

ROGER DEANE'S WORK.

Talcott, Hannah Elizabeth (Bradbury)  
Goodwin

ROGER DEANE'S WORK.

BY

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WRITTEN FOR THE SANITARY FAIR.

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" Oh thou, the earthly author of my blood, —  
Whose youthful spirit, in me regenerate,  
Doth with a twofold vigor lift me up  
To reach at victory above my head, —  
Add proof unto mine armor with thy prayers ;  
And with thy blessings steel my lance's point."

SHAKSPEARE.

Two years ago last April, — I pause to  
count the seasons that have slid away  
since the first sounds of war roused the  
echoes of our New-England hills with a  
crash almost as deafening and surprising  
as if old ocean had forgotten the mandate,  
" Thus far shalt thou come," and his waves  
had swept inland, over meadow and forest,  
country and town, carrying desolation and

Amer. Studies

ruin in their path; — I pause to count the seasons, for we have lived so much more in deeds than in years since the first gun was fired at Sumter, that one can hardly believe only two winters have sifted their snows upon the earth since that well-remembered day, — only three summers have vainly sought to cover with bloom and beauty the hideous stains of blood and devastation which war has left upon our fair land.

Two years ago last April, when the first swallows were twittering under the eaves of a 'thrifty-looking New-England farmhouse, and the old willows that skirted the lane were just putting on their softest tint of green, and the red buds of the maples hung out a promise of cooling shade for the coming summer, — the quiet inmates of the brown farmhouse forgot to look for the footsteps of spring. Roger was at

home, but his presence did not bring, as in former years, joy and gladness to the homestead hearth; — he had not come now for a few days of vacation, but for his mother's farewell blessing. She was a widow; so he choked back the impulse that bade him fly to rescue our flag from dishonor when the news from Sumter startled our land, and bowed his head over books which had suddenly lost their charm; but when New-England men had been shot in Baltimore, he could no longer check the hot blood that leaped in his veins, — blood inherited from Revolutionary heroes, — and, thrusting from his thoughts ambitious hopes and the memory of his mother's widowhood, he had enlisted.

"Oh, Roger, how could you do such a thing?" asked the mild-eyed, sad-voiced mother; and though there was reproof in her tones, there was loving admiration in

her eye, and a gentle caress in the way she lifted the short brown curls from his broad forehead.

"Well, mother, for more than a week I resisted the strong tide of impulse that bade me go, because you were a widow and I your only son; but I could not study and could not think of anything but the insult to our flag and the call for men; and when I read about the shooting of our men in Baltimore, I think the news half crazed and maddened me, for I rushed out and enlisted without waiting for your consent. You will not make it too hard for me to go, mother, nor withhold your blessing now?"

"I will try to make the sacrifice cheerfully."

"But you must not talk or think of sacrifices, mother. Why, I'm sure to come back. You know the boys all say I've a

charmed life, but you've never known of half the hair-breadth escapes I've had. Only last fall I was out gunning, and slipped upon a decayed log in such a way that I fell and my loaded gun discharged, its contents all going through my sleeve and just grazing my arm. I don't believe such stanch old republican blood as I've inherited from the Deanes and Prebbles is to be spilled by rebels."

"I trust that our God will save and return you, Roger; but when I think of the hardships you must endure, and the dangers you must encounter, my heart sinks within me."

"You must think only of the glory and honor of helping protect and preserve our free institutions. And as for the hardships — what are they, mother? Why, camping out for a few weeks in the open air, with a hard couch and plain fare;

but there's many a young man who'd gladly go through it all for the pleasure of trouting and shooting for a few weeks; and I reckon what others can endure for sport, I can for our country's sake. And three months is such a short time too! You'll hardly miss me. Then, you know, there are plenty of people who believe there'll be no fighting at all. We've only got to show the South that we are in earnest, and they'll quickly be on their knees."

"It may be so, Roger. I know there are people, wiser and older than I am, who think we have only to raise an army and threaten an invasion to bring them to terms; but when I remember the harsh and bitter war of words which has been waged so long, I fear the contest will be long and bloody. I think it would have been much better for you to have waited until your

medical studies were completed, and then go as surgeon. But this is no time for the expression of fears or regrets: we must act. When does your regiment leave for Washington?"

"We hope to be off to-morrow; the next day surely."

