and golden fruitage of the royally crowned autumn. And now when her brilliant glory was on the wane, slowly and sadly grand impurpled autumn gathered up her pathetic loveliness and laid it in the broad lap of stern old winter. And cold, cold December, with its shadows of sunshine, was rapidly approaching, and every one was making the requisite preparations to meet the fair which was to be held in our village, to exhibit the talent, the character, the energy and perseverance of the leading citizens of the county.

The time had come and every one seemed determined that it should not pass unheralded.

The music was loud and jubilant, and seemed to woo the lofty and the lowly to enter and find a welcome. The time speed away rapidly on wings of light and merriment, closing with a grand ball at night. The ball-room was one blaze of light—a rush of gay music,

wreaths of flowers and fragrance. The room were a crush of silk, satin, tulle, and lace, velvet and broadcloth—a dazzle of white kid gloves, artificial blossoms, and brilliant jewels.

And there the wounded dove met face to face with the fowler.

Did it fold its wings, and drop its head upon its breast, and tremble at the sight of the mighty sportsman?

No. But as I promenaded up and down the gay room, and joined in the merry dance with some lively cavalier, there came a pair of dark brown eyes, which were alternately paling and flushing my cheeks, shutting out all sound from my ears—all sound save the remembered accents of the low-toned voice that had whispered such charming nothings in my ears.

But one sound, silent long,  
A whisper soft and low,  
The echo of those false sweet words  
He spoke so long ago.

The room with its gay fanciful throng, appeared to me, like some fairy scenes of enchantment. The jest was light, the repartee quick and pointed; the smiles bright, and the laugh merry; yet to me, the whole seemed one vast mockery. Flowers, lights and music, all seemed out of tune, and gangling and blending in the most jarring discords.

Long after the gay revel was silent, and the crowd gone to its different ways, I was standing at the window of Mr. Goodman's on the following evening, watching the

floating clouds across the moon that bathed me in a flood of silver light, when the servant came to the door and said,—

“Mr. Brandon is in the parlor, and wishes to see you.”

I arose and walked into the parlor, Oscar met me and extended his hand, I gave it a friendly shake, and seated myself in the first chair I came to.

Nine months had winged their rapid flight since I had looked upon that being on whom I had lavished the exuberant wealth of my heart, and he had gathered it, not to treasure it, but to trample it beneath his feet. Oscar seated himself in the large rocking chair, and threw himself back and looked as though he had swallowed a yard stick.

“Well, Lenore,” said he, placing his elbows upon the arms, and leaning over like a crow peeping into a marrow bone, “I suppose you have sued me?”

“I have, sir,” I replied.

“Will you continue to pursue the course you have taken?”

“I will, sir, with all my heart.”

“Do you think that you are going right, Lenore?”

“That question, sir, has been well considered, and my heart answers in the affirmative.”

“Well, Lenore, I advise you to drop this thing, for your sake and for the sake of your bondsman.”

“I have counselors, Oscar Brandon, and whenever I want advice I will call on them.”

“Do you think you will really gain the suit, Lenore?”

"The question can be better answered by the result, than by any train of reasoning. Yet I have nothing to fear, Oscar Brandon, for *Dieu defend le droit*."

"And so it was always my money you wanted, and not me."

"I never wanted a dollar of your money in my life, Oscar Brandon, and I don't want it yet, and would not have it, though I would prefer it to yourself."

"Well, what did you sue me for, if you don't want my money?"

"To avenge myself, and to teach you a lesson at the same time. And when you go to get up another flirtation, just to gratify the amusement of a few fleeting hours, you will think of Lenore Parolee and the trouble that you have caused, both her and yourself. And you will be more on your guard against trifling with woman's affections."

"What are you going to do with the money when you get it, Lenore?"

"Give it to the poor. Is there any other questions you would like to ask? If not, I have one I would like to ask you. You remember in your letter to me, you said, that when we forgot each other, you then would tell me the cause of this trouble. Now the time has come, that we can meet, but not as lovers, and now I want you to out with it."

"I will, if you will drop this breach of promise suit; but if you will not, I shall not tell you anything about it."

"Ah, well, I am not so anxious to hear it as all that, and I don't think that my curiosity would lead me that far."

"Well, mark what I tell you, you will repent of all this," said he, rising and pulling out my dear old uncle's watch, who had held it ticking to my ears so often, when I was a child, to amuse my childish heart.

