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LIEUT. WARNEFORD

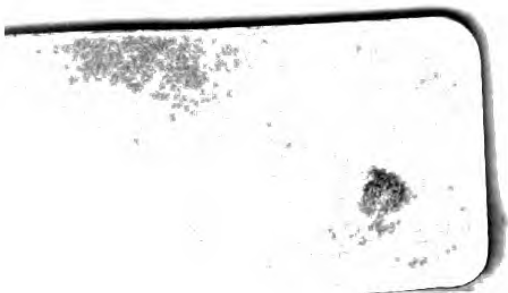
SKETCHES
FROM
A
MID
SHIP

AUTHOR OF
"THE JOLLY BOAT", &c.

LONDON,
G. VICKERS, ANGEL COURT, STRAND



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SKEDADDLE

NOTICE

NDENT

A LITERARY friend has asked me to see the *Sketches* of *Tales* through the press, making such amendments as I might deem expedient. I have done so to the best of my ability, and have only further to remark that having no claim to the merit of the *Sketches*, I must not be held responsible for the political or moral opinions expressed or implied in this very imperfect volume.

TED

Dec. 1864.

ROBERT WATSON, PRINTER

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GEORGE VICKERS

ANGEL COURT, STRAND

MDCCCLXV

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SKEDADDLE

BY "OUR OWN"

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEVER BEFORE PRINTED

LONDON
GEORGE VICKERS
ANGEL COURT, STRAND
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SKEDADDLE.

THE GALLANT LADS OF MISSOURI.

“It won't do, doctor ; we're whipped and forced to fall back, but if you are not particular as to the road you take, we'll give you such protection as we can afford,” said Captain Corder, handing me a tin pannikin of julep, flavoured with the wild sage of the prairie, and nodding good-humouredly towards me as he took off his own share of the bitter mixture at a draught.

The officer in question, a Kentuckian, and one of the best and frankest fellows in Uncle Sam's pay, was doing the honours of his tent under awkward circumstances. It was just after General Siegel's defeat at Carthage, and the Federals were sullenly retiring before the onslaught of Governor Jackson's raw levies of fighting Missourians. Everything was in confusion ; strange rumours of disaster and treachery prevailed ; the whole camp was in a state that said little for its discipline. It must be owned that I had taken a most unlucky moment to place myself under Federal protection. My own presence

in that wild Western nook of earth, always uncivilized, and now in the very throes of civil war, can be easily explained.

I, William Benton, of Hertfordshire, England, M.R.C.S., and M.D. by a Vienna diploma, had travelled over half the world in quest of the patients of whom I despaired at home. Surgeon of a whaler, a practitioner in the Sandwich Islands, assistant to a physician at New Orleans, I had been knocked about the globe a good deal. Of late I had been practising at Carthage, in Jasper County, Missouri. It was not a very remunerative occupation, however, for the country was thinly peopled; cash was a rarity; and I had formidable rivals in the uneducated bone-setters and herb-doctors, white and coloured. So, even before the war began, I had determined to quit the frontier, and the outbreak of the civil strife, disorganizing as it did all customary traffic and intercourse, confirmed me in my resolution. To leave the district, however, was not very easy. The railroads, never very numerous or well kept, were blocked by troops and stores, and in many parts torn up and obstructed. The roads swarmed with guerillas, and with stragglers of both armies, Federal and Confederate. Besides these, swarms of horse-thieves and outlawed vagabonds, the pests of the borders, had poured over from the Indian territory, and were marauding through the land, calling themselves partisans of either side indifferently.

Under these circumstances, I thought it a lucky thing when I found out that Captain Julius Corder

was one of Siegel's aides-de-camp, and hunted out from among my papers a warm letter of introduction to his father, old Colonel Corder of Lexington, a letter which I had never been able to avail myself of. However, this letter now stood me in good stead, for the kindly Kentuckian did his best to serve me. I had been absent at a neighbouring town during the Federal advance, and had known nothing of their reverse at Carthage until I found my light waggon mixed up with their retreating columns.

"You see," said the aide-de-camp, as he re-corked the whisky jar, "our great man's out of sorts, and it's a bad time to take to ask a favour of him. He's not a bad chap, Siegel—about the best of the Dutchmen—but he'll be as sulky now as a bear in deep snow. However, I'll try and manage it."

And off he went. After a short interval he returned, shaking his head, and saying—

"I told you how it would be, Dr. Benton. The general's out of temper for the time, and no wonder, for he has much to plague him. When I first spoke of you as an Englishman and a friend of my father's anxious to march with us to the nearest available railway, he growled out, 'Nein, nein,' testily enough. But when I hinted that you were a doctor, and might be useful, he relented a bit. And here's an order for rations and so forth, and permission in writing to travel with the waggon-train, under escort of the baggage-guard, which brings up the rear. Even that trifling favour is on condition that you help to look after the sick as acting surgeon ;

but you may join here or at the camp at Neosho, for we strike at once. And now I must be off to my duty."

And the Kentuckian jumped on the tall, bony horse which an orderly held for him, and set off at a gallop. I had a few minutes for reflection, and decided that I had better, being actually under the folds of the "star-spangled banner," stick to the protection of the Federal force, such as it was. The property stowed away in my light, spider-built waggon, so unlike the heavy vehicles of Missouri make, was not very valuable, no doubt, but it comprised nearly all I had in the world. There was my wardrobe, not very extensive; my instruments, some of which were new and expensive; a store of drugs, since chemists are rare in the West; my guns, books, curiosities, relics of old times, and also some parcels of peltry, costly furs bought from Indian hunters and roving trappers, and which were pretty sure to bring in a handsome profit when resold in London or New York. To draw the waggon I had a pair of tall mules, Tennessee-bred, driven by a teamster to whom the animals belonged. My own riding-horse, a very pretty mustang, was generally fastened by a lasso behind the vehicle, while I lounged on a mattress within.

Scarcely had I time to decide upon my plans when the bugle sounded, and the warning roll of the drums recalled the soldiers to their colours. Tents were hurriedly struck, canteens and haversacks packed, and amidst much swearing, trampling, lashing of whips, and grinding of wheels, the long waggon-train got under way. Jem, the gaunt

Missourian who acted as my charioteer, and whose surname, if he had one, had fallen into oblivion, put his big mules to the vehicle without a word, tossed his rifle and blankets beneath the tilt, and picked up his whip of twisted hide.

"Whereaway, doc?" said Jem, as he placed a fresh quid in his cheek, and scrambled to his perch.

"We are to keep with the troops," answered I; "you must drive where you can in the line of the baggage-train, until——"

"All right, mister," said Jem, who had a dash of Indian blood in his veins, and was taciturn enough for a Sachem of the red men; and sharply whipping his mules, he struck into the line of waggons that dotted the prairie.

Nothing worthy of note occurred during the early part of the march. The Confederate cavalry once or twice appeared, hovering like shadows on the horizon, but no serious effort was made on the part of the Secessionists to improve their recent advantage. It must be remembered that at that time—it was the summer of 1861—the anti-Union party in Missouri had not openly thrown in its lot with the South. Governor Jackson and the State troops were in arms against the Federals, certainly, but it was with the avowed design of asserting the neutrality of Missouri, and of repelling invasion and its consequences. And now that the Northern forces were retiring southwards, and were likely soon to evacuate the State, it was not the object of the victorious Missourians to do more than watch their retreat.

We quitted Jasper County, therefore, without

suffering any annoyance from the pursuers ; but on entering Newton, General Siegel soon proved that he had other ends in view than that of merely effecting an unmolested retreat. By a sudden flank movement, he approached the famous Granby lead-mines, which he hoped to capture, and the possession of which by the Federals would have proved in the last degree vexatious and disastrous to the enemy. The rearguard of the army, with the baggage and stores, was left behind in the county town of Neosho, a little place of some twelve hundred inhabitants, but still the capital of Newton County, and by no means insignificant when compared with the petty villages that were sprinkled over the remainder of the district. No resistance was made to our occupation of the place, but it was pretty evident, by the looks and language of the men, and still more of the women of Neosho, that the Yankees were regarded with dislike. There was no display of Secession flags or the like, but scowls and sneers, coldness and aversion, met the Northerners wherever they went, and a Federal officer or soldier was made painfully to feel that he was looked upon as a foreigner and a foe.

This sentiment of dislike was fully reciprocated by the military intruders, already inclined to look on Missouri as a savage province, and its people as barbarians. Captain Flibbins, who commanded the cavalry, his subalterns, Boston men like himself, and the florid German officer, Lieutenant Wagner, whose half company of flaxen-headed recruits from the Fatherland made up a portion of the escort, racked their brains to find out some way of repay-

ing in kind the slights they met with. The lieutenant paid endless "domiciliary visits," as he called them, to seek for arms and treasonable papers, and his men made free with the cellars and henroosts of suspected persons, unreprieved. Captain Flibbins, a great dandy, was perpetually clanking his steel scabbard and long-rowelled spurs in the drawing-rooms of the principal inhabitants, levying fines, administering the oath of allegiance, and so forth, and in so doing drew upon himself some of the very sharpest remarks that the tongues of even American ladies could utter.

We were not long in Neosho, but if we had been paid missionaries, hired to inspire undying hatred to the North and Northerners, we could not have done our duty better. And yet Flibbins, though a fop, and an ill-natured fop, was not a very truculent tyrant; the Germans, though sad pilferers, did not do any serious mischief; and I am sure that old Major Elderkin, our spectacled commanding officer, and who, after being a linendraper, custom-house clerk, and schoolmaster in his native Massachusetts, had suddenly been raised to military rank, would never have sanctioned any act of downright cruelty towards the helpless inhabitants. Indeed, at that early period of the war, the hearts of men had not been hardened, and their vindictive passions aroused, by dark and bitter wrongs, as was the case afterwards. However, our people gave sore offence, and were hated in consequence.

From this hatred I was exempt. An Englishman, unconnected with either party, and on friendly terms with many Missourians, I was hospitably

entertained by several of the chief persons in Neosho, where I had once or twice sojourned for a day or two, and was made heartily welcome in houses where no Yankee officer, save on duty, was ever permitted to cross the threshold. The "best society" in so tiny a town was necessarily limited in amount, and it struck me that there was a great paucity of bachelors; elderly men, middle-aged fathers of families, and ladies young and old, there were in plenty, but scarcely a young man was to be seen.

When I remarked on this fact, a lady present laughed archly, and told me that most of the gentlemen had "business at the Granby lead-mines" just then. And I could easily guess that the more adventurous part of the male population had gone to reinforce Jackson's forces, which were reported to be gathering around the celebrated mines, and to be ready to defend them against General Siegel.

I heard an immense deal of treasonable talk at these reunions, while the ladies never seemed to weary of singing "Dixie" and the "Bonny Blue Flag" to the piano, but the good folks of Neosho knew that they were safe with me. I was resolute in carrying out to the full my duty as a neutral. I was indebted to the Southerners for much kindness, to the Northerners for permission to travel under the protection of their bayonets, and as an Englishman, and a well-wisher to both sections, I was firm in my design to be a neutral, and nothing more. Accordingly, I not only kept my lips sealed on the subject of the treasonable hopes, plans, and wishes

with which the Neosho drawing-rooms overflowed, but I was equally silent, when among my Missourian friends, as to the strength and designs of the Federal army. I could not forbear, however, from indulging in a little harmless ridicule of the Yankee peculiarities of my guardians, and especially of the vaunting Flibbins and the pacific Elderkin, which latter worthy carried an umbrella under his arm when in uniform, lectured on teetotal principles, and was strangely out of place in any army.

I well remember, one fine afternoon, when I had been asked to dine at Judge Carbonnel's, one of the best houses in Neosho, that the large party assembled seemed in a state of excitement and exultation, the reason for which I could not fathom. There were three or four vacant places, though for whom they were reserved I had no idea. By degrees, however, one or two young gentlemen, whom I had not previously seen, quietly entered, and dropped into the empty chairs, amidst a buzz of welcome and congratulation.

"Well, Robert," said the grey-haired judge to one of these fresh guests, "have you made a clean job of it?"

"I hope so, judge," said the youngster, reddening ingenuously, as he found himself the target for so many bright eyes; "everybody says they're whipped. I stood myself by Governor Jackson's elbow when he said he was sure Siegel had had enough of it. The Yankees won't make many bullets out of the produce of our Granby lead-mines, I guess."

A wonderful clapping of white hands, and

laughter, and quick comment from gentle voices followed this modest speech ; and the old judge filled his glass, saying—

“A bumper, ladies and citizens, to the gallant lads of Missouri, our defenders against Abe Lincoln’s cut-throats ! Beaten off from the Granby mines, Siegel must soon make tracks from our county. Sorry to lose you, doctor, but I advise you to look out for the route, for the order to march will soon arrive.”

For this, however, I cared little ; my effects were ready, and I knew how speedily Jem and his mules could take the road. But some incidental mention of a certain “Abel,” who was warmly spoken of as having distinguished himself in the straggling skirmish which in Western legend will bear the name of the Battle of Granby, fell on my ear, and awakened my dormant interest. I asked if the Abel in question were my former acquaintance, young Abel Stanning, and if so, whether he were yet married to the pretty Miss Morris, to whom I had long since heard he was engaged.

“No, Dr. Benton,” said a handsome girl, one of the belles of Neosho, who sat on my right ; “my poor cousin—Abel is a cousin of mine, though I dare say you are not aware of it—cannot overcome old Colonel Morris’s prejudice against his poverty. Abel’s land, you see, is mostly scrub and rolling prairie, and can’t be broken up without capital. Now, Colonel Morris has five hundred acres of tobacco in full yield, and forty-five negroes, and no child but Kate. But he’s that severe, he lets his

daughter cry her eyes out, though he loves her too, in his proud way ; and as for Abel, he's all but forbidden the house."

Finding that I really took an interest in her cousin Abel, whom I had seen when at Neosho before, and who had impressed me favourably, and whose sincere attachment to the dark-eyed heiress of the gruff old militia colonel was almost proverbial in the place, my fair informant furnished me with further particulars. It appeared that Colonel Morris was a very zealous Secessionist, perhaps on account of his desire to retain the services of the forty-five negroes aforesaid, and that he had been brought to give a grumbling consent to Abel Stanning's union with his daughter on condition that Abel should first render some brilliant and notable services to the cause of the Confederacy. This, however, seemed no such easy matter. The poor lad had offered to shoulder a musket in the Southern ranks, though his farm must lie neglected in the meantime ; but this did not exactly satisfy the colonel, while commissions in the State levies were monopolized by those who had more influential connexions, and an ensigncy in the army of Jefferson Davis was as hard to be obtained as one in that of Queen Victoria.

Just then, and as his fair cousin was telling me how Abel's relations had feared lest the young man should come to harm by some over-rash effort to win renown and the favour of Kate's father at Granby, two newcomers dropped in, and one of them was Abel, with his left arm in a sling, and a

pale face, but a bright undaunted eye. His hurt, he said, was nothing, a mere flesh wound, earned quite at the close of the day, in an attempt to capture a Yankee howitzer. All was right, and the enemy in full retreat, but he and his companion had narrowly escaped being arrested in the town by a patrol of cavalymen under a tall officer, who wore a white handkerchief, rolled turbanwise, round his shako, and shouted and gesticulated like a play-actor.

I laughed as I recognised Captain Flibbins by this description, and gave some account of the whimsicalities of himself and his brothers-in-arms.

“Rank cowards! regular, right-out poltroons, one and all!” growled an old man, one of the pioneers who had helped to found the settlement, and who had a sublime scorn for all “down-easters,” as effeminate persons who had never staked their lives in hand-to-hand encounters with bear, panther, or savage.

“I don’t know that, captain,” said I, apologetically. “Flibbins is not very wise, and was a pastrycook, I believe, before the war; so he’s no great soldier, but I think he would fight. Elderkin’s courage is not very effervescent, but he is too conscientious not to stand a shot or two. And as for Wagner and the rest, they are not very timid, except, to be sure, on the score of Indians.”

“Indians!” cried several voices, and then there was a hearty laugh, while one of the ladies scornfully inquired whether the Boston heroes were very fearful of Indians. To this, laughing too, I replied in the affirmative. Their imaginations, I said, were haunted by ghastly images of scalping-knives, tomahawks, torture-stakes, and the grim

ferocity of the red men. Flibbins, in especial, who had devoured innumerable newspaper novels, was in constant apprehension of some collision with the painted "lords of the forest." His imagination peopled the whole of the Far West with whooping braves, and he had more than once called a halt and ordered the men to form a rallying square at the appearance of half a dozen oddly attired trappers, whom his fancy had converted into Pawnees or Sioux on the war-trail.

On hearing this, the Secessionists present indulged in a great deal of mirth, more or less bitter, at the expense of the Yankee greenhorns, and especially of Flibbins, who had made himself obnoxious to most families in Neosho. But in this case the scorn was genuine. Nearly every one of the masculine guests had fought and trafficked with Indians, while the ladies had heard from infancy, from the lips of father, brother, and friend, a very different estimate of the red man from that which was entertained by my companions from the Bay State, where a stray Indian was a mere exotic. The Missourians, on the other hand, dwelling as they did upon the frontier, and proud as they were of the white skin, which in itself is held a mark of aristocracy where darker complexions are common, viewed the savages in a practical and unromantic fashion.

"Not but," said the kind old judge, "not but that Indians will fight, clear grit and venomous, sometimes. I was raised in Kentucky myself, on the Bloody Ground; and my own grandfather and two uncles were scalped by the Piankeshaws and Shawnees."

“Ay, judge,” said another veteran, “and this child’s been in more musses with Injuns, since first we started the settlement, than any citizen in Newton County. Nine arrow-hurts in one skirmish, and my ha’r twisted into the hand of a blood-thirsty Arapahoe, till Bob Neale put a lead bead through the skunk’s heart, war something to be proud of, and I under seventeen at the time. But it’s forty-seven year ago—how time does run!—and Injuns ain’t what they were. Their spirit is kinder broken, and few tribes but the Comanche have a kick left in them.”

At the mention of the formidable tribe of the Comanches several voices were raised, and many stories, more or less apocryphal, were related concerning the cunning and fierceness of these, a most celebrated tribe of the “horse Indians,” who still swept the southern prairies, from Mexico to Arkansas, like a flock of falcons on the swoop. In all this animated discussion, I observed that young Stan-ning took no part. He sat silent, apparently lost in thought. But I had little time to remark on this unsociable behaviour on Abel’s part, for the bugles sounded shrilly, and a Federal sergeant came unceremoniously in.

“Dr. Benton,” said the sergeant, “I’ve orders to warn you that we march at once. We’ve got the route, and are to follow the main body with all speed ; so get your traps ready, Britisher, or you’ll be left behind. Is the judge here? So much the better, for I can’t find the mayor. Major Elderkin requires, judge, that you should find him guides,

and good ones, directly, as your prairie roads are apt to mislead gentlemen used to a civilized corduroy, at least. So be spry in finding them. Is that Catawba?"

And the man, who was half tipsy, helped himself, uninvited, to a tumblerful of the sparkling North American grape-juice. The judge, reasonably angry at the intruder's uncivil address and careless manners, was about to make some stern answer, when young Abel Stanning jumped up and whispered something in the old man's ear, which produced a talismanic effect. By the time the non-commissioned officer had finished his draught, the judge was calm, and said smoothly that he "would provide the major with guides." The bugles sounded again, and I took a hurried leave of my friends.

I should despair of conveying any adequate impression of the noise, bustle, and confusion, in the midst of which the Federal baggage train evacuated Neosho. The very soldiery of the escort, so lax was their discipline, poured along in clamorous groups, vociferating curses against the enemy, mingled with criticisms on the conduct of "that Dutchman, Siegel," in getting "whipped" by a parcel of rough red-shirted irregulars like those whom Jackson led. The cavalry galloped or lingered, as fancy prompted, and if the German infantry did keep their ranks, their downcast faces told of nothing but tame submission. The teamsters, sutlers, and so forth, were many of them drunk; and in some cases impromptu drivers,

black or white, were in charge of the teams. The oaths, cracking of whips, hallooming, and grumbling, made up an absolute Babel.

My own driver, Jem, was, by good luck, quite sober, and he bowled along skilfully enough, so that it was from choice that I mounted my own wiry mustang—a handsome creature that I expected to sell for a good price in the eastern States—and rode along on the flank of the long caravan. Waggon came up after waggon, laden with powder, cartridges, blankets, shot, shell, and stores of all kinds. The prairie ground was hard and dry, and the wheels went pretty lightly over the springy turf; but the long grass, mixed with many a wild flower unknown to English herbalists, was so thick and luxuriant in places as almost to obliterate the road. In this strait the guides, four in number, who had been supplied by Judge Carbonnel, proved very useful. They rode actively along the line, heading back devious waggons, pointing the proper course to bewildered drivers, and showing a zeal in assisting the safe progress of the Federals which, I own, surprised me much. Two of these guides were mulattoes,—slaves, probably, of some gentleman in Neosho,—but the other two were white men, of respectable aspect, and of intelligent, weather-beaten countenances. They looked like what they most likely were, hardy farmers, who knew the district well, but who were the last men that one would have expected to find sympathizing with “Lincoln’s hordes,” as the Federals were nicknamed.

Around the camp-fires that night, for we did not

march very far, the start from Neosho having occupied a considerable time, I observed that the two white guides were the objects of much notice, and apparently of much popularity as well. They were constantly surrounded, as they sat chatting and puffing at their pipes of red stone, made by Indian squaws far away on the Platte prairies, by breathless groups of evidently excited listeners. When I drew near one of these knots, I could gather that the Northern soldiers were eagerly crowding to hear wild tales of frontier warfare between the white men and the red,—stories of Indian craft and cruelty horrible enough, certainly, to affect any auditor with uncomfortable sensations. And to judge by the words that fell from Yankee and German, the effect thus produced by these grim legends, told in so rugged a spot of Borderland, was deep and startling.

“Musha, bad luck to them for a set of murdherin’ thieves!” said one voice; “to think of the cunning, too, of the desateful vermin, pretending to be——”

“If I have not seen Comanches, my brother Joel has, and he was lamed for life by one of their lances,” interrupted a tall corporal from Vermont.

“Ach, Teufel, the Confederates is petter than such tam savages, sapperment!” broke in a pudding-faced recruit from Rhineland.

It was plain that the troops under Major Elderkin’s command had a wholesome horror of the scalping-knife and tomahawk.

At daybreak on the following morning, great was the dismay when the Federals discovered that their

guides had vanished. Those treacherous Mentors had quietly saddled their horses under cover of the darkness, and had gone off without beat of drum, leaving not a trace of their presence except the raw-head-and-bloody-bones legends with which they had been so busy in storing the minds of the "down-easters" and "Dutchmen." In all this, I saw merely a not unnatural freak of harmless malice towards the invaders, coupled with that taste for telling marvellous and frightful tales which all old hands in a perilous and laborious career are apt to exhibit when in company with the inexperienced. As for attributing any deep design to the garrulous Missourians who had just taken French leave of us, I never thought of it for an instant. And, after all, they had caused no such remarkable inconvenience by their abrupt departure. The road was tolerably easy, and as the grass was shorter and more parched by the sun than in the rich bottoms near the river, the track was plain enough. And a stray hunter, riding by with a dead buck across his saddle-bow, gruffly bade us "follow our noses," and keep "straight in a bee-line," to the nearest post town.

Breakfast over, we marched. A long and picturesque caravan it was, stretched across the prairie, now topping the swells of earth that rolled their turfen billows before us like so many waves metamorphosed into grassy mounds, now crawling across huge savannahs as level as a billiard table. Grass and flowers, flowers and grass, with here and there a few bushes or some plants of the wild sage, wild

flax, or rhododendron, were all that we could see. Sometimes we espied a herd of grazing cattle at a great distance, but we met no traveller, and saw few signs of human beings. Even when we passed through a wretched village, dubbed a "post town" by the Missourians, the place seemed lonely indeed. Not a man was to be seen. The smith's forge was shut and the smithy furnace cold; the store was closed; every house had its doors and windows barred, as if to stand a siege. We saw no living creature except a lean dog, which barked fiercely at us from the roof of a shed, and a few straggling fowls, whose necks were quickly twisted by our German soldiers, who never lost a chance of eking out their commissariat rations by daintier fare, and whose scruples were few as to *meum* and *tuum*. The clucking and fluttering of these unfortunate hens brought a few women to the windows, and we were roundly and collectively abused as "Yankee robbers," while Flibbins's demand for guides was met with the dogged assertion that there was not a man in the town at that moment, "even if any Missouri gentleman would demean himself by pointing out the road to the Northern scum." These women were confident in the immunity of their sex—nowhere so much believed in as in America, at least until the war had gathered bitterness—and they raised such a clamour, and so pelted the foe with hard words, that it was with a sneaking and crestfallen air that the Federals obeyed the welcome order to march on.

On we went, but before the hour for the noonday half

arrived, we came to a creek or broad brook, formed by the junction of two or more of the sluggish streams of that region. We had no one to point out the most fordable place ; the turf was seamed with waggon-tracks, going in all directions, and our teamsters looked with some reluctance at the chocolate-coloured waters, into which the mud-turtles and water-lizards, scared at our approach, plunged suddenly from among the rank weeds. We had no pontoons, and we must get across at any rate, that was certain, but none cared to be the first to risk being smothered in the mud and water. Thus an hour was lost in wrangling and consultation, and then the passage began. The lighter of the waggons struggled through, with much groaning of axles, creaking of wheels, splashing, flogging, and noise. And in this way the ambulances, containing, happily, but few sick or wounded men, were got over, though the rough motion caused a piteous outcry from the sufferers within. Also about eighty waggons, each of which was drawn by at least eight horses or mules, cleared the creek, at the cost of wetting their contents. But the long array of waggons that followed, not so strongly horsed, since many of the animals that drew them had been left at different places along the road, disabled or dying, in consequence of the neglect or brutal usage of the drunken teamsters, were quite unfit for the transit.

Splashing and squelching into the tenacious slime, the heavy vehicles rolled into the bed of the creek, and in vain the drivers yelled and cursed, flogging and goading the labouring horses that strained and

tugged in vain. Waggon's were upset ; poles and axles were broken ; horses and mules, squealing, kicking, plunging, fell floundering in their harness, and were drowned ; while there was scarcely an attempt at discipline ; all commanded, none obeyed. The vehicles that had crossed the creek set off at a round trot, escorted by half of Flibbins's cavalymen, who, I believe, had undertaken this duty wholly without orders. That dashing dragoon officer had reined up his horse close to where I stood, and did not disdain to take counsel with the English doctor in this strait.

"Dr. Benton," said he, "what on earth am I to do to get out of this fix ? Siegel will have me broke if we lose the ammunition, and half the gunpowder and cartridges are yet on this side. Confound those blackguard teamsters for not taking more care of their beasts ! But what *is* a man to do who has such a commander and such a comrade as those two ?" pointing out the stolid face of Lieutenant Wagner, who looked like a wooden effigy void of intelligence, and the rueful countenance of Major Elderkin, who, with his spectacles pushed up on his forehead, and a perplexed aspect, looked the very picture of hopeless incapacity. "Only suppose the rebels should come up now, or if those Indian fiends—Jerusalem ! what is that ?"

A long, long howl, fierce, and mournful, and menacing, came on the wind, borne from afar off, distant, but rapidly approaching. It swelled and deepened, and died away, then was renewed, rising and falling in almost unearthly cadences of threaten-

ing sound. It was worthy to have proceeded from the throats of a pack of wolves, mad with their winter hunger, and sallying forth for prey. Nearer and nearer it came, and the earth began to shake as the dull beat of many galloping horsehoofs fell fast upon the turf. And then there was a cry indeed among our men, and fifty outstretched hands pointed to the north-west, whence came the boding sounds.

“The Indians! The Indians!”

I, too, looked, and I own that the blood ran cold in my veins as I saw a large number of wild horsemen approaching us at full speed across the prairie. They were lashing and urging their steeds furiously, and their plumed head-gear, fluttering blankets, and long lances were plain to be seen. On they came, striking their mouths with the palms of their open hands, as they uttered the thrilling war-whoop. That their purpose was hostile we could not doubt.

“The Comanches! The Comanches!” shouted a hundred voices, and the whole mob of armed men, teamsters, and camp-followers, swayed to and fro in the most utter confusion. There was no order, no obedience. To do Flibbins justice, though pale as a ghost, he drew his sabre and tried to rally his troopers. But these latter were beyond his call already, for they had dashed recklessly through the water, and were flying whip and spur over the prairie beyond. The sight of this defection produced the worst effect upon the infantry. They were already despondent and unsteady, and had no confidence in their officers or in each other. And when

the Indians drew nearer, and a few arrows and bullets came whistling over our heads, there was no disposition to resist.

“Life’s dear to us all, boys!” bawled one tall corporal, as he pitched his musket into the creek, and set the example of wading through the water, which reached to his armpits; “why should we stop to be scalped? I say, skedaddle!”

“Skedaddle!” echoed the terrified crowd, rushing for the chance of escape. A regular panic, or what Americans call “stampede,” occurred.

The teamsters cut the horses and mules loose, mounted, and galloped off, leaving the waggons to their fate. Such of the infantry soldiers as could secure a loose horse did so, and went off helter skelter through the creek and over the plain. The rest shouting, pushing, screaming, got across on foot, and ran with surprising speed, such as terror could alone confer, across the prairie. As for myself, I was knocked down and ridden over by a German fugitive mounted on my own mustang, which, in his frantic fear, he had appropriated, and when I regained my senses I found that my head was supported on some one’s knee, while the same Samaritan held a flask of spirits to my lips.

“A little drop more, doctor? nothing like it, when you’ve been beat faint.”

The voice was the voice of an old acquaintance, a gentleman I had known for years; but the face, unless my senses were still wandering, was the face of a painted Indian warrior, hideous with vermilion azure, and black, while the plumed head-dress

nodded formidably, and the scarlet blanket and gay beads were thoroughly Comanche.

"No bones broke. You'll be fresh as a trivet by bedtime!" said this extraordinary Samaritan; and I feebly murmured, "Phelps!"

"Yes, old boy, it is Sampson Phelps; much yours to command. And now look about you."

I did look, and beheld a number of receding waggons moving in the direction of Neosho, and which were evidently those abandoned by the Federals. Fresh horses had been put to them, and they were under the escort of several parties of wildly-accoutred warriors on horseback. And nearer where I lay, engaged in rifling the broken-down vehicles, were several grim forms, Comanches to all appearance, horrid in their war-paint and buffalo-robcs, but indulging in such bursts of laughter and hearty pleasantries as only Anglo-Saxon men can give expression to. I groaned. The mystery was too much for me.

"Your scalp's safe," said Phelps good-humouredly. "You've many a friend among those parti-coloured gentlemen yonder. You see, doctor, what you said about Flibbins and his terror of Indians set some of us up to play the Yankees a trick. We gave 'em guides, who talked to them of border fights and massacres till they were fit to run from their shadows, and then a lot of us decided to "paint Injun," a common trick on the frontiers, and to scare the Federals, and pick up as many waggons as we could. We had plenty of gay blankets, feathers, and ochre by us, and I flatter myself we acted our parts well."

“Then there were no real savages?” asked I, rubbing my eyes.

“Not one, except a tame Cherokee or two from the territory,” said Phelps, laughing. “It turned out well, for we’ve got Northern gunpowder and stores enough to supply our militia for a year or more. But the luckiest fellow is young Abel Stanning, who first planned the whole thing. He’s safe to be made a captain of State troops, when the governor hears it; and I guess it won’t be long before Miss Kate Morris changes her name to Stanning.”

Nor was it; for the stern father of the young lady was quite propitiated by the brilliant success of his would-be son-in-law’s project. And before I left Neosho—where my bruises detained me, in kind hands, for a while—I was a guest at the wedding of Captain Stanning and Miss Kate.

The details of this adventure were written down at the time, during my stay in Missouri.

At a later period in the war, when I was an assistant-surgeon at Nashville, Tennessee, a young officer, who had been brought into the hospital, mortally wounded, was under my care. A sort of friendship sprang up between us during the few weeks for which he lingered in life, and when he died he left in my hands a collection of manuscripts, describing events of much interest and pathos, which have been arranged in the form of the ensuing tales.

W O U N D E D.

“Six hundred and forty-three wounded !”

“If that were all !” My wife spoke in a sad voice. “If that were all !”

“The return is given as complete,” I said, referring again to the newspaper which I held in my hand. “One hundred and forty-one killed, and six hundred and forty-three wounded.”

“A fearful list, but it is not all,” my wife answered. Her tones were even sadder than at first. “A great many more were wounded—a great many more.”

“But this is an official return, signed by the commanding general.”

“And so far, doubtless, correct. But from every battle-field go swift-winged messengers that kill or wound at a thousand miles instead of a thousand paces ; bullets invisible to mortal eyes, that pierce loving hearts. Of the dead and wounded from these we have no report. They are casualties not spoken of by our commanding generals.”

I had not thought of this ; or, at least, not with any realizing sense of what it involved. My wife resumed—

“Let us take the matter home. We have a son

in the army. The ball that strikes him strikes us. If in that list of killed and wounded we had found his name, would there have been no bayonet point or shattering bullet in our flesh? I shiver at the thought. Ah, these invisible messengers of pain and death wound often deeper than iron and lead!"

As she thus spoke my eyes were resting on the official list, and I saw the name of a friend. An ejaculation of surprise dropped from my lips.

"What?" My startled wife grew slightly pale.

"Harley is wounded!"

"Oh dear!" The pallor increased, and she laid her hand over her heart—a sign that she felt pain there. "Badly?" She tried to steady her voice.

"A ball through his chest. Not set down as dangerous, however."

"Poor Anna! What sad tidings for her!" My wife arose. "I must go to her immediately."

"Do so," I answered.

Soon afterward we went out together; I to my office, and she to visit the wife of our wounded friend.

It is strange how little those who are not brought into the actual presence of death and disaster on the battle-field realize their appalling nature. We read of the killed and wounded, and sum up the figures as coldly, almost, as if the statistics were simply commercial. We talk of our losses as indifferently as if men were crates and bales. I do not except myself. Sometimes I feel as though all sensibility, all sympathy for human suffering, had died out of my heart. It is, perhaps, as well. If

we perceived to the full extent the terrible reality of things, we would be in half-paralyzed states, instead of continuing our useful employments by which the common good is served. We cannot help the suffering nor heal the wounded by our mental pain. But let us see to it, that through lack of pain we fail not in ministration to the extent of our ability.

When I met my wife at dinner-time her face was paler than when I parted with her in the morning. I saw that she had been suffering, while I, intent for hours upon my work, had half forgotten my two wounded friends—Harley and his wife ; one pierced by a visible, and the other by an invisible bullet.

“Did you see Anna ?” I asked.

“Yes.”

“How is she ?”

“Calm, but hurt very deeply. She only had the news this morning.”

“Is she going to him ?”

“There has not been time to decide what is best. Her husband’s brother is here, and will get as much information by telegraph to-day as it is possible to receive. To-night or to-morrow he will leave for the battle-field. Anna may go with him.”

“She appeared to be hurt deeply, you say ?”

“Yes,” replied my wife, “and was in most intense pain. Every line in her face exhibited suffering. One hand was pressed all the while tightly over her heart.”

“What did she say ?”

“Not much. She seemed looking into the dis-

tance and trying to make out things seen but imperfectly. If he were to die I think it would kill her."

"Two deaths by the same bullet," I said, my thoughts recurring to our morning conversation.

In the evening I called with my wife to see Mrs. Harley. A telegram had been received stating that her husband's wound, though severe, was not considered dangerous. The ball had been extracted, and he was reported to be doing well. She was going to leave in the night train with her brother-in-law, and would be with her husband in the quickest time it was possible to make. How a few hours of suffering had changed her! The wound was deep and very painful.

It was nearly two months before Harley was sufficiently recovered to be removed from the hospital. His wife had been permitted to see him every day, and to remain in attendance on him for a greater part of the time.

"Did you know that Mr. Harley and his wife were at home?" said I, on coming in one day.

"No. When did they arrive?" was the answer and inquiry.

"This morning. I heard it from Harley's brother."

"How are they?" asked my wife.

"He looks as well as ever, I am told, though still suffering from his wound; but she is miserable, Mr. Harley says."

A shadow fell over my wife's face, and she sighed heavily. "I was afraid of that," she said.

“I knew she was hurt badly. Flesh wounds close readily, but spirit wounds are difficult to heal. These invisible bullets are almost sure to reach some vital part.”

I met Mr. Harley not long afterward in company with his wife. His eyes were bright, his lips firm, his cheeks flushed with health. You saw scarcely a sign of what he had endured. He talked in a brave, soldierly manner, and was anxious for the time to come when the surgeon would pronounce him in a condition to join his regiment. His wound, when referred to, evidently gave him more pleasure than pain. It was a mark of distinction—a sign that he had offered even life for his country.

How different with Mrs. Harley! It touched you to look into her dreamy, absent eyes, on her patient lips and exhausted countenance.

“She has worn herself out in nursing me,” said her husband, in answer to a remark on her appearance. He looked at her tenderly, and with just a shade of anxiety in his face. Was the truth not plain to him? Did he not know that she had been wounded also—that two balls left the rifle when he was struck, one of them reaching to his distant home?

“In three weeks I hope to be in the field again, and face to face with the enemy.” He spoke with the ardour of a strong desire, his eyes bright, and his face in a glow—wounding, and the pain of wounding, all forgotten. But another’s eyes became dim as his brightened—another’s cheeks paled as his grew warm. I saw the tears shining as Mrs. Harley answered, in an unsteady voice—

“I am neither brave enough nor strong enough for a soldier’s wife.”

She had meant to say more, as was plain from her manner, but could not trust herself.

“Oh, yes, you are brave enough and strong enough,” replied Mr. Harley, with animation. “Not every one could have moved so calmly amidst the dreadful scenes of a camp hospital after a battle. I watched you often, and felt proud of you.”

“If she had not been wounded also—” my wife began; but Mr. Harley interrupted her with the ejaculation—

“Wounded!” in a tone of surprise.

“Yes, wounded,” resumed my wife; “and, as now appears, nearer the seat of vitality than you were. Did you not know this before, Mr. Harley?”

My friend was perplexed for a little while. He could not get down at once to my wife’s meaning.

“When you were struck, she was struck also.”

“Oh, yes!” Light broke in upon Mr. Harley. He turned quickly toward his wife, and saw in her face what had been unseen before, the wasting and exhaustion that come only from deep-seated pain. He had thought the paleness of her countenance, the weakness that made her step slow and cautious, only the result of overtaxed muscles and nerves. But he knew better now.

“I didn’t think of that,” he said, with visible anxiety, as he gazed into his wife’s countenance. “Our wounds, so ghastly to the eye, often get no deeper than the flesh and bone. The pain is short, and nature comes quickly to the work of cure with

all her healing energies. We suffer for a while, and then it is over. We are strong and ready for the conflict again."

"But," said my wife, "into the homes that stand far away from battle-fields come swift-winged messengers that wound and kill as surely as iron hail. They strike mothers, wives, sisters—some with death-wounds, all with the anguish of vital pain. Alas for these wounded! The healing, if it follows, is never, as the surgeons say, by first intention, but always slow, and often through abscess and ulceration. The larger number never entirely recover. They may linger for years, but do not lose the marks of suffering."

A long silence followed. There were others present who, like Mr. Harley, had never thought of this. I noticed that for the hour we remained together he was tenderer toward his wife, and more than once I saw him looking at her, while she was not observing him, with a troubled countenance. He did not again speak of the early period at which he expected to join his regiment.

On the day following another long list of killed and wounded was given to the public. As I read over the names and counted the numbers, my thoughts came back from bloody field and suffering hospital. "These are not all," I said. "Alas! not all. The ball struck twice, thrice, sometimes oftener. There is pain, there is anguish, there is wounding even unto death, in many, many homes within a thousand miles of that gory place. Some are alone and neglected—dying on the battle-field

with none to put even a cup of water to their lips—some are with loving friends who yet fail to stanch the flow of blood, or bandage the shattered limb—some cover their wounds, hiding them from all eyes, and bear the pain in chosen solitude. The sum of all this agony, who shall give it ?”

Our wounded ! If you would find them all, you must look beyond the hospitals. They are not every one bearded and in male attire. There sat beside you, in the car just now, a woman. You scarcely noticed her. She left at the corner below. There was not much life in her face ; her steps, as they rested on the pavement, were slow. She has been wounded, and is dying. Did you notice Mrs. D—— in church last Sunday ? “ Yes ; and now I remember that she was pale, and had an altered look.” One of our wounded ! Do you see a face at the window ? “ In the marble-front house ?” Yes : “ It is sad enough ; what in-looking eyes !” Wounded ! Ah, sir, they are everywhere about us. Already from over a hundred battle-fields and skirmishing-grounds have been such missives as pain and death. They have penetrated unguarded homes in every city, town, and neighbourhood of our once happy and peaceful country, wounding the beloved ones left there in hoped-for security. For such there is balm only in Gilead—God is their physician.

TAKEN BY STRATEGY.

A THANKSGIVING LOVE STORY.

THANKSGIVING DAY! with a chill, gray sky, and sudden flurries of snow eddy through the air like flights of white birds! Who would give a fig for a sunshiny Thanksgiving Day? Why, one might as well have Thanksgiving Day without a turkey, as without its keen wind and fluttering drifts of scarlet leaves making their moan among the dimpled hollows of the lonely woods!

Deacon Jacob Marble fully appreciated the possession of both these necessary adjuncts to the day of national gratitude; and therefore it was that his brown, wrinkled face wore such an aspect of contentment as he stood before the looking-glass tying his checked silk neckerchief.

“We ain’t rich people, Huldy,” he slowly enunciated; “but I don’t see but what we’ve as much to keep Thanksgivin’ for as most folks. The harvests have been middlin’ good, and things has gone pretty prosperous, considerin’——”

The deacon’s little wife interrupted this leisurely tirade in wife-like fashion by standing on tip-toe, to jerk out the clumsy knot that her husband’s

knobby brown fingers had constructed, and tying it trimly anew.

"There!" she said, complacently eyeing her work; "*that's* something like! *You* always take hold of a cravat as though it were the handle of a plough, Jacob!"

The deacon looked down upon the bright eyes and plump cheeks of his helpmate with a broad smile, that was not unlike a sudden gleam of autumn sunshine on one of his own sere harvest fields, as she stood there in the "go-to-meeting" costume of sober New England—a drab satin bonnet with dark blue bows inside, and a gray shawl wrapped cozily around her shoulders.

"Maybe you're right, Huldy," said the deacon; "but come—we shall be late for meetin'."

"Well, *I'm* ready," responded Mrs. Marble, briskly. "Bessy, be sure you watch the turkey, and keep it well basted—and put in the pumpkin pies when the brick oven is hot—and Bessy, the pudding—and the stewed apples, Bessy——"

"There, there!" interrupted the deacon, tucking his wife under his arm, and walking her off, yet in the full tide of her directions; "Bess will do well enough; she wouldn't be *your* daughter if she wasn't smarter nor a steel trap."

"How you do talk, deacon!" ejaculated Mrs. Marble, looking uneasily over her shoulder. "I didn't remember to tell her about the chicken pies, arter all. Shut the gate, deacon, or Job Grimes's cows 'll be in eatin' the tops off every chrysanthemum I've got. I wonder if the minister

... about the war, Isaac, don't

... between thoughts temporal
 ... went in her way
 ... nut-coloured
 ... that nestled afar
 ... its spire already
 ... snow-dunes.

... general-in-chief over the
 ... stood quietly
 ... foot on the
 ... thoughtfully playing
 ... her round
 ... rosy little body,
 ... geranium in the window,
 ... of roguish sparkles—a
 ... whom you would have fancied
 ... purpose of being kissed and
 ... made much of. She knew it, too, the demure fairy,
 ... coquetry in every fold of the crimson
 ... dress she wore, and *espièglerie* indescribable
 ... in the fluttering bows of ribbon that fastened it!
 ... over the mantelpiece, an old looking-glass—
 ... Marble would have stared if you had called
 ... reflected every dimple and rose-tint
 ... the peachy cheek, yet Bessy never glanced at
 ... reflecting transcript. No—she looked gravely
 ... heart of the fire with an unwonted
 ... the blue eyes, and a pensive shadow on
 ...
 ... Henry,
 ... had not heard the door open, yet she did not

start, when in the looking-glass she saw imaged another form besides her own—that of a tall, stalwart young man, in blue uniform, outlined with curves of vivid scarlet. He was a handsome fellow too, dark-eyed and sun-embrowned, with brown hair thrown carelessly back from his open forehead.

“Charles, *you* here?” she asked, half-reproachfully.

“Now don’t scold, Bessy, there’s a darling! I tried to keep away, upon my word I did, but you might as well expect a hungry bee to keep away from a bunch of honeysuckles—I couldn’t stand it, and so here I am!”

And he passed his arm around her waist, and looked with a species of laughing defiance down into the blue depths of her eyes.

“*Don’t*, Charles!” she said, possibly alluding to a kiss which terminated his words in a manner most satisfactory to himself. “When you *know* that my father has forbidden you the house?”

“Know it? of course I know it, and that’s the reason I waited in the hazel copse until I saw the good deacon well on his way to church before I walked in! But, Bessy,” he added, in a graver tone, “you must own yourself that it is unjust for your father to dislike me simply for being poor. He was a poor boy himself when he married your mother; I’ve heard him say so a dozen times! And as for Mark Vernon——”

“Hush, Charles!” coaxed Bessy, placing her little hand over the young soldier’s mouth. “You know

that I never would marry Mark Vernon were he richer than Cræsus himself !”

