FROM

BRIGHT

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HENRY BR

who died at Watertown, M
the absence of such desce
eligible to the scholarship
this announcement shall be
to the Library und

DEDICATED,

WITH TENDER DEVOTION,

TO

THE NAME AND MEMORY

OF

MY IDOLIZED HUSBAND,

JOHN RANDOLPH COLBERT.

ALSO,

TO MY KIND AND HONORED PARENTS,

MOSES AND ADELINE SPIVEY.

Broken Links and Southern Soldiers,

WITH MISCELLANEOUS

SKETCHES AND POEMS.

BROKEN LINKS

AND

SOUTHERN SOLDIERS.

"Fresh roses, red roses." But the echoes dropped dead;
And in vain the tides listened—the song's soul had fled.
It had sung its bright prophecy, spent its sweet breath.
Thou, too, hast thy rose—silent death!

CHAPTER I.

TWO o'clock. The sun could not find a break in the thick veil of cloud, through which to issue a ray of cheer; all was gloom without and within. A dull, heavy rain had been falling all day, rendering, if possible, more torturing the agony that wrestled within. An idolized sick one waited beside the invisible gulf, while tender ones were striving to draw her away, and hold her from the arms of the wooer. Their hope was anchorless; still they held to the shaking shaft; they would not quit the wreck until the cold waves

should wash them from their hold, and cast them upon the roaring ocean of black despair. Repeatedly during the day the devoted husband had begged her to say that she knew him, but the livid lips gave back no word. The little daughter would caress the bloodless hand, and sob, "My mamma," but the answering voice did not come to soothe her. Good grandma watched and waited; her big heart was full of love, pity, and sorrow, for this was but the rehearsal of her life: how often she had watched the silent waving of the death angel's wing, and beheld the mortal moth, in its placid paleness, ready to fill a nook in the hollow bosom of earth!

Two hours later the mantle-clock rang four, slowly and mournfully. The sufferer was growing restless; the hour was near. Once more the eyelids unclosed, the lamp of reason burned, the lips moved, and the sweet voice breathed audibly, "Heaven—home." That was all; the spirit retired, the breath ceased, and a great hush fell upon the hearts of the mourners. The husband kneeled beside the couch of his cold earth, and grandma drew the child away and received her grief into her own bosom. Mrs. Marly had been all that her husband's heart had ever thought to ask. She was his best, his dearest, his tenderest friend: ever gentle, amiable, and confiding—capable of advising with him in his deepest perplexities; so

faithful in piety, and so truly a glorious standard of womanly excellence. No wonder that his great heart was so swollen with his unspoken anguish. He knew he would miss her, but he could not tell how much, not until her pleasant manners were no more, and her tender greetings, her beaming smiles, and calm, lovable dignity sleeping the unbroken sleep. No, he could not tell, not until he was weary with waiting for "the sound of a voice that was hushed, and the touch of a hand that was still." When the grave had received its treasure, and sealed its lips forever; when there was no white face to gaze upon, and no cold form to clasp; when there was nothing left but a bare mound of earth to weep over, and unanswering memory to appeal to, then would come the heaviest grief—the grief without signs or symbols, that no weeping heart has ever yet fully expressed. O, indeed, this is the leaden grief that hurls a mourner into appalling midnight, and makes the soul feel that it can never rise again; never look upon the world of sunshine, or enjoy the fragrance of flowers; never listen to the melodious trilling of happy birds, or hear the voice of laughter, without seeking to roam away and hide itself with its solemn woe. But God doth not suffer his trusting ones to remain so always, for after awhile, when the eyes have wept until they may shed no more tears, he sendeth the Comforter to anoint the aching

wounds with the balm of resignation, and to lead the spirit into new action and amid new thought, finding something still for waiting hands to do. The sparrows do not fall without His care: "We are of more value than many sparrows."

CHAPTER II.

ELMA LEE was ten years old when her mother, Mrs. Marly, died. She was an only one, and the darling light of her mother's and stepfather's life. Grandma Marly, too, thought there was no other child like unto this one. She inherited her mother's amiability, discretion, and strength of character, and was every inch a beautiful miniature of the coming woman. When her mother lived, she was taught at home, and was by no means defective in educational progress. When she was thirteen years old, Mr. Marly urged his mother to consent to her absence, for he wished to place her in a distant school, to which he had long been partial. 'T was a sore trial to the old lady, but for the child's good she sacrificed her pleasure, and aided essentially in preparing her wardrobe. Grandma felt very lonely when Elma was gone, but the little girl-woman wrote often to her, and tried to make her glad with the spices of schoolgirl fol-de-rols; and the old lady enjoyed it all, and blessed her baby as the rarest of all babies. She

had been absent three years; the next was to be her last. She had won warm friends in this temporary home, but to one she was more than ordinarily attached. Viria Vane and Elma were roommates, classmates, and congenial companions. Both of them were first-class students, and both of them looked to the excelsior banner; but they would never have ruptured their bonds of love with a wrangle, for either one would have supported the other, and have shown no discomfiture, and doubtless would have been willing to divide the honorary scroll, and feel that each was duly honored. This point was not tested, however. Both were ambitious, but not selfish; both studious, but warm-hearted and generous, and that one year was to be the deciding-ground of their lives, they thought. One year more, and they would be young ladies and graduates! How little is known of human augury! How quickly the birds of omen may become perverse, and our pervious paths may be converted into impenetrable and perplexing jungles!

One Saturday forenoon most of the girls had gone with their good matron shopping. Viria and Elma remained in the college, preparing their lessons for the ensuing Monday. They had studied diligently all the morning, and by eleven o'clock were ready to lay their books aside. Viria called out to Elma:

"Do, Elma, put those books up, just as easy as you can, so as not to scare any knowledge back that was coming to the morning dawn; I'm tired, just as any prisoned monkey would be. Come, Elma, help me talk goose-jabber. I must 'cut up,' as the folks at home say, or I'll have to make my mark for a duck, and go to sleep."

"My brain is all in a muddle, I believe, Viria. Say, what is your programme, 'Mother Goose?'"

"Anything to start a good laugh; that's healthy, you know. I'll be a funny grandma, and you a beaming lassie; help me dress up in style, now. Do you know, suet and lily-white will make good wrinkles? Tra, la, la; tra, la, la. Elma Lee, we are as different as white and crimson."

"How do you know, 'Mother Goose?'"

"Because we are. I am happy in a mud-puddle of nonsense, and you are dignified to the last. I wonder why we love each other?"

"We suit so well; we are different, yet full of congeniality. You have always lived in the sunshine, and I have wept beneath willows and sorrowed 'mid the pines. You have crossed all the water on bridges, and I have waded my length in bereavements. I love the light, Viria, if I do seem a heart-shadow. Summer and cloud are pleasant together—you may be summer, and I cloud; but we will do all the better for that. Let

me tell you, 'Mother Goose,' you introduced a very gloomy subject to make a body laugh."

"Did I? Well, how will this do?"

She was a downright scare-crow, and Elma did justice to the occasion by giving vent to a happy musical laugh, which was so contagious that the would-be grandma was forced to join it at the risk of pulling all the so-called wrinkles away; and before the fit of mirth was over, there was a knock at the door, and a message for Miss Viria; a gentleman was in the parlor and wished to see her.

"Me! My life! I'm in a pickle, ain't I, Elma? What do you reckon all this means? Gentlemen do not call here most usually. What must I put on, Elma?"

"That white dress, Viria, do; and blue ribbons. This is May, and a bright day, too."

"That I will. There, you are a dear darling for helping me so nicely."

"Never mind; sit down. I'll dress your hair after quick school-girl fashion."

The pretty hair was soon plaited nicely, and tied with a blue ribbon, and both girls were well pleased to see what an attractive picture they had bustled up. In less than ten minutes Viria was back in her room. Her eyes were full of joy, tears and smiles laughing together. She threw her arms around Elma, and exclaimed, "It is brother Edgar, come to tell us good-bye before he

goes to the war. I have just looked upon that war question as a big pile of 'fuss and feathers' until now, and it has come home to me; the battle has already begun in my heart. I must fix up a few things to carry home, until I get some other way of moving. I expect I shall not return, for mother will need me at home when the boys are gone."

Viria was soon ready. Elma would not go down with her, but said good-bye, and went to the upper porch to see her off. Viria turned, kissed her hand at Elma, and then one of the gentlemen (there were two) looked up. Elma did not know whether they were both Viria's brothers or not. She thought they were; and the one whose face she saw was after the mold that most young hearts so much admire. When they were out of sight, Elma went back to her room; it looked dreary enough, naturally, since the summer was gone and the cloud left. She sat down by the table, and laid her arm upon it, and began to grope through the dense vacancy; and, drawing from her mind the rugged map of her life, began to count the mountains she had crawled over, and those she would soon stumble against. The future was not alluring; an endless desert seemed just ahead. Her step-father carried a new wife home in a year after she left, and she felt that his fatherly attention would not be the same. Ah! life, little

did you gain from close contemplation. Of all desolate things, desolate girlhood and desolate womanhood are most deplorable—most terribly burdensome. "I cannot stand this," she cried. "O heavy heart! do wrap thyself in something akin to sleep; and thou, O mind! if there is any hope, or reason, or strength in thee, lift thyself up and drop thine anchor into this rolling and lashing sea. Whet thy swords, O fortitude! and defend thyself against the desperate foe; for with me to surrender is to die. Shall I embrace thee, O knowledge! and cling to thee forever, when my soul is starving for tenderness, and there are none to look down and behold the loneness of the lone? I am bruised by the rocks and the tempest; I am drenched by 'the surfy waves,' 'That foam around these frightful caves,' and a name is to be the saving rock of my life. A name! O fame! you are a cold and gaudy thing for a maiden to adore, but there is a fearful idolatry in my ocean-bound isolation, and I must be a worshiper. What a fearful sinner I am! God is a father to the fatherless; I have his scroll of mercies near me. He alone can make me calm and happy; he alone can help me to win 'the good name that can never be taken away.' Bless thee, holy Father! the white surge cannot damp me while thou art near to hold me by the hand, and lead me to the rock of safety."

Elma Lee had not been quite well in several days, but she kept up with her studies as usual. This Saturday evening, however, when she sat down to study again, she found that she was merely repeating the words and lines; the meaning of the subject-matter seemed insuperable; that which she thought she was mistress of in the forenoon, seemed all mixed with something else. She put her books up, and went down-stairs, and thought to refresh her memory by trying to forget everything for a time, but she soon returned to her room, almost exhausted. This was out of the usual order of Hygeia. Her limbs were aching, too, and her head inclined to sympathize in the general disorder, so she threw a shawl about her and lay down. Soon she slept. When she awoke she had considerable fever—the pain in her head much increased; so she kept very quiet until late in the evening, when she felt much better—almost well, she thought.

For the whole of the next week she was struggling against these sick returns, but would not give up, or admit that she was having chills; for a chill was a horror of her imagination, and she thought she had no acquaintance with the shaking majesty.

At the end of the week Viria returned to collect and carry away her things. She did not live more than ten or eleven miles in the country. When she opened the door of her old room, she stopped

and exclaimed, "Blessed child! what spell has come over you? have you been sick?"

"Yes, a little; do I look like it?"

"Look like it, indeed! have you been in bed, Elma?"

"I believe so, Viria—every night; I could n't spare much time in the day, you know."

"Well, indeed! if Dr. Harvy will say so, I'll take you away and rusticate you awhile. You are becoming entirely too refined and ethereal at this rate; you will do for a mummy in a month. I'm going right now to ask him."

Elma caught her arm to stop her, but she sprang away and ran down-stairs, soon returning to say that Dr. Harvy wished to see her, Elma.

When Elma presented herself, Dr. Harvy said:

"Miss Viria wishes you to go home with her for a week or so; would you like to go?"

"Yes—no, sir; I can't spare any time now."

"Yes, you can; I insist that you go. I fear you will have to lose more time than a week unless you have recreation. Mrs. Vane will do you good; she is a most estimable, motherly lady. I wish you to go."

"Very well, doctor; I submit to your command." So she went back and reported herself a candidate for emigration.

She felt new life enter her depressed mental and physical system when she had gone a few miles.

The forest road boasted its magnolias here and there, and every thing seemed full of glee and rejoicing. Elma's heart began to effervesce with gladness. There was no systematic routine in all this boundless nature; 't was free, beautiful, and charming, and this school-girl Elma was a deep lover of nature.

When they arrived at Viria's home, she looked so much refreshed that Viria wanted to tell her she had actually grown beautiful. Mrs. Vane gave her a warm welcome, and then Viria, girl-like, marched her off to give her an extra primming before Will and Edgar came.

It was not long until they were back in Mrs. Vane's room. Viria drew a large easy rocker beside a window, and said, "Now, Elma, just sit here and rest good! I see I am a first-rate doctor, for you look better already."

"I know you are a most superior friend; I am afraid your dulciloquy will spoil me beyond redemption."

"No danger; you know doctors won't let critical patients talk. I must carry out the rule, so I will bring my guitar and sing 'Stilly Night' for you, and 'By-gone Hours;' they are your favorites, I reckon—hush!—no talking." So she half laughed, and played, and sang; and it was sweet and good to the listener, for she was willing to listen rather than talk.

Very soon the brothers came in at the gate. The younger one, Edgar, was a little ahead of Will, but stepped back when he saw the girls at the window, and asked, "Will, what young lady is that with Viria?"

"One of the school-girls, I expect."

"Well, I'm not much out if 't is a school-girl, but I'm dreadfully afraid of full-grown young ladies." He walked on a step or two, and called back, intentionally, loud enough for the girls to hear, "Come on, old fellow; do n't be hiding back that way."

The girls both laughed between themselves, of course, for they saw the whole transaction, and Viria stepped out and said, "O no, do n't hide, Will; I want you to help us make merry, because I have brought that good friend of mine with me." They were soon acquainted, and enjoying themselves as pleasantly as young people could.

Late in the evening an intimate friend of the young men stopped in: this was Dr. Monteith, the same gentleman who was with Edgar Vane the day he was at the college. He was a young physician in his first practice, but already he had won a skillful reputation. He was highly accomplished, and decidedly kind in his manner, which softened the otherwise haughty dignity of his bearing. He acted to both girls as an old friend would, and

associated in this capacity, they were likely to form opinions, and become more thoroughly acquainted in a week than they would under cautious ceremony in a month.

CHAPTER III.

THAT week to Elma passed as a dream. The time had flown, and she must return to school. The carriage was waiting at the gate; Viria was going with her, but not to remain. Her brothers would leave the next week for the army, and then —she could think no farther, for her throat would begin to fill with choking, and in her heart she could see no other picture than that of mangled limbs and bleeding forms.

This one week Elma would never forget. She had been happy; the sun had been shining, and beautiful were the thoughts of life. A broader field of existence seemed opening before her, and hope beckoned her on to something of rare excellence; still, there was that same secret torturing of forebodings.

Dr. Monteith accidentally overtook them; he was "going into town that morning, and would see that no harm befell them." Of course, this was common gallantry. Viria said something was to pay with Dr. Monteith, for he was n't half as much

of an iceberg as he used to be. Then she put her lips close to Elma's ear, for fear he might catch her words, and whispered, "What a spell! Do you know I do believe somebody is about to—to—lose himself?"

"What?"

"Well, to use plain English, Dr. Harvy will have to put somebody on bread-and-water diet for leaving a poor fellow without a heart! What do you think of that? ahem!"

"Well, you ought not to have done the 'poor fellow' so badly."

"Ought not! indeed you ought not; you are dreadfully slow at guessing."

"And you are as apt as a friction-match."

"As powder, you mean, when the match is lighted over it. Elma, don't you think the doctor has taken a wondrous fancy to somebody"—

"Yes"—

"Like you," Viria exclaimed, as soon as she said yes; but they were at the gate. Dr. Monteith was already down, waiting to assist them. Elma was last, and he held her hand an instant, and remarked: "I hope we may meet again, Miss Lee, but doubtless we will not, for I will leave for the army in a few days, and war, you know, is a treacherous foe. This last week cannot be a wasted link in my life's retrospect. But I am detaining you—good-bye."

Elma had just said "good-bye," and turned away, when Viria, her eyes twinkling with mischief, exclaimed: "Quite a pretty speech that was, Dr. Monteith. I'm only listening for mine. I hope you don't mean to slight your best friend."

"Surely I do not. How long before you are ready to return?"

"Not very long; an hour, perhaps."

"Very well, I will be here in that time."

As they went up the walk, Viria gave Elma's arm a dainty pinch, saying, "So, so—what did I tell you?—in love, sure as I live!"

"No, no; how could he love a green school-girl in one short week?"

"That problem is not solved by any particular line; 'tis almost a theorem, proved by natural evidence. I believe I must tell Dr. Harvy of your very fine conquest."

"Viria!"

"Yes, Miss—what?"

"Do be serious, child; don't you be guilty of any impromptu expressions regarding Dr. Monteith. You know the bare mention of my name in connection with his will subject me to much causeless embarrassment. Remember how merciless school-girls are, and think before you say a word, dear friend."

"That I will; you've vanquished me. I will not seek merriment at your expense; you are

more thoughtful than I; I always jabber, and have the mortification of after reflection. You are looking a bushel better than you did when I carried you away."

"Do I? Well, I feel two bushels better, then. I will never forget your kindness, and your good mother, for being so much the mother to me."

"Well, and won't you remember the boys, too? Say some good word for them."

"Yes, I will. I do think you have two of the nicest brothers I ever saw; and when I look at you and them, I feel real sorry that I can never have a brother."

"Yes, but you think Dr. Monteith's a heap nicer, don't you?"

"Viria, I do believe I'll give you a knock, if you don't stop that."

"Well, dearie, I am about to go back; and, my precious friend, I've a little bit of advice for your sweet self. You must quit so much study, and laugh and play more. By the time you are twenty-five, at this rate, you'll be all shriveled up like a green, frost-bitten gourd."

"The very idea!" said Elma, with a rich, ringing laugh. "I do wish you could stay."

"And I wish there was no war brewing, and no cannon to thunder woe and misery into our hearts and country. Then I would be so glad to be a school-girl, but not as it is. You need not wish

for a brother until this dreadful war is over. I have two of the very best, but they will be the greatest source of trouble to me now that I have ever known."

"Viria, darling, God leadeth us all. You cannot lessen your anxiety, but He can, for He is full of tender love and pity."

"Ah! I know it; but He seems far off to me, Elma. When I ask Him to guide me, I oftener find that I am praying to my own selfish nature than to the great Omnipresent. You must not think me over-wicked; my faith is poorly cultured; this is the trouble. I think every year I will be a good Christian next year, but when my probation for worldliness is over, I think 't is time enough yet; and thus I postpone from year to year. I know what will come after awhile: 't will be the story of the 'bridegroom and foolish virgins;' but I do now resolve, I will wrestle more fervently than ever, and realize that heavenly hope, if there is any comfort in it. We've been preaching sermons, and I have n't seen Mrs. Harvy yet. I'll be back here before long, and I want to see you full of gladness."

"I will certainly try to quit smiling, and turn to laughing, if you think the latter most agreeable, for you are a mighty splendid doctor."

"Yes, I am—but not half as splendid as Dr. Monteith!"

CHAPTER IV.

Wrathful the brothers frowned. Their flaming eyes in silence met. They turned away. They struck their shields. Their hands were trembling on their swords. They rushed into the strife of heroes.

—OSSIAN.

A GREAT national convulsion was about to shake all system from American rule. Mothers were sick with apprehension; sisters were tortured with pictures of broken home circles; maidens were mute with grief, and wives were agonizing with the Father that their husbands might be shielded from the leaden rain, and spared to their breaking hearts and lonely homes.

A hoarse death-rattle went hurrying through the land. It echoed from the high hills, and re-echoed from the hillocks and lowlands. A steady tramp was heard, and a constant march kept up; for sunny-hearted Southrons had happy homes to make them brave, and righteous nerves to make them strong. What lives were shadowed, though! What a river of tears was shed; what great anx-

iety of heart was endured, and what sundering of the spirit was felt, our Father only knoweth.

That big gun from Sumter!—Sumter, "so celebrated both by its being the scene of the first hostilities between the contending parties, and by the splendid and successful defense which it has since made, in the hands of the Confederates, against the fleet and armies of the North."

Whenever a point becomes history, it is then the property of its nation; 't is as an heir-loom in the memory of the nation's children. In the Life of Gen. Stonewall Jackson we find the following graphic description of Fort Sumter, and its bearing upon the cause of the war, or its relation to the cause:

"On the 20th December, 1860, the State of South Carolina, by the unanimous vote of a convention, called by her Legislature, formally seceded from the Union. At this time, Major R. Anderson was commandant of the Federal forces at Charleston. His head-quarters were at Fort Moultrie, on the mainland; Fort Sumter, the strongest of all the defenses, and placed in the middle of the bay, not being occupied. A grand banquet was given in honor of the Ordinance of Secession, on the evening of the day (Dec. 20) on which it passed. At midnight, Anderson, who must have received secret orders how to act, having spiked the guns, abandoned Moultrie, and conveyed all his men and stores to Sumter. Next

morning, to the amazement of the South Carolinians, they saw the Union flag floating over it, and found Anderson in possession. As was to be expected, this act of treachery greatly incensed them; for the authorities of South Carolina had received a pledge from President Buchanan, that the existing military *status* should undergo no change in their State during the expiring term of his administration. That pledge was violated by this seizure and military occupation of Sumter; and, notwithstanding all remonstrances, Buchanan, probably under the pressure of Northern clamor, refused to order Anderson back again to Moultrie. The Secretary of War, J. B. Floyd, who had been a party to the promise, felt his honor so compromised by this gross breach of faith that he instantly and indignantly resigned. Immediately after Mr. Lincoln had entered on his office as President, in March, 1861, commissioners from the South proceeded to Washington, to urge a peaceable separation, and to negotiate for the transfer of government property, and in particular for the removal of the Federal garrison from Forts Pickens and Sumter. But, under the pretext that to treat with them avowedly and officially might embarrass the administration of Mr. Lincoln, they were assured, through an intermediate party, that all would yet be well; that the military *status* of the South would be undisturbed, and that Sumter would be

evacuated. These assurances were given by Secretary Seward himself, verbally and in writing, through Judge Campbell, of the Supreme Court; but they were only meant to deceive. There never was any intention to keep faith, or to evacuate Sumter. It was a dishonest maneuver to gain time for collecting armaments and preparing coercive measures. The military reïnforcement of Sumter was pronounced by Gen. Scott and other advisers of Lincoln to be impracticable, except by artifice or surprise. Hence the deceit practiced to throw the Confederates off their guard. Meanwhile, unusual activity was perceptible in the Northern dock-yards and depots. Even down to the 7th of April it was pretended that the evacuation would take place. On that very day, Judge Campbell, uneasy as to Mr. Seward's good faith, wrote to him on the subject, and received the emphatic reply: 'Faith as to Sumter fully kept; wait and see.' The very next day (April 8th), the expedition started to carry 'provisions to a starving garrison;' but it consisted of eleven vessels, with an aggregate force of 285 guns and 2,400 men. It arrived in time to witness the bombardment and fall of Sumter on April 13th, lying at anchor in the distance during the action, and never firing a gun. The people of Charleston had put the intended surprise out of the question; but the Lincoln administration, nevertheless, accomplished

one great object for which they had been scheming. They had procured the battle of Sumter; they had got the South to take the initiatory step of resistance. Henceforth the Federal Government, while in reality commencing a war which they had fully resolved upon, could make it appear that they were involved in it by the force of circumstances, rather than of their own choice; and that the South, having fired the first shot, was responsible for all the consequences.

"Such was the impression produced, and intended to be produced in Europe; while the attack on the national flag, it was foreseen, could not fail to stir public sentiment to its lowest depths, and create a united war party in the North. Hence it was enough that the Federal forces in Sumter should make a mere show of resistance. Anderson accordingly just held the place as long as the rules of military honor required, and then surrendered it unconditionally, without having lost a man, whilst the fleet looked on at a distance, and never attempted to come to his aid. We are entitled, therefore, to repudiate the charge of having commenced the war, by making the first appeal to arms. Granted that the first shot was fired by the South, the first military aggression was on the side of the North. The Federal Government are responsible for all."

Ah! yes, but this will not lessen the pain in our

torn bosoms; this will not restore the absent, or bring gladness to our firesides. Bright eyes will close to beam no more; fond hearts will sleep with ne'er a throbbing pulse. Infants will call for the protection and fondness that cometh not again, while widowhood will wrestle with Heaven for strength to bear the great burden of care and desolation, that will well-nigh break her strong and waiting spirit. Brothers will meet on this crimson track, and brothers will learn, too late, that they have stained their hands in the life-wine of a brother. O sobbing misery! thine empire is our dwelling-place. Dark sovereign! didst thou ever heed a mortal's prayer? Didst thou ever soothe the torture of despair, or still the tempest of reeking agony? If thou canst not do all this, O queen of blackness, thou hadst better hide thyself, and call to the rocks and mountains to cover thee, for much as thou mayst gloat upon wretchedness, thou wilt be surfeited; thine eye-lids will hurt for lack of tears, and thine ears will ache with the sounds of constant groaning.

Though war's high-sounding harp may be
  Most welcome to the hero's ears,
Alas! his chords of victory
  Are wet all o'er with human tears.

CHAPTER V.

THE home of Elma Lee—of her step-father, Mr. Marly—was stately and beautiful. 'T was the home of his boyhood. He had seen both parents sit there in their accustomed places, silver-haired and trembling with age, like aspen leaves in whispering breezes. He loved them, and gave himself to them, and had kept his heart and mind so completely controlled that until he met Elma's mother he had never thought seriously of marriage. In a few months after he was married, his venerable father laid his long white locks beside his bloodless temples, and slept the sweet sleep with those who rest in the arms of their Saviour. Mr. Marly himself was an old man, his head was blossoming for the last harvest, and still the good mother sat there. She had crossed fourscore annual bridges on the river of listening Time, but her quivering fingers were yet working at the knitting, and her dim eyes looking heavenward, waiting patiently for the celestial glory that she knew must soon come. The most beautiful object that the morning and

evening sun ever beheld, in his watching from east to west, is pure, patient, holy old age. Just think of it! The sun rises with splendor o'er the first morning of the infant; it hears the first infant-cry; it beholds the first timid look that the little half-waking, half-fearful eyes bestow upon the strange world into which it has entered. It sees the first baby-smile, and is not deaf to the first half-uttered word. Year by year the eye of the great God is thus looking through the glowing sun; year by year the divine ear is listening for the dawn of reason and spiritual regeneration in the little image of his creature. It comes; the little seed germinates; the plant of eternal life begins to grow; the weeds are carefully pulled away, and soon the flower-buds begin to shoot forth; then the young fruit makes to itself a fruit-stem, and ere long the Father is beholding, through the great sun of light, a fruit-tree full of pure flowers, and rich in its glory of harvest. Day by day the eye of the Great Spirit spans the temporal and spiritual growth of its own; day by day comes the "good-morning" of peace, evening by evening the "good-night" of quiet; year by year the benediction of holy sanctity, and then again the cheerful salutatory of the New Year. Thus, on and on, from the babe, struggling with life for life, to the babe again, that is sinking trustingly into the extended arms of the Saviour that never deceives. The tree

is young and smooth at first—green and beautiful; but summer, and winter, and heat, and snow, and frost, suck away and dry up its freshness and youth; but it lives—not verdant and glowing, but rich. The young tree has but little fruit, but it is cultured, watered, and guarded; year after year it yielded more and more, until there it stands; behold it! The bark is all dry and shriveled; the leaves look yellow and pale, but that is only the old, faded dress. Do look at the fruit! what luscious fruit! That is ripe old age, just fit for the garner of heaven.

The time was almost at hand for Elma to arrive home. Good Grandma Marly was knocking about every now and then, watching for her baby, as she had called the child ever since she had been in the family. The kind lady had loved Elma's mother; she had appreciated her great worth, and felt that her son was not so happily situated in his last marriage; but that was hardly to be expected, she thought, so she just acted the good mother through, and leaned upon the dignified staff of age and benevolence, trying to find good in all things. The second Mrs. Marly, jr., had, also, one daughter and a son; the daughter was a few years older than Elma, the son was just a man—just twenty-one.

Elma came home. Grandma had not seen her in two years; her joy was beyond estimation. She

went to the broad front steps, and wanted to go down to meet her baby, but her son restrained her, for he knew her strength was less than her affection. How different was the welcome from what Elma's anxious heart had imagined! Papa was as glad as if he did n't have a new wife; he took her in his arms, and kissed her just as he did of old. Grandma's eyes were brimful of joy and gladness as she clasped her to her bosom. Mrs. Marly was not all a stranger in her manners, but was kind and thoughtful. Her daughter, Miss Inez Ellrich, was rather too conventional to be wholly agreeable to a young school-girl. James Ellrich was the last to meet her, but not least in courteous attention. He seemed to comprehend more readily than any one of the new family, that home now was not what home was; there was a new bond of social restraint that was not there when she left, and there was a representative in her mother's chair that must remind her of the time it was made vacant. He saw sadness in that young, tired face, and from that hour the heart of James Ellrich fell into dim shadow. His was a cultured mind; this was his first vacation since he had finished his classical career; he had applied his splendid opportunities to real advantage, and was now ready to take his mind and energy together, and erect his own throne. There is no true mental aggrandizement independent of moral restraint and spiritual

attainment. The mind may expand until it grasps the heavens in its height, and surrounds the ocean in its might; yet 't is weaker than water, and less reliable than mist, unless it has a refined soul-standard to lean upon. What is beauty, if 't is soiled, specked, and obscured by filth? What is man, all clothed in practiced vice and loathsome sin? A nuisance, an eye-sore, and a quagmire of pollution.

James Ellrich had brought the struggle for reliable manhood with him from his early boyhood, and he had not given up. He would never allow himself led away by fast young men, no matter how agreeable the part they might play. He knew that the jewel of honorable manhood came from no other source than that of honorable deportment. He had looked around, young as he was, and wondered at the multitude of young men who chose rather to wallow in the sickening gutters of low amusements—drinking, cursing, swearing, training their minds to love the low level of ignorance and depravity. The proud lips of this young man had unconsciously curled in contempt, and his fine heart had recoiled with instinctive repugnance from the slightest contact with this low herd. Ah! young men, this day the fearful maelstrom of reckless dissipation is ruining, ruining, and destroying the elegant temple of holy architecture. You are pulling down the lovely dome of the Master, and de-

facing with heathenish fanaticism the image of the great Creator. It is not necessary that an observer should be old in years and silvered with care to perceive the moral tendency of the youth of our land. Let a boy live to fifteen, and nine cases out of ten he has left the paternal roof, or *paterfamilias* has bestowed upon his most honorable scion a "patch," the proceeds of which are to be spent after the dictates of his own youthful fancy. Now, for some boys this would all be very well, but it would be for such boys as we do not see more than once every half-century. It would be for an old-headed boy, with a great deal of common hard sense; it would be for that boy whose decision of character had pointed out for him an honest and actual course, whose mind was hungry for meat, and whose lips could pronounce the clear water of the crystal spring the purest, sweetest, best beverage that has ever been prepared for the children of men. It would do for that boy who was rich in heart-glory—who could rely upon his own moral and mental resources for sweet companionship. God has not created the children of the human family so entirely different as their social career seems to indicate. There is, indeed, a natural proneness to evil; but when men make watches, they furnish them with regulators; and do you think this is the invention of man? do you think this his original idea? Truly, no; he de-

rived it from the Godhead in his arrangement of creation. We are the watches of time—the time-pieces of the Father's mercy, pointing to the close of the temporal day—the twilight and night of death. When the sparkling jewel of spiritual holiness was broken by man, the infant of creation, the heart-aching Father, to preserve the severed fragments, formed them into beautiful watches of ephemeral duration, each one varying in length of day, according to His unerring ordinances, from a score to four-score years; still but a day in the Father's reckoning. To this most delicate fabrication was attached the label governor, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and the mighty lever was turned by honest toil, conjointly of hand, head, and heart, while it was oiled by the distilled dew of the heated brow. This was the fine steel regulator of the human life repeater; and, if broken off, time after time, by the rough hand of vice, there is shortly too little left for the reliable counting of seconds, and the useless framework, the tarnished casings fall to the lap of earth, with no other tears than the rains of heaven, no other sighs than the winds of the evening, and no other mourners than the trembling stars of eternity.