And thus the conversation was dropped. He bid me good-by and with rapid steps he hastened from the place.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## LILIAN'S WEDDING.



FEW months later witnessed a pleasant event at my aunt Margaret Raymont's. It was my cousin Lilian Horton's bridal night; and her friends were determined that so important an event should not pass unheralded.

Bright lights streamed from every window and flashed among the trees, lit up the verandas—casting their broad bands of radiance far out to the secluded walks among trees and shrubs, lighting here and there in quivering bright gleams—while the room was one blaze of light—a dazzle of bright eyes, flowing curls, brilliant jewels, and artificial blossoms. And Lilian with her regal robe of silk, absolutely radiant in her floating veil, its white orange flowers, the black glossy curls, the sweet fair face with its sapphire eyes “seemed rather like some enchanting vision of ethereal loveliness, than any earthly embodiment of beauty—though that beauty was to be a joy forever to the manly lover at her side.” The marriage ceremony was performed by Parson Stewart, and the words were spoken that gave the name of Lilian Horton to the past.

Lilian Horton was the orphan child of my aunt Jane Horton. Her parents having died when she was quite

young, she was compelled to seek a home under the parental roof of her aunt Margaret Raymont.

Lilian had no nearer relatives than cousins to fill the office of first bridesmaid, and following the dictates of affection she chose me—“because,” she said, “I love you best, dear Lenore; you seem like a part of myself. We have both marched together under the same dark banner, waving its hostile and pernicious colors over our pathway, with no sunbeam to cheer our lonely way, with no kind parents to waft to our ears sweet words of cheer. But, dear Lenore, let us hope for a better and brighter day. Let us catch the song of triumph that is wafted to our ears and speak to ourselves words of lofty cheer;—there is ‘a silver lining to every cloud,’ and the ‘darkest hour is just before the break of day.’” And she raised her tearful eyes to Heaven and “looked through the misty veil, which those pearly drops had woven, as that of an angel glorified by the golden light streaming in from the window that looked forth towards the setting sun.”

“I suppose that Gertrude Walden has discarded Oscar Brandon,” said my cousin Nora Raymont, who came in just as the last words escaped Lilian's lips.

“Why—how did that happen?” said I. “I was under the impression that they were to be married soon.”

“I suppose that Gertrude did not know anything about yours and Oscar's engagement, until it was currently reported that you had sued him for breach of promise, when she discarded him on first sight; and I think she displayed her wisdom by so doing. I don't think I would

venture out to sea on the same bottom, after seeing other shipwrecked before my eyes."

"Yes, cousin Nora, men have a thousand advantages over us; and in their courtship, they add cunning to their accomplishments, and are as jealous to deceive, as if their lives would be made happy by the cheat."

"That is true, Lenore. However, they will find it a sad mistake at last, if perjury is to be accounted for; although your false traitor, like many others, may look on that time at a great distance. But I suppose he thinks himself excused, as being more knave than fool, which title, indeed, is so highly due to him, that I believe none will do him such manifest wrong as to dispute it. And I am sure, the blacker he appears, the greater reason you have to bless that Providence which permitted him to break the contract; for without a doubt, he would have made an intolerable husband."

"But it daily aggravates my troubles, Nora, to think that I suffered myself to be so easily imposed upon."

"Well, Lenore, it is our common fate, although all impostors are not equally industrious to be wicked; and you ought not to condemn your judgment, for want of sagacity to discover a cheat, as it would be to arraign the conduct of almost all the human race. And Lenore, let us take this view into consideration, that all afflictions of whatever kind, proceed from God. 'I create light, and make darkness, I make war and peace. I, the Lord, do these things.' This, my dear Lenore, should be your first consideration; and *si deus nobiscum, quis contra*

*nos?* It was this that reconciled Eli to the severest doom that perhaps was ever pronounced upon man. Though contrary to human nature, and much more to natural affection, yet it is the Lord, let him do what shall seem good. This reconciled Job to all his unparalleled sufferings—'The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away;' rapacious hands, and worrying elements were only instruments of His power. Therefore I bless and adore His holy name. This consolation fortified our Saviour Jesus Christ on the approach of his inconceivable bitter agony—'But it is My Father's pleasure, and not the malice of my bitter enemies, therefore not my will, but Thine be done.' From these consideration, dear Lenore, endeavor to reconcile yourself to the dispensations of Providence. Don't you remember the beautiful hymn written by Moore? It is to me worth all he ever penned besides. How often do I say it over to myself, lingering with a warming heart and a quickening pulse on every word of consolation."