“Heaven bless you for those words, love !” said the young man, earnestly ; “and yet I sometimes fear——”

“Hush !” exclaimed Bessy, lifting her finger ; “I thought I heard the gate shut.”

“Only your fancy, darling. And, as I was saying——”

Rat-tat-tat ! rat-tat-tat-tat ! thundered a pair of vigorous knuckles on the door—click, click ! sounded the irresponsive latch, which Bessy had secured after the departure of her parents.

“It is my father—I know his knock !” gasped Bessy, in breathless trepidation. “If he should find you here, Charles ! What can bring him back ? Conceal yourself somewhere—the pantry, quick !”

“I can’t ! it’s full of preserves and apple barrels,” said the fugitive, hurriedly surveying the premises.

“The kitchen, then. Oh, *do* make haste !”

“Hang it, I wont hide like a burglar !” exclaimed the young soldier, half-laughing, half-defiant. “What have I done to be ashamed of ?”

“For *my* sake, Charles !” pleaded the girl, as a fresh shower of knocks descended on the stout oaken panels of the door, and the deacon’s voice was heard clamouring for admittance. “Quick—he is going round to the window !”

Charles Mellen looked around, in a sort of desperation ; the clock-case was too small to get into—

the wood-box too narrow—the tea-kettle decidedly impracticable—and, spurred by dire emergency, the valiant son of Mars dropped on his knees, and scrambled nimbly under the old-fashioned chintz-covered lounge, or settee, that occupied the vacant space between the windows. There he lay, shaking with suppressed laughter, behind the ample valance of blue and white chintz, a sort of extempore “masked battery,” while Bessy hastened to unbar the door.

“Thought you was asleep!” growled the deacon. “I was just agoin’ to try the winders! What on airth made you so long a comin’?”

“I thought—I did not know——” stammered Bessy, turning white and red alternately.

“Oh, you s’posed I was a robber?” said the deacon, breaking into a genial laugh. “Gals does get the queerest notions into their heads sometimes. I’ve come back arter my spectacles, for I don’t rightly feel as if I *sensed* what the parson said without I could look him full in the face, and besides, I like to foller the psalm-singin’. Where do you s’pose I could ha’ left ’em? Last I remember havin’ ’em I was settin’ on that lounge readin’ the paper.”

“No, no, they are not there!” faltered Bessy, turning scarlet, as the deacon peered about the chintz draperies. “Perhaps you left them on the clock-shelf.”

“Well, p’raps I did,” said the old man, abandoning his first idea, greatly to Bessy’s relief. “No I didn’t, nuther. Good land! here they be, in my gray waistcoat-pocket! Well, I *am* glad. I’ll have

to step spry though, if I calculate to overtake your mother before she gets to the meetin'-house. Bessy," he added, as his foot was on the threshold, "if you're really feared o' burglars, I'll give up the Thanksgivin' sermon and stay 'long with you."

"Oh no, father—indeed, it is not necessary," said Bessy, earnestly; "I am not at all afraid."

And she closed the door on the deacon's broad shoulders just as Charles Mellen emerged from the sheltering folds of his retreat, with a face of comic dismay.

"I was very nearly unearthed that time!" he exclaimed, with a peal of merry laughter. "Suppose he had taken it into his head to prosecute that search, and hauled out a young man instead of a pair of spectacles! *Don't* look so solemn, Bessy."

"Leave me, Charles," pleaded the girl; "leave me—you have no right here; and it would be far wiser, far better for us both, were you to go."

"But I haven't any idea of going," persisted the young soldier—"at least not just yet. Listen to me, Bessy darling—my own promised wife."

"I *am* listening," she said, half-turning away her head, yet making no effort to withdraw the hand which he had taken.

"Bessy, I have not yet told you why I am here to-day. The fact is, that I have been away from my regiment quite long enough. The trifling wounds I received a few weeks since are entirely healed, and I am going to try my luck once more as a soldier of fortune. Bessy, my summons has come, and I must march to-night."

“To-night?”

The fair head dropped upon his breast with a low, bitter cry; the tears rained fast upon his soothing hand.

“To-night!” he repeated. “I may never return, Bessy, and I would fain have the right to call you *wife* before I go. Dearest, it would be such a strength, such a comfort to me! Will you deny me this, the last request I may ever make?”

Still she sobbed on, her head pillowed on his heart.

“I have loved you long and tenderly,” he resumed, “and I should fight the better for knowing that my precious wife at home was praying for the absent husband. Bessy, may I go to the battle-field with this buckler of strength about my heart?”

And when she lifted her tear-drenched eyes to his he knew that the prize was *won!*

“But, Charles, when——”

“*Now*, dearest. Get your bonnet, and we’ll place it beyond the power of earthly hands to break the bond between our two hearts. My own love, if a life’s devotion can reward you for this hour, it shall not be wanting!”

The fitful snow-flurries of the morning had settled down into a good old-fashioned storm—drifting, drifting in white blinding clouds around the farm-house on the hill, folding the old stone fence in ermine wreaths, and ridging the roof-trees with alabaster. But within, the pine-logs blazed cheerily on the hearth; and the deacon, sitting in their genial glow, listened complacently to the

hollow moan of the wind among the forests. In the shadow beyond, Bessy was musing, her cheeks softly flushed, and her eyes full of dreamy light.

“Bessy,” quoth the deacon, stooping to replace a log which had just fallen apart in a shower of bright sparks, “I’ve something to tell you, daughter. Mark Vernon had a talk with me this mornin’, arter meetin’.”

“Well?” she said, quietly, a shade of pallor creeping over her face.

“And he wants you to be his wife, Bessy—the mistress of his store-house and broad lands. What do you say, my child?”

“I cannot be his wife, father. I am married already.”

“Married!” repeated the deacon, vaguely.

“To one, father, whom I have already given up to his country. I became Charles Mellen’s wife while you were absent this morning; and he has left his bride to do a *man’s* behest—to die, if need be, for the old flag, which he loves better than wife, or home, or life itself! Father, say that you forgive me; for I have only you and my mother left to comfort me now!”

Poor little Bessy! her short-lived courage gave way to a burst of tears; and when she lifted her wet eyes from the old man’s knee she knew that she had not pleaded in vain.

“Bessy,” said the deacon, after a few moments’ pause, “you’ve done a rash thing; yet I can’t, somehow, find it in my heart to blame you, as perhaps I ought to do. I’ve always maintained that

the men who go forth to defend the Union deserve to be rewarded with the richest treasures of our hearts and homes, and it's too late now to go back from my word. Cheer up, my girl! When Charles Mellen returns I shall not refuse to bestow my brightest jewel upon him!"

And thus it was that the soldier wooed and won his bride.

L O I S.

LILY-likeness ! That is all the word in our dictionary that will tell you anything of Lois Hall ; though, to be business-like, I should commence with the cottage, standing on a little brownish rise, with a faint flower garden, and an ineffectual vegetable patch, from which you are to infer that the soil was stubborn, and likely to prove too much for the little hired boy—sole scrap of masculinity about the premises of Mrs. Hall ; and that the only neighbour was the sea, tumbling in disorderly fashion on the desolate beach below them.

Lois's room looked on it, out of one little white-curtained window ; the other kept itself informed as to the state of the country, and the probabilities of visitors coming "across lots." Between them stood a bureau, whose drawers had been rifled by Tory marauders, troubled with an eruption of brass knobs and handles, having a swinging oval mirror, and a small infinity of little drawers, where, doubtless, some belle of the Revolution bestowed her powder and patches, her buckles and ruffles. In a corner was the bed, modelled, as to proportions, after that of the unlucky Canaanitish king of old—one which made getting in peculiar and getting out

problematical, and offered you your choice of locality, if you had any fancies about your head and particular points of the compass; grimly carved, and unrelenting, even over Lois, asleep there, her brown hair falling all over the pillow, and a little hand clutching painfully at the coverlet. Lazy child! waking, half an hour after the usual time, with a start and troubled eyes.

“Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil,” murmured Lois, as she knelt down to pray. “Does the Father of Lies send such dreams?”

I have said that “lily-likeness” was the only word for Lois, yet I wish that I could better define her peculiar charm. Other girls had hair as soft and abundant, brighter colour, for Lois was pale, form as lithe; neither was there strength or lofty purpose in the lines of her face: yet she took you always by surprise; she was just what you had not expected to see. Then, too, lived a peculiar charm in Lois’s touch; everything that had been near her blabbed of its happiness: the little collar lying across the toilet cushion; the velvet bow that John Gifford had taken from her hair and kissed the night before he went to join his regiment.

She was thinking now of it and him. When he came back she was to marry him; she had loved—no, not that—she had liked him all her life, from the time that he fought her battles at school till now. He was the son of their nearest neighbour; was taller, stronger, better looking, kinder, braver, than any one else. It was quite natural. She had

been more proud than grieved when he went away, and always calmly certain that he would come back safe, only her dream troubled her. It had been of him, and all pain and confusion; and I doubt if she quite recovered serenity till, on her way down, she had looked out on the piazza, and breathed in the morning peace and freshness before entering the "sitting-room," as it is styled in New England nomenclature.

Her mother turned from the window with a face brighter than the sun pouring in between the muslin curtains, leaving for Lois's view a tall figure with a lieutenant's strap on his broad shoulders, and a face that, however browned and altered by the shading of a moustache and cutting short of curling hair, was still John Gifford's.

Lois stopped short in utter wonder. Her mother quietly stepped from the room, closing the door behind her.

"Well, apple-blossom!" cried John, "I am not a ghost, you see."

At sound of the voice Lois remembered herself, and went quickly to him, holding out both hands.

"So it is really you! I am not half awake yet! I thought you were part of my dream. How you have changed!"

"You have not!" said the admiring John. Then suddenly catching her close in his strong arms, "Oh, Lois, Lois! how can you? Is this your girl's nonsense, or does your still heart really know nothing of what is going on in mine? Child, I have lived in the thought of you as we ought to

live to God. Why, I have stopped when the battle was at the maddest to make sure that that bit of ribbon of yours was safe, warming my heart; and all the hateful time in the hospital I had but one prayer, 'O God, come what will, let me see my little Lois again!'—while you—you are so coldly sweet."

Lois looked puzzled and distressed.

"Why, I am very glad to see you, dear John, only it is so sudden, and so strange. Did you come last night? I heard nothing of it."

"We made noise enough," holding her fast, and stroking her lovely brown hair.

"We? Who?"

"I have some one with me—Captain Dinwiddie; he is a splendid fellow, got a bad hit in that last affair of ours, and I brought him here for you and mother to nurse up. He hasn't a near relative in the world, and these hotels are so deuced hard on a poor fellow that is half sick and in a hurry to get well."

Lois clouded at once.

"You know I don't like strangers, John."

"But, my darling, this is my friend. He saved my life. When we were ordered on our final rush across that confounded slaughter-trap of a field, my leg met a ball, and in the thickest of the fight down I went like a baby. Allan—that's the captain, you understand—saw me tumble, sung out to some of the men, and came on, our fellows say, like a tiger, pitched into half-a-dozen rebels so they thought the very devil was after them, picked me

up (he is not a stout man, but he took nearly all my weight himself), fairly carried me off under the very nose of the battery blazing away at us like Vesuvius or some of those fellows. Is that a stranger? We've stuck together like David and Jonathan. I don't believe there has been a skirmish, or a ticklish reconnoissance, or a hard camping out, that we haven't shared together; and then, Lois," argues this impetuous John, calming a little, "if I took him home you know what the girls are. They couldn't nurse him or talk to him as you can, and your mother is willing. What do you suppose she said last night, bless her!—that she would take a regiment in if they were friends of mine;" and John burst into a somewhat forced laugh, by way of contradicting his eyes.

"This captain must be a hero. I should like to see him," thought Lois; for John never could enter in her imagination even as candidate for that distinction. He was blundering about women's matters, and not always kind to the queen's English—things impossible to reconcile with hero-ship.

"Well, pussy!" asked John, a little anxiously.

Born to be henpecked was our John evidently, but then so was the Duke of Marlborough.

"I was wrong. I am glad you brought Captain Dinwiddie here," answered Lois, quietly.

The door opened. "He is coming!" whispered John, still trying to hold her fast, but she slipped away from him like snow, and stood expectant. The first look was a disappointment.

Captain Dinwiddie was thirty at least, probably thirty-five, and looked to Lois's inexperienced eyes slightly made. His features were irregular, his only beauty a pair of fine eyes, normally gray, but changing perpetually to blue and even intensest black, and almost feminine softness—owing doubtless to the remarkable length of the lashes, yet interpenetrated every tone and look, that "charm" as subtle and impossible to define when found in man as in woman—and Lois, who had recoiled at first, caught herself, before ten minutes were well over, liking him very much. Came simultaneously with this admission an oppressing sense of being ill at ease, of everything looking its worst, of John's boorishness, of the mortifying plainness of their housekeeping. Engaged in this profitable thinking, she could hardly have told whether she had eaten breakfast or not. John, however, at the zenith of his happiness, read nothing of this in Lois's downcast face. He was busy with his plans for the day.

"He must make his peace at home," he said, laughingly, "and Lois he dared say would entertain Captain Dinwiddie;" at which Lois held her peace, but inwardly fell into consternation, for what had she in common with this fine captain? So terrified was she at the thought, that she even came out of her shell of coolness, and eagerly whispered John to stay, holding his coat by one white finger, and blushing very much. John wouldn't have given that timid touch for the diamonds of Sinbad! yet there was the fact of mother and sisters un-

visited, stubborn as ever, leaving him nothing but to ride away after all.

Lois sat down by her little work-basket with a strip of muslin. Doubtless its hemming was of vital importance, for if it had been the bond of peace or the ties of affection she couldn't have given it more undivided attention. Allan drew up the lounge close by her.

"May I lie down? I have gotten used to self-petting since this troublesome wound."

Lois looked up at him. She had not thought how really pale and suffering he seemed. He "certainly" took a new inflection, for now that she knew what to do with him and could pity him he had lost at once all his terrors.

He lay a while quietly watching her. Suddenly he broke out—

"It was good in John to bring me here. After our stormy life, you and this little quiet home are veritable paradise. I think myself there."

Certainly he looked his thought; the hard lines had gone from his face; he might have been ten years younger, but he could never long be quiet. He fidgeted, turned from side to side, and drew presently a book from his pocket.

"Lois—I beg pardon, Miss Hall—I am so used to hear John speak of you by that pretty Puritan name of yours."

"Every one calls me so; you need not make the exception."

"Well then, Lois," dwelling lovingly on the word, "let me read to you;" and without

waiting for assent he began reading the story of Enid.

Lois listened pleased at first, but half way her lips began to curl.

“You don’t like it?” he asked, curiously.

“The telling, but not the story.”

“You wouldn’t so have ridden with the man you loved?”

Lois’s eyes rather than her lips flashed out,
“Never!”

“Then you have never——” He stopped short.

“Never what?”

“Nothing.”

“What were you about to say?”

“I have thought better of it; I shall not tell you.”

“Please.”

“Positively no,” and he went on reading.

John came back late, and looking anxious.

“Small benefit would he get from his furlough! Mother was over head and ears in a lawsuit, and every one was in trouble, and he must spend at least three days in town, perhaps more, and try to straighten out the tangled skein.”

Lois looked grave on hearing this, but then that was only natural.

John stayed not three days, but a week; wrote then, postponing his return indefinitely. “If he only had the lawyers in proper position before a certain battery that he wot of, he thought that he could bring them to terms; as it was, submission and patience were all that were left.”

That morning Allan's wound had troubled him, and he had spent it on the sofa while Lois sat near with her sewing. When lunch-time came she would not permit him to stir, but brought up the old-fashioned stand, that spent most of its time in being very much on one side in a corner, and looking like a target, laid thereon a fresh cloth that scented of rose-leaves, a silver basket piled with roasted apples, and a pitcher of a quaint stumpiness and solidity filled with cream. Just then came John's letter. Allan watched her read, or rather hurry over it impatiently.

"He says it may be another week before he comes," was her comment, letting the letter slip through her careless fingers to the floor.

Allan picked it up.

"I have no pocket," said Lois, "and it is too much trouble to go upstairs."

"What shall I do with it?"

"What you like."

"You mean that?"

"Yes; why not?"

Allan's eyes were at their intensest, looking into hers with a glance that she could not bear an instant. He rose deliberately, walked to the fireplace, held it over the coals an instant, and dropped it in. At that Lois, who had been sitting like one petrified, exclaimed—

"Oh, Allan!"

"Well?"

His tone was so sharp that she shrank a little.

"Nothing—there is no harm—I have read it; but oh! John would never believe it!"

Allan groaned. "I wish I were shrivelled up, body and soul, like that!" pointing to the black film quivering on the coals.

"Oh no! not without me!" cried the girl, who a week before smiled her scorn of Enid's tame constancy.

Allan turned and came hastily toward her—stopped half way—ground out a bitter exclamation, and left the room; and a little after Lois saw him galloping past the window on his way to town. He came back late and went at once to his room. The next day he frequented the kitchen, to Mrs. Hall's discomfiture, and stuck by that lady as though she were his salvation, all the time plainly avoiding Lois. He was fighting Apollyon manfully—fighting as a man will with remorse behind and dishonour in front.

Lois, poor child! understood nothing of this. She had sometimes a dim, painful sense of wrong and danger, but it was forgotten now in the new and overwhelming fear of having in some unimaginable way offended him; and she wearied out memory trying to recall the unhappy word or look that had done this mischief. For the hundredth time she was thinking this over as they were going down to the beach in utter, dreary silence, he with head bent down and lip compressed.

Suddenly the pain grew too intolerable.

"What have I done?" she exclaimed. "Are you angry with me? What is it? You make me so miserable, Allan!"

Captain Dinwiddie shuddered from head to foot, and looked desperately away; but there were the

soft, clinging fingers on his arm, and the burning, pitiful face that he had seen with his first unguarded look, and the sudden tremble of the sweet voice, and, above all, the passionate love in his fierce heart; and suddenly honour, conscience, will, whatever chains had bound him, snapped short. Words came like lava—

“Angry, and at you, my darling, my own——” He stopped sharply. They were close on the beach. “Watch that wave,” he said, hoarsely; “if it break against this rock it is fate. If not—well, we shall see.”

Even as he spoke it was upon them, breaking over the fragment on which they stood, wetting Lois’s dainty walking-boots.

“It is fate,” he repeated.

“What?”

“I will tell you by-and-by. Let us go back.”

The afternoon was a wild one; sun showing fitfully among hurrying clouds, and the wind moaning and shrieking after them as they went up toward the house. Already it was almost dark in the cozy sitting-room, and the fire gleamed and smouldered in twilight fashion. The house was deserted. Kitty had leave of absence; Mrs. Hall had gone to a neighbour’s. No better time for Allan Dinwiddie than now. He caught Lois’s hand and drew her down beside him.

“Lois,” he said, “when, in place of the apple-checked, black-eyed girl I had imagined, I first saw you, I said to myself, ‘This poor, blundering John has stumbled on the pearl that I have been use-

lessly looking for all my life.' When you rebelled against Enid I knew that you had never loved. I had guessed it from the first; you had all the calm of a child. When I burned the letter I tried you; but your words called up John; I fancied him amazed, reproachful, incredulous of my villany. I hated the thought of my perfidy. Child, what evil spirit was it that sent you to me then, with your pleading eyes—as if I could be angry with you? Then, when I felt what a straw I was in the vortex, I said, 'Let chance decide; if the wave strike the rock, I will struggle no more; if not, I will leave this place to-night.' Yet, after all, Lois, it is you, not the wave, that must decide. Tell me, dear, what is my verdict? Do you love me?"

Lois hid her face, but Allan drew her hands away and held them; and then, her head drooping lower and lower—

"I thought that I loved John—I did, indeed," she said, pitifully. "I was so ignorant. I never once guessed, though I might have known, why I liked you so. Oh, I am a wicked, wicked girl! I hope John will kill me!"

"You should have known John better," cried some one coming out of the shadow, and showing them John himself.

Lois was too utterly appalled to speak; move she could not, for Allan held her fast.

"There were two men in one city," went on the solemn voice, "the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds. But the poor man had nothing, save one

little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up——”

The steady tones faltered. Lois cried out—

“Let me go, Allan—I will go! I tell you this will kill me!”

She writhed herself free, and going over to John tried to kneel before him, but he held her out at arm's length.

“Kill me!” she said, faintly.

“For what?—to add crime to sorrow? Oh, Lois, it is bitter enough now! I prayed God that I might see you again, come what would, and He heard me; and rather than have had such seeing, I would that my lips had stiffened in death while I was praying.”

“It is not worth it,” said Lois, half proudly. “I am only a silly girl. Some day you will wonder how you could have cared for me.”

John took a little case from his pocket and tossed it open on the table.

“See, Lois, these were for you; you were always running in my head. I think your little finger was more precious in my sight than all the women I ever saw. Fool that I was! all the way home I pleased myself thinking how I should clasp them on your pretty wrists. I hid myself when I saw you coming, thinking to surprise you. I never dreamed that you didn't love me; yet I might have known that you were too young to look into your own heart, or to bind yourself by such a solemn promise. But you—oh, Allan, my friend—my brother!”

Allan raised his head.

“If it will be any satisfaction to use me for a target.”

“No, no!” cried Lois, hurrying between them, “the blame is mine—all mine.”

John turned pale at that. To see her looking at Allan with such love in the eyes that had been so cold for him, was more than he could bear.

“It is a sore temptation,” he said, hurriedly. “I had better go. If I stay here longer I shall have as many devils as the man whose name was Legion.”

He went away, avoiding Mrs. Hall, whom he saw coming at a distance. Lois sobbed hysterically, and Allan, who spite of remorse could not help feeling triumph also, set himself to comfort her—an easier matter than to explain to Mrs. Hall, who loved John almost as well as she did Lois. Still the thing was done—could not be undone—scandal would not help it; so she sighed in secret, shielded and countenanced them outwardly, above all hastened their marriage as fast as possible.

In her happiness Lois had almost forgotten John’s sad, stern face, and the solemn words uttered in the twilight; but will sin forget her?

JESSIE UNDERHILL'S THANKS- GIVING.

It was the evening before Thanksgiving.

The great maples in the door-yard that had blazed so long in russet and golden fire had showered the last withered leaves upon the path; the creeping vine on the piazza columns glowed scarlet in the misty autumn air, and the woods in the valley were stained with the bloody footsteps of many a midnight frost. And yet Hezekiah Underhill, standing pensively polishing his spectacles before the fire, was not satisfied with Nature's great kaleidoscope of colour.

"It don't seem just right!" soliloquized Hezekiah, "not to have a genuine snow-storm afore Thanksgivin'!"

"Take things as you find 'em, father!" said Mrs. Hezekiah, a stirring body, who never stood still long enough to give a wrinkle time to settle down on her face, and whose coffee-coloured cap-ribbons, owing to "perpetual motion," seemed exactly like brown birds continually on the wing. "Elder Jones says there's nothin' but what's for the best!"

"Well, there's no harm in wishin', I s'pose," said Hezekiah, argumentatively.

"No," said Mrs. Underhill; "but if *I* was goin' to wish, 'twouldn't be for such a little thing as a fall o' snow. I know what *I'd* give a big apple for."

"What?" questioned Hezekiah, rather surprised at his contented helpmate's expressing any ungratified desire.

The little woman fluttered up close to him, and there was a liquid glimmer in the eyes she raised to his face.

"Think of the many, many empty seats there'll be around the 'Thanksgivin' firesides to-morrow, Hezekiah! Oh, if I could have *my* wish, I'd bring 'em all back from the graves upon the battle-field, and from the weary hospitals. Think of our Jared, keepin' guard along the Potomac; think of Hiram Steele's brave boy wounded under the very flag he fought for, and dying in a strange land!"

"Do you think he will die, Aunt Mary?"

A slight figure was clinging to Hezekiah's arm, and a pale, pretty face, with bands of shining black hair and wild startled eyes, was turned upward in breathless suspense.

"There now, I do say for't, I never meant *she* should hear! I s'posed she was upstairs!" ejaculated the flurried old lady. "No, dear, I hope he'll get better; any way it's our duty to hope for the best. That's what Elder Jones said only last Sabbath day!"

"Uncle, tell me, *do* they think he will die?" repeated the girl, turning to the old man as if she had neither heard nor heeded her aunt's words.

“Child, how should *I* know? You’ve asked me that self-same question forty times this last week if you’ve asked it once,” said Hezekiah, good-humouredly. “S’posin’ he *don’t* get well, why should you fret about it? When he went away, six months ago, you was a-flirtin’ with Harry Mossmore, and playin’ with his feelin’s just exactly as our cat teases a mouse. Didn’t I hear you with my own ears tellin’ Frank Steele he was nothin’ more’n a friend to you, and you wondered at his presumption in ever supposin’ he could be anything more?”

“I never meant it, uncle!” sobbed the girl, “never! It was that mad spirit of coquetry that possessed me, I scarce know how. The words had not passed my lips before I would have given worlds to recall them. But oh! the punishment is greater than I can bear. Tell me, uncle, do they believe he will die? Oh, if *I* could die, too!”

“He is in God’s hands, my child,” said the old man, solemnly, “and He who raised the widow’s son at Nain, and brought Lazarus back to life, will not fail to do all things well. Trust in Him, Jessie, and pray to Him.”

Jessie Underhill scarce heard the old man’s words; she had resumed her seat by the window, and was gazing sadly out upon the gold and incarnadine of the sunset as it flamed above the western pine-forests, likening it in her own mind to the flash of cannon and the dreadful stains of blood upon the battle-field. And with the throbbings of her heart, rose and fell the treasured bit of paper

cut from the list of "Wounded" in the daily journal, and containing but one line—"Francis Steele, Private, Dangerously."

Hezekiah Underhill looked at his niece's drooping figure, while strange contortions passed over his weather-beaten features. Once or twice he opened his mouth and shut it again with a click like the spring of a steel trap; once or twice he made an involuntary step toward her, and then resumed his former posture as if by an effort.

"No, no!" he muttered between his teeth, fairly beating a retreat, and never pausing until he was out under the tossing boughs of the old maples. "She's daughter, and niece, and everything else to me; but I can't do it! It would spoil all! Poor Jessie, poor little broken-hearted dove!"

Was Hezekiah Underhill demented that he should break out into that strange smothered chuckle, even while the tears were streaming down his cheeks? Certain it was that he conducted himself very strangely all that evening, reading the newspaper with its columns upside down, depositing the pitcher of cider in his wife's work-basket, and finally bringing down on his devoted head that lady's remonstrances by stirring the fire with his snuff-box, and trying to put the poker in his waistcoat-pocket.

"Hezekiah, are you crazy?" ejaculated Mrs. Underhill.

"Well, no, not exactly," said Hezekiah, sheepishly; "but I *do* feel kind o' elevated. Come up to the fire, Jessie; don't sit 'way off in the cold.

That's right, puss—nestle down in your old chimney-corner seat. That's the way you and Frank Steele used to sit together when you were children."

"Father!" exclaimed Mrs. Underhill, reproachfully, as Jessie burst out crying, with her face hidden on her aunt's knee.

"I didn't mean to," apologized Hezekiah; but even then his face was in a glow with something brighter than the genial shine of the fire-light.

It was evident that Hezekiah was glorying in the mystery of some wonderful secret. And never did any secret struggle so desperately for disclosure as Hezekiah's on that Thanksgiving eve. But he kept it. For the honour of mankind let it be recorded that Hezekiah Underhill *kept his secret*.

Of course it's no use trying. Soyer himself, even were he gifted with the descriptive powers of the wizard of Waverley, never could have given you any idea of Mrs. Underhill's Thanksgiving dinner. The brown, crackling turkey, unctuous with stuffing and oleaginous with rivulets of gravy; the pyramids of crimson quivering jellies; the green crisp pickles; the battalion of pumpkin-pies, nestling like amber lakelets in shores of russet crust; the pudding, a triumphant mystery of culinary art: the whole dictionary would fall short in expressing the plenteous glories of that feast of fatness.

Hezekiah disappeared soon after breakfast—whither he had gone nobody knew, for all the explanation he vouchsafed to his wife was that he "was goin' to bring company home to dinner."

But punctual to the noon-mark on the kitchen-floor he returned, and not alone.

Jessie was in her own room, thinking sorrowfully and crying a little between whiles, when Mrs. Underhill came up with flushed cheek and a voice strangely tremulous.

"Darling, your uncle wants you to come down stairs!"

"Indeed, aunt, I had rather not;" and Jessie shrank involuntarily into a chair.

"But he has brought home a friend, dear, and would like——"

"Oh no, aunt! *Please* let me stay here—I have such a dread of strange faces just now."

"My dearest, but your uncle particularly wishes it. Come, there's a good girl!—let me smooth your hair and put on your pink ribbon bows. *Now* you look sweetly."

Mrs. Underhill's hand shook and her eyes overflowed while she fastened the simple brooch in Jessie's collar.

"Why, aunty, what's the matter?"

"Nothing, Jessie—nothing. Come, are you ready?"

Hezekiah Underhill stood in the middle of the room as they entered; and beside him Jessie's bewildered vision took cognizance of yet another figure.

She stopped with dilated eyes and pallid cheek; her brain seemed in a whirl, but when the mist cleared from her sight she was clasped to Frank Steele's breast—the noble breast that had borne the brunt of battle's fiercest tide—the breast that

should evermore be her shelter and her resting-place.

"Jessie, will you take me, pale and scarred and sickly? Will you be my wife?"

"I will love you all my life long."

That was all they said—but it was enough.

"But, Frank, tell me how it all happened?"

"It was your uncle's plot, love. I was lying in the hospital—sick, wounded, dying, as I thought—when his letter came, telling me of your remorse at what you fancied was your unkindness. It was written without your knowledge; but, Jessie, it was like a draught of immortality, an elixir of life to me. I grew better under the very eyes of the surgeon, who had told me I was a doomed man. And here I am on sick leave, to hear my happiness again from your own lips."

The sweet lips confirmed his hope—but it was not in words.

"I declare," said Hezekiah, rubbing his hands gleefully, "it seems jest like a story in a printed book! But there was one time I thought I should have let the cat out of the bag—when you sat *cryin'* by the window last night, Jessie. But I'm glad I didn't tell. Frank wanted to surprise you, and I guess he's done it!"

Frank Steele, sitting before the merry Thanksgiving blaze, with Jessie's hand in his, felt that the great reward for all those midnight watches and perilous battles had come at last. May every gallant soldier in the land reap the same sweet harvest!

GOD'S SOLDIER.

“IF I were only a strong man !”

A sick girl sat propped up with cushions, near an open window, in the early September days, while summer yet lingered among the green leaves and flowers with which it had beautified the land. Her face was almost ghostly in its whiteness. Far back in their sockets lay her eyes, which neither pain nor wasting sickness had been able to dim. Her shadowy hands, with their long transparent fingers, lay, one across her bosom, the other resting, like a piece of exquisitely cut marble, on a purple cushion.

Not very far away from the gates of death. The road had already gone down from the sunlit plains, and was crowding in among the shadowy cypresses. Not far away from the gates of death. She knew it, and was not afraid.

“If I were only a strong man !” The tremulous fife, shrill but exhilarant ; the throbbing drum, changing the time in which her heart was beating ; the reverberant tread of armed men—these were yet in her ears, though the pageant was gone. Weak, sick, dying as she was, her soul was quickened by a new inspiration.

"But I can do nothing." She sighed a little while afterward, letting the white lids, with their thick fringes, fall over her glittering orbs.

"Nothing, Alice?"

The shut lids flew open, and the bright eyes were in the questioner's face.

"*What* can I do? I am not a man."

"No; you are a weak, sick girl."

"So weak, that these poor hands cannot even knit."

"Just so weak, Alice." The voice was burdened with tenderness.

"There are sick soldiers in our hospitals. But I cannot even visit them, nor do so small a thing as hold a cup of cold water to feverish lips."

"No, you cannot do even this."

"I am helpless. I can do nothing! And yet I would give my life, if that would avail anything, for our country. To me, people do not seem to be half in earnest—do not seem to comprehend the peril in which we are involved. Men talk of business and gain, and women of dress and pleasure, as if no enemy were at the gates, mad for our destruction. I feel, sometimes, as if I must cry out from the windows, and warn the people of a danger they do not appear to dread."

"If you could infuse your spirit into one who has the strength to stand up in the face of our enemies."

The sick girl raised her head from among the cushions, in a half-surprised way.

"My spirit into another?" she said.

"Yes."

"Into whom?"

The answer did not come until her question was repeated. Then the name "Howard" was spoken.

"Howard!" It was evident that a pang had gone through her heart. Her lids fell quickly, and her face buried itself among the purple cushions.

"When our country is in danger, God lays upon us the duty of offering for its defence even our most precious things."

The sick girl lifted her head again. If the pale face could be paler, it was paler now.

"Howard is brave and patriotic," she said.

"I believe it, Alice."

The eyes were shut again. A hard struggle was in progress.

"If I were not so weak, Aunt Phœbe. If the time were not so near at hand." Her lips quivered and tears fell over her cheeks. Silence followed.

"Three years, or for the war! I should never see him again in this world! Oh, Aunt Phœbe, I am not strong enough for this!"

"Only in the degree that God gives us strength are we strong enough for any trial," was gently answered. "You asked, 'What can I do?' and the question is answered. Pour into another heart your strong enthusiasm. Vitalize another soul with your intense patriotism. I have watched you closely, Alice, when Howard has been here. You are not, apparently, the same girl then that you are when he is absent. You do not talk as strongly about the war; and if he shows anything like military

ardour, are silent. Not a single stimulus, so far as observed by me, have you offered to his love of country. Is this right? Are you doing your highest duty in thus seeking to hold him back from the ranks of patriots and defenders? I think Howard brave; I know him to be sound in principle. He belongs to that class of men who make the best soldiers. And why is he not in the army? The answer is with you. Speak the fitting word, and he will move at once to the call of duty. Into his manlier strength your warm life shall flow. On the battle-field your brave words will be in his thought, and make him invincible. What can you do, Alice? You can give a man to the army of freedom—a man filled with your own spirit, counting not his life dear so that his country is saved.”

“Leave me to myself, Aunt Phœbe,” said the sick girl. “God will no doubt give me strength; but I feel very weak now.”

Aunt Phœbe laid her lips tenderly on Alice's forehead, and then went out.

For a long time shadowing lashes lay close upon white cheeks. The pale thin mouth was shut. It was a sad mouth now. Was there strength enough? Could the sick girl bear this parting with her lover—a parting in which there was so little promise? And deeper still than this went the pang. She thought of wounding and of death. Could she give that precious one to these?—send him away by a word to encounter, in his own dear person, the terrible things of which she had read as befalling in battle? Her weak heart shuddered. She grew

faint and sick before the images imagination wrought into almost life-like existence. But this state passed. Other thoughts flowed into her mind, and changed the character of its creations. She did not see the dark things of fear, but the great success that lay beyond the strife of battle-fields. And now was revived the old ardour of patriotism. Up from the valley of doubt and fear she walked with firm steps and eyes fixed on the mountain-tops beyond. She had been ready to give all for her country—even her own life, if that poor offering could have availed anything—all but this! Now she was equal to the last great duty.

“I am strong in Thy strength,” she said, lifting her eyes meekly upward. “Take all of earthly support. I will lean upon Thy everlasting arm.”

The shadowy lashes no longer lay close down over her white cheeks. The pale thin mouth, shut so tightly a little while before, was parted, and the sad expression gone. The clear eyes looked out upon the sunny sky and pleasant landscape. Her heart beat in renewed strength.

“Oh, Howard!” What a flash of joy went over her countenance! The door had opened and a young man entered. He was in age not past twenty-three; yet he had a firmly-set mouth, an eye of strength, and the step of one whose thoughts were already maturing into distinct life-purposes.

“Dear Alice!” he said, and kissed her. Then taking her little hand, thin and colourless almost as a snow-flake, he held it very tightly, sitting down and bending towards her as she lay among her

purple cushions—gazing into her face and drinking in of its sweetness.

“If you were not so weak, Alice.” There was a meaning in his voice beyond the mere expression of regret. Alice felt this, and, as she tightened her hand in his hand, answered—

“If I were not so weak—what then, Howard?”

His mouth grew serious. He looked at her for a little while, and then his eyes dropped to the floor.

“What then?” She pressed him for an answer.

“I would go from you for a little while.”

He saw her start. But instead of grief or pain, a soft smile lay upon her lips.

“Where?”

He stood up, drawing his form erect.

“I am a man—strong and full of stature.”

She did not answer, but her eyes were in his face.

“Do you understand me, Alice?” His voice was just a little unsteady. He sat down again, taking the hand he had relinquished a moment before.

“I think so.” She spoke very evenly.

“When our country calls upon us, Alice, God calls.”

“I believe it,” she answered.

“It has called upon me—has been calling for months. The summons is in my ears day and night, and, without sin, I can no longer remain disobedient. But how can I go, and you so weak, so frail? Oh, Alice, it is not that love has diminished, but the call of duty grows more and more trumpet-like every hour.”

"You speak truly, Howard," was the firmly-given answer. "When our country calls upon us God calls. I have heard the voice, and recognising it as the voice of God, have looked up, asking, What can I do? I, so weak, so helpless—just ready to be blown away by a breath—not able to minister even to my own needs. Oh, I have trembled in every nerve with excess of desire to respond."

"Let me take of your spirit, darling!" said the young man, bending down to her until his breath was upon her cheeks. "Let me lift from your weak shoulders the burden of active duty and lay it upon my own. Strengthen me with your love! Say to me, go forth and offer the service of two hearts. I am ready to bear your gage of honour to the battle-field as a true and loyal knight."

No fear came upon her heart. God was giving her strength for the hour. Her face grew warm, and the shrunken flesh, infilled by stronger pulsations, seemed to round with the fulness of health.

"Go forth!" she answered, "and may God give you courage and endurance!"

The sick girl laid her head upon the bosom of her lover, and in the enthusiasm of the hour was happy.

But did not her steps falter as she moved along this new path of duty? No. Her love of country was genuine, and the ardour that flowed from this love no evanescent heat. For herself, she knew that her steps were daily descending to the river of death, and that in a very short time she would

be amidst the encompassing waves. Over the river faith saw the land of immortals, and the shining ones on the bank ready to receive her soul. She had conquered the human weakness that would hold her beloved to her side, and in saintly strength given him to his country in the hour of need.

How brave he looked in his uniform! How strong—how manly! Pride twined itself with her love. Never a word of weakness—never a look of pain—never a hindering tear; but always an inspiring strength. She hardly seemed to him a frail, dying woman, but a beautiful spirit pointing the way through danger to duty.

The time of parting came. Alice had not dared to trust herself to think of this hour. Would she have strength for the trial? Strength of spirit? Yes! But the heart would beat faster and stronger with human emotions; and the frail body might not bear the strain.

“God’s love and God’s strength go with you, Howard!” She tried to be calm and brave. “Be a true soldier! I shall be near you, always near you, Howard!”

He kissed her over and over again—drew her wildly to his heart—gave her a loving, long look of impassioned love—then, without utterance, tore himself from the room.

A messenger reached him an hour afterward as he was marching to the place of embarkation, his regiment having been ordered to the Capital. The nature of this summons was such that he obtained

leave to remain behind and join his regiment on the next day.

The ordeal of parting had been too severe for Alice. The strength that came to her was unnatural, an excitement that consumed. When the scene passed she became so weak and tremulous that she could no longer sit among the cushions in her great arm-chair, but had to be lifted to the bed, where she lay with shut eyes, and breath so low that Aunt Phœbe, as she stood over her, was sometimes in doubt whether the chest moved or not. Half an hour she thus lay. Then her lips moved; and as Aunt Phœbe bent down her ear, she caught the whispered name of Howard. It was then that she despatched the messenger, who was just in time to reach the young soldier before his departure.

“ Alice !” The voice went down to the region of consciousness. Slowly the lids upraised themselves, and there was light and joy in eyes that looked into her lover's face.

“ Oh, Howard !”

“ You know me, Alice ?”

She smiled sweetly, but feebly ; and her eyelids began to droop as if they were heavy with sleep.

“ Alice !” he called, tenderly—“ Alice !”

She looked at him again.

“ Do you know me, Alice ?”

“ Yes.”

“ Who am I ?”

Her eyes, now fixed and becoming glassy, were looking steadily into his eyes :

“ God's soldier !”

As the words left her lips a brief smile played over them. Then the eyelids fell, and a veil was drawn over the ashen face. It was the veil of death!

"God's soldier!" said the young man, as, three days afterward, he turned in tears from a new-made grave. "'Without fear, and without reproach!' Amen!"

Prompt to the call of duty; patient under suffering; all-enduring; tender to the sick as a woman; quick to help the weak; pure from all sin; and brave as a lion in battle—so did this soldier of God, into whose life had flowed the lofty enthusiasm of another life, move among his fellows. Into their spirits his spirit was infused. They felt the motions of his undaunted courage, and found, in his true words fitly spoken, an inspiration to noble deeds. Give such men to our armies, and having justice on our side, victory is sure to perch upon our banners.

"God's soldiers! Men inspired by no thirst of blood—no hatred of their fellow-men—no mere love of danger and mad adventure, but self-devoted for their country; strong and brave from duty; ready to lay down their lives to defend great principles of human rights when assailed. These are they who, in the present great contest, are most needed. Send them forth, true wives, mothers, sisters, maidens! You know them. Lay no restraining hands upon their garments—put no hindrances in their way. God's soldiers must now to the field, for all the powers of hell are moving to destroy the outposts of civil freedom.

AN EXCHANGE OF PRISONERS.

“EVERY young man ought to enlist—*every* one!”

Letty Dallas flashed the blue light of her eyes, half smiling, half scornful, upon Mr. St. Mayne as she spoke. A straight, lithe maiden, with black ripples of shining hair, and blue eyes, full of shadow, like late-blossomed violets, it was not in the nature of any male individual to endure her sprightly badinage unmoved. Yet Marcy St. Mayne only smiled as he stood quietly watching her.

“Are you so very anxious to secure volunteers, Miss Letty?”

“Anxious? of course I am! Come, Mr. St. Mayne, follow your brother’s example, and turn soldier!”

St. Mayne smiled with provoking coolness.

“Oh, if I could only inspire you with a spark of *my* enthusiasm!” said Letty, with glowing cheeks and flashing eyes. “What sacrifice wouldn’t *I* make for the Banner of Stars!”

“Would you really sacrifice much?”

“Anything—everything!”

St. Mayne lifted his long dark lashes, and looked her full in the face with an expression she could hardly comprehend!

“Am I beginning to make some impression on that icicle nature of yours?” she laughed. “What bounty shall I offer? A ribbon? a smile? or a bouquet?”

“Letty!” said St. Mayne, calmly and deliberately, “I *do* require bounty—a bounty beyond money and beyond price!”

“What a solemn preface!” said Letty, lightly. “Well?”

“I will be your soldier, Letty, and fight as man never fought before, until your own lips bid me lay down the sword, if you will reward me, some day, with your own sweet self. *That* is the bounty I require!”

The deep crimson which had dyed her face turned suddenly to ashy whiteness—she leaned against the carved marble Cupids of the mantle, that he might not see how she trembled.

“No, no! I cannot! I cannot! Anything but that!” broke from her quivering lips.

“Pardon me!” said St. Mayne; “I see I have over-estimated the amount of the sacrifice you are prepared to make for your country. You are willing that we men should baptize with our blood the steps that lead to Freedom’s altar, yet *you* cannot give up one idle dream, one girlish fancy, in its behalf. -Do I seem harsh?” he added, as her eyes were raised appealingly to his face. “Nay, I did not mean it. There, Miss Letty, our negotiations shall be forgotten!”

“Stop, Mr. St. Mayne!” she said, folding her little hands so tightly together that the pink-tipped

nails turned to rose-leaves. "You are right in speaking bitterly of idle fancies. I accept your proposition—go, as my representative, on to the battle-field."

His face lighted up with sudden brilliance.

"And then?"

"And then—your *devoirs* shall not be unrewarded.

He took the cold hand tenderly in his.

"I will lay down my life, if need be, in token of my thanks," he said.

Over—it was all over! She had given up all that a woman holds dearest for her country's sake, yet she hushed the sobs that struggled up from her breaking heart, and tried to think she had done right. And then she took a tiny-folded paper from her bosom—only a playful note about some japonicas that Walter St. Mayne had once written her, and burned it, without daring to read its contents over.

"I cannot lay down my life for the good cause," she moaned, "but I can yield up my life's happiness. When a soldier falls, shot through the heart, the pain is over; but oh! *mine* will ache on for ever. Yet I should not repine—it is for my country."

White and silent she sat there, while the sunset flamed through the silken purple folds of the curtains, and touched the dark old paintings with gold. Sweet, faint odours rose from the marble vases of heliotrope and roses in the bay-window—to Letty they seemed like the scent of those pale

flowers that grow in cemetery shadows. And the gray, gray twilight came at last.

The night before the battle! St. Mayne never forgot the starry silence of the heavens without—the peculiar aromatic odour of the pine cones crackling on the stone hearth of the rude Virginia cabin—not even the ragged crevices in the log wall. He remembered them all as long as memory and life endured.

There was a light, elastic step on the threshold, a clink of spurs against the floor, and a tall, brown-faced officer stood beside him, laying a careless hand on St. Mayne's shoulder.