O young men! you are the pillars of the home circle, of the holy sanctuary of the church, of the State, and country; and yet you forget yourselves.

You give yourselves over to all conceivable wantonness; you leave the hearthstones for the gaming-saloons; you leave your farms for horse-races; you leave the society of refined, pious, cultivated women, for the light, frivolous entertainment of the ball-room; and you leave the holy of holies, the church of the high God, for the low, dirty, common grog-shop. You know how you enter them; but, Heaven help you, do you know how you leave them? Your groceryman gets ready to close up, and you are shuffled into the street with about as much tenderness as a decomposing rat or dog would be. Perhaps you are not quite dead-drunk—then you are more loathsome still; your lips are full, and overflowing with the hydrophobia of the lowest profanity; you cut about, get your eyes nearly knocked out, your cheeks ripped open, your lips gashed, and your teeth pommeled into your throat. We who have known you from infancy, are ready to turn from you with horror; we would plead with you, but the sweet panacea of your existence deludes you into believing that you would do no wrong were you to shoot your poor, trembling mother, or your frail, fainting sister. O dissipated young man! this picture is not half bad enough; you don't try to think how dreadful it is, for as soon as you begin to be sober enough to think, you are so tortured that you want nothing but strong drink to kill your heart-achings;

you certainly do have some heart-ache when you find that you tried to turn yourself to a hog, and were not able to effect the transformation. Instead of becoming the proud oaks of your homes and country, you import from the forests of Java, and nurture its poisonous Upas. You render noxious the atmosphere you live in; you are a slough of despond; you are a black pit of despair, and your mother's heart would not have hurt a mite in comparison with her constant woe, if you had been torn from her bosom and divided limb from limb, before her eyes, by the wild beasts of the forests, when you were a tender, nursing infant. You are a fearful whirlpool, sucking in all the tender plants and weak youth of the country by your demoniac influences. Gray-haired fathers lay their heads in the dust, and thank God for the veil of the grave to hide their shame. Fond-hearted mothers sob their lives away in anguish, and still cling to the wreck of your manhood. O young man, stop! stop! A new father has adopted you, and well you serve his dark designs; but 't is Belial. He will pet and caress you, and give you your fill of pleasure, such as you are willing to term pleasure; but, young man, he is buying your soul, and paying you now in whisky, debauchery, and recklessness. He'll take you to his home after awhile—his darling son—and he will lead you into such an awful labyrinth of flaming brands

and burning coals, that you will think the parable of Lazarus and Dives is not all a myth.

"Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

CHAPTER VI.

ON the 18th day of July, 1861, the Federal army, under General McDowell, was repulsed by the Confederates at Bull Run; and the 21st of July, 1861, will ever be memorable in the heart of the honest South. 'Twas the Sabbath; beautiful, bright, and balmy, to us who were far from the sound of drums and the noise of battle. A brilliant summer sun stepped upon the brow of the morning, and illuminated the mantle of the day. What lovely quiet! what bright, glowing sunlight! what soft, mellow calling to worship and devotion!

"But the invaders had consecrated it with an impiety equal to their malice—to the bloody orgies of the Moloch of their ambition. The sun had not begun to exhale the dew, when along the Warrenton turnpike every more pleasing sound was hushed into terror by the rumbling of the wheels of a great park of artillery, and the hoarse oaths of the officers hurrying it toward the extreme left of the Confederates. Columns of dust, rising into

the quiet air in several directions, disclosed the movements of heavy masses of infantry. The Federal General, leaving one strong division to guard his rear at Centreville, paraded another opposite Mitchell's Ford, and still another in front of the Stone Bridge, each accompanied with batteries of rifled cannon; while the mass of his army made a detour through an extensive forest, to the west, to cross Bull Run at Sudley Church, and thus to commence the assault in the rear of the Confederate left. They proposed to amuse the right and center by cannonade and a pretended assault, so as to detain those troops, while the flanking force marched down the south side of Bull Run, crushed the brigade which guarded the Stone Bridge, and opened a way for the division attacking it to cross, and thus beat the patriot army in detail. Had the prowess of the Yankee troops been equal to the strategy of the chieftain, this masterly plan would have given them a great victory. The Confederate Generals anticipated a flank attack, but were unable to decide at first whether it would be delivered against their extreme right or left. Their hesitation, and the friendly concealment of the forest, enabled the enemy to effect his initial plan, and throw 20,000 men across Bull Run, at and near Sudley Ford, without a show of opposition. Colonel Evans, with a weak brigade of 1,100 men, held the Confederate left, and watched the Stone

Bridge. A mile below, Brigadier-General Cocke, with three regiments, guarded the next ford. When Evans ascertained that the enemy were already threatening his rear, he left the bridge and turnpike to the guardianship of two small pieces of artillery, wheeled his gallant brigade toward the west, and advanced a mile to meet the coming foe. Here the battle began, and soon the roar of musketry and the accelerated pounding of the great guns told that the serious work of the day was to be upon the left.

"From 11 o'clock A.M. to 3 P.M. the artillery shook the earth with its incessant roar, while the more deadly clang of the musketry rolled in peals across the field. To the spectator, in the rear, the smoke and dust rolled sullenly upward, beyond the dark horizon of pines, like the fumes of a Tophet.

"The gallant and anxious General Bee had just exclaimed, to the broken fragments of his over-tasked command, 'There is Jackson, standing like a stone wall. Rally behind the Virginians. Let us determine to die here, and we will conquer. Follow me.'

"He placed himself at their head, and charged the dense mass of the enemy, and in a moment fell dead, with his face to the foe. From that time Jackson's was known as the Stonewall Brigade, a name henceforward immortal, and belonging to all the ages; for the christening was baptized in the

blood of its author, and that wall of brave hearts has been on every battle-field a steadfast bulwark of their country.

"Four o'clock in the afternoon, and as yet the Federalists were only repulsed, and not routed. They were still bringing up fresh masses, and on the eminences fronting that from which they had just been driven, were forming an imposing line of battle, crescent shaped, with the convex side toward the Confederates, for a final effort. But their hour had passed. The reserves from the extreme right, under Early and Holmes, were now at hand; and better still, the Manassas Gap Railroad, cleared of its obstructions, was again pouring down the remainder of the Army of the Valley. General Kirby Smith led a body of these direct to the field, and, receiving at once a dangerous wound, was replaced by Colonel Arnold Elzy, whom Beauregard styled the Blucher of his Waterloo. These troops being hurled against the enemy's right, while the victorious Confederates in the center turned against them their own artillery, they speedily broke, and their retreat became a panic rout. Every man sought the nearest crossing of Bull Run. Cannon, small arms, standards, were deserted. The great causeway from the Stone Bridge to Centreville was one surging and maddened mass of men, horses, artillery, and baggage, amidst which the gay equipages of the amateur spectators of the

carnage, male and female, were crushed like shells; while the Confederate cavalry scourged their flanks, and Kemper's field-battery, from behind, pressed them like a Nemesis, and plowed through the frantic medley with his bullets." (Life of Jackson.)

A great battle had been fought, a great victory gained, "and while the Federal army and capital, with the rabble of the nation, were thrown into a panic as abject as their previous boasting had been arrogant, the Confederate people and armies received the news of their deliverance with an unwonted quiet, made up of devout gratitude to God and solemn enthusiasm. No bells were rung in Richmond, no bonfires lighted, no popular demonstrations made. From the solemn acts of religious thanksgiving the people turned at once to eager ministrations to the wounded heroes who had purchased the victory with their blood."

With their blood! O big heart of a wide, wide country, how little you know the depth of the crimson stain! But go to the fireside of the young wife, where the tender babes stand so lone and quiet at her knee; they are startled into awe and wonder. Behold her the slender, swaying willow! The storm hath well-nigh sundered the frail body. The soldier-husband is slain; and not only did he spill his life-blood for his country, but the sword or musket that destroyed the spring of vitality

broke the goblets of life, gladness, and love in the far-off home—left a widowed heart to wailing, and fatherless infants to the pitiless storms of a never-ending winter. Go to the home of the aged widow: years and years ago she laid her pillar of strength away in the robe of "ashes to ashes, and dust to dust." Her life has been taxed with unwonted nerve and unsleeping energy, that her children should not lack the superior advantages that a father's care would have provided. She has led them in paths of truth and enlightenment from the cradle to noble manhood. They have just gained the eminence, and turn to look back, in joy, along the slope man climbs but once—the gradual hill from infant inches to man's estate. But fate saw them from the deep valley on the other side, and meant that they should have no honest plain to rest upon. She called for war, and sounded the heavy tocsin. They heard her peal, and answered. The fond mother, whose form had already bowed to the weight of years, bowed lower; the young sister, who had been looking to these proud brothers for protection, shrank away to hide her tears. She could not be brave when they were hugged in the arms of peril, nor dry-eyed when they might soon be bleeding. They went away in the early morn of the threatening day, and in the great heat of the first loud battle came the wooing of the low death-watch. The early morning wore a coverlet

of rare purity, shining unspotted, unstained. But the evening, O the evening! A mantle of blood fell over its head, and a garment of wounds and death-shadow clung to its shoulders. Many a tortured one cried to Heaven, and many a dying one turned his mouth to the stifling dust, while the heat of fever burned out his power to live. Death, gory death, flapped her broad wing of mystified darkness over the camp, and while slumber closed the eyes of some, sleep, endless sleep, sealed the lids of others, and breathed the dirge:

"Soldier, rest, thy warfare is over;
Sleep the sleep that knows no breaking."

Great was the Sabbath-day achievement! Glorious to our Southern standard, but dear earth drank too much blood. Heaven saw too much agony in sympathy with her aching creatures; and the immortal soul of one poor soldier, no matter whether he had distinguished himself in the field of science and literature or not; no matter what his calling or position; no matter what his home or nation, his spirit being thus hastened into the presence of the great Judge and judgment, without a fixed hope in the Lord Jesus, was worth more to him than millions of victories on the carnage plain. Ah, Manassa! battle hath won thee a name, and given to thée the red mantle of the hero's fame; thou canst not give back one single drop of blood;

thou art full with the life-wine of our braves, and thou art eternally mute, though many proud voices died away on thy bosom. Thou art Manassa still; proud ones thrill at thy name, but thou art meek. Mother-earth cannot control her voice to praise her misguided children, for a whole score of years will not avail—will not suffice—to purge away the tide of evil imported with the curses of the fiendish gorilla of the North.

The contested day was closing. The sickened sun was almost ready to hide itself with the paralyzing incubus of the day, and forget the Sabbath-day desecration, by waking upon the wilds of another half-sphere. The last light was falling hazily upon three soldiers, aloof from the many dead and dying. One was unhurt, the other two were wounded—one slightly, the other mortally. The dying one said to his brother, who was supporting him, "Will, I'll have to give up. I feel like I'm torn in fragments; 't will soon be over now. You keep my Bible, Will. Tell Viria I know she'll miss her playmate brother, but she must look heavenward, so that we may meet in the gardens of Paradise. Tell mother, Will"—and now the poor boy almost wept—"tell mother I am not afraid to die; I will meet our God in peace. Bless her—care—of—my—boyhood—and—O, Billy!" He was over the river now; the last faint sound had died away, and the name of Edgar Vane was

removed from the private's roll on earth, to be enlisted with the angels in the far beyond. William Vane and Dr. Monteith wept over him there in the gathering misty gray light. Dr. Monteith had received a wound in his arm, but that did not hurt him beyond his endurance. He grieved over the loss of his friend, and doubly grieved in his great sympathy with William Vane. Edgar had a very fine face; and now, as he lay there, the slain soldier, how all-glorified he seemed, with his last words wreathed into a halo of peace for the lacerated hearts of his friends!

"Happy is he o'er whose decline
The smiles of home may soothing shine,
And light him down the steep of years;
But O how blest they sink to rest,
Who close their eyes on victory's breast!"

William Vane most sadly missed this tender, manly brother, and deeply did he mourn him; so full of winsome purity, so noble in generous affection, so brave in the hour of peril, so calm, so fearless, so confiding in the hour of death! But he is free; no chains can sully him.

Honor closed his eyes, affection blest his breath,
And angels in the skies rejoice to see his death.

"What muse shall mourn the breathless brave,
In sweetest dirge at memory's shrine?
What harp shall sigh o'er freedom's grave?"
O Southland, thine!

CHAPTER VII.

ELMA LEE had been home two months, and they had been the sweetest days that she had known in such a long, long time. She kept her room with grandma, for the old lady had hinted at first that she was very lonely by herself sometimes. Inez had formed a very friendly attachment for her, seemingly, and James was kind as a brother. She liked Inez very much, but she liked James much better. Inez was quick to evidence something of the hyena in her piercing and thrilling black eyes. She had most beautiful eyes; they could hold the dagger's point, and in an instant wear away to the tenderest light that ever beamed from eyes of earth. She was sometimes as stiff, rigid, and dignified as an ocean iceberg, and then again as soft, mellow, and tender as the balmy breath of spring. No wonder she was wooed; no strange thing that she most always won; nor yet is it very marvelous that loving and affianced maidens intensely feared her presence. James was not of this cast; he was manly, dignified, and

affectionate always. There was ever the same courteous greeting, ever the same unvarying frankness, to make one always easy, and ever the same sympathetic tone. Was he perfectly handsome? Yes, but not handsome after the mold of unthinking young ladies; still he was so esteemed by those who had seen him give vent to the proud tenor of his soul. His eyes were not dark like his sister's—she was like her mother—but they were of a bluish steel gray, and how they could brighten! but it took Elma to tell of them. When she had been home about a month, grandma asked her the question, "Elma, how does grandma's baby like grandma's good boy, James?"

"Very much, grandma, very much indeed; he is so affable and pleasant. Grandma, don't you think he has the prettiest eyes, almost, you ever saw? How they can brighten and dilate, and cheer and soothe one. I tell you, grandma, I do just think he is a glorious representative of splendid manhood."

"Well, that will do very well; I hardly expected to hear you word it so well. Now, I've been quizzing James a little, too; and, although you are a very sober little lady, I'll tell you some of his ideas. He says you are a perfect pearl—a jewel worth winning and worth wearing."

"Grandma, you ought not to have done that."

"Done what, my child?"

"Why, you ought not to have asked his opinion of me, grandma. I'm afraid he thinks I wanted to know his impressions; but, notwithstanding my appreciation of any refined gentleman's estimation, still, dear grandma, you know you and I are such old cronies, I'm afraid he'll take it for granted that I was cognizant of your queries, and—and—attach undue importance to your generalship."

"O no! little Miss Coy; but hold thus fast ever to prudence; 't will be no detriment to you. Elma, I would like to live to see you married to just such a man as James; he is not like his mother, or Inez, either, but I can't tell wherein the difference is. He is a good boy; he is so respectful to age; he never sees me try to walk but he comes up to help me. Sometimes he will laugh, and say, 'Here, grandma, is your stick; wait till I hand it to you.' I always wait, but you know he is the stick he means. He does help me very much better than my wooden stick does, certain, and I am always right glad when he comes up."

Now, grandma did n't know it, but her talk had put that young head to thinking, and she could n't decide in her mind, at first, how she ought to act; but did finally determine to be frank and kind as usual to James, otherwise he would think strange, and perhaps subject her to some embarrassment. For the next month after this conversation, which ended the second pleasant month of Elma's stay

at home, every thing passed very much as it had the first month. The war was spreading everywhere, breeding destruction even as a wild and unguarded fire in dry autumn. James had been perfectly quiet about it—seldom alluded to it. He did not wish to divulge his plans, for he knew his mother would despair so bitterly. From the first 't was his intention to remain home a short time in justice to his mother and sister, for he and they had been separate most of the time for several years. But now the time was past; duty, he thought, urged him to go into field-service, so he arranged all his matters before he told his friends of his intentions. The morning before he was to leave he was a little late coming to breakfast, and, after coming, ate but little. When he arose from the table, he passed round to his mother's chair, and laid his diploma in her lap, saying, "There, mother, take care of that for me, please. Inez, here is the chain that I have worn with my watch; 't is the one our father wore, and very elegant; I leave this in your charge." Then, moving to the back of Elma's chair, he slipped a simple blue ribbon round her neck, to which was attached his small but handsome watch, asking, "Please, Miss Elma, will you do me a favor? Mother and Inez both have watches, and mine would be a care without benefit to them. Won't you wear mine, and keep it working regularly? See, I have procured a

plain, inexpensive time-piece, that will suit me better for the present."

Mr. Marly saw that Elma did not see the propriety of this step in James, and instantaneously asked, "What for, James? why are you transferring your claims?"

"Because I leave in the morning for the army."

Elma had taken the ribbon from her neck, but Mr. Marly said, "My daughter, will you not oblige James?"

"'T is a charge I fear to assume, but with your approbation, Aunt Marly, I will take care of it."

Mrs. Marly was in tears, but controlled her voice to say, "Do so, Elma, if James wishes it; I will thank you for gratifying him."

"Thank you, Elma. Mother, I am to leave in the morning; I will go on and join a company with those I know."

He turned and left the room, and did not make his appearance any more until dinner. Mrs. Marly had taken much care in the preparation for dinner; it might be the last her boy would ever take with her; but her heart wanted the sackcloth and ashes of sorrow. Ye who have been borne on the billow of parting, and buried 'neath the dark waters of after-gloom, can realize the aching separation. That evening they had all been sitting together on the porch, but one by one left a vacant seat, until James and Elma were alone. Mr. Marly had been

called out to supervise the storing of some corn that was being hauled in; Mrs. Marly had gone to attend supper arrangements; grandma had a pair of socks she was toeing off for James, and Inez had gone to her room with a headache. Elma found a sudden excuse to leave for awhile, but James caught her hand, for he was expecting this very step, knowing her timid, truthful nature as he did.

"No, Elma, don't go; I must tell you a thought of mine before I go away. You do not care to hear it—I see the mirror of your soul in your eye—but I must tell you: I have loved you since I first saw you; you are dearer to me than every thing else. I want you, heart and hand, for my very own. Tell me, Elma, some day, if I ever get back, will you wear my name, and be my own Elma?"

"Mr. Ellrich, I am too young to know my own heart-resources, and I cannot give you that promise. I am very proud of your friendship; I honor the lofty compliment you offer me, but I can't see far enough into the future, nor do I know enough of the present, to acknowledge that I love you—not as you wish me to. I do love you to a certain extent, but 't is with the serene tenderness of a sister. I have thought hundreds of times in the last two months that I would be so happy if you were my brother—my own brother. That cannot

be; and, I think, from what I know of my own heart, that I can be only a friend, giving you the holy trust and affection of a sister. I wish I did love you, Mr. Ellrich, just as a deep, true woman always does love, but I don't, and I don't want your affections deceived."

"Deceived! Elma, do you love any one?"

"That is scarcely a right question."

"It is, Elma; my position demands it. If you love no one, then 't is my right to continue seeking for your affection; if you prefer another more worthy, or equally worthy, then, as a true gentleman, with our family association to strengthen it, I take the position of a brother, and constitute myself a natural protector. Tell me, dear Elma, do you give any one that first place in your heart?"

"'T would be strange if I did—just from the school-room, as I am, with so few acquaintances. I never before had an opportunity of pledging myself to any one, and because I honor your happiness and mine so thoroughly, I will not give you a pledge that might after awhile prove a galling chain, for I may some day see some one I will love as my all-loving nature dictates. You see my motive now, and I believe your own noble manliness is sufficient to approve it."

"Yes, and if I should be reckless enough, after your good warning, to still look forward to a change

in your dear self, be sure I do so on my own responsibility, screening you from all error. Elma, you do not now accept the hand of love's fate, but a prophetic hope or madness encourages me. If I ever get back—and that ever is a world of doubt —I shall be sure to ask you again, unless I find you belonging to another; then I will not be stubborn, but hold you honorably near and dear as my sister. There is the bell—come; I am not hungry, but must appear so. Mother is ready to overflow with my prospective leave: help me, Elma, to carry away a brave, cheerful countenance; help me to speak of subjects so foreign to gloom that sunshine will stray through the lattice-work of thought for the few hours we will all be together."

And she did help him. An interchange of comment upon amusing anecdotes soon elicited a general interest, and produced a very pleasing effect with each member of the family; so the evening meal, which they had all been dreading, proved to be one of social enjoyment—without levity, but illumined with cheerful entertainment. Afterward they assembled in grandma's room, for the weather was getting too cool for her to enjoy a seat from the fire of an evening. James begged her to tell them something of the long ago, and so she rummaged in her fine and well-stored mind for something to tell them; and when it grew late they were all sorry, because grandma had such a great

memory, full of the good, beautiful, humorous, and ludicrous, and this evening she gave herself away for the amusement of the family, particularly for the sake of her good boy, James. She felt that she would never see him again, and although she held no claim to his bright manhood, yet her aged eyes would constantly moisten at the thought of his departure, for he had been so kind to her; she would miss him, but she would pray God to take care of him as long as her voice gave utterance.

The morning, with the sad leave-taking, came. James was a great favorite with all the family; servants and all were sorrow-smitten. Mr. Marly, his mother and sister were going with him as far as they could to return that day. Elma did not want to leave grandma, but they went to the porch, and James turned to tell them good-bye. Grandma put her trembling arms around him, and as her dim eyes let fall the drops of a last farewell, she faltered, "God bless you, my dear boy!" then turned away, and James heard a suppressed sob from her aged lips that fell upon his heart like lead. Elma extended her hand for good-bye, but his heart was too full for cool ceremony with his loved ones; he laid his arm around her, and kissed her smooth, fresh brow, and turned to go, then stopped, and said, "Elma, please bring me that little Bible you promised me." She had it near by, and carried it to him—heard his gentle "Thank

you," and then went back into the house to think, and look into her own feelings.

She sat near a window where the wildwood's checkered picture met her eye. There was the large, waving black-gum, with its rich, red October leaves, and the broad-spreading oak, with its changing robe from verdant hue to ominous brown. There were the proud, lofty pines, towering far above their forest fellows, full of dignified majesty and profound wailing; there the shrubs of finer texture, with the red, yellow, green, and brown arranged after the artistic fancy of unerring nature. Elma saw all this, but with a fixed eye and vague idea; her heart was questioning her prudence, and asking how she could dream refusal, when one so noble as James had asked to be cherished as the nearest and dearest. Then the question, "Am I as cool-hearted as my fancy leads me to believe? Is there no wild, deep interest there, that I have neglected to attend? Let me see: aye, I am right; there is one that I do not love, but ah! how I could love if the future should offer approval! But go back, spirit-image; I cannot treasure you until I know you have laid yourself upon the altar of my future." She was so lost to every thing but thought, that she did not hear the gate open or perceive the presence of any one until a "Pray, Miss" startled and aroused her.

A poor old man stood before her in rags. Cool as the weather was, he had on no coat; his shoes were, in plain words, pieces of leather, tied with pieces of string in various places to hold them together; his whole dress was simply a vestige of what it had been. His face did not present such an aged spectacle, but his hair was gray, so was his long beard, and he looked weary.

"Poor old man!" was the young girl's mental thought. "What will you have, good sir?" she asked.

"I am hungry, Miss, and tired."

Elma turned to grandma, and said, "Grandma, here is a poor old man out here; must he come in here to the fire?"

"Yes, my child, certainly; ask him in to rest." Elma then opened the door, and said, "Come in here, and I will fix you some breakfast."

When he had breakfasted, he asked who lived there; asked Elma's name, and grandma's name; told them he was hunting some relatives he had not seen in a long time, then thanked them abruptly, and left.

Notwithstanding his shabby appearance, he was a man of much unstudied elegance. He seemed in the wrong station, for he did not look like an ordinary loafer. Grandma said he was a spy, and ought to be looked after. Elma half agreed with grandma, but said he ought to be a good

man, for he had as fine a countenance as she ever saw. There was some mystery about the stranger, but the two roads may make a junction some day, and the tangled mesh will unwind and discover the silver cord.

CHAPTER VIII.

"DEAR me, mother, the weather is so cold!" said Mr. Marly, rushing into his mother's room; "'t is almost freezing out doors now."

"Robert, take care of yourself, my son, these cold December days. You should stay home by the fire, and not be riding about to take pneumonia. I should hate to see you laid up now, Robert."

"And I should hate very much to endure a spell of that sort. I rode over to see Mrs. Vergner this morning. Henry was wounded recently, and his mother is in agony about him; she is afraid he is worse than she has heard. Poor woman! 't is a pity she has but the one child; if he should be killed, she will utterly despair. Elma, are you afraid to venture over to spend the night with her?"

"O, Robert, 't is too cold! Why, son, 't would make the child sick. I am afraid to have my baby go out such weather as this."

"'T is not far, mother, and she can wrap up

warm. Mrs. Vergner will feel very grateful, I know."

"Yes, Robert, I know she would, but I don't want the child out this evening; I want her to stay with me."

"O well, certainly, mother, just as you prefer; but some time soon I would like for Elma to go over, as she is such a friend to Mrs. Vergner, and Mrs. Vergner to her."

"Yes, I'll remind her about it when the weather is not so bad."

That night, when the household was wrapped in slumber, grandma laid a cold hand on the young sleeper beside her, and called, "Elma, my child, light the lamp."

She sprang from bed instantly, touched a match, and brought a light to the bedside; but grandma was asleep again—asleep! her eyes were not entirely closed. Elma touched her hand; 't was cold as earth. She screamed for Mr. Marly, and soon they all stood over the breathless body of grandma. They all mourned her, for

"She was a pleasant angel here,
Before wings had been given
To bear her to that blissful sphere
Beyond the silver cloud so near
Her native heaven."

She was so aged, they had all known for a long time that she could not soothe and gladden them

with her benign presence very much longer; but Mr. Marly felt that the storm had laid his stately forest low; he had never known the hour when that good mother had been in his way. She was always considerate; she never intruded upon his rights or privileges. Because she was his mother, she did not want him to feel that he acted or insinuated disrespect, if he did not agree with her in every thing. She was not childish and exacting because she was old. She kept herself employed, because she was happy in employment; it made her feel sprightly to keep up her reading, and she had not entirely given up letter-writing. She tried to keep something new to think of, that her mind might keep its luster to the last. Christ stood at the top of life's mountain; she kept her eyes on the summit; when the cloud gathered, she praised God, for he made it gather; when it rained, she praised him, for he made it rain. When the long summer grew too warm for other people, grandma would say God knew best—she was willing to have it as he gave it; and when other people worried and fretted, she always tried to get out of the way, for she said if any thing was wrong, and could be remedied, there was much rashness in fermentation: if it was wrong, and could not be changed, 't was surely madness to fret about it, for any cross grew lighter as soon as resignation became a prop for it. Truly, "there

is no virtue more acceptable to God, and in practice more conducive to human happiness, than resignation to the divine will." Thus good grandma carried her perishing body to the top of the high hill for interment. She left her tomb in the hearts of her friends, and her spirit stepped from the summit of earth to the pavements of heaven—white-robed, blood-washed, and glorified, with her jewel adornings of rich and invigorated faith. But O! 't is a sad, aching thought and heavy trial to lay aside forever the presence of a venerable Christian parent. The words of a thoughtful mother are richer than rare jewels to the heart of a faithful, trusting son or daughter; and when age adds finer flavor, they are like bottles of well-kept wine—too valuable to be wasted on desert air, too holy to be poured into the ears of scoffers and scorners.

Mr. Marly mourned his loss with no slight grief, and Elma was fully as much bereaved; for, poor child! her last bosom friend was sleeping a hard sleep, from which no power of earth could call her, and she felt more alone than ever she had in life before. Mrs. Marly and Inez would miss her, too; but they were not bound by the long chain of memory and affection that knit the hearts of the silver-haired son and the young orphan girl.

The December evening was piercing and chilly, but the friends of Grandma Marly, far and near,

came to prove their last regard. Sweet burial of the chrysalis robe, embalmed with fragrant peace, glorified with good works, embroidered with finest gold! The cherub life that sustained thee hath stolen softly out through the little window of thy tabernacle, and with renewed youth, more lovely than earth's youth, flown far away through limitless space, to boundless and beautiful eternity. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

From the burial service Elma went with her anxious friend, Mrs. Vergner, who was a lady of wealth, position, intelligence, and actual merit. She was a widow, and felt all the cords and cables of her strength and womanhood binding around and depending upon her only son, Henry. Since she heard of his wound, she was almost frantic in deep anxiety; but she said little to evidence her uneasiness. Almost every hour she would determine to go to him; then would think, "Perhaps he will come, and I will not meet him." So she waited and watched, and asked God to strengthen her.

A few evenings after Elma went to stay with Mrs. Vergner, this lady came in the room from some out-door oversight, and said:

"Elma, dear, I know 't is warmer in here by the fire, but I think we can throw some shawls around us, and find a short walk pleasant; the weather is much more tolerable this evening."

"Certainly it is; I will enjoy a walk with you."

Mrs. Vergner was inspired with unusual sprightliness. She had looked and longed for her boy's presence, until she was taking the last plunge before despair, that was to risk her whole hope and expectation upon his immediate arrival. She was looking for him every step she took, and when they had gone far enough, and he still came not to meet them, she stopped, strained her eyes eagerly to look through the broad opening in the road, and then, with waning spirit, turned to go back. Elma perceived her sudden depression, and tried to comfort her with longer hope.

"Don't give up yet, Mrs. Vergner; perhaps he'll come to-night, any way."

"Perhaps; but, Elma, my craft of expectation is carrying more sail than its ballast of faith can sustain; 't would not take much of a gale to overset me. I'm completely heart-sick now; hope is too long deferred."

'T was almost dark when they reached the house. Mrs. Vergner sat down by the fire and rocked to and fro, with her face hidden in her hands. Elma stood at the bureau smoothing her hair, which fell in heavy, brown masses about her shoulders. The bell sounded for supper, and Mrs. Vergner left her chair to go to the dining-room, just as a shadow, noiseless as dew, fell in the doorway.

"Mind, mother, darling, you'll hurt me."

Those cautious words quelled her excitement and called forth the tender mother, for she only said, "My darling boy," and left her tears to speak her fond, deep joy. Her first impulse, as Henry thought, was a rush to his arms, and so he alluded to his wound to save him from any undue excitement. As soon as her overflowing joy would give words to her lips, Mrs. Vergner said:

"Come, Elma, help me to welcome my boy."

"Elma! Elma! Is this Elma Lee, the little girl I used to crown with wreaths of wild flowers?"

"The very same."

"I am glad to see you, Miss Elma; but you are mistaken—you are not the same little girl—you are Miss Lee, now; then you were my sweet little Elma."

"At any rate you have changed but little, Mr. Vergner. I am very glad you are home, to relieve your good mother's anxiety."

"Is that all? Won't you say you are glad to see me yourself, after these long years since we said good-bye?"

"Yes, that I will; I am glad to see you."

"Thank you; you have some of that little girl about you still. Mother, I retain my relish for good things to eat, and I heard your supper-bell."

"Yes, but perhaps a sick boy would like something extra prepared?"

"Not a bit of it, my good mother; with your

permission, we will see if there is not something good enough for me on the table."

Henry Vergner's wound was still very painful, but his mother's tender nursing would strengthen and restore him. He looked very pale, but home would do him good.

Elma went home next morning, but there was such a deep shadow there that at first she could hardly contain herself in the house. She had not been there before since grandma was carried away.

A few days after, Mrs. Vergner and Henry drove over. Inez was hardly herself. Elma had never seen her in company with gentlemen, and she concluded that now she was certainly the most sparkling beauty she had ever looked upon. What was it? Were they in love with each other, or was Inez only leading him on? Was it her love of admiration that made her so marvelously brilliant? "O no, no!" thought Elma, "there is more feeling in her happy face than mere coquetry, or even strong friendship could command." And Elma thought, too, as other maidens had done, "Were I plighted, I should dread her spell over the heart of my beloved."

Nearly every pleasant evening Mrs. Vergner and her son would ride out, and often would stop at Mr. Marly's; and every time Inez wore that same enchanting look. She was winning Henry Vergner; he loved beautiful women, but what was

she winning him for? One morning Mrs. Vergner sent for Elma to spend the day. Although Elma was less beautiful than Inez, she was no less attractive. Elma Lee was a woman full of heart, soul, and feeling. When once given, her life's tendrils would all cling to the same standard so long as it existed; she was true, faithful, and loving. Inez Ellrich was beautiful, and adored her own loveliness. She was a butterfly to sip from every flower-cup, and the prospect was that indiscrimination would cause her to drink a poison dew some day, and leave her to pine and die for her own temerity. In the evening, after Elma had spent the day with Mrs. Vergner, Henry carried her home. During the ride, he asked:

"Miss Elma, we are such old friends—now tell me, what is a test of woman's friendship?"

