

A SPRAY FROM LUCERNE.

BY

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A SPRAY FROM LUCERNE.

"You should have seen that long hill-range,
With gaps of brightness riven,
How through each pass and hollow streamed
The purpling lights of heaven ;
Rivers of gold-mist flowing down,
From far celestial fountains,
The great sun flaming through the rifts,
Beyond the wall of mountains."

WHITTIER.

"If I comprehend our driver's *patois*, Aunt Linda, we must reach Lucerne in another hour, and you have borne your pain so bravely, I'm sure your courage will reach to our journey's end."

"I do not mind it so much for myself as for you. Two ladies crowded and cramped to make room for my poor ankle, and Mr. Simmons forced to sit with the driver!"

"Oh! I dare say Horace likes that seat best. He can enjoy the scenery and his cigar at the same time, and not feel obliged to make himself agreeable to us," answered the amiable wife of the gentleman whose cigar fumes floating back, spoiled the aromatic breath of the sweet ferns and pines.

"It is such a misfortune for all of us," uttered with a sigh and a groan, both of which were the fruits of pain, as any one who knew Mrs. Larrabee would aver; she was not given to sighing, or any other outward manifestations of grief.

"It may prove a blessing in disguise, Aunt Linda; we are all needing rest, and your accident will oblige us to take it." If Grace Maltby's words were common-place, there was soothing music in the tones, but her aunt's nerves had been so ruthlessly jarred, they could not at once accept the tuneful healing.

"Even if it is only a sprain, I may be obliged to stay at Lucerne a month! It was such an awkward thing to do! I really believe if some one would scold and fret about it, I could bear the pain more heroically."

"Indeed, it's a pity you shouldn't have every solace within our reach, Mrs. Larrabee! What could have tempted you to scramble up that hill in advance of your party and the carriage? And then like a sentimental girl of sixteen rather than a sensible woman of forty, you must needs climb the bank for a flower! You might have known both stones and turf would be treacherous after such a fall of rain! There's your scolding."

"But the flower was our own clematis; and how could I know the stones were wet and loose? Besides such a bouquet as this repays one for bruises and pains," and then despite the suffering of one and the anxious concern of the others, the three ladies laughed merrily at sight of the wilted bunch of clematis, heather, blue hare-bells, and wild pansies, which had been the innocent cause of so much pain; and Grace Maltby, thinking only of diversion for her aunt, quoted, —

"And deep in the moss gleamed the delicate shells,
And the dew lingered fresh in the heavy hare-bells,
The large violet burned, the campanula blue,
And autumn's own flower, the saffron, peered through,
The wild rhododendrons and thick sassafras;
And fragrant with thyme was the delicate grass;
And high up, and higher, and highest of all,
The phantom of snow!"

Mrs. Larrabee and her niece, Grace Maltby, were making the "grand tour" alone, but for economy's sake had taken a post-chaise in company with Mr. and Mrs. Simmons, to cross the Brünig Pass from Interlaken to Lucerne. And the ladies choosing to walk when the ascent was most steep and difficult for their horses, and Mrs. Larrabee, clambering up ragged banks and crumbling rocks for the delicate wild-flowers, slipped — and was a sprained ankle the only fruit?

The tower and spires of Lucerne, its noble mountain heights, mirrored in the Lake, and the hoary head of Rhigi, like a grim sentinel overlooking all, were a welcome sight to the party, and even Mrs. Larrabee lost for the while her consciousness of physical suffering, as the magnificent landscape, glowing with sunset flushes, burst upon their view.

"Aunt Linda, we'll find a room whose windows shall command a view of this lovely lake and these mountains, and then if you are obliged to rest here for a month, there will be amusement enough in studying the scenery." This was said in a cheery voice just as the carriage drew up before the Bellevue House.

"You are always looking at the sunny side, and for your sake I will try to make the best use of our detention. Now, if you can make the porter understand that a chair must be brought to the carriage, and that two strong men must carry me to a sunny room, that has a cheerful out-look" —

"Just be quiet and not try to move, or even to think for yourself, and Mr. Simmons and I will manage everything for your comfort."