"Does Alice know that you have enlisted?"

"I've had no time to tell her yet. She had gone to school before I reached home this morning."

Mrs. Deane's last question brought a cloud upon the open, handsome face of her son, and for some minutes both sat in silence. Mother and sisters were dear to Roger, and could not be left without many severe struggles; but he had found, during the last year, a love more holy and sacred than that of kin;—it had crept stealthily into his heart, but once there had taken

root; its buds and blossoms were making fragrant his whole life.

What would Alice say? She was a tender, delicate flower, in calm, sunshiny weather. Now that the storm had burst, would it crush her? Or would she be—

“A reed in calm, in storm a staff unbent!”

“She will say go, mother. There’s the right kind of stuff in Alice to make a woman of; more strength of character behind her girlish, light-hearted ways than people give her credit for.” Roger spoke in a lower, more quiet tone than he had used before. There was veneration and tenderness in his love, and he could not speak of it in the same gay, careless way that he had spoken of the war.

Mrs. Deane did not reply. She had not given Alice much credit for strength of mind or will, but had yielded to the charm of her bright face and winning manners,

glad that Roger had chosen from a good, old family, and never fearing but Alice’s love would in time develop sufficient womanly strength.

“I may as well go over to Squire Harlowe’s and call on Alice. She must be out of school by this time, and I will bring her back to drink tea with us and spend a quiet evening here. Shall I, mother?”

“If you please, Roger.”

Perhaps the young man detected in the sad tones of his mother’s reply a shadow of jealous feeling, for, stooping, he kissed with tender reverence her forehead, and left the room.

It was hard for Mrs. Deane to share, even with Alice, the very few precious hours that Roger could be at home; but her heart was familiar with sacrifices, and summoning her woman’s strength and patience, she busied her hands and thoughts

with making little, loving preparations for Roger's journey and campaign, — and tried to comfort herself with thinking that many a mother had laid upon the altar her only son, and perhaps at this very hour thousands were bending with tearful eyes and clasped hands, asking God to bless the sacrifice. But ah, there were not many sons like Roger: true, tender, manly, and honest; and if the thought caused a pang, it likewise brought a balm, for if Roger must go, what pleasant memories would be left of his love; — and if he should fall! No; the Master, who had called back to life the widow's son at Nain, would watch over Roger; she would not for a moment allow such a fear to throw its black pall over her heart.

And while she was still bending over the knapsack, Alice came, with her hand in Roger's, and though there were traces of

tears on her fair face, there was hope, faith, and courage in her brown eyes.

"Mother, Alice says I've done right." And Alice, not daring to trust her voice, knelt by Roger's mother, taking the work from her hands while she kissed her lips.

But I have no need to paint the scene in that widow's cottage, nor the parting in the gray light of that spring morning, for, alas! there have been many such since then; till now there are few families but have a hero in this war, and few firesides but have a vacant chair.

Roger gone! — and yet the violets and pansies bloom and live; the old apple-trees throw out a fragrant prophecy of autumnal harvests; while the sad-faced Widow Deane moves about her house and garden as in former years, only in her heart there is no answering echo to the glad sound of spring's footsteps. And Alice Harlowe is



always finding an excuse for visiting the cottage. Last year she was so shy and coy, never coming unless Roger or his little sisters came to bring her. Now there is a book or bouquet, or, better still, a letter from Roger, which must be shared with his mother. Ay, what pleasant amusing letters they were; what charming descriptions of country and town; what a jolly thing camp-life was, while May and June were scattering their blossoms on the earth! Certainly, it began to look more serious when the July heats grew stronger and fiercer, and the smell of powder poisoned the breath of summer. But these rebels were pampered slips of aristocracy; when the contending hosts grappled, they would surely shrink away abashed before the strong-limbed, iron-willed farmers and mechanics of the Federal army. They were not buoyed up with the stern justice of their cause as were the stanch

defenders of the Stars and Stripes. This doctrine of States' Rights was a flimsy bulwark, a mere pretence for the protection of slavery;—it would not give them nerve and muscle on the battle-field. So we tried to think; so Alice believed. But Mrs. Deane had lived longer, had pondered many things in her heart. She thought there was much more strength and unity of purpose in the South than we gave them credit for. She was only a woman, timid, shrinking, cowardly, afraid to think of what might happen to Roger. She had not the spirit of the old Roman and Spartan mothers, nor yet of the New-England woman, who wept because she had no son to defend her country's honor. Well, the July days grew sultry and brought with them rumors of skirmishes, which seemed to verify our belief in Southern cowardice;—the rebels were retreating. We could afford to lose a few

such men as Ellsworth and Winthrop when we had a fair prospect of crushing the rebellion so easily.