"Her sincerity, I think."

"But cannot deceit wear a beautiful mask, and walk abroad for sincerity?"

"Perhaps; but sincerity is consistent."

"Will a woman use coquetry with her friend?"

"I believe not."

"Why, then, are so many young ladies engaged heart and soul in this immense spoliation—this fearful slaughter of human hearts?"

"Ah! I can't tell; vanity, no doubt—but men share the fault with women."

"You think so."

"And so do you."

"I wish you would give me your idea."

"If I can: Young ladies make themselves agreeable; men like to be entertained, and they like to control. One visit, and another, and soon a man's vanity makes him use every blandishment in his power—all that eyes can speak and lips can utter —to win a woman's regard, her admiration, her love. He persuades himself that he is sincere, until, having won, he finds the chains of plighted feeling wearing heavily."

"And then?"

"Does he not often go back, and say, Let us sever these bonds? Or perhaps the lady perceives the change, without ever knowing the cause, and is left to regret and surmise."

"Yes, I think this often happens."

"Again, when he finds his freedom to win other hearts fettered, does he not begin to analyze his heart's emotions, and prove to himself that his effort to exalt himself to a divinity in the eyes of the lady, having accomplished its end, is now impoverished, having no substance to feed on? Vanity is the whole incentive, and vanity is wretched, save in universal conquest."

"You do not talk like girls of your age, usually, Elma. Have you learned all this from experience?"

"O no! not a bit of it. I never had any of

this sort of experience. I know nothing of coquetry myself, but I have seen a good deal."

"You would not make a good impostor, Elma. I don't think you will have to walk back when you promise."

"No, my good friend, I don't feel that I will. I think I will know when the surest, strongest cord of my being is touched, and then I shall not hesitate to reply in tones of strict and faithful candor. I shall not think it dishonor, or that I show myself too easily won, when I promise to love, honor, and obey with one solicitation only. I would hate to become the wife of any man, knowing that I had been engaged to a half-dozen others."

"You are right, Elma, little friend; I am glad to see you evince firmness of character. Now, Elma, I have a secret for your keeping: Did you ever hear Inez speak of me?"

"Not particularly."

"Did you know that Inez has promised to be Mrs. Vergner, jr.?"

"No, indeed, I did n't; but I hoped she had."

"Why, Elma?"

"Because—I don't know why."

"You don't know, then, that she has quarreled with me?"

"What?"

"Yes, actually; I am ashamed to acknowledge

it—and from such a cause. When Inez came here to live (I knew her before), I soon found that I loved her. We were engaged before I went into the army. I have known you, you know, almost since you commenced to walk, and she is foolish enough to believe that I want to make a transfer of my affections since you have come home, because I have spoken of you very often in the time you have been absent. Now, don't let Inez know I have spoken to you of this, Elma; I want to give her a short lesson. I love her most tenderly, and she ought to know it. She has an impulsive, impetuous nature, that needs to be disciplined, and I want her to think of a few words she has said, without knowing that I am thinking of or caring about her; but, little Elma, there are words you may be able to say some day. You haven't a brother, and I haven't a sister in this world. I have petted and caressed you from my boyhood, and you may retrospect these things with Inez in such a way that she will never suspect your information, and perhaps you may make her confidence in me permanent. 'T is not natural that she should believe me, for if she thinks as I do, she knows 't is a point of honor for me to defend my honest pledge; for as you have expressed, I believe in honest pledges, and I would not make one that I, on my part, could not sustain."

"I am sorry, sorry; and, be sure, if I find it in

my power to aid you in any way, I will consider it a pleasure. Do not keep Inez suffering too long; you can mend the matter much better by more zealous affection. Be careful, dear friend; don't go too far. Inez certainly should not impose a rein upon your heart's oldest friendships, but you must bind her more closely to you by proving your steadfastness in your allegiance both to her and your friends. Don't make the matter too serious, now; laugh it away and let it go, like mist in all-absorbing sunlight. We are here now—you will come in?"

"No, I believe not."

"Yes, come in only a minute, and call for Inez."

"Elma!"

"Don't stop—come, go into the house."

"No, I don't intend to go this evening; 'tis late, and 't will be near night when I get home. Good-bye—I will follow your advice in a few days."

CHAPTER IX.

"Forget thee? No! As well might dread
The sun, in his high flight,
Would fail o'er earth his rays to shed,
And leave the world in night."

MR. MARLY'S home was upon one of the most direct lines of travel in the State of Louisiana, and as soldiers were passing constantly, 't was a very usual occurrence for them to stop there for the night. One evening in March—a rainy, blustery evening—Elma Lee sat in her own room, up-stairs, taking a faithful labor-review of her books. She had devoted most of the winter to this very important duty, and was still working. There was conversation going on in the sitting-room below, but 't was a matter of no consequence to her; she was accustomed to voices there, and did not even surmise who had stopped in. When the bell rang for supper, which was early, on account of the uncomfortable weather, she stepped to the glass, smoothed back her soft, wavy hair, and simply banded it back from her brow, letting

it fall naturally around her shoulders. She had on a dark-blue dress, that fitted to exactness, and gave a most delicate shade to her naturally fair face. Setting her collar all right, and looking like the little divinity of neatness, she went down quietly, as usual, to the dining-room. There were two or three strangers at the table, and her usual seat was occupied. Mr. Marly, noticing her presence, said:

"Come round to this seat, daughter, by me."

The visitors were sitting with their backs to her as she entered the room, but as she passed to the other side of the table, and courteously acknowledged their presence with "good evening," she blushed, and looked away, then looked again as one of them said "Miss Lee!"

"Dr. Monteith."

"And do you recognize me in this shadow?"

"You are not well, doctor?"

What made the soft cadence of the girl's voice so sad, and so all-forgetful of the presence of others, for that one instant? And why did the doctor's eyes grow so brilliantly tender as he replied:

"No, I am sent home to get well, or to die. Seeing you to-night is a pleasure I had not anticipated. I am very glad to see you looking so much better than when I saw you before. Do you hear from your friend, Miss Viria, often?"

"No, very rarely since her brother was killed.

She is spirit-broken, for he was a very brilliant young man; and she was so proud of his attainments, and so happy to call him brother!"

"Her loss is of no ordinary order, for Edgar was of a most superior mold—poor boy! I love his memory, but I grieve to unwrap the death-mantle, since I cannot recall him, for 't is a painful and tender wound in my life's retrospect."

"Are you going to return to Magnolia Forest?"

"No, Miss, I will go to my father's; I need my good mother's care now."

When supper was over, Mr. Marly had a bright fire in the parlor, and asked Inez and Elma to go in, and make the time pleasant with music; they had an excellent piano, and both girls performed well. Elma introduced Miss Ellrich to Dr. Monteith, and was not surprised to see that magic witchery of loveliness that she had seen before in the presence of Henry Vergner. Dr. Monteith was a man of splendid elegance, and there was that of magnificent beauty about his face that made a mind retain him forever if he was once received. He was now, in appearance, a comparative wreck, but his marvelously fine eyes made him transcendant still. Beauty itself is power, and beauty is enhanced when refined purity becomes the great sun of the soul. It has its influence over the most savage heart; the half-civilized barbarian will bow to it, and the enlightened and Christianized

often forget the commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," and fall down to worship and adore the godly workmanship of the god, instead of God himself. O 't is a wild worship, this consecrating of the human heart to the adoration of flesh-and-blood perfection! and how we all writhe in just such soul-conflagration! how often we build our thrones, and set our lovely images upon them! Ah! how all-inspiring they are to our poor, weak spirits! But the Father is jealous of this stolen rapture, and silently draweth the lamp away, to leave our life-world in darkness. This hard struggle was coming to Elma Lee; she was pulling back, but fate was pushing her on. The pit was opening, and she was in the dense shrubbery, just one step removed from the unsightly chasm. We are paying these sacrificial rights all along through the years of our lives; we are standing on the brink of the critical abyss, when ecstatic bliss is almost suspending human sense and human judgment; the glistening spray of all-diffusing and all-fragrant joy may bespangle our sheeny mantles, then leave them to the drenching rain, to desecration and decomposition, while the serpent is ready with fiery tongue to hiss and bite, or the asp, beneath the deluding grass, lying in wait to sting, and stupefy, and destroy.

The next morning both girls were at the breakfast-table. Inez found Dr. Monteith so truly en-

tertaining, that he was worth trying to make an impression with, so she did not fail to make a most attractive morning toilet. Elma wore the same dark-blue dress; her hair was arranged in the most tasty and becoming order, and her blue eyes had borrowed a half-eager, half-anxious, wondering light that they never wore before. Inez joined in the easy table-talk with a happy grace and lovableness, while Elma, five times as unfathomable in knowledge, was dumb—so mute in seeming imperturbation.

"Ah! the brilliant black eye
May in triumph let fly
All its darts without caring who feels 'em;
But the soft eye of blue,
Though it scatter wounds too,
Is much better pleased when it heals 'em."

Dr. Monteith looked much refreshed, but was much emaciated from illness. His large, luminous, dark eyes were full of a soft-speaking expression, and Inez knew that they were interested as well as interesting; but Inez did not know that Dr. Monteith asked Mr. Marly to say to Miss Lee, after the stage came in sight, that he wished to say good-bye to her; and Inez did not find out that Elma thought Dr. Monteith would need a lunch for that cold day's travel, and that she really saw it attended to. Dr. Monteith's home was not more than fifty miles away, and that evening he expected

to sit at the paternal fireside. His glad mother would embrace him with a full heart and dewy eyes; his proud old father would pat him on the shoulder, and say, "Well, my boy, I'm glad to get you home again with soul and body together."

Elma stood at the front window of her room, looking down upon the traveler as he seated himself in the stage. She saw the stage start, but continued standing at the window, until an old negro servant asked:

"What you be doin' dar, Missy? Does you mind to stay at dat place all day? Specs you wants to be gwine wid de black-eyed stranger."

Aunt Judy's thick lips wore an expression of triumphant good humor, and she chuckled out a good, cheerful laugh, as if she had drawn some secret to the daylight, but Elma replied quietly enough:

"I was just thinking, Aunt Judy, how glad they will all be when he gets home; but they will be sorry, too, for he is so changed."

"And dat's it, is it? Didn't know but you was sorter lubbin' de sick sojer!"

"Why, Aunt Judy!" exclaimed Elma, forced to laugh.

"Well, neber you mind ole Aunty, honey. I knows I lubs yer, child; you's always been a mighty good child, and you knows how to take a body. I use' to nuss you when you was n't big

'nuff to laf hardly—when you was mighty little thing; and somehow I can't help pleggin' you a little bit sometimes. I'se plegged yer mar lots o' times, long 'nuff 'fore she eber see yer own par, Massy Lee. Missy was one ob de best 'omans eber was in dis world; she was al'ays mighty good to dis nigger, an' I al'ays lub you, child, 'cause you's her baby."

Dr. Monteith was at his father's door with the nightfall. They did not hear the stage when it drove up and stopped; so he opened the gate cautiously, and walked silently up the shadowy walk to the doorway. He placed his foot upon the dear old step, upon which he had so often seated himself after a lively romp with his brothers, and then went softly to the door of his mother's room, from which a light was emitted into the hall. He peeped in, and they did not see him; but the sweet picture was there, the hallowed picture of his life. His only single sister sat near the door; a step forward, and he had his arms round her neck. One glance upward, and then, with a quick scream of joy, they were all eager to welcome the invalid home. The exquisite joy of welcoming a loved one is too holy and ardent to be evaporated and weakened with word-efforts; bliss is better felt than told, and better imagined than written.

As soon as Dr. Monteith became rested from his long journey, he seemed to gain strength rap-

idly; and if he had availed himself of the privilege of his discharge—for he was found wholly unfit for the hard life of a soldier—his life might have constituted a good, long web of useful diligence and virtue. But he was proud: everybody who saw a young man at home said he ought to be in the army; other boys were away; and, sick or well, all the young men must go, or be taunted with cowardice, skulking, etc., etc. Dr. Monteith could not wear the shadow of dishonor; he anticipated the result of his exposure in the field, but, as soon as he was able to do duty again, he joined the army and went into service.

He was not sorry to find himself near Mr. Marly's the next evening after he left home; for he started in the evening in order to make that point the next day. 'T was June, a bright, beautiful day, too; and Elma had gathered beautiful flowers, and called a little negro girl to go with her to garland her mother's and grandma's grave. She had twined the flowers about them, and then sat down by her mother's tomb, with one hand resting on it, the other lying carelessly in her lap; her head was leaning against the cold sepulcher, and her thoughts were wandering far, and high as mortal dream may go. Her heart now worded but one prayer, and that was, "Thy will, O Father; and if I lose the hopes of earth, let me not wrestle with the blackness of despair,

but be lifted up to cling to the horns of thy altar. O God—my Father!"

Her dress was simple, as usual: a plain white muslin, with a blue ribbon around her neck, to which was attached James's watch. A neat straw flat was on the ground beside her; her glory of hair all down, but well combed. She did not know that any human being was contemplating her; the little girl with her was wandering among the many graves that consecrated that little tract of earth; and not until Dr. Monteith bent over her, did she become aware of his proximity.

"My darling, I love you!"

Why, Rudolph Monteith! you, so dignified, so stately, so apt to make every thing conform to the exactness of order; you, who had studied a love-speech, of sublime comparisons, and beautiful similes, to think you would have surprised yourself into such emphatic, strong words!

Elma Lee was not startled, or alarmed. Why should she be? That voice was the one, of all the earth, she most rejoiced to hear. She looked up—her face was full of illumination; her lips parted to speak; then she turned back to the tomb, and wept as though her spirit would ebb away in tears.

Dr. Monteith took her hand in his, and said:

"Tell me, my own darling, why it is you weep—you are mine; such love as I give you takes

no refusal; little have we ever been together, but I give you, next to my God, the devotion of my life. Tell me, Elma Lee, will you give me this hand, and let me have you, for weal or for woe, so long as life lasteth? Tell me, Elma; suspense is torture now."

"Dr. Monteith, I should not make you my confessor; but I see into my deepest soul, and tell you now, I feel but one regret, and that is, I love you too well."

And you, Elma Lee, where is all your prudent calculation? Where are the credentials of him to whom you have given your young being, ah! Elma Lee?

Credentials! Behold the man! is *he* not enough to reässure all doubt? he, noble as nobility, proving his virtuous independence of character, in every word, in every movement, in every aim?

We do not blame you, Elma Lee, for you two had exchanged jewels, the rare jewels that a human being would give all the world to own, after having deserted them to obtain the mammon of the earth, earthy. We all live for love. Convince a human being that he is not loved, and he becomes callous of surroundings; he may work in the exciting train for fame, but when the evening sun draws the mantle of night over his refulgent face, when the wine of excitement is exhausted, and he is left alone to his own gloomy self, his

manhood laments, his hope-banner embraces the dew of earth, and he would give wealth, position, and fame for the sound of a loving voice and the light of a tender eye, that he might listen, spell-bound, and know that the musical tone is his own, and the enchanting radiance of the soft eye beaming for him only. We must all live in this exclusive predominance; we must love some one, and some one must love us, or we awaken to the coldest sensation that exists between happiness and the death-bed. We know this from the teachings of imagination, for, if a momentary shadow intrudes to cover the luminary of human confidence and human affection, what volumes of thought are read in a twinkling of time! how utterly void is the sanctum of hope! and misery becomes so full of suppuration that the keenest and deepest wound from the lancet would be no pain, compared to the intense weight of the stifling fever of agony.

"Bless you, Elma Lee, my gentle dove, bless you! When this great crisis of war and battle is over, may I come again, and claim my lovely bride! Honor impels me to go again to the post of hardship and danger; but, darling, keep studying and improving, and the time will pass pleasantly with you, while I, in the arms of exciting duty, will brave the time out, and welcome gladly, if I make the journey through, the hour that will restore me to you and home."

That night Dr. Monteith had a long talk with Mr. Marly. Mr. Marly was opposed to any engagement with Elma during the war, but finally gave in. Dr. Monteith gave him references, that he might investigate his family standing and character. Mr. Marly took them, but said he would make no use of them, because he was not ignorant of his position. Mr. Marly had two fears: the one was that Monteith might be killed, and Elma would be a widow and never a wife, for he knew her deep nature, and felt how great a shock her feelings would sustain if once wholly concentrated; the other apprehension was the failure of the doctor's health and the approach of consumption, for he had been discharged on account of weak lungs; besides, Mr. Marly had other plans for Elma, that she had not suspected.

Notwithstanding all this, he did finally give his consent, but reserved in his own mind one proviso: that was, to object to Elma's marriage with Dr. Monteith, if he should return seriously affected. He was looking the picture of health then, but no telling what a winter of exposure would do.

For once, Inez thought Elma beautiful. But hers was a hard, selfish nature, full of envy. She conjectured the relation existing between Dr. Monteith and Elma Lee, and determined, because she had failed to make him kneel at her

shrine of loveliness, to interrupt the even tenor of their love-affair, if possible.

Next morning, Elma would not trust herself at the breakfast-table; she felt seriously the danger to which her friend was going, and knew the lines of sadness would hold their force upon her features; but when the family and Dr. Monteith went into the dining-room, she went to the parlor, and when he came in, afterward, she tried to keep up a bright, brave face, until he began making preparations to leave; then she could bear no more. Dr. Monteith bade Mrs. Marly and Inez good-bye at the table, purposely that he might have the last few minutes of time with Elma. When the sad good-bye came, Elma's voice failed her. She gave him her hand without speaking, looked up into his dear, beautiful eyes, and turned away; but he still retained her hand, and, although his own soul was stirred to its fountain-depths, said: "Do n't, my darling—do n't send me away with tears, but smiles!"

But words were useless now: he had to go, to keep his own eyes dry; and Elma went to her room, and locked herself within, until she could control the intensity of feeling, that she was blushing to acknowledge even to her own soul. Ah! there are souls that seem constituted to dwell together; a spirit-thread seems to draw them near each other, even when others call them

strangers. There are those to whom one meeting is as a beautiful revelation of the hearts and minds that dwell within—to whom one look is a talismanic stamp, an eternal stereotype of splendor, veiled with rose-ashes; for—

"There lurks a dread in all delight,
A shadow near each ray,
That warns us then to fear their flight
When most we wish their stay."

CHAPTER X.

"We sat in our grief; we waited for morning in our tears."

WE had high hopes for Vicksburg. We called it the impregnable city, with its immense breast-works and superior natural fortifications. Why, of course Vicksburg would stand the siege! We reverenced the name—'twas a mountain of unclimbed proportions, in our great hope nine times fortified by the fabulous Styx, with savage Cerberus standing guard, and the horrid Eumenides striking terror to the hearts of the invaders! 'T was hard to believe that our hope was a fallen star, whose light had left the roof of God's temple forever. Ah, me! Come on, sleep, and "seal our swimming eyes;" but, sound! you may travel slowly, for you have nothing but defeat to herald. O ye sons of Neptune! if ye had thought to build your mountain of heaped-up trouble and perplexity instead of piling Ossa upon Pelion, perhaps ye might have raised a stairway to heaven; but go, regret—we've no time for tears; we must

fill the gap with strength and fortitude instead of despair.

Yes, they said Vicksburg had fallen into conquering hands; but we would not be quite convinced until the soldiers commenced passing, with their parols in their pockets and their hearts in their mouths, because they had toiled so faithfully and lost so much. Their efforts had been so woefully misplaced, their rights so vainly contested, and their hopes so crushed and blighted! But repining will not help us to consolation; it will not breathe the breath of life into our breathless friends, or make them sleep the long sleep more sweetly. There is life left to some, and our spirits are born and plumed in the lofty hall of freedom. The sun will not hide behind the cloud forever. The 4th of July, 1863, commemorates our sad misfortune, and adds a brighter crown to immortalize the brows of the gallant General Grant; but it cannot become an anniversary monument of our departed glory, for we hold our altars in the sanctuaries of our souls, and burn thereon the incense of undying independence of character, and if this is a nation's banner, it will never be destroyed; though the winds and tempests rend it in twain, the fragments will wave together, and continue to honor the worshipers that planted it.

This is a little thing, a mere drop in the bucket

of national fame and defeat; so, turn away, and leave our "wreaths to wither upon the cold bank" of the flowing Mississippi. Let us go and plant flowers upon the little hills of the quiet woodland, and make a world of beauty instead of a crimson plain. Come, lament no more; our throats are dry and aching, our eyes red and burning. We cannot help it; we 've done our best.

Dr. Monteith was at Vicksburg, and, of course, one in the train of parols. He stopped at Mr. Marly's on his return, but Mr. Marly and Elma were both from home. This was a disappointment of the superlative order of intensity, for to see Elma was the great dream of his thought. That night he wrote a short letter and addressed it to Elma, leaving it on the mantle, against the wall, so that the superscription would be perceived by any one entering the room. Unfortunately, after he left, Inez had need of something in that room, and, seeing the letter, slipped it in her pocket, with the intention of destroying it; but, hard as that beautiful woman was, she could not reconcile the point with her feelings; so she laid it away, thinking it was not quite so bad to retain it as to destroy it. Not long after this, a schoolmate, to whom Elma had been much attached, was to be married. Elma was solicited as bridemaid. The home of the prospective bride was twenty or thirty miles away, but Elma went.

She did not feel curiosity enough to ask who was to be her attendant in this capacity. She knew there were a good many soldiers through the country then, from the surrendered city, but her entire sympathy was with one of whom she had not heard for long, weary months. Imagine, then, her surprise, when the ceremony was over, to behold Dr. Monteith in the assembly. What a moment! The world seemed to spring away, and her brain become but a spinning-ball suspended in air. The supper-hour was over, and yet he had not been near.

Elma was beautiful, so her friends said, but she was strangely happy and unhappy. There was a miserable foreboding away down in her heart, and she sat down and wondered what it all meant.

Immediately her friend, the bride, who was a lively, happy-hearted creature, went to her and caught her hand, saying, "Elma, I want sweet music to-night, and sad; come, play for me. Have you forgotten that piece I used to pretend to cry over—'The Favored Guest'?"

"No; but, Jennie—"

"No ifs and ands, if you please, my dear; do come and sing just as sweetly as you can."

Elma went to the piano, and when she had finished, Jennie told her that she had been fooling her always before, for that night she sang with so much soul and power, that she liked to have made

her cry, sure enough. Indeed, she did sing with her soul, then; the soft, trembling tones mellowed into the deepest pathos, and Jennie's mirth was just the required stimulant to rouse the guests from the deep feeling they were entertaining. As she finished the last lines—

> Ah, no! with me love's smiles are past:
> Thou hadst the first, thou hadst the last—

she perceived Dr. Monteith near her; one instant their eyes met, the next he extended his hand and led her from the piano. His first question, when they were alone, was:

"You did not answer my note; why?

"What note, doctor?"

"The one I left at Mr. Marly's."

"When did you leave a note there?"

"As I returned from Vicksburg."

"I am sorry to tell you I have not had the pleasure of seeing it."

"Indeed! Well, 't is a matter of no consequence now, since I see you; but it might have caused much trouble, for there is a rumor out that hurt me very much, and if I had received an answer to my little letter, I would have known before now that it was false. I was afraid to speak to you, my darling, for fear I was lost to hope."

"How strangely you talk, my good friend; what do you mean?"

"Elma, I have a right to the question—were you ever engaged to one Henry Vergner?"

"Never."

"Did you ever love him?"

"Yes, doctor, I love him yet; he is one of the best friends I ever had."

"And you said you love me—O Elma!"

"Indeed I told you truth, Dr. Monteith. I said I love you, and I say I love Mr. Vergner, and I think I always will; but, Dr. Monteith, I will relieve your jealousy, and appreciate it. Henry Vergner is one of my life-long friends, and I hold him dear for his true merit and his undeviating kindness. You, Dr. Monteith, are my sovereign self. I am not able to reduce you to an ordinary level with my friends. When I think of you, I look up, and you are trying to repay all this trust with suspicion and jealousy."

"Elma, forgive me; but the whole seemed from such a reliable source. Miss Ellrich insinuated that such was the case, and I heard it elsewhere."

"Well, my friend, you have my refutation of the whole; whom will you believe?"

"You, my darling, you. I am not ashamed to acknowledge my jealousy, for it is a compliment to the value I place upon you."

"But, doctor—"

"What is it, Elma?"

"Nothing! nothing—only I would not like this experiment very often."

"Elma, are you hurt with me? How could I help my own agony? I did not know what step to take."

"You believe what I have told you?"

"Every word."

"Then we need not speak of it again."

A short time after this, Dr. Monteith was at Mr. Marly's. Elma had occasion to bring her folio in the parlor, and when she was through her search after some little item she wished to show Dr. Monteith, she laid it on the center-table. She left the room soon after, and, as she was going out, the doctor said, "I shall claim entertainment from this while you are absent," laying his hand on the folio. Elma replied frankly, "You are welcome to the entertainment, doctor;" but when she came back a few minutes after, and went to the back of his chair, she found him with a letter that she did not care he should read. He had just taken it up, read the commencement—"Dear Elma," and then the signature, "Affectionately, Henry Vergner." To one of Rudolph Monteith's exclusive temperament this was not quite reserved enough, but he would have thought little about it if Elma had not that instant taken it from his hand. He looked up in surprise and doubt; he had seen too much, and yet too little. The letter

was of recent date, and of course if a single mysterious brick is laid in the pavement of courtship, a lover is always ready to name it treachery. Rudolph loved with no passing love. Elma, in his estimation, was so lovely as to be loved by every one: what if another should win her from him? 'T was a dreadful thought to him, and distrust blazed in his eyes, and the unreasonable fiend writhed and struggled with his soul. He stood up from his chair, and folded his arms across his bosom. Elma never saw him so supremely princely before; there was untold grandeur in his look of injured confidence, and Elma, instead of looking the confused culprit, looked full upon him, into his proud eyes, unflinchingly, until he spoke.

"And art thou false? Thou, in whom my soul trusted? thou, the one of all the earth whom I would delight to honor and cherish? O Elma Lee!"

"False! No, Dr. Monteith, I believe that is not my character." Her cheeks were flushed now, and her eyes like diamonds in their fervor. "False! The word sounds rather out of place. Do you want to read this letter?"

He hesitated a minute—"I do."

"Here," she said, handing it to him; "but stop, listen! That letter is from Mr. Vergner, as you have seen. It relates to his heart's own confidence. It has no bearing with me whatever

farther than this: we have known each other as long as I can remember any one, and having no sister, he has simply taken me into the confidence of a sister, and intrusted to my keeping the dearest dream of his heart. I have no right to reveal it, and I leave you to determine the nice point of honor."

"Elma, I do not believe you could deceive; I do not think you capable of deceit. Here is the letter. I have no right to read a letter pertaining to the sacred confidence of another. I am very much hurt with myself; the simplest and the strongest proof I can offer you is to humbly beg your pardon. The instant I beheld the signature of that letter—having heard what I had, and you taking it from me so hurriedly—my soul, devoted as it is to you, became darkened like the night-time; I felt as if the sun had gone down, never to rise again. Love is always in error, and I believe

> "Was never yet without
> Its pain, and agony, and doubt."

Let me repeat earnestly, that my gentlest, purest, and strongest affection has been bestowed upon you for good and forever. You are the only choice of my heart, and cannot be supplanted by any thing of mortal mold. All else of earth sits in the dim distance when compared with the hope I have

in you. I feel how blank my life would be without you, and I am always fearing I might lose you. Once more let me ask you to forgive me."

"I do forgive you, Dr. Monteith. Appearances were certainly not in my favor, but, my dearest friend, I do dislike to see you so soon shaken. Rudolph Monteith, do you mean to act this way forever? Do you think to give way to every spasm of suspicion without even an effort to guard your feelings? You will wreck your own peace, besides making me very uncomfortable. My dear friend, I have never had a thought to deceive you since I first met you, and you ought to remember—

"Not from thee a wound should come,
No, not from thee.
Cold triumph first to make this heart thine own,
And then the mirror break where fixed thou shinest alone."

"No, my treasure, 't will not be so always; when I know you are my very own—when the world greets you by my name, and my love is the great wall of your life's protection—then, Elma, you will forget that I was ever afraid of losing you; or if you remember it at all, 't will be with a fond smile of sweetest confidence."

That same evening several young ladies were at Mr. Marly's, and as the weather was very fine, and the distance short, they all agreed upon a walk

to the country burial-ground. Elma thought several times during the evening that Dr. Monteith was unusually pale; and after they stopped among the tombs, as he leaned against one of the white monuments, he turned his head wistfully, and looking upon her, simply pointed to the crimson fluid just expelled from his mouth. He was attacked with hemorrhage, and just then Elma felt that the mower had lifted the scythe, and that the garner was open to receive the first precious fruits of her life. O hand of death! O voice of the grave! They who have seen thee laid upon their treasures, and heard thee wooing the spirits of their beloved, know why the living agonize when the lamp begins to flicker in the counter atmospheres of life and death. All of them turned to enter the church, that the sufferer might rest; but Elma, now when she most wished strength, became almost helpless; she made a few steps, then, almost full fainting, sank upon the ground. Dr. Monteith saw her quietly as she suffered, and turning back, took her fan from her hand, and forgot his own necessity, until she looked up and waved her hand toward the church, saying softly, "There, doctor, go; take care of yourself; I will soon be well."

After awhile he was better, and insisted upon walking back with the girls. Elma did not think any exertion prudent, so she managed to send ahead for conveyance, which was soon waiting for them.

They were in the sitting-room; Dr. Monteith was lying upon a sofa. He called Elma; she drew a chair nearer the sofa, and sat down. He took her hand in his, and said, with deep fervor, "My darling, do you know that this hemorrhage is ominous of trouble?"

She masked her own anxieties, and replied, "I hope not, doctor."

"Elma, I would hate to die now. Our stars are shining darkly, my love, but God grant they may brighten, and the shadows evaporate."

What Elma Lee felt cannot be written; she was sick with anxiety. She had never imagined that Dr. Monteith would live to old age; or, if she did, 't was an apprehensive, fitful dream. She tried to push the anticipation as far into the future as possible, but now she felt that the trial might come very soon. 'T is an agonizing hour in which we rob happiness of the sun and moon—in which all the glow of strength and vitality begin to pale, and leave us in the dim hour between daylight and night-fall. When gladness might wear the rose-wreathed garment of youthful affection, 't is a torturing touch that changes it and substitutes the dead lilies.

"Elma," he said, "this one evening's experience has made you a stronger home in my deepest soul. I love you more and more, better and better. I am sorry you have had to sustain such a test, but

had you evinced less sympathy in my calamity, I might have rated your strength of feeling at a lower estimate; but now I raise it higher, and I feel very proud and very humble."

O joy, grief, parting—individually so unlike, still so nearly blended! Joy gives us flowers, grief drinks their nectar, and parting wastes them to decay; each blooming sweet comes to our senses but to be lost when sweetest. Ah, nature! why dost thou adorn perfection but to see it perish? Why permit our souls to clamber up the lofty oaks, only to fall, to be bruised, and trampled? God knoweth—this is his reason. Kiss the rod, O mortal! 't will help thee to bear its weight; bless the stripes, they may be marks of favor; for "Resignation can alleviate the distress of this life, calm its varied troubles, pour a ray of comfort to enliven the vale of tears through which our pilgrimage must be made, and cheer with consoling expectation the gloom that lowers over the pillow of death."

CHAPTER XI.

WE will make a long stride, and cross the bloody river at a bound. After the battle! after the war! and

"Night closed around the conqueror's way,
And lightnings showed the distant hill
Where those who lost that dreadful day
Stood few and faint, but fearless still.

The last sad hour of freedom's dream
And valor's task moved slowly by,
While mute they watched till morning beam
Should rise and give them light to die.
There's yet a world where souls are free,
Where tyrants taint not nature's bliss;
If death that world's bright opening be,
O who would live a slave in this?"

