

# The Project Gutenberg eBook of Papers from Overlook-House, by Frederic W. Beasley

This ebook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this ebook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you'll have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

Title: Papers from Overlook-House

Author: Frederic W. Beasley

Release date: August 5, 2011 [EBook #36980]  
Most recently updated: January 8, 2021

Language: English

Credits: Produced by Curtis Weyant, Mary Meehan and the Online Distributed Proofreading Team at <https://www.pgdp.net> (This file was produced from images produced by the Wright American Fiction Project.)

\*\*\* START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PAPERS FROM OVERLOOK-HOUSE \*\*\*

## PAPERS FROM OVERLOOK-HOUSE.

By Caspar Almore

PHILADELPHIA  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.  
1866.

Entered according to the Act of Congress, in the year 1866, by  
J. B. LIPPINCOTT & CO.,  
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

---

### CONTENTS.

[Pg 3]

<a href="#">INTRODUCTORY LETTER</a>	5
<a href="#">CHAPTER I. ARRIVAL AT THE VILLAGE</a>	13
<a href="#">CHAPTER II. THE WELCOME AT OVERLOOK-HOUSE</a>	18
<a href="#">CHAPTER III. THE CHRISTMAS LOG IN THE KITCHEN</a>	33
<a href="#">CHAPTER IV. HOW THE OVERLOOK PAPERS CAME TO BE WRITTEN</a>	47
<a href="#">I. DR. BENSON; OR THE LIVING MAN EMBALMED FOR TWENTY YEARS</a>	51
<a href="#">II. THE GHOST AT FORD INN—NESHAMONY</a>	75
<a href="#">III. MY FIRST ATTEMPT AT BIOGRAPHY;—OR, LITERATURE FOR A FAIR WIDOW</a>	91
<a href="#">IV. KATYDIDS;—A NEW CHAPTER IN NATURAL HISTORY</a>	127
<a href="#">V. THE IMAGE-MAKER</a>	139
<a href="#">VI. THE CLOUDS</a>	142
<a href="#">VII. THE PROTECTOR DYING</a>	145
<a href="#">VIII. THE INDIAN DREAM-CELL</a>	149
<a href="#">IX. WILD FLOWERS GATHERED FOR MY WIFE</a>	178
<a href="#">X. RIVERSDALE</a>	181
<a href="#">XI. DR. SAMUEL STANHOPE SMITH AND THE HAUNTED HOUSE</a>	198
<a href="#">XII. MRS. DIGBY'S ECONOMY</a>	224
<a href="#">XIII. TO MY WIFE</a>	236
<a href="#">XIV. FADING AWAY</a>	237

---

### INTRODUCTORY LETTER.

[Pg 5]

MY DEAR FRIEND:—At last, as if borne to you by some scape-grace of a messenger, these papers, copied from the time-discoloured manuscripts, so carefully preserved in the old book-case, which with its dark lustre, its bright brass ornaments, is still the prominent object in our library, are destined to reach the hands into which they should long ago have been placed.

I well remember the evening on which you first heard of them, and listened to my attempt to read them to you; perplexed as I was with the faded lines, traced by fingers which can write no more.

You will not forget our drives, previously, during the day, and late in the afternoon, in consequence of my week-day service in the old church. Perhaps the ancient edifice would need the excuse of days of architectural ignorance, but no Cathedral on earth can surpass it, in its claim to occupy a place amid scenes of surpassing beauty and sublimity. There it stands alone, on the slope of an immense hill, with the whole range of the mountains from the water-gap to the wind-gap full in view—glorious walls to sustain the great blue dome of heaven! The great solitude of the road that winds along the grave-yard, has often caused me to think of distant friends, and has riveted them to my soul with still more indissoluble bonds. And the Great Friend has been the great relief from oppressive loneliness, as I thus stood in one of the beautiful gates of the Eternal Temple. As to that quiet grave-yard itself, the "rhetoric of the dead" is there well spoken, and they whose ashes are here deposited, do not find "second graves" in our short memories.

[Pg 6]

You will tell me that all connected with my church is not always solemn. Your perverse memory will never forget the leader of the choir; nay, the useful man who was often choir itself. He sang at least with energy. Unfortunately—oh well do I remember my fearful victory over my features, when I first became cognizant of the fact; a victory at a time when a smile had endangered my claims to due ministerial sobriety; unfortunately he had the habit of marking time emphatically, by raising himself on his toes, and simultaneously elevating his hand, his chin, his eyes, and his hair. Yet that was but a slight trial to us both. The man was better than either of us; and the first impression having subsided, we found that he did well in calling forth the voices of the congregation. You will recollect our return home, as we refused all offers of hospitality, although the snow was falling, and we were warned not to risk the drifts, promised by the rising wind. We would not be detained, as we had set our hearts on passing the evening together in the old mansion of my fathers. On we drove, the sound of the bells sweeping in wild merriment over the great fields of snow, or rising to a louder chime as we passed through the forest, under a thousand triumphal arches, of boughs laden with white honors. Only once, and where the road was in a ravine, was I afraid that you would be exposed some hours to the storm, until we should hear the voices of hunters, and the bay of their dogs, sent to seek us, after our custom, when any one is lost in the snow. Happily we extricated ourselves, and soon saw the lights gleaming from the windows of the house upon the hill.

[Pg 7]

How pleasant the welcome of our good old Cæsar, the man of dark hue, who had no desire to be the first man in the village, nor the second man at Rome; but was all eagerness to have a place, however lowly, in the Eternal City! Another glad welcome in the hall; a net-work of questions from little threads of voices, and the seats before the great wood-fire, one of the few remaining representatives of the profuse customs of the fathers; one witness that our forests are not yet all swept away. Did we not give ample tributes to the repast prepared by Cæsar's wife! Two hungry men rescued from snow waves, we proved that one could feast on Dinah's poetry of food, and yet, in the ensuing night, behold no magnificent bandit, with a beard that would have done credit to a Roman Centurion, and a dagger that honored the sense of sublime danger, by the assurance that if it was to give us our death-blow, it was no coarse weapon; the grand villain peering over you with an eye in which the evil fires take refuge when conscience is in ashes. You know that in that coming night, you did not even see the "fair ladie," now your wife, borne away from you, in a mysterious coach, by some ruffians clad in splendid mantles, while you were palsied, and could not move to seize the sword, or gun, or could not call for aid. How pleasant was that evening! From your weed rose the cloud that no counterblast, royal or plebeian, has ever yet been able to sweep away from the lips of men. Knitting by her little stand, sat one, whom to name is to tell, in a word, the great history of my best earthly happiness. I am sure her sweet thoughts, when spoken, were as the fragrance of flowers over our homelier fields; while her gentle sympathy added to our strength, and her instinctive and pure impressions, aided our conceptions, as gentle guides, and taught us how wisdom was linked to minds swayed by goodness. What a bond has she been of our long-enduring friendship! We talked of the old times—of the ancient famed hospitality of the house. We spoke of those who came there at Christmas—when the hymn of Milton seemed to be read in a grand audience chamber—at the Spring when the world seemed again so young—at Autumn where the mountains and hills were all a glow, as if angels had kindled them with a fire, burning, but not consuming them, turning them into great altars, by which man could stand, and offer his adoration. Then we spoke of the papers that had been read among the assembled guests. I told you their history; a history further recorded in the fourth chapter; the last of the four chapters preliminary. These were written by my grandfather. As your curiosity was awakened, I drew forth some of these, from the old book-case in the library, and read them as I could. You insisted that I should decipher them, and let you send them to the press; send them to some one of your honorable publishers, so that many eyes could read, what few eyes have rested on, in this distant solitude. Julia seconded the proposition. What had I to do, but to obey! Some years have passed, and you have often complained of my procrastination. Shall I make excuses? Excuses are the shadows which the irresolute and idle, the evil, keep ever near, as their refuge from just accusation. The moment you feel the least loss of self-respect in seeking

[Pg 8]

[Pg 9]

them, the moment you have to search to find them, take heed of them. Those formed to be giants, often live in them, and then life is consequently the life of the dwarf. I knew that I could have sent the papers long ago, had I written two or three lines each day, since I gave my promise. Julia, who, woman-like, always convicts me when I excuse myself, and consoles me, and defends me, when I am in the ashes, and contrite with self-upbraiding, who is never severe with me, but when I spoil the children by keeping them up too late at night, says, that I never allow a literary effort to encroach on my great duties; that I have had so much to do, that I could not sooner perform my promise. She laughs, and says that the dates I annex to my papers, during my progress in this work, show how I was interrupted, and that if the histories of intermediate parochial work were given, the book would be a strange record. Often the sick and suffering have caused long intervals to elapse in these labors. When I could attempt the work, the change in the current of my associations has been a relief. Julia has wished me to write histories of the lives of some of those, who composed various papers in the old case. Of course, some of the authors have been passing utterly from the minds of a race, that cannot remember, but the least remnant of those who have gone before. We lament the ravages of time. Multitudes are forgotten on the earth, whom it would be a blessing to have in perpetual remembrance. Alas! we have also to confess, that time conceals the story of innumerable others, when it is well that it should be buried in its deepest oblivion.

I hope that I have copied these papers with commendable accuracy. We trust that they will add to the happiness of those who read them, and prove at the same time to be profitable. May they increase kind impressions! May they sow seeds that shall have the sun and dew that never falls on growth that is evil! Man has tablets in the heart, for inscriptions greater, and more enduring, than those of the great ledges of rock in the far East.

[Pg 10]

As one would hesitate to write the outlines of his coming destiny, if such a pen of Providence could be ready for his hand, so he, who has any love for others, would pause before he would carve, even in faintest letters, one word on these, which could sully the surface, where the indestructibility warns us, that all is an eternal record with Him, whose eye is too pure to look upon iniquity. I need not attempt, like authors of a former age, to solicit a favorable criticism, from the "gentle reader." If I say, here, that the hall has rung with peals of laughter, as some of the papers of the old book-case have been read, that some have shed tears over the Ghost of Ford Inn, and said, it is too sad, these assurances will not predispose one who shall open the proposed volume, to utter a favorable opinion. These waifs must be cast on the waters, like all other similar ventures. We must wait, and learn where Providence shall waft them.

Will these papers outlive this decaying house? Will men love us because we have sent them forth? Will we, because of them, be grasped with a kindlier hand? Will they soften hearts in this trying world, and aid men to a greater charity?

But I must pause. Lamps will grow dim. Warnings will come, that letters may attain to too great prolixity. Readers are often not sufficiently sagacious, to know that when Homer nods, he has a design. Can I apply, what old Dr. South, the great and witty preacher said, when he printed the sermon at the Royal mandate, that the Majesty of the Realm must excuse the length of the discourse, inasmuch as he had not had time to make it shorter? Or, shall I remember the severe speech, doubtless a dutiful necessity, a knife to remove such a miserable vanity as often makes men worse than useless; the severe speech of an Eastern Divine, who, when the young preacher waited all day in vain for a compliment, to his morning's discourse, and said, in desperation, as the evening waned in the study, "Doctor, I hope that I did not weary your people with the length of my discourse," had for reply the quiet answer, "No, sir; nor by the depth of it."

[Pg 11]

So, as you have the infirmity of going to sleep over the most interesting discourse, as the lamp is going out, as I am nervous, sitting up at such a late hour, as the paper is all written over, and I have none other near at hand, I release you. Go to sleep, but wake the world to-morrow, and then say that I am your friend.

A friend of many years,  
CASPAR ALMORE.

---

## OVERLOOK.

[Pg 13]

---

## CHAPTER I.

### *ARRIVAL AT THE VILLAGE.*

I stepped from the stage-sleigh, in the village of Overlook, at the post-office: for there the driver stopped to leave his mail-bag. That important article, which, as a boy, I used to regard with undefined dread, for I associated it with a poor wretch, who was hung for laying villanous hands upon one, in a desolate road, was the old-fashioned leather sack, full of iron rivets.

Perhaps at the time when this writing may reach the press, such a contrivance may have become

antiquated; and therefore I had better add to my description, that a weighty chain passed through iron rings, to secure the opening; and finally, there was the brass padlock, at which the Indian gazed with such contempt, when he said, "Brass lock upon leather! that makes my knife laugh." I stepped from the heavy stage-sleigh into the one sent for me by Judge Almore, and it was like passing from a heavy craft on the waters, into one of lesser make, and lighter burden. John Frake, the farmer at Overlook Manor, had driven over for me. His horses seemed exhilarated by the bells, and we dashed forward in splendid style. John Frake was a character; a real man in energy, work, and talk; frank, and good-hearted.

[Pg 14]

As we drove along, in a loud voice, that permitted not a word to be lost by the melody of the bells, he made his comments upon all things, and especially on the inhabitants along the streets of the village.

"Dr. Norkin lives there," he said, pointing with his whip to a comfortable house. And then as if pondering the beginning of a long train of thought, he added,

"Those Yankees are unaccountable smart people."

"The doctor is a Yankee, then?"

"Oh no! there aint enough Yankee in him to make a spot on the map of Massachusetts. Not but that the doctor has lots of common sense, and keeps all that he has got ready for use, when wanted, as ready as my plough to go through the ground. But those Yankees have the most uncommon ways of putting things together; just as if you took something out of the middle of the earth, and made it fit something on the top of a mountain."

[Pg 15]

"Yes, but I don't see what Yankees have to do with the doctor."

"I'll tell you what I was thinking about. I was once at the mountains, forty miles off, where there is a mineral spring. There is where ladies and gentlemen go to drink water, eat all manner of things at the tavern, and get well, when they never have been sick. Iron in the water at the springs! Bless you; it would not divide the nails in a horse-shoe in a month, to the whole army of the Revolution, if they had drunk of nothing else. Well our judge and the family followed the fashion. Fashion is a runaway horse that carries a great load of straw behind him, and sometimes he has after him things much better than straw. I drove up to bring them home. But the judge was taken sick just before I got there, and sent for our doctor here, to come up and cure him. In the night, after I got there, one of your uncommon Yankees, who seemed to be well off, and to do fifty things, from what I could gather, to make money, had a bad attack; unlike anything I ever heard of around here. He was awful bad. I heard the racket, and went into his room.

"'My friend,' says I, 'you do look awful bad'—for I always speak my honest sentiments, in a sick-room, or out of it. 'I thank you for your sympathy,' says he—and yet somehow it sounded as if he didn't. I presumed he didn't want any one to talk to him. 'Send down for Dr. Norkin,' says the landlord. 'He is here;' this is what he said to the sick man. 'He lives forty miles off—at Overlook. But he is here, attending on Judge Almore—who has been ill.'

[Pg 16]

"The sick man, after a groan or two, raised himself up in his bed. It was as good as the best apple, to see how quickly he seemed to ungear his mind from his sick body. He gave a long thought. Then he said,

"'Did the judge send for that doctor, because he was in the house at the time when he was taken sick? Or did he send all the way to Overlook for him to come here to him?'

"'He sent for him to Overlook,' says the landlord, before I could put in a word.

"'Then I'll see him,' says he—speaking quickly out, and firm like, as if he was a king. Now wasn't that cute? I tell you such men think faster, and a great way before other people. Well; it's a free country, and all people aint bound to do their thinking alike."

We now came to the entrance of the lane, that led up to Overlook House.

Two large cherry trees stood on either side of the gate. I drew the attention of my companion to them. They were very venerable, and their winter boughs showed some signs of decay.

[Pg 17]

"Them big trees,"—said he. "Either of them, I'll engage is as old as three average men. They say a man averages thirty years of life. Now they are full ninety years old, and big at that."

"You have lived long with the judge?"

"Bless your heart, sir, long indeed. But he's a good man. There's few that don't say so—well, thank God, it is those kind of people that don't. When he speaks and acts, you feel that our Lord has taught him his religion—just as we know it is Sunday, when we wake and hear the church-bells ringing, and all the sun-light seems full of the sweet sound, and all the sound as if it had gone through the bright sun. I do love Sunday."

Here we were close to the house. "Come and see me," he said, "down at my house there. It is not as big as the judge's, but then there is room in it for a hearty welcome. I will give you a glass of good cider, or two, or three, for that matter. As for wine, I never keep any. It seems to me to be poor stuff, as if it was trying to be brandy, and couldn't." The mission of the sleigh was now over. I and my trunks were at the porch of the house. So the worthy farmer and I parted for the present.

*THE WELCOME AT OVERLOOK-HOUSE.*

A colored servant man, of most respectable appearance, and of quiet manners, evidently glad of my arrival ushered me into the house, saying that Judge Almore would be home in a short time, as he had gone but a little distance on the farm; and that his good lady would come down stairs in a few minutes. The hall of the house was large, and decorated with Indian relics; with long deer-horns, also, and other trophies of the hunting ground. I was hastened into an adjoining room, which I had scarcely entered, before I felt the invigorating heat from the great fire-place. There the hickory logs seemed doing their best, with their immense flame, to make me feel as if I was cared for, a stranger from a distance. On the hearth there was a small mountain of glowing coals. How pleasant it is to sit before such a fire, and to think that our interminable forests, will supply abundant fuel, for the inhabitants of our cities for hundreds of years to come. Even when New York, and Philadelphia, Trenton, and Boston, may, two or three centuries hence, have each two or three hundred thousand inhabitants, and that expectation of their increase in population, is not so chimerical as it seems, and when the country round them, may be so cleared and cultivated, that in a circle of fifteen or twenty miles in diameter, the farm-houses may generally be in sight of one another, it is probable that the decrease of our woods will scarcely be perceptible.

[Pg 19]

But as I gazed into the flames which soon removed all chilliness from my frame, I had no time for lengthened speculations on the future of our land; for Mrs. Almore entered the room, and greeting me with great cordiality, assured me of my welcome. As I was engaged in conversation with this most estimable lady, I found myself called on to regret her visitation with a great affliction. Her cheerful countenance and manner, however, proved that she had not permitted it to hang over her as a cloud, to darken her days, or to make her selfish in her expectation of attention. The affliction was a great deafness, one evidently of long duration, and incurable; so I judged from the evidence of her loud tones, almost shouting when she addressed me. I flatter myself that I can cause any one to hear me speak, who has the ability to know, that a pistol is discharged not far from his ear. And I always feel great commiseration for those who hear with difficulty. Meeting with such, I regard the power of my lungs, as a gift, particularly designed for their service and enjoyment. Indeed I undesignedly secured a legacy from an aged aunt, by the assiduity I exhibited in informing her of what was said around her, when others neglected her, as she thought, because it was so difficult to make her to hear. Trained as I had been in the past, I have to confess, that my powers of loud speech, were never more taxed than on the present occasion. The loud tones in which we commenced our conversation, were gradually increased; I perceived that as she raised the pitch of her voice, it was a delicate intimation to me, that I must speak with increased effort, if I would secure a perfect hearing. As we were engaged in this polite rivalry, each being, not only a diligent hearer, but a good speaker, a most comfortable-looking African woman, of very dark hue, entered to receive the orders of her mistress. She desired to know, as it soon appeared, some particulars concerning the approaching meal; and also to receive some orders which pertained to the room I was to occupy. The good mistress then stepped aside and drew near to the swarthy domestic. To my surprise, the lady dropped her voice to a good undertone, and gave her directions, as it were, "aside." She is one of those deaf persons, I said to myself, who can understand what others, with whom they are familiar, have to say when they see the motion of their lips. I once met with a man who had this singular gift. He possessed it to such an extent, that strangers, who conversed with him, never knew that he did not hear a word which they spoke. Yet what could I do now! I was compelled to hear what was said. How strange it was, that the good lady overlooked the fact, that I must hear all that could be heard by Dinah. And this Dinah was now informed what set of china should be placed on the table for my special benefit. From what she hinted, I inferred, that there was some special honor in this arrangement; as it proved to her that the Holemans, who took tea with them the night before, having made use of a decidedly inferior service, were some grades less respectable than myself—though the mistress, when the insinuation was made, peremptorily declared, that the aforesaid Holemans were very worthy people, and should always be treated with great respect, as valued friends, in her house. An occasion was also taken, on the mention of the white and gold china, to administer a cutting reproof to Mrs. Dinah, for a nick in the spout of the tea-pot,—which circumstantial evidence, clearly and hastily summed up, proved to be the result of carelessness in the kitchen. To this attack, Dinah, as I must honestly testify, made persistent defense, and gave some most curious rebutting testimony. And I am also under obligation to state, that even when most excited by the charge, she never even made the most distant allusion, to the possibility that the cat had anything to do with this domestic calamity. Such was the honor of the kitchen in the good old times. I also learned, incidentally, some curious information concerning the comparative ages of some chickens, which had lately been cooped up and fattened.

[Pg 20]

[Pg 21]

[Pg 22]

I gleaned besides, some antiquarian lore concerning a venerated "comfortable," that was intended for my bed,—and a hint that some portion of its variegated lining had been the valued dress of a grandmother, worn by her on some memorable occasion,—a proud record in the family history. Some very particular directions were also given for my comfort, so that my ideas on the art of house-keeping, were greatly expanded; and I was ready to look on each lady, who ruleth over a house, as a minute philosopher.

Dinah was also informed, that she was forbidden to act on a speculative principle, which she

advanced, with great assurance; namely, that bachelors did not see, or know anything; that it was only married men who did; being set up to it by their wives, who made a mighty fuss in another house, when all the time they knew things wasn't as tidy at home. She was told not to act on any such miserable sophistry—that things were to be done right, and kept right—no matter whether any one noticed them, or not. In the course of conversation, my having come from New York was the subject of an allusion; whereupon the dark woman slipped in the observation, that she did wish she could get to that place, for she "was afraid that she should die, and have nothing to tell."

[Pg 23]

After all this important business was transacted, there was a hasty, and sudden digression for a moment, in the shape of a kind inquiry into the present state of the health of the hopeful heir of the said Dinah, who was spending the chief portion of his days in a cradle. I was, I must confess it, very much astonished to learn, from the reply and descriptions of the mother, that there is such a wonderful sympathy, between the teeth which are trying to make their way into the world, and the mechanism of a juvenile which is concealed from human sight in his body. It seemed to me a marvellous proof of the manner in which such little creatures maintain their hold on life, that he could possibly have endured such astonishing internal pains; and, also, that all the world ought to know the sovereign virtues of an elixir, which was compounded at Overlook House. Its virtues, unlike the novel devices that are palmed on the public with such pretentious certificates, have been tested by the infants of several generations.

All cabinet meetings must have an end. So Dinah disappeared, after a furtive glance at my person; drawing her conclusions, I am assured, whether I would be a suitable husband for Miss Meta.

[Pg 24]

Soon after the hall door opened, and this young lady entered. Her mother introduced me to her in the same high pitch of voice, in which she conducted her conversation with strangers.

She said a few kind and pleasant words to me; and with a voice raised to an imitation of the maternal precedent, though without the loss of its indescribable sweetness. She was evidently anxious, that her mother should feel, that she was to be a party in our brief conversation.

As I looked at her, I thought that a sweeter, more ethereal form, a face more radiant with affections pure as the air over the snow, an eye to rest on you, as if it said, that every one on whom it fell was a new object for sympathy, had never met my view, and I thought then, and think now the more confidently, that I have made a good use of my eyes during my pilgrimage in the world. After the interchange of the few words to which I have alluded, she was about leaving us; but before she reached the door, her mother called to her, and arrested her steps. The good lady addressed her, in the same low tones in which she had formerly conversed with Dinah.

As I looked at her again, I felt that I repressed the exhibition of signs of unrestrained admiration. She seemed, indeed, as if she had grown up in the midst of the beauty of the natural world, and had been moulded to a conformity with all that we witness of grace in the field, or in the forest. The mother spoke in a manner half playful, half serious. "So Miss Meta this is the old way. You expected the arrival of this young gentleman, quiet, good-looking, evidently a person of good sense, and your father says, of most estimable character. And there you have on your old shawl, your old bonnet, and your hair blown about in the wind as if it had never had a brush applied to it. You are so careless about your appearance! You know that I have often spoken to you on the subject. And yet, on the most important occasions, you neglect all my advice. You will be laid upon the shelf yet. You will die an old maid. But do not blame me. Do go, and brush your hair, and put on another frock, and make yourself presentable. And after that, go and see that Dinah arranges everything right. I will give you credit for order, and expertness as a house-keeper. Old maids, however, are often very good house-keepers. So go, and do as I tell you. I don't mean to say that you are a dowdy, but I want to see you more particular."