“Writing letters, Marcy? Don't lay them aside—there are no secrets between brothers.”

“You are right,” said St. Mayne; “there should be none. I am writing to my engaged wife.”

Walter St. Mayne held out his hand in smiling congratulation.

“Engaged, old fellow! And never told *me*? But who is the lady?”

“Miss Dallas—our lovely little Letty.”

“Dallas! Letty Dallas!”

Walter St. Mayne's head fell on his folded arms, both resting on the rude camp-table, and a low groan broke from his lips.

“Walter, are you ill?”

“No, not ill,” stammered the young man, in a stifled voice. “Only I am tired, and these pine-cone fires have such a suffocating smell. Don't be uneasy. I shall be better soon. Go on writing to—
-to Letty Dallas.”

St. Mayne looked at his brother's drooping head with a keen, agonized gaze. He asked no questions, but quietly folded away his papers, and sat regarding the fire until Walter St. Mayne looked up again.

"We are to fight to-morrow, they tell me, Walter," he said. "Well, I'm glad of it. But, Walter, if—" He paused a moment, then resumed, "if I fall, you will not forget the brother who loved you far better than his own life. Promise me that!"

And Walter promised, with his forehead resting on Marcy's shoulder, where it had often, often lain when they were both boys.

But Marcy St. Mayne did not fall. By his side, through all the din and tumult of battle, walked his unseen guardian-angel; and when he bore his young brother from the red field, a sabre-wound across his brow, the shout of "Victory!" sounded like a pæan in his ears.

The purple curtains were drawn to shut out the storm and darkness—the gilded clock ticked softly on the mantle of the room where Letty Dallas sat all alone, her dimpled cheek resting on her hand, while the unshed tears sparkled on her lashes brighter than any diamonds.

Suddenly the door was opened, and a servant announced "Lieutenant St. Mayne!"

She started up, pale and trembling; then he was come at last to claim her troth.

How changed he was as he stood before her—how the calm, steadfast brightness of his eyes perplexed her!

“Letty,” he said, “by all the rules of love and war, I am your captive.”

She stood spell-bound in the magnetic light of his glance. “But,” he added, “I wish to effect a change of prisoners.”

“A change of prisoners?”

“Even so, dearest; and here is your other captive!” He stepped back, and Letty’s wondering eyes fell on a tall young soldier, who had lingered in the shadow of the doorway—a handsome fellow, whose brown curls hid the fresh scar on his brow—her old lover, who had never dared to tell his love. Ah! he had grown braver *now*.

Well, true love is not exactly selfish, but self-absorbed, and it was not until Walter rose to take leave, at the chimes of midnight, that they remembered that Marcy had slipped away long since.

The next day Letty received a little note, containing only the following words in Marcy St. Mayne’s handwriting:—

“By the time you receive this, my dear little sister-elect, I shall be *en route* for camp once more, feeling sure that I may safely leave Walter to your nursing. Let me add that I have fought one battle for *you*, and I hope to fight many more for my country.

M. St. M.”

And in the sunshine of her great happiness Letty Dallas never knew the everlasting eclipse that had come over Marcy St. Mayne’s life!

T H A N K S G I V I N G .

“WHAT have soldiers in hospital, writhing in pain or tossing in fever, to be thankful for? The day is a humbug. Keep it? No, I’ve not kept it.”

A strong man shorn of his strength spoke, but it was no Delilah answering.

“Many a poor soldier weary with pain and agony has found cause for thankfulness; some trifling deed of pity or word of sympathy has stirred his heart to gratefulness. Suffering generally humbles men to recognise and accept what they disdain in the pride and glory of health.”

“Yes, you women get us in your power and then crow.”

“Victor, what malice!”

“It is true; then tell us to be thankful. For what? for maimed, crippled bodies, for useless arms, for paralytic legs?”

The pale face grew paler, and a scornful smile gleamed out of restless, eager eyes.

“Oh, Victor! Victor! the battle is but half fought, the glory only half won when you utter these thoughts.”

Victor partially raised himself, leaning on one arm and speaking haughtily.

“If you think I implied regret at giving my mite to this war, you are wholly mistaken, Margaret.”

“No, no! I did not mean that, believe me; but it is right for all to be thankful, and I meant you had not gained one of the direct purposes of suffering.”

“Pray what is that?”

Margaret’s head drooped as she answered—

“Gratitude for having shared in even the least degree that which was endured for us all by our Master.”

Victor’s voice had lowered before he replied—

“I am no Carmelite, Margaret, nor one of those who believe that mere bodily pain can make us like the Divine One.”

“But it can help—it can indeed.”

She was so afraid to speak of these things that she dared not say all she was thinking. She wanted to assure him that a better appreciation of the great sacrifice lay in his power than in hers, rejoicing as she was in health and vigour; but different leaven had been working in his mind, for he suddenly resumed again, in his cutting, ironical tone—

“Ah, it is easy to preach of thankfulness in purple and fine linen to the ragged, beggarly horde! You have heard the sermon to-day, you have given thanks devoutly, and now—stand a little further off that I may look at you—you are going to the sumptuous dinner; but you do not care for the viands, your esthetic palate is to be cajoled. I wonder who will whisper the most tasteful, delicate flatteries; who will offer the most poetic draughts,

spiced carefully for such dainty lips ! Let me see. The sheen of your silk dazzles—I must shade my weak vision—it is very beautiful ; and the lace at your throat, how soft and downy!—you call it a *ruche*, I believe ; the rose, too, in your hair is red, rosier than your fair face, red as the blood I have seen on battle-fields——”

“Madge ! Madge ! where are you ? Come out of this dungeon. We are waiting for you. What are you two crouching over ? Victor, you look as sour as green grapes. Look at me ; am I not bewitching ? See, I am *en militaire*.”

The fairest little being, robed in pink tarlatan, danced in and thrust her curly pate down on her brother’s arm, chattering all the while.

“You have kept Madge ever so long ; isn’t she a darling ?”

“What is that she wears on her necklace, Josey ?”

“A cross, a pearl cross ; Madge, let him see it !”

“Don’t ask her, Josey. She is angry with me. Is that the way you women wear crosses made of pearls and hung on a golden chain ? How heavy they must be !”

“Stop, Victor, stop, you are outrageous. Madge has gone, and I shall go too ; but look at the buttons in my ears.”

“*Petite sauvage* ! why make holes in such little pink sea-shells of auriculas ?”

“I don’t know what you mean. I wear army-button ear-rings to match this army-button bracelet, and they are lovely. But, Vic, I wish you had

your dear old leg again, so we could have a redowa —and how splendidly you used to lead the German ! Oh, it is too bad ! I shall just cry.”

“ And make your eyes red. Oh no, Josey ; come, dance off with yourself. Who’s to be there ?”

“ Everybody.”

“ Tell me who Margaret dances with.”

“ She wont dance in war times, she says. Isn’t she an old foggy ? She came up to me the other night and said the music ought to be funeral marches instead of giddy waltzes.”

“ Was that after I came home ?”

“ No, before ; and you know how magnificently she plays. Well, she would not touch the piano except to give us the adagio of one of Beethoven’s symphonies, or something else so sad that we could hardly keep from tears. But I must go, Vic. Good-bye ; don’t get blue here all alone. I suppose you would rather have a book than my delectable society ?”

“ Oh yes, chatter-box ; adieu !”

The light steps danced down the hall ; other steps and other voices echoed, died away ; the carriage wheels rolled off, and silence reigned.

Victor took up his book : the print was too fine, so he was obliged to relinquish it, wishing he had some one to read aloud to him. Margaret had so often read to him that the words began to bear more clearness and power from her voice than any other, but he had provoked her now. It was not a pleasant reverie in which he was indulging ; alone, crippled, feverish, restless ; he who had prided him-

self on his independence and manly strength. But he did not regret having spoken as he did to Margaret; it rather satisfied him to resent kindness and patience with cool sarcasm; it was his masculine protest against forbearance and gentleness. "Thankful, grateful—I have no need—I wish to have no need for such words. Has she not left me all alone here to gnash my teeth at fate, to ponder over my uselessness and miserable good-for-nothingness, while she dances off to a dinner—a Thanksgiving dinner? And why should she not go? What does she owe me that she should deny herself any pleasure? Nothing. To be sure, I once told her—I was fool enough then—that no other woman in the world had so great a sway over my actions; confound it! She has tightened the rein till the bit cuts at every pull; but I am revenging myself. I hurt her nicely to-night. She's a good little Christian, and does not like to be thought a Pharisee."

A little table stood near with convenient trifles. A book of larger type caught his eye, Mrs. Browning's "Last Poems." It opened of itself, as if it knew the hand accustomed to hold it (not Victor's), at the hundred and seventy-eighth page. Down the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth verses was scored lightly a pencil mark. For one vivid moment he knew what one woman had suffered in all the dreary time of his silent imprisonment in Richmond, and like an avenging weapon those verses cut in deeply. He tried to shake it off; he tried to think some other hand had opened these pages so often that the leaves fell apart at this one place.

He knew better; and knowing it, self-reproach added to his dreariness. His bell rang so furiously that the servant feared some accident, and rushed breathlessly in.

"Did the ladies say when they would return, Joanna?"

"No, sir; but not until late, I'm sure, sir."

"Ask them when they come—no, you need not either. Bring me a glass of water."

"Yes, sir."

He was very restless and feverish, and lay with closed eyes, as quick steps indicated Joanna's return. But the step was lighter, and a cool hand laid softly on his brow made him start.

A quiet figure in gray merino, with only a blue bow knotted under the linen collar, stood near him—thick, drooping, wavy curls hid her eyes.

"I thought you had gone!" was the half-impatient exclamation.

"I changed my mind at the last moment."

"To heap coals of fire on my head, I suppose."

"Victor, drink this water; you have fever; don't talk."

"I must."

"Not now; let me read." She had opened a book, and crouched down on a low ottoman, her face shaded by her hand, began to read. The voice was like a chime of low, sweet bells, but they seemed to jangle in Victor's ears. He tossed and turned, and finally put out his hand and grasped the book.

"Pardon me, Margaret."

“ Shall I go away, Victor ?”

“ Yes.”

There was not a tinge of sentiment or sadness in her words, but they were very calm and low—

“ I only came because I saw you were worse, and needed recreation,”—rising as she spoke.

“ Do you call this recreation ?”

“ No, it is very evident I have done harm.”

“ More than you can repair, Margaret.”

He was not now speaking satirically, and she looked at him with amazement.

“ You have made me break a resolution so strong that it was nearly a vow.”

“ I, Victor ?”

“ Yes, you, with your calmness and womanly gentleness, your terrible malignity.”

She knew not what he meant ; and though she had determined not to be weak, tears would come ; just one passionate outburst, which she quelled proudly the moment they were shed. But he saw them, and drew her toward his couch.

“ This is the way I have to sue for pardon, lying helpless, maimed for life. I had rather you had killed me, Margaret, than force me so to love you that I cannot longer hide it. Oh, Margaret, Margaret, it was cruel ! I, who shall never ask any woman to be my wife !”

Margaret put out her hand very coolly.

“ Good night, Victor.”

“ Must you go ? Then I am mistaken. I hoped you cared for me, Margaret, in spite of my detestable behaviour.”

"Yes, I must go, Victor."

"It has been very tiresome for you here, Margaret, listening to my folly."

"No, I did not care to go out."

Her perfect indifference at last enraged him, as she knew it would.

"You seem to be in no way moved at my misery. I did not know you were so cold and heartless."

"What would you have me say?"

"Drop some delicious grains of pity; sweeten the bitter pill with honeyed phrases."

"I am very sorry this has happened."

"But that is a cant expression. You are generally original."

She was silent again, and moved toward the door. He detained her, grasping her passive hand.

"Among all your thanks to-day can you spare a little forgiveness?"

"For what?"

"For my rudeness and harshness." His voice was gentle again.

"There is more to forgive than that."

"I daresay; but I am in earnest. Don't go yet. Do you forgive me?"

"No!"—firmly, softly, but emphatically.

"And why not? Is my sin so heinous?"

"The man is not a brave one who tells a woman he loves her but will not ask her to be his wife."

"Margaret!"

She went on as indifferently and coolly as if discussing some novel.

“It is not brave, nor is it honest, for he may have won her love in some strange way.”

“But she should let him know,” said Victor, half amazed and half amused.

“A true woman’s self-respect is a barrier to that.”

Victor bit his lip.

“A cripple, doomed to drag a footless stump after him all his life, has no right to ask a young and beautiful—no, nor an old and ugly woman to be his wife.”

“Who has laid down that law?”

“A true man’s self-respect is the barrier.”

Margaret glanced up, a very sunbeam of a smile playing over her features.

“It is a dead-lock, Victor.”

“It shall not be, Margaret, if you will just stoop down here a moment.”

“What for?”

“Now I have both your hands; tell me, do you, dare you love me?”

There was no answer, and her curls drooped over her face. He repeated the question, but she would not reply.

For a moment or two his pale face worked. It was hard for him to make the attempt he had almost sworn not to do—so hard, that for a moment he faltered.

But the temptation was irresistible, and he saw that nothing else would compel Margaret to answer; so he spoke—

“Margaret, will you be my wife?”

"Yes, Victor," came the answer, clearly spoken.

"The wife of a cripple?"

She crushed the words with a kiss.

For a long while there was stillness, Victor clasping tightly Margaret's hands as if afraid she would elude them, but in place of the pain and feverish irritability on his features was a look of very expressive content.

Margaret's tears were so nearly falling that it was some time before she could ask Victor what he was thinking of, so unusual was his silence.

"Keeping my Thanksgiving at last," was the reply.

MY CONTRIBUTION.

I HAD actually subscribed five hundred dollars! Not in all the history of my givings was there a parallel to this. Five hundred dollars! I looked at the filled-up cheque, after cutting it free from its blank companions, with fond, reluctant eyes, ere passing it to other hands; yet was I not the grudging giver this little hesitation implied. My heart was in the cause of national honour and national safety; and in sacrificing something for my country I was but discharging a patriotic duty. This was my contribution to a fund our citizens were raising for hospital and sanitary needs. If double the sum had been required of me, double would have been given.

“So much for my country!” I said in my thought, with a feeling of self-approval. I felt that I was a better and truer man for the act. “If every one would do as well according to circumstances.” There came a slight chill to my enthusiasm, consequent on the thought that I was doing so much more, according to my ability, than other people. I had seen the subscription paper. It bore the record of no larger contribution than mine.

Two citizens only had put down their names for five hundred dollars.

“To have given equally,” I said within myself, “Mr. Harland should have made his contribution a thousand dollars instead of five hundred; and Grant should at least have come up to my figures—dollar for dollar; he is quite as well off as I am. Then, as for Tompkins, I can’t see how he had the courage to write down only fifty, in the face of half a dozen poorer men who gave each their hundred. But we have a test of patriotism in this, and know where to place men. Love of country is a fine thing to talk about, but when sacrifice is asked, how rarely do we find word and deed in harmony!”

It is the most natural thing in the world to let speech betray our thoughts. As I moved about among friends and acquaintances, a word dropped here and a sentence there revealed the secret of my self-approval; and I doubt not that nearly all of them understood what was going on in my mind—how I considered my contribution to the war fund, taking means into account, as the largest made by any man in the town.

For me, five hundred dollars was a large sum to give away. Tens, twenties, and an occasional fifty, under the pressure of public calls for church or charitable needs, had passed out through the carefully-loosened purse-strings, that drew back again with increasing tightness on the diminished gold; but giving after this liberal and exhausting style was altogether a new experience. I felt something poorer on account thereof, and began to meditate

economies. When I paid a thousand dollars for a pair of horses no impression like this was perceived; not even when one of them got injured by a fall, and I parted with him for one hundred and fifty dollars. Here was a dead loss of three hundred and fifty dollars; but in face of it nothing so like a sense of poverty touched me as in face of my contribution to the hospital and sanitary fund. I did not feel poorer for the three hundred dollars expended in preparing and stocking my fish-pond, though the money paid therefor was a sunk investment, every dollar; nor for the six or seven hundred paid for summer-houses, garden-statuary, and fancy work about my grounds and dwelling. All this, being for my own gratification, I could afford. The expense was calculated, and taken as a thing of course. But this five-hundred-dollar gift to our country in her time of pressing need, freely as it was bestowed, left with me a sense of exhaustion, as though weakened by an effort greater than my strength.

No wonder, such being the case, that I talked rather more than was seemly of what I had done. We have in our town an excellent but plain-spoken man, who, his life being one of the strictest integrity, does not stand in fear of anybody's opinion. He is not a rough or obtrusive man, but, as I have said, plain-spoken, free from guile and flattery. You can hardly converse with him for ten minutes without knowing yourself a little better than when you began the conversation. His name is Preston.

"We have done our part," I said to him, as we

stood together in the street one day. We had been speaking of the war, and the necessity of supporting the Government to the full extent of its needs. I referred, in saying "our part," to the various contributions in men and money which the people in our particular locality had made, and especially to the late subscription, which footed up three thousand dollars. Three thousand dollars, of which I had given a sixth part. I could not fail in this remembrance.

"Yes, and nobly," he answered, with a glow of enthusiasm not often seen blooming his quiet face. "Our people have done nobly, not keeping back their most precious things."

"Three thousand dollars is a liberal sum," I said.

"Yes." His voice dropped a little.

"And of this sum two men gave a third part." It pressed for utterance, and I was weak enough to let it forth.

Mr. Preston did not answer, "And you were one of them." No; but said, in a voice that still fell lower and lower, until it expressed a sentiment of reverence, "There is one in our midst who has given more than these two men a hundred-fold. But the name is not down on any subscription paper."

More precious than silver and gold! Yes, there are things more precious than silver and gold; and I understood Mr. Preston to refer to human life and human love. Shame touched me, and I stood silent and rebuked.

“Come,” he said, “walk with me into the next street, only a little way. It is well for us to comprehend these questions of sacrifice and patriotism in all their bearings. The danger with us all is, that we magnify our own burdens and our own loyalty, and in doing so fail to award the honour that is due to others.”

I did not answer, but in silence went with Mr. Preston into the next street. It was one in which the poor dwelt. Small houses, a few neat, and with tasteful shrubbery about the doors, but most of them miserably neglected and forlorn, stood on each side for a distance of three or four squares. My visits to this part of the town were of rare occurrence. It was not pleasant to gaze upon, and so avoided. All looked poor and mean now as my eyes ranged along the street, and I questioned with myself as to whither I was going, and to what end.

“The widow who cast in all her living gave more than those who, of their abundance, poured gold and silver into the treasury.” My companion broke the silence with these words as we paused at the door of a small, one-story-and-a-half cottage, around which everything was clean and in order, but plain and poor. His knock was not loud, but low and respectful. I did not answer his remark, but stood beside him in a vague expectancy. A child of ten years opened the door, and looked up into our faces curiously. I saw that she recognised Mr. Preston, but no smile lit up her young face.

“How is your mother to-day?” was asked.

"Not very well. Won't you walk in?"

"No, thank you, my dear. I only stopped to inquire about your mother. Is she able to sit up?"

"Yes, sir. She sat up 'most all day yesterday, and sewed part of the time. And she's up again to-day. Wont you come in? Maybe she'd like to see you."

"Not this morning; I'll call round again. Say that Mr. Preston called. I'm glad she's better. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye, sir!" I felt the low, almost choking flutter of the child's voice away down in my heart; my eyes were dim as I turned away. What did it mean?

"She has given most of all," said my companion as we walked away.

"What has she given?"

"Her husband."

"He is in the army?"

"He is dead!"

"What? Dead!"

"Killed in battle."

I stood still. "In battle?"

"Yes. Three weeks ago the news came. He rests with the slain at Fort Donelson."

"Who and what was he?" I asked, rallying myself, for I felt an overpowering sense of weakness.

"A sober, industrious mechanic; a good husband and a good father. I saw his wife on the day after his march with the regiment that went from here six months ago. The parting had tried her severely;

but she was brave with it all, and full of a noble heroism. 'He is strong and courageous, and will do his duty,' she said to me; 'and the country must have such men. I could not cling to him weakly and in tears, as some wives did to their husbands, and hold him back when his heart and conscience bade him go. He is in God's hands. Men die at home of sickness as well as in battle. I trust in God.' Her eyes were full of tears as she spoke, and her voice betrayed the fear and suffering that were in her heart. Ah, sir, neither you nor I will ever fully comprehend all that humble wife endured in parting from a good husband, on whose strong arm she had leaned for many years—in parting with him thus."

We walked on again, silent for some moments. How mean and poor seemed my half-extorted gift—I say half-extorted, because there was really more of the spirit of doing to be seen of men than genuine patriotism in the act—to the priceless contribution of this poor woman! I had signed a cheque for five hundred dollars, that was all. No consciousness of the draft of that cheque followed. I did not feel my comforts diminishing; I did not relinquish a single pleasure; there was nothing sacrificed except love of money. But she gave her husband! She, poor, dependent on his life for the support of herself and her children, had said, when his country called, Go! And the sacrifice had been complete.

"The blow must have been terrible," I said. "Poor woman! This is indeed sorrow."

“She staggered and fell,” was replied. “For a week the struggle between life and death was almost evenly balanced. Then the slow reaction came, and the poor crushed heart began to gather up its rent fibres, and to string its quivering nerves for new efforts and new duties. The strong arm on which she had leaned for so many years was broken, and she must stand henceforth alone. How she faltered and staggered with uncertain steps at first! For hours she would sit and weep. But slowly strength came, and now, you remember the child’s words, ‘She sat up ’most all day yesterday, and sewed part of the time.’ A heavy burden has been laid upon her, and she must walk henceforth with stooping shoulders and weary feet. Her own hands must earn the food with which her children are to be fed, and the garments with which they are to be clothed. Her toil and her care are more than twice doubled; and with them are the widow’s loneliness and the widow’s sorrow. What are my war-burdens, what are yours to this? Ah, sir, there is no room for complaint or boasting. With us the sacrifice is as nothing in comparison. It is hardest with those who are least thought of, and who get least of public sympathy.”

“We must do something for this woman,” said I. “Her case touches me deeply.”

“Your possessions and mine would lose more than half their value were such a calamity as the dismemberment of our country to fall,” was answered. “Our enemies are men in arms, and we must oppose with man in fierce battle. While they fight

and die we are at home, and in their blood and suffering we find safety. Is there honour, is there justice, is there humanity in forgetting this service, and leaving the widows and orphans of our dead soldiers to bear unaided their burdens of want and sorrow? I think not. Yes, assuredly we must do something for this woman. She has given her all, and if she have no share henceforth in our abundance then are we not guiltless in the sight of Heaven."

How small seemed all the contributions I had made, and of which I was so self-gratulant! My cheeks were hot with shame. Not since have I referred to that last subscription in any conversation, nor has a word about the coming burden of taxes escaped my lips. I would blush at complaint now. Burdens! They who seem to have the largest share feel their pressure lightest. On the poor, the humble, the too often despised and neglected, the heaviest of our troubles will fall. Let us see to it that we sin not in forgetfulness of what we owe them—that we do not let widows and orphans cast in all their living as the price of our safety.

IN HOSPITAL.

“YES, there’s no use denying that we had rather a stormy time of it.”

And Captain Ferdinand Lawrence stroked his moustache, and complacently handled the scabbard of his sword, as he spoke, with the air of a hero who has no objection to being properly appreciated.

Grace Bryan had listened to the whole of his circumstantial description with blue, dilated eyes fixed on his, curved lips half apart, and a cheek where the colour varied, as you have seen sun and shadow chase one another over slopes of blossoming grass. No wonder that the doughty captain felt inwardly elated at the success of his eloquence. Had he at last struck the responsive key-note to this pale young beauty’s nature? Was his long servitude of love at last to meet its exceeding great reward?

Oh, Captain Lawrence, Captain Lawrence! could you but have seen into the hidden mysteries of Grace Bryan’s thoughts, what a crash there would be among the dazzling colonnades and airy pediments of your grand *Chateau en Espagne!* But love is blind, and so, unfortunately, is self-esteem.

“Captain Lawrence,” said Grace, with her little hands nervously interlocked, and her serious eyes

never moving from his face, "was there not a private in your company called John Harral?"

Captain Lawrence gave a quick, involuntary start, but recovered himself immediately, though with a heightened colour on his dark cheek.

"Harral—Harral; yes, I believe there was."

"And can you tell me what has become of him?"

"Upon my word," said the captain, with a little uneasy laugh that was decidedly at variance with the keen glance shooting from underneath his bent brows—"Private Harral is a lucky fellow to have inspired such an interest!"

"Can you tell me what has become of him?" repeated Grace, as calmly as if she had not heard the covert sneer.

"One don't keep the run of these privates," said Lawrence, carelessly; "but if Miss Grace really cares to know, why, of course, my poor services are at her disposal!"

He drew out a little memorandum book, neatly bound in black morocco, and leisurely turned over the leaves.

"Let me see—Gates—Hall—Hannah—oh, here it is! Harral, John—marked 'missing.' Just the sort of fellow to take particularly good care of his bones and sinews—deserted, I daresay. Oh, they *will* do it, Miss Grace. Hold on, though, here's another entry. Harral—killed in the action—buried on left side of creek—hum—m—m. Anything else I can do for you, Miss Grace?"

But Grace did not answer; she did not even ask to see the treacherous "minutes" which might

have revealed their own inconsistency. She sat like one stunned, with hands still folded, and eyes mechanically fastened on the winter sunshine that quivered along the opposite wall, while the blood slowly receded from her cheek, and the colour from her lip.

“Gracious Heavens, she has fainted!” ejaculated the captain, springing from his seat. “Hallo here, somebody! Bring camphor, Cologne, anything! Confound Private Harral!”

Are there any wounds so bitter that Time—whose gentle finger draws the mantle of velvet grass over new-made graves, and puts the chiaro-oscuro of many sunrises and sunsets between us and our griefs—cannot heal them? Yes, there are some that bleed on silently, and mine life and heart away with their unseen gush—and such a one was hidden under Grace Bryan’s sad smile and heavy eyes, always luminous with the melancholy shine of unshed tears.

“I assure you, Miss Grace, I consider it a very Quixotic piece of business,” said Captain Lawrence, in accents of grave displeasure. “You’ll do nobody any good, and only upset your own nerves. It’s all nonsense, this idea of ladies visiting the hospitals—what can a woman, who has been accustomed to shriek at the sight of a spider, do in the midst of such dreadful scenes? My dear Mrs. Bryan, do persuade your daughter to abandon this absurd fancy!”

Mrs. Bryan looked helplessly from her daughter to the captain, and then back again.

“Captain Lawrence is right,” she said. “Consider, my love, what suffering you will be compelled to witness.”

“Mamma,” said Grace, firmly, “is it any worse for me to witness than for these brave fellows to endure? Oh, mamma, to think that we have been sitting at home in ease and luxury while the men who perilled life and limb in our behalf lie perishing within a stone’s-throw of our Aladdin palaces! Let me go, for it breaks my heart to remember how selfish I have been!”

Soft-natured Mrs. Bryan looked appealingly toward the captain. He shrugged his shoulders.

“Well, if Miss Bryan chooses to be so foolish, I have, of course, no right to interfere. Only——”

“Don’t trouble yourself to finish the sentence, Captain Lawrence,” said Grace, quietly. “I need not say that I have not expected the honour of your attendance, nor do I ask for it now!”

She walked out of the room with the air of a young queen. Lawrence watched her with a glance in which vexation and admiration were curiously blended.

“The superb little vixen!” he muttered between his teeth. “What evil genius has put that hospital idea in her head? However, it can’t make any difference; he must be dead long ago. Only I wish I could have dissuaded her, for if——Pooh!” he broke off suddenly, “there’s no use bothering myself with such an exceedingly improbable supposition. I wonder what makes me love that girl better the more she sets me at defiance? Why

can't I scorn her as she scorns me? It's a curious psychological puzzle, the ins and outs of that throbbing, passionate thing that we call a heart! By all the powers! she *shall* be mine, if I peril my own soul to win her."

The noonday sunshine lay brightly on the floor of the long barrack-room, with its wooden ceiling, and range of narrow pallets on either side, and Grace Bryan felt a sick giddiness reeling through her brain as she saw the pale, ghastly faces outlined against pillows scarcely whiter than themselves—the shattered arms—the mangled limbs bound down to wooden stretchers—the expressionless faces whence life and light were drifting away into the shoreless tide, side by side with muscles all racked and contorted by fierce spasms of pain! This, then, was a hospital.

"My dearest, you are fainting!"

"No, mamma, I am not," said Grace, resolutely battling with the involuntary recoil of her whole physical nature. "Let us go on. I feel quite well now."

How the sunken eyes of the sick men brightened as the fair, slight figure bent above them with gentle words of pitying encouragement—what healthful remembrances of absent mother and sister love returned to them with the touch of her long, soft curls upon their burning foreheads—the cool contact of her hand against their fevered palms! And as she passed on, strength and courage came back, and the surgeon himself wondered at her nerve and calmness.

They had reached the last of the white beds, where an attenuated figure was supported among pillows, with an open book before him. Not reading, however. The heavy eyelids drooped above the hollow cheeks, as if slumber had weighed them down, and there was a sort of weary repose shadowed over the sharpened features.

"He is asleep, do not disturb him," murmured Grace, under her breath.

"No, he is not asleep," said the surgeon; "and this is one of the cases on which I most pride myself. Just gone, when he was brought here—dreadfully wounded at Fredericksburg; but he's in a fair way to recover now, thanks to our new system. Come a little nearer—he'll be glad to see you!"

The heavy lashes were slowly lifted at the sound of their footsteps, disclosing dark, grey eyes full of the strange mystery that only comes to those who have stood on Death's threshold and seen the flow of the dark, dark river.

"Harral, what's the matter? Speak to me!" exclaimed the surgeon, in dire perplexity. "A glass of wine, Johnson; quick! he's swooning again."

Where were your eyes, good Esculapius, to imagine that John Harral could swoon with those fluttering fingers in his own, those blue eyes pouring tides of eager light into his uplifted heart? Your Pharmacopœia knows no such remedies as these.

"I knew you would come, Grace—I knew you

would not leave me all alone," he murmured, with the passive bliss of a child who wakes from hideous dreams to find his face against his mother's bosom.

For Grace Bryan had laid her cheek on his pillow and breathed one whisper into his ear—a whisper that was like the pulsing of magnetic life through his veins.

"Tell me once more that you love me! Let me hear it over and over, dearest!" he said, with closed eyes. "Ah, I shall soon be well *now!*"

It was not until they were in the open air, safe beyond the hospital ward, that Grace Bryan fulfilled the captain's prediction, and fainted.

"Of course; didn't I tell you it would be so?" triumphantly exclaimed Captain Lawrence, twisting the fingers of his buckskin glove round and round. "A woman can't help fainting in such a place."

"It was not from foolish terror, nor shrinking tremors," said Grace, meeting his exultant eye with the serene glance that disarmed its fire at once.

"No; what then?"

"From great happiness—the happiness of meeting one whom I have mourned for as dead."

"Mourned for as dead?" vaguely repeated the captain.

"I have seen John Harral this day."

"Oh," said Captain Lawrence, after a moment's blank silence, during which the ticking of his watch sounded like a thousand trip-hammers, and his face turned a dull yellow. "Indeed! Pardon me, but

've just recollected—good-morning—hope to see you again.”

And so Captain Ferdinand Lawrence walked off the stage of Grace Bryan's existence.

Need we describe how Miss Grace transformed herself into nurse, physician, and consulting faculty to a hospital consisting of one patient? And how she found it an even more “interesting case” than the honest ward surgeon had done? If our readers want any more explicit details they must ask Mrs. Harral.

TAKEN BY SURPRISE.

FLOATED out on the fragrant air the waltz-music, burning, delirious. The rich bloom on Lute's clear brown cheek deepened into the red of wet coral, or of the fuchsias that burned in the snow of her dress and drooped among her broad black braids, and the long eyelashes fell with a sudden sweep to hide the pleasure flashing too brightly in her lustrous eyes.

Jack Centyre's name was on a line with the "Gunst Werber" on her tablets. He was coming across the room to claim her hand, and she tangled the chains of her fan and her bouquet-holder inextricably together. The liking of a year could no longer be masked by cool tones and words. It struggled about her mouth, looked shyly from her downcast eyes, spoke in the very tremor of her little hand resting in his as they glided off into the wild music groaning, quivering, and whirling about them, making itself one with motion, and a part of the thrill and shuddered delight pulsing in their every vein.

In the centre of the brilliant rooms he bent low his handsome head till his bright hair touched her glowing cheek, and whispered—

"Farewell, love!"

Lute looked up aghast; her eyes met his full of solemn tenderness and warning. The music faded, died almost away.

“As I was saying,” went on Jack, steadily, “this waltz-beat is noticeable in all——”

It burst out again; his voice sank low, his lips murmured close in her ear—

“I came here to say farewell. Walls have ears, writing may betray. I leave Nashville to-night.”

Another whirl and rush of music; then Lute’s voice, faint and trembling—

“Leave! for what?”

“For our country, Lute—for the Stars and Stripes—for the Union!”

He tightened his grasp as he spoke, for she seemed falling. Another turn took them within the arch of the conservatory door. A fall of fleecy curtains separated them from the glaring, heated rooms, and the faint ray streaming from a single globe of ground glass alone did battle with its shadows. He drew her into its dimmest corner, still holding her fast. She struggled slightly, with timid hands tried ineffectually to free herself from his firm clasp, then drooped her face, crimson even in the darkness, low, lower, till it was hidden quite on his shoulder.

“Two hours later I shall be flying like a felon, travelling in the darkness, hiding by day, hunted down, perhaps, like a dog or a slave,” he said hurriedly. “Think how little heart I had for this; but I could not go without saying good-bye to you.”

“Where is the need?” she asked, with a shudder.

“Every need—the direst. Our flag and our government are not idle words, Lute—showy insignia brought out to grace a gala-day, nothing worth in themselves. They have been our very life and breath all these years, and like the air, because unseen they have been unvalued, their very existence almost denied. Now the day of our trial is upon us, and let him be called coward and slave who shrinks or falters.”

“And I——”

The words escaped unconsciously. She was thinking of that dear head lying low in some ditch or on some mountain ridge, upturned blankly to the sky, cold and dead. His stern-set face relaxed suddenly, and the dark flame in his eyes melted into infinite tenderness.

“You dear! Will you care? Will you wear heart-mourning for me if I fall?”

A tear glittering on her cheek in the faint light was her answer. He stooped to kiss it away, but voices came perilously near. The waltz was done.

“Give me something of yours that has been near you,” he whispered.

She undid the belt that circled her trim waist, and gave it, with its gold and azure clasps, into his hand.

“God bless you, keep you from all harm, and bring you back to me!”

Her voice sank so low that he could scarcely catch the concluding words, but there was no time for answer. A sudden ray of light shot in through

the parted curtains, soft footfalls and silken rustlings sounded close by them. He bent low over her, and pressed his lips to hers. Merry voices called them—the Philistines were upon them. Lute answered with a careless laugh, he with a jest, as they mingled again with the crowd. Who could have dreamed of that last burning kiss, that voiceless farewell?

An hour after exclaimed Evelyn Devereux, the hostess—

“Lute Loder, do you know you have lost your belt and those lovely clasps? What a pity! I thought I had never seen anything so pretty. I shall have the servants look everywhere.”

Lute smiled faintly at thought of such profitless looking. Miles away at that very moment, it was rising and falling with every pulse of the heart of Jack Centyre, as he rode steadily and swiftly on in the darkness.

Let those who have kept vigil through long months with hope and fear, tell how the weary ensuing days passed for Lute, if words can tell; if there is any expression for an undying heart-sickness, a never-ceasing terror. From society she was presently ostracised. Came there one day Mrs. Rawlinson, the outward and visible sign of that inward and mysterious essence, principle, or quality, whatever it may be, known as the *ton*, indignation throned on her bushy eyebrows, determination ensconced about the corners of her mouth.

“Ah! come here, you naughty child,” was her

salutation as Lute entered ; “ we were talking of you—were we not, Miss Primly ? ”

Aunt Rachel, who interpreted aright the ominous quiet of lips and mouth in her somewhat unmanageable ward, assented feebly, while Lute seated herself without other reply than a bend of the head.

“ I came here to talk to you quite seriously, ” pursued Mrs. Rawlinson, smoothing her gloves uneasily, and obviously embarrassed by the steady gaze and formidable composure of the culprit. “ I knew your mother, my dear, and I feel an interest in you. Young people will be indiscreet, will draw wrong conclusions ; no one knows that better than I. A pretty girl of eighteen can't be a Socrates—we don't expect it. In fact, why should we expect it ? As I said to the ladies yesterday, berthas not battles, pleasure not politics, is running in your little head. ”

No answer to so much condescension ; no appreciation of such elaborate kindness, either expressed or implied ; only ominous silence, stormy eyes, and mutinous though as yet quiet lips, and Aunt Primly looking on aghast and helpless. Clearly there was no resource left Mrs. Rawlinson but to bring out her heavy guns and open fire.

“ Miss Loder, in a committee of our ladies it was yesterday decided, ” continued Mrs. Rawlinson, “ that while our husbands, fathers, and brothers are away fighting our enemies, we cannot in justice tolerate them in our midst. We have a list of ladies professing Union sentiments, and painful as

it will be, we are resolved to cease all association with them."

"The question is, then, who are the sufferers?" retorted Lute.

"I am sorry to say that your name is on the list."

"It is honoured then."

"I pleaded your youth and beauty in vain. You are more than suspected of Union feeling."

"Why not say more than suspected of Christianity, love of country, or some such heinous offence?" burst out Lute. "If I am only suspected, let suspicion be changed to certainty. I know no country but the Union. I acknowledge no allegiance to any flag but the stars and stripes. I desire no friendship with traitors and ingrates."

"She is mad!" gasped Aunt Primly.

"Worse!" echoed Mrs. Rawlinson, solemnly.

Lute rose to her full height.

"Mrs. Rawlinson, tell your friends that the poorest man that fights for his country against the treason of secession is more honoured in my eyes than your proudest leaders. If I were a man, my best blood should seal my words; as a woman, I am only sorry that I cannot prove my sincerity by a more costly sacrifice."

Mrs. Rawlinson rose, reddening and swelling.

"You will repent this."

"Perhaps. All things are possible."

"You have ruined yourself," quoth Aunt Primly, in despair. And if to be sedulously excluded from all recognition is to be ruined, then Aunt Rachel was right. The girls, her old friends, passed her

with a giggle and whispers about strong-mindedness and abolitionism ; the men with looks of cold reproof ; the elderly ladies with real or affected horror. Aunt Primly read her a daily homily ; secession was blatant all about her ; not one word, not even a token of any kind, had she ever received from Jack ; yet he was not dead ; for she read, with a thrill that who can describe, in one of the local papers, that the arch traitor Jack Centyre had escaped, and was serving as a lieutenant in Buell's army ; but she stood firm—words easily written, lightly read, but hard and bitter in practice.

At length Miss Primly fell ill, and while her fever was at its height came the news of the fall of Fort Donelson, and the wild panic and terror that overtook Nashville. In the midst of it all Lute sat calm and even joyous, for to her the Federal army meant simply Jack Centyre. Jack well, faithful, and coming back to her, was the picture Hope held up before her ; and one afternoon, while the city was breathlessly expecting the coming of Buell's army, as she sat by a lower window weaving golden dreams, she heard the jar of the gate, and looking up caught the glitter of sword and epaulets. He had come ! and breathless with delight she ran to the door, opened it, and started back aghast. The uniform of the Texan rangers met her eye, and a face pre-eminently handsome, spite of the evident traces of debauch—a face only too familiar to her, that of Raymond Mainwaring, outcast for his vices from a circle by no means saintly, and her bitterest enemy because she had once rejected him. What

could have brought him there? She stood holding the door, looking at him with undisguised dismay.

“May I come in?” he asked, with an evil smile. “It is so long since we have met.”

Even as he spoke he stepped past her into the hall, turned the key in the lock, and took it out.

“These are unsettled times,” he sneered, “and I have no fancy for being impaled like a bug on a Federal bayonet, and sent North as a curiosity. Will you come into the library, Miss Loder? I have something to say to you.”

There was no one within call but female servants, for all the neighbours had fled; no help but to follow. Lute did so with a silent prayer. He gave her a seat, placed himself beside her, and, leaning forward, fixed his eyes intently on her face.

“You, I remember, are fond of poetry,” was his most unexpected beginning. “I came here to quote a stanza that has been running in my head all day.”

“Kind of you, but is it worth the risk? Pray, what is your quotation?”

He took her hand. Direful menace and fierce triumph flamed in the midnight depths of his eyes. He spoke as if he would burn in every word on her memory:—

“ ‘For Time at last sets all things even,
And if we do but watch the hour,
There never yet was human power
Which could evade, if unforgiven,
The patient search and vigil long
Of him who treasures up a wrong.’ ”

He had a marvellous voice, full, deep, capable of any inflection, and it rang out now like the toll of doom. Lute's heart gave a sudden bound, and then stood still in mortal terror; the blood surged over cheek and brow, and as suddenly receded; and her voice shook spite of her bravest efforts, though her words were calm enough.

"*Bon!* I see your taste has improved; but I conclude this is only your text. What is your sermon?"

"A short one, Lute. A year ago I loved you, and you might have saved and redeemed me. You refused with scorn, and society applauded you, but 'Time has set all things even.' The wheel has turned. Society has need of me now—ignores you."

"True, yet hardly worth the telling."

"You are right, as usual: were that all I had to say; but listen. I am a man of a curious pertinacity of disposition, and I never relinquish a determination. A year ago I decided that you must belong to me. I have not changed my mind, though I have waited in silence. My time has come. Your consent is no longer necessary. You are alone here, in a city distracted with mad, selfish terror, and Government will not inquire too closely into the conduct of so useful an officer. I shall take you."

"You dare not!"

"I dare anything."

"God——"

"Is on the side of heavy battalions and favourable circumstances."

She struggled to shake off his grasp on her wrist which he had unconsciously tightened to a painful degree. A locket fell from her belt. He picked it up and opened it.

“Jack Centyre! So he is my rival! Will it interest you to know that I saw him at Fort Donelson? He was one of the first to scale the walls, and I think was cut down at once. But come, my love; time presses.”

A pistol lay on the table. Lute, in desperation, caught it up and aimed it at him. He smiled scornfully.

“Shall I show you how to pull the trigger? I think you are more afraid of it even than of me. What a soldier’s wife you will make!”

She dashed down the pistol and darted toward the door, but he held her fast. A moment’s struggling exhausted her little strength, and left her utterly helpless in his iron grasp. There was no relenting in his determined face—he had no pity. Surged up then to her brain, with a dull, waving sound in her ears, the quickened tide of blood. She seemed fainting—dying; when suddenly, amidst the whirl and confusion of her faculties, she found that she was listening to a sound growing nearer and louder every moment: the quick gallop of horses; the creaking of the gates; the loud echo of hoofs along the carriage-road.

“Come!” urged Raymond.

Her answer was a long and thrilling shriek. Shouts and voices responded from without. They were thundering at the door—locked, alas! and

quite strong enough to withstand a lengthy siege. Some one called her—

“Lute! in God’s name, where are you?”

It was Jack’s voice! She answered with a second shriek, as Raymond tried to drag her toward the door. They were coming around the house. There was a jingle and a crash of broken glass as a window was dashed in, and then sprang into the room men in the welcome Federal uniform, with swords and revolvers drawn.

Lute ran up to the leader.

“Oh, Jack, you have saved me! I knew that you were not dead, and that you would come!”

And so, as usual, the little things of man’s estimation were the agents of Providence. Jack’s impatience proved Lute’s salvation, and her happiness also; for Aunt Primly could not in decency deny to Lieutenant Centyre the life that he had saved. Mainwaring was then marched off to the camp in triumph, and the official report coolly noted him down as “One prisoner taken.”

How many that read it dreamed of the almost tragedy depending on those simple words?

IN EARNEST.

HERE and there was a rift of grayish light; tossed midway near the zenith low ranges of cloud-hills, not with snowy base and glowing tops, but sullen inky forms; all the remaining sky wears a leaden desert stretch, water running with tiny foam crests, wind moaning; all the landscape hushed and sad, as if waiting in silent consternation for the mischief that air and wave were brewing.

It was not cold, yet everybody at Grant Baracole's left the drawing-room because there was a fire in the library, and as some one said, "it was such a comfort to have ocular demonstration that all bright things were not dead." They were gossiping and lounging in such idle fashion as people careless in purpose and vacant in heart will, while apart in the window, half behind the curtains, Mabel Winthrop read slowly to herself—

"No danger shall affright, no difficulties intimidate us; and if in support of our rights we are called to encounter even death, we are yet undaunted, sensible that he cannot die too soon who lays down his life in support of the laws and liberties of his country."

That was what the American David said in 1774

to the English Goliath, the assured words of men who have the truth and are in earnest about it.

“Are any of us in such solemn earnest?” thought Mabel, sighing, as she looked around her.

There was Del Cameron and her brother Reginald in the shadow of one of the book-cases. At a low spoken word she had turned her head half away, her colour rising slightly; he was watching the slight quiver of the full lips, the gleam in the down-cast eyes; it was only another flirtation on the list of Del’s follies that season: and as for Reginald, for what or whom did he care? Mabel, his sister, could hardly have told. As in the Eastern story, he had angled for gold and silver fish that turned black in the frying, and died uttering dismal voices of prophecy; he had plucked apples of Sodom and fed on ashes; he had ridden enchanted horses of theory to dizzy heights of speculation, and returned to earth with the eye of Faith put out; at last coldly resigned himself to exist.