How many hearts remember that quiet midsummer Sabbath, when mothers, wives, and sisters gathered prayerfully in New England, in blissful ignorance of the fearful carnage on Virginia's soil! Who can ever forget the solemn hush of the week that followed, when the great wheels of business were paralyzed, and the very life-current in human veins seemed frozen with fear, while listening to the horrible details of that Sunday's battle?

What a week of suspense to the anxious, waiting hearts, whose husbands, sons, brothers, and lovers were in that contest!

Mrs. Deane and Alice sat with clasped hands in the summer twilight. It was Saturday evening; and if no word came from Roger that night, they thought hope would

die. But One, whose ear is ever open to the prayer of faith, had heard that lonely mother's earnest pleading and had saved her only son. And while they sat making sickly efforts to cheer each other, Roger's little sister came flying in bearing aloft a letter.

"'T is Roger's handwriting, mother!" she exclaimed; "he must be safe!"

"Yes! thank God! I've been weak and full of fears, or I should have known he was safe. Read it, Alice."

And Alice, brushing away tears that anxiety and suspense had failed to wring from her heart, read:—

"DEAR MOTHER:

"I'm all right, safe. Thank God for me, for I don't know how to thank Him as I ought. I learned a lesson last Sabbath, which all the sermons that were preached in New England could never have taught me. I learned how vain is man's strength unless

directed by Infinite Wisdom. Oh! the horrors of that battle-day! I grow sick and faint now, when I think of the pools of human blood, the ghastly wounds, the panic-stricken men, and the flying horses; — but you must have seen in the papers all these disgusting details, and I will not write them. I cannot tell you how I was saved; I hardly know, for my clothes were pierced with balls, and I received only a little flesh-wound in my arm, which I bandaged with my handkerchief; but I suppose the loss of blood, the heat and exhaustion, all combined, caused me to faint; and 't is a wonder I was not left upon the field. But Peter Riley, God bless his generous Irish heart, (you remember Peter, mother? he made our garden last year); well, Peter saw me fall, and he with another brave fellow carried me off the field to an ambulance; but in the fear and panic of the flight the am-

bulance was left,—the cowardly brutes in charge of it cut the traces and escaped on the horses! Still I recovered from my faint in season to fly with the rest,—God only knows how. When we reached Washington I was only fit for a hospital. But never fear now, mother; I'm doing well and have been up assisting the surgeon all day. He says I've shown remarkable skill in dressing wounds for one who had no experience. He is quite an elderly man, and has been so kind and attentive to me, giving me so much good advice, that I feel as if I had known him for years. He says I was impetuous and foolhardy to rush off as a private as soon as the first war-note sounded, when I might do my country so much better service in the capacity of surgeon. And he says too, that, setting aside the happiness and honor of serving these brave fellows, who have spilled their blood for the cause of

truth and liberty, the experience I shall get as a surgeon will be invaluable to me. He thinks — and I am afraid he is more than half right — that we have got to wade through rivers of blood before our glorious old flag shall again be honored in the disloyal States.

“Dr. Chandler is a Massachusetts man, and he says he can secure for me the post of Assistant-Surgeon, and keep me with him. Now, I want you to think this over, dear mother; and make up your mind to send me off again with your blessing, after I have made you a short visit. You know I shall be saving lives and serving God and my country, and shall have better fare without as much exposure as the rank and file. But I need not press my suit, for I know my mother's heart is loyal, and every American woman must make sacrifices in this hour of peril; and if I should die in the service —

‘No! the brave  
Die never! Being deathless, they but change  
Their country's arms for *more*, their country's heart.’

“But, as I was going to say, if anything should befall me, I should be supported by the glorious hope of a blessed immortality in that kingdom where disloyalty, war, and strife are unknown. Alice — I'm proud of Alice, mother! She has written me such beautiful letters, filled with hope and cheerful courage. What a shield of strength and purity her love will be to me!