[Pg 25]

"My revered mother," said Meta, with a most grave inclination of the head, and with a slight pomp of declamation, "your will is law. My dress, for the next two or three weeks, shall be a grand deceit, as if it was my habit to be as particular as the young Quakeress, who once visited us, and who was as exact in arranging her robes, as the snow is, in taking care, that there shall be grace in its unblemished drifts. I intend, in fact, to be irresistible. Henceforth let all young men, quiet, respectable, who have not cross eyes, and who fascinate a mother, and give occasion to all her sanguine hopes of matrimonial felicity for a daughter, beware of Meta. They are as sure of being captives, as the poor little rabbits I so pity, when once they unwisely venture, to nibble at the bait in one of Peter's celebrated traps. So, best of mothers, forgive the past. Wisest of counsellors, for a brief space, farewell."

[Pg 26]

After the retreat of the daughter silence endured for a little while, while I walked to the window, and enjoyed the extensive and beautiful view. The residence of the Judge was on a hill, overlooking a picturesque village, and hence the name of the mansion which in time dispelled a very ugly name, from the small town, and gave its own designation to the place—the name of such a collection of dwellings generally becoming permanent when the post-office is established in its limits. After this I was engaged in the survey of some fine old plates upon the wall, and the picture of a portly old gentleman, whose dress indicated that he had lived in the olden time. I was seeking to find some clue to his character and history in his face, when Mrs. Almore rose, and crossed the room and joined me.

[Pg 27]

It was evident that the picture was too important for me to look upon it and not know what was due of admiration for him, of whom this uncertain resemblance was all that remained on earth,—the frail shadow of a shadow. I saw at once that she had a formidable history to relate, and that

she had often told it to those who gazed on the form on the wall. I suspected that some family pride was gratified by the narrative; and prepared myself for some harmless amusement, as I was to watch and observe how the vanity would expose itself. But she had not got beyond some dry statistics, the name, the age, the offices held in the State in the good olden time, when such honors were always a pledge of merit in the possessors, before the Judge entered the room, without our observing it. He drew near, heard for a moment, with the greatest astonishment, the loud tones of the lady, who now addressed me.

He extended his hand to me, with very kind, but dignified, courtesy, and, after giving the assurance that I was most truly welcome on my own account, and for the sake of my father, who had been a fellow-student with him at Princeton College, and almost a life-long friend, he turned to the lady by us, his honored wife, and exclaimed,—

[Pg 28]

"My dear, I heard your elevated voice outside of the house, and in the extreme end of the hall. You really alarmed me. At first I could not imagine what had occurred in the room. Why do you speak in such tones of thunder to my young friend? Is this a new style of hospitality for Overlook-House?"

"You told me that our guest, Mr. Martin, was deaf." So spoke the good hostess, with a look of frightened inquiry, a perturbed glance at myself,—with a countenance that expressed a desire for relief,—while her tone was expressive of a great misgiving.

"I beg your pardon," said the Judge; "you are under an entire mistake. I told you that he wrote to me, some time ago, that he had met with an accident and become very lame. But when I told you this I remember that you were very much abstracted. I presume that you were deeply absorbed in some new order for your household, or in the state of Dinah's noisy heir. I never heard that Mr. Martin was deaf for a moment in his life. I told you that he was lame."

"Are you sure—are you sure that he is not deaf?"

"I am sure that he hears as well as either of us. And,—at least as far as you are concerned, that is to say that he could not have a better sense of hearing. He might possibly, it is true, be abstracted, when any one spoke to him, and imagine that he said 'deaf,' when in reality the speaker said 'lame.'"

[Pg 29]

"Dear me! my future peace is destroyed. It is worse than if a ghost intended perpetually to haunt me—for the ghost would come only in the dark; but this disaster will torture me day and night. I have buried myself under a mass of ruins from which I cannot extricate myself." And the lady looked as if an anaconda was threatening to creep in among us.

"I am sure that Mr. Martin will forgive you. He has only been annoyed by a loud conversation for a short time. It will be a pleasing variety to hear you address him in a gentle voice. Since he had such evidence of the pains you have taken to entertain him when you thought him deaf, he is assured that you will not change your desire to make him feel at home and to know that he is among friends, now that you hear so well."

"Judge, you have no sympathy. You should have taken care that I did not fall into such a terrible mistake. I often notice that you speak to me, and turn and go away, as if you never watched to observe whether I understood you or no. I have often felt it, Judge, often felt it,—although I kept my feelings on the subject to myself. And now you see the consequences. You see where you have landed me. And I am the one to suffer all the evil that results from such indifference. What shall I do? Here is Meta. Meta, what shall I do? Mr. Martin is not at all deaf. Somehow, your father did not impress what he said on my mind. I am sure that this is not the first time that I have misunderstood him, and I never have any desire to fall into error. People that are so accurate and so careful as he is, not to be guilty of any mistake in their professional duties, so accurate as they say he is when on the bench, are often careless of smaller matters at home. Meta, Mr. Martin can hear. My dear, he can hear as well as you or I."

[Pg 30]

"Let me, my dear mother, enter into your Christian joy, now that your sorrow over his supposed affliction is relieved. You know that it is an unmingled pleasure to you to learn that he is not afflicted with so great a calamity as you supposed."

"Very well, Meta."

"And then, mother, as far as I am involved in the consequences of your mistake, he knows that I appear in my present fascinations; see my smooth hair, and this frock almost new, not in my own will, or in accordance with my usual habits, but solely from a sense of filial duty. I am so charming, because of my reverential regard for the injunctions of my mother."

"Meta, can you never be still?"

"And then, mother, if there be a little art in my dress, if snares lurk around me to secure those who come near me, this does not proceed, in the least possible degree, from any guile in me. It is the mere expression of the anxiety of a mother that her daughter should not attain the condition of some of the best people on the earth. I allude to a class of my sex who are ignorantly, I will not say uncharitably, supposed to make the world uncomfortable through their inflexible devotion to minor morals."

[Pg 31]

"Meta, unless you are silent I shall have to leave the room."

"Well, mother, then I am mute. How fortunate it was that I was the only person with whom you conversed in the hearing of Mr. Martin!"

"Meta, you drive me mad. I did have another conversation, which he heard."

"Oh, do tell us! What happened? It could not have been as interesting to him as the one which you held with me. I shall not use my brush for some time without thinking about it. Do tell us. As Nancy often says, I am dying to hear all about it."

"Oh," said I, "Miss. Meta, all that your mother said was of no importance. She cannot care, when she reflects upon it, whether I heard it or no."

"But, Mr. Martin, then tell us what she said. It put my father and myself under a lasting obligation."

"Mr. Martin can be more considerate than you are."

"Yes, madam, because he has heard all. I will be as considerate as you please, if I can only acquire the same information. Well, walls have ears. And if ever walls heard anything, I am sure ours have heard to-day. They will speak in due time. Father, who has been in the room with mother since Mr. Martin arrived? I must ask Ben."

[Pg 32]

"Meta, I take my departure. If nothing is heard of me to-day or to-morrow, search the mill-pond. Oh, what a difference there is between being lame, or deaf! I cannot forgive your father. Really, he ought to be more cautious. I cannot forgive him."

---

## CHAPTER III.

[Pg 33]

### *THE CHRISTMAS LOG IN THE KITCHEN.*

The day after my arrival, Miss Meta and I were returning home, after we had driven several miles over the country in a sleigh. Our nearest conception of the ecstasy of those who shall hereafter have wings, with which they can fly over earth and sea, on a bright morning, racing with the larks, or some ambitious hawk, or, on some most fortunate hour, even with the eagle, is attained when we glide thus over the snow. But far above all the other pleasure of the time, was the sweet companionship of her whose laugh was merrier than the bells, which Cæsar had hung around the horses with a profuse generosity. I have wondered at the mysterious manner in which some of the loveliest beings with which God enriches this earth are developed before our view, on occasions when we might expect that we should obtain the least insight into their character.

How is it that the ineffable purity of a woman, her depth of affection, her capacity for sympathy, which even in its lesser degrees renders her such a blessing in a world of so much trial, can, in some instances of great perfection, appear with such evidence in a few words, in an act which requires but little self-denial, in a tone of sorrow for small suffering, or of joy for some one who is happy! There are some men in whom you place perfect confidence as soon as you once behold the eye kindled with an earnest expression, and hear their voice. After all the disappointments one endures in life from misplaced trust one may freely confess that if we have spent many years on the earth, and at last say in our hearts there are none in whose professions we can repose, the fault is in ourselves. We judge ourselves to be true men, and we cannot be a miracle, standing alone as such, amid all the rest of the human family. But if we can assuredly pronounce of some men that they are worthy of our utmost confidence as soon as we become acquainted with them, much more can we confide in our impressions, thus quickly formed, of some of the gentler portion of our race. How many years have passed since I formed my first impressions of Meta! and how true they were! Quickly, inaudible prophecies, in their silence arresting your mind and eliciting homage, were made known in her presence, and gave promise of endless charities to adorn her daily life. There was an imperious necessity in her noble nature, elevated as no power of earth could accomplish, to perform with strict exactness even the least duties, as one who heard him say that the least of his commandments can by its observance aid us to the attainment of the true life.

[Pg 34]

[Pg 35]

An enthusiast might have said that her very laugh was too pure for earth. All pure influences, too good for us, are needed by our necessities. It is well for earth that we have not only those among us who, though not criminal in human estimate, are of the earth earthy, and of whom the world is worthy. Her joy always proclaimed the freedom given the blest here below, and that it never could subvert the deep gravity of her nature—as the bark that moves so gaily in the sun and wind, by a sudden check reminds us that it cannot drift into danger, but is secure; for the hidden anchor holds in its just bounds.

We had crossed a stream upon the ice, and were now ascending the hill from whose summit we could see Overlook-House in the distance. The great forest was on either side of the way. Suddenly we espied three men holding a consultation over an immense log. It had just been severed from a huge tree, which the saw and axe had laid low, the great branches sweeping the snow as they came crushing down into heaps, and here and there revealing the dead leaves and the wintry grass.



Near them stood—models of patience—four oxen, looking as if the cold air could never discompose them, and attached to a sled whose strong runners seemed to defy any weight that could be heaped upon them. I recognized the men as servants belonging on the estate of the Judge. They were negroes, slaves,—slaves in name, awaiting a near year of emancipation fixed by the law of the State. They were perfectly aware that they could have their freedom at any time from their master,—freedom in name; for they now possessed it in reality.

[Pg 36]

Nothing could be more comfortable than their general appearance. Their dress was warm, and such as any laboring man could desire. At the present moment their happiness seemed perfect. They surrounded the log with an exhibition of exuberant animal spirits, with transport in such excess that it never could have been crowded into the frame of a white man.

As we drew near, one was demanding attention, in a most triumphant manner, to sundry vast knots which protruded from the log. Then the trio made the wood ring with shouts of merriment, and threw themselves into inimitable contortions.

"What causes all this excitement?" I asked. "Why should that log cause all the effect which the greatest wit could hope to produce?" "They are preparing," was the answer, "a back-log for the kitchen chimney. It is to be put in the fire-place this evening, the night before Christmas, after all the fire has burnt down required for an evening meal. As long as any portion of it lasts, they have holiday. In winter they have so little to do, that it would puzzle them to say what change the holiday makes in their labor. Their imagination acts on a traditionary custom. Hence they take it for granted that they have an easier time than in the month before or after. They go into the wood and select the largest tree and the one which can afford the log most likely to last. Before they retire to rest, they take great care to arrange the brands and coals so that it shall not burn during the night. They often throw water upon it when it seems to burn too rapidly. And as to their wisdom, I think that on the present occasion they have made an admirable choice."

[Pg 37]

We now drew near, and spoke to the Africans. They eagerly called the attention of their young mistress to the wonderful qualities of the severed trunk. Assertions were made concerning fabulous quantities of buckwheat-cakes, that would be eaten before that vast cylinder would be reduced to ashes. There was not the slightest idea that any member of the family of the Judge would feel the least interest different from their own. In fact they felt that all joined them in their conspiracy against—they knew not what,—a conspiracy for some great imaginable benefit unknown.

[Pg 38]

"You had better hasten," I said, observing their oblivion as to the work before them; "for the sun is sinking, and the night will soon be upon us. There is no moon to-night."

"Master," said one, "what is the reason why the moon always shines on bright nights, when we do not want him, and not on dark nights, when we can't see where we go?"

Happily, before I could summon my philosophical knowledge for practical use, and deliver then and there, from my oracular sleigh, a lecture which would do honor to my Alma Mater, while I, in a lucid manner, removed the perplexity of my inquirer, he was called away to make diligent use of one of the great levers provided for the occasion. The rolling of the log on the sled was hard work,—so hard that I gave Meta the reins, and volunteered my assistance. I did well as to the physical application of power. Yet I found these men, in this instance, possessed of more practical natural philosophy than myself. The toil was seasoned with much wit,—that is to say, wit if the laughter was to be the test. And there is no epicure who can exceed the African in enjoyment when he is feasting on his own witticisms.

Meta told me that I must by all means be a witness to the process of rolling the log on the kitchen hearth. So we led the way home, our fleet horses leaving the oxen, with their vast and important load, far behind us. On our arrival home, we found the wife of the doctor, with the Judge and his good lady. She was a pleasant person, and added to the conversation of the evening the remarks of an acute and cultivated mind. She had one protruding weakness. It was her pride in her family, which was a very respectable one in the part of the country from which she came. She had been educated in the idea, that they were the greatest people in the world,—a wide-spread delusion in the land. This led her to assure me, at least a dozen times in the evening that her family were very "peculiar." "This tea very fine! Yes, it is remarkably good. I am sure that it cannot be excelled. And I must say to you, that my family are very peculiar. They are very peculiar in their fondness for excellent tea."

[Pg 39]

"The Judge's family not exclusive! No; certainly they are very much beloved, and, mingling with others, have done great good to our community. But I must say that my family are, perhaps, too exclusive. They are peculiar, very peculiar. They do not like to associate with uncongenial persons."

"What a grand Christmas fire! Well I suppose I inherit the love of such a blaze. How cheerful it is! Well my family are peculiar, very peculiar; they always like to have a cheerful, a good warm fire. They are peculiar." So "peculiar" I soon discovered meant that they were very remarkable, very distinguished people. It was to be supposed that all that they did, indicated that they were made of clay finer than all the rest used in the formation of other people. Common things touched by their hands became gilded and refined. Wherever they were, there was a pyramid above the common elevation, and on its summit was their appropriate place. Was the doctor on that platform? Or was he only holding to it by his elbows and yet with his feet far above the earth on which common men had their place where they could stand?

[Pg 40]

With the exception of this folly the lady was, as I have said, an acquisition to our evening party. She was evidently one who had a kind heart, and devotedly attached to her Lord and Master. In after days I found her to be one of my most valued friends and advisers. As respects their ability to become such true friends, an ability which truly ennoble man, I have no doubt that her family were peculiar, very peculiar indeed.

The evening was quickly passing away when we were summoned, according to the order which Meta had given, to the wing of the house where was the kitchen, that we might see the great log rolled into the fire-place. The kitchen was a very large room, such as were built of old by prosperous settlers in our land, when they had acquired enough of this world's goods, to make such additions to the log cabin in which they began their farming life, as they in their full ambition of space could desire.

[Pg 41]

How often are the dwelling-houses in our country a curious history of the gradual increase of a family in prosperity!

The kitchen of the Judge was evidently designed by a frontier architect, as a great hall of refuge for a large family. The windows were planned when there need not be loop-holes where Indians prowled around, and might need the admonition of a rifle-ball to teach them to keep at a respectful distance. The glasses in them were small, and the pieces of wood in which they were inserted would have been strong enough for the rounds of a ladder. There was room for all things. One could churn, another spin, another mend a net; children could find appropriate nooks where they could con the spelling-book and study the multiplication table in times when the rod was not spared; neighbors making a friendly call could find a vacant space where they could sit and partake of cider and homely cakes, and if they had any special business, which a citizen would settle in two minutes, could spend an hour in preliminaries of a very vague kind, in generalities not glittering, and coming to the subject, only when they were farthest from it, and all could be transacted without any one being in the least degree incommoded.

[Pg 42]

One of the prominent objects in the kitchen at Overlook-House was the rafters above you. The ceiling was resting upon them, in the form of thick boards, which were the floor of the rooms above. From these guns were suspended on wooden forks, just as they were cut from the tree and stripped of their bark. Fishing rods were hung there in the same manner. In some places parcels of dried herbs were tied to large nails driven into the timbers. Here and there a board was nailed to the rafters, forming a shelf. On one side of the room was a great bench with a board back much higher than the head of any person who could sit upon it,—which back by an ingenious device could be let down and make a table,—the rude sofa beneath answering for solid legs.

Near this useful combination was a box on rockers—as a cradle. There lay the heir of Dinah. Its little dark head on the white pillow was like a large blackberry, could it have existed out of its season and fallen on the pure snow. Dinah, who was near it, was a character. Her sayings were memorable. One day she was speaking of a bad man who had found his way for a brief season to Overlook, and said in a state of great indignation, for he had cheated the people by some act of bare-faced villany, "Master, if the devil doesn't get that man I want any of the folks to tell me what is the use of having a devil?"

[Pg 43]

But the most singular portion of the room was the great fire-place and the arrangements connected with it. It was a structure perfectly enormous, and the stones required for its erection must have made a large opening in the quarry. It was deep and high. An ox could easily have been roasted whole before it. Over it was a shelf which no one in these degenerate days could reach. On either side were two small closets,—made in the deep wall,—the door of each being made from a wide plank, and secured by a large wooden button. In the back of the fire-place, on one side of it, was the door of a great oven,—rivalling in size, I presume, the tomb of the ancient grandee in the east—where the traveler slept, perhaps on some of the very dust of the proud man who gloried in the expectation of a kingly sepulchre. On either side of the room on a line with the vast fire-place were two doors opening into the air, and exactly opposite to each other. The broad hearth extended from door to door, being flagged with large smooth stones. Each door was framed of heavy oaken timber,—the boards in consequence of the depths of the frame being sunk as deep panels. Each had a heavy wooden latch, and a vast curved piece of wood was the handle by which it was to be opened.

On the great pavement in front of the fire-place stood Cæsar, a man with a frame finely developed. His twin brother Pompey dwelt on an adjoining farm,—so resembling him as one of the colored people said that you could "scarcely tell them apart, they were so like one another, especially Pomp." He had a rough coat thrown over him,—a fur-cap on his head, and he held in one hand an iron chain that trailed on the stone hearth and in the other a lantern emitting a blaze of light.

[Pg 44]

When we were all in our places Cæsar directed one of the boys to open the door on the right hand. There on the snow revealed by the light of his lantern, was the famous log on a line parallel with the stone paving that crossed the end of the room. Around this log, he with the help of the boy fastened the iron chain, securing it with a spike partially driven into the wood with a heavy hammer. The door on the left was then thrown open, and we saw by the lights borne by several of the laborers, that the oxen which had drawn the great segment of the trunk from the forest were standing there upon the snow waiting to complete their labor for the evening. The long chain extending across the whole width of the room was drawn through the door and fastened to the yokes of the oxen.

Then came the chief excitement of the time. A quantity of snow was thrown down at the entrance where the log lay in ponderous quiet, and beaten down with spades and the heavy boots of the men. All were now directed to stand some distance from the chain for fear of any accident. Then Cæsar gave the order. There was a sudden movement without. The words of command which oxen are supposed to know, were spoken to put them in motion. There was a loud snapping of whips. The chain was heaved in the air and rose and fell. The huge log was drawn forward. It passed the door and glided along on the stone pavement, like a great ship moving through the water after its sails have suddenly been lowered, and it proceeds by its acquired impulse. When it had reached the front of the vast aperture where it was to be slowly consumed, Cæsar gave his prompt order. It was immediately obeyed, and the oxen were brought to a pause in their exertions. It was evident from the absence of explanation to those without, and from the perfect composure of the master of the ceremony, that similar scenes were of frequent occurrence.

[Pg 45]

The chain being removed and the oxen led away, the log was rolled by the application of the levers to its place. There it lay, the crushed snow melting and falling on the hot hearth, the singing sound of the steam rising from the stones.

So there was the measure of the fancied increase of freedom from labor during the Christmas season. Nothing now remained but the gathering of all the household to the evening devotions. The Judge read the Scriptures, and after the singing of a hymn offered up the prayers. There was an indescribable reality in the attention, and a fervor in the kneeling church in the house. It led you to reflect how One who came down from above and took our nature upon him has taught man how to make his life on earth the dawn of an eternal day. I had felt the presence of God in the shades of the great mountain forest during past hours. But here in the stillness of this evening worship, as the light of the Redeemer revealed the grandeur of all that is immortal in men, of all that stands ever so near the portal of endless glory, as all earthly distinctions faded away among those who to the eye of faith, were now the sons of God,—distinctions overlooked at this hour, as the last fragment of the moulted plumage is unknown to the eagle soaring in its strength, no words could better express the sentiment of the time than those noble ones of old,—"This is none other than the house of God; this is the gate of heaven."

[Pg 46]

---

## CHAPTER IV.

[Pg 47]

### *HOW THE OVERLOOK PAPERS CAME TO BE WRITTEN.*

"I believe," said the Judge one morning shortly after my arrival, "that I must supply you with pen and paper, and assign to you a task."

"What can I do? Tell me how to be useful."

"Do not offer too hastily. Let me inform you of a custom which is observed here like the laws of the Medes and Persians.

"All our guests, at our festival seasons, and I hope that whenever it can be in your power you will be present, are most seriously enjoined to bring with them a contribution to our Overlook Papers. From each is demanded a story, a poem, or an essay. In the evening these are read. And indeed, I require from each of my friends who receives an invitation, if he cannot accept it, still to transmit his paper.

"These or copies of them are preserved in the huge book-case in the library. We sometimes draw upon the old collection, and it is pleasant to revive the old associations as they are again read to a happy circle. I ought to have sent you word, and told you to prepare your paper. It is an unusual thing for me to be guilty of such an omission. As I have been negligent I must now enjoin you to prepare to do your part with the others."

[Pg 48]

"My dear sir, has ever any guest written a paper after his arrival here?"

"Come! come! I have never asked any guest to do it after he came, who could probably accomplish it more easily than yourself."

"What shall I write?"

"Whatever you please. A Poem if you will."

"I might make the attempt. But will poetry come 'under compulsion?' Surely not 'under compulsion.' Shall I cudgel my brains? Will Pegasus go at my will when I smite him with my staff? How long might I sit here, the image of despair, and what despair on monumental marble, as desolate as the poet with fixed eye, unable to indite a line? How long might I be like the hopeless bird—all promise, but not one unfolded gleam of beauty? In this free air am I to find the poetic pressure of a prison? In this old cheerful home, a poet's garret? With your abundant and hospitable board before me, can I write as famous men of old, when they wanted a dinner? Am I to sit here, as one has said, waiting for inspiration as a rusty conductor for a flash of lightning? My dear sir, I surely can plead exemption. Let me come here, if we live, next Christmas season or at the early spring or autumnal gathering. I will provide two if you please. If the first should weary, then the circle can hope that I have kept the best for the last."

[Pg 49]

"I do not think that it will answer for one to be a hearer who has no paper of his own. So let me insist on your compliance."

"Well sir, if you insist on it, I must see what I can do. Would you object to my producing a poem already published by me in a New York paper?"

"I am sorry to say that would not be in accordance with our rules. The piece must be composed for our social gathering."

"Well I must then make the attempt. I would weave a short romance out of some story I have heard in my travels. But I am always afraid of the sad being who, searching to the fag-end of memory says, after hearing you, and approving, let me see, I have heard that, or something like it, before! I once learned a lesson and received a nervous shock which easily returns, as I was about to address a meeting, and under a sudden impression asked the most knowing inhabitant of the village, 'Did any of the speakers who have addressed you ever tell such a story?' 'Oh! yes,' said he, with sudden alarm, 'Every one who has been here has told that story.' Yet that was my main stay, argument, illustration, eloquence. I had to do the best I could without it. Since then I am in a trepidation lest I fall into the pit from which I kept my feet at that time."

[Pg 50]

"Well so much the better. Such caution will insure variety."

"Do not be too sure of that. Excessive care often leads us to the very errors it would avoid."

So our conversation closed. The paper was written and read. I looked some time ago in vain for my piece among the Overlook papers. Strange to say, it was not there. I saw the Judge originally endorse it and tie it up in the collection. Meta told me when I expressed my surprise that the document was missing, that she must confess that when she was younger and more silly, and had her taste less cultivated, she took it one day, after I had left her father's, secretly from the pile. Regarding it as of such small consequence, she had not put it back in its place; and as it was also particularly weak in having a few sentences evidently meant for her to understand as no one else could. She will find it, she says, when she next examines her old papers and letters. And she assures me that it must be safe, because the old house would not trouble itself to destroy it; the Overlook moths would not dare to touch it, and that it is destined to outlive its author, even if he had brass enough in him to make a monument.