And thanks to Miss Maltby's excellently spoken French, and Mr. Simmons' American energy and yellow Napoleons, a cheerful room with a lake-side

view was secured, and, considering the slow pulsation of European life, Mrs. Larrabee, very soon after the arrival of the carriage, found herself on a couch, and under the skilful Dr. Steiger's hands.

"Only a bad sprain and a lacerated muscle, Madam, but absolute quiet will be necessary, and strict compliance with my directions;" this was the physician's slowly pronounced judgment after a careful examination of the injured ankle.

"How long shall I be a prisoner?"

"That depends on your obedience and this young lady's nursing. We'll hope a couple of weeks will make you all right." But strictest attendance on Dr. Steiger's part, combined with tenderest care from Miss Maltby, did not find Mrs. Larrabee able to move in two weeks, nor even in four.

Their travelling companions lingered at Lucerne nearly a week, until boating and mountain picnicking had become monotonous, and then departed to finish the Alps after the fashion of tourists. Grace Maltby was more than willing to assume the undivided cares, and bent all the resources of her sweet healthful nature to the task of nursing and amusing her aunt; and the sunshine and the

scenery were powerful auxiliaries, as she had predicted.

The invalid's couch was daily wheeled to the windows that she might watch the varying effect of light and shadow upon the landscape — the departure and return of the little steamers, whose decks were crowded with indefatigable English and American tourists, bound for Weggis and Mt. Rhigi, Flüelen, Altorf, and the Bay of Uri; and sometimes, as a reward for her patient waiting, Mt. Pilatus unveiled his head, and made clearer to her finite vision the purity and infinitude of that love, which is likened to encircling mountains, and such rocks as those gray pinnacles which pierced the clouds.

"I believe travellers make grave mistakes, Aunt Linda, in trying to see so much territory," Grace said one evening, when they had silently watched the shadows creeping stealthily over mountains and Lake. "Now, if we had remained no longer than most people do, we might not have seen old Pilatus once, and we certainly should not have become familiar with the wonderful changes wrought by the rising and setting sun, and the charming effects of clouds."

"You are very thoughtful and cheerful, my dear

Grace, always showing me the bright side of our misfortune. But I cannot forget that my awkward fall will prevent you from seeing many portions of Switzerland that were in our programme."

"Let us never mention the fall again, or if we do, only as a reminder of the old adage, 'Man proposes, and God disposes.' I am more than content with what I've already seen, and there is some new charm for me every day here. Look at the pinkish purple clouds, which are winding in and out amongst the gray peaks; and then, as if not satisfied with their home on those glorious heights, they make the water blush and glow with their mirrored beauty. Oh! it is all too fair and lovely for words, but it sinks down deep into my heart."

They gazed in silence until the purple light slowly faded from the skies and lake, and then the elder lady spoke: —

"The study of this landscape from my window sometimes quite reconciles me to our detention, and sometimes fills me with a strange peace. It never wears the same aspect; but, like God's mercies, is new every morning and fresh every evening."

Grace gave an appreciative clasp to her aunt's hand, and then ringing for lights, took up the book

she was reading, when the sunset glories proved more absorbing. It was a small Tauchnitz edition of "Vèra," and the girl smiling and hesitating said, "I have an emotion of half shame or guilt when I touch this book, Aunt Linda, and I'm going to tell you why. When we were in the parlor of that wretched inn at the Grindelwald, I chanced to pick it up from the table, and turning to the fly-leaf, I read this sentence written with a pencil, 'Left by Somebody for Anybody,' and without a moment's thought, I instantly appropriated the book."

"And have fancied the act a petty theft ever since?"

"Almost—and yet I think the selfishness of the act its worst feature. Of course, I reason that the book was left for me as definitely as for any one; that after reading it, I can leave it upon some hotel table for the benefit of another, but then comes back the remembrance that I seized it and thrust it into my bag when no one was looking; I did not give the others a fair chance, and I concealed the possession of it from you, until our necessities obliged me to bring it forth."

"Only one of the party could appropriate it, and the others impressed me as persons who would not appreciate "Vèra." I'm sorry if the slightest

shadow rests upon your conscience, but I'm grateful to the stranger who left that temptation in your path. The book has been full of sweetness and consolation for an invalid. Let me look at the writing, please."