And in the glow of her fine enthusiasm, Nora repeated,—

"Oh, Thou who driest the mourner's tear,  
How dark this world would be,  
If when deceived and wounded here,  
We could not fly to Thee!  
The friends, who in our sunshine live,  
When winter comes, are flown;  
And he who has but tears to give,  
Must weep those tears alone.  
But Thou will heal the broken heart,

Which, like the plants that throw  
Their fragrance from the wounded part,  
Breathes sweetness out of woe.

When joy no longer soothes or cheers,  
And e'en the hope that threw  
A moment's sparkle o'er our tears,  
Is dimmed and vanished, too,  
Oh, who would bear life's stormy doom,  
Did not thy wing of love  
Come, brightly wafting through the gloom  
Our peace-branch from above?  
Then sorrow, touched by thee, grows bright,  
With more than rapture's ray;  
As darkness shows us worlds of light,  
We never saw by day."

"None," said Nora, "but those who have had the sky of their earthly affections shrouded in darkness, can fully understand the closing words of this consolatory hymn. When we turn from all in this life that we vainly trusted, and lift our eyes upward towards the sky, bending over our sad spirits, an unexpected light breaks in upon us, and we see a new firmament, glittering with myriads of stars, whose light is fed from the inner world where the sun shines forever undimmed. What is this life? It is nothing more than a blubber upon the ocean, to float for a moment upon its surface, and then gone forever. Just so with the children of this world. The things that are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen, are eternal—there is nothing permanent or lasting in this world. God, alone, can give us comfort, and whom we seldom regard but when we are driven to it by necessity.

Solomon, who had tried all the alluring charms of love and beauty, whose qualities and riches gave him an opportunity to gratify every inclination, without any bounds to his wishes, called them 'vanity and vexation of spirit.' It is no wonder then, if every one of us discover the same truth to our cause. I have one question to ask you, Lenore; and forgive me if I wound, when I would only heal; for I assure you, I sincerely commiserate your calamity, and wish it were in my power to alleviate your distresses. Do you love Oscar Brandon still?"

"No, no, Nora, my love is dead, so dead that no hand can ever trace resurgam above its still white ashes. I can never be more to him than a dead memory. Respect once lost dethrones love, and mine for him is buried too deep for resurrection. Bitter tears have quenched the ardor of my affection; and the love-flame can be lighted never more. Pictures of real life touch the heart with power, while abstract presentations of truth glitter coldly in the intellectual regions of the mind, and then fade from the perceptions, like figures in a diorama. But there are some memories of the dead which no coffin-lid can ever shut in;—memories which can never come to us the slightest thoughts, without an exquisite thrill of pain. I did love Oscar Brandon better than I did my life; and his heartless desertion is the keenest sting that time could have for me; though it has sought out its most cruel tortures. But I would not recall the past and be Oscar's wife to-day if I could; he would never have made me happy—and yet I loved him with as pure affection as ever burnt upon

the altar of love. I once believed in his truth ; and yet realized only his falsehood—and it is written on a remembered page of memory through all eternity. It is indelibly imprinted on my mind, and is ever fresh in my recollection, and will expire only with life ; though I have struggled so hard to cease to think of him and his infidelity, and tear his false image from my heart. But will the sun forget to shine, or the seasons succeed each other in their turn ?”

“I know, Lenore, it is not easy to efface the deep impression he has made in your heart ;—that must be the work of time ; *tempus odorem rerum*, with God’s assistance, which I hope, will never fail you. And may the grace of God, who has thought proper to send this trouble upon you, continue to support you under this and every other trial, *venenum in auro bibitur*, and *pas tot naufragia patitur*.”

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

## RETRIBUTION.



HE wheels of time rolled on, as they will, regardless of the human hearts beating beneath them—unmindful of the petty rights and wrongs of woman.

I don’t know how it is with my reader, but for myself, I must confess that when interested in the progress of any work, or the development or growth, either in the natural or moral world, I like to let periods of long or shorter duration occur, when I shut them away from my observation, that I may mark with more distinctness, the advance which has been made. A pleasure is often afforded to the mind more impressive than can be derived from the same object, while viewing the slow and imperceptible operations of causes and effects, as they work their steady changes.

It is too much to ask my reader to take an electric leap over two whole years of my moral existence ; to leave our weary planet, with its countless interests ; to roll through the long journey, while we take no notice of its idle whirl. The thing cannot be done except on paper ; but since in this way, great jumps may at times be made, I must be indulged with the experiment.