---

## I.

[Pg 51]

### ***DR. BENSON, OR THE LIVING MAN EMBALMED FOR TWENTY YEARS.***

The United States is the oldest country in the world. Many of its institutions are of a venerable antiquity which cast those of Europe into the shade. By their side those of Great Britain, France and Germany seem but of yesterday. The honest impressions of each man substantiate these assertions so clearly that all argument on the subject would be as great a work of supererogation as that of carrying shade to a forest. Ages, countless ages, as all reflecting men are aware, have been requisite for the development of man into the highest type of civilization. Not less, it is obvious, than five thousand years could elevate any human being into a genuine Yankee. Such an immense space of time must have elapsed before man, passing through each primeval epoch, could have worn away on Plymouth Rock the caudal appendages that impeded the progress of humanity.

We have such remarkable institutions among us, such progressive theorists upon all possible subjects, that the foundations of our cities must have been laid simultaneously with those of the Pyramids.

[Pg 52]

A like conviction arises as we compare our accomplished financiers who can raise up in any plain, mountains of gold, and turn little streams of promise into seas of bank notes, with the Indian magician whose alchemy transmuted mutterings and strange figures in the ashes into comfortable fires, venison, bear's meat, and a variety of comforts for his terror-striking wigwam. Are there not noted streets in our cities where some men have discovered the philosopher's stone?

And then look on the systems of our modern politics. Each man can see what glacier periods have been over the land, what thickness of ice impenetrable to pure rays from above, melted from beneath, ice which has ground down to dust the ancient heights of honor, of modest nature distrusting itself. Yes, we are the oldest people in the wide world.

Even the little village where my history directs our attention has one savor of dignified antiquity. It has had a long series of names in no rapid succession. Our antiquarians have not paid sufficient attention to this subject of the succession of such names borne by our villages and towns. One cause is our nervous apprehension, that such a study will reveal a former state of society which people of strong prejudice may not mention to our honor. Citizens who have long purses acquired in the sale of farms divided into town lots, who have highly educated and refined children, do not wish any one to contradict them while they intimate their illustrious descent, by saying that they remember when their father or grandfather dwelt at Scrabbletown, Blackeye or Hardcorner. The honest truth is that these names of these rural towns do indicate the transmigration of the souls

[Pg 53]

of the places into different social forms. They often tell of the original solitude, the cluster of poor dwellings of men a little above the Indian, of small taverns springing up as the devil has sown the seed, of the free-fights, of the loose stones in the roads, the mud immeasurably deep, of the reformation with the advent of the itinerant preacher, of the church, of the school-house, of the rapid progress in general prosperity. In place of yielding to the seductive influence of the disquisition which offers itself to my toil, I shall consider it sufficient to say of our village that it was honored by becoming the residence of Dr. Benson. It is sufficient for me to inform my reader that at the time when my history commences his fame and occupation gave the title to the place. Indeed, in his honor it bore successively the names of Pill-Town, and Mortar and Pestle city.

His general history was not one that is uncommon in our land. Many a man of small education, but who has had a natural turn for the study of simple means for the cure of ordinary diseases in a country neighborhood has acquired considerable skill, and done more good, and far less evil, than could have been anticipated. In fact the ignorant often lean on such a man with special confidence. They prefer his services to those of the well-taught and meritorious physician. For they think it easily explicable, that the learned doctor should often cure the diseased. Books have taught him what medicines are needful for those who are sick. But around the quack there is a delightful cloud of mystery. His genius was surely born with him. He has stumbled on his remedies by some almost supernatural accident. And then there is the exciting and most pleasant doubt whether he has not had some dealings with the devil. You have moreover this advantage, that you acquire all the benefit of his compact with the evil one, without any guilt on your part. All that is evil lies on the head of the practitioner.

[Pg 54]

How noble the calling of the true physician! What more need we say of his office than that in every sick-room he can look to the Redeemer, and feel that he employs him to do, what he was continually doing by his own words when he was on the earth? "Without the power of miracles,"—I quote from memory words that fell from the lips of one very dear to me whose voice is no more heard on earth, and I fear I mar the sentence,—"Without the power of miracles, he goes about doing good, the blessed shadow of our Lord; and by him God gives sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, enables the lame to walk and raises up those almost fallen into the sleep of death."

[Pg 55]

As I write, the manly form of our family physician, the form that we laid in the grave a few years ago, rises before me. Oh! what unselfishness, what high sense of honor and professional duty, what compassion for human infirmities, what a grand and enduring perception of the brotherhood of man, of the one family of rich and poor, learned and ignorant, didst thou then learn, our dear kind friend, in thy innumerable ministrations! Literary men have too often indulged in cheap humor at the cost of the physician. It is easy to caricature anything grand and sacred. It is easy to cure in the pages of the novel the sick man who plays his pranks at the expense of the doctor, and eats his meat, and drinks his wine when the medical advice assures him that he must fast or die. Just imagine one of these literati to send for his physician in haste.

"Doctor," he exclaims, "it is well you have come! Do give me some relief."

"Wait a moment," exclaims the physician! "I have something to read to you."

"Read to me, doctor! Why I am ill,—alarmed. Depend upon it, I am very sick. Prescribe for me at once."

[Pg 56]

"Prescribe for you! Why hear what you wrote concerning physicians. If they are what you describe, you should never ask them to come near your sick bed."

"But I wrote only in jest. I described the pretender."

"No, my dear sir, your assault is without limitation. Your attack is against all men of my profession. Your words were adapted to aid the ignorant popular prejudice against our art. I will read to you."

I cannot but think that, in such a case, there are not a few writers of light literature, who would be forced to perceive the meanness of their assault on a noble profession.

Our hero commenced his public career in a blacksmith's shop, where he gave assistance in the useful work done by his master on the anvil. There he displayed a curious talent for healing the diseases of the horses, which the farmers brought to the place. This gave him some notoriety. And he never was sent for to heal as a veterinary doctor, on any occasion, when he did not have the confidence of a man whose eyes pierced far through the skin, and saw the secret causes of disease.

A change in his fortunes occurred, when a skilful physician, who fled from France in a time of great political trouble, came to reside in his neighborhood. All the spare time that our hero could command he spent in serving him in his fishing excursions—rowing his boat for him, and pointing out the best places where he could cast his hook—an act that seemed to be his best solace as an exile. The good stream or lake that well repaid his skill and patience in the use of his rod, was almost to him for a season, a Lethe between him and beautiful France.

[Pg 57]

The amiable Frenchman was not destined long to endure any sorrows on our soil. At his death, Benson became the possessor of his few books, his few surgical instruments and some curious preparations. He rented a small house near the blacksmith's shop and tavern, and placed his books, the instruments, some strange bones, a curious stuffed animal, and some jars and bottles prominently in the window. He also had some unaccountable grandeur of scientific words,

understood by all to be French—a public supposition in evidence of his having been a favorite pupil of the doctor. And then, as he was a capital fellow at a drink, it is no marvel that he acquired practice with rapidity. And as money flowed into his pocket, unhappily the whisky, in a proportionate manner, flowed down his throat. But as he had an established reputation, he of course received the compliment: "I would rather have Benson to cure me if he was drunk than to have any other doctor to cure me if he was sober." Such was the confidence of the men of Pill-Town in his skill.

[Pg 58]

Oftentimes when his brain was excited by his potations, he would wander off into the woods and seek roots and plants, talking to himself in strange words, and bent, apparently, on some great discovery. He began to throw out vague hints to some of his companions that he knew of some strange secret, and could perform a work more wonderful than he had ever before done in all his practice. But as his associates never dreamed that any one would make experiments on the bodies of men, and as his talk of philosophy seemed to be in the clouds, they, more akin to the clods of earth, heard him with blank minds, so that when he had done talking, there was no more impression left, than the shadows of passing birds left on their fields.

Once as he sat with a friend over a bottle of famous whisky, which is your true leveler, placing the man of science on a level with the ignorant boor, he gave him a full account of a singular adventure which he had with an Indian physician. It was a peculiarity of the doctor that his memory and power of narration increased, as he imbibed increasing quantities of his primitive beverage. He said that he had wandered away from home one fine morning, and been lost in the distant forest. He became very weary and fell asleep. His slumbers were broken by some sounds that were near to him, and looking through the bushes he saw a majestic Indian who was searching with great diligence for some roots, whose use he had imagined no man knew but himself. The doctor said that he rose, and approaching him with due professional dignity, informed him that he supposed he was one of the medical fraternity. His natural conjecture proved to be very correct. They soon became very sociable, and pledged each other in several good drinks from a flask which the white man fortunately carried in his pocket. The savage M. D. finally took him to his laboratory, and in return for some communications from one well versed in the modern state of medical science in France, which the red man listened to with the most intense admiration, he disclosed a variety of Indian cures. Above all he told of a marvelous exercise of his power, and related the secret means employed under the assurance of the most solemn promise that it should not be divulged. Dr. Benson told his friend that this great secret was in his mind morning and evening; that when he waked at night it haunted him, and that he could not cease to think of it if he would make every attempt.

[Pg 59]

When the bottle was nearly empty he said that if his hearer would promise great secrecy he would relate the narrative of the Indian. The other gave the required assurances. Three times however the doctor repeated one specific caution,—"Would he promise not to tell it to his wife?" and receiving three most earnest pledges, that no certain inquisition should exert its rack so successfully, as to extort any fragment of the confidence, the relater proceeded without fear. I will tell you, said he, how the red-skin doctor influenced the welfare of a great Indian Prince.

[Pg 60]

Awaha was king of a tribe whose territory bordered on one of the great northern lakes. The eagle soaring when the heavens were filled with the winged tribes, was not more conspicuous and more supreme in grandeur, than he, when he stood among all the assembled warriors of the north. As the thunder-peal when the bolt tore the great oak on the mountains, so that it must wither and die, exceeded all the other tumult of the storm, so the shout he uttered in battle was heard amid the fierce cries of conflict.

The hearts of all the beautiful maidens moved at his approach, as the graceful flags and wild-flowers move when the breath of the evening wind seems to seek rest as it passes over the quiet lake. The Indian mothers said that it was strange that he sought no wife, when his deeds had gone before him, and seemed to have softened the hearts of such as the wisest of his race might have chosen for him. He had come from the battles a great warrior. Were there not daughters of his tribe, who became more stately and more grave, as though they heard great battle songs when he came near? Were not these fitted to be the wives of great braves,—the mothers of sons whose fame would last in war-songs? Surely the great warrior had need to speak to one who would be saddest of all when he was away, and most glad when his shadow fell upon the threshold! He speaks not, and the air around him is too still. The sunbeams seemed wintry, waiting for his voice. He seemed to leave the paths through the forest very lonely. The great mountain's summit must not ever be alone, covered with ice and snow, bright in the sun and in the moonbeams. Let spring come and cover it with soft green, and let the sweet song fill its trees, as the warm light streamed over it from the morning.

[Pg 61]

Many of the tribe marvelled that he did not seek for a bride the beautiful Mahanara. Some said that it was whispered among those who knew her best, that her thoughts were as the scent of the sweet vine she had planted and trained over the door of her wigwam, intended for the narrow circle at home, but drifting away far off on the fitful breeze; for when she would not, she sighed as she remembered the young warrior.

Once, some of the village girls told her that they heard that he had chosen a bride who lived far beyond the waters, and the great ridge of the Blue Mountains.

[Pg 62]

She replied, and her words seemed to die as they reached the ear, that the one whom he had chosen for his wife, ought not to plant the corn for his food but where the flowers covered the sod which she was to overturn in her spring tasks, that she must bring him water from the spring on

the high hills where the Great Spirit had opened the fountains with his lightning, and where in vallies the pure snow lingered longest of all that fell in the winter; that when he came back from the hunter's far journey or from the terrors of his war path, her face must assure him of all the love and praise of his tribe, as the lake tells all the moon and stars shed abroad of glory in the pure midnight.

The story that was a secret sorrow to her was false, and no maiden should have whispered it. It came not over a path that was trodden by warriors. The dove would not fly in the air which was burdened by such tidings. Awaha loved her, and because she feared to meet him freely, and seemed to turn away as he drew near, he thought that she loved him not.

One night he fell asleep by the great fire of the hunters. The companions of the chase had counted their spoils, and spoke with joy of their return, of the glad smiles that awaited them, of the hum of the voices of the children as they drew near to the village.

[Pg 63]

He dreamt that he came near to his solitary dwelling-place. He was all alone on the path of the forest. He heard the unending sounds which are in the great wilderness, none of which ever removes the lonely shadow from the heart,—the shadow that has fallen on endless generations, that speaks of countless graves amid the trees, and of countless hosts that are out of sight in the spirit land.

That I could hear, he thought, one voice breaking the stillness of my way! That I could look to the end of the thick trees and know that when I issued from their darkness, as the light would be above me, so the light would be in my home.

As he was thus borne away by the fancies of the night he murmured the name of Mahanara.

By his side was her brother, who loved him more than his life. He heard the name, and rejoiced in the assurance which it taught him. When he spoke of the murmur of the dream the next day, as they were alone on the great prairie, he received the open confession. And then the brother uttered words which filled the heart with hope.

When they returned from the hunting-grounds he directed his steps to the dwelling of her father, —crossing to reach it, the little stream that she loved to watch as it foamed amid the white stones that rested in its bed.

[Pg 64]

Around the walls were trophies of the chase and of the battle. But the wild songs and the stories of former days were no more heard from his lips. He seldom spoke but of the Spirit-land, and in strange words for the home of the Indian, prayed that the Great One would teach the tribes to love peace. He said he was going to new hunting grounds, but not to new war paths. The people of the wilderness that he would meet in the sky would speak in voices that never would utter the cry of strife.

When the evening came upon them, and the old man sat silent, looking gladly on the stars, Awaha said to Mahanara, "Walk with me to these fir-trees that echo murmurs to yon stream."

"Mahanara's place is here," she said gently. "Here she can prepare the corn and the venison, and spread the skins for her guest. But in the fir-grove there is no door for her to open. There she cannot say, Welcome. There she cannot throw the pine-knot on the flames to brighten the home for thy presence. Stay here and say some words of the Spirit-land to my father. I will sew the beads, and weave the split quills, and the voices I shall hear shall be pleasant like the mingling of the murmurs of the rill and of the wind when the leaves that we see not are in motion, sounds which I so love, for they were among the first sounds I heard by the side of my mother."

[Pg 65]

Then he replied, "I must say here what I would have said to thee under the stars and the night. Why was it not said in the days that are past? The stream could not come to the water-flower, for it was frozen. The sun came the other day, and the winter-power took off its bonds from the stream. Long have I loved thee—loved thee here as I wandered in the village—loved thee far off on the prairies—loved thee when the shout told that the vanquished fled from our onset. Be my bride, and the Great Spirit will know where is the Indian whose step on earth is the lightest."

He saw that the tears were falling fast as he spoke, and that she did move as a maiden at the plea of her lover.

"Thou hast waited," she said, "to move thy flower until the winter has hold of its roots in the ground hard as the rock. Hadst thou come before the snow had melted, then Mahanara had gone with thee. Then together we had cared for him who can go out on the hunt no more. But seest thou these links of the bleached bone carved with these secret symbols? Seest thou the fragment of the broken arrow-head? Thou knowest how these bind me to another. I will pray for thee to the Great Spirit. A warrior's wife may pray for a warrior. Seek thou another and a better bride among the daughters of our tribe."

[Pg 66]

"It cannot be," he said. "I shall go away from the land where the sun shines, like the lone tree amid the rocks. It shall wither and die, and who will know that it ever cast its shade for the hunter."

"Ah not so," she said, "it is the shadow of to-day. Seek the wife that is on the earth for thee. If she has sorrow send for me and I will hold up her fainting head. If I comfort her, then shall I also comfort thee. I will speak the praises of thy tribe and she will love me."

Awaha sat in his lonely house day after day, and friends looked on him in sorrow and said that the Great Spirit was calling him, for his last path was trodden. They sought me in their sorrow, not regarding the long weary journey. My home is in a deep dark cave on the side of the mountain. The great horn from the monster that has never roamed the forest since the Indian began to hand down the story of his day hangs on the huge oak at the entrance. The blasts shake the forest, and I hear it far down below the springs in the earth where I burn my red fires.

In vain I tried all my arts to drive from him the deep and lasting sorrow. So I sought the aid of my mother whose home is near the great river that pours its waters from the clouds—over which the storm of heaven seems to rage in silence. She heard my story, and she arrayed herself in her strange robe bright with the skins of snakes from a land where the sun always keeps the earth green and warm. On her head were the feathers of the eagle and of the hawk.

[Pg 67]

She kindled her fire on the stones that were heaped together and threw in them bones and matted hair.

Then she drank of the cup, death to all but for her lips, and poured that which was left on the flame. The fire told her the story of days that were to come. She said that Awaha must live. When three winters had come and gone Mahanara would be alone, for wrapped in his hunting skins, the braves would lay her husband in his grave. Let him live—let Awaha live—for he and Mahanara shall yet dwell among their people. The vine shall fall. It can twine around another tree. Let Awaha live.

So I sought him—and his eye was dim—he scarce knew the voices of those around him. I gave him the precious elixir which my mother alone on earth could draw from roots such as no eye of man has ever seen. The young men placed him on a litter and bore him to a far off river. There we made the raft, covered it with leaves, and we floated gently onward to my cave. Then I said leave him with me. In a few days he will have strength and shall go down these waters to his canoe. A new home shall he seek where there are no paths ever trodden by Mahanara. There he shall not look round as the breeze moves the bushes, as though she was near him. He shall not see flowers there which shall say, you gathered such for her in the warm days when the Indian village was full of hearts as bright as the sun shining down upon it. The woods everywhere has a place for the warrior. There are no mountains where the battle-cry cannot echo. There are no red men where the great man shall not be great. I then gave him strange food that a hunter from the spirit land once threw down at the tent of my mother when she had healed his little child that he left to the care of his tribe. I then compounded in the cup which was white and shining, as it had been on a high rock for ages to be bleached in the moonbeams, the draught that he was to drink that he might sleep for three years. I laid him gently in the clift in the rock above my cave. The warm spring ran winter and summer beneath the place of his rest. I covered him with light bruised roots that would add to his strength. I placed over him the cedar boughs, matted, so that the rain could reach him. Over these, folds of leaves well dried in the heat of the cavern. I laid the loose stones over all and scattered the dust there which the beasts flee from, waking the echo of the forest. There he slept until the great stillness come over the husband of Mahanara, and the great song had told of his wisdom, of his battles, as the warriors stood by his grave.

[Pg 68]

One day she sat by the side of the stream,—and not on the bank where she had often chanted the wild song to Awaha. Her hands were forming the beautiful wampum belt. I came to her, and as we spoke of past days, her eye rested on the chain of Awaha, that I wound and unwound as if I thought not of it, before her eyes that rested on it for a moment only to look away, and to look far down into the deep water.

[Pg 69]

I laid it secretly near her,—and left her, crossing on the white stones of the stream, and passing into the deep forest.

When the dark night came over all the village, I crept silently to her wigwam. There she sat by the fire and pressed the chain to her heart, and looked sadly on the flames that rose and fell, and gleamed on one who was near and unknown.

He must live. So I sought him when the red star was over the mountain. Three moons more could he have slept, and have yet been called from his sleep to see the bright sunbeams.

Oh how beautiful the warrior, when all the coverings were taken away, and I saw him again as on the day when he first fell into his slumber.

As I waked him, he said, "yesterday you said that I should live. I feel strange strength after the sleep of the night that is past."

When he fell asleep a great night had crept up to his eye,—and he saw not the hunting-ground,—the fierce battle,—the wigwam,—but darkness,—and beyond it darkness,—and beyond that the land of all spirits. Now his eye was sad,—but he looked as one who heard voices call him to go forth, and be not as the stone that lies on the hill-side.

[Pg 70]

I sought Mahanara, and told her that he would come back from far, and would seek her as the bride of a warrior. I sent him to her home, and he trod the forest paths as the sunshine sweeps from wave-crest to wave-crest in the brook that hurries on, leaving the sound of peace in its murmurs. So out of the years they met, as the breeze so sweet from over the wild-flowers and trees of the valley, and the wind that carried strength from the sides of the mountain.

"Can you marvel that they call me the great medicine man among the tribes? Thou art a great



brother. Thy fire-water is good. The white men honor thee. Thou keepest the sod that is wet with tears from being turned over. They call thee the very great man of thy tribe." I will not tell you all that he said of me. Let others learn that of him, and speak of it. Then he said,—"Brother tell thou me more of thy wonderful powers. I will teach thee how to mingle the cup for the sleep of many years." "So he told me," said the doctor, "how to compound the mixture. And the secret no one shall hear from my lips. If you will, I will put you to sleep for as long a time as you can desire. Put your money out at interest. Go to sleep until all you have has been doubled. Then let me wake you, and you can enjoy it."

[Pg 71]

This desire to put a fellow-creature into this sleep took possession of the doctor, and it was his dream by day and night, when he was tipsy, or half ready to become so. He tried to persuade a good-natured negro, Jack, who lived near his premises, to indulge in the luxury. But Jack assured him that he was as much obliged to him as if he had done it.

At last he formed his plan, and attempted to carry it into execution. There was Job Jones, who lived, nobody knew how, and nobody cared whether he lived or not. When he could gain a few coppers, he was a great and independent statesman at the tavern. And when he had no pence, he walked along in the sun as if he had no business in its light, and with a cast-down look as if he thanked the world for not drowning him, like supernumerary kittens.

So one evening the doctor easily enticed Job to his office. Then he partook of whisky until he lost all sense of all that occurred around him. The poor fellow soon fell asleep. The great experimenter dragged him to a box prepared for him in the cellar. Then he poured down his throat the final draught, and covered him with great boughs of cedar. He then ascended to his office. His first thought was that of triumph. "There," he said, "was that shallow Doctor Pinch, the practitioner at the next village, who had called him an ignoramus, and said that he was not fit to be the family physician of a rabbit. He had written the account of the boy who had fallen down and indented his skull, and that some of his brains had to be removed,—all done so skilfully by Doctor Pinch, that he was ever after, a brighter fellow than ever before. His mother always boasted of the manner in which the doctor had 'japanned' his skull. But what will he be when I wake up Job? Sleep away, Job! You will have for years to come, the easiest life of any man in these United States. No want of shoes, or clothes, or whisky. When you wake you shall have a new suit, after the fashion of that coming time. Doctor Pinch! Pooh! what is Doctor Pinch to Doctor Benson?"

[Pg 72]

After a little while a cry of murder rang through his half intoxicated brain. A great chill crept over his frame. The night became horrible in its stillness.

He must try the old resource. It never failed, whisky must restore the energy. He took up the glass from the table. It fell from his hands as if he was paralyzed.

He had made a fearful mistake. The cup of whisky which he had poured out for himself was the last drink which he had ministered to Job. He had taken the sleeping draught by mistake.

[Pg 73]

When they came, he thought and found him so still, so senseless, and that for days he never moved, would they not bury him! Then he might smother in the grave! Or waking some twenty years hence, he would wake in some tomb, some vile epitaph over him, written by that Pinch, and call for aid, and die, and die.

He saw himself in his coffin. The neighbors were all around him. The clergyman was ready to draw an awful moral against intemperance from his history. He was about to assure his hearers that no one could doubt what had become of such a man in another world.

His brain became more and more confused. He sank on the floor senseless. So Job slumbered in the box, and the doctor on the floor of the office.

---

Twenty years have elapsed. Dr. Benson wakes. It is a clear morning. How has the world changed! There, out of his window he sees the village. That row of neat dwellings is his property. He has a pleasant home to wake in. His wife is the very personification of happiness and prosperity. The clothes in which he arrays himself are a strange contrast to the miserable habiliments in which he fell down to sleep on the office floor twenty years ago. There is the spire of the church—and thank God, he loves to enter there as a sincere and humble worshipper.

[Pg 74]

What a change in this lapse of years! What an awakening! How is the world altered!

If the doctor's voice reached the ear of the intemperate man, he said, "Friend, better the fang of the rattlesnake than your cup. The bands that you think to be threads, are iron bands that are clasping you not only for your grave, but forever. Awake! and see if the good Lord will not give you a world changed, as the world has thus been to Dr. Benson."

---

## II.

[Pg 75]

PART FIRST.

There, where the time-worn bridge at School House Run,  
Spans o'er the stream unquiet as our lives,  
You find a place where few will pause at night;  
Where the foot-fall is quick, and all press on  
As if a winter's blast had touched the frame,  
And men drew to themselves. Oft there is seen,  
So men aver, the quiet gliding ghost.

Descend yon hill, near woods so desolate,  
With upward gloom, and tangled undergrowths,  
And shadows mouldering in the brightest day.  
Near is the Indian spring's un murmuring flow.  
The summit now is gladdened by the Church.  
You leave all village sounds, and are alone,  
On grass-worn paths your feet emit no sound.  
The thick damp air is full of dreary rest,  
And stillness there spreads out like the great night.