There was Vivia Baracole and Allan earnest enough about each other; sneering Mayne Warren certainly in earnest about Lottie or Ethel’s fortune it hardly seemed to matter which; Hesperia, wife of Grant Baracole, and other cadet matrons, enthusiastic over their babies and their braiding patterns; in a corner Grant Baracole and Jack Delaunay dissecting a military reputation after approved tea-table canons, and having it well down at last, everybody closed in at the death with his or her particular thrust.

Mabel listened with eyes growing suspiciously

soft and dark, like the summer sky before rain ; and at last—

“Do you think people talked like that in 1775?” came out from the window in a voice a little indignant and tremulous.

Everybody stared blankly, trying to piece the question and the conversation together. Reginald found the clue first in the book still lying open on her lap.

“Oh! you have been reading up; but your history knows nothing of the tea-table gossip and about-the-fire chat. Hearts were made of very much the same stuff then as now.”

“Yes; but there *is* a difference. I can't explain, but I can feel it.”

Reginald was about to dismiss the subject with a careless jest, but Mabel turned toward him such a distressed and quivering face that he stopped short; and as he looked thrilled through him suddenly the infection of her pain, waking feelings forgotten under the ice-crust of his selfish unbelief, followed by words crisp and stinging.

“You are right. Those queer, prim-powdered people were in desperate, deadly earnest, and we are not. That is just the difference.”

Half-a-dozen voices broke out in full cry—“Not in earnest!—the very thing that everybody is talking about, that the papers are urging.”

“Exactly; ‘urging’—everybody urging somebody else. The Government—the army—the masses—our neighbours—anyone but ourselves. It is high time for somebody to look alive, and be very much

in earnest indeed. The handwriting is already on the wall. If some one doesn't bestir himself, who knows how soon the foe will come crushing in among us? One man or woman's effort is but a drop toward the wave, therefore valueless; but if enterprise could only infect us in the lump—say by thirties and forties—because there is such desperate necessity that somebody should do something to tighten that mischievous screw that is turned "loose" in every one's mouth, and near no one's grasp."

People sat aghast—partly at the heresy, partly at the source. Speech could have been expected from the marble-lipped Plato over their heads with as much reason as anything serious from Reginald Winthrop.

Mable left her seat to go over to him and take his hand in both of hers.

"Why not be in earnest, then? You who, if you would——"

He placed a finger on her lips.

"Have I ever announced myself as a candidate for martyrdom?—and besides, though I call out vanity of vanities loudly as any Solomon, am I not a shareholder in the stock, drawing my dividends with tolerable complacency? I kindle sometimes at noble possibilities, just as I like a ballad, with metre all awry, because our mother sung it. We have all had our dreams, and perhaps it is true that for the child-world patriotism and honour lived; but facts or dreams, they are dead enough now, make our phylacteries as broad as we will, talk we ever so virtuously."

"I don't believe it—I won't believe it!" burst out Mabel, indignantly.

"You need not," said a quiet voice, as a gentleman who had entered during the discussion now came forward. "Life is not false, and if we are, it is not of necessity."

Mabel turned joyous and excited.

"Oh! Dr. Philips. Now you will help me."

(Reginald, cool and half displeased.)

"But we were not discussing truth."

"That, however, is your creed."

"If you mean that I believe that each man and woman is guided simply by reference to his or her interest, the only difference lying between base and lofty conceptions of interest, yes."

"There is, then, neither virtue nor truth. Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. We may have hoped for something better—may have even started on pilgrimage, but the road was hard, or we lost the way, and forbid it, Pride, that others should succeed where we have failed! The men and women who have a purpose are self-deceived or liars, so let us all glide gently down the stream together. Out on this soft, sneering devil that has possession of the age!" answered the doctor, warmly. "We are so many spoiled children newly come to an estate contested and in confusion; we have yet to learn that we each have something to do, and we are slow in coming to knowledge of the truth; but the estate is a fact, not a fiction, and we will not sell our birthright of liberty for a mess of pottage. God gave it us, and by his grace we will preserve it."

“From which I infer that Dr. Philips has volunteered by way of performing his share of the work,” said Reginald, smoothly sneering.

“I have. I am here to spend my last day with you all.”

The answer was most unexpected. Everyone started a little, but still Reginald was incredulous.

“Do you go as surgeon, or have you a commission?”—which, translated by the air of eye and lip, meant in the original vulgar, “It is not so very heroic in a country doctor to accept an opening to distinction.”

“No, as a private.”

This time people gasped, as after a shower-bath, and Grant said in an undertone—

“Thornton, I believe that you are in the incipient stages of brain fever, and that I should be justified in detaining you for the opinion of a physician.”

A smile, sweet, but how unutterably sad, shone out in the clear blue eyes.

“Et tu, Brute! Don't you see that any gentleman will go as an officer, scarce one as a private?”

“But the degradation! the association!” said two or three voices together; “and what can you do as one of a mass, and such a mass?”

“Just the work, I trust (unless I am too vain), of the leaven in the dough. I shall be one man fighting with a purpose, and bringing trained moral and intellectual perceptions into contact with untaught instincts. Good against evil—knowledge against ignorance. Sacrifice is all I have to offer,

and I give it as others do money or military skill."

"Plucky that," muttered Jack Delaunay to Reginald, but that gentleman was silent, busy with an uncomfortable ghost of a former self that was thoroughly roused and would not be laid. Rose about the doctor a feminine buzzing, all the ladies anxious to make the most of their new-fledged hero, and talking all together, excepting Mabel, who had gone back to her window, sitting quiet and watching them disdainfully.

How intolerable they all were! Why must people be so absurd, as if there were any use in talking, unless one man were to say, "I will go too!" Girls, poor weak things! could do nothing but stay at home and suffer, though why should she suffer? She had no interest in this country doctor, who had neither money nor position, and though he talked well, could stoop to flirt with Del Cameron. He had just picked up a little knot of gay ribbon that she had worn at her collar, and refused to give it back. He would wear it as a badge, he said. That! after——Here the sentence stopped in Mabel's brain. Prudent sentence! and to mend matters, Reginald, catching sight of her face, which I am afraid was a dismal one indeed, put his head in between the curtains and quoted—

"Then her cheek was pale, and thinner than should be for
one so young,
And her eyes on all his motions with a mute observance
hung."

"The monster!" She was so glad when the

dressing-bell rang. In her little airy, violet-scented chamber there was quiet at least.

She sat down before her dressing-table, her long hair falling all about her slender waist, her chin supported in her hands, staring fixedly into the glass, and Hesperia, who had followed, watching her under pretence of playing with her fat golden-haired baby, and chattering something after this fashion—

“When are you going to town, Mabel? I am in a hurry for *Le Moniteur*. Some one told me they mean to wear short cloaks. Wont it be dreadful?”

“Very.”

“Or do you like them?”

“Yes, I suppose so.”

“Very dreadful, and you suppose that you like them; which do you mean, Belle?”

“I—don’t—what were you saying?”

“That it is such a pity that Thornton Philips is going.”

Mabel jumped up and began to do up her hair with great energy.

“You will lose a good physician.”

“Do you know,” went on Hesperia, as if entirely absorbed in her own speculations, “that I think we are going—Ella, stop, was there ever such a mischief!—going to develope a romance? Del Cameron, I think, really likes Thornton.—Don’t touch the subject, Ella!—She has some germs of nobility, and we of a man like him might make of her a smart woman.”

"I am sure I hope it is so with all my heart," answers Mabel, with unusual distinctness, very rosy, and putting the little sparkling back-comb into her hair very hard indeed, at which deep-scheming Hesperia put down her head to indulge in a little giggle behind the baby.

"Only I must say," went on this consistent Mabel, from under the floating white skirt just then going over her head, "that there is a certain degree of propriety to be expected even from Del Cameron, and I should have thought (buttoning up her dress vigorously) that Thornton Philips had too much sense to make himself so ridiculous."

"Oh! men in love are never sensible, my dear;" with which axiom the two ladies go down the broad staircase together.

Hitherto I have said nothing of Mabel's beauty, because I hardly knew how to translate into words what is almost too subtle for thought to seize and locate. I might, like Olivia, give an inventory of charms—item two gray eyes, item two lips indifferent red, and still you would not see Mabel. It was a certain morning—seeming as if she had just dawned from somewhere, such a look as a child wears when just waked, and with the sweet solemnity of the sleep-world still upon it, that was the subtle secret of her attraction, and made the people in the drawing-room below start a little, as though they had not seen her enter fifty times before.

Del Cameron with one glance (feminine) took in everything, from the soft rolls of hair and mist-like

dress to the perfect calm enthroned on her forehead, and her face lengthened visibly, but blind Thornton Philips saw nothing. He was too busy looking into Del's blue eyes and singing, "How can I leave thee!" with an emphasis.

Reginald, to whom the flirtation, viewed in the light of the conversation near the book-case, was interesting, took a flower from a vase and handed it with a meaning smile to Thornton, who nothing daunted turned to Del with—

"Ah! lay it on thy heart
And think of me."

"Brava!" cried Reginald, as Del took the flower, at which that young lady had the grace to blush.

"No, eleven, isn't this?" asked Jack Delaunay, who had always admired Mabel, coming to sit by her on the sofa.

"What do you mean?"

"Simply that this is Del's eleventh flirtation. I have been keeping count. There was Charlie Spence, and Eugene——"

"Spare the list! I will take your word."

"I think, though, this is serious. Del has been angling for the doctor all summer, simply because he fought shy of her; and now, if he is in love, I suspect that she is."

"You call that love?"

"Why not? There are half a dozen different kinds of love. It has its varieties, like the scarlet fever or any other epidemic. There is the mushroom growth—see present example—the champagne

sort, the slow product of years, the fierce passion that lives cycles in a week, the deep self-unconscious affection, part of life and soul, and then——
There is the dinner-bell. Permit me to escort you.”

That was a lamentable dinner indeed. They sat opposite Thornton and Del. If Mabel turned away, people would think that she cared. If she looked, she was afraid that she should care. She could not keep her wandering attention on Jack Delaunay, who at last grew piqued and sullen; but it was hardly over when the doctor came to look for her.

“Miss Winthrop, you will not refuse me a game of chess—our last, perhaps,”—at the same time commencing to arrange the pieces, as if refusal was impossible.

The table stood a little apart in the recess of a window opening directly on the grounds. The light curtains, filling and swaying with little puffs of wind, shut out the rest of the drawing-room in a measure. Jack Delaunay and Del walked away, feeling themselves *de trop*; so they were quite alone; and having neared nature, though ever so little, felt in her truthful presence the utter paltriness of the lie they had been enacting. Involuntarily Mabel had thrown aside her smile and careless look like a mask, and sat sober and silent, looking down at the board; while the keen, cold speculation that had dwelt in the doctor's eyes all day melted away into soft depths of feeling, and his voice trembled slightly when he commenced to speak.

“Miss Mabel, suppose we try and add interest to the game by putting up stakes. Say, for instance, that if I win you will wear this ring for ever.”

Mabel looked and crimsoned on the instant. It was the betrothal ring of the Thorntons—diamonds in an antique setting, with their motto, “Fidelis,” graved on the gold. His eyes were fixed full on her, questioning, yet combating also resistance on her part. Impossible now to assume coldness; her first look had betrayed her; more impossible to meet his eyes. He had made the first move, and was waiting for her.

“And how if you lose?” she asked, with a faint hope of turning the affair into a jest.

“I shall not lose.”

Now, if the floor would but have had bowels of compassion, and opened to receive her, or if an accommodating fairy godmother had only been on hand to whisk her up the chimney, for he was pitiless! He would smile his triumph into her very eyes, the eyes that had kept him at such cool distance all summer. Not Zenobia chained to the Roman’s wheels chafed more fiercely. With heart and soul she vowed to herself that he should not win. She was no contemptible player, and she bent all her energies on the game, but she was flurried, and her opponent cool and determined; and so at last her heart gave a sudden quivering throb and was still, and even Thornton’s steady face gleamed and quivered as he said under his breath, “Check-mate.”

Some one parted the curtains, and bright golden hair and pink cheeks showed themselves in the opening. Del Cameron came to look after them.

“Who wins? What an age you have been!”

Mabel looked in dismay, but the tell-tale ring was gone, and the next moment half the chessmen were swept off by a careless move of the doctor's. On one knee he bent to recover them, and Mabel felt her hand seized under the table and pressed to a mustached lip, as the cold circle slipped on her finger. Emblem of what? She dared not think of it, but slipped away, and left the window to Del and Thornton.

The twilight was almost over, the drawing-room already lighted; and catching a gleam from one of the lamps, the thing on her finger sparkled as if flashing out a laugh at her. Ethel, talking with Jack Delaunay and Hesperia, saw it at once.

“How odd and how pretty! Have you ever worn that ring before, Belle? I have never seen it.”

Mabel's cheeks grew warm again. Hesperia smiled benevolently. Jack Delaunay caught both blush and smile, and his face grew dark.

“My memory is better than yours, Miss Ethel,” he said, with a world of meaning. “I have seen it before. It is not easily forgotten.”

“It is an antique,” returned Mabel, indifferently, passing on into the hall lighted only by dim flame and cool with the damp night-breeze. Out on

the wide piazza the still night seemed hushing and brooding low over the earth like a tender mother leaning over the cradle of her youngest born. The vines hardly rustled on the trellis, and one could scarce have guessed at the neighbouring of the water but for the lights mirrored in its dark surface ; but as she looked through the branches of a larch pierced a fine quivering gleam, and streamed from behind a jagged boulder of cloud up into the dark heavens a sudden glory, flowing up in golden waves about black promontory and vapour islet, and throbbing in glancing ripples over the still water. At the moment Thornton's voice sounded behind her : " I have been looking for you. Here is your shawl."

" Oh, it is you ! { I am glad you came. I wanted to give you ' this.' "

" This" was the ring. Thornton put it gravely back.

" One moment, Mabel, till I say what I came here determined should out. All this summer you have halted between two opinions. You did not hate me absolutely, I think, but always sounded in your ears that dread ' Only a doctor, Philips ;' and if ever at any time cheek began to glow and eye to kindle, you stiffened at once again into propriety. Now it is even worse. It will be ' a private in the army,' or at best ' a romantic mad-man ;' yet I love you, Mabel ; you are in my heart to live and die for you. If you will trust me, with God's help I will make your happiness. Choose now. Keep or give back the ring. I shall know how to interpret it."

The little hand that had been extended was withdrawn, slowly, tremblingly, to cover a bowed and averted face, and then followed a hush, broken at last by Thornton: "I had forgotten in my selfishness. I have news for you."

"For me?"

"Yes. Reginald is going with me."

"As what?"

"A private."

It was too stupendous. Mabel received it by faith; take it understandingly she could not—not even when she read the two beloved names in a corner of a daily paper, on the unpretending list of a few men who are in earnest.

TRUE COURAGE.

“No, it is not at all remarkable, my dear. A man of Alan’s make is not easily content to stand idly by and watch others striving for fame without his having a share in the race or in the spoils.”

“Oh, do you think that his motive?”

“Not altogether, perhaps; he has fine traits, fine ability—Alan’s well-fitted to succeed. Pity he married so early—great pity: his wife was not of the right stamp. Hand me the grapes, dear. Where’s Gracie?”

“In the library with Alan; he came to borrow a book for his mother. I like that devotion of his: he thinks no woman in the world her equal.”

“What all sons ought to believe faithfully.”

“I wish Grace would keep some of her high-flown ideas a little in check. I am sure she is talking war with all her might to Alan, and he has been excited enough ever since he came back. Have you noticed how moody and absorbed he is?”

“That is because his mind is not fully decided. Then, too, those three months unsettled his business arrangements.”

“These grapes are very fine. Charles, do you think Alan has any idea of asking us for Gracie?”

There was a slight shrug, a half-anxious smile on the paternal visage as Mr. Redwood responded—

“How can I tell, my love? Stranger things have happened.”

“Fancy Grace a stepmother! I should not like it at all.”

“Ah, it would come home to us!” said Mr. Redwood, smiling. “No, I have no wish either to be an antiquated grandparent quite so suddenly. Besides, Gracie would grace a fortune which Alan could not give her.”

“Oh, as for that, if they loved each other——”

“The woman will out,” interrupted Mr. Redwood; “all for love, without a thought of the needful lucre.”

“Yes; I have not improved since my youthful days,” said the wife, demurely.

It was getting dusky in the luxurious parlour; “shadows from the fitful fire-light” were already dancing on the wall. With twilight comes that dreamy lingering over the past; joys and sorrows are seen through a mellow mist of indistinctness: and so sat Mr. Redwood and his wife, quite forgetful of the present, talking over old and happy days which the wife’s light allusion had recalled; forgetful, too, of the two younger people who, not far off, were quite as pleasantly employed.

The golden autumnal sunset deepening to crimson was slanting in the library windows, which, open to the ground, gave glimpses of garden paths brownly matted with fallen leaves. The faint breath of asters, purple and pink, white and yellow,

came in with the freshening air. Far off, the hills now darkening, at mid-day glowed like a bouquet.

At a door of the book-cases stood Grace, her slight, small stature looking slighter and smaller for the athlete beside her, whose brown face was intent upon a book as he listened to her rapid, forceful words. Her face was full of *verve*, life, activity; even her delicate fingers were busy, and the dark wool with its bright border was fast being fashioned into something wearable.

“Oh, Alan,” she was saying, “it makes me impatient to hear people sighing over the times! I think this a grand age, a noble era, when Good and Evil have met, like knights of old, to test the prowess of their followers. Who can doubt the final triumph? Good must win: this we all believe.”

Her companion assented silently, not caring to check her flow of thought; and she went on, her whole face lighting, her proudly curved lips enunciating every word with a clearness which was musical, like the swift fall of nuts on a still day in the woods.

“If our ancestors could have been gifted with prescience, I really think they would have been glad to know that this day was coming; not for the bitter strife, nor for the bloodshed, but for the grandeur of a people rising in their might to redeem their country from treachery and error. My ancestors, you know”—and the little pride of accent did not mar the sweet smile which rose—“were of the best blood; and as I look at Rufus, I often think my

brother a fit representative of a noble race. But had he shirked his duty at this time, had he not been so nobly eager for the fray, with so earnest a purpose, I could hardly have hidden my scorn."

Alan glanced up quickly as if stung; unconsciously Grace netted on briskly, her eyes now on her work. There was a little tinge of sarcasm in Alan's tone, as he replied—

"You then would be like the one, Grace, who, when

'Home they brought her warrior dead,
She nor swooned, nor uttered cry.'"

A shadow crept over Grace's brow, which, in animation, had kept true time to her words.

"I don't know—it is a glorious death," she said, very gently and slowly, Alan's face changing its expression as she spoke. "I should not regret that he had chosen it; but, Alan, you remember that at last—

'Like summer tempest came her tears.'"

"And even now I see a glistening drop. Dear Grace, forgive me—I was cruel; but—I don't know whether you meant it or not; yet your words seem to reflect on my actions."

The glistening drop was swept instantly away.

"I know you better, Alan. I am sure you told me that you wanted to go—that you would go."

"But——"

"There must be no *but* in the way, Alan. Don't you know that this is a recruiting station? I have induced a number of enlistments."

For all her playfulness her companion still looked serious; he began, too, to stride slowly up and down the room with the forgotten book in his hands. Grace looked admiringly at his strong, manly frame; of all her *preux chevaliers*, Alan was her chosen one for dauntless courage and resolve. She longed to see him still more her hero.

“You told me, Alan, that it would be no very difficult work for you to raise a regiment; and you know with what *élan* men would fight under the command of one so nobly fitted to lead them.”

The praise was so gently offered, with such persuasiveness, that Alan could not resist it. He stopped in his walk, and faced the winning *demoiselle*.

“Grace, do you really think all duties subservient to this of fighting for one’s country?”

“Certainly, Alan,” answered the enthusiast.

“Can you imagine nothing which demands a man’s life and honour quite as much?”

“Not at this time.”

Alan again walked the floor, speaking as he did so.

“I am so nearly of your mind, Grace, that I cannot conscientiously argue for the other side. Besides—— Oh, I *must* go! I believe, as you say, that I can have some little influence; and certainly I owe my share of toil and hardship and danger. I long for it; God knows it is not a craven spirit which has made me hesitate.”

He was roused from his moody quietude; but Grace did not quail at the fire she had evoked. More than ever she admired him. Suddenly he turned and said—

“ My motherless children, Grace, who can I leave them with? My mother is too old to be burdened with the care of them, and if I die——”

Swiftly two hands grasped his in their firm but velvet touch, and an eager face looked up at him.

“ Leave them with me, Alan.”

“ You, Grace, you?”

“ Do you doubt my ability?”

“ Are you willing to be a stepmother, Grace?”

“ Oh, Alan!”—and the hands relaxed their hold, but did not fall, for now Alan had them fast and close—“ I did not mean *that*.”

“ Of course not, Gracie; but that is what it amounts to. Do not struggle so; your fingers have a way of restlessness that is not good for them—they will be hurt. Now you must listen. You have told me my duty; let me tell you yours. I want some one to bid me go forth and win fame as well as fight bravely. I want some one to be thinking of me and praying for me while I am gone. Yes, I am just so selfish; and I want that person to be one whom I love better than any one in this world or in any other.”

“ Hush, Alan! you forget you ever had a wife.”

“ Indeed not, Grace. I remember that four years I was bound to one who loved me not so much as the poodle she petted in her arms—one who, though dead, I dare to say was not a true woman. Never let her name again come between us, Grace. Silence only can heal such painful memories. Grace, are you too proud to be a poor man’s wife?” Alan asked, softly, as she stood with eyes cast down and wrists still turning uneasily.

“No, Alan, nor—a stepmother, if in this way I can aid the good cause,” she answered, with a half smile.

“But, Grace, is your love to be the guerdon for only my soldier career?”

“I shall be so proud, Alan, if it can be.”

Only half satisfied, he drew her nearer, nearer. Nor did she shrink away timidly. The spirit of old romance and days of chivalry shone in the light of her clear eyes. His kisses fell softly on her brow, “royal with the truth,” and, as in a dream, they stood silently watching the darkening garden paths, not heeding the growing chilliness of the air, or the dead leaves which fluttered in at their feet.

“Now, mother mine, you know all. How does it please you?” said Alan, drawing his chair close to the one where sat in rather stately uprightness an old lady, who for nobility of feature matched the one beside her. But the older voice trembled, the older eyes were dimmer, and looked farther back than forward.

“Alan, dear, you know that I love Grace, and that I long to see you happy with one so well fitted to render your home all that you wish; yet the compact does not please me.”

“What compact, mother?”

“It is evident that Grace wishes you to go to the war.”

“Certainly; she spurs me on to what I most desire.”

“Have you told her how you are situated?”

A darkening shade gathered over Alan’s face as he replied, somewhat impetuously—

“Why should I? She thinks as I do—that nothing so much demands a man’s life and honour as his country.”

“Alan, ‘they also serve who only stand and wait.’”

The storm had been brooding all the afternoon; now it broke angrily; the words came like dashing, driving rain.

“Not those of brawny muscle, and each nerve strung for action—not men born to do and dare, to lead and fight and conquer. Mother, why have you so long combated me? I have no right to refuse this second call. Had the women of the Revolution your spirit, where would we have been now? Did they not urge on their sons and husbands? Look! I am a soldier, every inch of me. Military science has been my passion for years. I have influence. I can go into the ranks with twice the power of ordinary men. My example has some weight; and the cause could not be nobler. Why do you persist in opposing me?”

“Because, Alan”—and the fragile form grew more erect, the dim eye calmer, steadier than ever in its gaze upon her excited son—“because God’s hand points to a different path for you. My son, listen patiently to me. Years ago you spurned my advice, and rushed on recklessly to sorrow—rushed on to that which now is hindering you at every step. Listen. Alan, my son, God blessed you with many gifts, with health, strength, and intellect. Life began for you very auspiciously; but you remember, dear, how rashly, from one imprudence to another, beginning with your loveless marriage,

from one extravagance to another, you went blindly forward—not blindly either, but wilfully—until you were so involved that there was but one course for you to pursue, if ever your errors were to be redeemed. Nobly you paused, and determined to begin anew ; unselfishly you bowed to your burden ; and, my son, you have so far retrieved the past as to convince all that your honour is above reproach. But, Alan, all is not yet accomplished ; your debts are yet heavy ; it will take years of hard work for you to redeem your obligations ; and the penalty, though severe, is just. Wilful rashness and folly led you to assume them ; wilful determination to do your duty must rid you of them. I know you will cry out at me, but, believe me, it is *your* duty to stay at home and work. The principle is just as imperative as the country's need, though less heroic in the world's view."

"And what if all men and all mothers should think as you ?" asked Alan, whose head was bowed between his hands.

"Each must decide for himself, Alan. The time may come, the peril be so great that I should say even to you, Go ! but it has not yet ; men and treasure are pouring forth. Then, Alan, your children—God gave them to you. My life is not worth much ; do they not need you to guide them, to support and educate them ?"

There was no answer, only a smothered groan.

The mother's heart overflowed, tears streamed down her aged cheeks as she rose and drew Alan's head down on her shoulder.

“Alan, my boy, do not grieve ; God’s way is the best way always. I honour your patriotism. I share it, darling ! You have forgotten that I sent your brother, who even now may be suffering or dead.”

“Mother, I am a brute ! I don’t ask you to forgive me. I acknowledge that ambition has blinded me ; my motive was not the purest patriotism.”

“Hush, Alan ! you do yourself injustice. I know your brave, proud spirit ; but, darling, you see which way lies your path, do you not ? Even to-day a letter from your uncle speaks of a position soon at your command, in which, with your youth and energy, you may, sooner than you think, be untrammelled.”

There was utter silence. The storm had quieted. Alan’s face was stern and pale ; but as he rose to leave the room he bent for a moment over the chair which his mother had again resumed. The look and gentle caress which accompanied it assured the victory.

Grace was skimming down stairs to the blithe tripping notes of “Malbrook s’en va-t-en guerre” as Alan stalked into the hall the following morning ; but she stopped suddenly with a vivid blush as she met his dark eyes and quiet salutation. She had involuntarily expected a little more ardour from her lover ; but though they found the library unoccupied, Alan still maintained his cool gravity, not so much as offering to kiss her dainty little hand, where gleamed his own seal ring, with its crest and

motto of "*Au vrai courage, rien impossible.*" Alan broke silence, however, at once.

"Grace, I have come to release you from yesterday's promise, to ask your pardon for my rashness."

He seemed to think a quick plunge better than any slower procedure. Grace looked steadily and silently up at him, unprepared and incredulous, waiting for a fuller meaning of his words. His task was not easy; the very presence of the little Joan d'Arc, as he had often called her, made it hard for him to quell the aim which for months had been tightening its power.

"Reasons which have restrained me this long fled while in your persuasive presence yesterday, Grace, and I told you that which I ought not to have done—a share of the perils and glories of our time is not for me, nor the guerdon which you promised; since I cannot fight, I must not claim the reward."

Slowly, rather bitterly he spoke. Slowly, rather sadly she replied—

"*'Au vrai courage, rien impossible,'*" slipping off the ring as she quoted its motto. The bauble fell with a tinkle on the hearth. Alan stooped to pick it up, his eyes flashing, the veins in his temples swelling. Did she mean to taunt him? was it not enough that he was enduring the sacrifice of his great desire without this added pain?

He was hurt, angry, and proud. Swiftly reviewing the past, as his mother had done, in a few words to Grace he explained himself, she listening with downcast eyes. Hurriedly he went on, not defending himself, not arguing his case, merely

telling her what he thought she had the right to know. Then he rose, and very gracefully, with manly earnestness and feeling, thanked Grace for her willingness to share his duties, relinquishing at the same time the cherished hope which for a few short hours had made him a happy man.

It was a dark, lowering day, and the wind was rising. The library seemed to grow darker, the air chillier. Grace shivered a little. In her eyes was an absent, dreary, disappointed expression. She was looking down still, and her hands were clasped listlessly before her. Again she murmured, "*Au vrai courage, rien impossible.*" Again Alan's eyes flashed, but his voice was calm and low. Though a conqueror, he was wounded, but nothing now could make him flinch from his determination.

"What is *vrai courage*, Grace?"

She looked up at him. "I was thinking, Alan."

Her voice was so sweet and sad that the thought of her taunting him seemed an ignoble suspicion. Eager words were rising to his lips, but he paused as he saw the absent, pained expression fading from her eyes, and a clearer light dawning under the fringed lids. She was so beautiful, and he so loved her, that for one moment he longed to say, "Grace, honour, duty, life itself is at your disposal. Command what you will, I obey;" but the man in him was too strong, too vital for that.

"No," he thought, "I can give her up too. I have done it—the struggle is over; cost what it may, duty shall win."

Grace stood still with clasped hands, but the

little fingers were no longer listless; her proud little head was poised dauntlessly as she spoke—

“Yes, Alan, I was thinking over that motto; for once the man who bears it on his shield proves it in his life.”

Alan started. Had he heard aright? Was he in his sane, sober senses?

Still with the same *verve* in face and speech as on the previous day, she went on—

“Courage to deny yourself fame and honour, courage to choose the humbler duty, and courage to give up what seemed to be dear to you”—blushing exquisitely and modestly as she spoke so of herself—“that is *vrai courage*. I honour you, Alan, for possessing it as much as I do the soldier who bleeds for our country.”

Alan's voice for a moment could not find steady utterance; his stern resolve and self-denial, with the forlorn prospect of a loveless life before him, had so fixed themselves in his mind that he looked at Grace mentally as one does actually at strong sunshine after being in the dark; but her earnest admiration and glance of warm regard brought him quickly to her side.

“What, Grace, is it true? Can you, then, love me, though not your warrior hero?”

For all answer she let his arms encircle her, and buried her face in his bosom.

ALICE BANKGROVE'S SOLDIER.

THE gnarled old veteran of an apple-tree that overhung Squire Bankgrove's red-brick house was tossing its boughs of pink-streaked apples to and fro in the September sunset; the level beams looked straight into the deserted robin's nest in its mossy fork; and Alice Bankgrove stood in the doorway shading her eyes with a pretty, sun-browned hand, and looking the while, as the western light, sifting through a canopy of moving leaves, covered her with narrow lines and zigzags of tremulous gold, like a bird peeping through the gilded wires of its cage.

"Home already, boys!" she called out, as the garden gate swung on its creaking hinges, and the hazel eyes flashed a sunny welcome down the path.

Boys, indeed! The *boys* whom Miss Alice apostrophized so patronizingly were two stalwart fellows, either of whom could have picked the young lady up with one hand—handsome, olive-cheeked young giants, with the strength and symmetry of Hercules in their thews and sinews, as might have testified the shining heaps of newly-threshed grain they had left piled on the floor of the echoing, fragrant old barn under the hill!

"But why do you look so serious?" she added, the next minute. Ah, what curve of the lip, what quiver of the brow ever escaped a woman's quick eye? She read the two faces as if they had been open books.

"We have been talking, Alice," said the younger, a dark, open-browed young man of about twenty, leaning up against the doorway. "I am going to ask your father to get another hand to finish off this fall's work."

Alice stood in astonishment.

"What for, Harry? Irad hasn't been teasing you again, has he?"

Harry Moore burst into a great, mellow laugh.

"As if Irad's nonsense ever seriously annoyed me! No, Alice—the truth of the matter is, that I feel like a fool threshing wheat here, when I ought to be standing in the ranks with a musket on my shoulder, fighting for the Stars and Stripes as my grandfather fought at Lexington and Bunker Hill."

And as he spoke, his dark eyes sparkled with inward fire, and a flush came on his sun-burned cheek.

"Hear him talk," said Irad Curtis, shrugging his shoulders. "All moonshine, say I. Time enough to fight for the old flag when the old flag hasn't men enough to do its work, and sends word for Hal Moore and Irad Curtis to come along and lend a hand. Meanwhile, let every man mind his own business—that's my maxim!"

"I shall not wait for any such message," re-

turned Moore, quietly. "I mean to be off, straight-way—that is, Alice, if *you* think I'm doing right."

"I would volunteer to-morrow, if I were a man!" said Alice, instinctively clasping her hands together and drawing a deep breath. Moore's face lighted up.

"That's enough, Alice!" said he.

Irad Curtis, standing in the shadow of the old apple-tree, quietly watched the two faces beyond with half-closed, vigilant eyes and a disagreeable curve to his lip.

"Wonder what Squire Bankgrove will say to all this," was his internal comment. "If he really means to give his daughter to a farm-hand, I don't see why my chances—with a little management—are not as good as Harry Moore's. She don't exactly like me; but if Harry really is in earnest about this volunteering business, it's the most obliging thing he could do just now. Once give me a clear field, and——"

Irad Curtis set his lips closely together as he entered the wide, cool hall where Squire Bankgrove—a hale, portly personage of about fifty, with ruddy cheeks, and locks thickly sprinkled with silver—sat in his elbow-chair, dozing over the newspaper.

Harry Moore walked straight up to him and broached the subject without unnecessary circumlocution.

"Squire Bankgrove, could you make it convenient to dispense with my services on the farm?"

"Well, I don't know," said the squire, who was

a man of reflection, and seldom committed himself without first consulting his snuff-box and his red silk pocket-handkerchief. "Are you thinking of leaving me? I've no fault to find with *you*, Harry Moore!"

"Thank you, sir. But I have made up my mind now that every young man's place is in the ranks of his country's defenders. And so, sir, I shall enlist to-morrow!"

Squire Bankgrove brought down his clenched fist on the window-seat with a force that made the blackbird start in its wicker cage.

"Well said, my boy! I wish I was ten years younger, and I'd go 'long with you myself!"

"I am glad you approve it, sir."

"Approve it, Harry! I don't do nothin' else!" cried the squire, entirely heedless of the memory of Lindley Murray in his enthusiasm. "And when you come back, Harry, after you've done a *man's* duty on the battle-field—for you *will* come back"—

"Don't, father!" interposed Mrs. Bankgrove, who was wiping her spectacles very hard; "don't go temptin' Providence that way!"

"Wife," said the old man, solemnly, "he will come back! Shall not the LORD of Battles be with him? As I was sayin', Harry, when that day arrives—"

"Then, sir," said Harry, "will you consent to give me your daughter?"

He had spoken from a sudden impulse the words he would never have dared to utter under ordinary circumstances. No recalling them now, however,

and Alice blushed redder than the ruddiest hollyhock by the garden wall! Squire Bankgrove opened his eyes wide, and slowly rubbed his nose, looking the while from Alice to Harry, and back again.

“ Well, I’m free to confess I hadn’t thought o’ *that*,” said the squire. “ But, Harry Moore, you’re made o’ the right mettle, and I’ve always found you true to the back-bone. Yes; if Alice hain’t no objections, you shall have her when you come back again.”

And thus it happened that when Harry Moore went away to the wars a lock of Alice Bankgrove’s silky hair lay upon his manly heart, and stirred to the music of its strong beatings.

“ Whew-w-w !” whistled Irad Curtis, as he worked all alone in the perfumed silence of the old red barn; “ I didn’t suppose the affair would turn out precisely as it has done; but no matter—things may happen just right after all !”

And Irad Curtis was not a whit disheartened at the cool politeness with which Alice Bankgrove put aside the innumerable little courtesies he strove to render toward her all that fall—not he! There was a good deal of dogged perseverance ingrain to the nature of Irad Curtis.

The year glided away in sun and shower—blossoming roses and dreary falls of snow—and once again the harvest-moon hung like a shield of ruddy silver over the quiet old homestead, with its red barn and its cluster of gnarled apple-trees. But in the west the sun had set with wild, ensan-

guined splendour, amidst clouds whose crimson dyes seemed like a sea of blood. And Alice Bankgrove, sitting at her window, thinking of the dreadful rumours of battle that floated dimly into the country solitudes, could not bear to look at the blazing horizon, so nervous had she grown.

Suddenly a clear bugle-sound rang out amidst the dewy hollows, dying away with pathetic cadences in the woods, where a score of whip-poor-wills were moaning their sad refrain.

"There! the stage has passed by, and the mail is in!" exclaimed Alice, springing to her feet. "Papa, may I go down to the post-office?—it is only a little way!"

"It's a mile, child, and more, and the dew is falling," said the practical squire, looking up from a calculation he was making by the light of a tallow candle.

"Do let her go, father," said his wife, nudging his elbow; "don't you see how worried she feels? You was young yourself once!"

Alice scarcely waited for the permission ere she hurried away through the lonely woods, dew-dripping, and full of faint, sweet fragrance.

"No letter for a week," she murmured to herself. "Perhaps it will come to-night—*perhaps!*"

"A letter for Alice Bankgrove? No, there is no such letter," said the gray-headed old postmaster, sorting over the pile of epistles in a leisurely way that was agony to poor, impatient Alice.

"No letter! are you *sure?*" repeated the young

girl, leaning eagerly forward, with blanched cheek and throbbing heart.

"Sartin sure, Miss Alice—that is, as sure as a man can be of anything in this oncertain world. Stay, though!" he added, as Alice was turning away with a thrill of sick despair; "here are some newspapers for Jeremiah Bankgrove, *Esquare*. That's your father, I guess."

Half an hour afterwards Alice came into the sitting-room at home with slow, languid steps, and dew-drenched hair hanging carelessly about her shoulders. Irad Curtis sat by the table talking to her father. He rose and bowed.

"You have been to the post-office, Alice? Why didn't you let me go for you? I hope you have taken no cold."

"Did you get a letter, daughter?" said Mrs. Bankgrove, keenly scanning the girl's face.

"No letter," returned Alice, wearily; "here are some newspapers for you, father."

She laid them on the table, and went and sat on the broad door-stone, her cheek resting on one hand.

"No letter? that's strange!" said Irad, artfully. "Now, if *I* was off to the wars, and had a sweetheart, like somebody I know of at home, I should write every day!"

"Pity you *wasn't* off to the wars, with a sweetheart at home!" said the squire, drily; and Irad was silenced for the moment.

"Read us the news, Irad," said Mrs. Bankgrove. "The squire's eyes ain't so young as they was, and

he does make awful work readin' by candle-light."

"Yes, do, Irad," said the squire, putting his spectacles back in their case with a sigh of relief; and Irad unfolded the teeming columns of the newspaper, and began :

"Great Battle in Virginia!" he enunciated, reading very much as if the words had been printed in capitals. "List of the killed and wounded."

"Read *that*, Irad!" said the squire, leaning forward. Mrs. Bankgrove gave a quick glance toward the door, but Alice had vanished.

"It's pretty lengthy," said Irad, ruefully; "but here goes!"

Name after name he pronounced with slow, mechanical exactness, as if each were not shrined in some bleeding heart—wept over with everlasting tears!

"What!" shrieked the squire, suddenly, as *one* well-known name knelled on his ear; "not in the list of *killed*?"

He started up, pale and trembling, with a cold dew on his forehead.

"Yes, it is," said Irad, himself rather dismayed. "Company E—that's his very company; read for yourself, if you don't believe me!"

The squire's dim eyes traced the fatal syllable in the doomed list, through a thick mist of blinding tears.

"Poor Alice! it will break her heart!" he said, in a husky tone. Mrs. Bankgrove gave a piercing cry, and sprang forward just in time to catch the

sinking figure of Alice, who stood near the door white and motionless as a spectre.

Dead ! killed in battle ! She could not believe it, though she repeated the words to herself mechanically a thousand times a-day ! Dead—in the bloom of his vigorous youth, and *she* living to mourn him ! She scarce understood why people looked pityingly at her, and whispered one to another as she went by : she felt like one who walks in the mystery of a dreadful dream, and blindly trusts some day to waken from its awful shadow.

Dead ! killed in battle !

The sad December blasts were moaning through the skeleton woods ; the icicles tinkled, like tiny chimes of bells, at every rattle of the frozen boughs ; the sunsets burned in orange flame along the west, and the nights, still and starry, were full of rimy frosts that cut almost like a knife in their biting keenness. And Alice Bankgrove, leaning sadly over the fire of crackling logs, wondered what dreary snows were folding their shroud over *his* unknown grave !

“ Better go to bed, daughter ; it is past ten,” said the squire, “ and a stormy night. There’s snow in the air, or *I’m* mistaken !”

“ I will, by-and-by, father.”

Mrs. Bankgrove, wiser than her husband, quietly took up a candle, and beckoned him into the adjoining bedroom.

“ Don’t notice her, Jeremiah,” said the mother, in a low voice. “ She’ll grieve it away in time if she’s only let alone, poor child !”

"It's too consarned bad!" said the squire, the nearest approach, by the way, to profanity in which he ever indulged. "And to think of Irad Curtis comin' danglin' round to ask if I'd any objections to his comin' to see Alice Sunday nights. Objections! *I* let him know what I thought of his conduct. He wont come again in a hurry, I calculate!"

"There, there, father—hush!" said Mrs. Bankgrove, soothingly; "you'll disturb Alice."

And she closed the door as softly as if her daughter had been a sleeping infant whom she feared to arouse.

Alone, Alice sat there before the fire—alone with the ticking clock, and the bubbling drip of resin from the singing pine logs, and the wail of the tempest without, sadly pondering on the wintry blight that had come over her own young life. Almost before she knew it the old clock had chimed once and again, and the faint horn of the midnight stage, passing on its lonely way down in the hollow, floated indistinctly up to her ear—and still she mused on.

"Hallo there, inside!" bawled Jonathan Starkey, the stage-driver, "who wanted to get out opposite Squire Bankgrove's house? This is the nearest we come to't. Just over the hill, sir, and take the first road to your right—'tain't but a little way—and pitch dark at that," he added, in an undertone, as he helped out a muffled figure; "sorry I can't drive you nearer, sir; you seem to be lame."

Lame! If every bone in his body had been shattered, the knowledge that he was within sight

of Alice's home would have given him supernatural strength. How well he knew every turn of the road, even in the dense darkness of the stormy midnight—how familiarly the frozen ground answered to his footfalls!

Far out into the murky gloom streamed the ruddy brightness of that hearth-stone where she sat all alone. Could she but have known *who* was toiling to reach her through the night and tempest!

She never heard the faint, uncertain tap at the door, she never heard the click of the latch, but all of a sudden some mysterious influence bade her look up.

Great Heaven! it was her lover standing before her—pale, haggard, worn by pain and travel, but still her lover, and the next instant she lay sobbing on his breast.

“Oh, Harry, Harry Moore! They told me you were dead, but I knew it was false! I knew yet you would come back to me!”

And after he had told her of his well-nigh fatal wounds, his dreary captivity, and his final escape, she still sobbed through her tears—

“Oh, I knew, I *knew* you would come back!”

“Well, Harry, when are you going to take possession?” questioned the squire, jocosely. “You know I promised you my daughter when you came back.”

“As soon as possible, sir,” said Harry. “We have settled it all, Alice and I.”

“Wife,” said the squire, “do you remember my saying, under this very roof, more than a year ago, that I was sartin the Lord would bring Harry back to us ; and haven’t my words come true ?”

He leaned forward and kissed away the tear that sparkled like a solitary diamond on his wife’s withered cheek ; for somehow the sight of the young people’s happiness brought back his own honeymoon days.

And Irad Curtis remains a bachelor still !

THE TENNESSEE BLACKSMITH.

NEAR the cross-roads, not far from the Cumberland Mountains, stood the village forge. The smith was a sturdy man of fifty. He was respected, wherever known, for his stern integrity. He served God, and did not fear man—and, it might be safely added, nor devil either. His courage was proverbial in the neighbourhood; and it was a common remark, when wishing to pay any person a high compliment, to say, “He is as brave as old Bradley.” One night, toward the close of September, as he stood alone by the anvil plying his labours, his countenance evinced a peculiar satisfaction as he brought his hammer down with a vigorous stroke on the heated iron. While blowing the bellows he would occasionally pause and shake his head, as if communing with himself. He was evidently meditating upon something of a serious nature. It was during one of these pauses that the door was thrown open, and a pale, trembling figure staggered into the shop, and, sinking at the smith’s feet, faintly ejaculated—

“In the name of Jesus, protect me!”

As Bradley stooped to raise the prostrate form three men entered, the foremost one exclaiming—

“We’ve treed him at last! There he is—seize him!” and as he spoke he pointed at the crouching figure.

The others advanced to obey the order, but Bradley suddenly arose, seized the sledge-hammer, and brandishing it about his head as if it were a sword, exclaimed—

“Back! Touch him not: or, by the grace of God, I’ll brain ye!”

They hesitated and stepped backward, not wishing to encounter the sturdy smith, for his countenance plainly told them that he meant what he said.

“Do you give shelter to an abolitionist?” fiercely shouted the leader.

“I give shelter to a weak, defenceless man,” replied the smith.

“He is an enemy!” vociferated the leader.

“Of the devil!” ejaculated Bradley.

“He is a spy—an abolitionist hound!” exclaimed the leader, with increased vehemence; “and we must have him. So I tell you, Bradley, you had better not interfere. You know that you are already suspected, and if you insist upon sheltering him it will confirm it.”

“*Sus-pect-ed!*” Suspected of what?” exclaimed the smith, in a firm tone, riveting his gaze upon the speaker.

“Why, of adhering to the North,” was the reply.

“Adhering to the North!” ejaculated Bradley, as he cast his defiant glances at the speaker. “I adhere to no North!” he continued; “I adhere to

my country—my whole country—and will, so help me God! as long as I have breath," he added, as he brought the sledge-hammer to the ground with great force.