Two years make a great change, sometimes. It is



long enough, with its whirling speed that now mark every movement, to make us strangers in our lower world, could we let go our hold upon it, and cease to mark the vision, as its changing form melts before our view into other forms and attitudes. We must run fast now, if we would keep up with the world.

Oscar Brandon had engaged the best lawyers he could find, and strenuous efforts were made by his relatives to gather evidence in his favor; although they worked hard and incessantly, the time expired and they had achieved—nothing.

The case had been put off from time to time, and the costs were added and multiplied by hundreds. Finally, the day of trial came, and the court room was crowded to excess. But before the trial was begun, Oscar Brandon came, like a penitent sinner to the seat of mercy, humbly pleading for a compromise. Of course my tender nature could not forbear. How could I be so cruel as to turn a deaf ear to the prayers and entreaties of one of my fellow creatures? How could I bear to stain my soul with his blood? For I feared greatly that if the law was allowed to take its course, the shock would have proved fatal to him. So I yielded to his humble petition and consented to a compromise.

The volcanic fires of revenge were quenched; for I felt that I had my revenge already when I saw the pain that I had given him, and heard of his insane blasphemies. I knew that I had filled up his bowl of agony, even as he had filled up mine, together with his own conscience

which lashed him like so many cat-o'-nine tails. No matter how deep and hardened a villain may be, the most reckless and unscrupulous of the class possesses some conscientious principle within, which acquaints him with the fact, that a point in the moral government of life has certainly been made against him. So was it now with him. It was fearful to contemplate the change which had taken place in his appearance. His countenance manifested an expression of great grief and sorrow; his brow wore a settled gloom; his lips too became tight and firm, and were pressed closely together, whilst his heart smote with grief and boiled with fury. But it is almost impossible to describe the storm of conflicting passions and emotions that jostled and rustled against each other within him, when I consented to the compromise.

After receiving the amount demanded of him, I satisfied my lawyer's demands, and contributed the balance to the benefit of the Orphan's Asylum; feeling perfectly happy at the thought of being of some benefit to the poor and homeless ones.

During these two years my aunt Fibby had grieved until she was nothing more than a dried rawhide. Poor thing, she too had starved herself until she hardly had strength enough to wink her eyes. Her crop that year was very poor, and she could not afford to lay out her money for provisions; though the blessed Lord seemed to smile on her after all; for she sold okra, beans and tomatoes by the quart, and she had collards for dinner, collard for suppers, and collards for breakfast, which she

ate without even a ham bone to flavor them. But when she learned that the breach of promise suit had been compromised, she killed the best rooster on the place; for said she, "we can't afford to have a good dinner every once and a while; he won't be much loss any way, for he has had the epizootic for a week, and I may lose him yet, so I will make safe of him while I have the chance;" and the poor woman flew around to such an extent that she came very near flying off the handle. My aunt Fibby seemed to be in good spirits, until she was informed that Oscar had nearly a thousand dollars cost to pay besides the amount that was paid to the plaintiff. And she uttered many bitter oaths from way down the depths of her heart for the one that had robbed him of his treasures, and her, of her rest and bright anticipations. But poor woman, there was another great trial for her, which almost terminated in a death-stroke, when she was informed that her big boy was actually to be married to Jerusha Pophandle, a poor dressmaker's daughter who lived next door, and the only way she had to earn her living was by her needle.

"Oh!" said she, raging with fury, "I had rather follow you to your grave than to see you marry that little squirt of a Pophandle gal; and I will never recognize her as a daughter in my life."

"Ah! mother," said he, "if you had let me alone, I would have been a happy married man long ago, but you have destroyed my happiness, and now I will do as I please."

It was evident that Oscar Brandon had married this girl through revenge to his mother, for he had become to hate her as he did a snake, and peace and quietness was impossible when they were together under the same roof.