‘Love 's a virtue for heroes! as white as the snow on high hills,  
And immortal as every great soul is, that struggles, endures,  
and fulfils.’

“What a boy I am to be quoting poetry, with a bandaged arm and the groans of so many poor suffering fellows ringing in my ears! By the way, mother, I think I've asked a hundred of these wounded, shattered men to-day if they regretted having enlisted in this cause. You should see the light that

flashes in their eyes, and hear the hearty emphasis of their tones, as they reply, 'Never for a moment.' Such patience as they exhibit! no murmurs, nor complaints. My heart is wholly drawn out to them, and my life is at their service. What a long letter I have written. You may expect me home in less than two weeks. Tell my little sisters to prepare for some rare fun in hay-making and berrying. And, dear mother, pray without ceasing for your country and your son.

"Most lovingly yours,

"ROGER S. DEANE."

They were women, Mrs. Deane and Alice; so we will not blame them for shedding a few tears, partly for joy that Roger was safe, and partly because they saw the sacrifices that must be made in the future.

"If his God and his country need him, we must help him buckle on his armor, Alice."

Mrs. Deane's tones were tremulous, but there was submission and holy trust in her face.

"It will be much easier to bid him go as a surgeon than in any other way," Alice replied. But when Roger returned, he insisted that it had cost him the sacrifice of many ambitious hopes to act as a surgeon.

"Because, you see, mother, there is no prospect now of my ever being anything but a surgeon; and one never asks the names of the surgeons that do their work after the battles, but rather what officers commanded in the engagement. I can never be a gallant colonel nor a brave general now, but I can be a faithful patriot and surgeon."

"And an honest man and earnest Christian, Roger. Live so that your religion may be honored."

"God helping me, I will, mother."

August and September came, bringing their deep-hued flowers and mellow fruits, but not to the widow's cottage its wonted cheer and pleasures. True, Roger was at home, and each hour of his stay was precious, but life had suddenly grown a serious thing with him. His laugh was less loud and frequent, and his face seemed to have caught a shadow from the black cloud which hung over our nation;—deeper thought and more serious purpose lighted it, and preparations for his great work had taken the place of those pleasures which had formerly occupied him at this season.

And Alice had laid aside her embroidery and crochet-needle, and coarse gray cloth and red flannel might be seen for a part of each day in her fair hands; and surely, ladies' hands have never looked more fair than when plying the needle upon soldiers' garments. Even Roger's little sisters found

the hemming of 'kerchiefs, stitching of seams, and scraping of lint more interesting than dolls. The terrible reality of war awoke many a heart from a selfish, pleasure-seeking existence to find that there were things of more importance than —

“Crinkling silks that swept about  
The fine dust of most subtle courtesies.”

Many a hand found some real work to do, which before had only cared to show off its jewels. Oh, if our American women had thought less of dress, fashion, and parade, would not their sons have been wiser and nobler men? Would not the selfish, intriguing politicians, who have helped to bring on this cruel war, have been purer, honester statesmen, if they had been cradled and taught by pure-minded, home-loving mothers; if they had been counselled by wives whose adorning was not “the outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of

wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel?" I wish I might say one word which would arrest the eye and claim the serious attention of giddy young girls, — something which would help to make them worthy of bearing the sacred titles of wife and mother; but I know their thoughtless habits so well that I am sure every paragraph which looks serious in this little story will be "skipped."

The husks were pale and rustling on the golden ears of corn when Roger again left home, not for a jolly, free-and-easy campaign in summer weather, but for work, — such work as shows the stuff that men are made of. And Mrs. Deane took up the simple, homely duties of her quiet life, finding time for many more acts of kindness and charity than in former years — for Roger's sake she would have told you; and Alice, for the same reason, bent her pretty

face over "seam, gussets, and band," pricking the blue tints of soldiers' shirts into her white forefinger, — and writing brave, courageous letters to the young surgeon, while she grew pale as the faded forest-leaves over the newspaper reports of skirmishes and battles in the West.

Oh, the ominous hush of that "quiet" winter on the Potomac, and the sickening sound of revelry in our Capital, when silly women rivalled each other in the giving of parties and wearing of jewels, and flirted with shoulder-straps and gilt-buttons; and the waves of life were crested with such muddy foam!