Upon the left, hidden by aged oaks,  
Is a small cedar grove; where broken winds  
Are organ-like with requiem o'er some graves.  
A low stone wall, and never-opened gate  
Protect the marble records of the dead.

[Pg 76]

To stand at sunny noon, or starry night  
Upon the arch, where you can yield the soul,  
Captive to nature's impress, power with peace,  
Is stillness from afar. The solitude  
Seems linked with some far distant, distant space  
In the broad universe, where worlds are not.  
Unrest with rest is there. We often call  
That peace, where thoughts are deep, but where the soul  
Moves as the great, great sea, in mighty waves.  
Here memories for tears, forgotten thoughts  
Come without seeking. Just as the winds of May  
Bring with unlabored wings, from unknown fields,  
Sweet scents from flowers, and from the early grass.

The fearful man, who left the village store,  
Near to the cross roads, where the untutored tongue  
Supplies the gossip of the printed sheet,  
Has here beheld the mist-like, awful ghost.  
The rustic lover under midnight stars,  
Detained so long by Phebe's sorceries,  
His little speech taking so long to say,  
Has had his faith sore tried, as he has asked,  
Will I, next week, pass here alone, again?  
Far the most haunted spot lies yet beyond,  
Follow the road until you reach the Ford,  
There at the mouldering pile of wall and logs,  
Where once the floating raft was as a bridge,  
A pure white spirit oftentimes is seen.  
She sometimes wanders all along the shore;  
Sometimes from off the rocks, she seems to look  
For something in the waters. Then again  
Where the trees arch the road that skirts the bank,  
And night is like the darkness of a cave,  
This gentle spirit glides. Earth's sorrow yet,  
Its burden, weary burden, borne alone.

[Pg 77]

Sad is the story of her earthly life.  
You see that lonely house upon the green,  
With its broad porch beneath that sycamore.  
'Tis now a pleasant undisturbed abode.  
There lingereth much of ancient time within:  
Long may it cling there in these days of change!  
Quaint are the rooms, irregular. The bright fire  
Glow from the corner fire-place. Often there  
I sit, and marvel o'er the shadowy past.  
It is a place of welcome. Loving hearts  
Extend the welcome. Angels welcome thus.  
Dear sisters, reading there the purest page,  
Planning some act of gentleness to wo,  
The selfishness of solitary life,

Not finding place amid your daily thoughts,  
For you commune with that activity  
Of love most infinite, that once came down  
From the far Heaven, to human form on earth.  
The music of the true, the harmony  
Of highest thoughts, that have enthroned as kings  
The best in heart, and head of all our race,  
Have their great kindred echoes as you read.  
O as your prayers ascend, pray oft for me,  
And then I shall not lose the name of friend.  
The golden link that bindeth heart to heart  
Forever, is the Love and prayer in Christ.  
Since the Great Being gives me love at home,  
The Diamond payment for my worth of dust,  
Gives me that bright and daily light of earth,  
I'm bold, and covetous of Christian love.

[Pg 78]

This house, in ancient days a wayside inn,  
Has sheltered men of mark. Here Washington  
Rested his weary head without despair,  
Before the sinking tide rose with bright waves  
At Trenton, and the spot where Mercer fell.  
Here youthful La Fayette was also seen,  
Whose smile, benign in age, was joy to me,  
As my loved Father, at our fire-side spake  
To him, as the true Patriot speaks to those  
Who win a nation's homage by their toils.  
Here even now, on an age-colored pane,  
The letters, diamond-cut, show Hancock's name.

The war had found the host of the Ford Inn  
A happy man; no idler round a bar;  
For his chief calling was upon his farm,  
With rich fields open to the sun, amid  
The dense surrounding forests, where the deer  
Still lingered by the homes of laboring men.  
He bore arms for his country. And he heard  
The last guns fired at Yorktown for the free.

One little daughter played around his hearth;  
Oft tracked his steps far in the furrowed field;  
Looked up with guileless eye in his true face.  
After each absence short, her merry shout  
Of greeting at his coming, rose as sure  
As sounds from those dark cedars on the shore,  
When the winds rise and break their mirror there.

[Pg 79]

Oh happy child! She also learned the love  
That places underneath her the strong arms  
Of Him who held the children when on earth,  
Journeying along his pathway to the cross.  
She opened all her gentle Heaven-touched heart  
To all the unknown teachings of her home.

The wild-flower's beauty passed into her thoughts,  
And as she gazed, and saw in earth and sky,  
In every form the love of God stream forth,  
She knew of beauty that could never fade.  
For He, from whom these emanations came,  
Will never cease to be a God revealed.

Happy the child, for her fond parents both  
Had souls to kindle with her sympathies.  
They learned anew with her the blessed love,  
Which makes the pure like children all their days.  
With her pure mind repassed the former way,  
Their age and youth blended at once in her.

There was a small church in the little town  
Of Bristol, some miles distant, over which  
A loving pastor ruled with watchful care.  
He came from England,—and but few had known  
That he was bishop, of that secret line  
Which Ken, and other loyalists prolonged,  
Prepared for any changes in the realm.  
The good man loved his people at the ford.

The child's expanding mind had ample seals  
Of his kind guidance. From his store of books  
He culled the treasures for her thoughtful eye.

[Pg 80]

Another memorable influence,  
To add refining grace, came from the town.  
One, whose sweet beauty threw a woman's charm  
Over a household, seeking health in air,  
That rustles forest leaves, that sweeps the fields,  
Came to their home, and was not useless there.

She threw round Ellen, in resplendent light,  
What Ellen knew before, in fainter day.

The lady was so true in all her grace,  
Such open nature, that the child, all heart,  
Could think, could love, could be as one with her.  
How sad, that the refinement of the world,  
Should often be the cost of all that's true!

From the volcano's side the dreadful stream,  
That buried the great city, pressed its way,  
To every room of refuge. Prison ne'er  
Gave bondage like those dark and awful homes.  
Around each form came the encrusting clay:  
Death at the moment. Dying ne'er so still.  
In passing ages all the form was gone:  
The dark clay held the shapes of what had been,  
And when the beauteous city was exhumed,  
Into those hollows, moulds of former life,  
They poured the plaster, and regained the form,  
Of men, or women, as they were at death.  
So all that lives in nature, in the heart,  
Is often, living, buried by the world,  
By its dead stream. Dust only can remain.  
And in its place the statue—outward all  
The form of beauty—the pretense of soul.

[Pg 81]

How the child basked in all her loveliness!  
Unconscious, she was moulded day by day,  
Sweet buds that in her heart strove to unfold,  
Had waited for that sun. And Ellen saw  
Her mother in changed aspect. The soft charms  
Of her new friend, revealed at once in her,  
More of the woman's natural tenderness.

The gentle child, had not a single love  
For all the varied scenes of bank and stream—  
And these to her were almost all the earth,  
But as each glory centered round her home.  
If the descending sun threw down the light  
Tinged with the mellow hues of autumn leaves,  
Upon the waters till they shone as gold,  
And yet diminished not the million flames  
That burnt upon the trees, all unconsumed,  
It was to her a joy. But deeper joy  
Came with the thought, that all her eye surveyed,  
Was but a repetition of the scene,  
When her fond mother, at some former day,  
Had by her side blessed God for these his works.  
And all the softest murmurs of the air  
Recalled her father's step, and his true voice.  
Thus home entwined itself with every thought,  
As that great vine with all that wide-branched oak.

## PART SECOND.

And in this quiet scene, the child grew up,  
To know not inequalities of lot,  
Of any rank dissevering man from man.  
Once from the splendid coach, the city dame  
And her young daughter entered the Ford Inn.

[Pg 82]

As Ellen gazed upon the little one

Whose eye recalled the dove, and then the gleam  
That morning threw upon her much loved waves,  
And on the tresses, like the chesnut fringe  
In full luxuriance, she came forth and stood  
With such a guileless, and admiring love,  
That tenderness was won. And then they strolled  
O'er Ellen's favorite haunts. She asked the child,  
Have you such waters, and such trees beside  
Your home far off? The little languid eye  
Gazed vacantly on all the beauty there,  
And then, as one who had not heard the words,  
And least of all could give forth a response  
To nature's loving call, even as it passed  
To her, through Ellen's eyes, and Ellen's voice,  
And from her kindled soul,—she turned again,  
Absorbed in the small wagon which they drew,  
And to the stones they skimmed upon the stream.

Just for a brief space, down there seemed to fall  
A veil between the two—a veil like night.  
All Ellen's greater, deeper swell of tides  
Of soul, forever dashing on the cliffs  
On which mind's ocean-great forever beat  
Their swell of thunder, here could find no height  
That could reverberate. And yet her heart  
Was all too noble, high, serenely pure,  
Too Christ-taught ever thus to stand apart.

The tender gentleness, the laughing eye,  
The soul responsive to the moment's joy,  
The power to love, the softening sympathy  
With every bird or squirrel that appeared,  
Or rabbit, scarce afraid, with wondering eye,  
The love of parents, her sweet talk of friends,  
And above all, a heart to beat so true  
To all that One in heaven had said to her,  
Were most alluring powers. Ellen forgot  
Wherein they differed: And their souls then chimed  
As sounds of bells, blended in summer's wind.  
So, as if sunbeams faltering on the bank,  
The cloud departing, creep o'er all the green,  
Her brightening interest rested on the child.

[Pg 83]

And when they parted at the bridge of logs,  
Though the child's dress was gorgeous, and the pomp  
Of city livery from the chariot shone,  
While the soft tear was in our Ellen's eye,  
There still dwelt all unknown in her sweet mind,  
All free from pride, the deep inspiring wish,  
That she could raise this merry-hearted one  
Above herself: and then there came the thought,  
Unconscious, causing sorrows—higher aims—  
That the one gone was poor, and she was rich.

There was a loneliness, and so she sought  
Her mother; whose companionship was peace:  
Who ever won her to her wanted rest.

There is a poetry in many hearts  
Which only blends with thought through tenderness:  
It never comes as light within the mind  
Creating forms of beauty for itself.  
It has an eye, and ear for all the world  
Can have of beauty. You will see it bend  
Over the cradle, sorrow o'er the grave.  
It knows of every human tie below,  
The vast significance. Unto its God  
It renders homage, giving incense clouds  
To waft its adorations. By the cross,  
It hears the voice, "How holy all is here!"  
It speaks deep mysteries, and yet the clue  
Is most apparent to the common mind.  
Its sayings fall like ancient memories;  
We so accept them. Natures such as these  
Are often common-place, until the heart

[Pg 84]

Is touched, and then the tones from gates of heaven.  
Such are the blessed to brighten human life—  
To give a glory to our earth-born thoughts—  
To teach us how to act our deeds as kings,  
Which we might else perform as weary slaves.  
They give us wings, not sandals, for the road  
Full of dry dust. And such the mother was.  
So as we tell you of the child, there needs  
No voice to say, and such the woman was.

One day she sought her father in the field,  
Just before sunset, ready for his home.  
And as they reached the rocks along the shore,  
Where the road turns, to meet the deep ravine,  
Nigh unto Farley, a faint cry for help  
Rang in their ears. It was a manly voice  
Grieving through pain. They turned aside, and found  
A stranger, who had fallen, as he leapt  
From out his boat. His fallen gun and dress  
Proclaimed the sportsman. Aid was soon at hand,  
And in their dwelling he found friends, and care.

[Pg 85]

Days past. His mother came, and soon she found  
He spake to Ellen, Ellen unto him;  
As they spake not to others. And it seemed,  
Such a perpetual reference in his talk,  
As if he had not now a single thought,  
Which had not been compared with thought of hers.

At first her pride was moved. And while she stood  
Irresolute, the spell was fixed: as when  
The power of spring thaws winter to itself.  
She knew her son was worthy: and she knew  
Here, in the wide-world must he seek a wife.  
And in due time she was his fair-haired wife.

They had a rural home across the stream.  
Their lights at night answered the cheerful light  
Of her paternal home. Their winter's fires  
Mingled their gleam upon the dark night wave,  
Or on the ice. By summer's winds her voice  
Was wafted o'er the waters, as she sang:  
And loving hearers blessed her in their hearts.

Oh! what a joy, when in her arms they placed  
Her son—ah doomed to be her only born!  
Her cup of happiness seemed now so full.  
And then the Father, knowing all to come,  
Gave her more grace, and so she loved him more,  
And had no Idol. But, as days rolled on  
Such sorrow came, I scarce can tell the tale.  
She saw her husband's manly strength all gone.

[Pg 86]

There was a withering tree, in the spring time,  
Which on the lawn, seemed struggling to assume  
The Autumn's hues amid the world's full green.  
He faintly smiled, and said, "So do I fade."  
Soon it was dead. He lingered slowly on.  
Hopes came: hopes faded. From the early world  
'Tis the same story. It was well for her,  
In this her sorrow, she had learned to weep  
In days of bliss, as she had read the page  
Which tells of Jesus bearing his own cross.

His mother came, but Ellen was repelled  
By the stern brow of one who met the shock  
And would not quail. That hard and iron will  
Was so unlike *her* firmness. She was one  
Who had ruled abjects. Sorrow seemed a wrong.

The parting time drew near. And then as one  
Who asked as one gives law. "This little boy  
Should dwell with me. Thereby shall he attain  
All discipline to form the noble man.  
Even as I made his Father what he was,  
So will I now, again, care for the child.

Let him with me. And he shall often come  
And visit you. This surely will be wise."  
We need not say that Ellen too was firm.

A mother's love! In all the world a power,  
To educate as this! Could any wealth  
Of other learning recompense this loss!  
Would this stern woman ripen in his heart  
Fruits, that angelic eyes beheld with joy?  
"When the boy grew, at times she'd gladly send  
With thanks, the child to all this proffered care."  
But now—to send him now! Why at the thought  
A darkness gathered over all the world.  
From all things came a voice, "All, all alone,  
The husband is not—the child far away."

[Pg 87]

There was strange meaning in the angry eye;  
A strange defiance, and an unknown threat,  
Enmity and a triumph. As if a triumph gained.  
A nation crushed, her husband's mother looked,  
No flush was on her face—her voice the same.

Coldly she said, farewell. And Ellen held  
The child with firmer grasp, when she was gone.  
Then she had sorrow that they thus should part;  
For she felt all the reverence death made due,  
And also mourned rejection of her love.

As the child slept one night, watched by his nurse,  
She crossed the river on the bridge of logs,  
To reach her parents. Under the bright stars  
The Neshamony, and its hurried waves,  
Rising and falling all around her path.  
No peace in all the Heavens that she could see  
Was like her peace. "I suffer here," she said,  
"But suffering, I shall learn more love for all."

She had returned. Her footsteps died away,  
Her parents stood yet in the open air,  
Where they had parted with her for the night.

Then o'er the stream there came an awful cry.  
It was her cry. Oh agony to hear!  
It stilled all sounds besides. It seemed to make  
The wide-arched Heavens one call to echo it.  
Parents and others rushed there with affright,  
In breathless terror. Nurse and child were gone.  
Each wood around, and every forest road  
Gleamed all the night with torches. But no cheer  
Rose to proclaim a trace of faintest hope.  
One traveler said, that on a distant road  
He met a carriage, hurrying with strange speed,  
And heard, in passing, cries of a young child.  
In vain they follow. Hopeless they return.

[Pg 88]

Oh wondrous, the ingenious plan devised  
By that poor mother to regain her child!  
Her parents tried, as if for life and death  
To give her aid: and saw that she must die:  
For patience such as hers was all too grand  
To linger long on earth. She day by day  
Trode her old haunts. But never did she see  
The Heaven, or beauteous world. Her pallid lips  
Moved with perpetual prayer. And when she leaned  
On those who loved her, the storm-tossed at rest,  
She was as quiet as in days, when she  
Was but an infant. When they spoke of hope  
She smiled. It was a smile of love, not hope.  
It was indeed simplicity to one,  
Just on the threshold where His people pass,  
And where, forever, they have more than hope.

All saw that she attained a mystic life,  
That was not of the earth. What might she had  
To love the sorrowing! By the dying bed  
She seemed as if she had not known a pang,

[Pg 89]

Her voice so peaceful. Little children round  
Gazed sorrowful: and in their confused thought  
Deemed that the anguish of her little child  
Weeping its mother, was her dying pain;  
And thought how desolate fond hearts would be  
If they were gone, as was her little one.

One sweet Lord's Day she knelt down at the rail,  
In her loved Church, and had forgot all grief,  
Receiving there the hallowed Bread and Wine,  
And the one shadowed forth had strengthened her,  
So that she fed on food come down from Heaven.  
The others moved. But she was in her place.  
The Pastor came, and found that she was dead.  
Oh how the tears of Christians fell that day!  
Oh how they thanked God for her good release!  
And so she went to her eternal rest.

But men, unreasoning, said they saw her form,  
Oft in the night, along the river shore—  
Oft at the Ford, which now is crossed no more.  
And men will say, in firmness of belief,  
That when the Inn was closed, and no man dwelt  
In its forsaken walls, a light was seen  
In Ellen's room. And then they also say,  
That pure white flowers which never grew before,  
Now come with Spring, where her bright spirit walks.  
My children say, that if you hear the owl  
Along her pathway, you may hasten on  
Sure that her spirit will not meet you there.  
But should you hear a bird of plaintive song,  
Break the night's stillness, then go far around  
By field and wood—for you may see her form  
Along the shore she gladdened with her life—  
A shore of many sorrows at the last.

[Pg 90]

---

### III.

[Pg 91]

#### ***MY FIRST ATTEMPT AT BIOGRAPHY;—OR, LITERATURE FOR A FAIR WIDOW.***

I had just concluded my first cause at the bar. My duty had been the defence of a man, whom the jury, without leaving the box, condemned to be hung. My friends said that I spoke very eloquently. I consoled myself for my want of success, by remembering that my client had put into my hands, sorry evidence of his innocence, in place of having allowed me to arrange the circumstances of his murderous deed, so that the testimony against him might have at least, some degree of inconsistency and doubt. But the rash creature formed his plan for killing a man out of his own head. A poor, stupid, blundering head it was.

I have always regarded that trial with a cool, philosophical mind. I think that any gentleman, who indulges himself in that rather exceptionable occupation of shedding the blood of his fellow-man, without first consulting a lawyer, deserves to be executed. And, verily, this fellow got his deserts.

Well, as I sat in my office, perfectly calm and composed, some hours after the case was decided, I received a pretty note from a widow lady. I had often met her at our pleasant little evening parties. She was on a visit to one of her friends in our green village; was very pretty, was said to be quite agreeable, and it was obvious that she was much admired by the gentlemen. As to her age—to say the least on that subject, which I consider, in such a case, to be the only gentlemanly mode of procedure—she was some years older than she wished to be accounted.

[Pg 92]

Her particular friends said that she had been very beautiful as a girl. She was one of that select class, scattered over our country, concerning each of whom there was a family tradition, that on some occasion of public ceremonial, General Washington had paused and stood opposite to her in mute admiration. I know that the great Father of his country was reported to have paid such a tribute to one of my maiden aunts—and that the story procured from her nephews and nieces a large portion of respect. I boasted, as a boy, of this fact—regarding it as a sprig of a foreign aristocratic family, would the honors of his aunt, the Duchess. But an unreliable boy at our school matched this history from the unwritten archives of his vulgar relatives. So, in great disgust, I held my tongue on the subject for the future.

Well, thought I, as I mused over the note of the widow, the formation of some of her letters indicating a romantic turn of mind; this is, indeed, a strange, a very strange world. Here I have just done with a client who must get himself hung. A dull, stupid fellow; a blockhead of the most

[Pg 93]



knotty material, "unwedgeable" by any possible force of common sense; a spot on the face of the earth! Hang him! Hanging is too good for him. He was a fellow who had neither eyes, nor nose, nor mouth for the attracted observation of a jury, nor any history, nor any ingenuity in his murderous deed,—as a thread on which a poor advocate could suspend one gem of argument, one gem of eloquence to blaze and dazzle the eyes of the twelve substantial citizens, whose verdict was to life or death. And now here is a call to attend to some legal business to be done in the sunshine of a fair lady's favor! Has she heard of the rare ability displayed in the defence of this man who is so soon to be suspended in the air, as a terror to evil doers? Or has she been allured by my good looks and agreeable manners? Handsome!—a few years older than myself, and then a good little fortune, which my legal knowledge could protect. Well, if this world be odd, I must make the best of it. Society is a strange structure; and happy is the man who is a statue ready for his appropriate pedestal.

It is unquestionably an amiable trait in human character which clothes those, who by special circumstances acquire marked relations with us, in attractions which surpass ordinary charms. [Pg 94]

I must freely confess that I never saw the widow look so interesting as at the hour when I made my visit. I presented myself with dignity, as one who represented learning at the bar, and future dignities on the bench. She received me kindly. There was a seriousness in her demeanor, an obvious earnestness, as of one who had a burden on the mind, so that I perceived that the occasion was one of great importance.

I ought here to inform the gentle reader that it had been my good pleasure, instigated by ambition natural to young men, and as a relaxation from my graver studies, to indite various articles in prose and verse for the *Newark Democrat*;—a paper which was supposed by the editor, the host at the Bald Eagle Inn, the headquarters of the ruling political party in our town, and also by several members of the Legislature who could read any kind of printing, to exert a great influence over the destinies of our country.

There was one contribution of mine, entitled, "The Flame Expiring in the Heart," which obtained great admiration, and was committed to memory by a number of the young ladies at Miss Sykes' boarding-school. It was copied into both of the New York papers. Just, however, as it seemed to be securing a place for itself in American poetry, some one, urged by envy, and under the instigation of very bad taste,—some said it was Paulding, some Washington Irving,—but that was simply slanderous,—I say some one of more self-conceit than of the gift of appreciation of pure versification, and of elevated sentiment, wrote a reply. It had a hypocritical dedication as if the author of the aforesaid poem was affectionately addressed, and as if the utmost tenderness of sorrow was displayed in sympathy. To crown all, the coarseness of the writer was shown in the title, "A Bellows to Fan the Expiring Flame of Alonzo in the Newark Democrat." [Pg 95]

However it is not necessary for me to dwell on my literary career. I was compelled to allude to it, in order that you could understand the reasonableness of the conduct of the lady under the circumstances which I now describe.

After a few words of greeting, she at once descended into the "midst of things." She informed me that the reasons of her sending for me, were her convictions of my goodness of heart, which she gleaned, no doubt, from the tone of my poetry, of my elevated desire to promote the interests of science and of letters, and her high idea of my literary abilities, particularly as a writer of prose.

Here I felt that her critical skill was in error. She had not, perhaps, as much natural capacity for the admiration of sterling poetry as of prose. Without intending to hint that I pretend to the false humility of undervaluing my prose style, I am satisfied, that to say the least, my poetry is in all respects its equal. But to return from this brief digression; the fair one proceeded to say, that she perceived that I had a remarkable gift in narrative. [Pg 96]

Now, her deceased husband, she said, was a very remarkable man. A true account of his abilities and virtues need only be placed before the public attention to secure him a perpetual remembrance among men. It would be a great wrong,—indeed it would be robbing the world of a just claim, that his character, writings, and his general history should not be widely known. As she discoursed on the subject, she became a little romantic; and when she began to expand her views, and to adopt the figure of a flower concealed from the gaze of men, lying buried in the dark recesses of the forest, which ought to be brought out before the common view, I doubted whether the sentence had not been previously studied. This only proved, of course, her faithfulness to the memory of her husband; and her desire that I should enter into her sympathies.

She proceeded to say, that she had selected me as his Biographer. If I complied with her wishes, I would find that I had undertaken a task in which I would have intense interest, and be stimulated to exertion. She could tell me of eminent men who had spoken of him in terms of exalted praise. He had once sent to a distinguished scholar in Germany, a strange petrification; and the learned man had written a long essay, in which he described it, and made it the basis of remarks on nature in general, and took occasion to speak of his American correspondent as a learned man, and one who wrote in magnificent sentences. Indeed, I was to find no difficulty in collecting the greatest abundance of material for a memoir. She wished this composition to be prefixed to a large volume in manuscript which he had prepared for the press some years before his lamented close of life. The volume was a treatise on "Fugitive impressions, and enduring mental records." [Pg 97]

Now had this proposition been made by a man, I should have declined the undertaking. In that case law would have appeared as a jealous master,—its study long, and life very short. But as it was, the lady had sufficient power to extort a promise that I would devote myself to the work.