"You had better let us have him, Bradley, without farther trouble. You are only risking your own neck by your interference."

"Not as long as I have life to defend him," was the answer. Then, pointing toward the door, he continued, "Leave my shop!" and as he spoke he again raised the sledge-hammer.

They hesitated a moment, but the firm demeanour of the smith awed them into compliance with the order.

"You'll regret this in the morning, Bradley," said the leader as he retreated.

"Go!" was the reply of the smith, as he pointed toward the door.

Bradley followed them menacingly to the entrance of the shop, and watched them until they disappeared from sight down the road. When he turned to go back in the shop he was met by the fugitive, who, grasping his hand, exclaimed—

"Oh, how shall I ever be able to thank you, Mr. Bradley?"

"This is no time for thanks, Mr. Peters, unless it is to the Lord; you must fly the country, and that at once."

"But my wife and children?"

"Mattie and I will attend to them. But you must go to-night."

"To-night!"

"Yes. In the morning, if not sooner, they will return with a large force and carry you off, and probably hang you on the first tree. You must leave to-night."

"But how?"

"Mattie will conduct you to the rendezvous of our friends. There is a party made up who intend to cross the mountains and join the Union forces in Kentucky. They were to start to-night. They have provisions for the journey, and will gladly share with you."

At this moment a young girl entered the shop and hurriedly said—

"Father, what is the trouble to-night?" Her eye resting upon the fugitive, she approached him, and, in a sympathizing tone, continued, "Ah, Mr. Peters, has your turn come so soon?"

This was Mattie. She was a fine rosy girl, just passed her eighteenth birthday, and the sole daughter of Bradley's house and heart. She was his all—his wife had been dead five years. He turned toward her, and in a mild but firm tone said—

"Mattie, you must conduct Mr. Peters to the rendezvous immediately; then return, and we will call at the parsonage to cheer his family. Quick! No time is to be lost. The bloodhounds are upon the track. They have scented their prey, and will not rest until they have secured him. They may return much sooner than we expect. So haste, daughter, and God bless ye!"

This was not the first time that Mattie had been

called upon to perform such an office. She had safely conducted several Union men, who had been hunted from their homes and sought shelter with her father, to the place designated, from whence they made their escape across the mountains into Kentucky. Turning to the fugitive, she said—

“Come, Mr. Peters, do not stand upon ceremony, but follow me.”

She left the shop and proceeded but a short distance up the road, and then turned off in a by-path through a strip of woods, closely followed by the fugitive. A brisk walk of half an hour brought them to a small house that stood alone in a secluded spot. Here Mattie was received with a warm welcome by several men, some of whom were engaged in running bullets, while others were cleaning their rifles and fowling-pieces. The lady of the house, a hale woman of forty, was busy stuffing the wallets of the men with biscuits. She greeted Mattie very kindly. The fugitive, who was known to two or three of the party, was received in a bluff, frank spirit of kindness by all, saying that they would make him chaplain of the Tennessee Union regiment when they got to Kentucky.

When Mattie was about to return home, two of the party prepared to accompany her; but she protested, warning them of the danger, as the enemy were doubtless abroad in search of the minister. But, notwithstanding, they insisted, and accompanied her until she reached the road a short distance above her father's shop. Mattie hurried on, but was somewhat surprised, on reaching the

shop, to find it vacant. She hastened into the house, but her father was not there. As she returned to go into the shop, she thought she could hear the noise of horses' hoofs clattering down the road. She listened, but the sound soon died away. Going into the shop, she blew the fire into a blaze ; then beheld that the things were in great confusion, and that spots of blood were upon the ground. She was now convinced that her father had been seized and carried off, but not without a desperate struggle on his part.

As Mattie stood gazing at the pools of blood, a waggon, containing two persons, drove up, one of whom, an athletic young man of five-and-twenty years, got out and entered the shop.

"Good evening, Mattie! Where is your father?" he said. Then observing the strange demeanour of the girl, he continued, "Why, Mattie, what ails you? What has happened?"

The young girl's heart was too full for her tongue to give utterance, and throwing herself upon the shoulder of the young man, she sobbingly exclaimed—

"*They* have carried him off! Don't you see the blood?"

"Have they dared to lay hands upon your father? The infernal wretches!"

Mattie recovered herself sufficiently to narrate the events of the evening. When she had finished, she exclaimed—

"O that I should have lived to see the day that old Tennessee was to be thus! disgraced Here, Joe!"

At this the other person in the waggon alighted and entered the shop. He was a stalwart negro.

“Joe,” continued the young man, “you would like your freedom?”

“Well, Massa John, I wouldn’t like much to leabe you, but den I’se like to be a free man.”

“Joe, the white race have maintained their liberty by their valour. Are you willing to fight for yours? Ay! fight to the death?”

“I’se fight for yous any time, Massa John.”

“I believe you, Joc. But I have desperate work on hand to-night, and I do not want you to engage in it without a prospect of reward. If I succeed I will make you a free man. It is a matter of life and death—will you go?”

“I will, massa.”

“Then kneel down and swear before the ever-living God, that, if you falter or shrink from the danger, you may hereafter be consigned to everlasting fire!”

“I swear, massa,” said the negro, kneeling. “An’ I hope that Gor Almighty may strike me dead if I don’t go wid you through fire and water and ebery ting!”

“I am satisfied, Joe,” said his master; then turning to the young girl, who had been a mute spectator of this singular scene, he continued, “Now, Mattie, you get in the waggon, and I’ll drive down to the parsonage, and you remain there with Mrs. Peters and the children until I bring you some intelligence of your father.”

While the sturdy old blacksmith was awaiting the return of his daughter, the party that he had repulsed returned with increased numbers and demanded the minister. A fierce quarrel ensued, which resulted in their seizing the smith and carrying him off. They conveyed him to a tavern half a mile distant from the shop, and there he was arraigned before what was termed a vigilance committee. The committee met in a long room on the ground floor, dimly lighted by a lamp which stood upon a small table in front of the chairman. In about half an hour after Bradley's arrival he was placed before the chairman for examination. The old man's arms were pinioned, but nevertheless he cast a defiant look upon those around him.

"Bradley, this is a grave charge against you. What have you to say?" said the chairman.

"What authority have you to ask?" demanded the smith, fiercely eyeing his interrogator.

"The authority of the people of Tennessee," was the reply.

"I deny it."

"Your denials amount to nothing. You are accused of harbouring an abolitionist, and the penalty of that act you know is death. What have you to say to the charge?"

"I say that it is a lie, and that he who utters such charges against me is a scoundrel."

"Simpson," said the chairman to the leader of the band that had captured Bradley, and who now appeared with a large bandage about his head, to bind up a wound which was the result of a blow

from the fist of Bradley. "Simpson," continued the chairman, "what have you to say?"

The leader then stated that he had tracked the preacher to the blacksmith's shop, and that Bradley had resisted his arrest, and that upon their return he could not be found, and that the prisoner refused to give any information concerning him.

"Do you hear that, Mr. Bradley?" said the chairman.

"I do. What of it?" was the reply.

"Is it true?"

"Yes."

"Where is the preacher?"

"That is none of your business."

"Mr. Bradley, this tribunal is not to be insulted with impunity. I again demand to know where Mr. Peters is. Will you tell?"

"No."

"Mr. Bradley, it is well known that you are not only a member but an exhorter in Mr. Peters' church, and therefore some little excuse is to be made for your zeal in defending him. He is from the North, and has long been suspected, and is now accused of being an abolitionist and a dangerous man. You do not deny sheltering him, and refusing to give him up. If you persist in this you must take the consequences. I ask you for the last time if you will inform us of his whereabouts?"

"And again I answer, No!"

"Mr. Bradley, there is also another serious charge against you, and your conduct in this

instance confirms it. You are accused of giving comfort to the enemies of your country. What have you to say to that?"

"I say it is false, and that he who makes it is a villain!"

"I accuse him with being a traitor, aiding the cause of the Union," said Simpson.

"If my adherence to the Union merits for me the name of traitor, then I am proud of it. I have been for the Union—I am still for the Union—and will be for the Union as long as life lasts!"

At these words the chairman clutched a pistol that lay upon the table before him, and the bright blade of Simpson's bowie-knife glittered near Bradley's breast, but before he could make the fatal plunge a swift-winged messenger of death laid him dead at the feet of his intended victim; while at the same instant another plunged into the heart of the chairman, and he fell forward over the table, extinguishing the light and leaving all in darkness. Confusion reigned. The inmates of the room were panic-stricken. In the midst of the consternation a firm hand rested upon Bradley's shoulder; his bonds were severed, and he hurried out of the open window. He was again a free man, but was hastened forward into the woods at the back of the tavern, and through them to a road a quarter of a mile distant, then into a waggon, and driven rapidly off. In half an hour the smith made one of the party at the rendezvous that was to start at midnight across the mountains.

"John," said the smith, as he grasped the hand

of his rescuer, while his eyes glistened and a tear coursed down his furrowed cheek, "I should like to see Mattie before I go."

"You shall," was the reply.

In another hour the blacksmith clasped his daughter to his bosom.

It was an affecting scene—there, in that lone house in the wilderness, surrounded by men who had been driven from their homes for their attachment to the principles for which the patriot fathers fought and bled—the sturdy old smith, a type of the heroes of other days, pressing his daughter to his breast, while the tear coursed down his furrowed cheek. He felt that perhaps it was to be his last embrace; for his resolute heart had resolved to sacrifice his all upon the altar of his country, and he could no longer watch over the safety of his only child. Was she to be left to the mercy of the parricidal wretches who were attempting to destroy the country that had given them birth, nursed their infancy, and opened a wide field for them to display the abilities with which nature had endowed them?

"Mr. Bradley," said his rescuer, after a short pause, "as you leave the State it will be necessary, in these troublous times, for Mattie to have a protector, and I have thought that our marriage had better take place to-night."

"Well, John," he said, as he relinquished his embrace and gazed with a fond look at her who was so dear to him, "I shall not object if Mattie is willing."

“Oh! we arranged that as we came along,” replied the young man.

Mattie blushed, but said nothing.

In a short time the hunted-down minister was called upon to perform a marriage service in that lone house. It was an impressive scene. Yet no diamonds glittered upon the neck of the bride; no pearls looped up her tresses; but a pure love glowed within her heart as she gave utterance to a vow which was registered in heaven.

Bradley, soon after the ceremony, bade his daughter and her husband an affectionate farewell, and set out with his friends to join others who had been driven from their homes, and were now rallying under the old flag to fight for the Union, and, as they said, “redeem old Tennessee!”

THE GHOST AT CEDAR GLEN.

“DULL? I should think so! I never was so lonesome in my life, Sara. And it used to be so different when ‘the laddies were in town.’ It’s of no use denying it, life goes very stupidly without the laddies. We women, I for one, need their society to keep our temper on the right balance.”

“They need us quite as much,” I exclaimed, rather hastily.

“That’s just like you, Sara. You’re so tenacious of the dignity of ‘*our sex*.’ Sara,”—all the time poking the grate fire lazily, lying at her “lissom length” upon the floor—“Sara, I wonder you never put on bloomers, and went round lecturing on woman’s rights.”

I flung my ball of yarn at the speaker. It hit her dark glossy head, and disarranged a braid or two. She revenged the act by trailing the ball along for “Keeps,” the Maltese, to scamper after. And leaning back in my chair, I watched her and thought about her.

“A dark, handsome little creature,” I thought, “but inscrutable. You talk idly,” I thought. “You assume carelessness, lightness, frivolity, to cover, if not a memory which hides and hurts, a

restlessness, a fever of unquiet, born of an unsatisfied spirit. Which is it?" She was a half-way cousin of mine ; we had been correspondents all our lives, off and on, and visited each other at irregular intervals. And this present visit of mine, which had lengthened from a season into a twelvemonth, had passed, and I had not yet fathomed her—this inscrutable something still baffled me. If this doesn't give some indication of character, I don't know what does. To live in the same house with a woman, eat at the same table, read a good many of the same books, and have sundry mutual feminine interests, and yet for a year *not to find her out!*

I had only come for a season—for the winter—then I should return North again, and Jessie would go with me for the summer : that was my plan. But that summer came, with war-clouds hurrying threateningly, and breaking in heavy destruction. I urged departure, never doubting but this gay little cousin would accede. But no. She said coolly, and quite carelessly—

"I sha'n't go and leave Liz and Ned here at school, while such a rumpus is going on about their ears."

"Take them too," I suggested.

"Out of the question. You forget Uncle Rush has their responsibility. He'd be likely to let them go North now, wouldn't he? No, I must stay."

And then she burst out of her coolness, and for a moment I felt the fire of the Radeford blood.

"Stay with me, Sara—stay with me ; I shall be lonesome as death if you go."

“ You lonesome, with all the Radefords to pay cousinly devoir, and the Kingstons down the street ?”

“ You simple Sara,” she answered, “ don’t you know that I am only part Radeford ? Don’t you know that the Chester soul is within me—that it tempers, and tames, and cools, not chills, Sara, this wild Radeford fire ? Don’t you remember how I have been Aunt Miriam’s charge for the greatest half of my life ? Aunt Miriam, who is all Chester, soul and body—all Yankee, as Uncle Rush sneers. And so, perforce, don’t you see that I should consume myself and die, if left in this fiery atmosphere without a whiff of the Chester air to relieve me ? Come, stay, Sara ; I like you best of anybody.”

So I stayed. Why shouldn’t I ? I was alone in the world, with no nearer relatives than my aunts and their children. And none of these liked me “ best of anybody.”

It *was* a fiery atmosphere for me at least, who believed in human freedom, the laws of God, humanity, and the government that most nearly represented these.

It never occurred to the Radeford cousins that there was anything inscrutable in Jessie Radeford. They thought Cousin Jessie “ so amusing,” “ so droll,” “ rather wild to be sure,” and they “ wondered what she could see in that cold Sara Chester.”

But cold Sara Chester fancied *she* could see far beneath their ken, and below reserve, and wild wit, and drollery, that she could detect stinging sarcasm and sardonic scorn.

And so, as she lay there "at her lissom length," this inscrutable Jessie Radeford, and played at talking, as usual, while she played with Keeps, the cat, I thought my thoughts about her.

What was it? What set me following on that on this night? What unless, as the fire-light struck upon her face as she spoke, I imagined that there was a haggard look about her eyes?—that there were hollows in her cheeks, and that the pomegranate-bloom there was hot fever only?

I was going to follow up my thought, when she began again—

"Sara, your argument isn't sound."

"What argument? I didn't know I had argued."

"My! don't she snap us up on our words, Keeps?" Then to me directly: "Well, your assertion, Sara, that the laddies need us as much as we need them. I don't believe it. They can fight, legislate, and do quantities of things, a good deal better without us than with us. Then, even in social affairs, who ever heard of a woman from choice having a party entirely of her own sex, clubs, and all that—eh, now?"—resting on an elbow, and eyeing me triumphantly over Keeps' head.

I laughed: "Oh, that's only their bad taste, Jessie. This is a question of needs, and the bad taste doesn't spoil the fact that they need us."

Oh, ho! you wouldn't like to fight, would you, Sara? You don't think your need comes there, do you?"

I had forgotten her first presumption, and only answered the last; but her words touched the fretted

string, and I blazed a little in a passion of words which relieved me.

I told her I longed to do anything which would proclaim my belief in the law of right. As to fighting, nobody knew what the necessity might be; and I believed I should begin that target-practice again which Rick commenced teaching us at Newport two summers ago. The fire must burst out some way, for utter repression wasn't *my* forte, however it might serve others. And here I darted a keen glance at her. I might as well have looked at the Sphinx.

There she lay, trailing the ball of bright wool round and round a circle of the carpet for that frisky Keeps to spring after; and her face was about as expressionless as the cat's.

Presently she gave a little giggle, as the Maltese clutched the plaything and rolled over with it in feline merriment. Then, as if the play was out, she rose, yawned, and said—

“I've got a plan, Sara. I shall die of ennui if I stay here for the holidays, and preside at Lou Radeford's Christmas-tree, and superintend punch-bowls. So I propose a trip to the Cedars. There we'll have Christmas all to ourselves, and make merry in any fashion that would shock the Radefords. Its huge old house you know: wings, gables, and all sorts of queer places; and it's haunted too!”

“Hasn't that story died out yet?” I asked.

“Yet? No; it's revived. Since the first of the Radefords—that old wicked Sir Rushton that Aunt Rush takes such pride in—since he used to stalk

round, in old colonial times, with spurs and rapier, to the terror of the country folks, I believe the tradition has held until a few years ago, after Spiritualism appeared, when it assumed new form, and it was averred by the neighbours that lights had been seen at unusual hours, and strains of music heard. That's rather agreeable haunting, isn't it? Well, this died away, to be brought up by—who do you think? Jetson! Jetson came up from the old place the other day, declaring that he 'b'lieved the speerits were round agin,' for 'he was sure that he and Jemimy heard 'em flyin' round in the eastern gable.'

" 'Are you afraid, Jetson?' I asked.

" ' 'Fraid! Lor' bless you, no, missus! Theys wont hurt nobody. They's good speerits, I heard tell; but I let 'em have their part all to theyselves. Couldn't think of interferin', you know, with 'em. They mightn't like that.'

" You ought to have seen the old fellow's eyes roll as he said this.

" 'Well,' I said, 'you needn't interfere, Jetson; but is that what you came up to tell me?'

" 'Well, no,' he answered; 'but if I'd let Jim and Luce come down and spend Christmas 'twouldn't be so lonesome-like. You see speerits make a place dredful lonesome, 'specially nights.'

" I laughed at him, and told him 'twas nothing in the world but some boards in the east gable—had got loose, probably, and were creaking in the wind; and that old willow, you know. I declare I'll have that willow cut down! It's

made more fuss in frightening people than it's worth."

"So you consented to Jim and Luce going down?"
I broke in.

"Yes; in company with us; I knew you'd like it better than the Radeford party."

"But what will the Radefords say?"

"Say? Oh, laugh at me, perhaps sneer a little at Jessie's odd notions, and then lay it all to that cold Sara Chester."

I laughed. I was quite willing to take the odium.

"And when do we go?" I was impatient to be away.

"To-morrow, if you like."

And the children?"

"Oh, Ed and Liz are crazy over Christmas-trees yet, and they've dreamed of this one for months; besides, Uncle Rush would feel hurt at my proposing to take them. I'll have 'em down at New Year's, though. They can spare their sister until then up there with the Radefords."

So "to-morrow" it was. The day was bright and clear; and as we approached the brow of the hill which commanded a view of Cedar Glen, I thought I had never seen a more romantic spot, or one more fitted to suggest "the fairies tripping on the green," or the "mysterious ghost in pallid moonbeams flitting."

It was high noon, but the house lay half in shadow, showing glimpse of gable and wall spotted with moss and mould; tall chimneys, from two of

which issued a faint wreath of smoke, evincing that Jetson and his Jemimy were making hospitable preparations for us. It was the same picture of other days—those of my childhood visits, when I had once or twice been out to The Cedars for Christmas. The same, yet not the same. Then it was filled with gay, grand company, and up the avenue rolled many a fine carriage in place of our old-fashioned and rather dilapidated vehicle. Then, too, saddest loss of all, instead of only these two sable figures to greet us, there was a group of smiling faces, the centre of whom were those whose fading “made the hame gang drear” for those left behind.

I thought of all this as I entered. I wondered did Jessie think of it too. I turned and looked to see. There was a “far” expression in her eyes, and her lips were closed tightly, as if holding back a sigh. Then of a sudden she said to me—

“Why not—why shouldn’t I keep Christmas here at The Cedars, where my father and mother kept it? I have always wanted to since—since—but—” and here she ended a little sharply to stem a softer tide. I hated to have those seventeen Radefords here to yawn and wonder what I could see in this old barn.

Her face grew bright again in a moment, either from resolve or a natural reaction, it was hard to tell which; and we went in under the broad lintel with her gay voice sounding in gay speeches to the grinning welcome of Jetson and Jemimy.

We passed the day quickly enough—much more quickly than when in town—for there was plenty to do in going over the place, sadly changed from

the old times, yet still showing a certain care and order, which plainly implied a loving oversight; and I discovered where to attribute this, as I listened to the minute inquiries of my little cousin, and the scarcely less interested answers which that faithful old Jemimy gave.

“Truly,” I thought, “circumstances do alter cases wonderfully. In this one day I have found a trait, or a depth of feeling, in this Jessie Rade-ford, which a whole year of town life failed to betray.”

Yes, we passed the day quickly, and night found us sitting before the huge fire-place in a room that had once been used to breakfast or lunch in—presenting in its smaller size an aspect of greater comfort than the parlours.

I remember perfectly the conversation of that evening, for it proved curiously significant. And I remember how Jessie looked. Dark, slight, and picturesquely handsome, she sat on the floor—one of her favourite attitudes—presenting a decidedly foreign appearance, something half French half Italian, in a skirt of black silk, and a pointed waist of deep red velvet, with a little flowering of a rich old lace at throat and wrists. Keeps, that never-failing Keeps, was in her lap, winking and purring her satisfaction. Altogether the picture was pretty and amazingly cheerful, and I said so.

“Yes, it’s a great deal better being here than at the Rade-fords’, isn’t it?” she asked, unheeding my compliment.

“Yes, of course I like it better, but you seem to

get on well enough with the Radefords," I answered, maliciously.

She replied with her usual *persiflage*—

"I get on *well enough*—that is just it—for I get on lightly, skim the surface, you know. I like Uncle Rush—I *love* Uncle Rush," she went on, musingly: "but my cousins, they are not like him, excepting Stamford: Stamford has fine qualities, a dash and spirit, and generosity, poor fellow!" Why did she say poor fellow?

He wore a *grey uniform*, with marks of high distinction upon the shoulders! Did this strange girl, who had carried an appearance of thoughtless, childish levity, and disregard of the state of the country—did she own somewhere a feeling deep down in the hidden depths of her heart, which made her consider this young Confederate with pity for his course?

"But the rest of my cousins are not of my 'kith,' Sara," she proceeded. "They don't consider me up to their high-water mark of pride. They lay all my queer notions, vulgar notions they mean, to the Chester blood—my mother's blood." Her tone grew here more vehement. "And they said of her—*her!*—that she wasn't a lady fit to match with a Radeford, because she did not come of a race who had been lords of the soil for generation after generation. A cruel, wicked race in the past, if tradition can be relied upon. My father resented the slights to her as long as he lived; and I have that one trait of the Radefords—I do not forget."

As she ceased her tone was quiet and low, but there was fierce emphasis in it, and a glow on her cheek and fire in her eye.

“No,” I thought, “you do not forget ; and that is not the only Radeford trait that flashes out occasionally. Happily their more generous qualities fall to your share.”

We sat awhile after this in a little silence, which I broke by saying—

“Well, I think we are two adventurous damsels who deserve praise for our boldness, Jessie.”

She looked up inquiringly.

“How?”

“Why, *isn't* it rather adventurous, not to say bold, for us to take up our abode here, with only one old man and a boy for defence of the castle, in the present wild condition of the country?”

She laughed : “Oh, this is too far away. There has been no soldiery this side of the hills.”

I laughed, too, at her cool decision.

“But there may be, Jessie, any day.”

“Well, I'm not afraid. Are you?” with a half-contemptuous air.

“No. I'm not afraid, or I shouldn't have come ; but I don't think it would be particularly pleasant for us two girls to have a visit from a party of strangers, whatever the colour of their coats ;” and I glanced significantly at her.

She tossed her fingers in the air with disdain.

“Let them come—let them come. I'm not my father's daughter if I could flinch before a regiment of them, whatever the colour of their coats, as you

say, Sara. No; I think it would be fine fun—indeed I do; an adventure, sure enough. Do you mind that old ballad—

‘And twenty thousand Jacobins
Rose all at once to horse?’

And do you remember how James Barry used to repeat it?”

She got up as she said this, and, walking up and down the room, began reciting the ballad in her curious way of imitation, catching with singular fidelity the voice of which she had spoken. Then pausing before the fire, with her mouth stirring in little half smiles, her eyes filled with dreams, she said, “Oh, how pleasant those days were, Sara! How we strolled and strolled on those lovely Newport cliffs in moonlight nights, or at sunset! And how the days went in riding and bathing, and the nights in music! Ah, me! I wonder shall we ever see them again—James Barry, and Rick Edwards, and Charley Baynes, and the cliffs, and the sea?”

She ceased suddenly, and went to the window, humming over a French air that James Barry sang in those old days, and occasionally saying a word or two of the ballad in precisely his tone. All at once she cried out, in quite another voice—

“Sara, come here!”

I obeyed her.

“Look out there—there, at the edge of the hills, where the pines are.”

“What is it? I don’t see—only the little scrubby pines.”

“Only the pines! Pines don’t move like that. Look now! They are coming down. *They!* It’s a body of soldiers, Sara.”

“Well, what did I tell you?” I retorted; but I must confess that I shivered a little as I recognised the dark moving objects. Who and what were they? It might be some unorganized, lawless band, bent upon depredation. I communicated my anxieties to Jessie.

“Pooh! don’t borrow trouble, Sara. Trouble!” she repeated, between her teeth; “perhaps there is a crisis coming to the trouble.”

I had suspected all along—I was sure of it now: Jessie Radeford was hiding against her heart some secret, which that insane pride of hers denied all respite of expression.

They came riding quietly down the hill, not over half a dozen mounted men, and as quietly, but surely, approached the house, and at length entered the avenue. There was a clicking of swords, a clink of spurs, and the ring of heels upon the stones without, a murmur of voices, and then the great ponderous brass knocker rang a summons.

“Cool, upon my word!” ejaculated Jessie. “Only six of them; how do they know but it is the stronghold of their opponents? Bah! ’Tis plain they are acquaintances!” and she darted to the door, saying, “No, no, I will go; Jetson or Jim would act like fools for fright.”

In a minute more I heard her light laugh, then

a deeper-toned one in response ; and they came in together — she slightly preceding — and Harold Kingston, that ambitious young rebel, her companion. Then a lieutenant, one of the Hughes, and all the rest, picked men : “ Only part of a detachment lying on the other side of the hill,” they told us. “ Lying in wait for a suspected approach of a force of Federals lurking about the vicinity, unless we can hunt them out and surprise them,” said Captain Kingston.

Jessie’s eyes shone, and she talked in her old reckless way, humming little drum tunes and martial airs as she stood swaying before the roaring fire. What was in this incomprehensible girl’s mind I discovered sooner than I expected to.

The guests were tired, famished ; besides, a storm was coming up — and what with riding all day, they were quite content to remain where they were.

We served them with meat and drink, and Jetson found them places to sleep in that many-roomed house.

By midnight Jessie and I sat alone in the parlour we had improvised, and “ talked over ” our adventure. She was excited, but not from the mere events that had just transpired. Fearless and wild in her spirit, she would only take such events coolly and naturally. But there was some deep under-current stirred.

“ Sara,” she said, as the house grew still, “ this is not all ended. Something of greater moment is

to happen. I feel it. There is fever in my veins, and a curious expectant flutter about my heart. I know the sign. Twice I have felt this way before, and twice something *has* happened. But it was not happiness,"—and she shuddered,

Then abruptly, but with passion—"Sara, the time has come to tell you everything. Ah, Heaven! what a relief to speak *all!*" and she pressed her hand with emotion against her heart. "Sara, I have kept silence because I dared not speak before. I knew myself too well. If once I had established a mutual, confessed bond of sympathy between myself and any other being, I no longer had complete control of my actions, nor my words. To betray them would have been madness. And you—all this time—you have not known what to make of me, Sara. So flippant, so childish, so selfishly occupied in the midst of such convulsions! But I was neither flippant nor childish. Sara"—and her voice hushed—"I have thought as you thought, felt as you felt, all along. My sympathies are not with those who sleep upstairs, but with those for whom they wait and watch. You think it strange, you think it sudden. If you had known my mother well, you would not be surprised. It was the one point of difference between her and my father. She hated slavery; and as soon as I was old enough to understand the position of things, and keep my own counsel, she instilled her principles into my mind. Ah! do you wonder that I love the North, with my mother ever before me as the type of what is noblest and best there?"

She ceased, in a little passion of loss and yearning, then went on—

“ My father suspected all this, and when he died his property was found to be so arranged that we could do nothing but continue living on in the same way. We could neither release the slaves nor sell the landed property ; and when everything was settled, it turned out that we had much less of any other—of available money than we had supposed. Poor mother ! It was a great blow to her. Well, it was not long before she left it behind her.

“ It was then you began to see more of your half-way cousin. You thought me strangely reserved at the very first—when we met North, Sara. Ah, you little knew how long habit of repression had sealed my lips. Then I had one hope yet. My mother had left me this charge—if it were possible, to instil into the minds of Ned and Liz what had become her religion. If I babbled much of my feelings, I should have made this for ever impracticable, under the guardianship, as they are, of Uncle Rush. Well, so time went on, and I spent those summers at Newport—there I met another fate.” She raised her head now, and looked me steadily in the eyes, and her face burned, though her voice was so clear. “ There I met James Barry, and I loved him, Sara.”

“ Jessie !”

It was all I could say, for though deeply touched by this confession, her will kept me from further demonstration here.

“ Yes, I loved him,” she proceeded in the same

tone, "and he loved me, Sara, but he would not trust me. It was one night down there on the cliffs, and I told him that I could not leave my brother and sister for a good while yet, that I had a sort of charge for them ; and so, though I loved him, I would leave him free. Though I loved him ! I told him *that*, Sara, and it is not easy for me to speak. But he would not understand. He misinterpreted everything, and wronged me by suspicion of coquetry and higher ambition ; accused me of pride, and thanked me, all in that quiet, cool way of passionate scorn which he had, for saving his vanity too fatal a blow by my fine reasons of rejection. Because I was rich, he thought, and he was poor ; for long before he spoke I knew he hesitated, for very pride, with that feeling. My passion rose too, and I disdained a word more of explanation. To be so judged, and by him ! How dare a man ask a woman to marry him when there is anywhere in his heart the seed of such suspicion ?"

Her voice grew vehement again, and again sank to its calmer tone.

"He went away the next morning. I never saw him again. Then you came home with me. Then the war followed. And from this last event, not a day, not an hour have I been free from tormenting anxiety for him. I saw at the very first, in a Northern paper, his name among the volunteers ; and any moment——"

She stopped, covered her eyes with her hand, and set a white tooth hardly against her lip to crush

back the tide of emotion. But all at once she dropped the slight cover, her face full of that expectant look—eager, watchful, listening.

“What is it?” I asked.

“Sara, I cannot get rid of that strange feeling—I am haunted. Something unusual is going to happen. I believe I am clairvoyant. It is a trait that the Radefords used to call second-sighted; and in every third generation it appears in one of the descendants.”

I drew nearer to her, thrilled at her words. The room was full of ghostly shadows, for the fire burned low, and one dim candle was flaring itself out in a corner.

Looking about me, I saw to my relief that the heavy inside shutters were closed and barred, and over them drooped, in thick folds, the dark old damask curtains.

As I thought of this safety—hist! what was that that broke the deep stillness?

I glanced at Jessie. She had not moved a thread; it was no fold of her dress that made that sound!

And she had heard too; her lips were parted to still her respiration, her eyes expectant. Neither of us spoke or stirred.

It came again—a soft, dull sound—a footfall. Something flashed over me. I leaned forward and breathed in the lowest whisper—

“Jetson’s ghost, Jessie.”

She shook her head for silence more than for a denial; and still *waited*.

Again, distincter now than before, that footfall;

nearer yet, and—there was a hand feeling for the door-latch—the door of the room where we sat. I grasped at Jessie, but she rose, and turned to face whoever might be about to enter. I rose too, feeling strangely excited, but not fear-stricken. The next instant the groping hand had found what it had searched for. There came a cautious click—the door swung open; and upon the threshold there stood the figure of a man in some military uniform.

It was but for a second. What happened then?

I saw Jessie spring forward. I saw her seize the intruder by the wrist, and draw him into the room. I heard her exclaim, breathlessly, “James! James!”

James Barry! And how came he here?

I know not by what word or question she asked this; but I remember that hesitation which called forth her passionate reply—

“For God’s sake!—for humanity’s sake!—do not distrust me again at such an hour, James Barry!” she ejaculated, in suppressed tones. “Do you think I would betray you? Listen. There sleep upstairs Captain Kingston and five other armed men. They are but a detachment of a greater number lying in wait for a suspected force of Federals in this vicinity. I have but to raise my voice and you are their prisoner; but, instead, because I espouse the cause of the North from my heart and soul, I ask you, as one of her soldiers, to trust in me, that I may render aid—the aid that lies in my power. You are a Federal officer,

perhaps in command of this force ; let me warn you of their——”

He interrupted her with an eager movement.

“Stay !” he exclaimed. “You have espoused the Federal cause. You wish to aid it. You have now a signal opportunity. Captain Kingston and his men will see you before they depart. Engage them in conversation—a conversation which you will assist me to hear from some unsuspected covert. They will readily disclose their whereabouts, their number, their plan of attack upon us. This is the only way whereby you can aid the Federal cause which you love. Will you do it ?”

Her womanly heart sank a moment ; but presently a fire shone in her eyes. Her voice was firm and resolute.

“Yes, I will do it—for the *Federal cause, which I love !*” she emphasized.

“I should not be likely to misinterpret your motive,” he said, hastily, but more sadly this time than proudly.

Then we heard how he came there. A fugitive had given him information a few days before of the proximity of the enemy ; had told him of the haunted house—as Cedar Glen was known in that region—as a guide-post to the neighbourhood. Captain Barry had seized upon this as a fortunate circumstance, and upon several occasions had made that uncanny “east wing,” which the negro had fully described, a hiding-place and a point of observation. Knowing the house to be occupied for a long time, only in some remote kitchen corner,

by two old domestics, he had sometimes taken a pleasure in exploring the strange mysteries of the ancient apartments.

He hoped Miss Radeford would pardon the liberty ; and even then the love that tore and rent this proud heart burst out in the bitter grace of his manner and his voice, as he bowed his stately head before her.

But Jessie felt only the irony ; and, with a shade of wrong upon her face, she turned to the subject of his concealment.

There was an old mirror of polished steel, ornamented with deep framings of dark wood, which reached from the ceiling to the quaint table standing under it. Behind this a panel-door slid, and communicated with a press that had once been used, but was now empty.

“Quite a Castle of Otranto,” remarked Captain Barry, as he surveyed this refuge, hidden only for convenience sake.

And his voice had the old music in it now, in its half-jesting tone—the old music, that brought those summer days, the cliffs, and the sea so vividly to view. I did not wonder that Jessie trembled as she heard.

The night, by this time, had worn on far toward morning. In a short time the early breakfast, at which we were to play such strange parts, would summon the guests from their slumbers.

As we turned to leave the room to prepare ourselves in something more fitting for breakfast than our evening silks, Captain Barry, too, turned. A

change had come over his face ; its hardness had vanished ; and he held out his hand, with these words—

“ Miss Radeford, before you go, let me say how much I appreciate the true spirit and courage that enables you to do this. Let me say that I no longer distrust you ; that the woman who, under these circumstances, can prove such loyalty and faith, wins for herself all faith in the best, purest of motives, however she may act. In looking back upon the past now, I can, in simple justice, only consider myself unfortunate in not awakening the same emotions that I felt myself.”

I was glad that he had done her even partial justice at last ; and as I saw them part, she never giving sign of her suffering, I followed her up the stairs to our room, resolved what I would do. *They should never part thus.*

But, as we stood in the chamber, I could see that her spirits had risen by his words. She stood there arraying herself in her bright merino morning-gown, a flush of excitement on her cheek, a kindling fire in her eyes.

“ I feel like a Frenchwoman,” she said ; “ a Frenchwoman in the days of Richelieu. I hope I may be as wise and far-seeing as they were.”

I never doubted her capacity, I told her ; and then I stole away. I was cold, I explained to her ; and as I had finished dressing first, I would not wait for her.

I went straight back to the parlour, where Captain Barry was waiting, and before I left the

room again he knew how he had misunderstood. He knew for what noble charge, what sacred responsibility, she had *left him free*. The strong fellow actually groaned at his injustice.

"Will she ever forgive me?" he exclaimed, huskily.

And he was for having me beseech her to come to him at once; but I showed him how much wiser it would be to wait until she had performed the part which had been assigned to her for the interview that was coming—wiser not to startle her with any fresh surprises.

A while later, in that same room, gracious, graceful, and piquante, a slim, dark girl presided at a wide and well-supplied table.

The hand that poured the coffee was steady; the voice that asked those marvellously well-chosen questions, or laughed in response to some bright sally, was clear, firm, and even gay; not a note rang falsely. And the manner had its accustomed nonchalance, its careless, even play, from the low chiding of that lazy, blundering Jim, who waited upon us, to the coquettish glance at the *steel mirror*, which reflected a knot of ribbon awry that her dexterous touch brought into order.

It was marvellous, this cool control, this matchless ease, with such a secret under all.

I, too, thought of Frenchwomen as I saw her now; dark, fascinating, distracting women, who had sat at the table of princes, with gay smiles and brilliant jests, while beneath their silken bodices throbbed hearts that held the secrets of a kingdom.

To me the moments seemed leaden-weighted. To her who sat opposite me time appeared to have lost its value. Her spirits actually rose as the seconds ticked audibly past from the old clock upon the mantel. It was the fine sense of the diplomatist when he sees the success of his finesse. Once I feared that this subtle elation might overdo the nice point of success. Vain fear! To the last, to the very end, when at the door she stood nodding and smiling adieu, it was the same careless, thoughtless gaiety; and as they rode down the avenue she leaned against the doorway, beating a little foot upon the stone, and humming a little tune, while she gazed across the hills.

But when the last rider disappeared, like a mask all gaiety, all childish thoughtlessness fell from her face, as she turned to re-enter the room where another interview awaited her.

For myself, I fled to my chamber. That interview was not for me.

Later a voice, her voice, called me—

“Sara, come down!”

I went, and I saw at once that I had done wisely in my revelation. There was peace between them, and love and faith which no more doubts would ever shake.

There was a soft light in Jessie's eyes as she said simply—

“Captain Barry is going, Sara, and he wishes to bid you good-bye.”

“To bid you good-bye, and God bless you, Sara Chester!”

I knew what he meant. I had done wisely.

Then in the next moment he had kissed us both—her last, holding her in lingering arms, and saying—

“I will wait for you all my life, if need be, Jessie.”

And then he was gone.

But they had not to wait so long. There was a crisis coming indeed. Neither of us felt it. She was wrapped in the present. I was dulled by the past excitement from any hope or foreboding. That night she sat gazing dreamily from the window, when I saw her face whiten. She called me to look.

A fierce rider was coming at headlong speed down the western range of hills.

What did it mean? She thought of *him*. I could have counted the strokes of her heart as those hoofs rang on the road and nearer up the avenue. We neither of us looked now until he stood before us.

A messenger from the Radefords. I breathed easier.

But something had happened. She saw it in the man's bearing. Ah, there was a letter. She seized it, tore it open. A grave looked passed into her face, but it chased all horror away. It was solemn news, but not what she feared. I took the sheet from her hand and read it. “Uncle Rush” was dead. A sudden but easy death—one of those swift spasms of the heart which stop its beat for ever.

It was all a whirl of excitement following this. We went up to town, and there, amidst preparations for the funeral, came tidings of the capture of Captain Kingston and a detachment of the —ths by a force of Federals.

Thank Heaven, *that* was safely over !

Then, at the last, that crowning fate. Those children for whom she had sacrificed so much were left without further prevision of guardianship. To their grateful sister fell the welcome charge.

What was to keep us now in this land of bondage ? Nothing but rashness, and we were not rash : we had learned too long the lesson of caution for that.

And one day we found ourselves in far New England—in free New England, for which we had yearned.

And later still, on another day, there was a happy reunion. The ghost of Cedar Glen appeared to us, not in surprise, as on that strange night, but heralded by joyful letters.

And again I heard a voice full of manly emotion say, “ God bless you, Sara Chester ! ” And I pray God’s blessing upon them—upon James Barry and his wife Jessie—and to all men and women who believe in the cause of humanity.

THE ROSE AND RING.

A ROSE and a ring!—there they were, lying in her lap. A half-blown rose, with the faintest blush on its petals, and a massive ring dangling from its stem, bearing the only infinitesimal initials, H. L. They were real enough; they didn't vanish into thin air; but how to account for them?

Lillian knitted her smoothly-arched brows and tried to think. She had been sitting there in the bow-window quite alone—nothing stirring in the long parlour and wide hall but a breeze that, rustling in through the open leaves of the window, swelled out the long curtains like sails, and carried off the stupid paper that she was trying to read. She had intended to go after it, of course; but it had floated over by one of the tall Parian vases, such a weary distance—between two problematical little chairs, past a gilt stand and a music rack, and across the Persian rug. She had positively a mind to ring the bell, and then she couldn't decide if it were not more trouble after all. Meanwhile her feet were resting comfortably on one of those fat little round cushions that people are always tumbling over in parlours; her pretty head rested just

in the luxurious hollow of the fauteuil, and it was such a drowsy, murmuring day. And spite of herself, the long lashes dropped softly over the brown eyes, and opened virtuously again, and fell once more on the fair, round cheek, and rested there. Senses had dulled, thought began to entangle itself in the labyrinth of phantasms and nonsense that lead to sleep-land, when had occurred the inexplicable part of the affair. There had been neither footstep nor rustle, yet somehow had lighted on her lips a kiss, and springing up from her fauteuil, not yet quite awake, rolled from her lap to the floor, with a slight metallic chink, the rose and ring.

She looked down the parlours, but only a spirit could have traversed their long stretch so soundlessly, and vanished without trace of any kind. She looked without: there were faintly-waving boughs and leaves, sunshine falling—checkered patches—on broad lawns and brown gnarled boles. She heard a bird singing loud and clear in the cool heart of a tree; the faint creak and strain of the *Sallie*, her uncle's sloop, as it rose and fell on the lake-like river, her sails showing partially through the trees; the under-toned talk of two or three of her crew lounging near in their rough sailor's dress: that was all—and yet that was Harry Lidek's ring—the one he had promised her to wear till they should meet again—Harry Lidek! who must be at that moment hundreds of miles away; who could not travel one foot on their soil without arrest and imprisonment; whom, in short, not even

madness itself, but only art-magic, could have brought there to her uncle's plantation.

So absorbed was she that she never even heard the smart click of her cousin Nathalie's slippers on the polished floor till she was close upon her.

"What on earth are you thinking of, Lillian? That face might do for the Secretary of War, or our poor President himself."

"Thinking of? Oh, nothing. I was dozing, I believe;" and with a guilty start and flush Lillian slipped the rose and ring into her bosom.

"Dozing! No wonder; you have been trying to read that paper, which, though the thing seems impossible, grows more stupid every day. Now I can tell you what is in it as if I had read it (which I haven't). There was the ferocious leader on the Yankees, stating that they were cowards, besotted and incapable, and only making us wonder that our old ladies don't go out and drive them off with broomsticks; there is the other leader, proving that our Government is made up of imbeciles, equalled only by the people who suffer them to govern. There is a letter about the valour of the regiment that stormed and carried a Federal hen-coop; and a paragraph about our home-spun dresses, the beauty and virtues of Southern women, ending by comparing us to those Roman and Spartan frights. Now *isn't* that the way it reads?"

"Yes—that is, I believe so," answered Lillian, who had scarcely heard at all.

"See here, Lilly! I want to talk to you." And down went Nathalie, regardless of her organdie

flounces, beside her cousin. "I am boiling over with treason. If that dear, handsome Beauregard only knew what is in my heart, he would have me shot for an example. I am positively pining for Newport. I would give my stone cameos for a good old-fashioned redowa with some of the enemies of my country that I could mention—Harry Lidek or Max Grainger, for instance. (Apropos of Harry, I saw his name in a Northern paper; he is a lieutenant in the Federal navy.) And, my dear, if our Revolutionary grandmothers dressed like dowdies, it doesn't console me for Le Bon Ton and Demorest in the least. All my dresses are last year's fashion, and I am sure they have something twice as pretty as Stewart's. Then I so want to hear from the girls—La Baracole, Belle Bayadere, and the rest. And as for a good, earnest, downright flirtation, I have scarcely had one since they fired on Sumter. All the men now are so fearfully serious; want you to marry them before they go—which, of course, isn't to be thought of. I did hope to keep in practice with Eustace; but since he chooses to be so sweet on you—oh! there is Hercules and his white apron, sign indisputable of dinner! My dear, don't you mean to dress?"

Ludlow tells us that even at the height of the hasheesh delirium, some mysterious principle within him sat apart reasoning on his vagaries and keeping guard over the proprieties. So with Lillian.

The enforced calm and resignation that had so long been hers was broken up; the premonition of some coming crisis was strong upon her; her heart

throbbled painfully ; nervous shudderings thrilled her through. What is this ? Where is he ? she asked herself again and again, till she grew half afraid that she had spoken the words aloud ; and, as she stood before her dressing-table, peered sharply through the veil of her long hair to see if she could read anything like surprise or distrust on her cousin's face. But Nathalie sat idly playing with one of the crystal bottles, humming to herself snatches of merry little songs. Oh, inscrutable human heart ! Here were two girls cradled together, having each other's looks and words by heart, and one was passing through such a fierce agony of doubt and fear as seemed like the bitterness of death itself, while outwardly calm, combing back her long hair, and fastening her little collar and its knot of gay ribbon, very much as she might have done on any other of the three hundred and sixty-five days of the year. The other sat careless and unconscious, running on in her usual flippant way about some of their neighbours who had just driven up.