Before the melting of our New-England winter's snows we had grown familiar with the sounds of war; had accepted it as inevitable; and many true hearts were praying that God would bring us from behind its "pillar of cloud and fire," a nation puri-



fied and honored. The pulse of business had again quickened in its great arteries, and life moved on much the same as before our nation paused to pay toll in human blood over the smooth turnpike of our sins. Spring put forth her buds, and —

“Earth smiled up as if she held  
Most honeyed thoughts at heart,”

and had quite forgotten the war-stains of the departed winter. Mrs. Deane and Alice planted their seeds, thinking of Roger's love of flowers, and waited in patient hope the sweet fulfilment of their blossoming.

The Army of the Potomac, as if awakened to new life by the breath of spring, was again in motion. “On to Richmond!” was the battle-cry; and with what eager intentness we watched each step of progress, —our hearts alternately buoyed with hope, or depressed with fear, —until hope seemed almost triumphant, for our great army threat-

ened the very gates of the rebel stronghold. And then — No! we will not live over again that seven days' battle, —we will not roll the stone from the grave of those buried hopes. We will only read an extract from one of Roger's letters.

“HOSPITAL, MALVERN HILL.

“MY DEAR MOTHER:

“I must write you a few lines, because I know how anxiously you will wait.

“We have been again defeated, but our men fought nobly, —better soldiers never gave their lives away, nor sold them at so dear a rate. If we have failed to take Richmond, our attempt to do it has cost the South a fearful price. You can hardly imagine how heartily I thank God for the privilege of helping to alleviate the sufferings of our brave, wounded men. I was upon the field a portion of each day during the long struggle, and several times narrowly escaped being shot.



"I wish I could give you an idea of the desolation which war leaves in its path. Do you remember how that fine old willow, that used to stand by the pasture-bars, looked after it was rent by lightning? Well, many of the grand old oaks and elms are shivered by shells till they look like that willow; fences are laid prostrate, houses are pierced and shattered, the road is strewn with tattered, blue coats, knapsacks, and muskets. On every hand there are blighted crops of clover, corn, and wheat, with here and there a few tender blades looking up piteously toward the summer sky.

"The house, which we are using for a hospital on Malvern Hill, is a quaint, old mansion, built of red brick, and owned by a wealthy slave-holder, I am told. There are still many evidences of wealth, as well as highly cultivated taste clinging to it. It must have been one of Virginia's most beautiful homes before the devastating breath of

war blasted it. From its windows you can see the windings of the James River for several miles. We have here nearly 250 of our Federal soldiers, and only three surgeons beside myself. The patience of the poor, wounded men is wonderful;—their sufferings are greatly aggravated by the intense heat (ranging from 90° to 96° in the shade) and the poisonous effluvia rising from the carcasses of dead horses, which taints the air for miles around. But, dear mother, do not worry about me. I am doing a great work, and God will take care of me. I shall try and write Alice a few lines to-morrow; but every minute, snatched from the bedsides of these poor fellows, even for necessary rest and writing, seems like stealing from them their chances of life. With tenderest love to all,

"I am always your

"ROGER."

"Oh, Alice," exclaimed the widow, after they had read and re-read that precious letter, "if Roger should escape being shot, only to die of fever and exhaustion!"

"Something tells me that God will protect him. And then he always seems to have such an exhaustless store of health and cheerful spirits, that I cannot believe he'll get sick; but if anything should happen to him, Mrs. Deane, I shall fly to him at once."

"My dear, do you not know that 't is almost impossible for women to gain admission to the hospitals? And then, if it were an easy matter to obtain passes, I am sure your father would never allow you to go. You are much too young and good-looking to be so exposed. I know Roger would not wish it."

"Don't let us anticipate trouble; but if Roger should need me, I'm sure my father

will not throw any obstacles in the way of my going to him."

Alice Harlowe was something of a queen in her father's house. She had never known her mother; and being an only child and a very pretty, winning one, it had been her father's pleasure to gratify all her wishes. Even when Roger sued for her love, and 'Squire Harlowe would gladly have dismissed him because of his poverty, Alice's tears conquered the stern lawyer, and forced him to sanction the engagement; — and ever since Roger had been in the army, he had allowed his petted child to spend a part of each day with the widow and her little girls.