The gratitude of the fair one, was, in itself, no small fee for the labor which was before me. I felt that it was necessary to arrange with her, that I could consult with her at all times, as I proceeded with my work, and that she should hear me read over a page at any time, or even sentences, if I needed her advice. These proposals satisfied her that I was about entering on my duty in earnest, and she became so affable, so pleased with me, that I anticipated that every page of my work would secure me a pleasant visit.

[Pg 98]

My first plan was to make a tour to the village which had the honor to number a few years ago, Dr. Bolton, who was to be so famous by means of my well-rewarded pen. And I must confess that my arrival at Scrabble Hill, for such was the name of the place, was attended with circumstances so very dismal, that my ardor would have been damped, had not a bright flame sent its warmth, and cheering rays through my mind.

I remembered that my very absence from Newark was a perpetual plea for me, to the lady whom I sought to serve. And this consoled me, as I drove along the street of the place. The dwellings were poor. They were more dismal than houses falling into ruins; for it was evident that they had been run up as ambitious shells, and never finished. The men went about with coats out at the elbows, and seemed to drag along languidly to the blacksmith's shop, or to the inn. The whole place looked as if it had no thought of better days. My sudden presence, and the appearance of my horse and gig, promised, as the opened eyes of the gazers assured me, to exercise the mental faculties of the inhabitants, in the highest degree of which they were capable.

[Pg 99]

The inn was no better than the rest of the village. The landlord was one of the most imperturbable of human beings. I verily believe that his wife told the truth when she asserted, as I inquired whether he could not be sent for, to sit with me, tired of my solitude in the evening, that I need not think of such a thing, for "John Hillers was no company for nobody." And this remark, I thought, was accompanied with the suggestion hinted in her manner, that she herself would be a far better gossip. Her exact adherence to the truth was, I presume, equally manifested, when I asked as a hungry man, "What have you in the house?" and she replied, "Not much of anything."

After a wretched meal in a room half heated from a stove in the adjoining kitchen, and where the fire-place was full of pieces of paper, and of empty bottles labelled "bitters," I began to reflect on the nature of my undertaking. The great responsibility devolved on one who should attempt the biography of so great a man as Doctor Bolton, all at once assumed a new aspect. My vanity and self-confidence began to ooze away. These rainbows faded, and a very dull sky was all that was left.

Was I able to do justice to so great an ornament of my native land? The reputation of a man sometimes depends on the ability of his biographer. A good memoir is a bright lamp, which guides the eyes of men to works, otherwise, perhaps, doomed to lie in obscurity forever. And when they are opened, it throws a gleam on the page, which secures attention, and elicits admiration. All the civilized world sees its great books in the light supplied by a few critics. Hence the critical biographer may enhance all the merit of the author, who is his subject. On the other hand, if he usher the unknown book before the public, by a dull and weak narrative, and criticism, men will imagine that he has been selected as a congenial mind, and will slight even the treatise of a man like Doctor Bolton.

[Pg 100]

In the morning the sun began to shine,—for I ought to have said that when I entered the village I drove through a dull misty rain. I took heart, and determined to prosecute my researches with ardor. What is to be done must be done, and let us try and do all things well.

The first person on my list of those who could give me information, was Mrs. Rachel Peabody. I found her at home. She seemed much surprised and mystified, when I told her that I was about writing a life of the doctor,—but not at all astonished that when I sought information, I should come to her.

[Pg 101]

The reference to the past excited her mind. For an hour or more she poured forth her recollections. And gentle reader, my page would present a strange array of information, could I accurately record the words that flowed from her lips. Her chief idea of the doctor, was, that he carried with her help, advice, and warm cabbage leaves, Eliza Jane, Faith Kitty, and John Potts, of the house of Peabody, through a variety of unaccountable diseases. Hitherto I had been a creature, hardened at the cry of little children. Now when I learnt what a sad time they often had, when their teeth were ready to force their way through the gums, I am prepared to bear all the noise which they can make, with a patience that will cause me to be a favorite with every mother.

I must confess that I left the mansion of the Peabodys very much perplexed, to know what I could weave, of this conversation into my biography. Had I gleaned a fact, that ought to live in the memory of men, long after marble monuments shall have crumbled into dust? As I formed my enduring statue, was I now able to take my chisel into my hand, and leave its immortal line? I flattered myself that I had a presentiment, that I should yet discover in this narration, some evidence of the greatness of the celebrated physician.

And now I was to call on Miss Mary Phelps—a lady of great respectability—advanced in life—who

[Pg 102]

had spent her years in maiden meditation fancy free.

Miss Phelps was certainly one of the most homely creatures, on whom my eyes were ever compelled to rest. If she had qualities of mind and heart, sufficient to compensate her for her external appearance, she was indeed an angel within.

But I quickly ascertained, that such a theory was impracticable. Her temper was, evidently, a torment to those around her. The airs of a foolish girl had not disappeared from her manner. She even received me with a ridiculous affectation of shyness, and when she glanced at me her eyes fell quickly to the ground.

"Madam," said I, "I have been referred to you as to one who could give me valuable information, for an important work which I have in hand?"

"Oh, sir—" and her looks indicated intolerable disgust, and great defiance,—"you are one of the folks hired to take the census, and you want Papistical statements about the ages of people, that ain't as old as you wish them to be."

"Oh, no—nothing of the kind. I am engaged in writing a life of Doctor Bolton. As his appointed biographer, I wish to attain all the knowledge I can concerning him. For this reason I have visited this village, where he once resided,—such a successful practitioner; and the object of such universal love and admiration. You have dwelt here a great many years." Here the lady frowned in a very ominous manner. "That is to say, you lived here as a child, and continued here until the present maturity of your powers has been attained. I have therefore to inquire of you, whether you can give me any information about him—anything that would throw light on his character. After all it is your gentle sex who retain the most tender, and lasting impressions of such a man."

[Pg 103]

Here Miss Phelps' demeanor became a most unaccountable procedure. Her eyes fell upon the floor. She looked as if she thought, that deep blushes were on her sallow, sunken cheeks. She became the most wonderful representation of modesty, sensibility, and embarrassment.

I waited patiently, but there was no response.

"Madam," said I, "unless the friends of the Doctor give me their assistance, it will be impossible for me to write his life. Think, madam, what a wrong it would be, that his history should not be known to the world! Surely you can inform me of some circumstances, which are of an interesting nature in his history. Can you not recall any events, which awaken tender sentiments? Did nothing ever occur in your intercourse with him,—did nothing ever occur between you that was memorable?"

"There may have been circumstances," she said, "which are of too delicate a nature to confide to you. There are feelings which one does not want to speak about to a gentleman, whom one did not know a little while ago from Adam."

[Pg 104]

"Indeed, madam, if the Doctor attended you in any illness, whose nature was such that you would prefer not to speak of it, do not for a moment suppose that I would trespass on the delicacy of your feelings by any inquiries. In fact it is enough for you to assure me, in general terms, that the Doctor was a skilful physician. I would much prefer such general statements: particularly as my nerves are much unstrung by hearing of the diseases of some children in this place—for whom he ministered in the most admirable manner. I need not print your name in his biography. As to diseases, I do not know the symptoms of those of the heart—or——"

---

"Ah, then," she said, "you have hit it. The heart! He was a lovely man. Yes, he was a man that any woman could love." As this was said, her hands were clasped together.

"I thank you," I replied, "for that information. You had, of course, ample opportunity to know his character. You have been his intimate friend." Here the lady gave me another timid, hesitating glance, and then her eyes sought the abiding place on the floor.

"Indeed I do not wish you to speak of anything which is unpleasant to you. If your admiration of the Doctor is so great, all that you could tell me, would be in his favor. Out of your recollections, you can suggest anything that you deem proper."

[Pg 105]

"You have heard about him, and me?"

"I have been told that you were intimate with him. That you could give me information about him. Whatever tender memories I may awaken, do not allow me to distress you."

Here she put up a marvelously big handkerchief to her eyes. Dear me, I thought, at least she had a tender heart.

"If, madam, you have lost a dear friend, whom the Doctor attended in his last illness—but excuse me,—I regret that I trouble you, that I awaken sorrowful recollections."

"You have never, then, heard of my history?"

"No, madam."

"The Doctor was a great loss to me." The utterance was distinct, in defiance of the huge

handkerchief.

"Were you in ill health at the time of his death?"

"I enjoyed very bad health—and he attended me—like—like——"

"A brother?"

"No brother could be so affectionate. Oh how often we sat together in this very room! Our hearts have been so full, that we were silent for half an hour together."

[Pg 106]

"The Doctor was very much attached to his last wife, was he not?"

"He married her after he was disappointed in another object of his affections. But it was not my fault. Things will cross one another sometimes, and make all go wrong. He said, when he gave me a bill one day,—that I was necessary to his existence. I shall never forget it. He did marry that girl—far too young for him. But I didn't blame him. I will not say any more. My feelings oppress me."

Suddenly, I began to understand, the meaning of this mysterious conversation. You will say I was excessively stupid not to perceive it before; that the hints were almost as intolerable and palpable as the most excessive hint ever given—that of Desdemona to the Moor of Venice. But you will please to remember, that you had not the personal appearance before you, which was in the room with me.

After I left this informant, I sat down on the rail of a small bridge, and then made a memorandum, of which you shall hear in due season.

I was told, in one of my "searches for truths," that if I would only write to Mr. Bob Warren, of Hardrun, I could acquire important knowledge of the nature which I so eagerly coveted. Accordingly, I addressed to him a very polite letter, and begged his aid—as I was collecting materials for the life of a celebrated Physician—Dr. Bolton, of Scrabble-Hill.

[Pg 107]

Only a short time elapsed before I received a reply, and to the following effect:

"ROBERT LORING, Esq.,—*Dear Sir:*

"About the doctor. I did know him. That is to say, I used to meet him scattered about the country, though I never called him in for professional services. In fact I believe my mother-in-law has more judgment about common ailments, than half the doctors around the world; and, thanks to a kind Providence, we have had wonderful health in the family.

"You want to hear about his personal appearance. He was a short thick-set man, with rather a reddish summit, and a sort of an in-pressed nose, and his skin always so tight that it seemed as if no more ever could get into it. As to his manners, he was slow, awful slow; slow in taking in ideas, like in mind in this respect, to snow melting on a March day. He did not say much, and so people, after the common ignorant notion about such folks, thought that as not much came out of him, there must be a great deal left in him. He would often repeat what others said, only putting the things into bigger words, and rolling them out so that people did not know their own observations.

[Pg 108]

"You ask me if I remember any observations of his. The most sensible remarks he ever made were some scornful attacks on Tom Jefferson's gun-boats, just before election; but I cannot say what they were, being very busy in hunting up voters at the time.

"I hope the doctor was no relation of yours. I write under that impression. I don't want to hurt anybody's feelings, but I must say I am in a quandary, when I learn that you propose to print a book about him. I hope I shall know when it is printed.

"As to asking my associates here, as you say, about the man, there is no use in it. I am perfectly willing to do anything to oblige you, or any one else. But I know what they would say—that he was a stupid, solemn old ass.

"I think the creature was honest enough. As to not being over blessed with smartness, it was not his fault; for all cannot have much brains; for if they had, what would the world be, where it seems to me evident that the great majority must be blessed with but little common sense, or the country would never get along? It is always evident to me, that a small part of the world must do the thinking.

"Poor fellow! I have nothing to say against the doctor. He was honest enough. He was good-natured, and could forgive an injury, and that I take it is a pretty good proof that his religion will be found worth more at last than that of a good many people who think themselves better than ever he thought himself. In fact, if I have said anything about him that is not to his credit, I am not much used to writing; and then the idea of having his life written, rather turned my ideas into confusion. I can't go through the work of writing a new letter. He never hurt any one, I believe, by his practice. His being slow kept him from giving as much medicine as he would have done had he been a smarter man.

[Pg 109]

"I hope what I write is agreeable and useful.

"With respect,  
"Yours to command,  
"ROBERT WARREN.

"P.S.—I will say that the doctor was ready to do a good turn. He was not hard on the poor. I believe I said he was honest, and had a good temper. It was a very good temper. He was honest as the sun—so people said, and in this instance it was true. He was not for experiments, as that Dr. Stone at the Run, who was always restless as if at some deep game, or like Dr. Thomas, at our place, who tried his new-fashioned medicines on rabbits, so that at least it was not an imposition on human nature. The doctor practiced in the good old way, and for that he has my respect."

I have now given you a pretty clear idea of the valuable results of my historical labors at the village. With my notes collected with so much care, I turned my back on this place, and returned to my office at Newark. [Pg 110]

And now what was to be done? I began to feel quite feverish and miserable. Then I asked myself the question, whether all histories, and a considerable number of our biographies, were not based on similar poverty of materials—were not paste-board edifices looking like stone, and having only chaff for a foundation?

Now came a great temptation.—Should I imitate certain authors who, by means of cunning sentences, made the trifling appear to be events which were all-important, and so transformed ideas, that the mean became an object of admiration?

I recalled an instance when an historian found a record of a man whom he desired to clothe in all possibility of royal purple, and so to find fame with his sect, or to gain applause as a gorgeous writer. The true narrative declared, "At this time he believed that he received from heaven a divine intimation, a light from above, assuring him that a man might go through all the instruction of the Colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, and not be able to tell a man how to save his soul."

Now, this plain statement, however translated into the dignity of an ambitious style, would not appear to advantage in a brilliant eulogy. The man was fanatical, and crazy. But the design was to represent him as a philosophical reformer in the religious world. [Pg 111]

And now behold the power of art. In the original document there is a sad poverty, and deformity of flesh and bones. The poor creature must appear on the stage in kingly robes. Hear our model!—Behold the transformation! "At this time he was convinced that he received a divine illumination, infusing such thoughts as transcend the most elevated conceptions of mere human wisdom; and he was overwhelmed with the depth of the conviction, that a man might pass through all the extent of scholastic learning taught at Oxford and Cambridge, and not be able to solve the great problem of human existence."

Was there ever such alchemy? If I could attain a moderate degree of efficiency, as the pupil of such a writer, the small items of information collected at the village, could become a grand biography.

Let me see, thought I, what I can make of my material. I do not know that I could dare to publish words which would make a false impression. But let me try my skill in this essay to transmute poor substances into gold. I take the note concerning the visit to Mrs. Rachel Peabody,—and the account she gave me of the sicknesses of Eliza Jane, Faith Kitty, and John Potts. [Pg 112]

"One of the most impressive views of the doctor, was his appearance among the young, when the sickness which does not spare our race in the days of our early development, was bearing its distress to the languid frame, and sorrow to the affectionate relatives who watched by the bedside. I do not mean to say that this illustrious physician was less skilful in dealing with the maladies of middle life, or with those which we deplore in the aged,—whose sun we would have to sink in all the tranquillity of a serene sky. It is the consequence of maternal love, that in this village where his great talents were so unfortunately circumscribed, you may still hear the most touching descriptions of his skill and tenderness by the cradle, and by the couch of those children, the future promise of our country, who would attend on the instructions of the academy, were it not that their condition has become one, where obscure causes prove to us the limitation of our finite capacities."

Let me now try my hand on the letter of Mr. Warren.

Note,—"The doctor was a solemn ass." Biographical representation. "Suspicion might arise with respect to the extent of the intellectual power of the doctor, if the biographer led the reader to suppose that all who knew him, in his retreat from the great circles where the understanding is cultivated to its highest degree, regarded him as a man of transcendent genius. The slow process of thought, often observable in men whose deductions reach the greatest altitude, like the great tree slowly evolved from its incipient stem, is a contradiction to the conceptions, which the vulgar form of the intellectual power of men of acute minds. They anticipate the sudden flashing of the eagle eye, and the flight of thought as with the eagle wing. And when they are doomed to disappointment, and meet with that seemingly sluggish action of the mind, which has learned caution, lest elements that should enter into the decision that is sought, should not be observed, it is an error at which a philosophical mind can afford a smile, to find that their unauthorized disgust, will seek a similitude for the great man of such tardy conclusions, in some animal that is [Pg 113]

proverbial for the dulness of its perceptions."

Note,—“Supposed to be wise, because he was solemn and stupid.” Biographical representation. “It is curious to observe that when contemporary testimony is elicited, concerning the powers of a superior man, you discover, amid unavoidable abuse and misrepresentation, unintentional testimony to his exalted qualities. While an attempt is made to undermine his claim to wisdom, it will incidentally appear that wisdom was ascribed to him. The endeavor of envy which would ostracise him, is a proof that it is excited by common admiration heaped upon its object.”

[Pg 114]

Note,—The old lady who intimated that there had been “love passages between herself and the Doctor”—Biographical representation.

“It is delightful to know that a man of such science, and constant observation, was not rude, or wanting in those gentle traits which allure the susceptibilities of the best portion of our race. I might narrate a romantic incident, which would prove how he had unintentionally inspired an affection in a lovely lady, which endured in the most singular extent, even to old age. I have witnessed her tears at the mention of his name. On the most ample scrutiny, I repose, when I say, that the Doctor had never trifled with this sincere love. The sense of devoted affection in this case, led the victim of a tender delusion to infer, that on his part, the regard was reciprocated. I can imagine the sorrow of his great heart, if he discovered the unfortunate error and misplaced passion. In the case to which I now refer, I could only judge of the beauty and attractions of the early youth, by those remains of little arts and graceful attitudes, which are the result, so generally, of a consciousness of a beauty that is confessed by all.”

Then too I could avail myself of the ingenious devices of praise, by a denial of infirmities.

[Pg 115]

“In him there was nothing for effect—nothing that was theatrical—nothing done to cause the vulgar to stare with astonishment. No pompous equipage, no hurried drives, no sudden summons from the dwellings of his friends, as if patients required his sudden attendance—no turgid denomination of little objects by words of thundering sound—no ordering the simple placing of the feet in hot water, as Pediluvium,—none of those arts were employed by the subject of our Biography, to acquire or extend his practice, or build up his great fame.”

I also found some of the letters of the Doctor. Let me attempt the work of Alchemy again. Let me transform some passage into the proper language of Modern Biography.

Thus I find this sentence in a letter to Colonel Tupp: “Some of our negroes in New Jersey are very troublesome, and some wise plan should be devised lest they become a heavy burden—”

“It would appear”—thus should it be erected into Biographical effect—“that the Doctor, to be named always with so much veneration, was probably one of the first of our men of giant minds, to foresee the dangers of the problem involved in the existence of the African race, in the new world. I claim him—on the evidence of his familiar epistolary correspondence—as the originator of the great movements of statesmen and philosophers, for its solution. He gave, beyond all contradiction, that impulse to the energetic thought, which has led to all the plans for the elevation of those, who bear ‘God’s image cut in ebony.’ As we trace the voice to the distant fountain—or the immense circle of fire on our prairies, to the sparks elicited by the careless traveler from the small flint, so as I recall the present innumerable discussions on this sable subject, I refer them all to the unpretending utterances of this great man. I recur to the small village where he dwelt. His study, his favorite retreat, is before me. There, at the table, illuminated as it were with his manuscript, I see his impressive form. Near him are the pestle and mortar; the various jars on which are labels in such unknown words, that the country people regard them as if they were the ingredients for the sorcerer,—his coat,—his books,—his minerals,—such are his surroundings.”

[Pg 116]

“There in that study—he first in the unostentatious effusions of a private letter, suggests the seed of those convictions, which led to the formation of the Colonization Society. No fanaticism, however, has marked and disfigured the stately forms of his thoughts, on the subject of the extinction of slavery. Let not the readers of this Biography at the Sunny South, imagine that he designed an interference with their possessions. There is evidence of the perfect balance of his mind on this subject, in the fact, that he designates them, in another letter, written probably after this one, which contains the immortal sentence, in which he employs a word, which in printed syllables, with the exception of one repeated letter in the English, resembles the Roman adjective for Black,—but whose pronunciation rejected the classical usage.”

[Pg 117]

“I am aware that those who love his memory will be compelled to do battle for the honors which they justly claim for these and other anticipations of later movements in the world of wisdom and philanthropy. As Harvey discovered the circulation of the blood, only to have his claim a subject of dispute, so our great Philosopher will find those to detract from his merits, and maintain that the great efforts to which we have alluded were of later origination.”

While I speak upon this subject of the African discussion, I may remark that there is a singular discovery which I have made, as I have searched his papers, and concerning which I am in doubt, whether it should be delegated to oblivion or made the subject of ingenuous confession. I am aware that obscurity throws its shadow over the topic. I am also aware that I may hereby cast a suspicion of the spirit of a wild projector, over the subject of this memoir. I think, however, and believe that I do not flatter myself unjustly, that I have guarded against such a wrong by the delineation I have given of his calm and reflecting character.

[Pg 118]

The circumstances which my pen is somewhat reluctant to trace for fear of misapprehension, are these: I find in a letter to a friend the remark, "You would be no less startled by the assertion, that I could transform the African into a white man, than to learn from me that my Cæsar has become sedulous in the discharge of his duties, and ceased to slumber by the kitchen fire when he should be at his work at the wood-shed."

Now observe this ominous suggestion about the transformation of the physical characteristics of those who have been translated among us from the land of sandy deserts. Here is a hint of the physical transformation of a black man into a white. And then I must add that I find two small pieces of paper lying near the letter, which seem to corroborate my view, which papers, I candidly confess,—here is the ground of hesitation, the momentum which disturbs the mind seemingly on the eve of its rest, might indeed have been prescriptions saved by accident, or have been hints on the subject of the transformation of the race of darkened skins. One of these fragments contains the words, "Elixir to remove the dark pigment which causes the surface discrimination"—on the other, "For the removal of odorous accidentals." I am willing to leave the subject to the consideration of my readers. [Pg 119]

Then again I have known a man who had no brilliant or striking qualities, exalted into one of most honorable fame,—in this wise,—

"The doctor perhaps had no one gift of intellectual power which exalted him above other men. But look to the faculties which he possessed in admirable combination; regard him in the complete symmetry of his mind," etc. etc.

Thus I amused myself by this imitation of the system of eulogistic biographies. But I must confess that I had returned to my home oppressed with a feverish anxiety, as of one who felt that he had become involved in a hopeless undertaking. How utterly absurd the position which I occupied! How silly had I been in taking the assurance of Mrs. Bolton for certain truth, and acting on the principle, that her husband was a great man in his day. I now began to regard the deceased as one of the most stupid creatures that had ever felt a pulse.

But then I had acquired the most morbid fear of meeting the widow. What excuse should I offer for a change of purpose? I have no doubt that my exposure and miserable life when at the village, seeking pearls and finding chaff, had produced a temporary derangement of my system, and that I had contracted some low fever. [Pg 120]

Nothing else could account for the manner in which I was tormented by my position. What could be more easy than to say that I found myself unable to gather material for the life of the Great—I was about to say, old fool! Somehow I was spell-bound. I could not reason calmly on the subject. It broke my rest at night. It haunted me during the day. I now perceive, that I ought to have sought the advice of my physician. But then, common sense seemed to have deserted me on this one point. I was nervous, wretched, for so unreasonable a reason, and could not find relief. One night I dreamed that the widow and the doctor were both intent on murdering me. There she stood near me, the picture of wrath, and urging him, as a second Lady Macbeth, to destroy me. He advanced and raised his abominable pestle above his head. He smiled, proving how a man may smile and be a villain, and procrastinated the deadly blow to torment me. Fortunately I saw projecting from one of his huge pockets a large bottle of some specific which he had concocted for a patient. Springing up, I seized the vial, and grasping him by the collar, was pouring it down his throat, saying, you infamous old murderer die of your own medicine, when a chair, near my bed, thrown violently half across the room by my impetuosity, awoke me.

But every knock at my door tormented me. Every letter was examined with terror,—lest I should recognize a hand calling me to account. [Pg 121]

I found my way about Newark through unfrequented streets, and across the lots when it was practicable. Even when I went to the court-house, on business, I left my office, not by the door, but through a small back window, and by sundry winding ways reached my destination.

After this plan had been pursued for some time, I was duly honored by the following note.

"SIR:—You are not to think that your designs are unknown. Your singular conduct in passing by my house so often,—a house so removed from the streets through which you would naturally pass,—could not fail to be observed by any man who had an eye in his head, and who regarded his rights. I am not alone in this observation of your proceedings. We have taken into consideration your stealthy look as you passed, and have noticed how you watched at the corners, lest any one should see you.

"Depend upon it your designs are known. The villany is detected. You are a hypocrite of the deepest dye. Unless you entirely, and immediately, relinquish your pursuit, you will suffer in a manner you little apprehend.

"Do not prowl in this mean way around my premises any more. Strive to retrieve your character. I hope the day may come when I can honor you as I now despise you. [Pg 122]

"WARNING."

About the same time I received this additional note.