Miss Maltby brought the book and knelt down by the couch, and both ladies scanned attentively the sentence.

"A strong masculine hand wrote that, and strength, delicacy, modesty, and generosity are the dominant elements of his character."

"You are the boldest clairvoyant, Auntie, in all Europe. Tell me how you draw such astonishing inferences."

"You will notice, in the first place, he used a nicely pointed pencil, and cut his letters neatly and firmly — there you see delicacy and strength; his modesty shows in the concealment of his name; his generosity in leaving the book for the use of a fellow-traveller; he might have exchanged it, as is the habit of tourists."

Miss Maltby laughingly declared her aunt a magician, and added, —

"If the mysterious Somebody who left the book should reveal himself, and we should find him possessed of the traits you ascribe to him, I shall

fancy you are a direct descendant of the Witch of Endor," and then, after a minute's thought, she asked:—

"Have trifles sometimes seemed to you freighted with a deeper significance than intrinsically belongs to them?"

"I have noticed this, that a seeming accident and a trifling act are often made the rounds of the ladder by which we ascend."

"Aunt Linda, I cannot touch this book without fancying that in some way the finding of it will be one of the rounds to the ladder of which you spoke. If it only leaves on my life a faint color of Vèra's faith and purity, and the Princess's beautiful religion, it will have wrought a good work."

"The possible stands by us ever fresh,
Fairer than aught which any life hath owned,
And makes divine amends,"

Mrs. Larrabee repeated softly, and in her eyes there was a calm, trustful light, which assured the beholder that her soul had received divine amends for her life's losses.

"I think you may wash your conscience of all stain as regards the book, by your patient reading of it to me, and possibly its pure lessons would not have fallen upon more gratefully receptive soil

than our hearts, if some other person had appropriated it. Can you finish it to-night?"

"Easily, in half an hour."

The reading was resumed, but often interrupted by an amiable and intelligent discussion of the book's merits; and thus the days of their detention were sown with seeds, which would perhaps burst into bloom, and enrich other lives.

The Sabbath dawned in beautiful Lucerne, as calmly bright as when our fair earth first awoke beneath his smile who pronounced it good. And George Herbert would have seen in it new reasons for affirming that,

"Sundays the pillars are
On which heaven's palace arched lies."

Miss Maltby, leaving her aunt with a book and the window for companions, went out to find an English church service. The streets were filled with strange sights and sounds for a girl, accustomed to the hush and decorum of a New England Sabbath.

Venders of fruits, confections, meats, and in fact all sorts of merchandise, temptingly or repellantly displayed, were busy at their stalls; women with bare feet and hard, tanned faces, dragged

their carts of milk, vegetables, or fish, often sharing their burdens with dogs rudely harnessed to the carts; young girls in quaint costumes, whose faces were not quite so worn and hopeless as those of the middle-aged women, were at work in the vineyards and fields; while others were bringing in their boats laden with fruits and vegetables from the small arable niches which were crowded between the rugged crags overhanging the lake; peasants in holiday attire, their hats bedecked with wild-flowers, smoked, and sipped their wine and beer, and ate their brown bread and cheese, sitting on rude benches by the wayside; graceful little shallops slipped from their moorings, bearing pleasure-seekers to and fro upon the silver-crested waves; the small steamers came and went, their decks crowded with those who were too intent on seeing the Alps to give an hour of quiet thank offering to Him who weighed them in his balance; old men and women, bent and rheumatic, and beggars of all ages, making capital of their repulsive deformities, followed Miss Maltby, supplicating alms, even to the church door; and all this hopeless poverty and desecration of the Sabbath under the shadow of God's most glorious creations, where it would seem man's nature should approach nearer

the Divine, because of the lavish beauty and noble majesty of his surroundings.

Miss Maltby's thoughts were so busy in trying to bring this muddy current of human life into some shadowy kinship with the glorious lake and everlasting hills which were the natural birth-right of these countrymen of Tell's, that she went mechanically through the service, scarcely noting who officiated, until the text, uttered in a musically clear bass voice arrested her attention, and then she recognized with a blush of pleasant emotion, a young American, whom she had met upon the Rhine, and again at Geneva. She knew now that the prayers and hymns had been read by a gray-haired English clergyman, but the text, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time," fell from the young man's lips with such a delicate mingling of authority and persuasion as to give Paul's exhortation new significance and power.