“ Mrs. Ogleby, Lillian ; coming to dine, too. I know by that little box. She always carries her dress cap in that. My dear, did you ever see such a cheery old lady ? I often catch myself wondering for what she could possibly have been born. I asked mamma once if she was ever young, and you should have heard her. ‘ Yes, Nathalie, and one of the belles of the county.’ But I really don't believe it. I am sure I shall never be like that. Lillian, why don't you say something ? Come here

and look at Miss Clara getting out of the carriage—quick! Were there ever such ankles! We shall have two courses at dinner not set down in the bill of fare—genealogy and philosophy—sure to resemble each other in the one quality of being unbearably tiresome.”

Ill-natured, weary talk! It jarred on Lillian even more than the rapturous salutation of the two ladies in question, who made a “set” at the two cousins in the orthodox feminine fashion the moment that they entered the drawing-room. That over, advanced Captain Danby—the “Eustace” referred to—wearing his uniform and a becoming pallor—result of a severe wound received at Bull Run.

Nathalie gave him two fingers and a saucy nod. Lillian did not look up, only suffered her hand to lie passively in his for an instant, and then withdrew it. Behind him followed Nathalie’s father, like, as the irreverent little beauty whispered Lillian, “a small tug puffing along with a large tow in its wake;” the tow consisting, in this instance, of a bronzed, athletic young man in sailor’s dress, and as shy as a girl.

“Captain Ward, of the *Sullie*,” said Dr. Carrington, presenting him. “Treat him well, girls; he is a hero. He volunteered to bring the sloop here, and ran the gauntlet of the Federal vessels when Captain Brown was afraid to come. There goes dinner. Lillian, take the captain’s arm.”

Lillian bowed, murmured something to vacant space, and rested the tips of two white fingers on the awkwardly proffered arm with a reluctance

that was probably equal parts of hauteur and indifference ; and yet he was not so ill-looking, this lumbering hero. If he could have solved the problem of his remarkably well-shaped hands and feet ; if he had been a little less gipsy-like in complexion, and ursine as to the matter of hair ; if his clothes could even have been induced to do anything but hang on him, he might have been superb. Eyes of that clear blue that so often deepens into black, and is always shaded by long dark lashes ; a mouth at once sweet and determined ; clear-cut features, broad shoulders, deep chest, and well-shaped limbs, were not altogether amiss, even in the captain of the *Sallie*, thought Nathalie, for Lillian had forgotten to look at him.

Mrs. Ogleby fastened on him at once.

“Ward—Ward ; are you any relation to the Wards of Raleigh ? Their great grandmother was a Miss Price—Belle Price, sister of the——”

“Oh, mother !” interrupted Clara ; “please don’t set Captain Ward climbing his family-tree before dinner, at least. Get him to tell us something about those dreadful Yankees, and whether they are coming here or not.”

“Little danger, Miss Clara,” said the doctor, shortly. “We’ll give them enough to do at home. Their young men will have other business besides promenading Broadway, I reckon.”

Nathalie sighed.

“But it is hard, after all. Think of it. Eustace met Harry Lidek on some of their expeditions, and Harry struck up a Yankee bayonet levelled at

Eustace's breast. That was like generous, saucy Hal. And think, too, of the Graingers. It don't seem as if they could be our enemies."

"Enemies!" echoed her father. "Nathalie, I loved Harry Lidek; but if he stood here now, may God do so to me, and more also, if I would not hang him on the nearest tree! He is a double traitor. He was born South."

Waves of colour surged up in Lillian's face, and a sudden flame glowed in her soft eyes. The hand that rested on the young sailor's arm was slightly pressed.

"Does Lillian indorse that?" was asked, in a very low but distinct voice, close in her ear.

She looked up in utter amazement, and as she met the singular glance fastened on her face sudden faintness came upon her. She clung now to the despised arm.

"Because," he went on, "I see that you wear a rose and ring."

Lillian began to tremble violently. Her ashy lips parted, but gave forth no sound.

"What is the matter?" asked Eustace, bending on her a look that was almost a frown. "Are you ill?"

"No; it is nothing," gasped Lillian.

"Oh, I am really glad to hear it, though 'nothing' certainly affects you very strangely. Do you know I almost thought that your companion had been saying something to agitate you."

Lillian made no answer. Indeed, she seemed incapable of speaking, and sat almost like a statue

through all the chattering, and the clatter, and the courses, the monotonous talk of Mrs. Ogleby, and the maddening truisms of her daughter. It really seemed to her that Mrs. Carrington never would give the signal to rise; and when at last it came, as her strange companion again proffered his arm, with his other hand he seized and held her little fingers in his for an instant. Lillian shrank back.

"In the name of God, who are you?" she said under her breath, but with terrible earnestness.

The young man glanced around them. Eustace was lingering under the arch of the door evidently watching them.

"Captain Ward of the *Sallie*; at your service, Miss," he answered, coldly.

There was a sharp pang at Lillian's heart. Doubt, terror, disappointment must out in some way. She pulled away her arm and ran out at a side-door, first whispering to Nathalie—

"Let no one come to look for me. I am sick, and want to be alone a little while."

Eustace saw her go, and would have followed, but was held fast by the inexorable Clara.

"Now, Captain Danby, don't you see that it is a more philosophical and philanthropic view? Consider Mr. Jones simply as a cross-grained, selfish, snappish, snobbish fact, and he becomes disgusting; but say to yourself I imagine that there is a Jones, but how do I know that he is not the creation of my fancy? He—— But you are not following, Captain Danby."

"Oh yes, I am," groaned Eustace, who was on

THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES

CHAPTER I

The first part of the history of the United States is the history of the colonies. The colonies were first settled by Englishmen in 1607. They were at first dependent on England for their supplies and protection. But as they grew in number and power, they began to assert their independence. They demanded the right to elect their own representatives to a local assembly, and to have their laws subject to the approval of that assembly. They also demanded the right to trade with whom they pleased, and to be taxed only by their own representatives. These demands were at first met by England, but as the colonies grew more independent, England became more and more oppressive. She refused to grant them the rights they demanded, and she imposed taxes on them without their consent. This led to the American Revolution.

The American Revolution was a struggle for independence. It was fought between the colonies and Great Britain. The colonies won the war, and they became an independent nation. The new nation was called the United States of America. It was founded on the principles of liberty and justice for all.

The United States has since then grown in power and influence. It has become a leading nation in the world. It has helped to bring about peace and freedom in many other parts of the world. It has also helped to build up a better world for all people. The United States is a land of opportunity and hope. It is a land where every man has the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.



thorns, because it was not the creation of his fancy, but an uncomfortable fact, that Captain Ward had just strolled out in the direction that Lillian had taken. "Oh, I beg your pardon, then. Well, consider that Jones may not exist at all, or that the being or presence that has given rise to my fancy may be in reality benignant and amiable; don't you see how much more elevating and philosophical would be such a view?"

"Probably; yes, certainly," sighed Eustace, wishing that he dared consider Miss Clara's one hundred and fifty pounds avoirdupois as the mere creation of his fancy, and treat her accordingly.

Meanwhile, Lillian had taken refuge in a little arbour situated a mile from the house, on what was known on the plantation as the Knoll; but she had hardly thrown herself, sobbing bitterly, on the little rustic seat, when the tall form of Captain Ward parted the hedge and stood before her. She started up at once, angry and terrified, but he caught her hands.

"Lillian, my little darling, don't you really know me? Does a little paint and a wig alter me so very much?"

"Harry! Harry Lidek!" Then drawing back, "Oh, I am half afraid of you! don't touch me yet! Are you sure it is yourself? Those are your eyes, and it is your voice, but how could you come here? Oh, Harry! if it's you, don't torment me. I have suffered so much this morning, and in utter loneliness. I felt as if shut out from every human heart."

“My poor little girl! you need feel so no longer. As for my coming, that was simple enough. We captured the *Sallie* trying to run the blockade; helped ourselves to her papers, and the rig of her crew, and came down here to pick up information. That is, the others did: as for me, I confess that my chief anxiety was to see if my little Lilly would keep the promise that she made me when we parted. You can never know what a thrill I felt when, wandering about the grounds, I came on you sleeping in that dear old bow-window. I couldn't help kissing you, and then I dropped the rose and ring, thinking that you might guess that I was here.”

“I did, Harry; but it seemed so impossible, and I was so foolish, that I thought it must have been your spirit, only spirits don't leave such substantial tokens. But oh, Harry! go at once; you are so dreadfully imprudent!”

“Your promise, Lilly; you promised when I came back to go with me, be it when and where it would. Will you keep it? The *Sallie* sails at midnight; will you go with me?”

Lillian buried her face in her hands.

“I will be father, brother, sister—all to you,” pleaded the young lieutenant, softly and eagerly.

“Take courage, Lilly. Say yes.”

“Venez, ma reine, venez, ma belle,” chanted Eustace's voice among the trees.

“Quick!” urged Harry. “Speak, Lilly. Will you come?”

“Yes, if I am alive,” answered Lillian, with

sudden and strange vehemence, and breaking from his hold fled back to the house like a startled bird.

How the intervening time passed she hardly knew. People sang, talked, did various unmeaning and every-day things about her. The hours (cycles they seemed to her) dragged away, the house hushed itself at last. At midnight she slipped from her cousin's side, and began hurrying on her clothes; but every board had taken unto itself a creak, every drawer had grown mulish and refused to open, and in her agitation she knocked over a chair. On the instant Nathalie's black eyes were wide open, and her little muslin night-cap perched up over the side of the bed.

"Lillian, where are you going? What does this mean?"

"I want my salts; I left them in the library; and my head is intolerable."

"I should think so when you put on your hat and shawl, and take a bundle in your hand to look for your salts! Come back. Stop, Lillian! If you stir but one step I will alarm the house."

Lillian came back and stood by the bed, white as marble, and with dilated, flashing eyes.

"Lillian, you were going to run away."

"I am going to run away."

"What do you mean?"

"I promised to come if alive, and I will go or die." Then suddenly throwing herself on her knees, and grasping her cousin's hand, "Oh, Nathalie, my little sister, pity me! I have suffered so this

dreadful day. Harry Lidek is here ; he dined with us to-day."

Nathalie struck her hands together.

" I knew it ! I knew there was something odd about that Captain Ward."

" Nathalie, you know how long we have loved each other ; but you can never know what it has been to be separated from him, my life, my other self. When we parted before I could only guess what sorrow it would be ; but now that I have felt it, I would rather die than endure it again. Alarm the house if you choose, Nathalie. His life and mine are in your hands. You heard your father at dinner—you know whether or not I could survive him. Act as you think best."

But Nathalie's weak nature was past acting. She could do nothing but crouch on the bed and sob. Lillian bent down and kissed her.

" Good-bye, little sister ! I do not think you will betray us."

Then, lest the cry at her heart should burst out, she ran quickly out at a little door in the lower hall, of which she had stolen the key, pursued by a wretched haunting of grief and wrong, till suddenly strong arms seized and held her against a fast-beating heart.

" Bless you, my darling, for coming, and God help me to make your happiness !" whispered Harry Lidek, low in her ear, as he hurried her toward the shore.

Mr. Carrington found in the morning an open

door, a vacancy where the *Sallie* should have been, and a note on his library table, reading as follows:—

“*Dr. Carrington :*

“Dear Sir,—For your hospitality of yesterday I am obliged; still more for the kind intentions that you were good enough to express in my behalf, though far be it from me to afford you an opportunity to execute them.

“Your sloop, the *Sallie*, is our prize, and will doubtless do good service in a better cause, but I offer no apology for carrying off my little Lilly. She was promised me, as you know, long ago, and I only take what is my own. With love to Nathalie, and kind regards for Mrs. Carrington,

I remain,

“Yours respectfully,

“H. LIDEK,

“(alias Captain Ward of the *Sallie*.)”

LOVE AS A CLAIRVOYANT.

A CHILLY wind sighing through leafless boughs, rain pattering against the windows, river and sky a grey blank—such had been the day. Twilight came early, filling the little parlour at Oak Glen with shadow. Already the flower-stands were scarcely distinguishable from the sea-green curtains against which they stood; the tall Indian vases, the bookcases, the wide fauteuils, the gay pastels on the walls, looked alike but so many dim ghosts; and Barton Ethicke's weird, uncanny music seemed sounding out from shadow-land itself.

He sat, with head bent down, playing low, as if to himself—the music, evidently only the half unconscious expression of his thought, ceasing presently altogether. Little boot-heels on a sudden clicked sharply on the marble tiles without; a fresh young voice hummed “*Oh liberta gradita!*” just without the door; and then, with a swish of silken flounces, came straight towards him an airy, slender figure. Close upon him Ethel Herrick started and tossed her saucy head.

“Oh! it is you, Mr. Ethicke! I hardly knew what it could be sitting there in the dark.”

Barton's thought stood before him, and the

golden opportunity for which he had prayed so long was in his grasp. For weeks she had eluded him; always tantalizingly kind, but innocently inaccessible. Now he had her—with no elderly relatives of dull perceptions as a shelter, no child, not even a spaniel, with which to effect a diversion. Sunbeams and mist wreaths had been as easily trapped as she—and now there she was, alone with him and the shadow, shrinking, uneasy; outwardly demure; inwardly, he knew, divining his intention and plotting to defeat it.

“Ethel.”

“Mr. Ethicke.”

“Don’t call me that.”

“What then?”

“I have another name.”

“Oh! Mr. Barton Ethicke.”

“Give me my first name,” he remonstrated, with ominous meekness.

“Well then, Mr.”

With such an enemy, what was the use of firing at long range? thought Barton, and sent Patience to the right-about, threw reticence to the winds. Long repressed emotion flamed up suddenly in his face; *vi et armis* he possessed himself of the little fingers toying nervously with the ends of her sash.

Ethel recoiled, and, as Fate would have it, against a light music-stand, which, under the pressure, followed the example of certain commercial houses, and went down. The crash sounded out with melancholy distinctness, and an elderly relative crossing the hall, put in her head to see

what was the matter. There sat Ethel by the fading light, diligently reading "Idyls of the King," while Barton was guiltily gathering up the music.

"It was Mr. Ethicke," explained the little hypocrite. "He is always coming down with a crash. For some unfortunate people this world seems really only one great stumbling-block."

Virtuous indignation, polite resignation, sounded in her voice. The elderly relative hemmed, hesitated, and, like most neutrals, finding her position untenable, retired. The door had scarcely closed when Barton rose and walked over to her. As quick as he, she had tied her handkerchief on her fan, and held it up, a flag of truce, as he reached her; but he was no longer to be evaded with jests. He sat down close beside her—useless then for her to tremble and shrink away in her corner of the sofa; closer and closer he drew her, till her full scarlet lips were pressed against his, and he could feel the beating of her poor heart. She tried to cover her glowing face with her hands, but they were seized and imprisoned at once, leaving no hiding-place but on his shoulder.

"You shy little elf," he whispers, "how did you have the heart to torture me so long?"

What need to go on? It is the old story. Lovers know it by heart; pater and mater familias smile to recal it; fossil bachelors and awful maiden ladies are shocked even to think of it. Besides, more serious matters presently claimed the attention of our young couple.

Their engagement was hardly viewed with plea-

sure by Ethel's family ; for Barton Ethicke, desirable in other respects, was a Northern man, and his Union sentiments made Alabama no longer a safe residence for him.

The marriage, if marriage there was, must take place at once; the separation of Ethel from her family be immediate, perhaps final. Mother's and brother's love, political sentiment, Ethel's natural hesitation, all barred the way, only to be swept aside by Barton's indomitable energy. Monday was the day fixed; "four days more," Ethel said to herself, with flushing cheeks, as she sat watching for the click of his horse's hoofs on the gravel walk. He had been gone two days—detained in the city on business. She had expected him early in the afternoon, and now it was twilight, so a few minutes more must bring him, and her heart beat high at the very thought.

Sounded out, sharp and suddenly on the evening stillness, a horse's hurried gallop; over the little wooden bridge, along the road, in at the gate it came. She ran gleefully out on the piazza, waving her handkerchief; but the rider, who had slackened his furious pace, and was coming slowly up the avenue of oaks, was not Barton, but her brother Ralph. He looked pale and anxious, and came in without speaking, seeming scarcely to see her. She followed him to the library.

"Have you seen Barton?"

"Yes."

"Where is he? What keeps him?"

"He is—detained."

"Detained! How odd! But he sent me a message—you have a letter for me?"

"No—nothing."

He sat down as he spoke in the most shadowed part of the room. Ethel instantly drew away the curtains to let in the feeble light, and going up to him, looked searchingly in his face.

"Ralph, what is it? What is the matter?"

"Nothing."

"There is. Are you sick?"

"No, I tell you! How absurd you are!"

His tone and look were half savage, but she wound her arms about his neck, murmuring close in his ear—

"Ralph, you cannot deceive your sister. I know that something troubles you. What have you been doing? Tell me. When did I ever fail you, or betray your confidence? Trust in me once more, and perhaps I can help you. You know the mouse gnawed the lion's net."

No answer, only the closer pressure of his arm. Appalled at the silence, she bent her head back, and met the solemn, ominous pity of his eyes. All at once she began to tremble and grow white.

"Is it—is it—something has happened to Barton! He is dead—they have killed him!"

"No, but he is in prison."

"Well, why do you stop? I am calm, don't you see, perfectly calm?"

Ralph's broad chest heaved; his voice shook in spite of himself.

"My poor Ettie! shall I tell you? Have you courage to hear?"

“ Yes, yes, I tell you. All, anything, only quick ! for my heart wont beat. I think it is waiting to hear.”

All this spoken low, with white, dry lips, and a curious strained distinctness of utterance, as though each word were forced out by a mighty effort of will.

“ Ethel, it would be better if he were dead this moment with a bullet through his heart. Our boys had planned a surprise for the Federals, and how Barton got wind of it Heaven only knows, for it was kept secret, and why he must meddle with it is a still deeper mystery. He must have counted on capture and detection, for the train filled with soldiers was positively in sight as he was tearing up the track.”

“ Is that all ? The destruction of a few rails ! ”

“ All ! He might have murdered his father with more impunity. Our long-cherished and well-planned scheme was foiled ; the Federals saved incalculable loss and disaster ! His life will be the forfeit, for he is judged and condemned already, before his trial.”

“ Never ! It is monstrous !—incredible ! He shall not die ! Ralph, we must save him.”

“ Ethel, all this afternoon I have been with Judge Percy, father’s oldest friend. I have told him how near he was to us and to you. I offered myself as a hostage for his good conduct, till he could be sent North. I pleaded for imprisonment—anything but a shameful death. I even threatened.”

“ And he——”

“ Said if it were his own son he could not save him. The mob were clamouring night and day about his prison; they thirsted for his blood. It was doubtful if they would not tear him limb from limb on his way to trial. He dared not, even if he would, acquit him. There is actually no hope.”

Ethel shuddered, but made no comment, only rose quietly. Ralph held her back.

“ Where are you going ?”

“ To him.”

“ My dear child, not to-night; you cannot see him. Visitors are not allowed after this hour. Wait till to-morrow.”

“ But the night is so long and still, and I shall think——” answered Ethel, with a look of terror.

“ My poor Ettie! I will stay with you.”

“ And we shall start very early ?”

“ As early as you like.”

And with that she was forced to be content.

Says George Herbert, “ Closets are halls, and hearts are highways to God’s affections.” And all Ralph’s tender sympathy, all her desperate striving, nowise softened her fearful suffering. She paced the floor, she knelt down, she fairly grovelled at times, as if enduring acutest physical anguish. With the first ray of light she ordered the carriage, and her misery was so great that no one had the heart to oppose her. She drove straight to the prison, where she was refused admittance, as she had expected; back again she went to the house of Judge Percy. The old man wiped his spectacles,

blew his nose vigorously, and tried to look all judicial sternness.

Quoth he—

“ My dear Miss Ethel, a Roman or a Spartan maiden would have tied the noose with her own hands, were he twenty times her lover.”

But Ethel burst out with a pitiful cry—

“ Oh! Mr. Percy, I am neither Roman nor Spartan, only a poor, weak girl, and so utterly miserable! See, I will carry nothing to him. Search me if you will. I cannot help him to escape; the words that we speak will harm no one; but I must see him—I must! Do not shake your head. You will not refuse—oh! you cannot, for you are not of stone.”

And she fell down on her knees before him, and her beautiful golden hair, loosed from the comb, dropped about her like a shining veil.

The judge cleared his throat vigorously.

“ I have no sympathy with the traitor,” he said, half apologetically to Ralph, “ but for her sake here is the order for your admittance. After all, a couple of hours will do no harm.”

Ethel clutched the paper with desperate eagerness, stopped for no thanks, not even to look if Ralph were coming, but hurried back to the carriage again. To her burning impatience minutes were ages of torture. She sat leaning forward, her hand on the door, her eyes devouring the streets through which they rolled.

They were admitted. The door of Barton's cell opened.

“At length!” she said, and sprang in with a cry
He turned quickly—opened his arms wide.

“My darling!—my pet!” he said, low.

For the last time she was folded to his heart.
Oh, the unutterable bitterness of the thought!
His last kisses!—his last words to her on earth!
So precious, yet melting away like the air, to leave
her only their remembrance!

“But there is another world,” he said, softly.

“Ah! but I haven’t faith like you.”

“My darling, Christ will come to you, I am persuaded. You see my death is for the best. He might not if I had lived.”

“But, oh, Barton, to die in this way! If you had been shot in battle, or stricken by God, I must have mourned; but by the hangman’s hands!—horrible!”

“For the Union—for our country, Ethel. Is not that glorious? Could I do less than offer up my life? The meanest hireling in the ranks does that. I counted the cost beforehand. I acted deliberately. I knew that capture was almost certain, but I felt that God, who sent me knowledge of the plot in a way of which the conspirators little dream, destined me also to foil it.”

Ethel answered by mute caresses—she had no heart for words. Two hours slipped away like a dream. Ralph called her, but she clung frantically to Barton.

“Oh, I cannot, I cannot; or, if it must be, grant me annihilation! Let not one atom of my being remain to throb with this intolerable anguish!”

“Poor heart! ask rather for resignation,” he whispered; but she was past hearing—for the first time in her life she had fainted.

The mockery of a trial was over, Barton condemned, and the day of his execution fixed—the Monday that should have been his wedding-day. Ethel had left the city, because her thoughts wandered out continually, and went up one street and across another, and so on, till they came to the prison, outside of whose bars they clamoured, crying out, “that they were spirit, and it but senseless matter, and they must pass; that he was alone, perhaps despairing, and they were one with him, and must go to him—they must, they must!” till she fancied herself going mad.

The journey and alternate trances of sleep and paroxysms of agony wore out the wretched Saturday, and the Sabbath brought with it a new phase of feeling; an utter incredulity, born out of the fragrance and stillness about her. The tranquil fields, the peaceful sunshine, the very birds swaying and balancing on the slender twig near her window, what were they but nature’s contradictions of the possibility of such horror as haunted her? Surely it was some dream, and oh, how she struggled and prayed that she might wake! She knew nothing about the time, for Ralph had stopped all the clocks in the house, and possessed himself of her watch, that she might be unable to count the hours or know the moment of his last struggle; but somewhere late in the wane of the long golden day she lay down, utterly wearied in body and mind, but

with the unbelief in her coming desolation still strong upon her. There were the roses blooming in the rustic flower-stand that he had given her ; his miniature rose and fell on her bosom with every pulse of her heart. She opened the little golden case and looked at it. There was no foreshadowing of evil, no foreboding in the clear-cut face. As she closed it the ring on her third finger caught the light, and flamed out with red and violet hues. She remembered so well when he placed it there ; he was to die the death of a felon, of those loathsome degraded beings whom she hesitated to believe possessed of a common humanity with herself, he who had held her to his heart and pressed his lips on hers—monstrous ! impossible !

At last, present and future, all outward circumstances, all thoughts were lost, merged suddenly in a sense of nervous exaltation, a rapid awful thrill, as if soul and body were parting. She was not asleep, she was not dreaming, but she was with him floating on to the wild music of the *Hirten Spiele*, filled with an unearthly pleasure that was half the delicious whirling harmony, half the clasp of his loving arm. Suddenly sepulchral air chilled them through and through, and they were in his prison cell, doors fast shut, all hope gone, and again her whole soul rose up in wild rebellion ; before its revolt bars of sense went down, time and place vanished—whether in the body or out of the body she could not tell, but she *saw* a road with its iron track, showing ghostly white in the dim night, cut in two by a wide and rapid stream. The faint air

was alive with the low hum of voices, the clatter and ring of arms. Men swarmed like bees, rolling huge bales to the banks, tearing up the iron rails, prying open ropes, binding the bales together, and hurling them into the dull water. Each worked with vim, with intensity, as though he alone were the saviour of his cause. Now and then lantern gleams caught the glitter of bayonets or of an epaulet, and high above them, a dim form in the darkness floated the flag for which Barton was to die—the Stars and Stripes.

Foremost among them worked Mayne Ethicke, Barton's cousin, often enough before the bitter war of brother against brother, a guest in Ethel's father's house. If he but knew—and she struggled incredibly to speak. She would have given her life for a moment's power of speech, but voice and words were denied her. She could only look and watch. Barton died to her a hundred times while the bridge was building, and the great host passing over. To her his life seemed hanging on the stumble of every foot, each slipping of a board, whatever caused delay.

The dawn came at last, haggard and threatening. It looked in on Barton sleeping quietly, and woke him. Only a few hours now, and for him all mysteries would be unveiled; he was going fast over the little slip of time that separated him from eternity. Solemn excitement possessed him. Something that was almost triumph shone out in his face except when he remembered Ethel; but he put away the thought of her as fast as possible, lest the

gush of tenderness with which he looked at and kissed the soft hair lying on his heart might unman him.

On the cool morning air grew a murmur, coming at first with an occasional sigh and sweep of the wind, deepening, nearing, resolving itself at last into a heavy measured tramp of feet and roll of wheels. Suddenly three or four shots sounded out sharply—a rush—a sudden flurry and terror in the streets, a shout—

“The Federals are upon us! Mitchell’s advance-guard are already in the town!”

Barton heard indistinctly the tumult surging about his prison, but speculated little about it; it mattered nothing to him. The time dragged on—time that is always in such haste with criminals and dying men! On late in the day the key turned in the lock. His heart gave one mighty bound and stood still. “At last,” he said, and rose. The door opened wide, Mayne Ethicke’s arms were thrown about him,

“Barton, dear old boy, we were just in time to save you!”

And then a strong hand was laid on his shoulder, and turning he saw Ralph trying to laugh, and choking in an extraordinary manner.

“Barton, my dear fellow, I never thought before to rejoice over a Yankee triumph.”

Barton’s answer was, “Ethel?”

Far away Ethel lay in deep, stirless sleep, so like that of death that her mother, anxiously watching, bent more than once in sudden terror lest the breath

had departed. Horses' hoofs rang out on the road, came clattering up the carriage-way.

"Ethel! Ethel!" said a strangely joyful voice in the hall below.

"Is Ralph mad?" murmured Mrs. Herrick, as Ethel opened wide her violet eyes, soft and dark with the sweet mystery of a happy sleep. Some one ran lightly up the stairs—it was Barton's step, his head looked in at the open door. Mrs. Herrick recoiled and shrieked, but Ethel sprang forward with hands outstretched.

"My darling, I knew you were safe and coming back to me."

Half an hour after she said to Mayne Ethicke—

"How you worked when you were building that bridge!"

He looked surprised.

"How did you know? I told no——"

"Oh! I saw," and she recounted her vision.

"An odd dream," said Ralph, musingly.

"But it was not a dream—I saw it," insisted Ethel.

"Easily explained," laughed Barton. "Love in the old days was blind, but in this our modern progressive age he has grown clairvoyant."

HOUSE-HUNTING.

“CHARLEY!”

The voice was soft and coaxing as the twitter of a bird in May-rose thickets.

“It’s almost the 1st of May, Charley. If you only *would* look up a house somewhere! You know this is sold, and I’m sure I don’t know what we’re going to do, unless you’ll be the dearest and darlingest of brothers, and——”

Charles Rayner contracted his brows, and rumbled his brown locks in a sort of bewildered despair.

“Mary!” said he, “I’d rather charge on set bayonets any time than go house-hunting! I don’t know anything about it, and what’s more, I don’t want to! There’s no use teasing me! I *wont*!”

But what is man’s resolve weighed in the balance with woman’s will? Mary Hooper pulled out a little laced pocket-handkerchief and began to cry, and all the gigantic barricade of Lieutenant Rayner’s determination crashed down, undermined by that tiny sparkling tide of tears! Mary got her own way, as she had known beforehand she should, and Charley Rayner sallied forth in the blue

brightness of the April day with a list of "eligible residences" in his breast pocket, and a confused mass of directions fermenting in his distracted brain!

"Halt!" quoth Charley to himself. "No. 88——'To Let.' This is one of the fellows on the list! Now, Charley Rayner, charge!"

The tinkling summons of the door-bell was answered by an ancient-looking matron in curl-papers and a faded shawl.

"I believe this house is to let?"

"Yes, it is," said the dame, curiously eyeing her interlocutor from head to foot. "Want to hire it? Calculate to keep boarders? How big a family you got?"

Rayner coloured to the roots of his hair, even while he could not help laughing.

"There is some misapprehension," he said, quietly. "I am not a married man."

"Then what are you taking up folks' time lookin' at their houses for?" snarled the acidulated matron. "I know what you're after—you're a hall thief! Get along—quick—with your shoulder-straps and your airs and graces, or I'll call the police! Imposin' on a lone woman this way!"

And before Charles Rayner could open his mouth to remonstrate the hall door was slammed in his face. What a situation for a dashing young cavalry officer! To be mistaken for a "hall thief," and ignominiously turned out of doors by an old woman in curl-papers!

"Confound it all!" ejaculated Charley, the brief

sentence exploding from his wrath as a champagne cork flies upward from an effervescing bottle. "I won't be made a fool of any more. I'll go straight home and tell Mary to hunt her own houses!"

But then he remembered the babies in the nursery, and Mary's diamond-bright tears, and mentally resolved to make one more trial at least.

"No. 16! *This House to let!* Hyacinths in the windows and blue silk curtains!" he commented to himself. "Looks nice, any way! Well, a fellow can but try, so here goes!"

And he gave the bell a spasmodic pull, bracing himself, *à la* iced shower-bath, for the consequences.

"May I be allowed to look at this house?"

"Walk in, sir—I'll spake to the mistress!"

What a bright little room it was into which the serving-maid ushered Lieutenant Rayner! The windows glowing with chimes of hyacinth bells, white and blue—the canary warbling in the full tide of April sunshine, which broke around his cage and scattered itself in bright billows over the moss-green carpet—the fire high-heaped in the cozy grate, and a young lady, with brown eyes and curls, just threaded with golden gleams, sitting at work among the flowers.

"Take a seat, sir," said the young lady.

"Thank you," responded the lieutenant, awkwardly twirling his fingers, and watching the tiny steel shaft as it glanced in and out of the transparent muslin ruffling.

"That's a pretty girl," thought Charley; "what long eyelashes she has, and——"

Confusion to the lieutenant of cavalry! how was he to know that the hazel eyes should encounter his own so suddenly? He turned scarlet—but not so red as the young lady.

"I beg your pardon," he stammered.

"Excuse me," said the brown-eyed lady, as the rosy colour died out of her cheek; but I think you must be a cavalry officer."

"I am."

"In what regiment?"

"The —th."

She rose, nervously dropping her work, and clasping her tiny hands together.

"Is it possible? Then perhaps you know Allan Carver?"

"Perfectly—a tall, handsome man, with dark eyes, is he not? He was a private in my company, and——"

"And was wounded at Fredericksburg?"

"You are right."

"Oh, Allan, Allan!" murmured the girl, with quivering lips. "And can you tell me where he is now?"

"In hospital, I believe. I could easily ascertain."

"Oh! if you *could*," she faltered. "We have been in such wretched uncertainty, not knowing whether he was alive or dead. We have written again and again, but in vain."

Private Carver had been rather a favourite with Lieutenant Rayner, yet at this moment he was

beginning to feel decidedly vindictive toward him. What business had he inspiring such an interest in the breast of this brown-orbed beauty? Why couldn't he have died peaceably, like many a one better than he?

"If you could tell us how to obtain his address?" added the damsel, wistfully.

Charley began to hate Private Carver in the depths of his soul; but he answered—

"I will try, certainly; and if——"

He paused abruptly, for the door had swung open on noiseless hinges, and a sweet-faced old lady, in fluttering white cap ribbons, stood before him.

"I believe you wished to see the house, sir?"

"Mamma," interrupted the younger lady, "this gentleman is a lieutenant in Allan's company—he knows Allan."

"And he wishes he had never set eyes on the miscreant," commented Charley, internally. "Allan, indeed! Now, I wonder if they're engaged."

The old lady's face lighted up, and she began a torrent of eager interrogatories.

"Oh, sir, if you knew the relief it is to hear from my son," she concluded.

"Your *son!*" echoed Charley. "Then Private Carver is your brother?" he added, turning to the brown-eyed fairy.

"Yes—didn't I mention it?"

"Private Carver's the finest fellow in the regiment!" ejaculated Charley, flinging his cap into the air. "I beg your pardon, ma'am, but I think the house will suit."

“Will you not look at it, sir?” said the old lady, in accents of grave surprise.

“Oh, certainly—certainly,” stammered the officer, with a dim remembrance of his sister’s directions as he stumbled down the kitchen stairs. “I hope the range don’t leak, and my sister was very particular about chandeliers being included in the sub-cellar!”

“Sir?” said the old lady.

“I—I’m afraid I’m talking sad nonsense,” apologized Charley; “but you see I’m thinking what a brave fellow Private Carver was.”

They went up again—the old lady ascending matter-of-fact stairs, but Charley Rayner walking on an atmosphere of cloud and *couleur de rose*.

What absurd questions he asked, without so much as waiting to hear the answers. How anxious he was to know whether the skylight “baked well!” and if the neighbourhood was frescoed, and the parlour ceilings agreeable; whether the wine-cellars were “gilded,” and if the door-knobs could be papered and painted! And finally he returned to the room where the hyacinths were, to say—

“It’s all right—we’ll take the house, Miss Carver. And——”

“Well, sir?”

“As I’m going on to Washington next week, I shall make it my business to find out Private Carver. I will call to-morrow, if quite agreeable to you, to receive any message you may wish to charge me with.”

The rosy cheeks were stained a deeper red—the hazel eyes became softly luminous.

“Thank you—you are very kind.”

How Charley ever stumbled out of the door was a life-long problem to him; but the next thing he was conscious of, a surly individual in the street was requesting him, in no very courteous terms, “to keep his own side of the street, and not run over a fellow outright.”

“Well, Charley, what luck?” demanded little Mrs. Hooper, as she came out of the nursery with a plump baby in her arms, and a dimpled two-year-old clinging to her skirts.

“Luck! the best in the world. I’ve engaged a *splendid* house!”

“Have you? Where? Three storeys high, or four? Is it a high stoop, or an English basement?”

“I don’t remember; but——”

“What is the rent?”

“By Jove!” ejaculated Lieutenant Rayner, growing uncomfortably hot, “I never thought to ask.”

“Stationary tubs, of course, and a laundry?”

“Laundry—laundry!—I didn’t notice. I know there were some stairs, and a room with flowers in it.”

Mrs. Hooper elevated her eyebrows despairingly.

“I can go back and inquire!” said Charley, with cheerful alacrity.

And he did; but when he reported himself the second time, Mrs. Hooper gained very little substantial information on the subject.

We do not venture to chronicle the number of

errands Charley invented to "House to Let" during the solitary week of leisure that remained to him. We only know that Private Carver, slowly recovering from tedious fever in the hospital, was considerably astonished at the exceeding attentions lavished on him by Lieutenant Rayner.

It was not long before the young officer obtained another brief furlough, and came home express just as the May violets were dying under the crimson eclipse of June roses.

"Don't torture me any longer, Amy! I tell you I love you better than all the world—better than my own life! Don't be cruel, dearest. Say yes or no!"

Sweet and soft the monosyllable came—so low *you* could not have heard it amidst the warble of the canary bird and the rustle of the rose vines on the sunset piazza. But Charles Rayner would have caught the silver accents through all the crash of armies and the thunder of innumerable artillery!

"My love!—my darling!—my precious prize!"

Won for ever! But who would have imagined that Lieutenant Rayner of the —th Cavalry could have garnered so much happiness from the very unromantic and *real* business of House-Hunting?

ELSIE'S RENUNCIATION.

FATES ripen fast in these days, and all that was happiest and hardest for me is over now. Years seem to have passed since June, and yet I can count the months on the fingers of one hand. Life had always run in an even current with me ; my griefs no one could see ; noteless agonies, none the less keen because sometimes fantastic. At first the world looked awkwardly to me : I was long in harmonizing. But as I grew older, and gained confidence and occupation, a degree of happiness was mine. Perhaps if I had kept in my corner I might have crystallized into the historical, botanizing, serene specimen of ladyhood I was fast becoming at twenty-one. But Time's whirling soon placed me in the midst of the people of my little drama.

There was Morrison Deane, whom I had long known with the indifference of friendship, now to find him of kindred. He told me how long he had watched me, how he understood my undeveloped powers. I felt that out of all he knew he confided only in me. His sympathy made me proud. Slow natures sometimes kindle in a moment to silent flame ; and if I had been slowly educating myself to

the appreciation of this man, what matter? No need to dwell on it—I loved him.

Do you know the mystery? The subtle, indefinite uplifting of the whole nature, the abandonment of the first rapture, the slow and hard control of a new being. I was changed out of my own understanding. For the first time I apprehended the unutterable beauty of that attribute of Divinity. Then I first truly worshipped God.

The future lay then in mazy, shifting colours; in no day-reverie did I seek to find my fate. Girls are prone to deceive themselves, and fancy the friendship of their friend turning love-colour; but I did not falter but once, it was so easy. Aunt Felix and I had lived in our country home without a thought of change. We, too, were alone in the world, and were contented as two women ever can be. Suddenly the ancient maiden, a hundred times more youthful in her feelings than I, consented to enliven the solitude of a solemn, respectable widower, a man I should never have suspected. Then my friends took counsel on my affairs, and decided I should be buried no longer, but take up my abode henceforth with my guardian and cousin James. So the house was dismantled, all my nooks and habits invaded, and all I was to commence my new life with was packed in three great trunks before me. The only time I was ungracious to Morrison Deane was that afternoon, when he walked in, swinging his straw-hat, and looking so cool and contented as to infuriate me. "Well," he said, in a few moments, "you *are* cross. Come, take a

walk ; I have to go over the river, and—is it too far for you ? Who knows how soon, like knight and maid, we may track these old ways again !”

I picked up my hat from the floor, and we walked toward the long covered bridge that spanned the river. Leaving its hot and dusty interior, we took a road that lay across desolate meadows, gradually gaining higher ground, till the queer brown houses of Berkeley began to straggle down to us, and we found ourselves in the long, elm-shaded street—the pride of the dwellers therein. I walked on slowly until Morrison ended his errand, when we turned back again. The hour altered the scene. Soft rose and amber faded into the blue of upper heaven, and faint earth-mists began to creep from the meadows, which bore a loneliness I had never felt before. Some portion of my mood escaped me as we talked unrestrainedly.

“I dread this new uncertainty so, my nature shrinks so timorously from the life before me, that I wish I could slip quite out of it. I feel hopeless.”

“Look at the bridge,” said he, as we neared it. “Along its dark perspective friendly little lamps glitter ; there is no life without them. You should have nothing to trouble you deeply. Have you ?”

“I suppose not. There is nothing to weep for, nothing to anticipate ; nobody to regret, and nobody to whom I am anything more than Miss Oliver.”

We had entered the bridge. It was deserted. The low gurgle of the water and our lingering

footsteps were the only sounds that roused the echoes.

"Pshaw!" said Morrison, and put his arm around me—he knew he might, perhaps. "How desperate you women are when a little sad! Now, I would work off, in my calculations or rough riding, such a mood as this; but you brood over it until you are ready for a flying-leap from the parapet. Are you not *Margie* to me?"

His tone shot through me. Oh, how happy I might be! Then came the flashing thought, like the rare jewel that makes the weary diamond-seeker free.

We came out on the open road again, and I asked him if he had seen Elsie, my cousin's daughter.

"Not since she was a child," he answered. He had heard she was very pretty, but not prettier than all young ladies, he imagined.

"They are very gay there. I wonder what sort of setting you will make for yourself! Can you turn fashionist?"

"I may."

"There is only one thing that I rejoice at in this transplantation—you will be on my ground; within these past few years we have been separated more than I like. You must tell your cousin James that I am one of your pieces of property."

He lingered in the doorway, and I knew felt retrospective and a little sad, as I did, at the thought of the old place being deserted; but he said nothing but cheerful words, and bade me good-night.

Days sped, and, clasped in Elsie's arms, I felt

my real poverty—that Nature had left me giftless. Here stood one who dazzled my senses. There was nothing neutral or negative about her. All glowed with the immortal tint of loveliness. I never yet saw a perfect statue or a Titian dream of colour, or heard strains of Schubert's music, without pain that almost annulled my pleasure. Some such heart-ache possessed me as I looked at her.

“I admire your Mr. Deane,” Elsie said, after his first visit. At the second she whispered, “*Doesn't* he love music? I shall practise Mozart now, you may be sure.”

At the third she said nothing.

He had promised to spend a certain Wednesday evening with us, and Elsie offered him the bait of chocolate if he'd come to tea. She spent all the afternoon at her toilet, braiding her hair before the glass, now looping it low, now pushing it back from her face, studying effects. I knew what she was thinking of. I believed she would succeed; and when his eyes fell on her that evening, I knew she *had* succeeded.

Not many days after this he found me alone, buried in the papers.

“Put aside your politics,” said he, “I want to talk to you.”

So I laid down the broadsheet.

“We are on the thunderous eve of another revolution, it seems. Have you read this leader?”

He put it by.

“I am selfish just now, Margie, and think of nothing but my own embarrassments. I love Elsie.

You must have seen it, knowing me as well as you do. Be honest. Do you think it hopeless?"

"Everything yields to the fortunate prince," I answered. "Try."

He lifted my hand to his lips as Elsie swept in, all perfume and colour. I don't think he would have spoken just then, barely giving me time to escape, but he saw her mistaking eyes fixed on me.

It was soon over, and my merry maid sprang in, scarlet in her cheeks and fire in her eyes. I must congratulate her.

He found a moment to speak to me that night. It was easier to tell him how glad I was he was satisfied and happy.

For two months he was intensely happy, a brief absence his only misery. Sharp enough, he thought, as he loitered over his adieux in Aldrich's sweet poet fashion. As he sat in the room with her, he watched her unobserved, with that full gaze that made me fancy all the fountains of his soul completed it.

"Elsie," I began, one night after he had gone, and we sat by the open window together, "how do you love him?"

She echoed my words.

"What do you mean?"

"I know you think him nice and handsome, besides being cleverer than some men, but if he should be very poor, or some fearful thing should happen to him—if you had to wait for your wedding-day all through the freshness of your youth and his—do

you feel as if you had feeling enough to carry you over a desert of time and circumstance?"

"Why, if I love him, I love him," she answered; "I don't know about romance."

"I was not talking romance," I said.

The battle guns brought out ourselves. Morrison was true to himself. With a smile he sang the little ballad of Lovelace's, and as he ended—

"I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more,"

stooped forward and clasped her hands. She did not understand, but half read some bodeful fate in his passionate glance, my startled air.

"What is it, Morry?" chimed the silver voice.

"I am one of the President's soldiers," he answered, gravely, and changed to tender soothing; which must have proved successful, for I found Elsie studying his commission with a kind of vanity I shared.

Morrison went, and the struggle of months brought him out unscathed. When I saw him fresh, brown, and warlike my courage rose.

One hour in all that summer's patient campaign he bestowed on me. Moved out of all reserve he suddenly asked—

"Are you dying a slow death, Margie? You are working too hard for the soldiers, and giving drop by drop your blood to these needy veins."

"No," I told him, "it was new life. I had found my work." Then we talked of the war seriously, and of Elsie. He had parted from her at Saratoga.

"You will watch over her for my sake, the one dear thing I own?"

I promised, and he shook hands warmly and moved away. I looked gravely after him. Who knew the mischance another month might hold? He caught my look and came back, re-uttering his good-bye, and for the first time kissed me. When the door fairly closed, the only tears I ever shed for him felt hot, heart-wrung.

The wounded came pouring in. The gloomy lists in the paper swelled. It did not startle me when I read his name in the long, confused column. I only thought of what must be done. What could I do? I was the only one at home—I could not hurry to the battle-field. It was not my right to nurse him when he came. But when my friends wrote me he was in New Haven—that haven of good nursing and devoted care—and not a word was heard from Elsie or her accompanying papa, I took my sober old Louisa and started for Connecticut. Once I thought of the proprieties; then, "Pooh," said I, "the women are too busy to comment on me, and have I not some gray hairs?" It was a relief to feel myself borne along in the rapid train. It was night before we reached our journey's end. That night was the hardest I ever passed.

As early in the morning as I dared we walked to the hospital. At the entrance stood some young girls smiling under their round hats. Their silver chatter ceased as we entered. A few moments' delay and inquiry, and I walked slowly down the room to his bedside.

"Ah me, Morrison Deane!"