Yes, the dreadful war was over—had bled itself to death—the last victory had been chronicled, and the last defeat lamented. Lamented! Ah! lamented with a heaviness that did not get lighter; lamented with tears that still continued to flow. The Southern heart was bleeding; the Southern

soul was burning, for too tightly did conquering hordes draw the cords of oppression. What did they seek? Union. Then they are pleased with muddy mixtures. They cried justice, and tried to put a black calf in the gubernatorial chair, that was only able to say Bah! when we begged protection. Bless the tyrants, but bless them by drawing your robes of honor close about you, that they may not become contaminated. Bless them, but do so by holding them in their low sphere. They cant of peace, and claim power; they call loudly for freedom, and would fain make our honest servants believe that freedom means social equality. Every thinking mind is willing to accord the same privilege in protection to all freemen, white or black: that certainly is the law of righteousness. But here the waves stop, and barricade the high-roads and by-paths, for the law of social equality is written in the door-ways of our dwelling-places, and stereotyped upon the stern rocks of our hearts. So far as kindness is concerned, we do feel more true kindness for our old servants than any other class or sect of people, for they were not the servants of a day, but of years and years. We wish them pure happiness in their respective stations, and we would do more to relieve them, if in honest distress, than any of the croaking cranes that would like to exchange their plumage for that of the crow. Every intelligent white man knows

that it will require years of study, observation, and experience to make a legislative body the walls of strength and wisdom that they should be; and yet a few white faces have forgotten the pride of their nation, and have tried to crush into unseen atoms the bright luminary of honest principle and intelligent manhood, in order to draw around them the sunless satellites of ignorance. How we have been smothered with a motley crew, picked up from the rabble—here, there, anywhere—illiterate, and of course unworthy the high honor and noble responsibility of legislators! They would never have expected such a confidence; they would never have aspired to the sublime impudence to which they have been pointed without graceless instigators. What is there in this life more honorable and more honored than a true and faithful administrator of the rights and interests of the people he represents? An honorable body of legislators would be very far from passing laws that might have a tendency to humiliate the national pride of their country. We have suffered many indignities from depraved laws, but God is a just God; we may trust him. He is the great Lawgiver, and although he seems afar off sometimes, suffering a perverted rule to reign over us, as if he were roaming carelessly a long journey, yet will he return and breathe upon the wilderness, to make the rose of Sharon bud and blossom, while

the white lily dispenses soothing fragrance. O such a God as ours! We may look up and smile a heavenly smile, while his hand is hard upon us, for our miseries are but the gauntlet between earth and heaven. Patience just a little longer; we are not sufficiently tried for the diamond world; our gold is not pure enough yet to make the golden goblets for the incense altar. Burn on, O fire of furnace-heat! the dross will all leave after awhile, and the pure metal will shine as a star by night. Rub on, ye diamond-washers! for our jewels are growing brighter, and soon they will shame your vengeance. You do not know the gems you are scourging, but eternity's jewel-case will be richer, perhaps, and there "no thief breaks through and steals."

For a long time we have said nothing of Viria Vane, but as soon as her brother could get home from the army he took her and their mother to Nova Scotia, that they might escape the trouble and confusion of an unsettled government; besides their home was darkened—one came not who went forth in youth's brightest manhood. Viria could never get over the death of Edgar, the idolized brother of all her happy girlhood. She had grown frail and delicate, and a change was essential to her restoration, and in Nova Scotia they had dear friends to welcome them from the sounds of defeat and trial to the arms of love and sympathy. This

was a most happy change for Viria; her spirits became more buoyant, more like her own, and happiness seemed ready again to fold her wings and rest over her bright head. She found two gay cousins at her aunt's, to make time flit by on zephyr wings, and there, too, she often met a cousin of theirs, who was not related to her. Hector Hazlitt was a minister. As a man he was handsome, talented, commanding; as a Christian, pure, meek, and earnest. He had just graduated, was in rather delicate health from hard study, and was home for a short rest. To one who knew Viria, it does not seem strange that she found in this young minister all her heart sought. She had been very vivacious, and was still a lively, animated girl, but the presence of Mr. Hazlitt subdued all but the good, and left that of her fine character predominant. She was tender and affectionate in her every-day associations, and how devoted such a temperament becomes when all absorbed by one worthy object! Viria did not know herself how far her heart's caprice, as she was pleased to think it, had already led her, but 't was so far that it was too late ever to turn away and be glad again—alone.

One evening the girls were dressing for company, when one of Viria's cousins took her to task for not adorning herself with ear ornaments.

"Viria, I do think you would look better with ear-rings. Why do n't you wear some?"

"Because I think they look heathenish."

"Now you heard Hector say that."

"No, I did n't."

"Well, you and he assimilate in your ideas the most completely of any two young people I ever saw. 'T is a pity you are both fettered. You ought to marry; you would make a very circumspect minister's wife."

"Your ruse to gain my confidence, my dear cousin, shall succeed in part. I see you wish to find out whether I am likely to be circumscribed by some old flame at home. To that I reply, frankly, that I am not trammeled; and, since hunting husbands is the forte of our generation, I may add that I am fully prepared to appreciate some wandering star of perfection. But listen! Who is that just arrived?"

"O that is Kitty—Hector's sweet little Kitty from Halifax!" And away sped her cousin, without seeing how deeply she had wounded Viria—deep and bloodless—and she sank upon a lounge, and cried: "I am weary now; I wish that I might die!" But no one suspected the child's depth of feeling, not even her devoted mother. She lost all real interest in amusement, and would rather never to have seen Kitty; but she had to wear pleasure in her countenance to save herself a tumult of teasing. That evening, when the rooms were lighted and the family gathered

together, while Kitty and the other girls were in an ecstasy of humor, Hector asked one of his cousins if Miss Vane was sick.

"No, I reckon not."

"Has she had bad news from home?"

"I cannot tell. She had letters this morning."

He crossed the room, and sat beside her, as had been his wont; but something in his inquiry after her home friends, touched her deep feeling, for she struggled hard to keep back the storm that was trying to burst in tears. The next day was to be one of enjoyment: they were going to have a happy picnic, and Hector now begged to be her escort. This was partially arranged, but jestingly, a few days before. Later that night, when the picnic was spoken of, one of the girls said to Kitty:

"Hector is to go with Viria to-morrow, Kitty. You came too late to secure his attentions."

"Well," she replied, "'t is a matter of no consequence. I 'm little—I 'll ride between them." And she flitted away to other enjoyments, happy as a bird, waiting only for the dawn to make her one—all save the wings.

CHAPTER XII.

IMMEDIATELY after the war closed, Dr. Monteith wished that Elma might become Mrs. Monteith; but when he spoke of it to Mr. Marly, the old gentleman became almost angry, and refused his consent. He said 't was willingly rushing Elma into trouble; that he had no doubt that he (Monteith) had consumption, and he loved Elma too well to see her heart left bare to such a life of agony.

Rudolph knew that Mr. Marly's remarks were sensible, but he did not believe himself so near consumption as Mr. M. did; so he went to Elma, and told her straightly of her father's opposition, the cause, etc., asking her if she wished to send him away and never see him again.

She hesitated a minute, as if thinking he might wish her to discard him; then, with her lips all in a tremor, she replied:

"O Dr. Monteith! Do you want me to tell you, go?"

Now he took her hand in both his, and said:

"Elma, when this dear hand sunders the links of our long love, I have no more trust in human nature, and I care little for life or death either: a broken faith is a bad light to live by, and a worse one to die by. Now I want your heart's truthful answer."

"Then I must cling to this old love; I can't change. I gave you my promise, once for all. I am sorry papa is not pleased; but I do think, truly, your delicate health attaches me more firmly and tenderly to my pledge."

"And you will be true to it?"

"Yes, Dr. Monteith, I will be true."

"Then, Elma, I ask no more. My opinion is that Mr. Marly is not without plans of his own; and for this reason he will be very hard to overcome."

Mr. M. did have plans of his own; he was looking forward to Elma's interest, though. Still, he took her temporal comfort only into consideration; her heart's affections were estimated at nothing when he thought of the benefits that might accrue from a union with James Ellrich. This had been his hope from his first acquaintance with James; and, although he had no cause for objecting to Dr. Monteith, farther than a delicate state of health, yet that one point, coming in opposition to his dearest wishes, was raised to a mountain, and fought against with vehemence.

In the meantime, Mr. Vergner came home. Elma did not want to be so unfilial as to marry without Mr. Marly's consent; and, if he would give a liberal approval, she wished him to consent to her marriage at home. When she saw Henry Vergner, she told him all her trouble, and, knowing her father's unbounded confidence in him, asked his intercession in her behalf, which he did not fail to use faithfully and with great effect. James had not yet come, and they were all growing anxious. They had not heard from him since a few days before the surrender, and perhaps something had befallen him. Mrs. Marly's affections were now in their most pliant state. Elma had suspected her of knowing something of James's state of mind regarding herself, and was ever cautious and reserved; but as her cold band of form began to relax, and Elma saw some rays of genial warmth reflecting on the frozen water, she did not shun the beams that fell upon her, but did all she could to lengthen and increase them. Elma had had very little confidential, easy association since dear Grandma Marly wandered away to the "land of the dead"—for Mrs. Marly and Inez were both cold—and Elma lived almost within herself; but now Mrs. M. began to seek her company, and would come to her room and sit with her. Each one found the other congenial upon this more intimate acquaintance; and after awhile

(as the young are almost sure to do) Elma opened her heart's volume and let her read its pages. Elma was pleased with surprise when Mrs. M. said: "Now, Elma, I will try to straighten this. You have not mentioned my dear James, but I know you left him off in respect. I, too, was bent upon having you and James marry, and I have almost hated you because you received another. James will be wounded deep and sore, but he is a strong man and will give way to no boyish weakness. I am only sorry that you saw Dr. Monteith before you did my boy. Since you have pledged yourself so truly and devotedly to the doctor, I commend you for your firmness. I can sympathize with you, Elma, for I was similarly situated; but I did not have the strength of constancy to fight my battle through the heavy weight of opinion, and so I broke my pledge, and have worn the curse ever since. My husband was all a man should be, full of noble character, and honorable; but I was forever thinking of my unworthy deception in promising to love, honor, and obey him, when I had sworn my soul away to another. I did all I could—for I had a high sense of honor—to be a good wife; but my affections were so cold I was never what Mr. Ellrich deserved. He who held my pure heart-pledge died a short time before my husband. I was left with my two children, James and Inez, and was wealthy; but,

with all my care, I am afraid that Inez will not test her stability of purpose until she has lost the best of her life, and then she will waste the remainder in vain regrets. James is like his father, and every way worthy the proud name he wears. He is reasonable, pure, and manly, and well would I have been pleased to see you his wife if you loved him, but never, never while you love another. I will see your papa about this, Elma. He is a good man, and will listen to reason after awhile. But, Elma, you may be content to lay your hand to your mouth, for Dr. Monteith is frailer than you think. Such hemorrhages as he has had are a sure precursor of consumption. You will have trouble—such trouble as woman's heart cannot calmly sustain; but, my child, while he lives I feel that you will be happy."

Next morning, Mrs. M. told Elma that her papa was waiting in her room to speak with her, and she went in with anxious trepidation. Mr. M. had never spoken uncourteously to her until latterly, and she thought she could not bear harshness from him.

"Elma, you are determined to marry Dr. Monteith, and I make a concession of my feelings and judgment. You have my consent; but, Elma, I give it grudgingly. No one knows, my poor child, the depth of my emotion in giving you up.

That Dr. Monteith is noble and worthy I know; his family position, too, is honorable and excellent. Were he a strong man, physically, I could most cheerfully lay your hand in his, and fear no evil; but as it is, I fear your young heart will erelong drop tears of blood. My child, you have erected an altar of earth, and, unawares, you have stationed upon it an idol of clay. I have seen it in your eye, when you were thinking 'my secret is sacred and locked away from all eyes.' You are making the creature your god, and the Creator is a secondary thought and worship. But, my dear child, beware! The lamp of eternal life cannot be filled with oil of earth—'t will burn out, and leave you in the night. Do not forget that God requires his own again. Those we love best and most delight to honor are often those selected by Almighty God to be first transplanted into the Eden of the blest. I know you will make a most exemplary and devoted companion, and I wish I could believe that you two might walk a long journey of beautiful years together, hand in hand. God grant you may be happy and full of peace! You have my pious blessing, but I will not see you married. As soon as you are ready, you can perfect your arrangements with Dr. Monteith." And Mr. Marly turned to his paper, as if he had not been interrupted, while Elma left his presence, as if she were a doomed culprit.

"Charm of my life, in whose sweet power
All cares are hushed, all ills subdued—
My light in even the darkest hour,
My crowd in deepest solitude!"

'T was a dreary morning in September. Elma Lee went to the window and looked out, and saw the slow, steady rain falling. That was her bridal-day, and one more solemnly sad she had never seen before—a rainy day, when every thing wants brightness! Toward evening the rain ceased and the sun shone out.

Only a few guests were invited. Dr. Monteith and Elma were opposed to a "festive throng;" so it was a still marriage, solemnized by two as devoted hearts as ever blended in the marriage-vow. 'T is a painful pleasure to see such devotion, and 't is seldom that heart grows into heart as did those two; and God must have made it so.

Rudolph Monteith, always handsome, was on this eventful occasion splendidly so; his bearing, always dignified and striking, was heightened to supremacy; and Elma—the gentle, all-dependent dove, the bright-eyed darling of her tender lord—looked up, and was happy in his great love, and asked no greater gift than that he might long reign in the dear home to which they would soon go.

Shakspeare says, "She is best married that dies married young;" but it does seem that lives

so strongly united would accomplish so much in their labor of amiable tenderness, if they might walk long upon the green earth, and grow ripe with frosty years, full of good works, for the beautiful garner of heaven!

CHAPTER XIII.

O I am dead, dead to-night:
The earth has lost its whole delight!

THIS was the thought of the worn soldier when he reached his home that night. Before he saw any one, he went to a window of the parlor to see what it all meant. The blind was turned, but not open; so he looked through, and was chilled through and through. There was Elma in ominous white and veil, and there, beside her, stood the master of her future! Just then James Ellrich wished himself across the ocean, and he would not have felt more like weeping if he had seen in that stolen look a long white couch and the draped figure of Elma. He turned away and determined to see Elma no more, at least until the trial wore away its sharp points; but he must see his mother, and was afraid he would be discovered. The servants did not know him, and he sent one to see if his mother's room was vacant. He then sent word that a friend was anxious to see her, privately. Mrs. Marly en-

tered alone, much excited, apprehending some fearful tidings, but James stepped close to her and said, "Please, dearest mother, don't make a bit of noise." She could hardly help it—she never wanted to scream such a shout of gladness in all her life before. She thought she could never turn loose her hold again—he was home, home, home! When she was a little quieted, James told her he did not want any one to know of his coming that night.

"But Elma will leave in the morning early, my boy."

"That is all right, mother—I can't see her."

"My James, you will not be unmanly?"

"No, dear mother, but manly; and to be so, I must preserve my absence until she is gone. I can't meet her, mother; I can't, I can't, not in a long time! If Mrs. Vergner is not here, I will go over and stay at her house to-night."

"She is here, James; but if you are willing, I will ask her in here, and you can tell her your plans. You are fatigued, and most of the guests will remain to-night, so you can put up a plausible excuse."

Mrs. Vergner entered into his plan, and went to tell Henry that she had engaged company to go with her home, and he need not shorten his evening's enjoyments; she would go early.

So James did not see Elma. She left his watch

with his mother, and also her affectionate remembrances for him; but Mrs. Marly heeded her son's wish, and did not tell her James was home again.

Inez met Mr. Vergner with much assumed haughtiness, condescending to acknowledge him as a slight acquaintance; but she was tampering with wrong metal. A warmer heart than that of Henry Vergner it would have been difficult to find, but he was far from being a servile lover.

Mrs. Marly thought proper to remonstrate with her daughter, but she did not take her advice pleasantly; so her mother, too, lost sympathy for her in her whimsicalities, and left her to her own fate. Henry let it all pass as though nothing were wrong, seldom throwing himself in her company. After awhile a straggling gentleman stopped in the country; he was hunting land, had plenty of idle money, and wished to invest it. Any thing for a new turn to life with Inez; so pretty soon she had poured the leaden heart of Major Kay into the crucible, and was melting it to a molding temperature.

Henry looked on, not the least ruffled. He thought if Major Kay could win Inez, that he himself would lose little, and Major Kay would make little, if she could be won away by so rank a stranger. But every thing has an end; so has the foolishness of our pretty lady.

CHAPTER XIV.

Not long did his life for this sphere seem intended,
For pale was his cheek with that spirit-like hue
Which comes, when the day of this world is nigh ended,
And light from another already shines through.

THE day for the picnic dawned in unsullied fairness; the bright June sun seemed to smile its approval of the day's prospective enjoyment. Viria was busy as her cousins packing away the esculent dainties that were to make a prominent part of the coming pleasure, for people get hungry at picnics, and it is always expected that they must be so. Those who are superior to this human passion had better remain where they are, and let those who can do justice to such entertainments go, for it requires lively people to make good picnic people, and who ever heard of a lively person that did not get hungry?

When they were putting the finishing touches to every thing, some one came down from Hector Hazlitt's room, and told them he was very ill. He

had been hoping to hide it, thinking he might get better and attend the picnic; but he was growing worse, and a physician had been summoned to see him. He sent word to the young ladies that he was sorry not to be with them—that he hoped they would all go and have a pleasant day. This was water thrown upon the glowing enthusiasm of the girls, for Hector was much beloved by his relatives, and his purity of thought and nobleness in all life's phases made him a universal favorite with his friends. What Viria would have given to remain quietly at his side that day, instead of mingling with the gay and thoughtless, the world will never know; but she wished to allay suspicion, rather than arouse it, so she went with the rest, to look upon and act her farce in the amusements anticipated. She said more witty things than a few—seemed destitute of soul and feeling—told Kitty she would do for an escort, and made a comic love-speech to her; and then, when she had exhausted every witticism she could fabricate, stole away to herself, and prayed for tears, for it seemed that her soul would burst, burst, burst! What a difference in people! Kitty had scarcely smiled since she heard of Hector's illness, and Viria had courted the muse for superior nonsense. Just before they set out for the picnic ground, Viria had occasion to go into the room alike hers and Kitty's, and when she opened the door, there was poor

Kitty upon her knees, her white face raised heavenward, and her lips moving in silent prayer. She did not go to the picnic, but Viria did, and was the gayest girl there. Her eyes were full of sparkling brilliance, and her cheeks flushed and glowing. Her cousins pronounced her radiant, and radiant she was indeed; but her glittering eyes were stolen from her soul, and the blood of her heart painted her cheeks in her great endeavor to mask her interest and affection. As soon as Hector was able to travel, he was sent to the Bermudas with many fervent hopes that the delightful summer of the islands, rich in picturesqueness, might tend to hold at a distance, if not entirely obviate, consumption. When the time came for him to start to Bermuda, Viria was standing with his cousin and Kitty, and when he said good-bye to her, asked lightly:

"By the way, will you send me a line with the rest of the girls?" (meaning his two cousins and Kitty).

Viria looked up to give him a saucy refusal, but his earnest, pleading glance belied his frivolous words, and she promised. As he passed through Halifax, one of their joint cousins was there, and when he found her alone, he caught her hands and demanded, fiercely, "Is Miss Vane engaged?"

She replied, astonished at his force of expression, "I do n't know;" then thinking of what Viria had

told her, she answered, emphatically, "No, she is not engaged."

"Then what makes her so cold?"

"I don't know that, Hector." And she didn't; she didn't know that when Viria began to be happiest, the white face of Kitty came and stood before her and pleaded for mercy just as often as Hector spoke warmly or verged upon tenderness. When he was gone, as the cousins were in conversation one day, one of them said, to some expression of Viria's, "Well, you and Hector are queer alike, I declare. I am right sorry he didn't see you before he engaged himself to Kitty; you suit him much better."

"Is he, then, engaged?" she asked, coldly.

"If he isn't he ought to be," was replied with equal thoughtlessness. "He has been escorting her about for two or three years, and she loves him."

It was grief enough to Viria to have her heart always telling her how she loved him, but the pang of this impulsive speech was sharper than the wound of an arrow. Viria turned it off in a smile, but her relative little dreamed of the wild tumult of feeling concealed by that smile. She had watched Hector and Kitty together, and she did not believe he loved her; but that kneeling form and white face made her vow not to come between them, if she could—not if Hector had ever led

Kitty to believe that he loved her. Whenever he visited at his uncle's, if Viria did not go into the parlor, he was sure to ask for her; and how she longed for his presence, and yet dreaded it. She was not happy, either with or without him. She hardly knew what he thought of her, for he never praised or flattered her, as other men did. Once he said her presence in town had made that the happiest time of his life: it seemed so absurd to one of her frank, and yet unknown nature, that she laughed at him. In all Viria's life before she had had little association with clergymen, and from that fact, or some other cause, she was always afraid of him, and more reserved in his company than anywhere else. Perhaps she was afraid of reproof, for she knew him to be wide awake to a blunder or error, either of head or heart.

As soon as Hector arrived at his destination, he wrote to his cousin, explaining his abrupt questions made on the eve of his departure. He told her how very dear Viria had grown to him, but he was perplexed as to the proper course to pursue. "Did I not think," he wrote, "that I will be restored to perfect health, I would never mention my great glory of tenderness; for dear as she is to me, far be it from me to bring upon her young head the great desolation of early widowhood." His cousin wrote in reply that he had better wait until his return, for Viria herself was still very

delicate, and her fond mother would not listen to her forming an engagement with any one; and more, she would oppose him, too, then, as he was a sufferer. He waited—he returned—but only to die at home. He arrived before Viria left for the United States, but he let her go from him without a word of affection. He had been corresponding with Viria from the time he left home, and she knew that with the knowledge of her increasing interest came also the sure conviction of his declining health. Kitty, too, was anxious and uneasy, although Hector had never insinuated such a thing as love. She believed he did not love her, for she told his cousin that she and Hector were only brother and sister in their hopes and future. She had no brother, and Hector had conduced many times to her enjoyment by serving in the brother's capacity. She was satisfied to love him as a dear little sister would a noble and peerless brother, and next to her own parents there was no one in the world whose death would cause such a void in the sweet circle of her home affections.

Viria's private feelings may be more easily imagined than described as she bade farewell to her friends and friend. That was a sad voyage to her. She looked into the deep waters, and instead of peace and calmness, saw storms and tempest. But she had her own secret, and still smiled, and

thought all the time how much of truth there was in the lines—

"The smiles of joy, the tears of woe,
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow—
There's nothing true but heaven."

CHAPTER XV.

"Not e'en when first we loved,
Wert thou as dear as now thou art;
And, though I then might love thee more,
Trust me—I love thee better now."

DR. MONTEITH was just home from a day's round of practice, and called to his wife, "Ellie!"

She answered "Yes, sir," from the dining-room, where she was overlooking the arrangements for supper.

"Come here, my darling."

She was soon at his side, and asking, sweetly, "What does my dear husband want?"

"Want! as if it is n't enough to make a poor fellow go hang himself, to find a strange letter in the post-office, to his wife, which he discovers, upon opening, to be from one of her old admirers!" And the young husband looked into the trusting eyes, and caught his loved one in his arms as he was wont to do day after day.

"'Tis right ridiculous, my love, or over-good in

you, to be so lenient when you have just discovered such a dilemma in which you are pleased to involve me."

"Well, never mind, I will proceed to the tribunal. This letter speaks of an old attachment, and lingers upon its lasting regard, and so forth, and so on, and I thought you had said 'no' to all your admirers long, long ago."

"Admirers! You know—"

"Sh! sh! don't tell a—a fib!"

"Well, if you won't let me talk, Mister, I reckon I can bide your time, as long as you are all the admirer I care any thing about."

"That won't do, either; can't you guess from whom this letter is?"

"Not unless you let me see."

"Well, look, then—now!"

"You dear, bad boy—to try to torment me with my dear Viria's letter! What made you do so?"

"The truth is, Ellie, I've tried hundreds of ways, since we were married, to see if I could put you out of humor with me. Of course I would n't let you get so; I'd stop teasing you if I saw a little cloud begin to rise, but—"

"Well, what has been your conclusion after such long practice?"

"That you are the dearest little fireside angel that God ever gave a man. Elma, sometimes my

very love makes me unhappy. I'm afraid I'll lose you."

"I know all about that, darling. This one fear has been the only shadow on my bright life since we were married."

"Listen! is n't that the boy? Read your letter, Ellie; I'll watch him awhile. Hey, Mr. Rudolph, what makes you open your blue eyes so wide at papa? Did you think 'twas morning, little man?"

As Viria's letter is one after her long absence, we will read some of it with Elma. She had written once before this since her return, and this was an answer to Elma's:

"DEAR OLD FRIEND:—Not old because you are married, but because I've loved you such a long, long time. My precious friend, when I received your letter, bearing the well-known chirography of Dr. Monteith, I thought sure—now I've fixed it! and he and Elma are not married, as I heard. But when I broke the seal and found 'Elma Monteith' at the close, will you believe me? I cried and laughed over that letter until the home-folks thought I had heard bad news. It is no use to tell you how silly I was, but it had been so long since I had read a letter from you, that the memories of the past came crowding up so fast and thick that—well—that I had to hold my breath! that's it. In plain, every-day language, I was glad,

O so glad to hear from you! and now that we have actually exchanged letters after such a long interval, we will let nothing come between us and this sweet pleasure, but share as much of each other's joys and sorrows as possible. Of the latter I see you know very little, for yours is the happiest letter I have read for a long time, and I am as blue as indigo, so to speak. Your good doctor threatens to marry me off, does he, if I will only make you a visit? Well, Ellie, I would so love to make the visit; but tell the doctor, Not so fast, dear, gentle sir! Do n't I know that 'misery loves company?' and do n't I know, too, that because he is plagued with a wife, that he wants to get some of those other chaps into the same fix, to pay them up for laughing at him? Marry me off, indeed! My mother would scold him for such a favor, for I'm the only unmarried child left. Do tell him, please, that I can find plenty here green enough to be willing to hire me for cook and house-maid without paying me wages, but I'm not going to bind myself for life to any such person so long as I can have such good times as Miss Vane. Tell that baby-boy—the little darling!—that I know he cannot be any thing else than a wonderful boy, with such a delightful name as Rudolph! I am sorry to report unfavorably regarding my health, but I trust that I am prepared to say, 'Thy will, O Father! not mine, be done.' I have found my trust in our

kind Heavenly Parent very sweet and comforting in many days of trying suffering, and I recognize his overruling providence in all that befalls me. 'It is the Lord; let him do what it seemeth him good.' Living or dead, I am the Lord's."

That night Elma said to Rudolph that Viria was in trouble about something, she was sure, and in closing up her comments she emphasized with, "I feel right badly about her, too."

'T was the second anniversary of Elma's marriage. Dr. Monteith was absent, as usual, attending his multiplicity of duties. Elma had been busy all day, putting things in exact neatness and making herself and little one pictures of gladness for the sight of her beloved. She saw him coming, and, taking the pretty infant in her arms, went to the gate to meet him. He had given her the warm kiss of greeting, and she asked, anxiously:

"Why is my husband so pale this evening?"

"I don't know, sweet wife; but I have felt just a little sick—a slight sensation of hemorrhage; nothing but imagination, I reckon. How nice and pretty you look, my birdie! and you put those orange-blossoms on just to make me remember the length of time I have been so happy! I had n't forgotten, love; but I am glad to see you remember it."

That evening, after supper, they were sitting side

by side upon the porch in the bright moon-light; the world was full of cloudless beauty; 't was lovely weather, and they were happy, too happy! Rudolph had been looking as well as any strong man for a long time, and had felt so little trouble about his lungs, that he and his wife both looked upon that enemy as vanquished. Never had he seemed more cheerful than he was then, and Elma was proud of her husband and thankful that she was his wife. The little boy had fallen asleep in his fond mother's arms, and she went into the room to put him to bed; but her husband soon called to her, "Can't you come back, dear? 'T is early yet, and the night is too lovely to shut our eyes upon."

She was soon at his side again, and he asked: "Elma, have you ever noticed how many sorts of bushes have sprung up here since we came here to live?"

"Yes; it has been a source of thought to me."

"Just look at that willow, growing of its own will and accord, on a great high hill like this! It is very pretty, but I wish it had n't come."

"Why not, my precious?"

"Because; a child's reason, you know. There is a peculiar feeling associated in my heart with that willow: it looks sad, notwithstanding 't is so thrifty."

"I 'll cut it down to-morrow—must I?"

"No, my darling; no, not for any thing. We

did not plant it, but we will see how large it will grow. Ellie, once there was a little time, you know, that I thought you did n't care for me. 'T would have been easy for me to have said good-bye to the world then, if God had willed it; but O how I dread death now!"

"Dr. Monteith, dear husband! why are you growing so sad? God will surely spare us to each other. You were so cheerful a little bit ago!"

"I earnestly pray He may prolong our lives to a green and happy old age. I feel like I can go when you will soon come."

"O Rudolph! do n't—you hurt me so! How could I live without you?"

"Well, my Ellie, I 'm just mean enough to feel that heaven would n't be a happy place without you. But did you hear that? 'T is eleven o'clock!"

They retired to their room. Dr. Monteith had lain down, and was trying to amuse the awakened babe. Elma heard a slight cough, and then, "It has come, Ellie!" She ran to her husband's side, and, catching up a towel, began wiping the blood from his mouth; it came profusely. Then, remembering that Dr. Monteith had given her directions and fixed medicine for himself a long time before, she hastened to administer it. This hemorrhage was soon arrested, and he slept well, and awoke next morning feeling very well—much better, he

said, than he did the day before; for the day previous he had felt considerable heaviness and obstruction about his left lung, and then he did not have that. He remained in-doors all day, until near sunset; but he was feeling so well he thought there could be no danger in walking in the yard; so he walked to the gate and back—a very little distance—but when he reached his room again he was very weak, and in a moment was spitting blood. Elma gave him another potion, and sent immediately for a physician. This last attack was less profuse than the first; still, Dr. Monteith sank under it, and that night, in the stilly mid-hour, the physician was startled from his slumber by a quick call from Mrs. Monteith. This was the third return, and was hard to check. The next day came another, and the next another, making five heavy hemorrhages in four days. Elma nearly lost hope; but this was the last attack of bleeding—not, however, the end of suffering. For weeks he could not rally; great debility attended him; and in that long prostration he laid his hand again, with all confidence, into that of the Father, and said, "Thy will be done." One day his good pastor was at his bed-side, and he wrote on a slip of paper (for he had not heard his natural voice since his first attack): "I believe this calamity has befallen me to draw me nearer heaven. I was wandering;

but, thanks to God, now I feel nearer, much nearer! The chastisement will do me good."

The dear old pastor replied: "Ah, Rudolph (he had known him from his boyhood), you give me great pleasure in these words. Truly, 'God doeth all things well.'"

Poor Elma would sit beside her darling husband, doing every thing for his comfort, until her anxiety would make the tears almost flow any way; then she would find some pretext to leave him, so as to relieve her brimming soul. But she would go back to him seemingly bright and cheerful; for she knew how essential this was to his advantage.

When he could be up again, how cheerful she was, and how tenderly she nursed him! She had been with him all the while, and could not see how changed he was, although she knew he was much more feeble than he had ever been. He had not spoken above a whisper in such a great while, that he almost thought he had no voice. One sunny, pleasant day, he wanted to sit on the porch; and when Elma had drawn his chair there and seated herself beside him, she said: "My darling, can't you speak in your natural voice?"

"I don't know," he said in a whisper.

"My ears are famishing for one more sound of it. Say one word, please, precious."

"What must I say?"

"Only Elma."

Then he spoke aloud, with a soft, sweet smile breaking over his beautiful lips: "Elma—my wife, my darling, every thing that is good and true!"

"And you feel almost well again?" How ready she was to be deceived!

"Yes, darling, almost well; and happy, sweet wife, in my spiritual resignation. Do you remember how I talked the same night I was taken sick? I felt that I could fight against heaven and its angels that night—I wanted to live so much, and had such a horror of death. I am quite as anxious to live yet, my sweet dove; but I am willing to trust the issues of God. I am almost a Christian now, Ellie."

"I bless God, my husband!" and for the first time since he was stricken, she wept in his presence. He laid his hand on the young head bowed upon his bosom, and stroked the soft, glossy hair, and again spoke aloud:

"I expect, now, darling, that I will never be well again; but as soon as I am able to take charge of business, I will have every thing done that I can to make our home convenient for you when I am gone; and I want you to stay right here, where we have been so happy together. How oft we will wander together in memory, dearest! and,

"If pardoned souls may from that world of bliss
Reveal their joy to those they love in this,
I'll come to thee, in some sweet dream, and tell
Of heaven."