My aunt Fibby and Mrs. Pophandle were not on intimate terms, nor had they been for some time; for my aunt Fibby accused Mrs. Pophandle of poisoning her well, and also her chickens and turkeys, and of killing the best turkey gobbler she had, which she expected to get one dollar and a half for the coming Christmas; but this was an absolute falsehood, as Mrs. Pophandle was a fine old lady, and highly respected by all who knew her. Mrs. Pophandle was not at all pleased with the match, poor as she was; for Oscar Brandon had showed his character in too plain a light. But seeing her helpless condition and believing that he had a pocket full of money, which was a mere delusion, she had consented to the fatal knot, and risked the consequences. Oscar Brandon had a good deal of property in his time; but his money had all very near leaked out of his pocket in spite of the iron fingers that grasped it so tightly; for he had several heavy law-suits previous to this and had lost all. It was true, he had a quantity of poor land, and tried to make a big show when he advertised in the paper:

FOR SALE.—1500 acres of land for sale. Address O. S. Brandon.

And at the same time it was so poor it would not sprout peas if they were soaked in warm water.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE LAST LOOK UPON THE OLD HOMESTEAD.

**W**ILL my kind readers accompany me to take a last look upon the home of my childhood, where eight years have intervened since I visited the dear old spot that was held more and more sacred to my memory? A hundred times had I proposed to go back on a pilgrimage to the home of my early days. yet I had not returned, my heart's strongest attachment was in another place. But the desire to go back revived after a season of affliction and many painful defeats in the great battle of life. The memory of dear childhood grew so palpable, and produced such an earnest longing to revisit old scenes, that I was constrained to turn my face once more toward my early home.

It was one warm morning in May as the sun returned from his long but rapid journey to the distant east, and sailed majestically up through the clear blue sky, that I visited the old homestead, with its climbing vines—a picture which had grown more vivid in my thoughts every year. How earnest was my desire to look upon it again! There was the dear old well with its “moss-covered bucket,” and the deep pure spring in which as I bent to drink, I had so often looked upon my mirrored face; and the broad, flat stone near by where I had sat so many times. I would

### *The Last Look upon the Old Homestead. 243*

sit there again, after tasting the sweet water, and think of by-gone days. The dear brook too, with its murmuring waters, glistening in the bright sunshine, and the river on whose banks I had gathered berries, and wild-flowers, and the old wine-press where I had so often sat and watched the purple current flow.

I could sleep but little for thinking of these things, and when morning broke, and the sun shone out, I went forth, impatient to see the objects which had been so long pictured in my memory. I was eager to reach the old homestead. Finally I came up to the ancient buildings whose architect had long since been called to sleep with his father, and over whose walls time had cast a duller hue.

Is this my old home! No—it cannot be. There is some strange error. Yes—yes, it is—for I see my father's grave-yard—I cannot mistake that, I would know it amid a thousand;—and I see the stump of the old walnut tree where I have played so often beneath its shade, and swung in my rustic grape-vine swing.

I paused sadly to mark the wreck which time had made. The duck-pond in which I had sailed my tiny boat, or watched the ducks sail majestically upon its surface, was dry and over-grown with elder and rank weeds. Ah, me! I cannot make words obedient to my thoughts in giving utterance to the disappointment I then felt. A brief space I stood mournfully over the ruins, and then moved on again—a painful presentiment arising in my heart all would not be as it was in my childhood days—as I

had pictured it in my imagination. The two great sycamores that stood bending together, as with a sense of protection, above that dear home;—where—where were they? My eyes searched for them in vain.

Where is the spring? Surely it is well up here, and this is the way the clear stream flowed! Alas! the spring was dry, and scarcely a trace of its former existence remained. The broad flat stone was buried in sand by the winds of March; the bucket had been broken from the well and it had caved in, leaving the curb standing like a sentinel. Near by was the old kitchen; the doors were hingeless, the windows were broken, the chimney had fallen, and great patches of the roof had been torn away. Around, all was in keeping with this. The garden was covered with weeds, the pailing that once enclosed it, was broken down; and the sweet roses of every hue, from the pure Albion to the dark Damascus; the pinks, some of the most spicy odor; the changeless amaranth; the pale sweet-scented heliotrope, always looking towards the sun; the pure lily, the blue violet, the cardinal, with its rich showy petals, and the proud, vain, and ostentatious, but beautiful, crimson and white peonias, which had been planted and nursed by the hands of my dear mother, were all dead; the old damson plum-tree that I had once loved almost as tenderly as if it had been a human creature, was no more to be seen; and the place where the grape-vine grew, was a pool of green and stagnant water.

My first impulse was to turn and flee from the place, under a painful revulsion of feelings. But I could not

leave the spot thus. For some minutes I stood mournfully leaning on the broken garden-gate, and then forced myself to enter my father's grave-yard. As I drew nearer and nearer the hallowed spot, I was more and more impressed with the fact, that, though change had been working busily all around, His hand had spared the sweet multiflora-vine that was entwined around the grave, and the evergreens, whose graceful branches swept the hallowed dust,—a change had been, but he had lingered only a moment, laying his hand gently, as he paused, on the sacred mound and pressed it onward.