He spoke of the dignity and beauty of the Christian faith which enabled its possessor to walk wisely, and so to bear himself toward them who are without, that they might recognize and strive to obtain the uplifting influence, and he dwelt with great earnestness on the necessity of seizing every

minute occasion for the exercise of Christian charity, for doing good unto all men, and thus redeeming the time.

"It was such an impressive sermon," Miss Maltby said in reply to her aunt's questions, while she laid aside her hat and mantle. "It almost seemed as if the minister knew all about my longing for something to do, and wrote that sermon expressly to show me that I must not wait for great opportunities, but redeem each day by the faithful performance of its humblest duties." And then she quoted the text, and gave her aunt an epitome of the sermon.

"It would be singular if your life should receive a new impulse from a stranger's chance sermon," Mrs. Larrabee remarked after noting the deep seriousness in Miss Maltby's eyes, and I may as well say here that Grace had fine eyes; they were large and dark, soft and changeable in expression, and their effect was enhanced by rich masses of light curling hair, worn in a simple becoming style, as unlike the artificial fashion of the day as a blue violet is unlike the passion-flower of conservatories. Perhaps Miss Maltby was a trifle longer in folding her mantle and disposing of her hat and gloves than neatness required, and when she turned to-

ward her aunt, there might have been a slight increase of the delicate color in her face, which was always paling and flushing, and in her voice an undertone of something not revealed in her words.

"Aunt Linda, the minister was not quite a stranger; — you remember the Mr. Hilliard whom we met on the Rhine?"

"Very well; somehow that river seemed to catch a rhythm from his well-timed quotations, and again when we chanced to meet at Geneva, his knowledge of Lake Lemman's poetry did not lessen its charms. Perhaps his coming will be another reason for contentment with our detention here."

"If I can only learn how to redeem my life from its monotonous common-placeness, I shall count Mr. Hilliard's sermon as another round in the ladder of which we were speaking last evening. Can you tell me, Aunt Linda, what a girl of only ordinary education and but \$1,200 a year can do to redeem the time?"

"What do you understand the Apostle's injunction to mean?"

"Until this morning I supposed it meant the performance of some great charity; some act of heroism or self-denial; to be the leader in a benevolent enterprise; to write a book, or to do

something so that one's days shall not be all alike."

"When Paul wrote to the saints which were at Colosse, enjoining upon them the text you have quoted, he could not have expected them to wait for great opportunities. The saints of those days were not rich in this world's goods; they could not build model lodging-houses for their poor, nor erect elegant churches, nor endow colleges. I doubt if Paul expected one of the sisters to write a book, or even an epistle, and I think we have positive evidence that he wouldn't have regarded a political career, or public lecturing, as walking in wisdom. You ask what a girl of your small means can do, and I answer, —

"The wise and true
Crave not for lofty tasks, but turn the small
To greatness by the great heart doing all
For God.'"

"If I had parents, brothers and sisters, or poor relatives to whom I could be useful, I think I could 'turn the small to greatness' by lovingly and faithfully serving them. But I'm so alone in the world, and my income will not allow me to give generously, and I haven't any particular gift that can be made useful," —

"Excepting a remarkable tact for nursing," in-

errupted Mrs. Larrabee. "You forget how necessary you have been to me since my home has been desolate; how many hearts have been cheered by your sweet voice, and how helpful and courageous you have been whenever occasion offered. You know Pascal says: 'The power of a man's virtue should not be measured by his special efforts, but by his ordinary doing.' You will find work enough in God's good time."

After a short period of silence, which both ladies occupied in reading, though Miss Maltby's eyes had often wandered to the window as if in search of an answer to her thoughts, she said: —

"Aunt Linda, Mr. Hilliard asked if he might call on you this evening."

"Then you have spoken with him?"

"Yes; he is a friend of the lady who sits next me at table, the lively little Mrs. Sage; we were walking back from the service, when Mr. Hilliard overtook us. He came last evening and is stopping at our hotel." Miss Maltby did not speak with her usual graceful spontaneity, and Mrs. Larrabee's quick ear noticed the slight hesitation, but she only said: —

"You may ask Mrs. Sage to bring her friend to see me. I am hoping Dr. Steiger will allow me

to walk as far as the parlor before the close of another week."