Elma Monteith had been devotion's self before, when her husband was well and strong; but now she was more—she was every thing. She pleaded with Mercy,

That beside
"God's awful throne forever smiled,
Ready, with her white hand, to guide
His bolts of vengeance to their prey,
That she might quench them on the way:
O Peace! O that atoning Love,
Upon whose star shining above
This twilight world of hope and fear,
The weeping eyes of faith are fixed
So fond, that with their every tear
The light of that love-star is mixed!"

After a little time, Dr. Monteith did seem to grow stronger. Then hope revived, and the sun smiled through the cloud; but the smile was ephemeral, although hope had taken a strong hold upon the devoted heart of the wife. A sudden cold produced a bad cough, and until this contraction he had not been troubled at all with a cough. He was growing worse daily; but Elma would have crazed without her hope-delusion, and she was constantly repeating, "Yes, he will get well and strong again." She did not

think how tenfold her duties had increased; she was so untiring that she did not perceive that her strength was made subservient to all the requirements of duty in every respect. She only dressed her precious husband because he liked to have her wait on him, and she combed his hair because she was accustomed to doing it: it was such a pleasure to her to take steps for him, and he was so pleased when she was doing something for him.

'T is well that the human heart can be so deceived, perhaps, else it would not have strength to execute the requirements of necessity. The winter passed; but the faithful wife, so all-absorbed in her great love and hope, did not see the gradual sinking; and it was in this time that she was more than millions of worlds to her husband, for she was cheerful, and always ready with hand, head, and heart, to nurse him, entertain him, and amuse him.

One evening in early spring, he was sitting on the gallery, when his ever-careful wife came to him with, "My husband will take cold, I am afraid."

"I reckon not, dearest, 't is so pleasant this evening; this pure air is so refreshing! Spring is almost here."

"Yes, it is, certainly. How you seem to enjoy it! My darling, your eyes make me think of a description in the 'Loves of the Angels'—

"Their light seems rather given
To be adored than to adore;
Such eyes as may have looked from heaven,
But ne'er were raised to it before."

"Ah, my precious! love-words are sweet from your lips. Now I want you to sing that little hymn I heard you singing to our boy the other night." She remembered, and sang—

"O for a closer walk with God,
A calm and heavenly frame;
A light to shine upon the road
That leads me to the Lamb!

Where is the blessedness I knew
When first I saw the Lord?
Where is the soul-refreshing view
Of Jesus and his word?

What peaceful hours I once enjoyed!
How sweet their mem'ry still!
But they have left an aching void
The world can never fill.

Return, O holy Dove, return,
Sweet messenger of rest!
I hate the sins that made thee mourn,
And drove thee from my breast.

The dearest idol I have known,
Whate'er that idol be,
Help me to tear it from thy throne,
And worship only thee!

So shall my walk be close with God,
Calm and serene my frame;
So purer light shall mark the road
That leads me to the Lamb."

"Thank you, Ellie. Those are beautiful lines, and you sing them so sweetly. Ellie, I thought before we were married I loved you as well as mortal man could love; but I find I love you much better now. Ellie, darling, if I should go from you, I want you to remember always how much I love you, and how much I appreciate your affectionate care of me—all your gentle, tender, and untiring kindness in nursing me. I wish I had words to express how much I do feel it all, my darling wife, but I have not. Come nearer to me, my love; let me press you to my heart, my own! O if I might take you with me across the deep, dark water! but God will be sufficient, I trust. Ellie, remember what I tell you. I don't want you to go to Mr. Marly's to live if I should die, but stay here, at our home. My family connection is large, and they think a great deal of you, and will love and protect you always. You know I told brother George to settle my mercantile and other business affairs as speedily as possible, so that you may not be perplexed with business cares. He has had entire charge of the store since I have been sick, and my medical accounts are all there, too. I suppose

he has nearly arranged every thing, as I wished him, some time past (in December, I believe), to settle off the business, so that my mind would be relieved. You will not have a fortune to trouble with, Elma; but there will be plenty to make you easy and comfortable; and when the children are large enough to go to school, that little office out there will make an elegant school-house, and you can get a few other children in the village and have a nice little school."

She sat and listened, but little dreamed that there was any thing more than an anxious possibility troubling her husband's heart.

The next day was the Sabbath. Dr. Monteith complained of nothing, said he was entirely free from pain, his respiration was very free and easy, and he sat by the fire reading his Bible. All of a sudden, he said:

"Elma, don't think I am silly; but since I am a married man, I do not like this passage of Scripture: 'In heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage.'"

"But, my darling husband, they are all as the angels of God in heaven."

"Well, but I like to feel that if I get to heaven first, I will have the first preference in meeting you, when you get there as my own. I do think I will feel more joy than any of the other angels."

"What a grimace some of the good men would

make to think that even heaven could not liberate them from their good dames! do n't you think so, Rudolph?" asked Elma, laughingly.

"I expect they would, some of them; but then, Ellie, you know they have n't all got such a good, cheerful dame to lighten this world's cares as I have. You have been my earth's all, Elma; and I would like you to tell me, since I have been sick so much, whether you regret marrying me, or not? Your life has been full of uncomplaining anxiety for a long time."

She left her chair and went to him — dear, tender wife she was!—and, drawing his head upon her bosom, kissed his brow, so pale, so white, and then his lips, before she asked: "My husband, can't you answer for me? You know, my Rudolph, I would not be any other than I am for this world. I am very proud to be near you, my dear, suffering one. I am happier at your side than I could have been anywhere else. I am always looking ahead to the bright day when you will be well. When the spring's softness cometh, my love, and we can walk abroad again in the warm sunshine, how we will praise our God for all his goodness!"

He laid his arm around her very tenderly, as she now kneeled at his side, and with his other hand caressed, thoughtfully, her fair brow; but he said nothing—nothing!

When dinner was ready, he went to the table, as usual, but ate very little. When all were through dining, he laid his arms on the table and leaned his head on them. This was a strange position for him at table, but Elma would not interrupt him. Presently he asked a relative, who was spending the day with them, to help him to his room. Then he sat down on the side of the bed, and told Elma he wanted to be undressed; and as soon as he was in bed, he said, "I want the doctor to come." He was sent for immediately, and soon there. Dr. Monteith was in a kind of waking stupor, perfectly rational when addressed, then falling into wandering sleep again, as he held to the hand of the invisible guide.

CHAPTER XVI.

"INEZ, I don't know that I ever said a short word to you before, but I won't stand this."

"Very gentlemanly language, to be sure, Sir Ellrich!"

"Inez, for Heaven's sake have some respect for your family, if you have none for your own name. I have pleaded with you in brotherly affection and mildness, and now—"

"And now what, Mr. Tyrant? Now think you have a right to insult me with your threats?"

"Tell me—what are you going to do? Do you mean to disgrace yourself by marrying that whisky-barrel?"

"In the first place, you have no cause to call names; in the next, no right to demand such a question; and in the next, I mean to do just as I please."

"God forgive my thoughts, but I will leave the country and save myself."

With flashing eyes and heavy strides James Ellrich walked to his mother's room, where she

and Mr. Marly were sitting, and, extending his hand, said, "Good-bye, mother; good-bye, father." But the old man held his hand, and, rising to his feet, said mildly, "What, my boy, what is the matter?"

"I am going to leave the country to save myself from committing violence. I can't stand any more of Inez's trifling. If she is bent upon ruining herself, heedless of all admonition, she must do so, but I won't stay to see it."

"James, are you acting hastily? I know you are always very prudent, but perhaps you are mistaken. Inez is a strange torment, you know."

"She has sense to know her duty better. I am determined to go, and know not when I will return."

"Are you prepared to leave, James? Have you sufficient funds on hand?"

"Thank you; yes, sir, plenty for my purposes."

"I am sorry for you to leave us, James. God bless you, boy; take care of yourself."

Mrs. Marly said good-bye with full eyes, but she did not try to restrain him in his designs, for he was a proud man; and if Inez persisted in receiving the attentions of Major Kay, he might be tempted beyond his capacity to bear.

James was gone, and Major Kay still came. One night they were at a party, and Inez knew

that Major Kay was drinking—almost drunk—and in a little while he was quite drunk.

Although she had acted so badly to Mr. Vergner, he did not want to trust her out that night with Kay. He did not know how to approach her, either; but after awhile he went to her and whispered very low, "Do you expect to go home to-night, Miss Ellrich?"

"I do."

"Will you receive my protection, then?"

"I have company, sir."

"Would you go out to-night with that drunken fellow?"

"I will provide for myself."

"Just as you like, Miss Ellrich; only, for the sake of tender womanhood, do n't venture too far."

"Your advice is not needed, sir."

Henry Vergner walked away, and the girl's eyes followed his fine figure until he left the room; and then Major Kay caught the sigh that fell from her lips, and asked what his beautiful lady was moaning for. Inez turned proudly, and drawing her robes together, left the room. She had never seen this man intoxicated before. She knew nothing of him, 't is true, but she did know that he was exceedingly fascinating when sober, and she was almost ready to yield herself to the charm; but now the charm was broken, broken! the spell was past, she was full of remorse. James was gone;

Mr. Vergner was justly estranged, and Mr. and Mrs. Marly had no sympathy to give her. She then thought, "It is, and still is not, too late to undo that which is done. I had well-nigh assigned myself a ruinous destiny, but now it may all writhe and die in this fiery ordeal of my soul's torment."

A few days more, and Major Kay called again, drunk. She sent word she had a headache (and she did, too), and could not see him. The next day he called about half drunk, and demanded her presence, and when she still did not see him, left the house with an oath. That night she heard a gentle tapping at her door, and upon asking who was there, found an old family servant, whom she admitted. The old woman brought her a little note from the Major, which read as follows:

"If you would save my life, let me see you one minute—just one."

He had directed the servant where to find him (in the summer-house, in the yard). Inez was excited—somewhat alarmed—but she had no thought of seeing Kay then; she had no confidence in him now, but sent word if he would call next morning, and be sober, that she would see him.

Next morning he called as directed. He was sober, and full of the old fascination. The man loved Inez; he was much affected when he told her he was going away, never to return; he said he was not worthy of any woman, for he never

expected to overcome his love of strong drink, but believed he was doomed to ——. When he was leaving, she gave him her cold hand in good-bye, and then almost ran to her room and wept. This was the first time in many a year that Inez had shed tears of humility. She was sorry she had ever seen Kay, and was still more sorry that she had no more strength of character than to nearly yield her heart to his flatteries. And now she prayed almost the first prayer that had passed her lips since she came to womanhood.

"God, guide me in the future;
Guide me o'er the threat'ning wave;
Save me, thou alone can save."

No one gets good by one struggle, and no one remains good without constant effort and continued trial. But Inez had commenced to wrestle, and she was determined to adorn the inner being as well as "the outer man."

"It is life to move from the heart's first throes,
Through youth and manhood to age's snows,
In a ceaseless circle of joys and woes:
It is life to prepare for death!"

CHAPTER XVII.

ELMA attributed her husband's wandering state of mind entirely to opiates, for his cough was so severe as to render a palliative necessary all the while. Each night she kneeled before the Almighty's throne with the prayer on her lips and the hope in her soul that the next morning would find him better. He did rally a little, and was able to sit in a chair by the fire a few minutes, long enough to have his bed made or his feet bathed. One night after Elma had fixed him comfortably in bed, he said to her, "No one can conduce to my comfort as you can, Elma; no one—not even my dear, good mother. May the Lord bless my wife!"

'T was Saturday morning, the first of May, and damp, cool, chilly weather. One week next day since Dr. Monteith went to the dining-room last, or was able to walk across the house. Elma had been up since three that morning; the doctor said he was hungry, and she got up to give him something to eat. The little Rudolph, too, awoke, and

his mother dressed him; and, holding him on her lap, bade him rub papa's hand, for the little fellow loved his father very much. As soon as told, he laid his little white hand upon that of his father, and he opened his eyes and said, "Papa's little man! papa is too sick to notice his boy much." Later in the day, seeing his wife beside his bed, as usual, he said, "Ellie, why do n't you lie down? I know you must be weary."

"Never mind me, Rudolph; I can rest here at your side. Didn't you see me nodding just now?"

"No, love; but I am afraid you will get sick. What would I do if you were sick?"

"Do n't you feel a little better to-day, darling?"

"Yes, I believe I do; I can see so many things, though, when I shut my eyes, and I can't keep them open."

"The effect of opiates, I reckon."

"Yes;" then he was almost asleep again. Late in the evening he called, "Ellie."

"Yes, darling."

"Throw the blind back a little." This she did, but noticing the effect of the light, and thinking it too great, she changed it. "Now, that will do; that is right."

The weather had been cloudy and damp so long that Dr. Monteith was getting anxious to see the sun again, and that evening he came out in full

splendor, just before setting. Elma saw it, and throwing the window open wide, she exclaimed, "Look, my darling, what a beautiful sunset!"

He looked around, said "Yes" very gently; then, in a dreamy whisper, said "Ellie!"

"What is it, darling?"

"I want my hat."

"Well, I'll bring it to you."

"Let's go to walk now."

"My precious, you are too ill to walk now; you are not strong enough. Let me put your hat up."

"If you say so."

After a little he sat up in bed and took a few mouthfuls of food, then said, "Let's quit now."

A few minutes later she sat at his back to support him, fearing he might grow weary before he would conclude to lie down. His mother examined his pulse, but said nothing, and Elma was too preöccupied with her precious burden (for his entire weight had sunk gradually upon her bosom) to notice the anxious look of his mother, until she heard her tell a son present to ask his pa to come in.

Elma said, "Mother, he is asleep, and he will rest better on his pillows. See, he breathes so much easier."

"Yes, we will lay him down."

As they could not succeed well together, Elma stood upon the bed, and raised him by main effort.

He was breathing easier, and there was such a gentle, peaceful expression on his features; but there was something else! There was no physician there; and Elma said, "Do send for a doctor!" Just then the good old father entered the room, and, laying his fingers upon the lightless eyes, pressed them down, as he whispered, "My poor boy!" "What!" "He is dead, my child." "He is not. O my darling! do open your dear eyes and speak to me! O look upon me again, for I am heart-broken without you!" Time after time she kissed the pale lips of her life's idol; but he was even as the lifeless and lightless gods of the heathen—as a block of stone, or a figure of art, without power to save. He was cold and statue-like; and the heart-wails of his beloved could never again waken him, or wring from him one word of tenderness or comfort.

He was gone! and the poor child Elma was alone. Gone! and she had been so deluded and so hopeful all that day, the first of May! She thought him so much better, and he was only turning loose his hold on life, and going down, down, to the grave! What Elma Monteith suffered, none of earth can tell. She had labored for her husband's comfort when her physical strength was hardly sufficient to provide for her own requirements; she had waited with him day and night, uncomplainingly, tenderly and lovingly, as

his only nurse; she had, truly, done all that she could do; and there was one sweet solace left—she had pleased him well. He had loved her to the bitter end, and had left her only for the courts of "heaven, sweet heaven." Another Southern soldier had gone home, with his noble manliness and proud loyalty blazing upon the records of memory, while his chastened and blood-washed spirit mounted the angel-wings invisible, and flew away beyond the ravages of time and the throes of death, without one last look at the beautiful shell-work from which it had escaped.

Not many suns after, in the same room from which had been borne the unconscious face of the father, the beautiful dead, was heard the first voice of an infant daughter—a new light amid the great cloud of darkness. She came as a "tender plant, as a root out of a dry ground." The soul of the bereaved one was stirred and troubled to its depths; but the heart of the mother was strong: she must cling to life and energy, for the babes were young and tender—her husband's representatives. She must look to the Father, and hear his voice exclaiming, "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver: I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."

We may best relate the conclusion of Viria

Vane's trial by copying her own words, from a letter to Elma:

"I have been afraid to hear from you all this time. I missed your letters, but dreaded to get one; for I know too well the course of insidious consumption. To-day ends the suspense. I am weeping over your letter, because I know that the most overwhelming sorrow that can enter into the heart of woman has come to you, and to me. This is the one great grief for which our hearts refuse to be comforted—the loss of those we love. But, Elma, we must turn to the glories of the innumerable multitude, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. How it soothes the keenest anguish, and allays the bitterest mourning, to think of them, our dear ones, before the great white throne; to think they shall 'not suffer, nor hunger, nor thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes!' The loss of our darlings should but increase our desire to live nearer to the Source of all blessings, that we may be ready to yield back our joys, one by one, as the Father hath need of them.

"O the richness of the consolations of our holy religion! O the depth of mercies underlining our

afflictions, with which we can bear all things, through Christ, who strengtheneth us! Ellie, I am prepared to sympathize with you in your unutterable bereavement, not as one who has never tried the sea grieves for the tempest-tossed sailors, but as one who has gone through the deep waters, and knows what suffering is, and wherein the consolations abound. I did not think to have told you how it all came about—my acquaintance with grief; but now that you, too, are afflicted, I will show you how far I may understand your feelings. About a year ago, the unfeeling robber, death, entered the splendid palace of my royal love and carried him away, while I was far from him, mourning in secret over our blighted hopes. I know this bereavement is different to that you feel in the loss of your husband and the father of your little ones; yet I have lost much, so much! and I think we may go together to the foot of the cross, and rest upon the soothing promises of the Holy One of God. Hector Hazlitt had never breathed a syllable of love to me, when I left Nova Scotia; but not a month before he died, and long after he had grown too weak to sit up, he wrote me his last note, as if the nearer he came to the borders of the unknown world, the more he felt his deep, faithful love. He wrote: 'Dear Viria:—I love you; and, although I know not whether any such feeling

is reciprocated by you, I longed to tell you how you have wrought upon the feelings of one unworthy. This is the last letter I shall ever write, unless God strengthens; but we will meet in heaven, where lives are full of strength, and pleasures never end.' He had written to me often during his illness, and of the glorious day approaching when he should stand in the immediate presence of his Saviour. O Elma, he was ripe for heaven! We must teach ourselves self-forgetfulness, and live in the joy into which they have entered. It was a long time before I could say from my very heart, 'It is the Lord: let him do as it seemeth him good;' but I can say it now, and feel glad to think I can wait patiently and cheerfully for the end of all things.

"The night before he died, he sent me 'good-bye,' and the request to 'be sure to meet him there;' and I live in the hope of a reünion in heaven; then all this waiting will seem but as a few days, for the love I bear him.

"A little while between our hearts
The shadowy gulf must lie;
Yet have we for our communing
Still, still eternity."

"Let me write you the beautiful lines that he is said to have quoted each day during his last illness:

"One sweetly solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er:
I'm nearer my home to-day
Than I ever have been before;

Nearer my Father's house,
Where the many mansions be;
Nearer the great white throne,
Nearer the crystal sea;

Nearer the bound of life,
Where we lay our burdens down;
Nearer leaving the cross,
Nearer gaining the crown.

But the waves of that silent sea
Roll dark before my sight,
That brightly the other side
Burst on a shore of light.

O if my mortal feet
Have almost gained the brink,
If it be that I am nearer home
Even to-day than I think,

Father, perfect my trust,
Let my spirit feel in death
That his feet are firmly set
On the rock of a living faith!"

"Our race is soon run, Ellie—we'll soon wade the deep waters between this and the other shore; but God will be with us. There is still some little work for us to do for the sweet sake of Him who suffered and died that we, through him, might have eternal life. Do not throw your righteous

trust aside, dear one, in the dark hour of your calamity. I wish we were near each other, that I might hold you to my heart and weep with you, for I cannot comfort you. I pray God's tenderness upon you and the little ones.

"Your loving VIRIA."

CHAPTER XVIII.

IT was now five years since Inez Ellrich determined to have some other aim in life than that of a vain, frivolous woman. Well had she kept her resolution. A bright Sabbath-day was inviting the worshipers of the great Omnipresent into the holy sanctuary of the church. The Christian membership of Methodist, Baptist, and Presbyterian, were all assembling at the Methodist church, in the country, to listen to the gospel-truths of holy religion. They were all seeking to serve the same God, and trying to prepare to enjoy the same heaven. If God saw fit to accept the humble sacrifice of their contrite hearts, and for their mountain of sin give them a world of love, what need was there for wrangling because they had not all bowed in exactly the same position, and used precisely the same syllables to express their humble contrition? God asks no other gift of his spiritual creation than the godly resignation of the thinking being—the mind, heart, and soul, and strength—to the divine law. If mind, heart, and

soul, are laid upon God's incense-altar, the creature hath nothing to fear. God looks into the heart, and there sees the heart's sincerity, and he loveth a "broken and contrite spirit." What love, what tenderness, what pity! Ah, Father, how sweet thy law of salvation, when once we begin to study under thee! How sublime and awe-inspiring the great mysteries of godliness, and how beautiful and all-winning is the condescending mercy and love of him, the pure and holy One of God!

When that day's service was ended, and the minister announced that the ordinance of baptism would then be administered to the candidates desiring, Inez Ellrich went forward, and, kneeling before the altar, was baptized "in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost," and received into the full enjoyment of Church privileges. But a surprise awaited the congregation; for, when the baptismal rite was over, and Inez had taken her seat, Henry Vergner went to her, and, leading her forward, in the presence of the whole congregation, the minister solemnized the marriage ceremony, which gave to the gallant and faithful soldier a companion who was pure enough to know that she had faults, and persevering enough to struggle against them in order to overcome.

A few days later and 't was the sixth anniversary of Elma's marriage. Three and a half years she had been wrestling with the desolation of

widowhood. The little boy, Rudolph, and the tender little girl, Myrtle, were fine children, growing rapidly, and full of exceeding promise. Now it was night; Rudolph was already asleep, but Myrtle was yet awake. 'T was pleasantly warm, and Elma drew her small rocking-chair upon the porch that opened into her own room, sat down, raised the little girl upon her lap, and gave herself to retrospection.

She had had no home, save that provided by Mr. Marly, since Dr. Monteith's death. Her brother-in-law told her immediately after her husband's death that there was no home left her, and afterward told her if she took advantage of the dower provision, she would engender feelings not very agreeable between her and the entire family. Had she no defense? It seems not. He advised her to go to Mr. Marly's, which she did in her grief and extremity. Her health was very delicate, almost precarious. She had no means, and Mr. Marly was deeply embarrassed. There she was, sick, with two babes, the younger one very frail, and requiring unceasing attention. Hundreds of times she had inquired of mystery, "What will I do?" She applied for a little school near Mr. Marly's house, and worked faithfully, struggling with debility, pains, and achings, but she broke down under it, became prostrate in illness, and almost sank under despair. Now, after three years,

she looked back upon those dreadful days, and wondered how she lived when she was so worn, so weak, and so perplexed. She had begged for some leniency in regard to her home—that she might be allowed to labor and purchase it, but a deaf ear was held to her pleading. She had quitted all the haunts of her heart's sanctuary, and began the life of day by day. Love and duty urged her on, and she was wrestling still. Elma Lee, in her girlhood, had a passion for writing; her own thoughts had lulled many an anxious hour. She had always believed that, with study and attention, she would win to herself some credit in the world of literature. Dr. Monteith had been very proud of this talent in his wife, and had encouraged her greatly; but she found that she could not devote herself to writing and be a good wife too, so she wrote unfrequently after her marriage. Since her widowhood she had lost no time that she could save; she had toiled all day for means of support, and written often at night. She had woven the moments together during the day, and made her pen the savings-bank of half-uttered thoughts. She had persevered—she had a manuscript laid away—would it avail her? She would risk it. She had not spent all her wages from teaching; if she could borrow a little money, perhaps she could succeed. She would try: every thing must begin, and perhaps her little beginning

might yield a living to her and her little ones. She was a resolute woman, and did not mean to be a lasting encumbrance to Mr. Marly, whose estate was a wreck since the war. Southern men—a great many of them—took many risks before the war; they were situated so that they might venture; their slaves were their property. But the war ended, and emancipation wrote a free deed, and the suddenness of the transaction knocked the pillars of liquidation and solvency from many a noble house. Mr. Marly was among these. He was not near able, by sacrificing all the shelter he had on earth, to cancel his indebtedness. He had been involved entirely by the emancipation of his property. He had notes on other men, and they would have more than cleared away his notes, but his creditors would not swap notes; they preferred to levy on him. 'T is strange how people change: in the day of prosperity, when a man has plenty of this world's goods, how essential he is! Why, a man with gold and silver attachments may well imagine that the world cannot possibly get along without him. It is all very well. Let a man's shining array change hands, and the one who holds it is quite as attractive as the other was; and he who has lost can step into his quiet nook, and never be disturbed by fawning voices and flattering praises.

Dr. Monteith was a Freemason, and Elma had read of the Brotherhood—how ever thoughtful

they were of the necessities of the families of deceased Masons. Now, Elma knew she was no charity-seeker, so she could not apply to the Fraternity; still she felt that she might accomplish a great deal if they would only trust her a little, and wait until she could refund the means. Should she ask? 'T was a tremulous thought. Would they help her? If they refused her aid, she would be no worse situated than before: it was worth the asking.

Little Myrtle began thinking mamma was very bad not to sing to her, as usual; and, although the mother was in little mood to entertain her, still she gave herself to the child's pleasure, and thinking of those beautiful lines from Moore, she sang—

O Thou who dry'st 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 wilt heal that 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,

O 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.

The last sounds were gone, the little one was asleep, and Elma was about rising to carry her in the room, when she perceived a strange figure standing quite still behind a jasmine bush, near by. She was alarmed, and arose hastily to seek the protection of her room; but when she made a step forward, the figure came in full view, and a well-known voice called, "Elma, don't be frightened; I am only James Ellrich; I could not wait till morning to speak to you, after hearing your voice here." Mr. and Mrs. Marly came down immediately after, and before the evening closed James had won himself the sobriquet, "woman-hearted," because he would not wait till morning to see the children, but begged that he might go in very softly and look at them while they were asleep. The family had much to say to each other, after a long separation, and they did not note the flight of time until the half-grown moon

"Was from heaven's steep
Bending to dip her silvery urn
Into the bright and silent deep."

Mrs. Monteith had one uncle somewhere in the wide world—her mother's brother—but she knew not where. Not long before her mother died he made them a visit, and of course Elma's recollection of this relative was very faint.

Not many days after James came back he walked into the dining-room, where Elma was assisting Mrs. Marly, and said to her that a gentleman was waiting to see her. James went in with her, and was actually sorry when the gentleman announced himself Elma's "Uncle Frederic."

He was the identical gentleman who played beggar to Elma during the war: he had gotten up his costume for effect, that he might be admitted *sans ceremonie*, and thus find out Elma's situation at home. He found it all he could wish, and went into the army satisfied. During the long years since the war he had been trying to retrieve his altered fortunes, and build a new home over the grave of "the lost cause:" he had succeeded. He had no immediate family living; Elma was his nearest relative, and he had but come to ask her to go to his home, and be a daughter to him in his old age. Mr. Marly recognized his esteemed brother-in-law instantly, and was full of delight in receiving him.

Elma went with her uncle. The deep ocean she had been tossing upon for nearly four years had shown her many rocks and breakers, many shoals

and quicksands, of which she had previously had no knowledge. She had been self-reliant to the extent of her ability, energetic and resolute; she had borne the storms of winter and the suns of summer in labor. It was all well: she had grown purer and holier under the shadow of the rod. She knew the voice of her Shepherd; she felt that he would lead her in paths of safety, although he had allowed her to be tried in the poison-fen of sore trouble and perplexing trial. She would believe to the last that perseverance after noble attainment would lend its own reward; and that the Father, from the mountain-heights of his eternal glory, would find means to assist all such as continue faithful in well-doing. Where there is common sense to prompt, and discretion to guide, industry in turning the wheel, and economy in preserving the proceeds, we travelers through this great, dark wilderness need fear nothing, but look up, knowing that "A patient man will bear for a time, and afterward joy shall spring up unto him."

"Wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it."

MISCELLANEOUS.

LITTLE PEARL.

'TIS little and pure, beginning and end,
The first that I caught, and won't do to lend.
I fear it will hide should I dive again,
For 'tis timid and shy as an autumn rain.
Then, the worst is first, and the first is worst,
Though 'tis lined and trimmed, and 'tis prosed and versed.
If 'twere yours you'd think—O 'tis nice, I'm sure:
I dived in the dark this one to secure!
But 'tis mine, you know, "that alters the case,"
As the judge would say—now who'll win the race?

Mr. Critic! hem! Good-morning, good sir
(You've called very soon—I'm all in a whir:
Ill nature, I see). I'm sure I do n't doubt
You find lots o' fault with that aching o' gout.
My writing! O dear! Good sir, you forget
You might slip a word and live to regret.
For oceans are made from wee little streams,
While pearl-strings are strung from many small beams.

Then, who can roll out a world in a day?
Were you always wise from your cradle-lay?
Have mercy! O please—you've traveled this swamp:
You know 'tis cold, and 'tis dismally damp.
Don't push me back! please; I'll wade to the shore;
You've lore—lots o' lore—now use it for more.
I've started—O stop! do see the cross eyes!
I'll give you no rue, but smiles for your sighs.
There! bless you, that look's a promising ray;
I'm on your mercy—don't drown me, I pray!

THE WHITE PRINCE.

A CHRISTMAS STORY.

I.

THEY are all asleep—the cold, hard Indians—all asleep. I am a little boy, and sick. Indians killed my papa, my manly papa; my darling mamma, too, I reckon; and little sister, baby-sister. I expect they knocked her brains out! Papa heard something at the lot, and he went to see what it meant: they knocked him dead, and caught me and tied me, and some of them went into the house. Poor papa! poor mamma! poor baby!"

The boy did n't dare to sob aloud; he knew he might be dispatched with all ease if he did not

please, so he opened his mouth and swallowed the aching fullness, and let the tears flow silently down his cheeks until he could think again. "They have had me three years, and I have not seen a white face in all this time. I am fourteen years old to-night, and sick for the first time since I was made an Indian. They are very good to me; I do all I can to please them, for I am in their power: they could quickly snatch this breath by striking their tomahawks to my poor brain, but why need I fear any thing? I am a captive-boy; they make me sing and dance when they please, and what is death but freedom? The moon is at its full—a golden sphere in the misty roof of night. How oft I have lain thus awake, listening to my heart-loves that can never come again!"

The next day the captive-boy was roaming amid the sweet haunts of memory. A consuming fever blazed upon each cheek, and the old Indians shook their heads. The white boy held a strong place in the Indian heart, and an Indian maiden sat by him, and constantly bathed his hot, dry face. She would resign her seat to no one, and they suffered it as her right. The old chief came and stood over the boy, and the maid looked up; her eyes asked, "Will he die?" The chief shook his head, with an "Ah, Allah!" then walked away.

Day by day the maid kept her place until the lad grew better; then she would wander away

and bring him wild flowers and wrap them in fantastic wreaths, only to amuse the poor boy. This Indian girl, Oneida, was the same age with the captive youth, and, children though they were, she would have risked her life to keep him safe from harm. She was the chieftain's daughter, and no doubt the peculiar interest the young girl had shown in the boy procured for him many a favor and many a kind word that would otherwise have been unthought and unspoken. He was grateful, and did much to amuse and please the dark maiden—going on from year to year, and learning largely from the wild world of nature, and the wilder people about him.

Thus passed six years more. Nine years he had been among the red men of the forest. Perhaps he might have escaped—perhaps! but this world seemed unpeopled to him when he thought his family all gone out of it. He had studied revenge thousands of times, but he was a Christian boy: he did not want his hands and conscience all marred and spotted, so he waited his time. And then, too, he was not with the same Indians that robbed him of home and family, but with another tribe, to whom he was given immediately after his capture. These Indians had already given him the name of White Prince, and they said next year they would have a grand Indian festival, and give him their princess, their lovely Oneida. Time

hurried on with its freight of fate, and the captive prince grew pale and restless, while his Indian love watched anxiously after him as he would take his bow and arrows and stroll away, as he would say, to kill her a dove. At first he would not stay more than a few hours, when he would bring back his game; but each day he was a little longer away, and after a time he would be gone all day, to return with the nightfall. Thus cautiously he maneuvered until the nuptial time was almost at hand. So long had he been with the Indians, and one of them, it seems needless that he should reconnoiter so carefully; but mind you, this was his life's stake: to seek flight and be recaptured would insure him an enemy's portion; and there were two roads before him: one was to be the White Prince among dark and ignorant savages, the other to struggle against this fate, and be a white man among civilized and enlightened people. It was easy to remain a prince—it was perilous to attempt to become a white man and seek his own nation. He wasted no time in debate; he had never told Oneida of love, and what if they should have a bride without a bridegroom? If he escaped, all was well; if they caught him!—no use crossing that bridge, though, until they proved their superior prowess, and forced him to it.