"DEAR BOB:—I heard the other day that you had returned home, and I have been eager to

see you. They tell me that you have fallen desperately in love with a certain widow, and that you have been up the country, under pretence of partridge shooting, in order that you might inquire about her property. Are the inquiries satisfactory? Are the acres and dwellings such, that on your return, she appears to be angelic? Or, being disappointed as to the properties left her by her father, and the old doctor, is she but a woman of ordinary charms? Oh Bob! I never thought you so mercenary. I thought that you would follow my example, and despise all but the real excellencies which can adorn a wife.

"Had it not been that I am lame, I should have been to see you,—as it is desirable that we should meet soon.

"Now I think of it, there is another foolish report about you,—that you go to the court-house by the back street, in consequence of your having heard that that scape-grace, Bill Turney, whom you lashed so terribly in your address before the squire, when Obadiah Potter was arrested for beating his wife, intended to pummel you as soon as he caught you. They say also that he describes his belligerent intentions in very graphic language, to wit, that he will, 'shoot through you, like lightning through a gooseberry bush.' These stories will amuse you.

[Pg 123]

"Stop and see me the first time you come along the main street in a bold manner.

"Your friend,  
"J. WALTERS."

These annoyances had at least a good effect. I resolved that I would see the widow, and throwing off my nervous anxiety, explain to her that I could not possibly find materials sufficient for a biography. I intended also to suggest, that a physician might be better qualified for the undertaking.

Hence I gladly accepted the invitation of a fair cousin of mine, to be one of her guests for an evening party; where I felt confident that I should meet the widow.

It had now been several weeks since I had been thrown into the society of ladies. My health was improved. The nervous fever that had agitated me, had passed away. The fascination of one whom I had sometimes met in our village gatherings, seemed to be restoring me to myself.

[Pg 124]

After a while, my companion looking across the room, said to me, "How well our widow looks this evening."

I thought that there was a mischievous look in her laughing eye. But sure enough—there stood the Empress, who had commanded the biography. She was resting her hand upon a piano, and in deep conversation with Judge Plian.

I crossed the room and spoke to her. She received me politely—but not as one who had the slightest recollection, that there was any tie of the most profound interest between us. Surely a man writing her deceased husband's biography, should have immediately become her chief object of attention. On the contrary, after a few common-place words, she turned to the Judge, and became absorbed in his conversation.

And this was the more remarkable, because the man was by no means good-looking. Nay, I think him rather insignificant. I had a few words with him on the occasion of the trial of that miserable creature, who would get himself hung, and I concluded, not only that he was not well versed in legal learning, but that he was a remarkably stubborn man, riveted to his opinions, even when, by means of lucid argument, you proved him to be in error.

A short time afterwards I entered into conversation with my fair cousin. She directed me to look at the two, near the piano.

[Pg 125]

"They will make a good-looking couple, will they not?"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, have you not heard of their engagement?"

"Engagement!"

"Yes, it has been a short acquaintance. Indeed, Bob, now that it recurs to my mind, I heard that she sent you out of the way, into the country on business, that the Judge might not be alarmed by the appearance of a rival. But you know that villagers are famous for gossip. Of course there was nothing in it. And I said, you never had a serious thought about her."

Was ever anything like this? Before the shoes were old with which she followed my poor father's body. While the Biography of her deceased husband was in progress, she forms an engagement with a man of no sort of personal attractions, and who, being on the bench, can have his legal decisions confuted by a young lawyer.

Surely the most strict moralist would confess, that I was released from my engagements! Surely Sir Charles Grandison would have said, that I need not put myself forward for an explanation with the widow. If she spoke to me on the subject, could I not say, "Let the Judge write the book?"

[Pg 126]

These notes have not been written in vain, if I can contribute, in the least degree, to the awakening of the public mind to a demand for greater moral principles, in the composition of



histories, and of the memoirs of distinguished men.

I thought that the widow might send me a note, before many days had passed. I waited, and concluded in a Christian spirit, that if she applied to me, she should have the notes which I had accumulated. But I never heard again of my first attempt at writing a memoir. I never heard again of Dr. Bolton's Biography.

---

#### IV.

[Pg 127]

#### *KATYDIDS:—A NEW CHAPTER IN NATURAL HISTORY.*

John Jones, a man who said he hated strife,  
Had from the altar led an able wife.  
No lines told scandal on a wrinkled brow;  
Temper and Time are rivals with their plow.  
Some said that she was gentle as the May;  
That Jones, the dog, was now to have his day.

Your pardon, men, I pray you now dispense,  
If I proclaim you void of common sense,  
When you would have your wives to know no will,  
To have no thought but such as you instill;  
To be your shadows, never to suggest,  
Each judgment crossing yours at once repress;  
And to suppose, that every chiding word  
Shall from your bearded lips alone be heard.

If no resistance met us in our home,  
What petty tyrants would all men become?  
The little wits that most of men possess,  
For want of sharp'ning would become far less;  
The selfish streams that flow from out our will,  
So far corrupted be more stagnant still:  
And restless, we should wage an inward war,  
But for the soothing rays of home's true star.  
Oh, let this wrong abuse of women end,  
In me, at least, they'll find a sturdy friend.  
I give my witness, I who have been thrown,  
Widely with all in Country and in Town,  
Women are best of all our fallen race,  
Richer in heart, than e'en in outward grace,  
And if our homes are not the abodes of peace,  
The fault is ours; and the complaint should cease.

[Pg 128]

In that small dwelling there—from morn to night,  
A woman toils, withdrawn from human sight;  
A plain poor woman, in a common dress,  
Of kindly tones, and of uncouth address.

Just wend thy way unto the little brook,  
Day after day upon its waters look,  
See every day the self-same ripples there,  
On those same stones, for ages smooth and bare.

So she from day to day the course of life,  
Finds one recurring call of labor's strife,  
Save when God's blessed day of rest hath come,  
And its sun shines, as in the church, at home.  
Unlike the stream she has no murmuring tone,  
She has God's will to do, and it is done.

With tender care she trains her youthful band,  
And never wearies in her heart or hand;  
Is ready, when the music in her ear,  
From one loved step, proclaims her husband near,  
To spread the frugal board, the welcome give,  
In each act say, for self I do not live.  
Oh man, o'erlook thy wife's unceasing care  
How her dear love doth follow everywhere,  
Forget her, as she stood beside thy bed,  
When the long sickness bowed thy weary head,  
Watching,—to her all sacrifice as light,  
As 'tis to stars to watch o'er earth at night.

[Pg 129]

Ah 'tis most noble, manly, not to know  
How light o'er all doth from her presence flow,  
And when a quicker word in haste doth fall,  
To speak of her, as if strife was her all.  
What could she say, if she replied to thee,  
Told to the world her secret misery,  
Showed the sad wounds that thy neglect had wrought,  
Where but a look the healing balm had brought.

One, at this hour, lies on the bed of death,  
A neighbor lovely as the morning's breath.  
Slowly she dies,—and with prophetic eye  
Tracing the course of human destiny,  
I see a home she brightened, hence so lone,  
Its calm day darkened, and its music gone;

The young, the old with anxious cares opprest,  
Their hearts, like shadows feeling for their rest  
On the green sward, where flickering sunbeams glide,  
My tears can fall, and standing by thy side,  
I know a woman's place, a woman's worth,—  
I know the gift of God in her to earth.

Thou wilt not let thy wife become to thee,  
That which her nature claims that she should be. [Pg 130]  
Thou hast a cold dead life from her apart,  
Thou art not moulded by her gentler heart,  
Else by her sweet, pure thoughts thou wert more true  
More wise, more bold each noble deed to do.

Of woman's weakness dost thou speak? Thou'lt find  
Her strength indeed, by this just bond of mind.  
You are the weak one, cannot grasp her might,  
Forever boasting that thy wrong is right.

Without her soul to thine, the page is dull  
Of all life's work,—and with this it is full  
Of all illumined splendors, as of old,  
The precious writings were adorned with Gold.

Ah view that cell so dark!—the felon there,  
With glaring eye that speaks his vast despair.  
He once in princely splendor lived his day,  
Lord of the street, a monarch in his way.  
His costly revels gained an envied fame,  
Where shallow fops, and women like them came.  
Oh man! how couldst thou thus thy God defy?  
Could riches pay thee for thy long-told lie?

If thou hadst said thy secret to thy wife,  
Made known to her the secret guilty strife,  
Told of the awful chance, the business dice,  
The gambling sales, the shameful, well-named vice,  
Asked what to risk, asked what a man should do,  
Would that shame-darkened cell have been for you?

She would have said, in woman's faith so strong,  
"We may be poor,—we never will do wrong. [Pg 131]  
Take all this splendor; let it fade away,  
But stand thou honest as the open day."  
Would she have been to thee a feeble stay?

We make the woman weak where she is weak;  
We school her feeble; feebleness we seek.  
We make believe that life is pompous pride,  
That she is blest, by gold when gratified,  
This my conclusion, as the world we scan,  
What's wrong in woman tells of wrong in man.

But where is Jones? While I have thus digressed,  
Why Jones, poor fellow, is by care oppressed.  
He draws his trail of briars round life's ring,  
And wonders he is caught by everything.  
Jones snaps at every woman, man, and child,  
Just as a turtle by hot coals made wild.

Jones had a daughter, and her name was Kate,  
As like her sire as pewter plate to plate.  
And they together almost vexed to death,  
The wife, the target of their arrowed breath.

Sometimes the patient creature's anger rose  
Their petty wrongs, and malice to oppose.  
And tempers such as hers, men do not try  
By single deeds that cause some misery;  
Stirred at the last by injuries borne so long,  
Their anger speaks accumulated wrong.

Kate had her beauty, and her household skill,  
And in due time her Jack had found his Gill,  
He was a man as meek as man could be,  
And could not dream of woman's tyranny.  
He was a pleasant man to smile "good day,"  
And had the art to say what others say;  
Thought his old saws came from a welling-spring  
In his own mind—not knowing he did bring  
All that so softly from his lips e'er fell,  
As vapid water from his neighbor's well—  
The poor dog never stole a good-sized bone,  
And so the world of curs let him alone.

[Pg 132]

Not to an infant could Kate gentle be,  
As to a creature, meek and kind as he.  
How could she tear the vine that round her grew,  
Ready to fall with every wind that blew.  
The wife made battle for him with his friends;  
And fighting them, she thus made good amends  
For all her patience with him. Thus with care  
She spread her shield, and said, attack, who dare.  
Strange, how 'mid peace we make the show of war,  
And shout unto the battle from afar,  
And her defense at last such habit wrought  
Had she assailed him, she herself had fought.

In time, ill-temper wrought upon her mind,  
And illness, too, its miseries combined.  
Oh! sad to read of intellect o'erthrown!  
Sometimes all blank. Sometimes one train alone  
Of thought, declares that reason is denied.  
We hear of one who said, I must abide  
Behind the door, because I am a clock.  
And there he stood, and ticked. And one was shocked  
To feel a rat within his stomach run.  
The doctor heard: the story being done,  
He wisely smiled, and said, "I soon can cure.  
You need not be a rat-trap long I'm sure."  
"Why how, O doctor, can you reach the rat?"  
"'Tis easy: down your throat I'll send a cat."  
The man at such a pill must need rebel.  
And with good sense he quietly got well.

[Pg 133]

Kate had her fancies—said she soon would die,  
And wasting seemed to prove her prophecy.  
"Poor Will," she said, "you soon my loss will mourn,  
The wife who shielded you from many a thorn;  
I'm glad the pigs are killed, the sweet-meats made,  
Our turnips gathered, and our butcher paid.  
I'm glad I sent away to Jericho,  
That lazy Bess, that tried my temper so.  
I'm glad I told my mind to Jane Agree,  
About that scandal that she said of me:  
That I was jealous, to my apron string  
Tied you—distrustful of my marriage ring.  
I'm glad I told her that it was a lie,  
And somewhat sorry, since it made her cry.

"And, Oh! poor Will—so helpless when alone,  
What wilt thou do, dear one, when I am gone?  
How would I love, a spirit round thy way,  
To move, and be thy blessing every day!  
To fan thy forehead, and to dry thy tears,  
To nerve thy soul, and banish all thy fears.

All I can do for thee, thou patient one,  
So gentle, tender, loving, all is done.  
I feel so lonely, in thy loneliness.  
This is, in death, my very great distress.  
Some one will fill my place, ere long, I trow,  
Your clothes are whole—in perfect order now.  
Be sure you get a wife that is like me,  
In gentle temper, and sweet sympathy.  
For you, so long to gentleness allied,  
Could not a bristling woman, sure, abide."

[Pg 134]

Poor Will! At first his tears fell down like rain  
Most at the time when she inflicted pain,  
By her unkind surmise, that he would take  
Another wife—did she the world forsake.

"You are a wife," he said, "so fond, so true,  
I cannot have another—none but you.  
You made me what I am the people say;  
Another wife might make me; what I pray?  
An eight-day clock, they say, I am most like,  
Wound up by you, and by you taught to strike.  
Another wife might keep the time too late,  
Take out the wheels, and snatch away each weight:  
And I, neglected, come to a dead stop,  
Like some old time-piece in a lumber shop.  
But if you think, dear wife, that I must wed,  
When you, at last, are numbered with the dead,  
As I depend upon your good advice,  
Choose you the bride. Shall it be Susan Price?"

Never had Bill so great a blunder made;  
Never had demon so his cause betrayed.  
Changed in her view—a villain lost to shame—  
She scarce believed that he could bear his name.

She saw the future. Susan Price was there.  
With hazel eyes, and curls of Auburn hair.  
The rooms she swept would that vile Susan sweep?  
The cup-board key would that bad Susan keep?  
With those same pans would Susan cook their food,  
For that fool Bill, and for some foolish brood?  
Would Susan drink the wine that she had made?  
Would all those pickles be to her betrayed?  
"Shall that vain thing sit there,—a pretty pass!  
Neglecting work, to simper in that glass?  
Will she cut down that silk frock, good, though old,  
And puff it out with pride in every fold?  
And of all other insults, this the worst,—  
My beating heart is ready here to burst—  
She'll use my blue-edged china,—yes she will—  
Oh! I could throw it piece by piece at Bill.

[Pg 135]

"I see her, proud to occupy my chair,  
To pour out tea, to smile around her there,  
While my false friends will praise her half-baked cake,  
And Bill will chuckle o'er each piece they take.  
And while his grief is lettered o'er my grave,  
He'll laugh, and eat, and show himself a knave."

Hast thou on some huge cliff, with oaks around,  
Heard the full terror of the thunder sound?  
Hast thou at sea, all breathless heard the blast  
Rolling vast waves on high whene'er it past?  
Then mayst thou form some thought of her dread ire  
Poured on the man to burn his soul like fire.

But soon the burst of anger all was o'er,—  
And softened, she could speak of death once more.  
"And Susan Price can marry whom she will,  
And,"—so she argued, "will not marry Bill."  
One day she said,—"It is revealed to me  
That ere I die, a warning there shall be."  
Will looked, and saw her mind now wandered more,  
As thus she spake, than it had done before.

[Pg 136]

"Yes," she exclaimed, "before I leave this scene,  
Death will appear,—the warning intervene.  
Death will appear in this our quiet home—  
A chicken without feathers will he come."

Fame spreads the great, and fame will spread the small,  
Fame gives us tears,—for laughter it will call.  
Fame spreads this whim,—this foolish crazy fear,—  
The neighbors laughed, and told it far and near.

There dwelt close by, a restless heedless wight—  
Mischief to him was ever a delight.—  
He heard the story, and his scheme prepared,  
And what his brain had purposed, that he dared.

He from a rooster all his feathers tore,  
—Had he been learned in the Grecian lore  
Heard of the Cynic, old Diogenes,  
Who, lying in his tub, in dreamy ease,  
Said to the hard-brained conqueror of old time,  
With heedlessness to human wants sublime,  
When he inquired, "What shall for you be done?"  
"All that I ask, hide not from me the sun."  
He might have thought of him; and Plato's scowl,  
When in the school he hurled the unfeathered fowl,  
And said, ere murmuring lips reproof began,  
"There, Plato, is, as you defined, a man."  
But of the Greeks our wight had not a thought.  
Under his arm the fowl, all plucked, was brought,  
And forced to enter into Katy's door:  
Who spied him wandering o'er her sanded floor.

[Pg 137]

She looked upon him, and began to weep.  
Bill sat not far off on a chair asleep.

"And so," she said, "Oh death! and thou art come  
To take my spirit far away from home."  
Then as inspired a sudden hope to trace,  
She waved the unfeathered monster from its place.  
Would drive far off from her the coming ill,—  
"Shoo shoo, thou death, now leave me, go to Bill."

'Twas overheard—and wide the story spread.  
It reached John Jones, and to his wife he said,  
In precious wrath,—"They slander thus our Kate;  
Some foe devised this in malicious hate;  
And you, perhaps, were one to make the lie."  
Thus deeply stung, she made a fierce reply.

"She did it, I am sure," replied the wife,  
"She did it, sure as I have breath and life."  
"No—Katy didn't," said the man in rage.  
"Yes, Katy did," she said. And so they wage  
A war of words, like these upon my page.

The Indian Fairy spirit heard the din,  
And first to patience strove them both to win,  
Sent the cool breeze to fan the burning brow,  
Volcanic fires to die by flakes of snow.  
In war incessant, still the clamor rose,  
Still Katy did, and didn't, and fierce blows.

[Pg 138]

At last the spirit took their souls away,  
And in their cottage lay their lifeless clay;  
Their bodies changed—and insects they became—  
Green as the grass—but still their cry the same.

Hence in all trees, we hear in starry night,  
The contradiction, and the wordy fight.  
We hear John Jones, and his unhappy wife,  
And all their brood forever in a strife:  
And Katy did, and Katy didn't still  
Are sounds incessant as a murmuring rill.

**THE IMAGE-MAKER.**

DWELLER ON EARTH.

Thou dwellest here, beneath this dome,  
A Pilgrim, far from thine own home.  
Where is thine heart, and where thy land?  
Thou longest for some distant strand.

We have thy love and gentle care,  
Thou bearest blessings every where.  
Yet day and night, and light and shade  
Shall with less labor one be made,

Than thou in sympathy be one  
With us, who through our course will run,  
Laden with cares, with pleasures worn,  
Children of hope to sorrow born.

Thou hast our speech, our garb, our toil,  
Well known, yet stranger on our soil.  
Some deeper hidden life is thine,  
As if we saw the tortuous vine

'Mid veiling branches intertwine;  
Swinging in air its precious fruit,  
While the deep mould has hid its root;  
From view its highest honors lost,

[Pg 140]

'Mid the oak leaves in murmurs tost,  
A secret work thy endless task,  
Thy endless care, of that we ask.

PILGRIM.

I seek to form an Image here.

DWELLER ON EARTH.

Thou art a Sculptor! Yet our ear  
Doth catch no sound of chisel stroke,  
No hammer clang—no marble broke.

PILGRIM.

The silence of Eternity  
Around my work doth ever lie.  
When marbles into dust shall fall,  
And human art no fame befall,

The sun no more its beams shall give  
To statues seeming half to live,  
Beauty no more on genius wait,  
Which copying seemeth to create;

When heaven and earth shall pass away,  
When breaketh everlasting day,  
Then shall the Image that I form,  
Appear 'mid nature's dying storm.

The Image that no human skill  
Could fashion, or Archangel's will;  
No angel mind the model give  
Of that which shall forever live.

[Pg 141]

At that great day it shall be known,  
The Image of the Eternal One.

The clouds that drift, are slowly drawn  
To that glorious sun at dawn.  
Darkened mists, and now so bright,  
Resplendent in the morning light;  
In borrowed glory,—spreading flame,  
God's fiery pillar still they frame.

So I,—in dark night once astray  
Through boundless grace have found my way,  
To thee,—the Sun of Righteousness,  
Whose wings are healing in distress.

From thee I trust, the dawning gleam  
Hath made me more than I can seem;  
Hath made me thine, in joy, in tears,  
Thy pardoned one,—one all whose fears

Are silenced in thy cross-wrung groan,  
Buried beneath thy tomb's vast stone,  
Which angels' hands alone can move.  
Earth has this pure work for their love.

Oh let thy glory shine on me,  
Armed in thy purest panoply.  
My shield, the Lamb, the cross it bears,  
Let me not weep its stain with tears!  
The gathering waters fill each cloud;  
The mountain's burnished tops they shroud.  
They spread o'er valley, over plain,  
Rich with God's blessings in the rain;  
On good and evil both they fall,  
In the vast care of God for all.

[Pg 143]

So Lord, thy servant thus prepare,  
To bear thy mercies everywhere.  
When in the grave mine ashes sleep,  
When o'er it, sad a friend may weep,

Thou wilt not suffer it be said,—  
His life was scarce accredited  
By Him who sits upon the throne,—  
By Him who bore our sins alone,  
Who wills our holy walk on earth,  
As sons of God, of heavenly birth,  
Who will have none disciples here  
Unless their cross with zeal they bear.

Life without Christ! That is but death.  
Prayer without Christ!—but idle breath:  
And love for man, but vanity  
Save at the cross 'tis learnt by me.  
Oh help thy branch, thou heavenly Vine.  
Union with thee is life divine,  
And clustered fruits are ever mine,

If from beneath alone we gaze,  
Thy providence a darkened maze.  
Rise on wings of faith and prayer,  
And then what love and wisdom there!  
So brightness of unbroken day  
Upon those clouds doth heavenward lay  
Though we can trace no single ray,  
Who look from earth. Yet angels see  
The glory as a silver sea.

[Pg 144]

---

## VII.

[Pg 145]

### *THE PROTECTOR DYING.*

Dread hour! nearing, nearing fast.  
Yet I cannot wish thee past.  
Death! Oh! but a dream till nigh,  
With night cold from eternity.

That cold night doth around me creep  
In which immortals never sleep.

The cloud its mighty shade doth fling,  
Like a mantle for a king,  
On the mountain's awful form,  
Scarred through battles with the storm.

So thy darkness falls on me,  
Darkness, such as cannot be,  
But to those whose soul is life,  
To a nation in its strife,  
That its wrongs for ever crushed,  
The cries of slaves forever hushed,  
And every chain forever gone,  
Man tremble before God alone;  
That man's true right, so long betrayed,  
On truth and justice shall be laid;  
That Freedom's martyr's work begun  
In blood, and fire, and hidden sun,  
Shall culminate in triumphs won;  
And the world's changing channels trace  
A course of hope for all our race.

[Pg 146]

Oh! how they as the humblest die,  
Who part from kingly majesty  
To stand before Him!—nothing there  
But as His image we may bear;  
The image by the humblest borne;  
The kings of the eternal morn.

The lowliest man, most void of power,  
To stand the trial of that hour!  
To come from life in quiet shade,  
From humble duties well obeyed.

Ah! if this be a solemn thing,  
What then for one in might a king!  
To meet the trial of that day  
From gorgeous wrongs in false array,  
Where false praise gilds the every deed,  
Where few warn one that will not heed;  
The man whom Weird-like hands have shown  
The weary pathway to the throne.

Oh! thou gory-crowned head  
Haunting here my dying bed!  
Was it not necessity?  
Moulding deed that was to be!  
Oh! king so false—away—away—  
Leave me at least my dying day.

Is there no refuge? Hated face!  
Come with the looks of thy cold race.  
Look thou as when thy soiled hand gave  
The Earl, thy vassal to the grave.  
Gaze thou on me in that worst pride  
As kingly honor was defied.  
Look thus on me—but not as now,  
That patient sorrow on thy brow.

[Pg 147]

I can but gaze. Forever near  
Thy dreaded form is my one fear.

A boy, I sit by running stream,  
The humble life my daily dream:  
Some lowly good—some wrongs redrest,  
A noiseless life, its peaceful rest.  
As that stream calm my life shall be;  
As placid in its purity.  
The humble stone shall tell the tale  
When life began—when strength did fail.  
An humble race shall bear my name  
Blest by a few not rich in fame.  
Oh! king, thine eye! It says, but then  
Thy hand had not the guilty stain.



Hark! how the marriage-bells are ringing!  
Voices fill the air with singing.  
Waves of light are now the beating  
Of my heart, and the repeating  
Seems no weariness of pleasure,  
Only increase of its treasure.  
Ah! dear wife! thy look hath sped  
Many a sorrow. But this head!  
E'en at the hearth, and by thy side  
This kingly blood-stained form doth glide.  
The quiet house of God,—the prayer  
Rising as incense in the air.  
I breathe the still and mighty power,  
I catch the glory of the hour.  
Am I not pure, and armed for strife  
With England for her better life?  
Thou gory head! my prophecy,  
In that loved church told not of thee.

[Pg 148]

Look as if heaven changed thy face,  
Let pardon there at last have place:  
Before me, on this awful sea,  
Some gleam of heaven reflected be.