He smiled, and said, "You are here, thank God!" I was speechless; but nothing could have torn me from him after that—only Elsie.

He seemed to fail rapidly, and the physicians looked doubtfully at each other—the women sorrowfully at me. They could not bear to lose so loyal, so obedient a soul.

Truer than steel, firmer than the rock, gentle as a girl, yet fighting with a steadfast sternness, and urging on his men with a resolution that there should be no failure. That is the soldier—that was he.

After a long consultation the surgeon told him by how uncertain a thread he held on life. The amputation of his arm might save him; but in his enfeebled state it was a great risk, and yet the only hope.

A letter from Elsie lay next his heart, as he answered cheerfully, "Let it be done. I shall not die of that. She loves me!" he whispered to me. "Let me scratch a line to her before."

So I fastened down a sheet of paper to the portfolio with pins, and gave him a pencil. He had taught himself to write with his left hand, but achieved the epistle with no little difficulty.

"Much as I have longed for her," said he, while I folded it, "I am thankful she accepts my will so patiently. Not for all the comfort she could bring would I have her exposed to these scenes for an hour. If I die," turning his eyes full on my face, "she will only know she has lost me, without the

added anguish of detail, for she has not your anchored soul."

After the operation, contrary to all their fears, he began to rally; daily he grew better, till my blood began to bound again. Hour after hour as I sat and fanned him, trying to create a coolness in the heated air, his eyes met mine with undaunted courage.

"I can never fight again!" was the only desponding thing he said.

"But then you can be a tax-gatherer," the doctor suggested.

A few mornings later and this watchful attendant said—

"This is unaccountable! Captain Deane was so well yesterday that I began to think of sending him home; to-day is the weakest yet, his pulse is absolutely nothing."

"Is the arm painful?" walking to him.

"Not much," he answered. The doctor made his examinations and went away dissatisfied. I watched him lie motionless, silent, pale, only a quiet breath or weary movement showing him alive. There was no change for the better: as the days passed he sank under an invisible hand.

Then it came to pass that I said, as I leaned over him, "Shall I not send for Elsie now?"

He turned his face to the wall as he answered—
"She will not marry a cripple, Margie; she has changed her mind."

That letter, like the anchorite's cross of points, was on his breast; he gave it to me, but could I

read her renunciation? I could not see. It dropped unheeded as I put my arm over him and touched his cheek with mine. I could not help it. His enemy had struck him unarmed and unaware.

He turned his face to me.

"Is it so, poor child" said he, faintly. "Are we all wrong? Be faithful; God will set it right."

The hour came when they lowered him into the earth, and fired their volleys over him.

I wish they could have dug a grave for me, but I have to live.

RECAPTURED.

A STORY OF ST. VALENTINE'S DAY.

A SUMMER twilight under the green awning of low-branched linden-trees—clove-pinks blossoming in the garden-borders, like chalices of spice—and stars just trembling into the warm violet sky—if Clinton Audley had lived to be a hundred years old he never would have forgotten the dim indistinct beauty of the dusky landscape. No; all that happened on that summer night was branded upon his heart in lines that Death itself had no power to efface.

“Not yet, Clara; do not speak so firmly. Remember that it is my life's doom you are pronouncing. Oh, Clara! think again.”

He had led his men up to the very cannon's mouth without a thought of fear, but now he was a coward in the presence of that slender, blue-eyed girl.

“It is useless,” said Clara Mervyn, with cheek whose colour never varied, and firm, pitying eyes; “my answer would be the same did I take a whole year for deliberation. I am *very* sorry, Clinton; but——”

“Nay,” interposed Audley, with a cold, constrained voice that scarce hid the angry emotions in his heart, “do not waste your pity on me. The matter is unfortunate as far as I am concerned; but I cannot see why *you* should grieve. I have been a mad fool, that is all. Good-evening, Clara!”

He lifted his light military cap and was gone; and Clara Mervyn sat down on the rustic garden-seat and had a good cry. Surely it was not her fault that Clinton Audley was so foolish—he might have known she didn’t care for him.

While the young officer, restlessly pacing to and fro, thought of the dark-eyed soldier whose head he had supported at Manassas while the life bubbled from his breast in red surging drops—thought of his last words, “It isn’t for myself; but Mary’s heart will break when she hears of it!”—oh, why could he not have died in that boy’s stead? There was no heart to break for *him*.

“The idle dream is ended!” he said, aloud; “and now for the realities of life. We shall never meet again.”

Could he but have looked forward to the time when they two *should* meet again.

“Only my right hand, doctor? Pooh! never mind; there’s many a fellow worse off than I am!”

“A very philosophical view to take of matters,” said the surgeon, half smiling, “but at the same time an unusual one. Hold still half a minute, can’t you?”

“Well, what does it matter after all? I’ve

neither wife nor sweetheart to fret about my disfigurements."

"But I suppose you expect to come into possession of one or both of those articles some day?"

"Can't say that I do. There, I'm comfortable enough now. I say, though, doctor!"

"Well?"

"Could you persuade that fat old nurse to get a pair of shoes that squeak in a minor key? Every sick man has his trials, and mine are those calf-skin shoes. Possibly I'm nervous, but I can't help it!"

The surgeon laughed good-humouredly.

"Don't annoy yourself on that score; there will be a change of nurses to-night, and I do not think the shoe-question will trouble you further. Try to sleep awhile now!"

Clinton Audley closed his eyes, and strove to forget the sharp spasms of pain that racked his poor wounded frame, while the fire shone ruddily on the walls, faintly illumining the long rows of narrow white beds on either side, and the gray dusk blackened into night, and—

"I must have been asleep," he thought, with a sudden start, as the little clock chimed eleven; "yes, I must. But who on earth is that? Oh, the new nurse, I suppose. *She* don't wear calf-skin shoes, at all events—moves like a shadow."

For like a shadow she had glided to his bed-side.

"I think your draft was to be taken at eleven, sir," and she glanced at her written directions.

And as Clinton Audley silently extended his left hand for the slender vial, he knew that the "new

nurse" was Clara Mervyn. She recognised him at the same instant—there was a slight start, but neither spoke.

Fate had brought them together once again.

The January snows melted away from the purple Maryland hills, and February's blue heaven smiled overhead. Spring was nigh at hand, yet the lost roses had not blossomed again on Clara Mervyn's cheek.

"Don't overwork yourself, Miss Mervyn," said the kindly surgeon; "there's no earthly occasion for it. They are all doing well, except that young Audley."

The colour rushed in a scarlet torrent to Clara's cheek, then receded, leaving it cold as marble.

"Will he die, sir?"

"Die? oh no! not the least danger of his dying. What I meant to say was, that his recovery is slow. Never knew such a lagging convalescence. A fine young fellow that—very. We surgeons are commonly supposed to have no feelings, Miss Clara; but I can tell you it went to my heart to take that boy's hand off. However—but bless me, it's nearly noon. Be sure you take care of yourself, Miss Mervyn!" and away hurried Dr. Wilde, who never knew what it was to have a moment's leisure.

Clara was left alone, her head drooping on her breast. The next instant she rose and looked at her own slender right hand with a shuddering, sobbing sigh.

"Oh, if I could have given *my* useless hand to save his!" she moaned. "If I had but the right

to cheer and comfort him! Ah me! what can a woman do but endure!"

Clara was learning a hard lesson in life's saddest school—to suffer and be silent.

"Miss Mervyn!"

She started at the words. He had never called her "Clara" since their parting under the lindentrees.

"Are you very busy to-night?"

"Not particularly so; why do you ask?"

"Then come and sit beside my pillow for a little while. I feel conversational just now."

She obeyed silently.

"Are you better this evening, Lieutenant Audley?"

"I think so. The red, glorious sunset has done me good. Did you know that this was St. Valentine's eve?"

"The 13th of February—so it is!"

"Do you believe in the goodly offices of St. Valentine, Miss Mervyn? I assure you *my* faith is limitless in the patron saint of lovers!"

Clara smiled as she remembered all the time-worn "valentines" she kept under lock and key at home.

"I confess to a little superstition on the subject," she said, colouring, for she felt that Clinton's eyes were fixed on her downcast lashes.

"Very well, then; you wont consider me mawkishly sentimental if I ask you to be so kind as to act as my right hand for once."

"I should be so glad. But how——"

“ Will you write a St. Valentine’s love-letter for me ?”

“ Certainly.”

“ Stop, though. Answer me one question first, frankly and fully—do you think it would be a piece of presumptuous folly in me to ask a woman’s love to bless a maimed, useless wretch like me? Nay, do not spare my feelings; I wish to hear the *truth*.”

Clara Mervyn was silent for a moment; and when she spoke it was in a distinct, though very low tone.

“ If the woman you love be worthy of the name, you will be far dearer to her now than ever you were in the prime of health and strength.”

“ You have taken a great weight from my heart, Miss Mervyn; and now will you assume the *rôle* of amanuensis ?”

Writing a love-letter for Clinton Audley to another woman—it was a strange duty—yet Clara Mervyn went through with it with a sort of mechanical calmness, heedless of the sore heart that ached so bitterly in her breast, while every word seemed the knell of a death-warrant. It was the bitterest cup she had drunk yet—a cup that *must* be swallowed to the dregs.

“ Thank you Miss Mervyn. I wont trouble you to direct it. Ah, if I were but certain that St. Valentine would speed my suit !”

He smiled; but it would have been difficult to tell which was paler—the cheek that lay against

the pillows of the hospital pallet, or that shadowed by Clara Mervyn's brown tresses.

She gave him the folded letter, with its earnest words of pleading, and then went away to her own room; for, fortunately, the "night-watch," as it was called, had been confided to another. And only the quiet stars saw the convulsive bursts of grief that shook her frame ere at last she sobbed herself to sleep, her flushed cheek lying on her drenched hair, and the lips quivering even in her dreams.

How glorious the crimson banners of St. Valentine's dawn were draped along the sky when at length she opened her eyes, how radiantly the morning lighted up those blue, far-off hills. Unconsciously her lips formed themselves into a smile, and then—ah, *then* the old pangs of heartache came back to her!

She was nearly dressed before her eyes fell upon a tiny bunch of violets, dew-sprinkled and fragrant, that lay on her toilet table—she caught it up with an exclamation of delight, and a note fell from its blue heart—a note directed in a strange, straggling hand.

"Some hospital directions," she murmured, and smiling at Dr. Wilde's eccentricities, she unfolded the paper.

"Great Heaven! can it be possible?" she faltered, as she recognised her own handwriting. "Did he mean to ask *me* to become his wife? Oh it is too much, too much happiness!"

She clasped her hands over her eyes for a

moment, then sank to her knees beside the little white bed, half uncertain whether it was not all a dream.

Five minutes later Clinton Audley held out his left hand to the blushing little nurse who had stolen softly to his bedside.

“Well?” he asked, scanning her face smilingly.

“Oh, Clinton, I am so happy!”

And then she burst into tears; it was well that there were not many patients in the convalescent ward.

“Are you really captured, my little shy, tremulous bird?” he whispered.

“Nay,” said Clara, shaking back her curls with a spice of the old mischief, “it is you who are recaptured, brave soldier though you deem yourself!”

“And had you no suspicion of the destination of that valentine?”

“If I had known it would have spared me a great many tears. But oh, Clinton, I think I shall never shed any but happy tears again!”

With the radiant dawn of St. Valentine's day had risen the morning-star of Clara Mervyn's life and love.

WAITING.

“I AM shamed through all my being to have loved so slight a thing.”

Fanny Marvin started, shrank away, and from behind her little spangled fan looked nervously about her; but Mrs. Grundy was flirting, or she was sneering, or else she was manœuvring, or, perhaps, she was eating; at any rate, she had not heard the fierce, angry whisper. The swaying, voluptuous music was going on, the camelias near them didn't blush, or the roses pale, only the dark fire in Captain Heriot's eyes gave the lie to the conventional smile about his mouth.

John Heriot, following the impulse of the natural heart, had been idol-worshipping; had enshrined and burned incense to his new-found deity; and, like the Israelites of old, received as his wages confusion of face. It was only an additional phase of the old experience, going on ever since the unsophisticated days when altars smoked to dead, cold, and still marble: and because we make temples of heart and brain, and worship principles and passions instead, we can't afford to smile back through the misty cycles at the Olympiad; for a righteous law ordains that all worship addressed to any other

than God must be given to unworthiness. So John Heriot found it. Any one could have told him that Fanny Marvin was not purity, tenderness, womanliness—in a word, only soft eyes and voice, lovely hair and shifting colour, and a rare taste in dress. Hardly the component parts of Captain Heriot's ideal wife! Sallow, flat-chested, somewhat ungracious Esther Graham was, if he had known it, far nearer his ideal—only it is so hard to believe that deep, clear eyes do not always mirror deep, pure thoughts; and so Fanny Marvin might have been Mrs. Heriot, and John's evil genius, but for the providential circumstance of young Tandem Dashe and his half million. Captain Heriot's love endured neither rivalry nor hesitating preference. He flamed out in reproaches, quarrelled fiercely, left her finally with the bitter quotation that heads this idle story, and went back to his regiment before his furlough had half expired, very poor indeed—robbed of all trust.

One woman had deceived him, another never should. They were all alike. Faith was a myth. Loyalty and honour (feminine) a poetic fiction. A little painted bit of ivory that he had worn about on his heart he broke up with a scornful laughter that was worse than tears; two or three faint little notes he held to the flame, and watched shrivel into dust with grim satisfaction. His diamond had proved a pebble, therefore there were no diamonds.

Houses, on the average, are the exponents of those who own them; so many stone embodiments of the ruling idea, the pet idiosyncrasy (those in New

York conscientiously excepted, tents being, in the writer's opinion, the only legitimate expression of metropolitan life). The house of the widow Ellicott was very like herself. It spoke principally of the times when Guy, first of the American branch, came to Virginia, bringing the very bricks of which it was built, a young wife, a slender fortune, and a family tree, that was of course a sapling in the time of William the Conqueror. It settled solidly down among the trees, like a house that considered itself an institution and knew nothing of the first of May. It spread itself out in brooding, cozy style; it ran to piazzas in the most unlimited way; it opened a huge door and a broad hall, like a generous heart; it had the traditional wide staircases and deep-set windows. Everywhere were cool, dark woods, panelled walls, waxed floors, with nothing bright about it except the conservatory, and Faith, only grandchild of Mrs. Ellicott, a lithe little maiden delighting in soft bright colours, pansy-leaf purples, midsummer blues, even venturing on scarlet and amber hues; pale almost to sallowness, but with a perilous power of lighting up and glowing with an inner diamond-like light, soft abundant hair, and one real beauty, brown eyes, tender and deep in expression, shaded by long lashes, over-arched by perfect brows, a quiet intense face, but—

“Not in the least like the family, child,” her proud old grandmother used to say—“only you have the little arched foot, and the rosy nails and palms that are always the marks of a true Ellicott;”

and Faith would look up at the hundred-year-old portrait of a blue-eyed, fair-haired Faith on the library wall with a curious smile, not at all as if she felt dimmed by the more patent beauty of her ancestors.

There was another characteristic of the Ellicotts. An intensity of will and tenacity of opinion, which Faith shared in common with such matters as the arched foot and rosy palms, though as yet developed only in visiting people whom Mrs. Grundy didn't delight to honour—an unwavering adherence to the Stars and Stripes, and the utterance of much treason. (See dictionaries south of Mason and Dixon's line.)

She was quite ready, this little Faith of ours, to brave at once the world and the above-mentioned fashionable female—not with that calm contempt that knows both their worth and worthlessness, but the ignorant daring that knows neither.

Society, which couldn't quite ostracize an Ellicott, advised Mrs. Ellicott “to come to an understanding” with her refractory grandchild, “as if one could come to an understanding with a butterfly, or a humming-bird” thought the stately lady, watching Faith take a stitch or two at her embroidery frame, flashing out in some gay little ballad, whirling round and round the room humming a wild waltz measure, and then flinging herself down amidst the cushions to tease and kiss Nada Blitherose, her little golden-haired cousin.

“Come, and I will tell you about the little hare,” said gleeful Faith. But the little one, putting out

a dimpled hand as if to keep her off, lisped solemnly—

“Are you very wicked, cousin Faith?”

“I don't know, Nada; how ever did that idea creep under that little golden thatch of yours? Did you get lost in some of those big books of sermons, when nurse Bella couldn't find you this morning?”

“Mamma told grandma this morning that she couldn't come and see you any more; and I know you must be very naughty, for mamma always tells me that it is only bad people whom I mustn't go to see. Have you told a lie, Faith, or disobeyed? Can't you pray to be forgiven? I like you so much, I want you to be good again.”

Faith unconsciously pushed the child from her, and sat up quite erect, and only looking straight at Mrs. Ellicott, the careless smile quite gone, and a look to make one think of the flush in the sky, and the light on the wave on a stormy morning.

“Children and fools speak the truth,” said Mrs. Ellicott, sententiously; “and Mrs. Blitherose only spoke the sentiments of every other right feeling Southern woman. You cannot expect to be countenanced while you advocate the cause of the enemies of your country.”

“Have I asked the countenance of any?”

“You will find it difficult to stem the tide singly. Besides, what affair is it of yours?”

“There are just two kingdoms—that of good and that of evil: there are only two standards—those

of right and wrong. He that is not for truth is against her; and, disclaim it as you will, you conservatives and neutrals are fighting vigorously on the other side."

"What arrogance for a child like you to pronounce on right and wrong!"

"Has God said, so strait is the way of truth that a child cannot enter therein?"

"Faith, it is very irreverent in you so to parody the Holy Scriptures. A woman's business is with the needle and the cradle."

"True, but these are not her sole concerns. If they had been, we should have been born without brains and heart; simply a patent compound of instinct—rockers, wheels, pedals, and a sewing-machine plate."

"You will condescend at least to acknowledge that men know *something* more of politics than you."

"Of politics, yes; of patriotism, no. This very child beside me could understand that the flag of the *Union* which gave her *State* life, and the power to live, was that of her *country*."

Mrs. Ellicott's last shred of patience gave way.

"I wonder that an Ellicott can ally herself to that low herd of Northern mudsill abolitionists who are the whole cause of the war. Do you know that if your friends prosper, the next step will be to free your slaves and make you a beggar?"

"Better that than living in open defiance of God."

"Has he anywhere said, Thou shalt not keep a slave?"

“No ; but he has said, ‘Do unto others as ye would that they should do unto you.’ I have yet to learn that any among us have dared to shut the gates of heaven against these poor beings, and deny that they have souls ; and if the merciful Jesus really died for them, and according to his promise lives in the hearts of those among them who love him, are they not ‘others?’ Are they not included in the commandment? Admit that, and then, my dear grandmother, if you can find me a man who dares assert that he would be willing to work all his days for another, be shut out by law from education and further development, and hold his heart’s best affections at the mercy of another human being, I will go as a vivandière with our army to-morrow.”

“Oh, Faith has grown quite unanswerable since she has acted as nurse to the Yankee captain !”

Both turned toward the third speaker, a handsome young man in a lieutenant’s uniform, standing in the doorway.

“Her proficiency is not so astonishing,” he went on, “when you consider her teacher, who, though a child and blind, has always the cleverest pupils in the world.”

A deep glow flamed up in Faith’s cheeks.

“It is manly and generous in you, Arnold Blithersoe, to attack a girl, and a helpless sufferer ! I spent six weeks at Captain Heriot’s house. I was indebted to him for all my pleasure while in New York. His sister and his *fiancée*, Fanny Marvin, are my dearest friends ; so, when I saw him tossed

into a cart with other moaning wretches, stopping at our door for a glass of water, and heard from the surgeon that every jolt and turn of the wheel lessened his chance for life, I should have allowed him to pass on to the tender mercies of a crowded shed, breveted by necessity as a hospital. That would have been noble and worthy of Southern honour, I suppose !”

“ Mrs. Ellicott, I appeal to——”

But that lady had prudently disappeared. The young man flashed a quick glance around. Nada was busy with the spaniel ; the coast was clear ; he came and sat beside her on the cushions.

“ Faith, are you quite sure that you don't love Captain Heriot ?” he asked, softly, trying to look into her eyes.

No question could well have been more unfortunate. Love a man who cared nothing for her, who was betrothed ! She would listen to no explanation, no apologies ; but flinging aside the hand that sought hers, went upstairs, face burning, and eyes moist with indignation of course, at the mere mention of loving John Heriot ; and, as she was thinking about him, what more natural than to go in and look at him ?

He was lying with half-closed eyes—closed, I am afraid, only on the instant that he heard a little slipped foot coming along the hall. He was very still ; he breathed like one in sleep ; yet from under his deceitful lids he lost not a movement as she went about the breezy, pleasant room, looping back a curtain, removing phials, and disappearing for an

instant to come back with her hands full of gay flowers, and sit down on the floor like a child to arrange them. He saw it all, down to the little bird-like poise of the head on one side, as she held it up for a final look. He no longer liked or trusted in women; but then he could admire this little bright-tinted picture, that wanted nothing but a frame. She was not pretty, but she pleased him. The perfect arch of eyebrow and the sweep of the long lashes; the little ear just showing from under the mass of soft hair brushed smoothly away; the scarlet of her lips, intense in tone as the heart of some flower that flamed out under tropical skies; the melting away of a little rounded chin into her white throat; her deft clinging fingers, the half-revealing of an arched foot, even the soft blue of her pretty wrapper, soothed and delighted him. She placed the flowers on a little stand, that had probably borne the silver goblet, with its foaming night draught, in those old times which Mrs. Elliott delighted to mention. She stole up to the bedside in the most exaggerated cat-after-mouse fashion, a little cool hand rested lightly on his forehead, and either she or the wind sighed, "Poor John!"

One of his hands seized and imprisoned hers, and a pair of mischievous eyes opened wide and looked up in her startled face. Faith's first movement was to try ineffectually for freedom; her second to despise herself, and say, coolly—

"Oh, you are awake, and better, Captain Heriot?"

"Both. But what has this last moment done

that you are so partial to it, while you freeze up all the rest with your 'Captain Heriot?'"

"I don't understand you."

"It was 'Poor John!' a moment ago."

"You were dreaming."

"Let me dream always, then."

Here each winced with a remembrance. John recollected that he neither liked nor trusted women; Faith thought of Fanny Marvin. His fingers relaxed; hers wrested themselves from his grasp.

She walked away toward the door, but there his voice arrested her.

"One moment before you go. What is the news?"

"Oh, nothing. I think most of our battles are fought on paper."

John groaned and turned restlessly.

"If these confounded wounds would ever heal!"

"Even then you will be a prisoner."

"Oh, I shall be exchanged. Your cousin, Mr. Blithersoe, has promised to use his influence in my behalf."

"Fanny will have reason to be glad," said Faith, with a sharp twinge at her heart.

"Fanny! I really don't think my movements will affect her materially; but I forget—you don't know—our engagement is broken off."

"Broken!"

Faith walked quickly back to the flowers, looked up as if to speak, checked herself, and bent low over them again. If it hadn't been quite impossible, one would have said, from the light in her eyes, that she was glad.

"Well," asked John, who had been watching her, "are you not sorry for me?"

"Ought I to be?"

"Ought you not?"

"How can I tell? I know nothing of the circumstances."

"Isn't it bad enough to be jilted? Don't that call for the deepest commiseration?"

Faith was looking half displeased.

"How you speak! I thought you loved her!"

"I thought so too; but something of late has shaken my belief. Two creeds are pulling at my poor affections on their death-bed: one stoutly asserts that I only dreamed, worshipping an idol of my own creation, not really loved, because I had nothing to love; the other, that there is no love, only a brief delirium."

"Believe it not!" exclaimed Faith. "Abase yourself in dust and ashes; confess that you have erred; but don't be weak enough to deny the existence of the moon because you once made a mistake about a Roman candle."

"Faith!" called Arnold Blithersoe, from without.

"Come back," said John, under his breath.

Faith nodded and went to the door. Arnold was there with a stranger in a sort of military undress.

"I have brought the surgeon, coz," was his salutation, "to see if Captain Heriot's wounds will permit him to move. A lot of prisoners are to be sent on to the Federal lines this afternoon, and I

promised to use my influence in effecting an exchange for him as speedily as possible."

There was no mistaking the triumph of his look, the meaning of his tone ; but again Faith's indomitable pride came to the rescue.

"I think he is well enough, and he will be very glad," she said, shortly. "He was wishing for it a little while ago."

Then she fled away to her own room, and kneeling down before her little white bed, was still for a while. An hour later came a message from Captain Heriot. "Could he see her for an instant?" Faith got up from her knees, bathed her eyes in Cologne water, and went down, calm, with the exception of a subtle tremor about her mouth. She found John dressed, and feverishly alert and eager.

"I am going," were his first words.

"So I supposed. I am glad for you."

"Be sorry for me, too. I shall not forget the weeks I have spent here."

"Hardly ; a doctor twice a day, medicines, fever, and bandages are not easily forgotten."

"But the tender little nurse who watched over me must be, of course. I thought you at least were sincere."

"I am," said Faith, proudly.

"Answer then ; is my going a relief?"

"No."

"What then?"

Faith raised her eyes and tried to meet his look, failed in that, and was silent.

"What then?" he repeated.

The answer seemed to force itself from her lips against her will.

“Pain, grief unutterable.”

John’s face lighted up ; he made a quick movement toward her, but checked himself.

“The pain and grief of losing a friend, Faith?”

She shrank away, burning with blushes, crushed with shame.

“You are cruel,” she said, passionately. “It is unmanly, dishonourable.”

“My little lily, Faith, forgive me. It was a poor return for my dear little nurse, but I doubted if a woman dared be true, and could love well enough to put self-love and pride on one side.”

He had drawn her close to him, and though she made no answer, her head rested confidently enough on his shoulder.

“Do you think you can be steadfast?” he asked, after a moment’s pause. “You will not hesitate or doubt either yourself or me?”

For answer she gave him her hand—a steady little one, as firm as it was soft and white.

“I would doubt not the sincerity, but the capability of any other woman,” he whispered ; “but I shall rest on your word, assured.”

“Not on my word, or that of any mortal’s,” she answered ; “but because I have promised you ; trusting in the strength of Him who is love, you may trust without fear.”

So they parted. He is working, she waiting, both hoping.

WISER AND BETTER.

SHE was walking hastily up the hill-side in a fitful mood.

On the brow of the hill a large old maple spread its branches, targets for the golden arrows quivering from the autumn sunset.

Gertrude had flung her jaunty little flat with its curled dark-blue feather upon the ground, while seating herself under the old tree, and now, resting her soft cheek upon her hand, dreamed until the flush in the west faded to amber. When at length she raised her head, a large tear was slowly rolling down her cheek. It fell upon a scarlet leaf tangled in the fringe of her shawl.

“Mocking the happy days of last autumn,” she sighed, brushing the glistening tear away. “I wonder if Walter will ever again twine bright leaves among my curls.” Stooping forward, she caught up her flat by one of its long ribbons, and gathering her shawl closely around her, leisurely descended the hill. At its base she struck into a path leading to a quaint little brown cottage.

“Och! Miss Gerthrude, ye been gone so long, honey, an’ a swate jintleman in rigimentals a waitin’ to see yer purty face, an’ yer Aunt Milly at the Squire’s lint party. Don’t be so eager-like,

dear ; it's not the like o' Mither Walther at all at all."

Gertrude gasped frightfully, leaning against the hall table for support.

Bridget appeared distressed.

"Would I run for wather for ye, honey?"

"No, no." She paused, pressed her hand to her side as if in pain, then resolutely turned the handle of the parlour door and entered.

A gentleman was slowly walking back and forth before the wood fire crackling upon the hearth. As Gertrude closed the door behind her, he paused, and then advanced a step or two toward her.

"I must introduce myself," said a rich, kind voice. "Bethel Stuart—Miss Fitz-Hugh, a friend of Walter Steyn."

"And he? What news of him?" burst from Gertrude's lips, raising her eager eyes to his face.

"He was wounded——"

"Oh! not killed, thank God, not killed!" she cried, interrupting him, clasping her small hands, her beautiful eyes brimful of sudden tears.

Mr. Stuart looked extremely distressed.

"Poor child!" he said, soothingly, laying his hand upon her bright hair, "would that it were *not killed*. But poor Walter died of his wound upon the battle-field."

The bright flush of excitement faded from her cheek. She raised her brown eyes to his with a pleading glance.

"He is not dead. No, no, not dead; only say he is not dead!" she uttered in a hoarse whisper.

Mr. Stuart shook his head sadly.

"Oh, my God, Walter, Walter!" she cried, in low, altered tones.

Bethel Stuart caught her ere she fell. Tenderly gathering her into his strong arms, he laid her, white and breathless, upon the sofa.

A rush of cold air from the opened window roused her. The long, dark eyelashes quivered almost imperceptibly, the pale mouth parted with a gasping sound.

Mr. Stuart left her for an instant and came back with a glass of cool spring water. She drank a little, he holding the glass.

"I am quite strong now," she said, in a faint voice; "please go on."

The recital was a painful one. When Mr. Stuart had finished, a look of relief spread over his fine features.

"You must let me be a friend to you now," he continued, bending toward her. "It was *his* wish."

Gertrude raised her wet face.

"You loved Walter," she said, in scarcely audible tones; "your breast pillowed his dying head—indeed, indeed your sympathy is very precious to me. Poor, poor Walter! Were those his last words?" she continued, vainly striving to steady her voice.

"They were his words," Bethel Stuart answered, evasively. "Your name was the last word upon his lips.—May I come this way sometimes and see how you are? Now that I have two little orphan nephews to care for, I shall not return to the war.

I had thrown up my commission before the last battle, but waited to see how Walter would fare. I am rejoiced that I did so. Good-bye, Miss Fitz-Hugh; I must be in the city this evening, and have barely time to catch the down train."

* * * *

Edith Barclay stood before a mirror in her mother's softly-lighted parlour, fastening a japonica bud among her dark, glossy braids.

"Mamma, how late Bethel is to-night!"

"Yes, my love."

"Edith, dear," Mrs. Barclay resumed, after a slight cough of embarrassment, "it strikes me you are too exacting—that is——"

"Pray go on, mamma," said Edith, turning with an air of superb scorn toward her mother, a frail-looking lady with a sweet, low voice.

"Never mind now, my love. That is Mr. Stuart's ring. I was in hopes you would have understood me," she added.

Mrs. Barclay kissed her daughter's forehead and left the room as Bethel Stuart entered it.

"How very late!" pouted Edith, withdrawing herself from his arms that he might not kiss her.

"I have had something to do which took me from town for a few hours."

"I don't see what," said Edith, petulantly.

"How should you, my dear?" resumed Mr. Stuart, with an absent air. "A few of Walter Steyn's things were forwarded to me from Washington by my directions. This afternoon I took the cars and delivered them myself to Miss Fitz-

Hugh. Poor girl, my heart bleeds for her. Edith, I must take you out there. And some day we will beg your mamma's permission to bring her here for a week or fortnight. The novelty of city life may divert her mind."

"She wont want to be gay. It will be so stupid having her *here*."

An expression of painful surprise crossed Mr. Stuart's face.

"You would be very much interested in her were you to see her," he replied, gravely. "Will you let me take you there some time?"

Edith would not speak, but sat with coldly-averted face.

"Edith, Edith!" cried Mr. Stuart, drawing her toward him, "where are your warm, generous impulses? I scarcely recognise my darling in this strange mood." He imprisoned both her fair hands in one of his, and holding her close to his breast, gazed long and earnestly into her drooping face.

Presently her eyelids began to quiver, the pouting mouth grew tremulous. She burst into tears.

"You don't love me," she sobbed, hiding her face upon his shoulder.

There were no grieving accents in her tones. Mr. Stuart did not try to soothe her, but allowed the passionate tears to fall, still holding her tenderly to him. When at length he did speak, which was merely to pronounce her name, Edith started at the grave tone. Raising her head rather proudly, she strove to withdraw from the strong arms which held her, but in vain.

Bethel forced her to turn her face to his. He was all gentleness, but so grave, almost stern, Edith fancied.

“Are you distressed at the sympathy and interest I have felt for poor dead Walter’s Gertrude? Is it so, Edith? is it so?”

He awaited her reply anxiously. It came at last with a snap of fretfulness.

“You can go out there and comfort Miss Fitz-Hugh as often as you choose. It wont make one bit of difference to any one in this house. Harry Lane will take me to parties and the opera.”

Bethel put her away from him, but not hastily.

“You are not a baby, Edith, to be coaxed back to smiles.”

“It has been nothing but Gertrude, Gertrude, for the last two months,” she pouted.

Mr. Stuart put a strong restraint upon himself before he again trusted his voice.

“God grant I have not been deceived in you, my precious Edith! But understand me once for all. I shall not cast off Miss Fitz-Hugh for this unwarrantable whim of yours. She has no friends, and I promised my friend Walter Steyn, when he lay dying upon the battle-field, that I would befriend her.”

He paused to wipe the large drops of perspiration from his forehead.

“Choose between us,” cried Edith, bitterly.

“Take care, take care, Edith,” said Mr. Stuart, sternly: “you are rash——”

"I mean it," she replied, with a light, mocking laugh. "I will never retract what I have said."

"Be it so, then." Mr. Stuart's brow and lips grew white. His voice sounded strangely to his own ears. "You have no pity on yourself. Farewell!"

Edith Barclay drew herself up haughtily, and bowed with the stately grace of a duchess. But when the door closed upon Bethel Stuart, she flung herself upon the sofa, and, hiding her face among the cushions, sobbed as though her heart would break.

Half an hour later, hearing her father's step in the hall, she started up hastily, pushing back the heavy braids from her wet cheeks.

"Papa," she said, going to meet him, laying her little hand upon his arm, "don't ring for coffee yet. I want to tell you something."

"Tears, Edith, tears? Why, where is Bethel? I don't see him here."

"That is the trouble, papa. I suppose I *have* treated him rather badly, and he has gone off."

Mr. Barclay whistled, his eyes turned up to the ceiling.

"And when is he coming back, my dear?" he asked, laying his forefinger against the side of his nose, glancing slyly at his daughter.

"Now, papa, don't—don't make fun of me," she said, throwing her arms around her father's neck, drawing him down to a chair, and seating herself upon his knee. "I know you think it is nothing but a silly quarrel; but indeed ——"

Edith burst into tears.

"Well, well, my pet! I am not laughing at you: only thinking over my own young days, you know. Come, come, Edith! Why, don't cry so, my dear."

He raised her hot face and laid her cheek to his.

"But, papa——"

"Well, my love?"

"You think Bethel will come back to me? Don't you, papa—don't you?"

"What took him off in such a hurry?"

"Because—because I didn't want him to care so much for Miss Fitz-Hugh."

"Who is *she*?"

"The young lady Walter Steyn would have married if he had not been killed in battle."

"What has Bethel to do with *her*?"

"She is an orphan, papa; and Bethel promised Mr. Steyn he would be her friend, and——"

"And what, Edith?"

"I felt badly about it."

"About what, my daughter?"

"Why, his going to see Gertrude, and talking so much about her."

"Didn't Bethel want you to go and see her too?"

"Yes; but I can't now."

"Why not?"

"I went off into a fit of heroics while Bethel was here this evening, and told him to choose between us. Afterwards, wouldn't retract what I had said."

"And Bethel?"

"He went off, papa, and I let him."

"My daughter"—Mr. Barclay paused a moment

—“Bethel Stuart is a very proud man. He respects himself.”

“Yes, papa ; go on.”

“And he wont come back—mark my words, Edith!—he wont come back unless you send for him.”

“Then he may stay away,” was upon Edith’s lips ; but something in her father’s face checked such a light reply.

“Tell your mamma I want her—stay, I will go up to her dressing-room, and have coffee there.”

He kissed her tenderly and let her go.

June came with her fragrant buds and vines. On every way-side bough the little birds held protracted meetings.

Surely, silently, under the influence of the sweet summer sunshine, the clouds of pride overshadowing Edith Barclay’s heart dispersed.

“Papa,” she said, one day, following her father from the dining-room into the hall, shyly putting a little note into his hand, “would you send that—to—to—Mr. Stuart?”

Mr. Barclay rapidly ran his eye over his daughter’s delicate handwriting.

“Yes, my dear,” he said, sadly.

“What is the matter, papa?” Edith asked, glancing uneasily at him.

“Nothing now. I was thinking, my love, that if you were *too late*—you understand me—why that there is nothing contained in this little note to cause you any after-feeling of embarrassment.”

“But I *don’t* understand,” said Edith, simply.

"Never mind, love. I hope I *may* be mistaken in some of my ideas."

Mr. Barclay sighed, and hastily tucked his umbrella under his arm.

"Better send it by Thomas this afternoon before he brings the carriage round. Good-day, my dear."

That evening several of Edith's friends came in. Mr. Barclay watched his daughter narrowly. There was a flush upon her cheek and a light within her eye which he did not like.

Their young guests dispersed; he drew her toward him, folding her to his heart.

"You are anxious and nervous, darling."

"No, papa, not now," she said, in a clear, calm voice. "See, I have his answer already." She drew a little crumpled note from underneath her belt, quietly replacing it.

"I partly forfeited his respect that evening, I fancy—my long silence has done the rest. Papa, do you remember the day you brought me home those beautiful fuchsias, and told me to give up pouting or I would be too tardy? But I was very wilful then,—was I not, papa?" She gazed up into her father's face with a sad, wistful expression then quietly bowed her forehead upon his arm.

"Edith, I shall take you to Europe. You sha'n't stay here," said Mr. Barclay, in a husky voice.

"Does mamma know?" he asked, presently.

She shook her head.

"Will you tell her, papa? I did not dare; it will bring on one of those distressing sick headaches."

The pearl which Bethel Stuart had carried so long within his bosom—hidden, as he profoundly thought, from human ken—which he had day by day cherished more and more: waiting, waiting never so patiently, for the day when he might discover it to the fond, shy eyes of Edith Barclay—what then? “Too late, too late;” she had come seeking for that which was not; and the June showers wept Amen upon the trees.

Time sheathed his remorseless summer scythe, sweet clover tops no longer swayed bashfully to the south wind, golden rods flashing gloriously in the sunlight—tender blades of grasses—buds, lilies, blossoms: where were they garnered?

Scarlet leaves were falling upon their graves.

A little while, and Father Time, with touch more delicate than a woman's, spread a white mantle over the ruin he had wrought.

And the young days of the new year flew by, and April came, coaxing with many tears the crocuses into bloom.

Gertrude Fitz-Hugh bent eagerly over them in Aunt Milly's garden, and, gathering a bunch, held them up delightedly to Mr. Stuart.

He imprisoned her slender wrist in a gentle grasp, brushing his cheek against the pretty flowers. Gertrude's eyes fell beneath his gaze.

“Gertrude, the last words of Walter Steyn have never passed my lips. Will you listen to me?”

Gertrude Fitz-Hugh started violently. A tremulous sigh fluttered to her lips. She did not speak, but waited patiently.

There was a strange thrill in Mr. Stuart's voice as he continued—

“Walter died ignorant of the engagement then existing between Miss Barclay and myself. Gertrude, besides claiming my friendship for you, he said to me, ‘Bethel, perhaps you and she will love each other some day—my darling Gertrude!’ Your name, Miss Fitz-Hugh, came with his last gasp.”

Gertrude was sobbing.

Mr. Stuart raised her wet face to the sunshine. “Will you be *my* Gertrude now?” he asked, tenderly.

A hot flush shot across her brow, a deadly paleness succeeded. The crocus flowers slid from her weak grasp. Locking her hands convulsively together, she said, in a hard, strained voice—

“You do not know your own heart. You love Edith Barclay, Mr. Stuart. I never heard why you parted. But you love her passionately even *now*. And—she—I saw her white face with its fitful flushings one day in the city, while Aunt Milly and I were shopping. Afterward I compared your two faces, and thought you were to blame.”

“And you do not love me, Gertrude?” he asked, stooping to pick up her flowers.

For an instant her lips quivered too rapidly for words; then she said, distinctly and resolutely, with a touch of pride—

“I think you have no right to offer me your love, Mr. Stuart.”

He turned abruptly and left her.

Gertrude watched him until he disappeared be-

hind the lilac boughs at the end of the long garden, then gathering up her wilted blossoms, went to her room to think.

How many of us have sought the seclusion of *our* chambers to *think*—think how we may best put away the remnants of a bright dream, and patiently take up again the threads of daily human life, and weave, weave monotonously, to the flow of our stealthy tears!

Did he love Edith Barclay, passionately even, as Miss Fitz-Hugh had confidently asserted?

Bethel Stuart's heart responded, Yes. His mind reverted to the note which he had received from Edith in the early part of the last summer, and how nettled he had felt because she had not written sooner. From that day forth he had steeled his heart against her.

Now a woman's hand had dared to turn aside the keen points of pride bristling at the port-holes of his heart, and lo! there was his pearl—not lost, only hidden.

Again he stood in Mrs. Barclay's softly-lighted parlour, and heard Edith's light step upon the stair. Not rapid as of yore, when springing to welcome him, but slowly, almost reluctantly, he fancied.

His heart throbbed painfully as she came into the room, a slight blush mantling her cheek, and spreading in crimson tides to neck and brow.

Bethel Stuart quietly placed a chair for her.

"I must beg you to bear with me patiently for a few moments." He paused, his emotion broke through all barriers.

“Edith! Edith! *can* you forgive?” he cried.

She raised her eyes to his face with a shy, surprised look. A soft, half-dreamy light stole into them.

“Edith! Edith!” he repeated, pleadingly, holding out his arms to her.

She came to him, and with the movement of a weary child laid her head upon his breast.

“We are both of us wiser and better now, are we not?” he whispered, softly.

O L D B E N,

THE SCOUT OF THE TENNESSEE MOUNTAINS.

How old Old Ben was no one knew exactly—not even Old Ben himself. He had been called Old Ben so far back that the memory of the oldest inhabitant served not to remember him by any other designation. Ben said that he must have been born old, for he had dim recollections of his mother calling him an “old-fashioned feller” before he was big enough to weed the garden. When he arrived at man’s estate, the girls invariably called him either Old Bachelor Ben or Old Ben. So he had made up his mind to one thing, and that was, he never was Young Ben. He was never known to have been sick, except it was that he had “the cussed shakes and fever a spell.” With that exception he had never invested much in patent medicines or other doctor’s stuff, and was consequently a vigorous man, standing firm in his boots. He was tall and had not much flesh to spare, but he often remarked that it “tuk a lean hoss for a long race, and he was one on ’em.” He knew the Mississippi, Cumberland, and Tennessee rivers, he said, better than he did his Testament, and had

acquired considerable fame for his skill at the oar and the wheel. He was the man to take a craft safe through a shute or over dangerous places, and for that duty was still preferred to others many years his junior. As for old Tennessee, he knew every inch of her "sile," and on that "p'int" he wouldn't yield a notch to any man living or dead. His courage was known to be of the right stripe, and he was set down as a tough old knot that would turn the edge of many a bright axe if an attempt was made to split him.

At the time the hurricane of rebellion swept over the State, Old Ben was on a visit to Knoxville, where he was well known. The many outrages perpetrated upon those who refused to succumb to the rebel sway so aroused his ire that he at length said that he believed that he was beginning to turn "injun," and that he couldn't die until he had had revenge upon the scaly varmints, who, he asserted, were mean enough to cut their grandmothers' throats for the sake of getting what the old women had in their stockings. One night he had been listening to a chap whom he knew as a briefless lawyer from Clarksville haranguing a crowd in a bar-room, and growing indignant at what he considered the fellow's insolence, he interrupted him with—

"See here, stranger, yer kin talk jest like clock-work about them cussed abolishunists—and every one knows that I hates 'em as I do pizen—but I'll jest bet yer drinks for the crowd that yer never owned a nigger for 'em to steal."

This challenge from Old Ben, which somewhat staggered the speaker, was received with much secret satisfaction by several Union men of the group, who, from necessity, were obliged to conceal their sentiments, and created a general laugh. It was a few minutes before the lawyer could recover his self-possession. He then drew himself up to assume as great a degree of dignity as possible, and fixing what he intended as a withering look on Old Ben, while a contemptuous smile played around the corners of his mouth, he said—

“Old man, I suppose you are some of the Union rubbish that has not yet been swept out of the State.”

“Thar yer right. I'm Union clear through to the marrow; and if I had my way I'd hang up a few such chaps as you ar', who never work, but ar' everlastin' smellin' around for some office, and who have brought all this trouble on the country. Yer ar' now goin' about deceivin' honest people—telliin' 'em that the whole North ar' agoin' to turn nigger stealers, and that the only way for Southern men to perfect thar property is for 'em to dissolve the Union and 'stablish a one-hoss consarn, with such one-hoss chaps as you at the head of it. I'd hang yer up without judge or jury. That would be the quickest way to settle the mischief yer have made.”

A loud braying from some of the converts to the new doctrines greeted the remarks of Old Ben. But nothing daunted thereat, he exclaimed—

“Yer may bray jest as much as yer a mind to.

But yer kin remember that jackasses do the same thing. And any one who jines the secession crew ain't fit to be named the same day with a jackass. Them's my sentiments, and I don't care who knows 'em."

"Look out, Old Ben! You'll be talkin' treason next, and then you'll be arrested," said one of the crowd who sympathized with the rebels, yet was very friendly with Old Ben.

"Treason!" ejaculated the lawyer. "He has been doing nothing else but talking treason, and should be arrested forthwith."

"Oh, no, Old Ben wont do any harm!" exclaimed another secessionist, who did not wish to see the old man molested.