But two days now remained. He had been gone the whole day, hunting, but came with the stars,

bringing honorable trophy to cast at his lady's feet. The young moon would soon be down, and he called to the maiden to come sing with him. She a dark Indian, he a fair white, but they were two to rivet attention in their fantastic Indian costume. His hair was long about his neck, dark and wavy, his eyes large, full and glistening, of a pure brown; and Oneida, faithful Oneida, she worshiped this white face of the White Prince. He told her he would go early next morning to hunt, and would not see her before he left. Oneida was satisfied. White Prince laid himself down to sleep, but the excitement of the hour was too great: the soothing god would not be wooed, so he kept still and waited. What if he should be watched? what if he should be pursued and overtaken? One of their horses was gone—had been gone several days—but the Indians said he knew his company too well to desert; he would come by the time he would be wanted. Would he? Then the prince would be lost, for he alone of all the band knew where the horse was.

'T was nothing unusual for him to rise early, and roam all day in the lone, dark wood; so his absence was a subject of no remark, until darkness came, and the half-circle of light, with its two sharp horns, swung itself in the high hall of heaven. Oneida watched and listened for the figure and footstep of the absent, but it came not.

Then the silvery thread dropped itself into the impenetrable darkness of the wild swamp, and the watcher went to her sleep, thinking, "I will see him early in the morning."

Morning came, but not the prince; he was nowhere to be found. The day was waning away, and some of them came to the camp, bearing a torn robe, besmeared with blood. Oneida wailed her sorrow, for her noble prince was evidently torn in pieces and devoured by ravenous beasts. Farther on, by the bank of the dark water, were human footsteps and blood, and then—"Closer, comrades, see! what a footprint! 't was a tremendous cougar, and along this track something heavy has been drawn." But they could not find the body: it was destroyed, and they all mourned with the broken-hearted Oneida, whom they ever styled "The Bride of the White Prince."

II.

'T was Christmas evening, and bitter cold. The streets of the city were slippery with sleet; lights were glittering in festive halls, and the young were dancing to merry music, forgetful of the freezing cold without—forgetful of the trembling poor, forgetful of the dead and dying!

A gentlemanly young man was hurrying along the street, his warm overcoat buttoned close about

his chin, and his gloved hands snugly tucked into his pockets. He did not look gay if you could have seen his face as he passed under the light of that lamp-post. 'T was a very calm face, though, and full of power, human sympathy, and—but he did n't look, either, as if he loved any thing or anybody, for he was hurrying along, only attending to his own business. He had been engaged with work until late; he was only a clerk in a large establishment, but then he was a most favored clerk, and was hastening to his room to find rest and warmth; and he would not have given this solitary enjoyment now for hundreds of brilliant entertainments. He thought directly that he heard a little sob as he was passing the last corner; then thought, No, 't was only the wind, I reckon. But Cyril Ivan had too strong a heart to let him rest, so he walked a few steps forward, then turned suddenly and went back. Sure enough! there in a little corner, about large enough for a kitten to have crept into, he discovered a wee one shivering and crying with the cold. His tender humanity needed no greater appeal, but raising the little girl in his arms instantly, he proceeded to his quarters. Then when he had put her down, safe from the biting wind, he made on a good fire, and sat down to ask questions. The child was eight years old, and assured by the gentle suavity and soft courtesy of her strange

protector, told her touching little story: "Mother died last night, and the people said I would have to go to the poor-house, or hustle away from there. Poor mother was sick such a long time and papa's been gone a great long while, so I have n't anybody to love me. My mother was a sweet little lady, and she was good. Papa loved mother, but maybe he's dead, for mother did n't get any letters." Then she looked in the fire, and then at Mr. Ivan, as if some fearful thought harassed her, and finally, catching his arm, in her earnestness she cried, "Please sir, I can't go to the poor-house; I do not want to be called a poor-house child, because it hurt my sweet mother." She now lifted her soft, blue, dewy eyes to his face, and begged, "You won't send me to the poor-house—you won't, will you?"

What could he do? The child certainly had some good steel in her temperament: he was young, without a home, without any fashionable, sneering sisters to sport and laugh about his street-beggar; without any thing of much consequence except his unsullied honor and proud self-reliance. So he, Cyril Ivan, set to meditating. Could he not keep the child, and take care of her? He was alone in the world, so was this little one. She would be a little beauty some day, and she was remarkably intelligent. He loved that sweet face already; it would speak for itself; it would resent

wrong, but it would be so tender and trustful in truth and affection. If she were only a boy now there would be no trouble; he could get along with a boy all the way through, but girls make young ladies: he could n't provide for a young lady so well. "I 'll risk it, though, see if I don't, and trust the Father of mercy and compassion that no evil may come of it." So he was determined.

"Little girl, you have not told me your name. Won't you tell me your name?"

"Yes, sir—Neva Finland."

"And your mother's name?"

"I do not know her name; papa always called her wife."

"And what did mother call papa?"

"She always said 'your papa' when she was talking to me, and 'my husband' if papa was there. I reckon papa was named Finland, though."

"I've no doubt of it, my little one. Now, would you like to have me for your Uncle Cyril?"

There was light all over the child's face at once; she forgot her fear—"Yes, sir; yes, sir."

"Let me hear you say Uncle Cyril."

She said it sweetly enough. "Now, Neva, have you had any supper?"

"No, sir."

What was to be done now? He had not yet taken off his overcoat, so he plunged into the pocket: there were two sweet crackers there that

he forgot to eat at noon, and there was an apple on the mantle. Could little Neva do with these till morning?

"O yes, sir, it is plenty."

So he laid the overcoat aside and took the child up. She ate this little feast with a relish, and presently she had gone to sleep. He tucked her away carefully as a mother might have done, and left her to her dreams. The little one was duly advertised, and left to his care unnoticed. He made arrangements to place her at school immediately; life took on an extra tint of gladness; a star had arisen out of darkness, and its serene light gave a soothing charm to every thing. Ivan had no money to spend foolishly now; he had something to provide for; he was not parsimonious, either, but he was careful, and saved the cents. The little girl grew and improved, and Ivan did not miss the dollars he was spending for her; he was attentive, sober, and prosperous.

Eight years rolled by: it was Christmas again. Neva was so much attached to Uncle Cyril, and wished so infinitely to please him, that she had studied far above her years, and took supremacy in classes of girls four and five years older than herself. Uncle Cyril was so naturally affable as to be courteous to all with whom he was associated, but he tried to please this one darling charge. She was his, his own, and all he had to love; while

she, dear, tender vine, twined all her life-tendrils about this beautiful elm that stood aloof from all the trees of the forest, and asked no greater luxury, no richer boon, than to see the radiant sun breaking through its shadows. Ivan was so thoroughly and naturally a business man, and so purely chaste, manly, and honest, that now, instead of being a poor clerk, he was a merchant, and had capital at his disposal. Neva was a young lady—only sixteen, but a well-developed, queenly woman. Almost unbending in her cold reserve with others, still with Uncle Cyril she was warm, frank, and affectionate, always meeting him with a kiss of welcome, and trying every means to please and entertain him. She was still the child with him, and he was ever as calm, courtly, and dignified as a father of fifty might have been. She had never reveled in the world of pleasure-seeking: Uncle Cyril had very positive rules about this. She might have done as she pleased, for he would not have known it, perhaps; but her sense of honor was so great, and her respect for this kind guardian so noble and perfect, she would not violate one of his established rules. She was a very fine musician: in this she displayed her great natural talent, but she had never heard any of the thrilling notes of the outer world's orchestra. Upon this, the eighth anniversary of her first meeting with Uncle Cyril, he called to see her, and told her to

be ready by a certain hour, as he wished her to attend the opera with him. She was enthusiastic with rapture. To go to the opera, and with Uncle Cyril, too, was a crowning joy. They returned early. What a delight she had enjoyed! and Uncle Cyril had enjoyed the evening, but in a far different way: he had drawn his entertainment from the ecstatic countenance of his lovely *protege*. As soon as Uncle Cyril was gone, and Neva went to her room, before she had removed her wrappings, even, a servant came up, with—

"Madam wishes to see you, Miss, in her room."

Neva was a standing favorite with madam, and no wonder, for she obeyed all the rules, and was ever courteous, notwithstanding her natural reserve. She turned about instantly, and went to madam's room. A seat was drawn before the fire for her, and as she sat down, madam commenced in a very austere tone:

"Does Miss Finland know she has violated a very special rule in my absence this evening?"

"No, madam; if I have deviated from my duty I am not aware of it."

"You attended the opera to-night?"

"I did, madam."

"With whom?"

"My Uncle Cyril, of course, madam."

"Miss Finland, I have heard that Mr. Ivan is no kinsman of yours. Is this so?"

"This is so, madam."

"And yet you trust him?"

"I trust him! Indeed, madam, whom else have I to trust? And pray, madam, why should I not trust him? Has he not been every thing to me—father, mother, brother, sister, and friend? If I may not trust him, then I am an ungrateful brute, and should be turned into the street at once. Please, madam, if you only wish to gratify an idle curiosity, I will return to my room and to my pillow. Mr. Ivan is not to be doubted in my presence, even," and with a haughty, dignified mien, glowing with the proud consciousness of noble innocence, she suited the motion to the words, and arose to leave the room. Madam said, very calmly now, "Sit down, won't you, Neva? I have something for your ear alone." She turned and sat down. "I have heard Mr. Ivan is soon to be married: do you know?" She turned pale as a statue now, but replied quietly, "No, madam."

"I should not have mentioned these things, Neva, but matters are taking a turn I do not like to trust too far. You have been under my charge so long, that I risk much to save all. You are a young lady of great ability, and great personal charm, but you are homeless, with no family to defend you. Very soon and you will have completed your entire educational course; you are very young, still old for your years; but you are

but a babe in the etiquettes and formalities of the world. Your nature is exceedingly pure and innocent, and it remains with you and prudence to retain it so. Have you ever thought, Neva, what you will do when your last term is out here?"

"No, madam: I have not concerned myself or my mind about any thing but my advancement."

"Neva, you are very peculiarly situated. Have you no relatives—no friends?"

"As to relatives, I suppose I have some, but they may be at the poles for aught that I know of them. Uncle Cyril is the only friend I have in the world, that I know, and I do believe I will tell him every thing you have said to me."

"Foolish girl! Then do you know that you will have deprived yourself of all hope of protection? Whatever you do must be done of yourself, and you must be your only confidant. Mr. Ivan's advice to you might not be, from the world's standpoint, the most discreet that you could follow. He is a gentleman, Neva; but, child, a young man who has no claims by law or consanguinity is a poor protector for a young girl out in the hollow, deceitful world; and if he is to be married, his home would offer little peace to you, with your beautiful face; you would not be happy there. Neva, will you think all this over, clearly and coolly?"

"Yes, madam. I would be something a little less than a rabbit, and not more than a tortoise, if I could make my brain run half-way from your argument and then sleep the spell off as a dream. Yes, madam, I will have to turn terrapin, and take it step by step; but I would have been glad to have escaped the knowledge you have imparted. You have stirred the waves of discord and mistrust, and I am afraid I escaped the poor-house in my childhood only to become a caird, and vagabondize the world. Madam, if evil should come of me, remember my words to-night—I will attribute the storm that makes a wreck of me to you, you only, for I do believe that Uncle Cyril would protect me and honor me to his life's last fiber of strength. But you have disquieted me; I cannot rest again."

"Neva, you may esteem me less right now, but the care I have exercised over you for eight years ought to convince you of my kind intentions. I would only give you a hint about propriety."

"Yes, madam, you would teach me to look for protection in nothing save consanguinity, for honor only in legal relations; and at last, madam, you would consider virtue merely a thing nominal—a mere outside show—and then leave me without a straw to cling to; for if I may not estimate my Uncle Cyril for his clear honor and nobility, for his disinterested purity, and whole-soul manliness,

I never expect to find it in this world. I have little respect, madam, for any law or set of laws that is so narrow in universal relation as to measure virtuous deportment and virtuous attainment in the vapid ladle of the selfish, brow-beaten world. There are some over-circumspect thinkers in this bitter world, who, instead of circumscribing selfishness and squeamishness, take care to let them have full play the world over, while they hem in the virtuous outbursts of the human heart, and surround them with bounds and oceans of iron ceremony; and whosoever doth not cling to Sir Thinker's ring, is thrown over into the gutter, and left to perish, if he will. Again, madam, I believe I will do wrong to leave the shelter of dear Uncle Cyril's long-tried protection, while you assume that, unless I run away, I cannot hope for safety. We will see: perhaps I have wit enough to earn a crust of bread, but I must say, I think I will be exposed to more evils in the big outer world than I would under dear uncle's firm, gentle guidance. I know I have expressed ideas very vaguely, madam, but these words are the impulse of the moment, unstudied, and perhaps unwieldy. I do not wish to wound your feelings, but mine are cut and bleeding. Good-night, madam. I hope you will give me a slip of paper, recommending me to the mercies of the street, shortly; since, if I must run away, I might forget to supply myself with a certificate."

The child-woman went out and closed the door, and ran to her own room. She fell upon the rug before the fire, and leaning her head on a chair, cried bitterly. For eight long years she had not felt the necessity for a good cry, but now she sobbed and sobbed, and thought she could not stop the tears from coming, no matter how hard she tried. O how she wanted to see Uncle Cyril! but three days passed, and he did not come. Then came a box of good things—nice things—and a little note, stating that he was on the eve of leaving to attend important business, and as he wished to be sure that she received her box for New Year, he sent it in advance: she need not open it until New Year. He would be gone some time, but hoped to be back to hear her deliver an honorary essay at the close of the winter term.

The little time almost flew by, and Neva was valedictorian, and won the scholar's wreath; but she would have given it all to see Uncle Cyril; still he came not: what could detain him? The excitement was all gone, and now, poor child! she began to try to think—to think! But she did n't know how to think, nor what to think, so she got bogged in a slough of despond, and was about to sink, sink, sink! There were some papers lying on the table: Uncle Cyril always sent her papers, and some of his firm continued it since he went away. She picked up one carelessly, and almost

the first thing she noticed was an advertisement, "Wanted—a young lady, well qualified to teach, who can furnish reliable reference. Apply at Woodside School-house." The very thing; or, at least, 't was a half straw, if no more. Madam was applied to for reference, and, of course, her opinion served as a jewel credential, for madam was far-famed; but Neva Finland could not, would not make a confidant of the lady, and so she made her plan sure, and went away without a word, leaving madam transfixed, for of course Mr. Ivan would give her a piece of his mind when he came home and found his bird flown.

III.

Mr. Ivan was on a wild goose chase, perhaps, but he would trace it through. He wrote to Neva that he was going to attend important business, and if she had only waited a few days longer, she would have found that Uncle Cyril was not such a faithless provider as madam had tried to make her think. But we are after Mr. Ivan's business now. He was simply tracing out an old newspaper bit of accident—mere local home-news, and, as already said, old news; for the paper had been used for wrapping something, and was thrown on the floor. He picked it up and noticed it casually and indifferently, but saw—"Mrs. Rowland and

Miss Emile Ivan were thrown from a carriage, the other day, and the elder lady much injured."

"Emile Ivan! Can it be? Precious, fairy sister! You must be the little darling of my boyhood," and so he started immediately, with the paper in his pocket, to explore possibilities.

He went to the printing-office from which the paper was issued, a hundred miles away, learned where the parties lived, and posted on. A beautiful residence greeted his eager eyes as he rode up. A young forest of trimmed and thrifty pines shaded the grounds of the inclosure. The sun was just setting, and as he was facing it a beautiful half-radiance enveloped the buildings and surroundings. Ivan could hardly steady his trembling joints to walk up the smooth-paved walk, and he was not an excitable character, either; but then the weather was bitter cold, and he was hunting dearer game than he had ever sought before. The hall door was closed; he knocked, and a servant opened it and asked him in. A warm fire was blazing in the fire-place, and every thing wore the smile of comfort and the glow of luxury.

"Is Miss Ivan here?"

"Yes, sir."

"Tell her a gentleman wishes to speak to her about an important matter."

Directly a fair girl—perhaps she was twenty, but looked not more than fifteen—came into the

room. The gentleman arose, and moving a few steps toward her, asked, "Am I in the presence of Miss Ivan?"

"You are, sir; pray be seated."

"Was your father's name Edward?"

"It was Edward."

"And was he killed by Indians?"

"Yes, sir, he was; and my brother—"

"Is here, Emile, darling sister—I am Cyril Ivan."

What a worldless tumult of joy, as she threw herself into the arms of a brother! There was no doubting in her heart—no thought of perchance or perhaps. She knew nothing of his footsteps; she did not stop to ask of honor, wealth, or fame, but clasped her fond arms about him with the dear word, "brother."

"Let me take you to mother: she is not well."

"Mother! our mother! Is our mother living, Emile?"

"Our mother is living, and is Mrs. Rowland."

"O my sister, this is too much joy! my cup is full."

She led him through a long hall, into her mother's bed-room. A pale, refined-looking lady sat in an arm-chair, near the fire, and Emile led him close by her, and said:

"Mother, did you ever see this gentleman before?"

Mrs. Rowland looked at her daughter in astonishment, and then looked full at Cyril. It was enough. The mature man preserved the features of the boy so perfectly, and presented such a faithful counterpart of the murdered father, that the mother forgot to embrace him, but buried her face in her hands as if hiding from some fearful phantom, and wept and sobbed. Cyril grew calm under this, and asked, "Mother, have you no little word of welcome?"

"Yes, my boy," she said, "yes, a world of welcome. Let me fold you to my heart. This extreme joy is almost equal to a new death, for it lays that awful and bloody memory open before my soul's eyes. Precious boy! you are my very own, my son. I am proud and happy."

She unbuttoned his wristband, and pushing up his sleeve, discovered a leaden scar, just above the wrist.

"I am satisfied. Do you remember how you came by that wound, my boy?"

"Yes, mother: I fell from the fence, upon my open knife. Here is the knife," he continued, drawing a much-worn knife from his pocket.

That was a happy time — a happy hour. Mr. Rowland, who had one only son by a former marriage, welcomed this splendid family acquisition with no little fervor and delight. Mrs. Rowland forgot her aches and ailments, or they forsook her

under the magical effects of supreme joy. Directly a little half-sister came, with the glad, shy caresses of tender confidence, and for the first time in nineteen years Cyril Ivan felt the sweet tenderness of the ties of natural affection; and when he went to his room he fell upon his knees, humbly thanking the great God for allowing him to feel this surpassing joy.

Osmond Rowland and Emile Ivan were to be married in six weeks, and as they had all been separate so near a life-time, Cyril wrote to his co-partner of his intention to remain a time in his happy home-circle. He took care, too, to make arrangements in advance for Neva. Afterward he wrote to Neva, but his letter did not reach her. The lone one was doubly lonely, while Cyril's soul was having a feast of fat things in the resurrection of his boyhood loves.

Shall we look back and see Mrs. Ivan escaping in the thick darkness of the night? Her husband did not come back quickly as she expected, so she went to the outside of the house, through a back way, with her babe Emile in her arms. She was strangely apprehensive of evil, but was a very prudent, calm woman. When she perceived in the moonless darkness several distinct figures moving toward the house, she crouched outside, with the sleeping infant close in her arms. A single cry from the child, the breaking of a twig, or even the

murmur of a heavy sigh, might then have won her death-warrant. O it was a dreadful night in her loneliness and desolation! A heavy cloud was coming up, too: the thunder was rolling uneasily and threateningly. Perhaps her treasures were not killed—only captured; and perhaps they would escape and return. She knew the strange men were Indians, because she saw them in the blaze of the firelight as they entered the house. There were no neighbors nearer than four or five miles, and to these the heroic but agonized wife and mother went. A deep stream intercepted her way, but there was a foot-log, and how she crossed in the darkness and excitement she knew not. She only knew that she reached her destination and told her wretched story. The settlers were surprised; Indians had never perpetrated outrages upon them before, but as soon as they could gather a squad of men they followed in pursuit. When they reached Ivan's dwelling they found it had been pillaged of some things, but nothing had been fired; the horses were gone, and there was the body of the slain husband! but no trace of the little son. They pursued the track some distance, then it turned into the wood. Nightfall was enveloping them, and a heavy rain was falling; the night was very dark, and it was probable that rain would fall until morning. They stopped and camped. Next morning the Indian track was no-

where to be found, but they scattered in several directions, seeking discoveries—finding none. The husband was dead! the boy might be, and the widowed mother was left with her great torn heart to heal, and with tender Emile to preserve and nourish.

IV.

Emile was married, and Cyril returned to his business, looking happier and handsomer than ever before.

As soon as he had peeped in upon his pecuniary affairs, and settled himself in fresh linen and dustless clothes, he presented himself at madam's private seminary to see Miss Finland. He had much to say to his own. Madam felt like shaking all over when she herself had to represent her charge. He chatted pleasantly enough with her a few minutes, then, with all his princely courtliness, said:

"I will be glad to see Miss Finland."

"She—she—is not here; she's gone."

"Great heavens! gone! gone where? what do you mean?"

"I only mean that she has left here, and gone—I know not where."

"Gone! gone! why is she gone? Were you not amply paid to take care of her? Did I not leave her in your keeping, that you might guard and pro-

tect her? How, then, can you tell me she is gone, and you know not where?"

Madam had worked Ivan into some excitement, and she began to grow clear-headed; so she proposed to bring the little note Neva left, which she did, and handed him. He read as follows:

"Madam:—I find an honorable opportunity of availing myself of your faithful instructions. As I am a homeless, friendless girl, explanations are unnecessary. NEVA FINLAND."

Cyril Ivan walked to the door, and out. He forgot, or did not care, for madam's presence. Yes, he forgot her and all the world, then, save his little darling—all, all, all! If Neva could have seen his countenance then, and heard his cry of despair as he went out alone, madam, with all her prudence, could not have shaken her faith for Uncle Cyril. Was he not a self-installed and a publicly-acknowledged protector? Years had shown his truth. He went to his room more utterly wretched than he had ever been. His isolation among the savage Indians had never produced such an extreme dearth as did his reflections upon this fractured bowl of hope. Until now he had not known how tenderly dear was this little Christmas waif—this little drift-log on the great river of life. How he had clung to it, strong man that he was, fearing to let go, lest the muddy deep of aimlessness

should woo him to its darkness! And now, when the island-shore was almost reached—when he might rest—the storm came, the breakers battled, and the hoarse cannons of the dreadful deep bellowed around him, and cast him, without oar or anchor, upon the howling water. What! if after all his pains he had preserved a viper, only that he might receive a deadly sting? What if she, his little pearl, should be won to some low haunt of vice? What if he had educated and refined her only to make her attractive in the eyes of base villainy? O horrid picture! how black, how loathsome! He dropped his face in his hands, and wailed, "Ah! Neva, Neva! better—ten million times better—to have left you on the pavement to freeze in the pure air of holy childhood, than to have lifted thee and see thee consumed by the fires of ruin! But no, little darling, I may cheer myself: some pitiful pride hath driven thee to this. My lily will not be blighted; she will not soil her whiteness with the mire of bogs and marshes. But O little one, I thought thee so void of the withering frost of silly, false pride! We will have the game through, Neva—hide and seek it shall be—but I will find thee, I will find thee. Mine is a proud love, little one, and it will shield and guard thee from the blight of the scathing world. Yes, I will find you, my own little dove—my pure, tender Neva!"

V.

"Papa!"

"What is it, love?"

"Papa, I think he ought to know."

"No, child; wait."

"O papa! he was so good, so kind, and I know he is sad and sorry."

"Never mind—wait."

She was an only daughter; the father had none other child. The wife had won her eternal home. He was rich, and the girl was an heiress, but she was unhappy—wretched!

"Papa!"

"Yes, love—but I want music now; come, practice this new piece. I wish you to be perfect in this by the time of your Christmas festival. Stop a minute, dear; are you sure you have the names of all the little poor children in the country? I want you to have all the children, but I want those specially provided for. Are there any fatherless or motherless unthought of? Inquire carefully, my child, so that all that need may be made glad with something new and comfortable."

"Yes, papa, I will make every inquiry;" and the young girl went on with her practice. But directly she stopped, broke down, and leaned her head on the instrument to weep. The father stood by her side. He was a handsome man, fifty, perhaps, and his head was like an autumn frost.

This gave him a most venerable appearance. His eyes were thrillingly black; his brow prominent, and indicative of much thought. His manner was deeply refined, and as he drew the dear child to him he was very tender, even to the fondness of motherhood.

"You think papa a hard man," he said: "do n't you, darling daughter? Never mind, my love; wait and see."

He patted her on the shoulder, turned and left the room softly, and went into his library. A beautiful portrait-picture hung above the fire-place: 't was that of a young girl in pure white; a wreath of white buds was twisted in her brown hair; a gauzy blue scarf was half wrapped about her dainty figure, while one white hand held it together. The blue eyes were raised upward, full of love and confidence, as if gazing into other eyes they knew full well. The picture had just been brought home and hung up there. 'T was painted from a small miniature picture, and now, for the hundredth time, perhaps, the gentleman stood beneath it, and gazed longingly into those lovely eyes. And now, grief that had been so heavy before—grief that almost crushed away his respiration—now found vent. He leaned his head upon the mantle, and the torrent rain of tears watered the arid desert of his burning thought. When it was all over, he looked up again, and murmured, "So like

her, so like her; darling, darling Ninnie, tender wife! 'T is bitter, but thou knowest all now."

Pinewood palace was a magic picture of light and merriment. An army, almost, of little people were gathering there for a Christmas festival. The sun was shining grandly, and it did seem that his glad rays were trying to peep into every nook and corner on the premises. The lady in the portrait, even, seemed to wear a gladder smile that morning than ever, as the father and daughter stood together looking at her. But the children had commenced coming, and the young hostess must do the honors apportioned her. To look upon her was to love her; and that evening, when the shadows pointed warning fingers and whispered time to go, that young lady had won more admirers than she would live to outwear. The last little one had gone, and left its sweet good-bye, when the thoughtful father came to the maiden and said, "Now, love, since you have surpassed my expectations in your child-festival, I want you to go to your room and rest; rest one hour, my dear girl, and you will be fresh and bright for evening. You may meet some old friends to-night; some, perhaps, whom you have or have not forgotten. Now go; do not forget to wear the new dress, my child—I have a fancy to see you with it on."

The young girl did as her father advised. She was really fatigued; and then the evening promised

no new hope to her to excite her: there was the quiet pleasure of pleasing her father—that was gratifying. Presently she dropped into a sweet sleep, but her father did not mean that she should oversleep herself this evening of all others. When the hour was up he went promptly to her room himself, and touching her cheek lightly, said, "Now, my child, 'tis time you should dress." Then he went back, sent her an assistant, and seeing all things progressing as he wished, he went into the parlor and thought to grow quiet with his reading; but his nervous excitement was stronger than his will, so he laid the paper aside and walked the floor heavily. Soon two gentlemen came; they were greeted with much warmth, and shown to their room. This was not to be much more than a home-circle sociable; it was Christmas evening, and our host wished to give additional life to his large house. But he did not want, nor would he have, hilarity. He had prepared a grand supper, and they would have sweet music and interesting conversation, but he would not have a fuss, and noisy dancing in his house. Ah, no! that was time wasted and strength spent in vain. When his child fatigued herself, and became overheated, he wished to know that something had been accomplished, something that did not have to consume the better part of the substantial being in order that it might have food. To be sociable—

to entertain his guests and have a pleasant interchange of thought—was right: this would lead to mental culture; and show the force of moral power; but, he thought, if people wished real physical exercise, they should first don a work-dress, and then find good labor. So the friends of our host were good friends, and not funeral-frumps, either, but pleasant, intelligent, wide-awake human beings. That's out of the story, though: we fall into lines again.

The young lady was all ready; let's look at her as she stands before the large mirror—just like the picture in the library. She is dressed in white, too; white silk, a blue scarf, turned half sash-like across one shoulder, and tied in a knot below the other arm. There were white flowers in her hair, too, and then came the jewel-face in all this setting of frame-work. Fair, but not a thorough blonde, with great blue eyes, thinking eyes, intelligent eyes, with a sea of light, gladness, love, sadness, and truth, all shimmering and waiting together. Now, was she pretty or not, with her figure tall and graceful as a princess ought to be, proud enough to be admired, and sweet and amiable enough to be loved, loved? She moves away softly, as if a sick one were being disturbed.

"Papa, will I do?"

"Do!" the gentleman exclaimed, jumping up: "do! you darling child! you are more like a

seraph flown in here. You will overdo, my love."

Just then a half-dozen or more friends were shown in, and presently others, until the expected guests were nearly all assembled. The father stood at his daughter's seat, and said softly:

"My daughter, there is a Christmas present waiting for you in the library. Will you please look after it, and let us have your opinion before we go to supper?"

"Yes, sir, with pleasure."

And with that gentle step so natural to her, she walked into the library. There! she came near closing the door quietly, and walking back; but the gentleman heard her, and turning round, she saw—"O Uncle Cyril!"

"My precious Neva!" and he caught the queen of his life and heart in his arms.

"Come, come now," said Judge Finland, at the other door—"no tears, no tears; they will spoil your eyes."

But they did n't, for they stopped right there, and made her eyes look like—not diamonds, for they are too cold and sparkling; but like eyes and diamonds together.

"She is yours, Ivan, and mine. You saved the little one from the grave while I was hunting gold to make her rich. If I could only put life into that lovely copy above us, I do n't think my ex-

plorations would make me ache so, but"—the old man turned his back a minute, before he could speak again; then, trying to catch a ray from the rising sun of the two young hearts before him, he said, "Ivan, since you think proper to lengthen your claim to this young lady, I surrender to your superior right, and make myself an agreeable third in this, your home. Remember, we must not separate while we all live."

"Good sir, thank you, again and again." Then, more timidly approaching Neva, he asked, "Do you approve the terms of treaty, my—Miss—Ne—Finland?" She lifted her eyes, not noticing his unusual embarrassment, and put both hands in his. It was enough; he was answered.

"Now, daughter, love, if you like your present, and forgive my hard fancy for holding you from making yourself known to Mr. Ivan sooner, we will join our friends and have some supper."

This was life, glorious life, to frank-hearted, pure Neva. She had won the White Prince, an honored and intelligent member of the best society. His long life with the Indians had caused him no loss. He had mastered time since his escape; he had worked and studied too.

'T is needless to go through with her father's return, or to tell of their happy reünion. 'T is enough that the pure-minded Neva has a Christian memory for Christmas; and while each succeeding

one becomes but a golden link in the anniversary chain of temporal joys, she does not forget that it commemorates the holy arising of the all-saving Star of Bethlehem.

The star that wise men fondly sought
Was hung above the Saviour's head;
The listening throng beyond had caught
The humble worship round his bed.

This star that came on Christmas morn,
Is seen by faith each living day;
And while it says a Prince is born,
It begs that sin be cast away.

O glorious star! thy tender glow
Doth mantle all our dying earth,
And by its lingering radiance—lo!
We run to win the living birth!

The dark will come—the soul will need
A pilot through the stormy sea:
O catch the star—its light will lead
Thy spirit safe—thy spirit free!

THE LABEL OF CREATION.

MAN, the noblest conception of the Godhead, the most mysterious execution of Divine ability and Divine architecture, the most glittering jewel in the rare diadem of a whole world's achievement, the sweetest flower in Eden, and,

more than all else, the lovely image of the transcendent Creator—the Holy of holies—forgot his origin, dishonored his parentage, and exchanged the princely birthright for a single mess of pottage, defaced his glorious Maker, and took his sentence in eternal doom!

He was driven from the paradise allotted him, forbidden to inhale the fragrance of his native bowers, or feast his ravished taste on their perennial fruits.

Upon his lordly brow—the brow so like his Maker's, the brow the Father had molded so tenderly, and twined about with angel fillets freshly blooming—was stamped the curse undying—the fearful curse that gluts on the vital fluid, and feeds upon the heart of the only bud that is left to tell the tale of the primeval wreath immortal!

A thunder-bolt to finite joys, a lightning-shaft most fatal, was that deep voice from heaven's high court, pronouncing, with the pity of a father and the power of a sovereign, the death-tones to its children, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

The words here dimmed away
Till lost in darkness, vague, and dread,
Their very silence seemed to say
Awfuller things than words e'er said.