If there were ruins without, there was desolation added to ruins within; but, neither ruin or desolation could entirely obliterate the form so well remembered. I passed on, now pausing to recall an incident, and now hurrying on under a sense of pain, at seeing a place, hallowed in my thoughts by the tenderest associations of my life, thus abandoned to the gnawing tooth of decay. When I passed through the old apple orchard, emotion grew too powerful, and a gush of tears relieved the oppressive weight that lay upon my bosom. There I lingered long, with a kind of mournful pleasure in this scene of my days of innocence, and lived over years of by-gone times.

At last, I turned with sad feelings from the spot which memory had held sacred; but which in its change could be sacred no longer. Material things are called substantial; but it is not so. Change and decay are ever at work upon them; they are unsubstantial. A real substance is the mind with its thoughts and affections. Forms

built there do not decay. How perfectly had I retained in my memory the home of my childhood! Not a leaf had withered, not a flower faded; nothing had fallen under the scythe of time. The greenness and perfection of all were as the mind had received them in childhood. But the loving, trusting childhood is gone now, and why do I dwell upon it? Why does its sensitive life yet move and stir in my memory? Has it aught to do with the cold, dark present? The present!—alas! what a contrast it is to that childish faith! I almost wish that I could now believe as I did then. But, no. Reason and the stern realities of life have dissipated the visions and dreams of childhood. It has made unreal to me that which was most real. In its cold, chilling light I have “looked into the world of tangible facts and possible realities.”

Now, my dear reader, I have given you my sad history, and were this sketch other than faithful to the fact, it would have a far more happy sequel. As it is, the reader must accept the truth, which is stranger and sterner than fiction.

Dear friends, I must bid you adieu; my inclination leads me into a land of strangers. We must part, but the parting will only draw closer the tie that binds us, and may the setting sun and evening star which have so often witnessed our special intimacy pilot me safely to my new and happy home in the West.

Kind and gentle reader, whatever name you bear, I trust you have followed with interest my sad history;

but the “sky is all blue now, and the current smooth, and the gate propitious.” I feel as I ought to lay down my pen for a season, and revel in the bright sunshine, for indeed, it is dazzling.

## FAREWELL TO THE HOME OF MY CHILDHOOD.

Farewell, farewell to the home of my childhood,  
Where first my foot-steps trod,  
Where first I learned to count the stars,  
And hush the name of God.

Farewell, farewell to my dear native home,  
Where my father in his grave is sleeping,  
As the wind moans a gentle dirge,  
While the willow tree is weeping.

Others may pass o'er thy lonely bed,  
And bestow not a thought upon thee;  
Yet thy image in my breast will dwell,  
'Till we meet in the land of the free.

Farewell, beloved relic, no longer I see,  
The place where thy dear form was laid;  
Though presentiment tells me, that ere very long,  
The tall grass will over me wave.

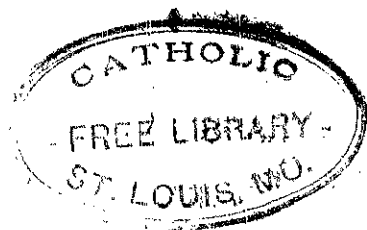
Then who will kneel beside thy grave,  
And pull the grass away,  
And whisper affections from a daughter's tongue,  
When my frame is far away.

Thy grave my tears must cease to moist,  
The flowers must wither and die,  
The wind will mourn a gentle dirge,  
As it sighing passes by.

Now, mother darling, I must say farewell,  
 Though it melts my heart when I bid you adieu,  
 A tumult of woe in my bosom is swelling,  
 While memory sad has her power to renew.

But take me in your arms, dear mother,  
 And let me weep upon your breast;  
 The world to me is cold and cheerless,  
 I am weary, let me rest.

O'er the ruins of home, o'er my heart's desolation,  
 No more shall thou hear me murmur or repine,  
 For death's dark encounter I will make preparation,  
 That when I am gone sweet rest I may find.




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*TO BE SOON PUBLISHED.*

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THE MARRIAGE UPON THE SCAFFOLD. By MISS BELLE PETERSON.

— AND —

POETICAL WORKS. By MISS BELLE PETERSON.

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