But Roger worked bravely through the Peninsula campaign; fought off the fevers which carried so many brave men to their last resting-place. And Dr. Chandler assured Mrs. Deane, in a letter written to allay

her fears,—“Roger has the nerve, strength, and endurance of three common men. He works like a tiger; and the bright, cheerful look which he always wears is better than medicine for his patients. I wish you could see his stern decision when using the knife, and his womanly tenderness when the operation is over. 'Tis my firm belief that more than half the poor fellows who must die —

‘Go proudly on their way with death  
Upon the errand of Almighty God,’

if they can draw their last breath with a hand in his, or resting upon his breast.”

It was natural for Mrs. Deane, being a mother, to shed a few happy tears over such an encomium on her son, — and very becoming in Alice to raise her brown eyes and thank God that she had the warmest place in that man's heart, and ask Him

to make her worthy to walk side by side with his strength and tender purity.

Roger would take no furlough during the July and August heats, though Mrs. Deane and Alice wrote eloquent letters of entreaty. He had but one answer to their appeals: “The memory of the sufferings that I should leave here, which possibly my care might alleviate, would destroy the pleasures of home. Wait until the autumn frosts have broken up the fevers and cooled the air.”

But September brought more to Mrs. Deane and Alice than its bright tints and spicy odors. Another great battle had left its red stains upon the soil of Antietam, and Roger, in his brave, daring efforts to assist the wounded from the field of contest, had been hit by a fragment of shell.

“'Tis not a dangerous wound,” wrote Dr. Chandler, “though I think he will

never have a sound ankle-joint again; and he has suffered so much from loss of blood and inflammation, that he is a mere shadow. It will be so long before he is able to work, and he is so much in need of a woman's care, that I have made arrangements to send him home. He cannot sit up; but I think the fatigue and exposure of travelling upon a litter will be no permanent injury to him. A great deal, in his case, depends upon nursing and freedom from excitement. You may expect him the day after receiving this. I shall send a strong, faithful man in charge of him."

"Each substance of a grief hath twenty shadows  
Which show like grief itself, but are not so."

Mrs. Deane and Alice had now "the substance of a grief" and knew that only the shadows had visited them before; — but faith, "the golden side of Heaven's great shield," came between their hearts and utter

despair; and while they sat exhausted and almost benumbed with sorrow, they remembered that God had tempered their great affliction with mercy, for He had given them the privilege of ministering to Roger's necessities and the hope of his restoration, while to thousands of homes the last week had brought only the message "Shot — dead!"

Roger came — but how unlike his coming in former years. Brought upon a couch over that threshold which his foot had so often pressed in proud consciousness of manly vigor; the bright hue of health gone, and only the flush of fever upon his cheek and in his eye. There were tearful embraces and whispered exclamations of "dear mother" and "my Alice" answered with "my precious son!" and "Oh, Roger!" Hearts have not very abundant language for such meetings. The rest and

quiet of home were so delicious after the bustle of travelling and the horrid din that had preceded it, that soon Roger slept, at first heavily,—the sleep of exhaustion,—and then his slumbers were fitful, broken, and feverish. When the morning broke he was delirious, and no longer knew the features of his mother and his Alice, but continually called upon them to come and remove him from some impending danger. Then he would imagine himself still at work upon the field of Antietam, and would call frantically for help to assist a stricken soldier; for lint and bandages to stop the gushing wounds of another. And then, in tender, soothing tones, that brought tears to the eyes of his attendants, he would say, “Here, my good man, rest your head upon my shoulder for a minute. A message for your mother? God bless her! I’ll take it with a lock of your hair, and tell her you

died as a soldier should! The rebels are flying, did you say? Three cheers for the old flag!” Even ‘Squire Harlowe and the old physician wept when the young man’s delirious and incoherent sentences showed that he thought himself still at work for his country.

I would not dare paint in words the days and nights of anxiety and agonized suspense that followed Roger’s return;—when for weeks his feet seemed already in the dark river, and Mrs. Deane and Alice were always lifting up their hearts in prayer for his young life. Neither would I attempt to picture the deep joy and thankfulness of those two women, when a conscious light once more returned to Roger’s eyes, and the physician gave them leave to hope that with careful nursing he might recover. This war has brought to almost every American family a familiar knowledge of

grief, but very few have known such happiness as came to Mrs. Deane and Alice with the hope of Roger's restoration.