Then fled the sacred boon—no more it came
To warm and brighten with its genial flame.

O beauteous sun! how fain we now would claim
Thy glorious light, burned out by human shame.
Until demoniac sin felled nature low,
No shadow e'er had caused hot tears to flow.
Alas! O world just born—O world just lost,
Sad angels wept, and billows wildly tossed;
Then countless whirlwinds caught aloft the strain,
Reëchoing lost! 't is death and endless pain.
O black despair, how quickly thou hast come,
To scream thine anguish, since there is no home!
Abandoned wretches! wild and lone thou art,
Ye two are all, but ye must surely part.
Ye two are fugitives from heaven; sent
To walk the endless night—on ruin bent.
Ah, fate! no more is joy, no more is peace;
Life is not life—sure death would be release.
For the demon Treason has done his worst.

O transparent happiness! thy mystic gardens, once so lovely, so redundantly embellished, are now, alas! so desolate and uncultivated. The first floret slumbering within its undeveloped calyx is blighted; and, instead of luscious fruits, thistles grow rank and wild upon the chosen spots of the Father's hallowed grounds. Is there now remaining any sublunary aim so strongly enticing as to cope with this first pure and precious happiness unadulterated from the hand of Omniscience? Is there any thing so sweetly, strangely powerful as to win the glow of unalloyed serenity? Is it environed by the smile coquetting with the rosy lip? or in the light that sparkles in the liquid eye, re-

flecting upon each clear and classic feature? Can these be symbols of happiness—the priceless gem we seek? Can it be bought with talent's latent fire, or entrapped by restless enterprise? Can the noose of daring valor encircle its wayward dimensions?—such valor as warms the blood in mortal veins, and nerves the arm like Spartan heroes to strike and fall, and freedom seek in death?

Can reputation yield the precious boon?—a reputation world-renowned, such as wrote beside the name of Alexander, "A world's conqueror?"—such as immortalized the magnanimous but unfortunate Napoleon, and twined the laurel wreath of greenest hue around a Cesar's brow? Is it possible that these fickle baubles can afford that felicity which alone can satiate the desires of the immortal mind, whose lofty aspirations would seek those things that are unwithering, unfading, undying? We think not; ay! we think not; for we know the bliss accruing from these mighty components of worldly aspiration is unstable as water—transient as the meteoric blaze that plays upon the vaulting sky.

When man's darkened career for transgression was promulgated in heaven, the supernatural light of perfect happiness descended the zenith of realization, and rested upon the clouded horizon of vague anticipation; for happiness such as this can only assimilate with, and be approximated to, un-

sullied purity—purity untainted by pollution of thought, from the polished spire of which the unspotted banner of eternal truth may float.

Happiness is not here. We catch a gleam of it now and then, but we are all sinners, and cannot be purely happy so long as sin is allowed a seat in our social circles. We may not exterminate sin, but we may study its deformity; and in endeavoring to shun it, will perhaps catch a few faint rays from approving conscience, to lessen the great black of darkness.

On that fated day when the impenetrable vapor for disobedience hung in blackened billows over the world just brought into existence, pitying angels beheld their favorite, and they must have wept over the fearful ruin of fallen perfection; for soon the star of hope sent a gentle ray from her beaming eye to cheer the helpless victims, then took her quiet, unchanging station as a Pharos, never sinking, to emit a feeble light or a fitful glimmer as a light-house on the sea of time, burning on and on unto the perfect day, commingling with her sister rays from faith's alluring orb. "Dust thou art" is also the label of all inferior works, from the wild, vindictive lion, whose sonorous notes of anger reverberate o'er the distant plains of Africa's benighted coast, to the harmless animalcule, invisible except by microscopic lens.

A warbler from the wild-wood grove
Mounts gladly on the breath of morn;
It gladly roves—its song is love,
Not list'ning to the huntsman's horn.
But ah! its home so measureless,
Is haunted by the sportsman's tread;
And soon its dove is treasureless,
Because she knows her mate is dead.

The world of vegetation, too,
Must feel the blight, and pass away.
The flower that opes while shadowy dew
Distills upon the couch of day,
May live to see the evening fade,
And die alike in evening shade.

We gaze upon the world around, and wonder if 't will fall;
We ask the winds sighing along if they'll forget their call.
We sit beside the purling brook, where little crystals drop,
Or wander to the foaming main, where bounding billows stop.
Alas! and will those waters cease, so fathomless and dark?
Those waters! realms of finny worlds, to float the proudest bark!
Those waters where the sea-gull bathes within the whitest wave,
And, screaming, lights upon the ship that plows the sailor's grave!
Wide waters, in whose deep, dark caves, the forming pearls are gleaming;
Blue waters, on whose mirrored brim the midnight moon is beaming—

Bright moon, with myriads in her train, that skims
along the sky,
Millions of bright seraphic gems, that from the morn-
ing fly,
And hide away till king of day sinks in the distant
sea,
That they may come and stand again amid their spark-
ling glee.
But sun and moon will wax and wane, and stars will
fade away,
While twilight will refuse to lend to earth her faintest
ray.
Mankind, till then, must suffer on, and wear their na-
tive ills,
Enjoying all the sweets of life, just as their Maker
wills!

The yeoman, at his honest toils, oft bears a heavy
heart;
The miser, counting out his dimes, suspects a thief, and
starts;
While doctors half forget 'tis pain that makes health
to decline,
And fear they won't get bread to eat if ailings don't
combine.
A mother, in her widowed state, toils for her children
dear,
Unheeding all—her aching heart, and her sad, weary
fear.
The statesman has his mental cares, though on a couch
of down,
And though erect his noble head, his grandeur soon
hath flown.
The soldier, on the tented field where angry bullets
flow,

Feels one to pierce his gallant form, and sees the crimson's glow.
The maiden, in whose constant heart her lover's vows still burn,
Hears that the chilly night of death did all his pleading spurn;
She knows the dampness from his mien was wiped off by the grave—
The grave! no one can tell her where, but 't is a soldier's grave!

'T is true that every thing must fade, that every thing must die,
And that the gayest things to-day must soon in silence lie.
All things? I should say all but one—one cannot turn to dust:
That one for which there is no death except in living rust.
With pains, like tortured spirits feel, to hear their vainest sigh,
It lives—to know it still must nurse its torments—fearful cry!
But there are two decrees for this—eternal light, or gloom;
O soul! dear soul! thou canst not sleep in the nightshade's poisoned room!

This is the one link of all past perfection—too hazardous to be staked against the fluctuations of this world. 'T is the link that binds us yet to immortality, and it is left with us to say whether we will unite it again with the once interminable chain—that which the Father Almighty will hand

to us, if we will only plead with him, through the great Redeemer, who knew too much of human woe to disregard a mortal's prayer. He alone can remove creation's label, by interceding, through his atoning blood, for the salvation of the crimsoned soul. It is immortal, but it will either live in delight, or it will ever famish, and never die in eternal woe.

"Day and night,
Seed-time and harvest, heat and hoary frost,
Shall hold their course till fire purge all things new;
Both heaven and earth, wherein the just shall dwell."

A LITTLE LETTER TO MY LITTLE ONES.

MY DARLINGS:—I write you this little letter, and fold it here amid these Broken Links, because I think you will find it some day. You are but tender babes now, my little son and daughter, and if you live to walk in the paths of manhood and womanhood, you too may walk alone. The mysteries of life often deprive us of those we love best—of those we cherish most. Your noble, manly father has already joined hands with the brotherhood beyond, and we are left to fight against the storms of life. Listen now! If you were to bend and deform a young plant, how do

you think it would grow? Would it grow up beautifully erect, as the Creator intended it should? No, my darlings, it might make a large plant, or a large tree, but it would be bent and twisted still. Sometimes little children think it nice to say little coarse words; and when they get used to them, they begin to say ugly, profane words, and then—and then they just step on nearer and nearer to ruin, ruin, ruin! I have seen mothers almost broken-hearted because their little plants, that they struggled to cultivate with care and diligence, grew up to make O! such crooked trees—the pure little children turned to wicked grown people! Now, listen again: The good Lord to whom we pray made us all; and he did not make us like four-footed beasts, but he made us each with a jewel soul. When we die, we do not go to dust and ashes entirely; no, not wholly, for God claims the soul, and he will not let it die. If the possessor has cursed his own inheritance, God is not responsible for the mortal's calamity, for he has cried with a loud voice, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." The Saviour condescends, and begs, "My son, give me thy heart." Then, when the wayward mortal takes his life and being into his own keeping—when the Father may not draw him near, that he may save—then the reaper comes and mows him down. The body is nothing, nothing! but the works of the body may condemn the

immortal soul to eternal burnings. O my tender ones, how my heart yearns over you now! Providential sorrows and bereavements cannot corrode and eat away the good in your lives, but sin, black, ugly sin, can make a wreck of the noblest promise. Life is full of error; God only can deliver. If you will throw yourselves upon God's mercy, and rely upon it, he will be your Father, he will be your Saviour. If you will consult his guidance, and submit your lives, your all to him, determining ever to cultivate the virtues and graces of the human heart, shunning vice and loving truth, your nurtured souls may look forward rapturously to the wings of peace that will come with the breath-hush to carry you home to the eternal city. My darlings—little son, little daughter—above all things, though you lose the whole world, O do strive to house your immortal souls in eternal heaven!

TO MEMORY.

I ALMOST plead with thee to quench thy fire—
To plant thy tomb, and still thy lonely lyre!
O friend! in whom my deepest soul was bound,
The world doth wail a dull and doleful sound.

O mem'ry! hear: how canst thou so beguile
With joyous ray, to make me brightly smile?
And then, just as I claim the light my own,
'Tis empty life intrudes—I'm lone! so lone!

O what a grief that mortal peace should bleed!
That all its strength should be a broken reed!
Joys that are past, O how they tear my soul!
And memory drops are in a fractured bowl.

Onward, still on, the hastening days roll on;
Still memory lags to tell me all is gone—
Gone the fond, dark eyes—gone the deep, sweet voice;
Gone the firm, low step, that made my soul rejoice;

Gone is the home where grew the young elm-trees,
Gone are the flowers we planted in our glees;
Gone all the gladness we wooed there together,
Gone all my lack of care, ay! gone forever!

O mem'ry! thou dost tell of sweetest pleasures,
Truly thou hast known all of love-light's treasures;
Thou hast dewy eyes while looking on the dearth,
O mem'ry! see, O feel for the parching earth!
Close thy heavy eyelids, breathe a word of prayer
O'er the lone expanse, to stir the stifling air.

O could I steal from yonder heaven a spark,
With which to brighten all this dismal dark,
I'd show thee, mem'ry, all this aching gloom
That bows me down with a dull, iron doom.

Mem'ry! thy flame doth do no living good;
The shore is cold on which protection stood;
The silent stars no mourners' tears repel,
And surcharged hearts with their own miseries swell.

My mem'ry! turn thy gilded mirror back;
I cannot look—you make my brain to rack;
For light that's gone doth make the gloom more gloom,
My lamp is down—my song is in the tomb.

THE MYSTIC SPELL.

THERE is a time in the record of life,
When the stoutest quake, and the sternest shake.
There is a time when the deep channel-stream,
With a heaving sound and a dark'ning tinge,
Flows over the sands of the wave-washed shore,
And leaves for its footprint the canker-spot woe!

There is a time when the clear sun of joy
Breaks forth from the cloud with a dazzling show;
But ah! 'tis flick'ring, and flat'ring, and false
As the moonbeam robe on the ruined tower wall;
Like the rose-ray gleam of the early morn,
Obscured by a cloud full as early born.

Coming events cast their shadows before,
Are oracular words from a sage-pen of yore.
Is it true that the storm that gathers on high,
Drops a shadow here ere we see it nigh?
Then doth the God of the rolling sea listen
As his shining locks with the white sprays glisten?

Ah! true it may be—no mortal can tell,
For the waters grow still, then heave and thrill;
Then wrestle and writhe, and tremblingly meet
Ere the contest comes with the lightning fleet,
To scatter them high, or to lay them low
On the lap of the cold, sighing water.

Ah! there are moments—we cannot tell why—
When the soul grows full of an aching woe;
Each thought is an earth of tempest and storm,
Each hope a burden of iron alarm.

Then rivers of tears are invoked to relieve
The sickened spirit, and bring it reprieve.

O stern cording weight of such pond'rous thought,
You stifle and torture, and linger untaught!
The world is void—each sound is with moaning,
And treasure is naught—the spirit is roaming;
It would pray, but it knows it is wordless,
Then it quivers, and thinks itself worldless.

There cometh a time—we cannot tell why
Our thoughts are so strange, so fearful, so wild;
We beg for a power to wield in the right,
And plead for a star to yield us a light.
But the flower is torn from the budding stem,
And the crown is spoiled of its purest gem.

There is a time when our spirit-friends come,
The friends that we loved in our happiest hours;
And we wildly sob in our swelling heart,
For fate and the tomb doth keep us apart!
O garland of love, with thy mystic spell,
Thou hast a home—in each heart thou dost dwell!

There falleth a time with no star on high,
There gleameth no moon in the misty sky;
Then, with thought unspoken, and torture unwritten,
We watch paling lights round the couch of our smitten;
As the chilly lips steal away the breath,
And a voice is heard with its low tone—death!

O voices! lone voices, how wailing your lay—
Ye come from afar with a tempest sway.
We know, O we know that the loving are gone;
We know that our life's bark is tossing forlorn;
We know that the foliage has dropped from the trees,
And left them unclothed in the cold winter breeze.

We know the wine-cup is filling with gall;
We know our sanctum's an echoless hall.
O God! what a change doth thy mystic spell bring!
Thy sleepers are still, but to us what a sting!
They'll heed no more the wild roar of the wind,
While we'll watch alone, with our burden to bend.

There cometh sadness, so full and so pure,
As to soothe the soul with an angel's allure.
And this is the wand that the meek one sends,
Refining the home its presence amends.
When this hour cometh, do we all feel it so?
There's nothing to mar our soul's happy flow.
Our trust is so pure, we tenderly wait,
To see what it pleaseth the great One to do;
The God of the skies in the sunlight doth smile,
And calm, gentle peace doth our moments beguile.
But, do you know, do you know what they are,
These moments so full of the heavenly fair?
Do you know, when you feel so full of the calm,
That a loved one is dropping from heaven a balm,
To lighten our sorrow, and lessen our fear;
To fill our souls with the holiest thought,
By the blood of the lovely Redeemer bought?
But broken farewell, O sweet mystic spell!
Thy tone is a song that we never may tell;
We love the sublime in thy whisp'ring untold,
The one little scroll by the angels unsold.
There is life and light in a world beyond this—
We know its truth by this soft, pearly bliss.
O wreath of immortelles! O crown to be sought!
The cross is the crown, by the Saviour wrought.

NIGHT THOUGHT (A FRAGMENT).

WE stand upon the beached verge of the salt flood; a silent ocean spreads before us. The vessel in which we have engaged passage is just ready to launch upon the great deep. 'T is but the travel of eight or twelve hours; still the thought comes, Will we ever reach the other shore? The other shore—the dawn of a new-born day! Ah! what violent tempest may arise, and drive us to fathom the eternal deep of darkness, ere the mist evaporates on the aurora mantle of another dawn. This closing our eyelids to be rocked in the arms of wavy darkness is a solemn act, and we feel, our Father, ere our heavy bark pushes out amid the wild and impenetrable shadows, that we should pleadingly implore thee to lay thy hands upon us in blessing and forgiveness, and give us a peaceful and happy landing on the beautiful strand of refulgent morning.

"Guard us while shadows lie
Far o'er the waters spread;
Hear the heart's lonely sigh—
Thine, too, hath bled."

VALE.

THERE is a temple, dark and lofty, but its towering spires are veiled to human orbs; from all external vision it is hidden away, and known only to the Argus eyes of feeling. Its magnitudinous proportions are monopolized by a bright curtain of seeming effulgence, bestowed by the sunlight of passing joy. Its columns of colossal dimensions are twined with mystic vines, faithful to their clambering trust, but Vale is the worm that hides among the shadows, and eats away the young flowers and perfected fruit. We puzzle our brain over the enigma of life, but Young says:

> Why all this toil for triumphs of an hour?
> What though we wade in wealth or soar in fame?
> Earth's highest station ends in "Here he lies,"
> And "dust to dust" concludes her noblest lays.

Still, life is hope; but if in this life we alone have hope, we are of all men most miserable. There is a something within—a low but earnest monitor—pointing to the heights of immortality. Cicero said: "There is, I know not how, in the minds of men, a certain presage, as it were, of a future existence; and this takes the deepest root, and is most discoverable in the greatest geniuses and most exalted souls." Addison, catching the

same strain, writes: "If 't is a dream, let me enjoy it, since it makes me both a happier and a better man."

Could we truly conceive the godhead to be full of omnipotent benignity, in believing that we are designed to pass away as the flower that perisheth, while the lamp that made the molded clay more than the dust and the potter's vessel, is forever extinguished? 'T is mortal to die—man can take life; but it is immortal to live again, and man cannot give life! God only giveth life eternal through Him who made the debasing cross the enduring throne at the foot of which he calleth us to sit, that we may receive the inviting and all-saving legacy of the holy Redeemer's love. This alone is life—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. But the narrow portal must be passed; the little Vale must be whispered ere we enter upon the eternal glories of eternal life. The wicked, the debased, the pure, and the good, in all ages and all climes, have heard this same voice; they have quivered in this same chill, frosty atmosphere, and no matter how proud in this world's goods, or how illustrious in this world's glory, they all come to fall at the little feet of little Vale. It is waiting to stand guard over us; each year we hear its voice, and for the last time it will call, sooner, perhaps, than we think, in the cold farewell!

A FRIEND IS DEAD.

HE'S dead! he's dead! O tell us, is it true
That death has come again to make us rue
The hour we breathed? since breath must end in death.
Ah! true, too true! we languish with regret,
For he is gone—so noble and so brave,
And lavish nature's gifts are in the grave.
O intellect! how proudly on his brow
Thy bright, thy thrilling fires did burn ; but now
No noise but silence and eternal sleep
Can know the dust whereon we constant weep.

In battle proud the daring soldier stood,
Nor lost one drop, one single drop of blood.
But shadowy death, thou standest not alone
On battle-fields, where limb from limb is torn;
For dire disease is faithful still to thee—
To execute is but her greatest glee.
She stole his spirit, and to thy domain
His life she carried in its racking pain.
The wine of life from his dear veins she drank,
Nor stopped to think, nor from the pleasure shrank.
She soared away, inflated with her gain,
While his cold form amid the sod was lain.

O soldier brave! these years have won thee friends;
Friends that can love, and memory's head now bends
O'er moments gone, that still a fragrance lends.
Thy manly virtue, thy proud depth of mind,
Are sparkling gems, our spirit-links to bind.
Thy grave is somewhere 'mid our bowers fair,
But in our hearts 'tis deeper far than there!

Though years have flown across the sphere of thought,
We pause to look upon these flowers brought,
And drop the dew that 'neath our eyelids gleam,
For memory aches over this broken dream!

O callous death! thy signet doth not care
For strength of mind, or wreaths that virtues wear.
Thou art greedy for our blossoms blooming,
And mak'st haste to gather at thy coming.
Our flowers! are they turned to stars in heaven,
To brighten up the misty twilight even?
O blossoms rare! my vase so empty seems,
And dimly shine the sunlight's brightest beams.
But see that star! that evening star above!
How bright its ray—that love-star of my love!

ANGUISH.

GOD! is there no release?—say, Father, say!
Or must I grope in this dark, pitted way?
For months I've looked to Heaven to succor me
From this torn path, but still the thorns I see.
I've prayed until my hollow voice grows dry,
Upward I gaze—there's nothing but the sky;
No moon, no stars, no tender, soothing word,
And like a lone, a frightened, wounded bird,
I steal away, and would, but cannot, weep!
Father! the hour was once when all was bright,
Then hope was sun enough for all the night,
When tears were drops of joy, so soft and still,
But that is past—my soul with anguish fills!
Each day I seek my duties to discharge;
Each hour my burdens heavily enlarge.

Wild fate! I am a wreck unless a change
Should come to me. This low, this groveling range
Is no small curse; my deep soul cannot sleep!
Great God! thou hearest the tender raven's cry;
How long, how long until thy Spirit nigh,
Shall bid me cease to wrestle with a fate
I cannot tame from morn till evening late?
O misery! is it not enough for thee,
That thou didst steal mine idol far from me?
O why not leave, and let my spirit rest
One moment, ere I number with the blest,
Or sink to death in the great, howling deep?
Roll on, dark day, and come, O boding night!
I'm worn and weary with my spirit's flight.
Better to die, ah, yes! to die outright,
Than thus to live when nothing gives delight.
It cannot last; O no! it cannot last,
God soon will come to make such torture past.
Grave! grave! sweet thy sepulchral voice and gloom;
There is a light that hovers o'er the tomb,
In veiled array its vigil long to keep!

When they have laid me low, to my long rest,
In my white robes—an honored wedding guest;
When they have put the last board in its place,
O'er folded hands and placid waiting face;
And packed the earth so close about the grave,
He'll come again his darling one to save.
For joy e'en then I could not, could not weep,
As heart to heart we'd through the heavens sweep,
And gaze with awe adown the dreadful steep!

Ah, darling one! a bitter cup I've held,
Through these long years with pains and achings swelled;

Without one friend to whom I might complain,
Without one voice to soothe the washing rain,
But God doth give, and God doth take away;
Bless God! he is the mourner's only stay!
I'll trust thee, Father! heal my soundless woe;
I'll trust thee, Father! whither must I go?
Direct—I yield, and richer harvests reap!

COMFORT.

WHAT am I living for? If I can lay my hand on my heart, and say, "For thee and thy glory, all-glorious Father," then there is much left to live for. Ah! then there is all left; for if I live for fame, I am hungry, and never filled; if I live for joy, it leaves a sting; if I live for my friends, they scatter and leave me; and if I live for love, it dies, and I am alone and desolate. God knoweth what is best: if I live for him, how beautiful is the flower-field to which I am going; how lovely the home to which he is calling me—home for the homeless, and a heaven with the Eternal! Ah! this is the sweetest thought I ever had: when all is gone, to feel that more than all is still left. God and heaven! if I may lay me down with these last words on my lips, as they entreat his pitying love, with the great book of my heart open before him, the Father, while my

trembling hands are laid in his, and tenderly awaiting his holy will, it is enough—I will have won the prize. Tribulation and trial will turn to dazzling gems, and sparkle in the crown of my own never-waning noonday. To live for God, is to gain such an inheritance as millions of worlds cannot equal, for it giveth us an everlasting seat at the right hand of the Father.

MY HEART'S MIRROR.

"Break, break, break
On thy cold, gray stones, O sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

Break, break, break
At the foot of thy crags, O sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Can never come back to me."

I.

FULL many an hour are our lives beguiled, saddened, and enriched by the heart's retrospect, and those sweet lines from Tennyson are glowing on my soul's tablet to-night, making me almost feel that I am the cold rock over which the wild sea is breaking. Just listen to that lone, solemn dropping out there—such a low, doleful, sob-

bing rain: this is November, with its dreary days, the saddest of the year, and I sit here by myself, and think, think, think. They call me an old bachelor, and I expect I am almost one, for I feel achingly venerable to-night, and would be better if I could say to the fountains of my soul, "Unseal and moisten these stubborn, burning eyes, with soothing and cooling tears."

Six years past last month. There stands the mirror, right there in that silvery flame. Can't you see it? 'tis all so plain to me. Look! that sweet, earnest face, so fair and tender; is n't it charming? and those eyes—eyes of heaven's own light—how deep and truthful! I used to look at them and believe they would belong to me some day, with all their rare tenderness and refined vivacity; but O gay young man! you need not be laughing there while you read the confession of one old man; you are all more or less sanguine, according to the prize you wish to win; and you do not know what mildew may fall upon the fair page of your own bright life.

Vulna's mother and my step-mother were sisters. Her parents both died when she was about fifteen years of age, and she came to my father's to live. Poor, dear, lone darling! But I must not stop to pity her; pity was an insult to her strong, self-reliant nature. We all loved her, and I most of all. The whole family loved her pres-

ence, and were sorry when she was absent. As for me, when she was away I was a half-waking fellow until she returned. We were together so much, and she was not out in the world's gay arena as most girls of her age, so I just took it for granted that my bright-eyed darling would never love any one but me, and I felt secure, so secure, in my deep, deep devotion. I had much to do before I could make a home just as I wished it, in which to place such an exquisite treasure, so I kept working and waiting. I was always of a very real, even temperament—not a bit of suspicion or jealousy about me. When I love anything I love it, and see no sense in making myself miserable, when I ought to be happy, by looking with an evil eye upon every thing that is n't done just as I would do it. No; but it was waiting that made an earthquake of my happy hope: I waited too long! My sorrow came, and it came full-handed; but my heart was my own iron chest, and I went and robed my treasure in the sheeny satin of lasting loss and constant love, and laid it in this closet-tomb. O my darling! darling! how my spirit chafed and mourned when he had stolen you from me! But let me go back.

One evening I had been riding along the highway, and when I was nearing home I met a dear old friend who had been my chum and classmate years before, in W——. I was very glad to take

him to my father's, and much prouder to introduce him to my attractive cousin, Vulna. I called her cousin; still she was not my cousin, as you know. He was one of the finest-looking men I ever knew, and indeed was worthy of the most profound regard. I always thought my Vulna beautiful, but somehow, whenever Wonly was present, I thought she was nearer perfected beauty—splendid beauty—than I ever saw her before. O strange, strange fate, thou art irresistible!

I paved the way to my own fall. Not once had I whispered my dream to any one. If I had only spoken to her months before, how different!—perhaps. How long I had dreamed of her, waking and sleeping! How buoyantly I had worked, and done every thing with an eye ahead to the culmination of this bright, particular star, and behold! I was blind before it came to the meridian. My sun was shining with such intensity of effulgence that I did not perceive the black spots that marred the disk, until the nucleus had absorbed the lighter umbra, and left my whole solar world to blackened deformity.

One morning, about six months after I had introduced Wonly into my father's house, I was in the library, reading, when Vulna came to me with an open letter in her hand. Her eyes were of a misty luster that I cannot describe, and her face glowing with a sublimity of happiness not easily

transferred to canvas. She laid her hand on my shoulder, as I was seated, and said, "Herbert, read this letter, and say if you think I am venturing too much in a—'Yes.'"

I turned to the signature first, and read afterward. No false one could have told of love with such sweet simplicity, nor yet could a foul hypocrite have worded devotion in such melting tenderness. I saw it all, but I was asleep to every thing but anguish. I forgot her presence, and sat paralyzed as if an electrical current had taken me in its course. Then I heard her call again, "Herbert." I looked up. She must have seen my dying soul then, for she asked with spasmodic earnestness, "O Herbert! what is the matter?"

"My darling, O my tender darling, must I give you up forever?"

I got up to leave the house, but she caught my arm, and with her pleading lips begged tremblingly, "O dear Herbert, please do n't look so strangely upon me."

I scarce knew what I did, but I turned and clasped her in my arms and kissed her time after time, just as I would have done her pulseless body if she had been dead and ready for the grave. I seated her in a chair near us, and left her alone, and weeping. I was so sold to misery that for a few days I cared for nothing; I do n't know what I did, but I think I wandered about, seeking rest,

and finding none. Her wedding was quite a festive occasion—a brilliant affair. I thought I could not look upon this torturing murder of my hopes and happiness; but I did, and I am glad for her sake that I did overcome my agony, for she, poor child, grieved at my sorrow. Yes, I saw him lead her to the altar—my pearly star, my diamond light, my earth, my all. He suited her well, and was deeply devoted to her; and she? O that is what made my heart ache so—to see how she loved him. He was as proud of his wife as I would have been; he was happy, but I—I was so wretched. They lived a long way from her girlhood home, and I have seen her but once or twice since her marriage, but I am glad to remember how happy she looked, and how kind and considerate was her dear Milton.

I have been a wanderer since then, most of the time: have looked for joy on the tops of high mountains, and been tossed by the billows of foreign seas. I am now in a strange and foreign country, but to-morrow I expect to start homeward, and perhaps this is the reason that my heart's mirror has been revivifying and burnishing its moldy surface.

"It might have been, it might have been;
The saddest words of tongue or pen are,
It might have been."

Sweet garland of love! you were made of rarest

flowers, and when I thought to lift you from the earth of anticipation to the heaven of reality, I found thy flowers were of frailest frost-work—too delicate to be handled. I am thy monument, but I would not that always should be as this night, for O my soul! how thou art stifled and suffocated with heavy, sorrowing thought! I'll go back to the old church-yard where I used to see her, and look about for the spirit-breath of my lost Vulna.

II.

Six years! how long, and how short! Long when the curtain is around us, and night seems eternal, but short when sunlight and peace are our bosom friends and constant companions. Six years! six long years since I took the dead body of my strong manhood's love, and buried it in the deep sepulcher of my deeper memory. But the spirit is lovely and beautiful still; its white robes are not molded, but fresh and sweet; for I did not hide it in a refuse and damp cellar, but gave it a home with all the good of my life, in the sunny parlor of my tenderest thought.

I reached home yesterday evening. As I walked 'neath the dense shade near the old home, I heard a soft, cooing voice, prattling to a dolly. I stopped, looked around, and discovered a darling little lady not far from me. She had not seen me, for I was walking slowly and quietly, lost in my own brown

dreams. The little creature was not more than four or five years old. She would take up her doll and kiss it with the real fervor of child-affection, and some of her talk was after this fashion: "Now be right still, little dolly. I love you, little dolly—don't I? Yes, I do—so much. Pretty dolly, I pat you; sweet dolly!"

I almost felt young again; she was so pure, and fresh, and pretty. I never saw more perfect features. Her eyes were brown, and so tender in their expression. I walked up close beside her, and startled her by asking—

"Where do you live, little one?"

"Here."

"Here? What is your name?"

"Vul'a."

"Vulna?"

"Yes, Vul'a—that's it."

"Vulna Wonly?"

"Yes, sir."

"Where is your papa and your mamma?"

"Poor papa is dead, dead; my mamma is in the house."

"Come, won't you go with me? you can return to dolly presently."

The little pet took hold of my extended hand with perfect trust, evincing a child's intuitive knowledge of a friend. The good home-folks, my old father and step-mother, embraced me with much

tenderness and joy, for I had been absent a long time, and hardly ever heard from them, or they from me. I was glad to see them, too—more so than I had ever been before. I had been there an hour or more before I asked after Vulna; then mother said, "Poor, dear child, she is not well. She has been frail ever since Milton died."

"How long has Milton been dead?"

"About two and a half years."

"You never wrote me of it."

"Yes, we did; but we noticed that you never alluded to it."

"I did not learn it until that lovely little girl told me this evening."

"She is a precious little thing, is n't she? and as good a child as is ever found."

After awhile Vulna came down. She was very kind, in her still, quiet manner, and seemed glad to see me. She had changed, but there was a solemn grandeur about her that I admired no less than I did the fresh brightness of her early womanhood.

"That face in joy's bright hours was fair,
More beautiful since grief was there,
Though somewhat pale the brow;
Ah! be it mine to soothe the pain
Thus pressing on the heart and brain?"

SEQUEL.

"Think not, beloved, time can break
The spell around me cast,

Or absence from my bosom take
The memory of the past.
My love is not that silvery mist
From summer blooms by sunbeams kissed—
Too fugitive to last:
A fadeless flower, it still retains
The brightness of its early stains."

'T is now three years since I came home from that long wandering—three years of as pure happiness as a mortal man deserves. Just half of that time have I been looking at my idol picture in the mirror of my heart. Vulna would not let me tell her all for a long time. She would say, "Not yet, Herbert;" but she did not send me away.

The little Vulna is very dear to me, and seems most tenderly attached to me as a second parent. She is her father's *fac simile*, and by Heaven's help shall never want a father's tenderness or a father's devotion. My own Vulna—my first darling and my last—sits near me, while I bottle up the reflecting rays of this my beautiful mirror, and I pray fervently that I will never have to turn its face to the wall, but rejoice in peace until the time

When this life is o'er,
"And we die to live, and live to die no more."

THE INNER LIFE.