"You've arrested a good many honest people who never harmed any one, and I expect my turn will come one of these days," replied Old Ben.

"You may depend upon that!" exclaimed the lawyer. "It wont be long before you are elevated!" and here he gave a peculiar jerk with the hand which he held near his neck. "If you don't mend your manners you will go up soon, old man."

Old Ben was about to reply, but was interrupted by the entrance of a man, followed by a number of others, who called the lawyer on one side, and then entered into a low but earnest conversation with him. The new-comer was a thick-set, brutal-looking man, with a face well covered with heavy black hair. He was generally known as Black Dave, and his business had been that of a negro-trader, but he was now at the head of a band of ruffians who,

under his direction, had been guilty of many acts of barbarism. The lawyer was a sort of lieutenant and adviser to the band. Old Ben pointed to the spot where they stood, and said—

“Some dirty business is afloat, I reckon, when two such chaps get together. One on 'em, who never owned a nigger or enough money to pay his licker bill, talks about the ‘North stealin’ *our* niggers!’ Them’s his words. The other one has run off more niggers, and sold 'em down South, than the abolishunists have stolen these ten years. If them ar’ the chaps what ar’ goin’ to be yer leaders, ye’ll soon smell so bad that the devil wont allow yer to come within rifle-shot of the front door of hell. He will have yer all pitched down the back way!”

After giving utterance to these sentiments, Old Ben turned on his heel and strolled leisurely out of the room. He had not gone far ere he was overtaken by one of the party from the bar-room, whom he knew as a sound Union man, and who said in a low tone—

“You will have to be very careful of yourself after what you have said. I overheard Black Dave tell the other that your case would be attended to shortly.”

“They’ll attend to me shortly, will they, eh?” ejaculated Old Ben. “Then I say let 'em come on! I’ll cling to the Union as long as thar’s a splinter left! I can’t live much longer, any way, but while I do live I’ll live like a man!”

“You are well acquainted with the mountains, are you not?”

“Reckon I am.”

“You know that a great many Union men, who have been driven from their homes, have been obliged to seek a hiding-place there until such times as the Union army gets this way?”

“Yes, I know it; and what is more, I’m agoin’ to make one on ’em. I itch to have a little vengeance on them scaly varmints. If the Union men about here had more of the parson’s stuff in ’em we’d make screechin’ work among them turkey-buzzards.”

“But you can’t expect all men to be Brownlows. His very boldness awed them for awhile, but you see they are getting over that now. Men have to be prudent for the sake of their families. If you will come up to my house to-morrow night, you will hear something that will do you good, and how you can be of vast service to the Union men in this vicinity. Will you come?”

“Yes; I’ll be thar!”

Old Ben’s companion noticing Black Dave and the lawyer approaching, walked quickly forward. It was rather a secluded spot where they had been standing, and Old Ben being in the shade was not observed by either Black Dave or the lawyer. They halted, and Black Dave, with great gesticulation, said—

“I’ve sworn to have vengeance on the old cuss, and now is my time! He didn’t think that I was good enough for his daughter. If it hadn’t been for him I believe I could have got the girl; but as I’ve lost her, I’m bent upon having my pay.”

“What do you propose to do? Has he got much that we could lay our hands upon?” said the lawyer.

“We’ll go out to his place toward midnight, and drag the old hound out of his nest. If I once fairly get him in my power I’ll make him sing psalms. I will let him know if I ain’t as good as any of his breed! He has got a couple of fine horses; we’ll take them, anyhow. But come, let us go back now and have a drink with the boys! They’ll miss us. You see, I don’t want any of ’em to know where we are agoing to. It might get talked about, and some Hessian spy give him the alarm.”

As they disappeared Old Ben came forth from a hiding-place where he had ensconced himself for the purpose of learning what mischief they were planning. Looking after the retreating figures, he muttered, half aloud—

“I’ll head off them devils yet, or else I’ll give ’em leave to call me a skunk! The old man whar right in showing Black Dave the door. He should have kicked him out. That’s what I would have done. But I’ll head off the villains, I’ll head ’em off!” he ejaculated, as he hastened forward.

Black Dave and his lieutenant returned to the bar-room, where they with their companions indulged in a drunken revel. Toward midnight he got together some ten or a dozen of those who were the least intoxicated, and started out on his work of vengeance.

This band of “defenders of the rights of Southern men,” as they styled themselves, had proceeded a

considerable distance from the tavern, when their commander ordered them to halt in front of a modest-looking dwelling, surrounded by pleasant grounds. He then addressed them as follows—

“Boys! now we are about to catch one of the blackest-hearted traitors in the South. He is a regular white-livered Lincolnite, and it ain't to be expected that we will show him much mercy. So, follow me!”

Black Dave then opened the gate and went toward the house, followed by his band. He gave several loud raps on the door with the butt of a pistol, and it not being promptly opened, he applied the heel of his heavy boot and administered a number of lusty kicks. The door was at length opened by rather an elderly female, who had a light in her hand. As soon as Black Dave caught a glimpse of her countenance, he said, in a gruff voice—

“We want your old man. Tell him to turn out quick, and not to keep us awaiting.”

“He is not at home,” was the mild response.

“You lie! we know better! If you don't turn him out, we'll go in and drag him out!”

“I assure you, sir, that he is not in the house.”

“Come, boys, follow me! We wont put up with any of the old woman's nonsense.”

Black Dave as he uttered these words entered the house, accompanied by several of his followers. After the lapse of a few minutes he returned, with a countenance blacker than usual, exclaiming—

“The old hound has run away, boys; but the

black-hearted traitor don't escape my vengeance so easy. Just throw a torch in the barn yonder."

"Oh! do not fire the place! Have some mercy for the family!" entreated the old lady.

"What is the family to me? I wasn't good enough to make one of them! They are a brood of traitors, the whole of them, and if you don't want 'em roasted you had better turn 'em out!"

After giving utterance to these brutal words, he strode off toward the outbuildings, seizing a torch from one of his followers as he passed along. Looking in the stable, and finding that the horses were gone, he gave utterance to a vile oath, and then threw the torch among some loose hay. Watching the flames as they crept slowly along, while a fiendish smile spread over his features, he told one of his band to pick up some of the hay and follow him. He then went toward the dwelling, and ordered the man to throw the hay on the kitchen floor; and then, despite the entreaties of the old lady and the cries of two or three children, who had been hurried from their beds and stood in their night-clothes clinging to their mother, the ruffian applied the torch. When the flames were fairly under way, he said—

"Come on, boys! Leave 'em to shift for themselves. Let us see if we can't track the old hound."

The ruffian then, followed by his band, retreated down the road, turning occasionally to behold the flames as they licked up that once happy home.

The next evening Old Ben was prompt to his appointment, and as he listened to the narration of

the outrage to a party of Union men, he exclaimed, as his countenance glowed with excitement—

“The miserable, scaly buzzards! I wouldn’t a thought they’d gone so far; they’re worse nor injuns! I reckoned it whar all right when I gave him the alarm and he got safe off. But to fire the house and turn the wimen folks and children out doors that time of night—I swar I’ll have vengeance for it! It mout not be quite reg’lar, but yer kin jest sot Old Ben down for Black Dave and that white-livered skunk from Clarksville. If I don’t fix thar flint for ’em then I wont trust bullet and powder any more. Thar’s no use of yer sayin’ any thin’ agin it,” he said, as he raised up his hand toward one of the assembly, who he supposed was about to remonstrate, “for I’ve settled the hull matter. It’s no knowin’ what they’ll do next, so they’ve got to go. The devil wants his due, and it is about time they whar on the road to see the chief of all secessionists.”

“It is what they deserve!” ejaculated one of the party.

This sentiment was generally concurred in by the assembly. The affairs of that part of the State were then discussed, and it was considered that it would be of great importance if communication could be kept up between the Union men in the mountains and those who yet remained at home. For the performance of this duty they all agreed that Old Ben, from his thorough knowledge of that region, was peculiarly qualified. He at once consented to act, but put in as a proviso that he was

not to be deprived of the privilege of attending to the case of Black Dave and his lieutenant.

In the meantime Black Dave, intent upon glutting his vengeance, set his spies to work to discover the whereabouts of the man whose homestead he had so ruthlessly destroyed. A number of days passed, and the spies were unable to give any satisfactory report, other than that they thought he had gone to the mountains. At this Black Dave's rage grew furious, and he swore that he would seek revenge in another quarter. The fate he intended for the father should be visited upon the son-in-law, his successful rival, who was settled in a quiet spot some miles from Knoxville. Black Dave knew that his rival was suspected of being a Union man, and that was a sufficient cloak for him in his design of villany.

It was on a dark and gloomy night that Black Dave got his band of ruffians together and set out on his work of Vandalism. We will not detain the reader with an account of his progress along the road. Arriving at the house, his summons was answered by a trembling black servant, who, in answer to a furious demand for his master, stammered out that he was not at home. The desperado's quick eye at once detected from the servant's manner that he was endeavouring to conceal something, and he immediately ordered his lieutenant to search the house. This duty the lieutenant performed in a style worthy of his leader. The wife, notwithstanding her delicate health, was brutally told to point out where her husband was hid, as

they wanted to give him a rope elevation. All feelings of humanity were set at nought, and the search was made in the most brutal and reckless manner; but it proved fruitless. The intended victim, hearing the noise of the band as they approached, at once suspected their object, and at the solicitation of his wife, consented to secrete himself, and succeeded in making his escape.

Black Dave fairly foamed with rage when he heard that he was again foiled—that his rival could not be found.

“The sneaking cur is hid somewhere!” he exclaimed. “But I’ll smoke him and his brood out. Fire the house, boys!”

Even the entreaties of her whom he once professed to love failed to stay the hand of the incendiary. Black Dave was inexorable. The torch was applied, and soon the flames began to creep along—slowly at first, as if gathering strength, and then suddenly they darted up their forked tongues and enveloped the whole building in a fiery circle. The flames, reflected by the heavy atmosphere, shed a brilliant light over the surrounding country. For awhile Black Dave stood gazing upon his work, while a sort of hellish malignity spread itself over his features, totally unmoved by the cries of the terror-stricken women and children. He then ordered the servant whom he had first seen to be tied to a wheel of a large waggon, and lashed until he revealed the whereabouts of his master. For Black Dave to order was to be obeyed, and the rembling black was immediately seized, tied, and

flogged. The blows fell fast and heavy, but the faithful black, notwithstanding the blood streamed down his back, refused to betray his master. The ruffian who administered the blows paused for a moment as if to take breath, which his leader observing, he shouted—

“ Give the black dog another dose, and lay them on lively !”

The words had scarcely fallen from his lips ere a bullet whizzed past the negro and buried itself in the brain of the ruffian leader, and he fell to the earth to rise no more. He had given his last order. His lieutenant, who stood near, sprang forward, and was in the act of stooping to lift the prostrate form of his captain, when crash went another bullet through his brain, and he fell upon the body of him who had been his companion in villany, and who was now his companion in death. The ruffian who had administered the blows stood for a moment as if transfixed to the spot, and then, throwing down the whip, he attempted to run, but had taken only a few steps ere a swift-winged messenger sent him travelling the same road with his leaders. Consternation now seemed to seize the remainder of the ruffians, and they took to their heels, many in their flight throwing away their rifles, which were soon picked up by Old Ben and his companions, and their contents sent after their flying owners.

It was not long before the pale and terror-stricken wife was joined by her husband and father. After an affectionate embrace, the father, picking

up a lighted torch, approached the place where the bodies lay. Stooping down to examine the leaders, he in a few moments exclaimed—

“Dead!—both of them! Old Ben hit both in nearly the same spot!”

So it was. The father, being anxious to see his daughter and her mother, who since the destruction of the old homestead had resided with her, was accompanied by Old Ben and another companion for that purpose. As they approached the farm they beheld the light from the burning dwelling, and at once rightly conjectured the cause, and who was at work. They crept stealthily along, and secreted themselves until a favourable opportunity should afford them a chance of being of service. Old Ben insisted that he alone should do the shooting, and that they could do the loading, as no shots were to be wasted. As he observed Black Dave and his lieutenant standing near together, he exclaimed in a low tone—

“Keerful! keerful now! they ar’ both mine!” and creeping to a favourable spot, he discharged the shots which finished the worldly career of the ruffians.

Black Dave’s rival, being secreted where he could view what was going on, seeing the ruffian leaders fall, at once judged that friends were at hand, and he sprang forward to render his aid in the destruction of the Vandals. When it was ascertained that they were completely routed, arrangements were made for conveying the family to a place of safety, and in the arrangements the

master did not forget his lacerated but faithful servant.

During the next fortnight several of Black Dave's followers were found dead, and upon examination it was discovered that each one had been shot in nearly the same place in the forehead, and it was concluded that they had all been killed by the same person. The conclusion was correct, for Old Ben in his scouting duties sent many a "buzzard," as he called those who preyed upon the homes of Union men, to his final account.

DEVEREUX DARE, PRIVATE.

MRS. ASHLEIGH DARE always looked at her handsome, manly son with a maternal pride which was altogether excusable. They were a fine couple for any one's seeing, the widow and her son. Mrs. Dare's forty years had not met her as enemies. The dark brilliance of her eyes was undimmed. Scarcely a thread of silver flecked the raven blackness of her hair. Her complexion kept bright still its clear, dark tints, and even her figure had not lost its old stately grace. The haughty French blood in her veins was not chilled either. She was as fit to be the mother of a hero as she had been to be Colonel Dare's wife—Colonel Dare, whose back no foeman ever saw.

Her son was after her own heart. He had her dark eyes and hair, her sparkling expression, and Huguenot hauteur; all intensified in him, however, by the long-during, persistent nature of his father, which he had inherited along with a certain resolute contour of mouth, which was the only external sign of his paternity. For all the rest he was, outwardly, a Devereux. No need to ask from which side his courage came—neither Dare nor Devereux had ever reckoned a coward among their children.

They had been discussing, these two, an engrossing question. It was just after that dreadful day at Bull Run, when the country needed so bitterly all her children, and every loyal heart was throbbing to one anguish of endeavour. Regiments were being filled up rapidly, and young Dare, just home, in the spring of '61, from his three years of foreign travel, was only waiting his mother's consent to enlist. He looked at her now with persuasive eyes.

"It should not be you, mamma, the daughter of a heroic race, the widow of a man who got his death-blow in the front of the fray, who would hold back your son when the land of his fathers has need of him."

"I do not, Devereux. I am willing you should enlist, if only you will use the interest of your family to procure you a suitable commission."

"I may not be worthy of one. I have not yet proved my fitness to rule."

"Your fitness! It is in your blood."

"Well then, seriously, I do not *want* a commission, because I feel sure that I can do more good by going as a private. All cannot be officers, and more men than you think are holding back because they cannot. They say—'It is the lower orders who serve in the ranks; we will not fight unless our comrades can be gentlemen.' Every one is waiting for some other. Do you think there are not men in Boston who will follow the flag the more readily if they march in company with my father's son?"

“Your father would not have done—did not do—what you wish to do.”

“Because he was needed otherwise.”

He knelt down beside her, just then, that handsome, gallant fellow, whom all women found so fascinating. He rested his head on her knee—it was an old, boyish trick he had—and looked with those great, persuading, dark eyes of his up into her face. His voice was full of appeal—his tones grew solemn in their earnestness.

“Mother, I *must* go. I can only go as a private, for my conviction that that is my duty is unalterable. If it is a sacrifice, it is one that must be made. Will not you make it with me? If you kept me back I should hardly be willing to accept life on such terms. It would only be a long misery, with the ghost of this unfulfilled duty stalking beside me for ever. Be brave, mother, brave and kind. If I should fall in battle, and lie beside some Southern stream with my life-blood ebbing away, let me not have to think, when your voice and your smile come back to haunt me, that I went away without your blessing.”

The heart, the quick, impulsive woman's heart, through which the eager French blood throbbed, was softened. Tears fell from the proud eyes, and glistened a moment in the short curls of the head, upon her silken lap. Then she put her hands on those thick curls with a caressing touch, and said to him—

“You have conquered. I will not keep you back from the duty your eyes see so clearly. You

may be right. At any rate, if you go, you shall go with my blessing, and remember that one at home prays for you every hour."

Tears, not hers, wet the hand her son drew to his mouth. Strongest hearts in the fray are tenderest oftentimes at the hearth-stone.

That was one struggle and one victory. The soldier had yet another conflict to dare—a harder one possibly—in the boudoir of Clara Gage.

He went there that night after his enlistment had been registered. She was his betrothed wife, and he loved her as a brave man can love a true woman. It may be that he feared her a little also. If he did, forgive him, for there was nothing else out of heaven that he did fear. In her case it was only because she was so precious to him that no calamity, save loss of honour, could have been reckoned by the same measure as loss of her. Somehow he shrank from telling her his plan, and meeting the look he fancied her eyes would wear when she heard it; and so he had unfolded it to her in a note which she had received that morning. He hoped that she would have reconciled herself to his views before he saw her.

I think he could have done a good many sterner things with less fluttering of the heart than he felt when he walked into the little azure-hung room where she waited for him.

She was a beauty of a different type from his handsome mother; but of one no less haughty. She was pure Saxon, with hair of dun gold, and blue eyes which could swim in seas of passionate

tenderness, but which knew how to flash scorn or scintillate anger. Just the woman for long loving or long hating. Your dark-eyed beauties are too stormy—their emotions exhaust themselves. For slow, strong patience in hating or loving give me a slight woman with fair hair and innocent looking blue eyes.

Miss Gage met her lover cordially enough—a wary general does not commence his attack till he has reconnoitred the field. If he can maintain his own line of defence and lure the enemy to leave covert and begin the battle, so much the better the chances in his favour. Perhaps Miss Gage had read Hardee.

She talked smilingly about the weather. She was going next week to Newport—couldn't she persuade him to go too? They would have merry times.

"I shall have to do with other balls," he said, a little resolutely, determined that she should beat no longer about the bush of his purpose.

She raised her eyebrows slightly.

"Saratoga?"

"Virginia, rather."

"A bad time to go South, in summer."

"Necessity makes all times alike. Did you not get my note?"

"What — that pleasantry you sent me this morning about enlisting? Did you think I did not know you better? Fancy Devereux Dare trudging through the Virginia mud, with that rolled-up whatever they call it, on his back!"

"It is well to fancy it, Clara. It will be real soon. I enlisted to-night."

"Without asking me?"

"Forgive me. My life was God's and my country's before it was yours. I knew my duty. I dared not run the risk of having my resolution shaken by your persuasions. I should not be worth your loving, Clara, if I could shrink from what I know I am called of Heaven to do."

"I thought Heaven's calls were of a more peaceful nature—to pray or preach to men, not shoot them. What does your mother say?"

"That she will pray for her absent soldier every hour in the day. Her prayers and yours will be my shield."

"I will *not* pray for you!" The girl's lips whitened with anger and resolution as she spoke.

"Not pray for me?"

"No; unless I do so unwittingly, in the prayer we are taught to offer for our enemies. You are my enemy if you go."

There was nothing weak or irresolute in Miss Gage's face. Her voice was quiet and even. Dare shivered as its firm tones fell on his ear.

"Clara," he cried, "what does this mean? You said that you loved me last night."

"It means simply that, like most women, I give in such measure as I receive. Last night I thought *you* loved *me*."

"And so I do, God knows."

"Do you think I believe you? Would a man who loved a woman go away from her to almost

certain destruction without even the grace to tell her his purpose until after he had pledged himself? Why did you not come here before you enlisted?"

"Because I was too cowardly. You have the honest truth now. I loved you so well that I dared not trust myself to your persuasions. My duty, I hope, I should have done in any case; but I shrank from the strain my heart-strings would suffer in doing it when you were holding me back."

A half-suppressed triumph looked from Clara Gage's eyes. She liked, even then, this confession of her power over him. She determined to test it fully. As his mother had done before her, she asked—

"Why do you not get a commission? I know you could. It would be bad enough to have you go at best. It is so much easier to fight where the martial music clashes, and the excitement of the hour works heart and brain to madness, than to wait at home and open every day's newspaper as if it might contain your death-warrant. I might bear it; I might forgive your leaving me so cruelly if you went in a position worthy of your name. If you go as a private I never will."

Dare's courage rose now. Summoned by her attack, it leaped up and formed into line-of-battle with quick bravery. He answered her as he had answered his mother before—gave her, with calm patience, all his reasons.

Her eyes hardened, looking wide at him with a cold want of comprehension, of sympathy, which he had never seen in them before. She waited

until he was all through, when she said—oh, so quietly!—

“My mind is not changed. If you go, as you have planned, you go my enemy, not my betrothed.”

Passion-heat of the dark-browed Devereux, tempered to firmness by the Dare persistency, rose up in his nature and took the reins. Had he yielded then to her commands, so urgently given, I believe that nothing could have appeased the measure of his self-contempt but to die by his own hand, like an old Roman. She had gone just the one step too far. He had no more persuasion for her now, and scant courtesy. His voice shivered through her nerves like the sharp whirr of a bullet.

“I accept the position toward you which you elect. Miss Gage, you had better ask God to forgive you in time; your death-bed will not be easy without such mercy!”

She trembled. There was that in his tone and manner which appalled her. She began to feel that she was a woman, and weak; and he was a man, and strong. But she had a pride as stern and inflexible as his courage. For sole answer she took from her finger a ring wherein a single diamond sparkled, and dropped it into his extended palm. Then rising, she bowed as she would have dismissed a morning visitor, as he stood, hat in hand, before her. He had loved that woman, with her blue eyes and her pale hair. He looked at her hungrily. His soul clamoured for one touch of her careless hand, her falsely-smiling lips. But he mastered the emotion, and only said—

“I shall fight the better for this, Miss Gage ; more than one dead rebel will have you to thank for his death-wound. The man who leaves least at home can best afford to throw his life away.”

Two days after that he marched with his regiment. He had not seen Clara Gage again.

She did not go the next week to Newport. She had said he would be to her only as her enemy, but a sickening longing took possession of her to trace that enemy's fate. She could not have danced—I think her limbs were too unsteady. Her father—she had no mother—was astonished at her resolution to remain in town all through the season ; combated it a little at first ; then became convinced that, after all, no place was more comfortable than Beacon Hill, and began to rejoice secretly in the prospect of coming from business to an open house, and a home which a woman's presence made comfortable.

He knew nothing of the great wave that had swept over his daughter's life. He heard, indeed, that Devereux Dare, whom he knew to be his prospective son-in-law, had gone to the war as a private. Like everyone else he wondered, and grumbled out, besides, a little personal dissatisfaction. He knew not that the vow which bound those two had been sundered ; and if the face opposite to him was pale, he had not too much perception to joke his daughter about her sweetheart, until one day she silenced him with these words, at which he experienced something such a sensation as if a rebel shell had fallen suddenly at his feet and exploded there—

“Father, there are some things which I cannot bear—this is one. Never name Mr. Dare’s name to me again.”

Thereupon she retired into her shell, and he was left outside wondering. He had thought to please her by talking of her lover; to give her an opportunity to express her grief at his absence, and seek for sympathy; but it seemed she did not like it. Well, he could be silent; it cost him nothing. Little he knew what to hear that name or to speak it cost her.

The autumn had not passed before, in the depths of her soul, she had repented; but her stubborn pride would scarcely acknowledge it even to herself. She would not open her heart to one emotion of tender truth. Yet there was something feverish in the eagerness with which she caught at every day’s paper. Scarcely his own mother followed the footsteps of that regiment so ceaselessly.

Mrs. Dare waited in hope. Once persuaded to consent to her son’s wishes, she had gone with him heart and soul. She had said she would pray for him hourly, and she did. Perhaps those prayers were mighty to turn aside Southern bullets. He was in many engagements—wounded slightly sometimes; but, so far, he had seemed to bear a charmed life. No great peril came near him.

Before he went away he had told his mother that all was at an end between him and Miss Gage, and given her the reason. He had not entered into particulars, but the little he said had been enough

to enlist on his side all his mother's ardent sympathies. The two women had been almost friends before—drawn together by their love for one object. Since he went away they had never spoken. They had met in the street a few times, passing each other with a cold bow, and that was all. Mrs. Dare saw at these times that the girl was growing pale, and it did her heart good.

At length came the news from Winchester of the retreat where the Massachusetts boys brought up the rear, forming in the line of battle and fighting as they went. In the list of the wounded two women read with strained eyes these words—

“Private Devereux Dare—dangerously.”

One with white lips, and a cry of passionate bewailing—“Oh, my boy! my boy!” The other, with tearless face, and a wail of a yet deeper agony—“And I told him I would not pray for him!” Each with the one purpose of hastening to her hero.

Miss Gage did not delay. She put on her bonnet and went at once to his mother's house. Mrs. Dare received her coldly.

“I do not understand your coming here now,” she began. “I am in too much trouble to receive visitors. Do you not know—have you not heard——”

“Everything. Can't you see that it is killing me? Even though you are his mother, you would forgive me if you knew what I have suffered. I love him. I did love him all the while. I must,

I will go to him. I must hear him speak my pardon before he dies."

Mrs. Dare's warm, impulsive heart softened to the poor, anguish-torn creature, who sank imploringly on the floor at her feet. She knelt down beside her and folded her arms round her, and raised her up.

"You shall go, Clara, you shall go with me; and I pray God that we may yet look upon his face again in this life's life. The train leaves at four. Can you be ready?"

"You will find me waiting for you at the depôt."

It was well for Clara Gage that she had a proud woman's fortitude. Once assured that she might go to him, she did not suffer her limbs to tremble, or her face to betray her. With step as lofty as ever, she went home. She met her father going up the steps.

"Father," she said, speaking with the calmness of one all whose plans are fixed, "Devereux is dangerously wounded, and I am going to him. I shall start at four with Mrs. Dare."

Seldom is a woman in any position more entirely her own mistress than was Miss Gage. Her father never thought of disputing her will, or interfering with her purposes. Moreover, he had never been informed of the dissolution of her engagement, and thought it but natural that she should resolve to go to her lover. She encountered no opposition from him, therefore, but rather help. Hurriedly her preparations were made, and when Mrs. Dare reached the station she found her companion waiting for her.

It was midnight of the second day when, after long travel and many delays, they reached the hospital. For a moment Mrs. Dare held parley with the surgeon.

“ Was it safe to go to him ? Would he know them ? Where was his wound ? ”

Clara Gage listened for the reply, clasping Mrs. Dare’s arm with her nervous fingers till it ached.

“ Yes, they might see him and tend him ; it would do no harm ; but he would not know them, he was delirious. His right arm was shot away, and he had, besides, a severe wound in his chest. ”

“ Was there any hope ? ”

“ A little—there might be a chance for him with good nursing. It looked more like it now than it did two days ago. ”

Then they went to his bedside—those two women who loved him.

He lay there, his cheeks flushed, his eyes wild with fever. He was talking incoherently—living over again, as it seemed, the brave charge in which he had fallen. At last he murmured, in tender tones—

“ You said you would pray for me, mother. Are you praying for your boy now ? ”

Then, indeed, tears rained from his mother’s eyes as she stood bending over him. But Miss Gage could not weep ; had she not said she would *not* pray for him ?

For days they tended him—almost, it seemed, without sleep or rest ; hardly knowing, in their anxiety, whether it was one day or many. There

were slow steps from despair toward hope; and by-and-bye there came an afternoon when he looked at them with calm eyes, and spoke to them in his own voice.

“Mother, you here? This makes home in a strange land. And Clara——”

Miss Gage was not too proud then to sink on her knees by the bedside, and her voice shook so with her sobs that he could hardly hear her say—

“Forgive me—oh, can you? I did not mean it when I said you were my enemy, and I would not pray for you. I *have* prayed for you, Devereux.”

“And I have forgiven you, Clara. Not at first, though; the sense of wrong was too bitter then. It was just before that last charge. The bullets were raining thick, and I knew it was an even chance whether I came out of it alive. Then I thought of you. I remembered how I had loved you. The bitterness went out of my heart, and that mighty love surged back. When the rest shouted their war-cry I only cried ‘Clara!’ and on we swept.”

“No more talking, ladies, unless you would lose again all we have gained.”

It was the surgeon’s voice as he went his round, and it put an end to a conversation that gave back to Clara Gage hope and youth.

It was not until they had been able to remove the beloved patient by easy stages to Boston that anything was said about the future. Then, one day, he drew from his bosom a ring fastened to his neck by a blue ribbon.

“Untie it, Clara.”

Miss Gage obeyed him as he reached it toward her.

For a moment he held the ring, sparkling and glittering, in the fingers of his one hand. Then he said—

“I put on this ring before with my right hand. I had a strong arm then to shield and support you. Do you care to wear my token when I have only my left hand to put it on with?”

For all answer she held out her finger, waiting for the ring. He hesitated still.

“Do you understand all it means? Do you care to marry a one-armed man?”

“I care to be yours, if you think me good enough to wear the honour of your name. I shall only be prouder of my hero because he bears about with him a token of how dear he held his country and his manhood.”

And so the ring was placed again on Clara Gage’s finger, and the next week they were married. He had wanted her before, but he needed her now; and she had come too near to losing him to delay her happiness by any coy pretences.

He had gained strength rapidly—perhaps because he *willed* to be well, or because he was so happy. His country had yet work for him to do. As one who had a right to say “come” and not “go,” he has aided in the cause of recruiting under the recent calls. He who has given so much has a right to ask others to risk something. To those who know him his example is more eloquent than his words.

ONLY ONE KILLED.

“ONE killed and three wounded.”

“That all!” said I. “Hardly worth the cost of a telegram.”

There had been a reconnoissance, a surprise of enemy’s scouts, a brief, sharp engagement, ending successfully, and casualties as above.

A pair of sober gray eyes were turned upon my face, and I read in them a silent rebuke for this lightness of speech.

“And yet,” I added, by way of apology for my remark, “the loss of this single life may shadow more than a single home. Cups that held until now only sweet wine may be full of bitterness hereafter.”

“What company was engaged?” asked a man who sat near. The newspaper was referred to, and the answer given.

“Company C.”

“Colonel R——’s regiment?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Are the names of the killed and wounded given?”

I noticed a slight unsteadiness in the man’s voice.

“No names are given.”

“May I see your paper for a moment?”

I handed him the newspaper, in which I had

read about the reconnoissance, and what seemed, at the moment, a casualty not worth reporting. I saw that his hand trembled a little, and that his eyes searched through the sentences of the telegram in an eager way.

“Thank you,” he said, as he returned the paper; “there are no particulars.” Then, with a falling of the voice, he added, “I have a son in that company.”

Remembering the light speech into which a want of reflection had betrayed me, I did not venture to respond in any way, lest the real concern I now felt might be regarded, if expressed, as only a pretence. Soon after the man nodded to the conductor of the car in which we were riding; the check-string was pulled, the car stopped, and he went out. My eyes followed him as the ear moved on until I saw him enter a house. Two days afterward, in passing this house, I saw crape on the door. My heart leaped with a painful throb.

“Who is dead in the third house below?” I asked of the store-keeper at the corner.

“Mr. B——’s son. He was killed.”

“In the war?”

“Yes, sir. News came, three days ago, that one man had been killed in a reconnoissance, and it turned out to be his son, Edward. Ah, sir, he was a splendid young man, and it will go hard with his father and mother. And hard, too,” he added, lowering his voice, “for one besides them.”

“Had he a wife?” I inquired.

“No, sir; he was not married.”

"A sweetheart?"

"Yes. He was engaged, I believe."

"Has the body arrived?" I asked.

"Yes; they brought it home to-day. Mr. B—— went for it himself."

"Was it much disfigured?"

"No. A ball passed through the heart, killing him instantly."

"Had Mr. B—— other sons?"

"No, sir; Edward was his only boy. It is a great loss, sir."

"How does he bear it? Have you heard?"

"I saw him an hour ago."

"Well?"

"He was very calm; but, sir, he looked ten years older. Mr. B—— is one of those men who bear things patiently; but he has deep feeling nevertheless. That boy was his idol."

"How is it with the mother?"

The store-keeper shook his head. "I asked Mr. B——, but his eyes filled, and he choked in trying to answer. I'm almost afraid it will be too much for her. She is not very strong."

"Did they oppose his going to the war?"

"Mr. B—— did not. He's an earnest man, and loves his country too well to hold back anything while she is in danger."

Only one killed! How insignificant the fact seemed when the telegraph made this announcement; but what bitterness had followed!

On the day following I noticed, in passing, a large funeral procession. Of the tens of thousands who

had lingered scarcely a moment over the brief telegram announcing but one killed and three wounded, had the imagination of an individual pictured distinctly a solemn scene like this as following in natural sequence, or given the faintest realization of the sorrow and suffering that lay veiled behind?

Fifty killed and two or three hundred wounded! Ah! now the pulses beat. Here is something worth while! How strangely this familiarity with war ices over the heart! One, two, three hundred killed or mangled. It is awful to contemplate; and yet we must come down to the single cases to get at the heart of this fearful matter.

"That is Mr. B——. His son was killed in a skirmish with the enemy. He belonged to Company C."

"Oh, in that slight affair! I had forgotten it. There was only the trifle of one killed, I think."

"And that was Mr. B——'s son."

Mr. B—— was leaving the car in which we were riding. He was so changed that I had not recognized him as the individual in whose presence I spoke so lightly about one killed and three wounded only a few weeks before.

"Sad, isn't it?" said the other, growing serious.

"Very sad. I'm told the mother hasn't left her room since the terrible news was communicated. He was an only son."

"That is trouble," was answered. "How little do we think of what is really involved when we run our eyes so carelessly, and often half-impatiently, over these almost daily announcements of one or

two killed or wounded in scout and picket skirmishing! It comes home to us in Mr. B——'s case."

A few weeks later.

"Did you see that face at the window?" asked a friend with whom I was walking.

I had observed the face—that of a young woman. It was visible for only an instant; but in that instant it had impressed me strongly, it was so white, so ghostly, so full of sadness and suffering.

"Yes, I saw it."

"There has been something more than bodily sickness," said the friend.

"Heart-sickness. Pain that defies the leech's skill."

"It always touches me to see a face like that," remarked my companion. "Heart-blight in one so young—ah, it is sad, sad! How quickly the tender leaves shrink and fade when frost drops down on a spring blossom! In later years we have more endurance. The heart is stronger to bear."

Not long afterward the same pale face and sad eyes looked out upon me from a carriage, and their image and expression remained with me as in a picture for many days.

"I am haunted by that face," said I, as it glided past me in the street, the eyes resting on mine for an instant. Was there not something of rebuke in them? I felt it so. And yet they were to me the eyes of a stranger.

"Unhappy one! sorrow has touched you early with his blighting fingers." So I spoke with myself as I walked on musing. "Has love failed, of the

shadow of death fallen over the threshold of one dearer than life? Ah, is there not in the experience of one soul, tried in the fire as thou assuredly hast been, pain enough to make our hearts shiver in the bare imagination? First the stunning shock of a fearful calamity, then the awakening to pain as life begins to stir in the bruised and broken fibres and organs, in the quivering nerves and lacerated tissues, and then the long period of slow recuperation, with its anguish of aching wounds, its helplessness, its despondency, its darkness. Ah, what a history is written in a face like thine, pale, suffering stranger! How little of all this is imagined by the passing crowd!"

Next I saw that face in church. It was still pale and sad, and bore a look of exhaustion, as from long-endured pain. But now there was in it a softer expression—a touch of resignation blending with pious hope.

"The strong hath strengthened her," so I said in my thought. "The burden was too heavy for her own soul, and she hath laid it upon Him. Her refuge is with the Comforter."

Often during the services my eyes turned involuntarily toward the young lady, who had awakened in me an interest little short of fascination. She impressed me as one who had turned hopelessly from earth, and now rested all with Heaven.

As I moved down one of the aisles, after the benediction had been pronounced, the slightly bowed form of Mr. B—— met my observation. He was alone. My thought went instantly to his wife sorrowing for her dead son.

"This may have indeed proved too heavy a burden," so I thought. "What a fearful weight to lay upon a mother's heart!"

"What!" I ejaculated, speaking half-aloud, as a new conviction flashed across my mind, "did that arrow strike there also?"

Mr. B—— had paused by the pew-door from which the pale-faced young woman was stepping into the aisle, and taken her hand. I did not see his face, but I noted a faint, sad smile on her lips. In the vestibule they lingered, and, in answer to a question, I heard Mr. B—— say—

"I think she is a little more like herself. Come and see her, wont you? It will do you both good."

Tears sprang to her eyes. My own were filling.

"I will come." I saw her lips quiver, as she thus answered, and then turned almost hastily away.

"Poor Alice!" said a voice near me.

"Doesn't it make you sad to see her?" was the response.

"Sad enough," answered the first speaker.

"They had been for some time engaged, and were to be married as soon as the war was over."

"Her friends feared awhile for her reason."

"Yes, and then for her life. But she is steadily regaining strength of body and mind. I was glad to see her in church to-day. She was always pure and good, and God will comfort and sustain her."

"Mr. B—— was in church also."

"Yes. Poor man! He really looks broken."

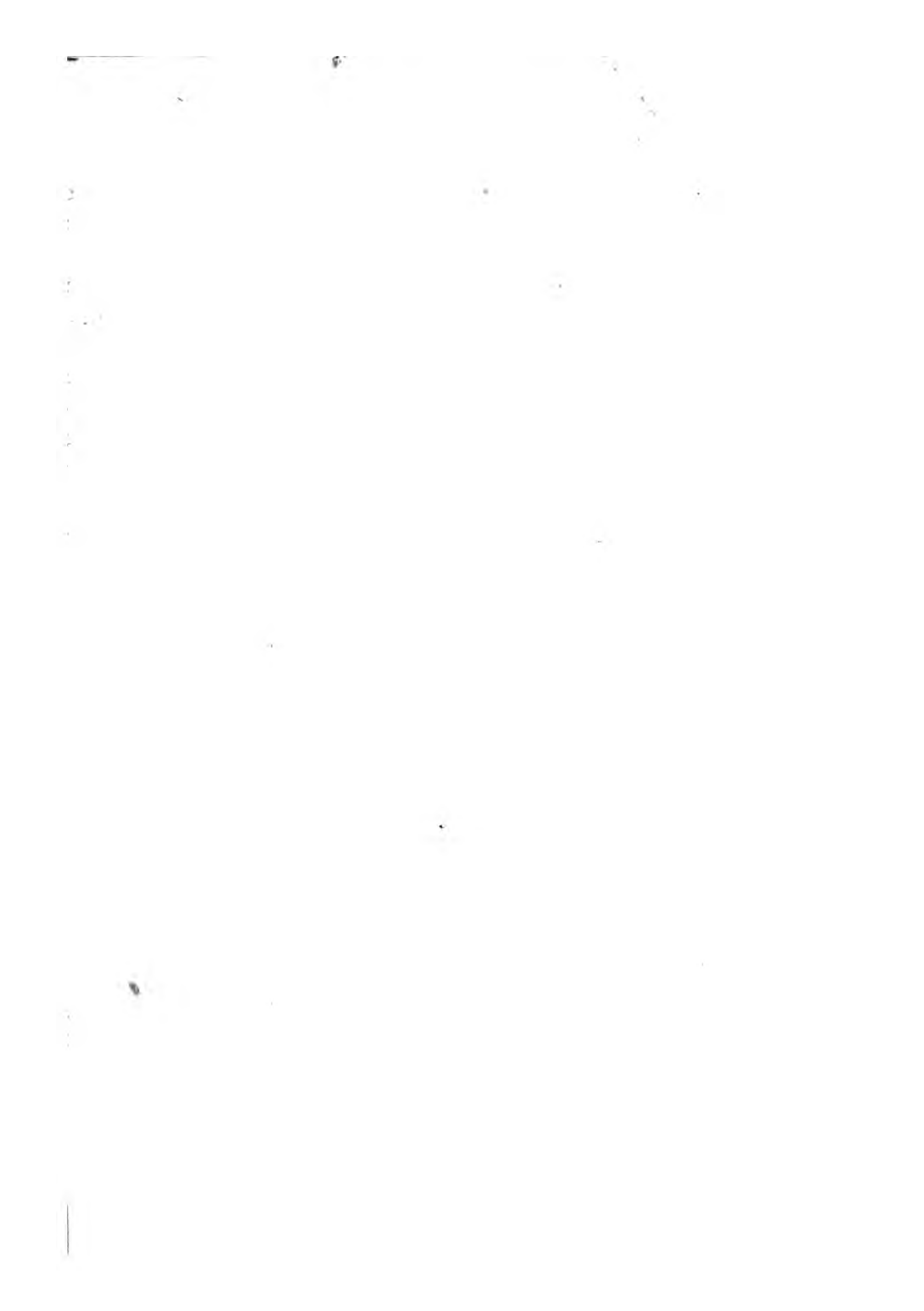
"They say that Edward's mother has scarcely been out of her room since the dreadful news came. Oh, I have pitied her so much!"

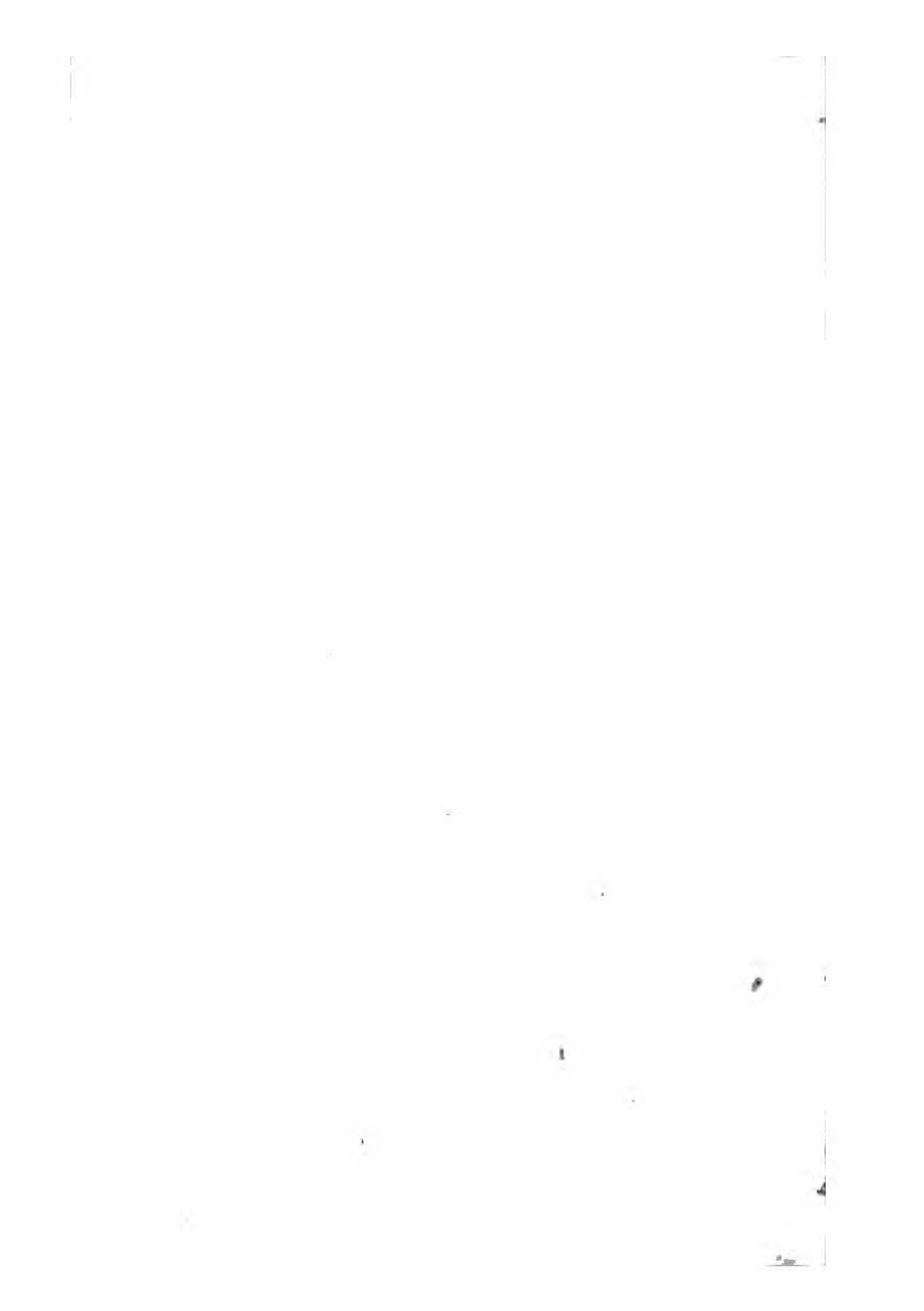
The speakers passed on, and I heard no more.

“Only one killed! Hardly worth the cost of a telegram!”

It seemed as if some rebuking spirit had thrown these words into my mind. I was shocked, and sensible of a creeping shudder along my nerves. Then my mind was crowded with a myriad multiplication of the sorrow and pain which had followed that one death. When peace comes—when the hydra head of treason lies crushed at the nation's feet—shall we pass the awful crime of those who, for selfish and wicked ends, turned our fertile fields into battle-grounds and cemeteries, and desolated our homes, as a light thing? Shall we give the fraternal hand, and offer the kiss of reconciliation, as though all were an innocent mistake or peccadillo? By the suffering and sorrow that remains unassuaged, no! Not revenge, not hate, not unforgiveness—no, not these for a Christian people; but a stern and abiding remembrance of the spirit that prompted the evils we have endured, and a never-ceasing condemnation of all who favoured it in word or deed.

THE END.







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