November's clouds, which had seemed so dark and heavy with their freight of sorrow, were now tinged with a soft and mellow light,—and the pale, withered leaves, whose rustlings had seemed like mysterious whisperings of some great coming sorrow, brought now a soothing balm. But there were still days and weeks of painful waiting for Roger, as well as for his friends,—days when the contest between the angels of Life and Death seemed scarcely decided. But Life was victorious, though Roger was barely able to limp about with the help of a crutch when the first spring flowers lifted up their heads in greeting, and the fragrant winds kissed his pale cheeks.

It was one of those warm, bright days in May, when the robins pour forth such

joyous strains of welcome to the buds and flowers, and the very air seems laden with new life and vigor for languid limbs, that Roger sat in a garden-chair under a blossoming apple-tree, and Alice by his side. He had never regained his old bright cheerfulness, and of late had appeared more than usually depressed. The widow and Alice had often attempted to reach the cause of his unnatural sadness, but he had always cautiously baffled their efforts.

Alice, timidly longing to administer balm, thought the fragrant sunny day and cheerful harmony of the out-door world would assist her in persuading him to share his troubles with her.

"You are not happy, Roger."

She spoke in that low, soft voice, which is still as excellent and becoming in woman as it was when Shakspeare wrote.

"No—not as happy as I should be when

I remember how much better my condition is than that of thousands."

"What would you have more?"

"Alice, you torture me! Do you suppose 't is an easy thing for a young man to limp about all his days? An easy thing to sit here, crippled, when my country needs me? But, oh, harder than all," — and here his face was hid by two pale hands, — "to feel that I've no longer the right to ask for your love."

"Why, Roger?" The snowy blossoms that fell from the old tree were scarcely softer than her voice, or sweeter than the perfume of love which clung to it.

"Why? because I was unworthy of such a treasure when I had health and strength to protect it; and now I'm sure your father would never consent to your walking beside a crutch all your life."

Alice was too timid to offer the balm she

would gladly have given. She longed to tell him that his lameness was an honorable badge, which she gloried in; that she was prouder of his crutch than she would be of General McClennan's sword; but she was afraid to trust her voice, and then, perhaps, Roger had grown weary of her love! That thought would freeze her to silence, if nothing else would.

But Roger spoke again. "To think you have been growing dearer and dearer to me all these months, and the conviction slowly fastening itself upon me, that it was only a sister's kind, patient care you were giving me, that you only pitied me because you could never love a poor, lame, sick man, and" —

"If that is true, Alice, you are unworthy of any man's love."

Both started at the words, for they had not heard the approach of 'Squire Harlowe's

feet upon the soft turf. And Alice, forgetful in her grief of Roger's presence and her timid reserve, threw herself in her father's arms, exclaiming,—

“Oh, father, it is not true. I never loved him half as well as I do now, and I should be so miserable without him, and he needs me so much, and”—

“Hush, child; you've given us reasons enough. I trust Roger is satisfied. I am. Be kind and gentle to her, young man, and God bless you both.”

And here he tried to put Alice back upon her seat, but she clung to him and hid her wet face upon his shoulder; and Roger, seizing one of his hands, poured forth a volley of incoherent thanks; and the robins set up a jubilant chorus of congratulation. The whole scene was very embarrassing to the stern lawyer, the muscles of whose face had been trained to such rigid composure; and

when he did speak it was in a voice so husky that his brother-lawyers would never have recognized it.

“Take good care of her, Roger, and never mind your lameness. I have only a few suggestions to make:—first, that you should begin housekeeping without any unnecessary delay; that you should take me as a boarder; and that you should think no more of your country's need at present. Open an office in our thriving village, and you will find enough to do for suffering humanity.”

Here I must let fall the curtain, although I would like to tell you how quickly love and hope chased the shadows from Roger's heart,—how many channels he found for his patriotism and charity to flow through, even though his ankle prevented him from serving in the army,—how poor, stricken soldiers still reverently whisper his name in prayer.



I would like to tell you how calmly contented and happy is the Widow Deane,—how pretty Alice looked in white silk with orange blossoms,—how sweet the sound of Roger's cane upon the floor is to her wifely ears,—what quantities of blue and red flannel assume shape and comeliness in her fair hands,—and how, while she works,—

“ A song of glory hovers round the work  
Like rainbow round a fountain.”