O THE inner life! Its still, small voice is deeper in its hidden cell than diamond's darkest chambers in earth's unfathomed caves—more charming than the tones of the charmer, "charm he never so wisely;" sweeter is its approving smile than is the taste of honey and the honey-comb, and more beautiful in its cultured and perfected loveliness than waxen figures or towering architectures. 'T is as lofty in its silent flight as heaven's sublimest height, and more noble in its quiet devotion than spiritless worlds of pompous riches. Meek and lowly, who knoweth the silvery streams that thread its covered soil, fertilizing the otherwise barren and desert-like fields of the flesh? 'T is the one fine conservatory of human existence where rarest exotics bud and bloom, and disseminate their unadulterated and ethereal odors, to stimulate and refresh the fainting mortal. O sweet palace-place of thought! who may look into the eye of man, and tell what holy strains, by angelic legion sung, are wafted through the spacious halls, or breathed amid the emerald groves of the mind? Ah, mind! who may pretend to tell of all thy living longings, of all thy future greatness, of all thy hallowed soaring, and all thy bitter mourning? O

how I love thee, precious inner life! Thou art mine, mine own; thou art my comfort here, in a dry and thirsty land. Thou art the golden link that binds to something not of this earth, and thou my friend when fury's face is frowning on my head! Ay, lovely stay, my great rock thou art—the Gibraltar of existence, when trouble's waves roll o'er this perishing shell of being. Long-suffering inner life! thou art the one chamber of paradise left to show what God intended his last, his perfect work to be, ere sin clipped the delicate cord of perfect peace, blew out the candles of eternal sanctity, and left the blinded victims to grope forever between the shadowy aisles of right and wrong. O inner life! sweet legacy to contemplate! Thou art the great needle, pointing to the greater magnet, Christ. Thou, the receptacle of the Holy Spirit, and thou the heavenly all that either gives or takes away the waters without price, and bread of life everlasting. Struggle on, meek, waiting inner life; 'tis but a span, and the narrow stream is waded; then how all-glorified the transformation! how beautiful the immolation on the altar of persecution, trial, and vituperation! Hold fast and be strong, inner life—be able to look thyself straight in the eye; know thy boundary; guard thy frontier, and thus protect the strong citadel from invasion; and, when the great warrior—the conquering commander—shall bid thee surrender,

the rich crown of garnet, pearl, and agate will be lifted to thy brows, as the plaited thorns shall fall apace and crumble in dust at thy feet.

VIOLET.

SOFT little eye, hast thou come from thy bed,
To tell me of one the world deemeth dead?
Didst thou rest on his breast the cold winter drear,
Unburdened by care, unfettered by fear?
Were his dark eyes closed by the firm lid-molds?
Were the pale cheeks fixed, and the white brow cold?
And his winsome lips—were they smiling still,
As when he was laid 'neath the cold, dark hill?

Blue violet, soft—my heart beateth wild!
Have you no little tone, even tender and mild?
Were the white buds left on his bosom vest,
Last tokens of me in his ling'ring rest?
Didst thou look in his heart and see the deep love
That is dead to the earth, but fragrant above?
O sweet little flower, come! rest near my heart,
You've been near my love, and we will not part.

O tender, sweet thing, so timid and pure,
You teach me a truth that will ever endure;
The winter may close o'er our souls in gloom,
The spring resurrects—he's gone from the tomb.
Gone from the tomb with its damp, moldy seal,
Gone from the tomb to the land of the leal.
He's left the cold ground for the heavenly height,
His spirit is blest—he's radiant in light!

WILL HE KNOW ME THERE?

WILL he know me there? will he know me there?
How sweet are the words — how living the thought!
Bright angels, with whom he doth sing to-night,
Will he know me there? will he know me there?
Will his dark eyes glow with a holier light?
Will his proud lips breathe a more rapturous song,
When the watch shall cry to the heavenly throng,
That I, a poor worm, have battled up there?
Doth he see me now? is his spirit near,
In its still, sweet way, to shield me from fear?
Thy mystery, Heaven! 'tis thine, thine own,
But show me, I pray, will he know me there?

Will he know me there? Be still; do not breathe!
And I'll look again at my glowing wreath:
The wreath that he left in his dying words,
That circles my heart with undying worth.
My wife—gentle wife—pure love, and so dear,
I am going first—will I know thee there?
Will I know thee there? will I love thee more
Than all of the angels that live in heaven?
Ay, my trembling dove, do not quiver so;
I know we will meet, and I'll know thee, too.
O I'll love thee most, for I'll know thee best,
And thou'lt be my own forever up there!

Will he know me there? What a diamond hope
Doth this anchor hold in life's ocean deep!
He'll fly to the beautiful gate, I know,
And he'll give such a hallowed shout of joy

That heaven will ring, and with ecstasy thrill
The myriad band. Yes, he 'll know me there.
O my matchless clay, fond, beautiful one,
My prince of the earth, far lovelier there;
How full is my thought in its proud delight,
O how will I feel when I meet thee again?
The brightest sun that a mortal may know,
Shone over each day when thou wert below;
But alas! how long is the lingering night
Of these slumbering years to my weary sight!
Sweet memory comes with her ravishing tone,
And I'm full of woe—would my heart were a stone!
O grief is so deep when there's no one to feel,
And the world is as cold as a frozen steel.

I would I might tell what a burning page
Lies here on my soul in its gloom to-night;
But I cannot speak, for my pinioned tongue
Cannot lift the words that my dream hath wrung.
As iron in mass, as granite in block,
So, heavy soul, dost thou lean on the rock.
The streams are dried up, the desert is parched,
The body is faint, the spirit is scorched.
But what of all this? so few are the years
That mortal may dwell with his hopes and his fears.
No matter what comes, next day after this
We cannot help then what hath happened amiss.

The billows have rolled, and the ocean tossed,
Since he went away to the far-off home,
And the crusty brine on my life is left
By the cruel world, by the cruel world!
They've cast me aside and trampled me down
Since his arm was stayed by the icy rush,
And I've wailed to Heaven with a bitter gush,
That they should not crush, that they should not crush.

My mouth now hath lain in the dust so long,
That I doubt my voice and my tongue for song.
But tenderest ray, what a halo of light
Looks down through the dark from the trembling spark.
He will wait me there, he will know me there.

Ah! this turbid stream, how clear it will grow,
When the saving grace from the throne shall flow;
When the little bark in the gale shall come
To help me up home, to help me up home.
The bitterest draught to the child of this earth,
Is waking from bliss to adversity's birth.
There are friends that seem so tender and true,
When the path is nigh, and the crown in view;
But as sure as the earth on its axis turns,
They will change to blocks if the scales are turned.
O it takes stout hearts to hold up the weights
That come in the hush of the scathing storm.
I know it all well—I have loved, and I've lost,
And God only knows what my loss hath cost;
But when the proud oak protected my head,
I was lauded, and crowned, and envied, and blest.
Since the hail and the storm my branches did break,
And I'm stunned with grief for their dear, dear sake,
The rocks have been piled in my weary path,
I've struggled against despair and its wrath,
With "the tale of bricks," and no furnished straw!
When these limbs have ached, and this dull head
throbbed,
Such friends have looked on with Pharisee's prayer,
And washed off the stain from their softened hands.
The homeless and lonely have much to forgive,
But they can thank the Lord as long as they live.
Who knows but the weights may be changed again?
Who knows that the wound will not cease to pain?

Who knows that the moon will not rise again?
Or who knows that the stars will not twinkle amain?
God maketh his loving and trusting to sleep,
And he will protect while through troubles they weep.
When the work is all done, and we slumber and rest
By the opaline throne, near the Saviour's breast,
These stings will but seem as a mole-hill of dust,
Forgotten, forgiven, bless God! not a tear
Need tremble on cheeks that are glowing up there.
But my own little lot—how rich it will be
When I meet him again, my love of the earth,
With the angel tone, and no waking sigh!
O darling! dear darling! I love thee so,
And I've grieved so much because thou art low;
But a small, still voice tells my spirit's ear,
Thou wilt know me there! thou wilt know me there!

THE GRAVES OF THE PAST.

THE present—this rugged present—is the beautiful ground-work of our lives. The future is the frail lattice-work over which the luxurious vines of vitalizing hope clamber, embellished with sweetest buds of illusory fragrance. But we turn to look upon the painter's first touch: our picture wants its misty paling and darkening background. We would peer through the dense vapor, and resuscitate the sleeping past. Ah, dreamy thought! how wildly thou dost waken beside this spirit vision of childhood innocence, early joys, heart-

wounds, and soul-loves! These lull our weighty cares sometimes, and sprinkle ravishing odors along the dull and beaten track of life. In the lone hours of sleep these phantoms come, and lead us into lights and shadows, almost forgotten amid magic windings, 'neath forest shades, and by flowing waters.

O those by-gones! they are but the drooping of angels' wings; so soon they have flown, and we know not whence they came or whither they go, but they bring to the mind a train of good memories, that soothe, and sadden, and burden us with unwritten longings.

O Past! thou art one vast field of graves; thou art the great Golgotha of proud hopes and honored heads; thou hast robbed our pearl-cases, and planted mold in our caskets; thou has made our affections void, and our hearts sick, and paid us with hollow moans and unspoken anguish. Pity, meek and lovely, from her high throne beholds the excavations of the heart, and showers soothing tears over the pitted ruins, germinating the seeds of hope; the plants spring through the sod, but they rise in dew, and thrive in mist, to reflect themselves in the polished mirror of pleasure, checking and reproving our sudden enthusiasm, for we know that each delicate vine and glowing flower will grow beautiful and lovely, then fold themselves in heroic silence to wither—to perish!

While the sunshine of the present mantles us with light and radiance, we smilingly catch at every bud suspended from the vine of anticipation and the magic tree of hope, looking forward to a rich and glorious fructescence; but the soul's reaction comes, clouds gather, and reason, no longer deluded, rises a queen, to combat with the certain rain and tempest.

Disappointments, griefs, bereavements, hate where we dreamed of love, and treachery where we expected fidelity, all combine to enrich the past, and to impoverish this life. They precipitate the bright picture of this world upon sharpened rocks, demolishing its beauty, and no glory of gilding or perfection of artistic touches can renew it or make it the same again. The grave has been made, the treasured remains interred, and the cold earth piled up to fill the vacuum, but the heart's retrospect will not die; it will return with its tenderest light, to leave us in night, and show to us that no soft voices or fairy graces can equal the fond earth-angels that sang to us, looked upon us, and caressed us in the sunny Eden of our lives.

We may walk hand in hand with earth's proud ones in the unwhispered future; we may attain heights from which to behold all the perfection of this world, but the poisoned wounds in our lives will ever be tender, and ready at a touch to open afresh and bleed.

Youth and age roam in the garden of thought together. Youth sees no danger, although the serpent may be near by, ready to plunge his poisonous fangs into the life-blood of the heart. Age is wary, for the asp has touched it with many stings, and made it to weep over unnumbered sepulchers deep in the heart, recorded only in the great volume of the sealed and unsealing past. O the past! the time never to come again! Upon thy midnight bosom so many plots are cherished in the moonlight sphere of thought, where grows the heart's-ease, tender and dear, on whose velvet leaves the pearl doth appear. Ah! we weep over thee; but no matter—not here will we rest by thy rippling streams so clear.

Then sleep—sleep on! O sunny past! O bitter past! Hoard up thy treasures, O deep, great deep! Wrap thy cold mantle more closely around our precious ones' graves, gloom, dark gloom! and thou, deep forest of wailing pines, chant thy saddest requiems over them forever! But hark, great Severer! thou who drawest the silent past from the little palm of the present, remember that your kingdom cannot always reign over us; for the tremendous pororoca—the great tidal wave from listening time—will erelong break the mighty bars of thy deep channel, wash us from the shore of the noisy to-day, and denude to our waiting sight thy secret windings which have so long im-

prisoned our fettered by-gones. Until then we will listen to the soft breath of the breezes to hear our names whispered in the familiar tones of imagery—

While chants of love on wings of spirits come,
To point us home.

We see those graves—graves of the past;
They on our lives their shadows cast.
Deep graves of hope—graves 'neath the sod,
Graves made by God's divining rod.

Those graves we've left in far-off bowers,
Those graves the heart still strews with flowers;
Graves made within the soul so deep,
Graves over which we fain would weep.

Ye winds of earth, ye clouds of heaven,
Ye wail and weep—our tears are driven
Back from our eyes; the fountain-head
Seems dried within its burning bed!

Tread softly, then, O thoughtless one!
Each light that beams is not a sun;
A smiling lip doth oft conceal
A heart long used to a lonely peal.

We may not see the dark'ning cloud,
Gathering around as a funeral shroud;
For in a twinkling graves are made,
Graves of the heart, with hope decayed.

Ah! soon indeed our lone retreat
We too must seek, where willows meet;
The past will then the present be,
The future from its mystery free.

With angels in the heavenly clime
Our voices, too, will sweetly chime,
To praise the great Eternal's name—
Through endless weal we 'll praise the same.

WOMAN'S INFLUENCE.

O woman! thou whose praises oft
The thrilling bard shall sing;
From whose bright eye, and lip so soft,
Pure light and truth should spring.
Ah! dost thou feel, when beauty's glow
Is loftily extolled,
How many times the tear-fount's flow
Will blister scrolls unrolled?
Thy mission is no fancy sketch,
'Tis fraught with deed sublime;
Thine influence over earth must stretch,
For weal or woe, till time
Shall muffle all his chiming bells,
And tell his last farewells.

SEGUR remarks: "Heaven, in creating woman, seemed to say to man, Behold! either the torment or delight of your present and future existence." How fearfully true! Not a year passes in the life of gentle woman that does not chronicle some point of importance, either for good or evil. She is weak and dependent, yet what mighty strength of tenderness and firmness is necessary to her perfect work! Woman, thou art a

wife—a mother. God made thy lord to rule over thee, but he did not say unto thee, Sit down and be easy; he did not tell thee to forget that a mind and soul were casketed within thee. God created all things, and he created nothing useless. He gave woman a charge, and provided an endowment fund for its sustenance and support. He furnished her with mind and heart, and from these two is she to deduce her powers of influence. Her independence is only educed from virtuous and intelligent attainment, and these virtues are the index to meekness and humility: meekness does not make her stupid, but sensible; humility does not make her menial, but exalted. Woman, thou dost not hold the scepter of empire, yet thou dost wield it; beside thy fireside art thou training the vines of decided character, either to adorn and honor the great pillar of State, or to deface and poison its very base and summit. O woman! such is thine influence over the head, heart, and actions of him thou dost call husband, father, brother, and friend, that thine opinion is often weighed in the balance and found too heavy on the side of wrong, when the scale is past turning, and the evil past recalling. A noble work spreads around thee and awaits thee. Moral philosophy is no myth, but the saving rock of every generation, rendered odorous by the flowers of goodness. Man is a detached soldier: day by day, hour by hour, he

finds the enemy in ambush; perhaps in places least expected the scout is observing his chances. This is the greeting the outer world, in its naked deformity, extends to its fellow-being. Where, then, must harassed man flee for succor? Wife, mother, friend, let him come to thee; let him rely upon thine amiable prudence, thy strong affection, and thine unwavering integrity. Thou shouldst not act as if thou hadst time for nothing but thine own cares, for man must have a friend, a bosom friend, a pure friend; and if thou shouldst frown upon his perplexities, the prospect affords so little for the bruised hope to rest on—so little to stimulate perseverance, or to encourage integrity of character—that he leaves thy presence; and, in order to calm a perturbed mind, joins hands with his enemy, and seeks relief in the maddening wine-cup! Behold the good woman! How ably she smooths the rough places! how tenderly she allures the spirit to begin with the morrow to right the wrong of to-day! To her is given

> To melt the heart of adamantine cast,
> To sweetest waters they redeem and last.

Her husband shelters her from the rude blasts of the world, and protects her from the winter's cold. He comes to her shivering with the frosty breath from which his great love has shielded her, and see how ready and anxious she is to restore

warmth and gladness to him by her thoughtful attentions and genial cheerfulness. Her influence throws an all-preserving mantle around her manly sons, and they leave her fireside competent to become rulers of their own households.

Her daughters enter their respective homes, armed for duty, with their mother's example ever shining before them, leading them to a lovely exercise of tender sympathy and attentive discretion. Their lives are sweetly attuned to the dictates of the holy religion, and they are not ashamed to be seen cultivating the gardens of the soul, that the Father may descend and add the dew of blessing to the tender plants they have sown.

Woman's life is not all sunshine. Into each life some rain must fall, and hers is full of anxiety; yet the autumn will come to strong-hearted, trusting woman, laden with richest reward. "The virtuous woman looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children arise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her."

How much sunshine is lost to home for lack of a little tender tact! What a love-lit spot it should be, and yet what a desert it is sometimes, and how unworthy the sweet name—home! A woman's home is a woman's throne, and she the wise queen, dispensing favors as her subjects have need. A true woman is a good wife, a good mother, and a

good friend. She is an earnest follower of Him who sought to lessen the bitter ills of human life; who gave himself that human depravity might be purged, and redeemed, and glorified in the world celestial.

Woman's influence! When we estimate it we are appalled! How much is depending on it, yet how little it is analyzed! Woman is created for loveliness and beauty, as a flower, to adorn; but while she enhances and immortalizes the frail human organization, she should not forget that the mortal should put on immortality; that the vivified soul might look through the perishing veil, while the stars of holy gladness would whisper of peace; and God, with his redeemed, would look down upon the children of men, and say, Behold my creation! it rejoices me that I made a helpmate for man.

The following lines are beautiful, and they teach a lesson of substantial merit; for in the home-surroundings originate the purest refinement:

Make thy home beautiful—bring to it flowers;
Plant them around thee to bud and to bloom;
Let them give life to thy loneliest hours—
Let them bring light to enliven thy gloom.
Make thine own world one that never has sorrowed,
A home-world, whose forehead care never has furrowed,
And whose cheek of bright beauty will ever be fair.

Make thy home beautiful—sure 'tis a duty;
Call up thy little ones, teach them to walk
Hand in hand with the wandering angel of beauty:
Encourage their spirits with nature to talk.
Gather them round thee and let them be learning
Lessons that drop from the delicate wing
Of the bird and the butterfly, ever returning
To Him who has made all these beautiful things.

Make home a hive, where all beautiful feelings
Cluster like bees, and their honey-dew bring;
Make it a temple for holy revealings,
And thou the bright angel with shadowing wing.
Then shall it be, when afar on life's billow,
Where'er thy tempest-tossed children are flung,
They will long for the shade of the home weeping-willow,
And sing the sweet songs which their mother has sung.

Make thy home beautiful—bring the bright blossoms,
Plant them around thee to bud and to bloom;
They'll waken bright thoughts in thy care-haunted bosom,
They'll gather the sunshine to lighten thy gloom.
List! to their lessons their soft voices cheer thee,
With sweetest of echoes from gardens above;
And while their blest influence ever is near thee,
Thou shalt reap rich reward in the harvest of love.

DRIFTING.

DRIFTING! ah, my soul, I'm drifting!
God knows where, but I do not.
Drifting, but a weight I'm lifting,
As I wade the dismal lot.

Drifting! Heaven! how deep a meaning
On that lengthened word is borne!
Greatest God! on thee I'm leaning;
Let me not of life be shorn!

In mine ears a ceaseless rumble
Lingereth from day to day;
On the jagged rocks I stumble,
As I blindly feel my way.

What a life! O pen of anguish!
Why art thou so mute and dull?
When I tell thee that I languish,
Why not breathe a strain to lull?

Sing, and wring away this madness;
Breathe, and ease this heavy load;
Help me on to life and gladness,
On a plain and forward road.

Ah! I've tried to break the arrows,
Ere they strike my bleeding soul;
But each day new trouble borrows—
Bursting thunders round me roll!

O the lightning's flash is fearful,
And the arid sky is red;
Ay, mine eyes! have ye grown tearful?
Bless the dewy drops ye shed.

For I'm worn with this long drifting,
'Mid these desert heaps of sand;
And the storm my strength is sifting,
How I long for verdant land!

Let the world breathe startling romance,
With its thrilling fiction glow;
Yet I tell thee, golden advance,
Life doth plow a deeper row.

Life and years do toil and sorrow
With the cares that haste to fall,
And with every linked to-morrow
Comes the rancor and the gall.

Heavy strokes the muscles render,
Weary steps the worn feet take;
And, but for the promise tender,
Souls would faint and hearts would break.

O these heaps are clearing, wasting,
And I touch firm land again;
God doth hand the wine I'm tasting—
Lead me, Father, to the main.

Hold my hand! O Father, hold it!
Let me not drift off, I pray;
Here 's my heart—O Father, take it,
Lest I grope and lose my way.

A SOUTHERN HERO.

"A woman's whole life is a history of the affections. The heart is her world; it is there her avarice seeks for hidden treasures; it is there her ambition strives for empire. She sends forth her sympathies in adventure; she embarks her whole soul in the traffic of affections, and if shipwrecked, her case is hopeless, for it is a bankruptcy of the heart."

I HAVE a friend, a darling friend, who was once the gayest of the gay. She was a strange, lovely commingling of wit, amiability, and generosity. I loved her, O I loved her as I have loved few others in life. We were both raised in Louisiana, and educated almost side by side from childhood. But she was always running ahead of me, and then going back to help me; and to look back upon it, she seems to me a great, proud vessel, full of sail, plowing independently the heaving bosom of the great deep; and I, a little, contented boat, towed along without will or aim, except to keep in sight of my leader. I was very different from Ernestine—my name, my real name, Carrie; but unfortunately for me, I won the nick-name Caper among my home-folks, and it follows me everywhere I go: instead of Carrie, I am simply Caper.

Before any signal-guns were heard on this side

the shore of peace from wrecked vessels and monstrous iron-clads, much commotion prevailed everywhere, and many strong hearts were wrung with anguish because of divided opinions and conflicting interests. Many sons were sacredly bound to the vituperated South, while their sires were full of venom and uncompromising curses. In a far-off village, where the wildest fananticism prevailed, a handsome young man, about thirty years of age, stood falteringly, with his hand on the gate-latch. His father had said to him a few hours before, "If you espouse that heathen cause, young man, you may leave my roof forever, and spare me the pain of looking again upon the face of a traitor son." He knew his father to be exceedingly stern, and unbending in malice and prejudice, and had hastily prepared himself to quit the haunts of childhood sports, and away to the home of his adoption. For several years his home had been in the South, and he was but now visiting his family and friends.

But we go on: he waited as if his heart was disquieted within him, but presently a gleam of light shot into his eyes, for she was coming—his good, fond mother. As she approached him, she asked, "Where are you going, Louis?"

"Back to the South, mother."

"And why—do you and your father disagree?"

"Yes, ma'am, we disagree."

"God bless you, my boy! I will not urge you to stay, then. If your conscience is pure and white, as it was when you first left me, I can trust you to form your own opinions, and not love you less because we differ. Political or national calamity should not affect domestic affection. If you cannot stay in peace, go in peace, my son. You are to me a noble son, a noble man, from the hands of nature, struggle, and attainment. I have ever taught you to love and trust God, and I pray that you have him in your heart."

Louis Werner pressed her to his bosom with the intense fervor of a last farewell—impressed the fond caress upon the tender lips, and the mother went back and entered her dwelling, while her heart was constantly telling her, "He is gone, he is gone." He was dead, it seemed, but there was no grave for her to water with tears, no tomb for her to wreathe with flowers, no name that she might dwell upon in love and tenderness, save in her great love; for Louis Werner was a forbidden name, and none might utter it among the household.

In the fall of 1859, at the church near Mr. Long's, was being held a protracted meeting. Mr. Long was uncle to Ernestine Labore, and her home was with him. Her vacation was not yet over, and she was there to enjoy the daily assembling with the lovers of Christianity. She was no hyp-

ocrite; she really enjoyed divine worship; she was seeking to strengthen her mind with truth, and she was always marvelously attentive. On Sabbath the church was crowded; a minister of much power occupied the pulpit, and Ernestine was all attention until service was nearly ended, and then one of the most frivolous, nonsensical things, as she expressed it, attracted her attention. A gentleman was very late in arriving—almost the eleventh hour—and there was no vacant seat except near the altar. He went forward with ease and elegance, and occupied the seat. Ernestine's mind became vagrant immediately after. Fine faces make fine impressions, and the face of that gentleman was likely to surprise an appreciative beholder into irremediable captivation. Now Ernie felt that she belonged to the minister when she went to church, so she kept trying to rein in her curiosity, and make herself subservient to duty; but as she changed her position just a little, she beheld a lustrous pair of rich hazel eyes bent full upon her. She looked away instantly, but again, as if by magic, the spell acted, and again each party met the disconcerted glance of the other. She was annoyed with herself, and before she could restrain her emotions, a smile, the faintest imaginable, ran over her features. That cured her wandering vision, though, for the remainder of the service she held her eyes fixed upon the min-

ister. When she went home, she made inquiry about the stranger, but found him a stranger indeed. She had no thought of meeting the gentleman in subsequent events, and had no anticipations connected with after acquaintance, but things work out mysteriously sometimes.

In the meantime I was home, in a revelry of delight, because Mr. Werner was boarding at my father's, and we lived only about five miles from Mr. Long. I had not visited Ernie since he had been boarding with us, and had been favored with no opportunity of telling her of my ups and downs, of my extra airs, and p's and q's, etc., etc. But for fear you misunderstand my revelry of delight, it was not because we had such a charming boarder, O no! but because he came home from church and began describing my friend Ernie so graphically that I could not mistake her, for he remembered how she was dressed even, and I had seen her wear the same dress. I was enjoying the fun of teasing my stately Ernestine, not knowing that she had noticed him at all. I made it convenient shortly after to go to see her, and as soon as I was divested of hat and gloves I began.

"So, Miss Labore, you have made a most wonderful conquest of late."

"Well, Caper, if you have made a conquest, you need n't taunt me with my lack of charms. Who is the marvel?"

"Me, indeed! and I'm so vexed because it is not me that I can hardly be civil. O ho! ever thus:

I never tried to catch a beau,
Through all my life of care,
But you or some one else would go
And doom me to despair.

I think it is a pity I have n't got blue eyes."

"That's some new poetry you've been learning. Where did you find it, Caper?"

"Find it, indeed! again—you are forever slandering my talent for original poetry: as de darkey'd say, 'Dat's 'rig'nal.'"

"It is?"

"Yes, miss, it's 'rig'nal; but as I was going on to say, you will have a new caller this evening, and I think you may prepare to look your prettiest, for the gentleman's worth winning. I reckon you and he will sail a long way out on the deep, deep sea of thought this evening, and if you chance to think of me at all, I reckon I'll put my finger in my mouth, and be amazed, and say, Ma'am! As a matter of course you'll be overwhelmingly smitten."

"As a matter of course I won't. You have extolled this nameless majesty so highly that my wits will sink away and evaporate if his excellency should arrive."

"If!" I reëchoed. "I wonder if it is possible

to convince you that you really are better looking than a harpy?"

Sure enough that evening Mr. Werner did call, and as soon as he entered the room Ernie's face was literally dyed with blushes. She was more completely embarrassed than I had ever seen her. It was really painful to her for a little time, but gradually she regained her wonted composure, and became more beautiful, more attractive than I had ever known her before. It so happened that Ernie was to return to school before me that session, and I alluded to it, and asked, "Reckon you'll miss me, Ernestine?"

She replied, "That I will—I'll have the blues terribly."

Mr. Werner, having formed his own very correct idea of Ernie's temperament, answered pleasantly, "Methinks the blue will be within the eye."

But I must not linger too long among these prefatory remarks: 'tis enough that from that day until Ernie left home Mr. Werner found every opportunity possible to see her. Such admiration, from such a cultivated, refined source, might have turned the head of many a silly girl, but Ernie was not silly. She did not think she might now fold her hands and say to her studies, Good-bye. O no! but she studied with renewed vigor. She was brilliant, and we all loved and praised her.

Another vacation had come; we were both at

home again. The great geyser of war was spouting and foaming, and threatening to sprinkle us with blood; every thing was warm with the exciting subject of election—who would be our next President? Even the tender youths of the country were all attention when politics was the topic.

The war-shout came at last, and it was not long until the manhood of our country was formed into little bands to defend our homes and principles. Gloom and agony prevailed.

The day our band of friends and brothers were to start, I went to Mr. Long's before they were to leave, that I might see my brothers as long as possible. Louis Werner was captain; not from any effort on his part, for he offered himself as a private soldier; but they were universally pleased to elect him. As they passed, many friends stopped to say good-bye; among others, Captain Werner. Ernestine became unusually pale, but as the proud soldier stood before her, she raised her eyes bravely to his, and said, "Good-bye, Captain Werner," although her voice was sweetly tremulous with emotion. But after they were gone—as for me, I could weep freely; my darling brothers had left me. But Ernie had no brothers; she must hold her eyes dry; she really was as one

"Who treads alone some banquet hall deserted,
Whose lights are fled, whose garlands dead,
And all but she departed."

In 1864, as we were in a portion of country subject to invasion, a great many families sought refuge in other sections of country: among these was Mr. Long. In the summer Mr. Long was back at his old home, and brought Ernie with him. We were together all the time she remained, and although she was somewhat reticent, still she gave me very reasonable satisfaction in relation to Captain Werner. I believed they were engaged.

Ernie has since told me that she met Captain Werner on her return. He had been delegated to attend some important business, and was going back to his command when she saw him. He was looking pale, and wore the air of a veteran. He bowed to her, was about passing, then stopped his horse, quickly alighted, and advanced with extended hand to meet her. It was a moment of joy to both, but 'twas union only to be broken—a meeting that only breathed the bitterness of parting. They had but a minute or two for conversation, and he was gone again. She never saw him more.

"Alas! poor country!
Almost afraid to know itself! It cannot
Be called our mother, but our grave; where nothing,
But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
Where sighs, and groans, and shrieks that rend the air,
Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems

A modern ecstasy; the dead man's knell
Is there scarce asked, for who; and good men's lives
Expire before the flowers in their caps,
Dying, or ere they sicken."

Captain Werner fought bravely through almost to the bitter end of our calamity, and then—it is painful to tell of all those broken cords! A little point was threatened with attack; the moving body of troops were marching to protect another position; Captain Werner's company was detailed to defend the place in case of a raid. All the raw help that could be mustered was demanded, and that night the dying officer wrote a word of farewell to his betrothed—the strong-minded, loving Ernestine—and the next day his smitten companions hollowed out a home in the deep earth, where the soughing pines might forever breathe their requiems. He was shot by some of the undrilled recruits, accidentally, and the devoted Ernestine is left to mourn her heart's loss, while he calmly sleeps within a hero's grave.

Ernestine still lives, a stately, subdued woman. The other day I picked up a book in her room, as I was spending the day with her, and upon one of the blank pages found these lines written:

'Neath the guard of the lone wailing pines,
Beloved, they laid thee in sleep;
And my grief with their wailing combines,
For deep in soul-anguish I weep.

The pall of the tomb is about me,
At home, and away, everywhere;
And daily I'm longing to meet thee,
Beyond, in the world of the fair.

Alas! all my treasure is lying,
Stiff, cold, 'neath the moldering ground;
While sadly my spirit is crying,
Though holding its tear-drops in bound.

How thickly the darkness is gathering!
A black cloud of grief veils my heart!
The pale moon with faint ray is flattering
The wood where the night-watches part.

But I'd seek thy damp grave, and press it;
Its coldness would cool my hot brow;
I'd linger alone, and caress it:
Ah, Heaven! fain would I go now!

Alas! I must mourn thee forever!
And turn to the past with regret;
For joy can awaken, ah! never—
I cannot, I cannot forget.

Ernie saw I was reading, but did not interrupt me until I concluded; then she said, "I think I was absolutely sinful and foolish when I wrote those lines, Caper; but it was hard indeed to give up such a friend as Captain Werner. We are ever ready to accept benefits at the hands of the Father, and I have been struggling against my natural selfishness, and endeavoring to sweeten all the bitters of life with the power of resignation to the divine law. I am not in the least unhappy now.

My memory is as strong to appreciate the loved ones of my past as it was in the soft hour of buds and blossoms. The tender mercy of Him who is ever ready to note our softest prayer, has given me a rich garden of rest, for I can trust the All-glorious.

> This twilight has rendered to me
> A branch from the blest olive-tree.

God has taken the sting from those sad words, 'It might have been;' and, instead of despair, my vision is lifted up to where

> "The brightest rainbow ever plays,
> Above the fountain of our tears."

THE END.