After that Sabbath morning's sermon, and the evening call, when Mr. Hilliard manifested such delicate concern for the invalid, and made an hour so short by his agreeable talk, the days of slow healing, and patient waiting for Mrs. Larrabee and her niece, received a new element of grace. The young clergyman conversed with remarkable fluency; he had a rare knowledge of history, poetry, and art to draw from, and he also possessed that rarer tact of never permitting his superior culture to seem obtrusive or dogmatic. His polite deference to the opinions of others encouraged an interchange of thought, and Miss Maltby often found herself talking with a freedom belonging to an acquaintance of years rather than of weeks.

Not a day passed after Dr. Steiger's permission was gained for Mrs. Larrabee to leave her couch, that a drive was not considered essential to her continued improvement by her newly made friends, and there were plenty of charming excursions planned with most benevolent intentions.

If Mr. Hilliard was drawn to Lucerne only by a desire to become acquainted with its wonderful beauty, he must have been a more painstaking ex-

plorer than are Americans usually, for he seemed in no haste to depart. Indeed, there were some books which he fancied could be read only here with a true comprehension of their meaning, and with illustrations from nature, — such, for example, as Schiller's "William Tell," and Owen Meredith's "Lucille" — not that a knowledge of these poems was necessary in the preparation of sermons; they were simply graceful blossoms, whose fragrance would steal over the deeper and broader fields of thought. He might have regarded a prolonged stay under the shadow of these mountains as essential to a right understanding of the prophet's exclamation, "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace," and where beside could a Biblical student learn so well, why God's love and care are symbolled by mountains and mighty rocks? — why He chose to commune with his servants upon solitary heights — why Mt. Sinai received such honor — and why his most favored servant was taken to the summit of Mt. Nebo for his burial.

And if Miss Maltby saw new beauty in poetry; if the landscape wore a more subtle and delicate charm since the coming of Mr. Hilliard; if

the breath of ripening grapes and the mist upon the hills seemed like the incense and the wings of prayer, — the fact was scarcely recognized, and if placed before her in the ordinary language of mortals, would have been denied.

This party of four, thrown together by seeming accident, but mutually attracted by similarity of tastes and pursuits, explored the lake and mountain scenery, and drifted contentedly upon the full tide of beauty and gladness, which summer had poured upon this Alpine district. Not a woodland path or mountain chalet but had some charm especially its own, making it worthy a visit. Nowhere else did flowers bloom so lavishly, and Grace had a most natural wish to preserve floral mementos of this holiday; and fortunately one of the young clergyman's many accomplishments was a knowledge of botany. Flowers gathered, analyzed, and pressed under such favoring circumstances, would take with them to her American home something besides color and form; and more than the sweet, intangible breath of summer. It was no marvel that to Grace the whole world looked —

“One great, loving thought,
Written in hieroglyphs of bud and bloom!”

CHAPTER II.

“I opened the doors of my heart, and behold!
There was music within and a song;
And echoes did feed on the sweetness,
Repeating it long.” — JEAN INGELow.

“MR. HILLIARD removes all obstacles to our enjoyment with such care and skill, that I'm constantly wondering what talisman he carries. Can you tell me, Grace?” asked Mrs. Larrabee, on their return from a visit to the ruined castle in Küssnacht.

“Only kind thoughtfulness for every one's pleasure but his own,” answered Miss Maltby, with assumed carelessness of tone, not raising her eyes from the arranging of her ferns and mosses.

“There are few men, no matter how kind their impulses, who could secure without noisy words so many comforts as Mr. Hilliard does; for instance, the chair in which I was carried to the ruins to-day was so easy, and was borne so steadily and carefully by the men, that after the first five minutes, I gave my eyes and thoughts to the charming

landscape, forgetting that a false step might precipitate me into the lake. And when we reached the ruins, what a pleasant surprise to find that a servant had preceded us with everything which could make a picnic enjoyable. You must have observed he always secures the best horses and carriage, and our guides always seem more intelligent and obliging, if they are selected by Mr. Hilliard, and the charm of his management is that he appears unconscious of doing anything remarkable."