---

## VIII.

[Pg 149]

### *THE INDIAN DREAM-CELL.*

In Pearl-run valley, not far from the noise and crowded streets of our great Metropolis, the original forests, and a few unsightly rural dwellings, have given place to a large number of those pleasant homes, which citizens of wealth or of comfortable means, have erected for their summer abodes. Hence the hills around are dotted with costly mansions, and unpretending cottages.

It is a sight inspiring happiness to look on these dwellings in the spring. You have evidence that so many families, released from the city are rejoicing in the pure invigorating air, in the sunshine and shadows, in the rooms associated with so much ease and tranquility.

Can it be that any one can be found who is void of all sympathy with the natural world? All who seek these rural homes, at the established season, are supposed—if we are the correct exponents of common opinion,—to take wings from the city, for those cool and shady nests, under the influence of love for the country?

[Pg 150]

Of course, when the spring arrives, all who have led a fashionable career for the winter, have a sudden and marvellous restoration to their senses. Like those whom some friendly magician has freed from the enchantments of an evil genius, they are restored to a healthy judgment. They then perceive the folly of the life which they have led. The absurdity of denominating as society, crowded assemblies, where conversation bears the relation to interchange of thought, such as becomes intelligent creatures, which wilted and fallen leaves sustain to those of the beautiful and nutritious plant from which they have been torn,—where trifles and external polish are accepted in the place of the best qualities which can commend others to our esteem,—where friendships are formed, not links of human creatures with affectionate qualities to one another, but to fashion, whose representatives they are,—friendships to be dissolved, as easily as the melting of the Pyramids of frozen cream, all these facts become, as soon as the air is heated in spring, some of the most clear of all possible demonstrations. Then they long for a more reasonable life. All that true poets or wise moralists have taught of the rural home, asserts its power over the memory. All vulgar glare becomes utterly distasteful. Simplicity of life, amid a nature that summons man to cast off artificial follies, has a powerful fascination. They have been poor city puppets too long. Let them now be true men and women, where all things are so true and real. Hence they hasten to the country.

[Pg 151]

Let us be thankful that any influences, even those of fashion, draw so many of our citizens from the towns to the country-places. Let us be thankful, that the great river of city-life,—hurrying on so madly, and tossing its stained waves crowned with bubbles that pain the eye, has its side eddies, and throws off great branches for far away shades, where the waters are at rest, and where innumerable small streams unite their efforts to purify that which has so long been so turbid.

Minds and hearts will touch one another in the rural scene. The limited number of associates will foster some more depths of mutual interest. The Sunday in the country, the rural church, the gathering of the congregation from green lanes, and winding roads, and not from streets sacred to pomp and vanity, to business, and to glaring sin, God so visible in all his glorious works, perhaps a Pastor trained by his labors among plain people during the winter, to speak the Word with greater simplicity, these are not influences which exist only in appearance. Men ask why

make life such a vain and foolish dream? I trust the day will come, when many families of cultivated minds, will reside all the year in our country-places. From such social circles influences must go forth, to transform no inconsiderable portion of what is called the society of the town. The necessary association of the two classes, will prove of inestimable benefit to each.

[Pg 152]

If you passed along Pearl-run valley, and left the more cultivated region, which we have described, the scene changed, and you found yourself in wild places.

There were steep cliffs, with endless masses of broken stone beneath, as if a Giant McAdam, ages ago had been meditating the formation of a great road, like that we pigmies build on a smaller scale, in these degenerate days. And there were mountains where you could scarcely detect any proof that the hand of man had disturbed the primeval forests.

These you could ascend by winding paths, and attain elevations, where half the world seemed to lie beneath your feet. Well do I remember such an ascent with a sister, who had been a few hours before, with me in the crowded city.

Our time was limited. What we could see of the glorious scenes around us, must be accomplished late in the afternoon. The sun had gone down while we were climbing up the side of the mountain. We had never been in such deep shadows. For the first time in our lives, we knew what was the awful grandeur of solitude. Our existence seemed more sublime for the solemn awe.

[Pg 153]

As we hastened on to reach a vast rock, from whose summit we were assured, the view was one of surpassing beauty, we met some children, wild in appearance, barefooted, seeking cattle that found pasturage in an open space, scarcely perceptible to the eye, that, at a distance, could take in the whole aspect of the mountain. But one of these little creatures in her kindness added, with surpassing power the effect of the wilderness.

"Take care," she said, "you may be lost." We, in the vast mountain where we could be lost!

What a sound for ears so lately filled with the noise of the crowded city! Oh child! what human study could have taught the greatest genius in our land, to speak and add to the solemn power, of that most memorable time, of two awed and enthusiastic wanderers!

How strange it is that the intense excitement of the soul, among such scenes, is such a healthy peace—never the over-wrought exertion of the mind! The intense activity within us does not *subside* into tranquility. It is elevated to a peace. If you would have true enjoyment there, God,—the Infinite Father,—our immortality—the world our Redeemer has promised us, must be placed side by side with every impression.

[Pg 154]

Our forests are strangely primeval solitudes, when you reflect what tribes of Indians have resided in them. That wild people have left there no traces of their existence. You often seem to be one of a few, who alone have ever disturbed the Sabbath rest of very holy places.

Why did not the aboriginal inhabitants leave us in letters carved on the rocks, traditions, which our learned and ingenious men could interpret? We know not what we have lost in our deprivation of wonderful mysteries. We wander by great oaks, and stony places unconscious of powers that linger there. The lore of demons and of spirits that plagued or comforted the Indians is lost to us.

Yet, let us not be unjust as though the civilization which has superseded the rude Indian life, had given us no romantic substitutes for these powers which agitated the barbarian. And especially let us be just to the genius of those who came over from the wilds of Germany, as well as those who had their intellect brightened by the illumination of Plymouth Rock. The imaginations of the two, were, indeed, very diverse in their nature. They differed as the stiff gowns and ample pantaloons, all so quaintly made, from the paint and skins which made the array of the savage.

I am by no means insensible to the poetry which speaks to us in the horse-shoe, nailed to the door to keep away witches, whose fears were the more suggestive, because no one ever described the full power of the mischief they were able to accomplish; and to the mysterious art medicinal, rivalling in wisdom many of the celebrated systems of the schools, whereby the muttering of strange words could cure a fever and ague,—and where a nail that had pierced the foot was safely wrapped up and laid up the chimney as a preventive of lock-jaw. The world is not so prosaic as some would imagine.

[Pg 155]

I am happy, however, in being able to rescue one important tradition from oblivion.

In one of the mountains of which I have spoken, which has been courteous enough to retain its place, and ancient habits, notwithstanding the airs and encroachments of the adjoining settlements, was a spot—well known to some favored few of the Indian tribes. It was a mysterious place.

At the side of a large rock was a small cell. It was hollowed on its stony side almost as if it had been a work of art. A little ledge that stood across it, afforded a rude seat.

Tradition goes back to the wife of an Indian king, centuries ago, who first acquired a knowledge of the virtues of the place, and availed herself of the acquisition in a very happy manner.

It is a comfort and a sorrow to know how human nature has been the same in all ages. Wives and husbands have had many virtues and failings in common, whether they dwelt in primeval days in the Alleghany Mountains or in Broadway in New York.

[Pg 156]

The Indian Queen had, it appears, great difficulty in preserving a salutary discipline in the wigwam. Her lord—yet not her master—she had never assented to that peculiar precedence in the marriage contract, had been inclined to low company—that is to company that might be good enough in itself, but was entirely too low for the royalty of the realm. These fellows, white traders, who would prowl about to waylay his Majesty, keeping respectfully out of sight of the Queen, were by no means school-masters abroad for the benefit of the red man.

Even the queen, for some reason which it is difficult to conjecture, did not object to the introduction of large quantities of fire-water into the palace. She always took charge of it, however, and for that reason, no doubt, felt that it would be used in a judicious manner.

But at last the king was unwise enough to set up as a reformer; not under the instigation of the white men,—but indirectly, through their influence. There is nothing new under the sun. We now abound in men and women, who are in advance of their age. A man of mere genius, in these days, is a helpless creature; sure to be laid up like old lumber in a house, in some out of the way place of deposit. But if he should only have a moderate disorder of the brain,—have circumstances to occur, which would produce the effect which according to Bishop Warburton was the result of the earthquake in his day, "widening the crack in old Will Winston's noddle,"—then particularly if he can be mad after a method, he is sure to form a society, and to be well fed and famous.

[Pg 157]

There was also in our kingly Indian reformer, one disagreeable quality,—by no means unknown in an enlightened philosophical head of associations. In all his projects, he was himself a central object. He differed from some of our reformers in one respect. He was not crazy for notoriety.

Among other things which he learnt from these good-for-nothing white scamps, who were in such disfavor with the queen, fellows who had traveled all around the world to little purpose,—sifting with wonderful skill all useless and bad knowledge from the good, and casting away the good as chaff, was a piece of information concerning the social relations of some of his royal cousins in distant lands.

They gave him a glowing picture of a great chief who had a great host of wives. Our king had informed one of his friends, that he thought that the introduction of this custom on our American strand, would be a most desirable improvement. And one day, under the influence of fire-water, which in opening his heart, proved how good a fellow he was, he suggested the theory to the queen.

[Pg 158]

It is said, that the wary queen, in her distress and perplexity at this theory, sought for one of the wonder-workers of her tribe, and learnt from him the secret powers of this cell. There she placed her royal spouse, who slept until he was sober enough to dream a wise dream. The consequence was his reformation. After this, it is also said, that the queen attained such domestic power, that a warrior who slept under their roof one night, was heard to inquire of one of his tribe, whether in case the people should go out on the war-path, the woman would be the great warrior.

It is also reported, that the spirit of the Indian queen often haunts the cell, and has some secret power to allure chosen way-farers there to rest, and have the dreams which belong to the place. The great peculiarity of the mysterious power here exerted on the dreamer, was this,—that he was compelled in his dreams, to follow a course contrary to his habits and nature, and to learn some of the results of a new course of conduct.

Over the cell were jutting rocks, which threw down as the sun was over them, strange shadows, making the most mysterious letters. Curious wild vines, with grotesque leaves, grew above it, having a fragrance like that of poppies, but of greater intensity. Some fir trees near, blended their murmurs with the hum of the wild-bees, and with a rill whose waters passed over a rock, covered with green weeds, and fell into a small dead pool, whose issues crept silently away amid innumerable roots. Opposite, on a mountain, was a circle composed of various objects, which, as you gazed seemed to move round with ever increasing rapidity, and to exercise a mesmeric power in causing tranquility, and a state of repose in which you were prepared for a control, extraneous to your own mind. The sides of the cell receded slightly inwards, in gentle curves, in such a way that you were tempted to recline, and lean your head for rest on the moss-covered hollows of the rock.

[Pg 159]

One of the inhabitants of our valley, whose name was Eugene Cranmer, had left the hill-side where he had a luxurious mansion, and had wandered into the wild region, that contained this mysterious cell.

He was well pleased to see the general air of comfort, as he strolled along; for it disquieted him to look on men who were very poor, inasmuch as he had a vague sense that he was called on for some exertion in their behalf. The poor seemed to him to mar the general aspect of the world, as some unfortunate error in the taste of an artist, will mar the general beauty of his picture. He wished all to be at peace, and have enough to eat and put on; for the world, in such a state, seemed to be a suitable place for a man who had attained great prosperity; and who had the undefined impression that his life would be extended a few hundred years, before he would be under the unhappy alternative of passing to a good place in a better country. He provided well in his house for himself; and of course he felt that such a care was all that was essential for the comfort of his family.

[Pg 160]

His mother in his early life had indulged him to excess, and acted on the principle, that all who came near him, would regard it as the most reasonable thing in the world, that it must be their study and highest happiness to gratify his inclination.

Our hero,—for it is pleasant thus to designate him, and to recognize the superiority of such a man,—had climbed the ascent of the mountain, and reached the place of the mystic cell. A peculiar agitation of the vines above it, and sounds as of a bird complaining of an intruder near its rest, drew his attention to the recess. He determined to seat himself and rest awhile, before he returned to his home. No sooner had this been attempted, than he wondered at the luxury of the sheltered nook. He had an undefined feeling, that after all, the natural world, providing on such an occasion such a place for his rest, was perhaps, not so inattentive to human wants, as he had frequently imagined. The walk he had enjoyed, the exhilarating air of the mountain, and the composing influences around him, had thrown him into a state of more than common good humor. He had fewer thoughts about himself; some dreamy recollections, and he went rapidly to sleep.

[Pg 161]

Then he dreamed dreams. First he saw a strange reptile crawl along the paths by which he had ascended to the cell. An odious object, deformed, it looked as if it bore deadly venom in its fang. It was also obvious that the creature had faculties to be developed. At one moment it seemed ready to put forth its strength to attain the new gifts,—to call into exercise powers that slumbered in its frame.

Its indolence, and anger at the stirring of inward strife by nature, caused it to assume a torpid indifference.

Suddenly a stream of quivering light fell upon it. A bright dove descended, and the radiance increased as it drew nigh, with silver wings; and part of the lustre of its plumage was as of wrought gold. It hovered over the creature, whom all its resplendent rays could not render even less repulsive.

Then came a strange transformation. On a sudden all that repelled the eye was gone. The creature glorified, assumed a place amid the objects of beauty that adorn the world.

[Pg 162]

And what was a cause of surprise, he who saw all in the vision, and witnessed the transformation, had now no other sentiment toward the transformed and glorious, but love. No association existed in his mind, to recall, with any disgust, what it once had been. His thoughts ever rested on the dove and its pure rays, on the indescribable beauty of the creature as he now beheld it, new-created in excellence. The deepest darkness of oblivion, spreading as far as the east is from the west, interposed between what it had been, and was now, could not have blotted out the disgust of the former unsightly appearance more thoroughly from his impressions. He could gladly have placed it in his bosom. Its beauty, he felt sure, would be perpetual memories, each ever being a new joy like a star rushing on into its place of brightness in the evening, gladdening all on which its beams can rest.

Then there came to him a voice which said, Thou too must be changed from evil to a glorious state. At first he bitterly opposed the suggestion. Change! What then would life be to him? Thoughts would be his, and views, and desires forever, whose very shadow touched him, to cause pain, and to assure him of their contrariety to his nature. He who had made slaves of all, to be the loving servant of all!

[Pg 163]

Then the influence that abode in the mystic cell began to exert its power over him. It was as if a fever had passed away, and a sweet quiet, as of an infant going to its rest had pervaded his frame. Resistance to the good desires passed from him. He began to wish for a glorious transformation.

And now the dream was changed. It was late at night. He drew near his home. The lumbering stage, full of drowsy passengers, had left him at his gate.

He was not compelled to linger long upon his porch. The door was quickly opened by one, whose form glided swiftly along through the hall, summoned by the sounds of the stage. It was his pale and weary wife, a gentle, uncomplaining woman, bearing all his oppressions as void of resistance, and as submissively as the stem, the overgrown bulb, the work of insects deforming the bud or flower, whose weight bends as if it would break it. He entered the dwelling and saluted her, as if her watching was the least service she could render.

And then, though he perceived that she was pale and faint, he imposed on her tasks for his present comfort. The servants were at rest, and she must arrange for his evening meal, and go from room to room to procure the least trifle he might desire.

[Pg 164]

And again there came over him the spell of the Indian dream-seat.

Just as he was about to pour upon his serving wife the vials of his wrath, because she had misunderstood some one of his multitude of directions, there suddenly was exerted over him a power which gave all his thoughts a bias, and ruled his words and manner as the wind sways the frail reed.

He began to speak to her words of tender commiseration. He insisted that she was in need of his assiduous aid for her present comfort. For her the wine and viands must be procured. She never again should keep these watches for his sake—watches after midnight. Nay, more; with a torrent of glowing words, he promised that all his future conduct should undergo a perfect transformation.

In his struggle, our hero acquired an almost preternatural quickening of the memory. All thought, however, ran in one single course—in the demonstration of his selfishness. He uttered

confessions of his deep and sincere repentance. He enumerated a long series of petty annoyances of which he had been guilty towards his wife, and which had made up the sum of much misery. One confession of a wrong deed revived the remembrance of another. If the chain seemed at an end, as link after link was drawn into light, there was no such termination.

[Pg 165]

He had no time to observe the effect of this his sorrow and confession.

His internal wrath at this departure from his ordinary habits, from all the course which he, as a reasonable being could pursue, from all the rules he had ever prescribed for his family,—from all that could make the time to come consistent with the comfortable care he had taken of himself in the past, caused such an agitation, that he thought for a moment he must die. His golden age in the past to be supplanted with this coming age of iron! Would he die? A great earthquake had crowded all its might into a mole-hill. It was as if a storm-cloud was just on the eve of being rent asunder, to tear the hills below with its awful bolts, and some angelic messenger was sent to give it the aspect of a quiet summer-cloud, and cause it to send down a gentle rain on all the plants.

He knew well from experience the sense of suffocation. His throat had seemed incapable of allowing a breath to pass to the lungs. But now he had, as it were, a sense of suffocation in every limb. His whole frame had sensations as if pressed to its utmost tension by some expanding power, as by some great hydraulic press.

What was to be the result? Was he to undergo some external transformation like the reptile which he had seen in the plain?

[Pg 166]

To his horror, he began, in his rhapsody of the dream to recall a huge frog, which he had watched as a boy—swelling—swelling—and about to burst through its old skin, and come out in the sunshine in a new and fashionable coat and a pair of elastic pantaloons, with water-proof boots to match. Then his imagination recalled a snake which he had seen when he sat once by the brook with a fishing-rod in his hand, the hook in the sluggish stream, and the fish, no one could tell where. Thus was it passing through a similar process with the frog—preparing to present itself in the court of the queenly season, making his new toilette as if he had been fattening off the spoils of office, and had ordered his new garb from the tailor without regard to cost.

In his heart there came again a tenderness for his wife and children. And with that deep emotion came peace—for suddenly a golden cup was at his lips, and cooling water, such as he had never tasted. An angel's hand—oh how like the hand of his wife in its gentle touch—was laid upon his head, and all its throbbing misery was gone. The same Being waved his wings, and a cool air, with waves murmuring in some music from a far off, blessed space, and with fragrance that lulled the disturbed senses to repose, passed over him,—and he felt that all his fever and distress had departed from him.

[Pg 167]

Then he appeared to be surrounded by his wife and children, who were wrapped in a deep sleep. He gazed on them, meditating offices of love in time to come. One and another, in dreams, uttered his name with unspeakable tenderness. His tears fell freely. The great night around him—that used to seem so unsympathizing—and to throw him off far from all its glory, as a poor worthless atom, now entered into accordance with the new found life within. The gleaming stars said to him, we take your purpose into one great mission of reflecting light. All spoke of hope. He was used to the feeling of loneliness and painful humiliation, when in the darkness under the great unchanging canopy. Now was he lowly; but he felt that man was great, as one who bore the relation of a spirit to the Maker of all things. He had never thought, that as great peace dwelt among all the human family, as now pervaded his own heart.

Again the dream was changed. He was in the city. He was seated in the old dusty counting-room. He was the former selfish man. The men in the place, were to him a sea of a multitude of living waves. All that he had to do was to count all created for him, and he for himself; and in that sea he was to seek to gain the pearls which he coveted. As men passed by, he had no blessing in his heart for those tried in life, and to meet death, or be tried still more. That God cared for them was no thought that made an impress on his nature.

[Pg 168]

As he sat before his table covered with his papers, witnesses of his gains, there was a sound of approaching feet. Then men entered and bore along with them a mummy,—the dead form in its manifold wrappings, as the mourners had left it in the days when Abraham dwelt in the land of promise.

They placed the form on which it was borne in the centre of the room, and then with grave deliberation proceeded to unroll its many integuments.

In a short time they had spread out all the folds of the cloth, and there lay the form which it was difficult to imagine had once been a living man—a being of thoughts, emotions, hope, with ties to life, such as are ours at the present day.

Our hero looked upon the extended covering of the dead. One of those men, of a far distant clime and age, who had belonged to the silent procession that thus presented the mortal remains to the eye, drew from the folds of his dress a stone of exquisite beauty.

He held it before the cloth, and rays of an unearthly light fell upon it, emitted from that precious gem. In a moment, that which had been so dark, became a piece of exquisite tapestry. On it were a series of representations, an endless variety of hieroglyphics.

[Pg 169]

As the rich merchant gazed on these, he read a history of a life, that strangely condemned his

own.

And then the Egyptian Priest came forth from the midst of his associates.

He held in his hand an immense concave mirror in a frame of gold. Taking his position between the window and the dead form, he first gazed upon the sky. A cloud had obscured the sun.

As soon as it had been swept away, and the noon-day beams streamed forth, he held up the mirror, and concentrating the rays of light, threw all the blinding radiance on the dead form.

In a little while it began, under the power of that wonderful glory, to assume the appearance of a living man. Breath came. It moved. It rose. The one thus revived from the power of death gazed on the cloth, and traced out for himself a plan of a beneficent life. He was to live to do good. Tears were to be dried, the hungry to be fed, the heart was to have its perpetual glow of good will, to speak words of blessing, and of peace, of hope to all.

As our rich man gazed on all this scene,—mysterious hands seemed to be unwinding countless wrappings from the soul within, dead to the Creator, dead to the love of man.

A light was poured upon him. A new life was given him. He was preparing to unlock his treasures, to share his possessions with the poor. The home of sorrow became a place of attraction. He was to seek all means of lessening the sin and misery of the human family. [Pg 170]

Thus far had his discipline proceeded. The dreams had given activity to the mind. They had bent the spirit of the man in glad submission to a yoke of obedience; and in this submission to all that was pure, he found how the great service was perfect freedom. Holy truths, which had never been great realities, but certainties that were among his deepest convictions, many of them like seeds still capable of life, but floating on the sea in masses of ice, perhaps to be dropped on some island forming in the deep, and there to germinate, now began to be living truth, and to struggle with the soul that it might live. He bowed before the august presence,—now that the great veil that had concealed the kingly visitants was torn away. Now they were not like the magnetic power, affecting dubiously, and without a steady control, the needle of the seaman as he drew near to the coast. They had become the all-pervading power in the needle itself, affecting each particle, and turning all in attraction towards the one star, that is before every bark freighted with the precious trusts, which he now felt to be so grand a responsibility. Are not these sealed with a seal that no enemy can cause to be forged or broken? [Pg 171]

A slight change in his dream, and the temptations began to reappear, crowding as the gay tares wind among the eddying wheat heads, and are tossed by the wind and arrest the eye. There was a sense of slight fear and doubt.

Then was he borne onward, and placed on the green sward beneath great overhanging rocks. Their awful majesty was tempered by the endless vines, laden with fruits and flowers that crept along their sides, and waved, as crowns upon their summits.

A lake spread its waters before him. As he looked far off upon its unruffled surface, he saw clouds, now dark, now radiant, floating rapidly in the sky. The wind that impelled them came in great gushes of its power, as their changing shapes, and rapid motion gave full evidence. And when the winds thus swept on, they gave not the slightest ripple to the great blue expanse of the waters. Yet they were no dead sea, but pure and living, from streams on innumerable fertile hill-sides, whose threads of fountain-issues glittered in the sun.

And the great shadows that fell from these floating masses in the air, did not reach to the surface of the lake. They wasted themselves between the clouds and the atmosphere of tranquil light, that rested on the placid, sky-like depths of the blue expanse.

Even at his very feet, these waters seemed in depth ocean-like. His eye was never weary as he gazed into their abyss, and the sight never appeared to have looked down into them, and to have found the limit of its power to penetrate their immeasurable profundity. [Pg 172]

Great peace again took possession of his mind! Then he felt the mysterious hand upon him, and he was lifted up from the borders of this lake, for other scenes. He could not but feel regret. He was however convinced, that any new prospect opened before him, would be one that he might earnestly desire to look upon.

The motion of the wings of the angel, as he transported him through the air, was as silent as the calm of the great lake.

They entered into a cave, so vast, that its roofs and sides were at such distance from them, that no object could be distinguished in the evening twilight. But soon he saw before him a high archway, lofty as the summit of the highest mountain, by which they were to emerge into the light. They passed it, and found that it opened into a deep valley.

A plain was here the prospect, and near to him the side of a precipitous hill. It had great sepulchral inscriptions on the surface of the rocks. There was a slight earthquake. Its power caused the sides of the hill to tremble, and revealed the bones of men buried in the sands and crevices. [Pg 173]

He proceeded—and soon he saw grave-stones on the plain. Drawing near, he attempted to read the names inscribed upon them. Soon he discovered that they recorded those of his wife and children. Foes, as he imagined, as his eyes rested on objects around, moving to and fro, lurked in

the shadows.