"Mr. Hilliard speaks both German and French fluently, and that may be one reason why he secures so quietly whatever he needs. And perhaps the people who serve him recognize a masterful, intelligent, and withal generous strength in him which makes obedience natural, and service pleasant," Grace replied, still toying with her woodland treasures, while the wavering color in her fair face betrayed an interest, which her averted eyes and indifferent tones attempted to conceal; and Mrs. Larrabee, with woman's quick perception, read the first syllables of the old story in her niece's fitful blushes; and as if willing to give it emphasis, quoted from one of her favorite poems:—

"Yes, I have often noticed he has —

"A mouth for mastery and manful work,
A certain brooding sweetness in the eyes,
A brow the harbor of grave thought.'"

And she might have added, a voice revealing manly integrity, culture, and innate refinement.

"Aunt Linda, how much longer shall we be detained here?"

"Dr. Steiger says I may safely leave on Monday next, — only three days more, — and I have learned to love Lucerne so tenderly, that I shall say good-by with a great sigh of regret. Grace, Mr. Hilliard has asked me if he may accompany us to Geneva. What answer shall I make?"

Miss Maltby raised her eyes for a moment to her aunt's face, but her glance of surprised inquiry was changed to blushing consciousness, and she answered stammeringly:—

"It is your right to select our travelling companions, Aunt Linda. Mr. Hilliard is always agreeable." And there the subject was dropped. Mrs. Larrabee did not choose to tell her niece what she knew of the clergyman's reasons for lingering a month in Lucerne, and not until that day had Grace acknowledged to herself that Alpine flowers gathered without Mr. Hilliard's aid would lack half their sweetness; that the scenery had

worn new grace and grandeur since his coming, and that her own life had been enriched and stimulated to nobler uses by his words. But that the clergyman had found in her more than a pleasant companion for holiday rambles she did not suspect, until the expression of her aunt's face, coupled with Mr. Hilliard's request, roused her unquestioning heart.

And then she remembered his careful shielding of her from fatigue and exposure, during their long walks and mule-back excursions; his evident pleasure in securing for her some coveted trifle; his delicate attempts to draw out her thoughts on whatever was the theme of conversation, and his deferential listening to her lightest word. And, it must be confessed, these memories gave birth to a timid hope, which lent her eyes a soft, gladsome light, and her manner a sweet humility very becoming; and other eyes than Mrs. Larrabee's discovered the added charm, when she reappeared in her aunt's parlor.

"We are trying to decide on an excursion for to-morrow," said Mrs. Sage, "and I want to spend it on the Lake. What is your wish, Miss Maltby?"

"To join the party in any excursion that will

leave pleasant memories. You know it will be our farewell of Lucerne."

"Then let us give the honor of our farewell to the Lake; and we will not spoil the sentiment and grace of the excursion by making it on a steamer. We'll have a small sail-boat, if that will be as agreeable to Mrs. Larrabee," added Mr. Hilliard; but he looked in Miss Maltby's eyes for his answer.

"If Aunt Linda can overcome her prejudice against boating, I think it will be delightful to drift close up to the feet of the mountains, and halt wherever we fancy."

"If we could be sure of a calm day, I would not object to the small boat; but there's so much danger of sudden squalls and capsizing, and my sprained ankle has made me such a coward" —

"You'll bury your fears fathoms deep in the Lake, before you've sailed half an hour with the two oarsmen whom I will secure; they know every rock, inlet, and cape of the coast, and can scent the coming squall as far as a war-horse the battle."

"You shall have the seat of honor, and Mr. Hilliard shall read us Schiller's descriptions of the scenery; and I will take along some book that shall serve as ballast, when poetry carries too

much sail. Can I find anything readable on your table?" And Mrs. Sage turned to examine the few books, while the others made plans for the morrow's pleasure.

"'Vèra'! — What an odd title for a book," exclaimed the lady. "Is it worth reading?" and then before an answer could be made, she read aloud the sentence, penciled on its fly-leaf, — "Left by Somebody for Anybody." "How strange! Where was it left, and who was the finder?"

"I found it at Grindelwald, and claimed it for my own," answered Grace, with an appealing look toward Mr. Hilliard, who seemed not only somewhat startled, but conscious and amused.

"What presumption! The book shall belong henceforth to me; or, at least, I will read it, and then leave it for 'anybody' whose conscience permits him to appropriate it. But you haven't told me if 'tis worth reading?"

"We found it very entertaining, and liked both its style and spirit," Mrs. Larrabee answered. "And more than once I've wanted to thank the author for its charming lessons of patience and courage; and if I could meet the Somebody who left it, I should tell him what his generosity has done for us."

"Perhaps generous emotion had nothing to do with Somebody's motives, in leaving the book," suggested Mr. Hilliard, and Mrs. Sage added, —

"Most likely his valise and shawl-straps were full and overflowing, and the book no longer of use to him."

"That sentence, bequeathing 'Vèra' to Anybody, might have been idly and thoughtlessly written, while waiting for his dinner," said Grace.

"No. Whoever wrote those words does nothing without a purpose," Mrs. Larrabee affirmed, with more than usual emphasis. "And, moreover, I'm quite certain, he is a Somebody whose friendship is worth having."

"You must know Aunt Linda has almost a clairvoyant gift, in discerning a person's character in his handwriting, and I have great faith in her skill."

"I hope your faith will not be less, when you know him better, who left that book," Mr. Hilliard said. And his eyes, bent upon Miss Maltby's face, conveyed a deeper meaning than his words.

"Do you mean to affirm, Eugene Hilliard, that you are the mysterious Somebody we've been discussing?" exclaimed Mrs. Sage.

"I believe the waif 'Vèra' was once mine, and

left by me at Grindelwald; and I'm delighted to know it has met such appreciative readers. I wrote that sentence, with a prayer that the book might serve as a stepping-stone for some one."

Mrs. Larrabee quietly held out her hand, and while she uttered not a word, the smile that accompanied the act assured Mr. Hilliard that he had gained a friend; but when he raised his eyes to read in Miss Maltby's face an approval of the compact, she had turned from them, and was studying the landscape as intently as if she sought that light "which never yet was seen on land or sea."

If ever the "Lake of the four Cantons" looked proudly conscious of its own loveliness, it was when our little party trusted their frail bark to her mercy. Never did the mountains seem so near akin to heaven, as when, with softened grandeur, they were reflected from the Lake, while flocks of fleecy clouds seemed indigenous to its clear depths. Never did the pink fox-glove bend more coquettishly from her rugged home in the gray rocks, than when she saw her face in this mirror of nature. The purple heather and blue gentian smiled and nodded in the sunshine, and the mountain ash flung out its clusters of scarlet berries in such prodigal profusion, that you could almost

fancy some niggardly fir-tree — whose head was bald, and whose branches were bent beneath the snows of many winters — was hoarsely calling, — "To what purpose is this waste?"

Now, as this "working-day world is full of briars," and events rarely do sail smoothly on without meeting breakers, sand-bars, and contrary forces too numerous for mention; these summer friends of ours really ought to have encountered one of those spasms of wrath, which gather around the head of Mount Pilatus, and bursting suddenly upon the Lake, whip its waves into white passion, their little shallop *ought* to have been capsized, — the ladies saved by Hilliard from drowning only by reason of his superhuman strength. But, no! the elements were in holiday temper, and threw no hindrances in the way of our tourists, who enjoyed without stint or measure the gracious beauty spread out around them. They went ashore for their lunch, just where the jutting rocks formed natural terraces, and a fir-tree, more generous than its neighbors, threw a canopy of green boughs over a carpet of soft mosses.

And while they partook gratefully of those viands which refresh the body, heavenly manna scattered by invisible hands stole silently into their

hearts. Books were discussed, poetry quoted, and Mrs. Larrabee, after much gentle persuasion from her niece, and many earnest entreaties from her friends, recited some lines, which had fallen from her pen in rhythmic numbers one summer day when the Lake of Lucerne sat for its picture. In a low, tuneful voice, quite in harmony with the gently breaking waves and the music of the forest, she repeated:—

“O, fair Lucerne, thy waters make
A mirror for proud Rhigi's face ;
And clouds their purple glory take
From heavenly heights to lend thee grace ;
Then on thy softly blushing breast
In golden silence calmly rest,
As infant to its mother pressed !

“Upon thy waves the lily white,
In summer sunshine idly dreams ;
The hare-bell bends to catch the light,
That on thy crystal bosom gleams ;
The brown-eyed pansy lifts her head
From off the tender mosses' bed,
On thee her incense sweet to shed.

“Fringes of modest, graceful ferns
Creep closely to thy silver brim ;
The columbine her coy face turns,
From sheltering rocks so gray and grim,
And looks, with fondly wistful eyes,
Into thy depths, where mirrored lies
The sunset amber of the skies.

“The tasseled larch and tuneful pine,
Their shade and music freely give ;
And flowering shrub and trailing vine
Beside thee are content to live ;
From heights where snows eternal sleep,
With joyous shout the glad streams leap,
A carnival with thee to keep.

“Around thee hoary mountains stand,
Guarding thine everlasting dower
Of beauty from profaning hand,
And telling always of God's power,
His majesty and holiness, —
And while thy waves their feet caress,
Thy gentler mission is to bless !”

“Amen !” responded Hilliard, with deepest reverence of tone and look. “And blessings on her who has stolen some threads from Nature's loom to weave for us a holiday ribbon.” And then a thoughtful silence fell upon the group, who sat watching the lake and the boats that glided phantom-like upon its surface. Mrs. Sage broke the silence with an abrupt question.

“Eugene Hilliard, what made you a minister ?”

“Such sights and sounds as meet us at every turning in this world,” answered the young man.

“But I want a sensible reason for your lack of ambition. Your father was an eminent lawyer and politician ; your uncles have held high offices, and your brother Stanley is adding honor to your old

family name. What is the secret of your content in a small country parish, and with a salary that will barely afford the decencies of life?"

"Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my disciples, ye did it unto me," quoted Eugene Hilliard. "The secret of my content is, that Christ accepts my poor service and blesses it; that He called me when I first reached out my hand for the honors and riches of this world, and said, 'Go, publish the glad tidings.'"

"But you might be a rector in New York, where thousands would listen to you instead of hundreds, where your talents would be appreciated, and would open the doors of cultivated and refined circles for you."

"To the poor the Gospel was especially sent, and some one must minister to those who live in the by-places. My parish is not so far from the great cities that we cannot hear the whirr and buzz of civilization. I have the satisfaction of knowing that the hearts of the people are turned toward me, that the children love me; in fine, my labor brings its own exceeding rich reward," and while Mrs. Larrabee ventured to express in words her approval of his mission, Mr. Hilliard gathered from Grace Maltby's face such commendation as would

sweeten labor. The long, level shafts of golden light, which shot under the hanging branches, bade our friends make preparation for their evening sail; and gathering up books, baskets, and shawls, the two matrons were soon seated in the boat. Miss Maltby, standing upon the lake's brim, waiting to be helped to her seat in the boat, missed the ribbon and locket, which she had worn, and, with an exclamation of regret, sprang lightly back over the rocks to search for it. After a minute's hesitation, Hilliard followed.

"I found your locket when we were gathering up the fragments of our picnic, and kept it as a hostage, until what I have given you is returned."

"I have nothing of yours but 'Vèra,' and you did not give me that;" and Grace held out her hand for the locket.

"You have made me a beggar," he said, taking the hand instead of restoring the locket, and Grace looking timidly up, forgot to ask what Mr. Hilliard wanted in return for his gift; she remembered only that her hand was firmly held, and that her aunt and the boat were waiting.

"For love's sake will you share with me whatever work the Master bids me do?"

The words fell solemnly and tenderly, as from a

great heart that knows the need and sacredness of love.

"The work and the love will make life such a different thing!" was the honest but tremulous answer; and then her hand received such consecration from his lips, her brow such honor, — and only the fir-tree and the silent rocks for witnesses.

Then Hilliard led her to the boat, and seated by his side, the purple haze on the mountains, and the soft sunset blush on the lake, seemed but reflections of that love which had transfigured their lives.

In a pretty, thriving village where the Berkshire hills and rivers make a landscape fair and delightful to the eye, Grace Maltby has found how to "redeem the time," and while "deeds of week-day holiness fall from her noiseless as the snow," she fills the parsonage with gladness and content.