And now his sorrow assumed a form, different from all the former remorse of his dream. A vague idea that all was a dream came to his relief. Tears fell, bitter regret for the past continued, but he had a joyous and undefined conviction, that his family were not beyond the reach of his awakened love.

A gentle hand was then laid upon his eyelids. It pointed to the mountain near—on whose summit an eternal light rested. Such light, he thought, must have been seen on the mount of the transfiguration.

He discovered that he had the power to look into the depths of the great mountain. As his eye penetrated those great hidden ways, he found that all was revealed there, as if the earth and rocks were only air more dense than that which he breathed.

His attention was soon arrested by a rock in the centre of the mountain. It became the sole object to which he could direct the eye.

[Pg 174]

There imbedded were evil forms, on which he looked to feel new sorrow, and to torture himself with self-upbraiding.

These forms were his work. It was evident that they should have been created in exquisite beauty. The material of which they had been made,—so precious—was a witness that this could have been accomplished. The marks of the chisel were a proof that there had been capacity—skill—which could readily have been exercised in creating that which was beautiful, and which had been perverted and abused in the production of the shapes by which he was repelled. And it was also evident, that they had been fashioned in a light, which would have enabled him to judge truly of every new progress of his toil, and under a sky where true inspirations would be fostered. My work! my work! he said—but he added, there is hope for the future.

As his new-found tenderness subdued him, the power that transported him from scene to scene, bore him away.

Soon he found himself standing before another mountain, which was in the process of formation.

It was made of the clearest crystal, and the light was in all its height and breadth. Angels were there, and waiting with a placid but unutterable happiness for labors that were to occupy them.

[Pg 175]

He could not rest. He must put forth into action the aims, the aspirations to fashion forms of immortal glory. As he moved, in his great ambition from his place, he saw that his dwelling was near at hand—close beneath this great mound of crystal, and that its light was reflected upon it.

He entered the house. His gentleness was the happiness of all. He was now the unselfish and loving husband and parent. He marvelled that so many little acts of love could be done day by day. He marvelled to see how little acts of love made up such a vast sum of happiness, and what moulding influences, whose value could not be estimated, were united with his deeds.

He found that forms were ever taken by the angels and borne away. They reverently bore them—reverencing the beauty, and above all reverencing them as the work of One who had given him aid to think of their creation, and to embody them according to the pure conception. They carried them first to a fountain of waters that flowed from a smitten rock. A crown of thorns, and nails, and a spear, were sculptured there. Washed in this stream every particle was cleansed. Afterwards they held up the form in the most clear light, brighter than the light of any sun, and the beauty became far more perfect.

The angelic laborers then carried each to the mountain of crystal. There it was imbedded,—but in a radiance which was to shine forever, and forever.

[Pg 176]

And then to his great joy, he found that vast numbers of men came to a summit of an adjoining hill; caring not for the ascent by a narrow and arduous way. They looked into the mountain, and were entranced by the forms that they beheld. He had no thought that they would turn to him in admiration. All that he exulted in, was, that he loved them, and that they turned away to labor to make like forms, for the angelic hands,—for the waters of the cleansing fountain,—for the inexpressible light that purified,—for the place in the mountain, where they should shine eternally.

Just at this moment, a bird perched on the vines around the cell. It poured forth a rich melody of song close to the ear of the sleeper. It awoke him gently from the profound sleep. The first sound which he heard was that of the sweet bell of his village church. Its gushes of sound rolled along the valley, and up the side of the great hills.

He felt that the impressions of his dream were durable. So deeply was he affected, that he scarcely thought of the visions in which the truth had been represented. He descended his path another man. Another man he entered his home. The house was a changed house that day. No one more subdued in spirit than himself, knelt in the church. No one with more determined purpose, heard that day, of the One who "pleased not himself."

[Pg 177]

[Pg 178]

## IX.

### *WILD FLOWERS GATHERED FOR MY WIFE.*

Though these sweet flowers are in their freshest bloom,  
They had a beauty as I gathered them  
Which thine eye sees not. For with every one  
New lustre in the varied colors shone,  
A purer white melted beneath the eye,  
A sweeter fragrance came from dew-gemmed leaves,  
Advanced in beauty as I thought of thee.

Thou seest that they grew wild in wood and fields  
Teachers of love and wisdom. Some I found  
In deep pine shades, where the sun's straggling beams  
Through bending boughs may reach them.

Holier rays

Through deeper shades can reach the broken heart,  
Through deeper shades can foster heavenly growth  
Of beauty for the everlasting fields;  
Through more dense shades can reach the good unknown  
To human fame, yet left to bless the world.

These flowers and leaves that ripen unobserved  
But for our eyes, had withered with the frost,  
And none had blessed God for their loveliness.  
They give their little power unto the wind  
To purify for men the air they breathe,—  
Air wafted far by every rising breeze.  
And so a myriad of the little deeds,  
Done by the men that walk in Christ's blest steps,  
Add health unto the living atmosphere  
Where men breathe for the strength of highest life.  
Deeds go out on a sea of human life,  
And touch a myriad of the rolling waves,  
Send the great sea a portion of unrest,  
Which saves its surface from the mould of death.

[Pg 179]

These flowers are memories that I had of thee  
During my wandering to the distant home,  
Where sickness was, and many an anxious care,  
Where there was need that Christ's work should be done.

Oh! if these paths we tread with our soiled feet,  
On this world far from scenes where all is pure,  
Our feet not yet in laver cleansed from soil,  
In wave by angel stirred and all so bright,  
Where gleams are on the waves from his own sun,  
Are skirted with these fragrant beauteous forms,  
What shall surround our path in Paradise?

Flowers have a language; so they choose to say.  
Each speaks a word of pure significance.  
Thus in the fields of nature we can print,  
Where flowers shall be the type, a beauteous book—  
With joyful eye can read the beauteous book.

With all my love of flowers, here is a lore  
Which is to me unknown. I have to turn  
Over the pages of that pictured book  
To spell each letter as a little child.  
But this I know, that none can e'er mean ill.  
Flowers are too pure, as angels sowed their seed  
On earth in pity for a burdened race.  
And where their smiles have rested there came forth  
These witnesses that men are not alone.

[Pg 180]

And also this is lore from nature's school—  
That speak they as they may—whate'er they mean  
Of faith to be unshaken through our life,  
Of love that never wanes, true as the star,  
They cannot speak of faith or tender love,  
Which I—flower-bearer—do not speak to thee  
In this my offering of far-gathered spoils.



***RIVERSDALE.***

It was my good fortune to dwell for some years on the banks of the Delaware, with a sturdy old yeoman, who was quite a character in his day. Manly, honest, hospitable, of a dignified bearing as of one who respected himself, and who had no false pride, it was a treasure to have known him.

His nature had been moulded, as far as earthly influences gave their impress by a life spent chiefly on a farm, in days that are called "primitive;" that being one of the words which hold in unfixed solution, some true but very vague impressions. A few years which he spent in the naval service of his country, had no doubt added some lines to the mould that shaped him as he was.

I have said that his characteristics were very prominent. Therein he differed from the mass of the country people. They are like a knoll, where you see at once all the outlines. You must look attentively, to discover more than the eye has taken in at its first glance. He was like one of our rugged hills, having bold varieties of shape, records of time and of great convulsions, of the violence of storms, of changes wrought by other and varied influences.

[Pg 182]

He had thriven in the world far beyond all his expectations. His life had been one of untiring industry, decision, and ingenious energy. At the time of his marriage, almost every penny was exhausted by the humble fee. As days rolled on, the Creator added to his store, and he purchased the farm on which his father had resided. By a manly appeal to the sense of justice, he prevented a rich neighbor from competing with him at the sale of these broad acres.

In after days he also became the possessor of the farm, called Riversdale. There he spent his last years of life. He lived there in the affluence of a rich farmer. It was strange to see him and his faithful wife so utterly unchanged by prosperity, and by the alterations in the habits of society.

At Riversdale he had a spacious dwelling. There was here a degree of elegance within and without. It had been the country residence of a rich merchant. His furniture was plain, but abundant, and all for use.

Among the curiosities of our house was the old clock, on whose face the sun and moon differed from their prototypes in the heavens, inasmuch as they had a far more distinct representation of the ruddy human countenance, and as they did not rise or set,—for their mechanism had become distracted.

[Pg 183]

And then there was the famous old gun,—taken from a Hessian at the battle of Princeton, and which had done great service in the deer hunts in the Pocano Mountains, and amid the pines of New Jersey.

Those deer-hunts were great circumstances in the course of the year. He used to narrate with great pleasure, the events that occurred at such excursions in the forests.

Once as he told me, he was alone in the woods with a guide. The darkness was coming apace. He had wounded a deer. The cry of the dogs indicated that they were close upon it. It became evident that the man wished to lead the hunters out of the way; and to disappear in the darkness, that he might appropriate the prey to himself. But all his mean plans were soon baffled. "If you," said the old yeoman, "can run faster than the buck-shot in my gun, slip away in the dark." Never guide, I venture to say, adhered more closely to his party.

His education, like that of so many of the old Pennsylvania farmers, had been very limited. His sympathies were not broad; though a small degree of sentiment pervaded a vein of tenderness which wound its way through the rugged nature of his soul. Sometimes it appeared so attenuated, that few influences seemed to be willing to work for the precious ore.

[Pg 184]

I remember that we were once walking along the avenue which led to the house, and I quoted to him a line of poetry which he did heartily appreciate. The scene around had little power to prepare his mind for the impression. Two huge old cherry trees were near us. These were gradually withering away; as if to remind him, as he continually passed them, that the days of his full strength were gone, and that infirmities of old age were creeping upon him.

Had I perused all our volumes of poetry, I could not have selected a sentence, which he could relish more than the one which I repeated. It was the well-known line of Cowper, that God made the country, but man made the town.

It was really curious to observe how this arrested all his mind. It seemed as if his soul was deeply impressed with a sense of the goodness of God, in giving man this beautiful green world, on which he does not labor in vain. He appeared also to have respect for the poet who could utter such a truth. Had all the tribe of bards risen from their graves, been capable of participating in our earthly food, and come to us that day, Cowper would have been treated to Benjamin's portion.

His histories proved to me how his nature was the same in early life, and in age, as to fearlessness, and to a rough opposition to those by whom he was excited.

[Pg 185]

Once his step-mother, during the strife of the revolution, and while his father was absent from home in the service of his country, sent him with a claim to a British officer. He was to demand payment for some produce which the soldiers of the king had taken from the farm.

He found him seated at a table, at a place not far from Bustleton, and presenting himself made known the object of his visit.

"Where is your father?" said the officer.

The boy was shrewd enough to know that discretion was now the better part of valor. But mingled emotions overcame his wisdom. The British soldiers around him were the oppressors of his country.

Regardless of the wrath which he would assuredly awaken, and scattering, manifestly, all hope of success in his mission to the wind, he saucily replied, "Why, he is at the camp with General Washington; where he ought to be." Perhaps he also regarded this as a defence of his father. A grasp at a sword, an angry oath,—an assurance that he was a vile little rebel, and must quickly vanish, were the evidences that he had given his receipt in full for all that had been taken as spoils from the farm.

I have said that he was a man of the most sterling honesty. His extreme care to ascertain that all his accounts were correct, was actually a trouble to the vestry of the church, while he was treasurer of the body. He was above the least meanness in all his dealings with men. As he was rather too suspicious of others, sometimes imagining that they had some evil design, where they had none, it was the more remarkable that he had no cunning in his own heart, was open in all his aims, and free from those arts which entangle weak consciences.

[Pg 186]

He had manners which were a study. Few men are not, in some degree affected by their dress. He was the same man in self-respect and courtesy, whether you met him in his soiled working-clothes, or in his best array. Summoned suddenly from the work in the field, or from the barn, with chaff and dust upon him, his calm courtesy in receiving any guest, whatever his station in life, the utter absence of all apology for his appearance, his entire devotion to the attentions due to his visitors, elicited your decided admiration. Not in his conduct, to his guests, but in some slight expression, when we were alone, could any of us detect that he felt any peculiar pleasure, when any of our most aristocratic inhabitants had called to see him and his household, manifesting their respect. I have never seen him more devoted and kind to any visitor, than to a poor friend,—one who had lagged far behind him, in the ascent of the hill of fortune.

[Pg 187]

It could not be expected that his wild portion of the country would be exempted from those rude scenes of violence, where men take the laws into their own hands. Nor can it be surprising, that with his physical strength, boldness, and wild life at sea and on land, he should sometimes be prominent in these wars on a little scale.

I remember how I heard one of his narratives with mingled interest and sorrow, when he told of a victory fought and won.

It was a contest with a party of butchers, who had come from a distance and taken possession of the tavern, maltreating some of the country people, who had, to say the least, a better right to the injurious comforts of the inn.

He was summoned from his sleep, and became the leader of the avenging party. When they reached the scene of noisy revelry, he proved that he did not rely on physical strength alone, but summoned a "moral effect" to his aid. A pretended roll was to be called. Many names of persons not present, perhaps not in existence, were, by his order, pronounced; and their "Here," was heard clearly uttered in the night air. The effect of this act of generalship soon became apparent. Silence, indicative of dismay reigned in the place of the former noisy laughter. The rough fellows were sorely thrashed, and taught that there was a high law which the quiet dwellers in the field could put in force.

[Pg 188]

In after days my old friend would have deprecated the recurrence of such scenes. There is always a tendency to law and order, and to gentle virtues where a man has a great fondness for children—and this love for little ones he possessed in a great degree.

It would have been a good scene for a painter, when they gathered round the white-haired man and elicited his attention and his smile. The large form sinking into its most quiet repose, as if there was no need that it should be braced now as if prepared for any struggle of life, and the rough features softened to gentle sympathy, would have been worthy of lasting perpetuation on the canvass. I have no doubt that the passage of Scripture recording the benediction of the children by our Lord, touched his heart powerfully, and allured him the more to the One who bore our nature in the perfection of every excellence.

If an able painter, I would strive to represent our Redeemer, as I could fancy that He appeared in the scene to which I have referred. Who can attempt to satisfy even the least imaginative disciple, by any picture of the countenance of our Lord? How difficult even to unite the infinite tenderness with the determination of the perfect man, whom nothing could move from his true purpose, because holiness was the necessity of a heart without sin? One shrinks, in some degree, from a multitude of representations of Him, as if they, failing to meet the inspiration of the soul, were not reverent. Might we not more easily conceive of his blended love and dignity, if he was painted among those who could not trouble him, whom He would not have sent away, whom he

[Pg 189]

took in his arms, and on whom he caused to rest a blessing, that ever waits now to descend on the children of those who diligently seek him.

Some of the quaint narratives of the old man have proved, as I have repeated them, a source of much amusement to the young.

For instance, he said that he was returning from a journey of some miles into the interior of the country. He had taken his heavy wagon, and aided a neighbor who was removing his goods to a new home.

The night had overtaken him as he returned. Just as he crossed a small stream, he heard a voice of one in great distress, calling for aid. "Oh! come here,—come here,"—were the piteous cries from an adjoining field.

Stopping his horses, and clambering a bank, he soon secured a "reconnaissance" of a field of strife.

By the dim light of the moon, he saw a scene sufficiently ludicrous, but demanding immediate activity. He had not come a moment too soon. A small man, a shoemaker, the one who cried for aid, and sadly in need of it had, it seems, been crossing a field, when an ugly-tempered bull rushed upon him, and would have gored him to death but for his presence of mind and dexterity. The poor fellow had skill enough to dodge the assault; and as the animal, missing his aim, rushed by him, he caught it by the tail. The vicious brute made every effort to reach his disagreeable parasite. In doing this he ran around in endless circles, very wearying to the little legs of the little man, and exhausting his strength.

[Pg 190]

As my old friend had come and seen, what had he to do but conquer? He hastened to the side of the living whirligig. The shoemaker was wearing out his shoe-soles more rapidly than any of his customers.

Seizing also the tail of the bull, he informed the exhausted man that he might now let go.

The animal continued the same tactics, but his foe-man was armed with his heavy whip, and this was wielded by a powerful right hand. A few blows, and the victory was won. The hero was left alone in his glory; for the rescued had vanished as soon as he could release his hold on the tail, and he did not return to see the result of the strife. Let us hope that he was grateful, although I doubt the gratitude of one who could thus run away, and leave all the battle to his deliverer. A benefactor in things small and great, who has a noble mind, though wounded by insensibility to his kindness, may receive benefit from the unthankful; for he may learn more deeply the example of the Lord, and he may free his heart the more to do good, and look for no return—learn to do good to the unthankful and the evil.

[Pg 191]

I have represented the farmer at Riversdale as openness and honesty itself in all his dealings. Men will be men. In country life, as in the city you will find a sad abundance of mean and tricky persons.

It is not a little curious to see our city friends come into the country, and take for granted that the sojourners there are all simple-minded and honest men. That is a weakness which is soon dissipated. The wisdom is purchased with the loss of gold and silver. They find that they are charged by many, probably the obtrusive ones, the most extravagant prices for all things. The more free they are with their money, the more they are required to pay. The value fixed on the substance offered for sale, is all that can possibly be extorted from any one who is imprudent enough to buy, and make no inquiries. There comes a danger of reaction. They change the theory concerning men of the field, which they have learned from poets and novelists, and are tempted to imagine that they all are like these thieves. I thank God, that I know well to the contrary.

[Pg 192]

Some men of large means imagine that if they are very free in spending their money, and allow those whom they employ, to take advantage of them, to extort unfair prices, that they will thereby cultivate good feeling, a grateful regard. This is an entire mistake. The man who cheats you never will be grateful. He comes to you, in all his relations to you, with meanness of soul. That is no soil for good will. He also fears, that at any time, you may be conscious of the fraud. He expects therefore an hour when you will be angry, and despise him. He judges of your coming enmity, by his own lasting bitterness and revengeful mind, toward any one who has overreached him. He has also some contempt for you, because you have been less cunning than himself.

Pay fair generous prices. When a man gains from you more than the fair price, let it be a gift. Do not expect anything from the man, who does in two days the labor that should be accomplished in one. Alas, as we reflect on the want of truth and gratitude towards us, we have to remember that we can apply these lessons to ourselves, as we labor in the vineyard where we have been sent to toil!

I have spoken of the hospitality of the house at Riversdale. This never could have been exercised as it was, but for the admirable arrangements of the good wife and excellent daughters. I look back, and marvel how all could be done in that house and farm, and yet time be found for the entertainment of so many guests.

[Pg 193]

I am deeply grieved to look back to those bachelor days, and find that I had a senseless conviction, that a house pretty much took care of itself. It was a delusion which must often have caused me to be troublesome, when I had not any idea that I was in the way. I now honor the statemanship which adorns domestic affairs, and hope I no longer am found at any time, a wheel

out of place in the machinery of any house. Never too late to mend. A good proverb, friends. But as we apply its hopefulness, let us take care to remember that when the present time shall have become the past, and we have done wrong in things small and great, it is too late to mend the sin and error. We cannot mend the evil of the past.

I see the good old mother of the household now. Always neat in her dress,—erect in form,—kind,—thoughtful, self-possessed. You could not know her long, and not perceive that she was a pre-eminent representative of the wife and parent. Her love for others had its true source, the love of God. Thence it flowed gently a stream of tenderness for her family, and then spread freely far and wide to all others. Her religion was of a very grand character. She knew, in all the trials of life, what it was to have her Creator for her Rock,—to have His rod and His staff. Real to her indeed, the divine love which brought our Redeemer to our form from Heaven, and caused Him to expiate our sins on the cross.

[Pg 194]

Once we were speaking hopelessly, of some reprobate. The opinion was advanced, or implied, that he was never to be reformed. I never forgot the sorrow she manifested, and her heart-felt but gentle reproof, while she corrected us in the abiding spirit of the hope in Christ for any one who yet lives. While the lamp holds out to burn, she asked, could not he return?

She was one of the most unpretending Christians, and therefore her deep piety could not be concealed. When she was unconscious of the revelation, she taught us in a living subject of the Lord, the power that can be given for holiness in this scene, where all gold can be well tried in the fire.

She was ever busy. In hours of ease she had her knitting-needle. How pleasant it was to see her at her work, in the warm days of summer, as she sat in her high-backed chair on the piazza which overlooked the River. With the steamboats, then beginning their course, she was never satisfied. "The boats with sails," she said, "glided away so natural like: but with the steamboats it was all forced work." No doubt she often regarded these different vessels, as emblematic of those who moved under gentle and approved agencies, and those who were out of harmony with nature around us,—the working of the hands that are infinite in power,—those who cared only for hire, and needed, in order to their activity, some of those goads which happily abound for the idle.

[Pg 195]

The aged woman came to us what she was, to remind us what endless influences are ever ready to mould us to increasing piety, and love for others. To the sick and sorrowing out of her household she had been an angel of charity. Her life had been a golden cord. He had strung it for her with jewels from the mine. Is that mine exhausted? The glories we know lie near at hand for all that will gather them.

Well can I realize after the lapse of years, the sorrow of the aged wife when it was manifest that my old friend must soon close his eyes on the world for ever. There he lay, his strong form promising hope, which the decision of the physician denied. Could he be dying, who was bound to the scene around him by so many ties? As he had gained these fields by such a life of labor, and held them so firmly in his grasp, as every tree seemed so surely his, as you felt the impress of his firm and undisputed will in all the arrangements of his broad farm, you might ask can all these bonds which bind him here be sundered? But God sunders all, as he will, in a moment.

[Pg 196]

And now he was on the verge of the world to come. In infancy his life had hung by the most attenuated thread. Was it better for him that he was to die an old man, one who had passed through life's trials, had received such endless mercies, had so many calls to so many duties? Or would it have been better for him that he had died in infancy, passing to the ineffable joy, but to less glory and honor than those who have borne the cross, endured in true manly toil, the burden and heat of the day in the vineyard of the Master?

It was in a quiet house, quiet as one so soon to be forsaken of its owner, that we assembled to receive with him the precious emblems of the great sacrifice made for us, in infinite love. If he received consolation, it was indeed given also to the aged wife. Her quiet sorrow, without a tear, was reverent, and full of submission. Its evenness,—not rising or falling with every hope or fear,—was a seal of its great depth. You read in her fixed countenance that she had the past with all its memories, and the future with all its solitude clearly before her. She was henceforth to be as the shattered vase, just waiting some small trial of its strength, to fall to pieces. But the lamp within was to burn on, and fed with ever increasing supplies of aliment for its flame, to glow with increasing radiance. Such lights in the temple of God never go out.

[Pg 197]

My aged friends! your ashes lie where you hoped that your mortal remains would find their resting-place. Years have passed, and yet I recall you to remembrance more affectionately, than when I stood by your opened grave. One cause of this, is, I presume, that the more I become acquainted with men, the more I learn to value those who have risen in their integrity, above the low level of ordinary character.

Changed is your dwelling. A vast and costly pile occupies the place where once it stood. But could you, the former inhabitants, of that which has undergone such alteration, reappear among us, we should recognize what is eternal in its nature. What is of earth, alters and passes away. But love, and truth, and faith, all the nobleness given by the Redeemer,—these endure. These are extended and glorified in the world to come.

***DR. SAMUEL STANHOPE SMITH AND THE HAUNTED HOUSE.***

When I was at Princeton College, Dr. Samuel Stanhope Smith was its president. A learned and able man, and an eloquent preacher, blameless in his life, his influence was great, not only over his college, but far and wide over the surrounding country.

I trust that it is one of the merits of our Republic, that truly great and good men will always have this influence and respect. Surely we have cast off those impediments to human progress which exist in other lands, where tributes due to real merit are paid to men for their accumulation of riches. Our offices in the states will almost always be bestowed on the deserving. The tricks of the politician will be generally unknown, because our people will hold them in abhorrence. In the old countries legislative bodies have felt the force of bribes. But I will boldly turn prophet here, and say, that no such practices will ever be known in such deliberative bodies in New Jersey. I can imagine the shame which the pure-minded people of this common-wealth must be ready to visit on one proven guilty of such a detestable enormity. Indeed he would incur the risk of being burnt alive at the stake.

[Pg 199]

The influence which Dr. Smith attained by the purest means, he exercised for the public good. His mind was of a philosophic cast, and he abhorred all superstition. Hence he was always eager to dispel the errors of the ignorant, and to remove the fears excited by diseased imaginations.

One day I was plodding over a page of Sophocles. No doubt it contained beauties whose discovery would repay toil. I was, however, unable to say, as I pondered it, lexicon by my side, with the Frenchman, "hang these ancients, they are always anticipating our bright thoughts," for I was not yet able to compare the idea of the Greek with the scintillations of genius which had flashed through my mind, and which were laid up for the future edification of the world, because I could not determine what the old dramatist had intended to say to us.

While I was in this state of most unpleasant perplexity, there was a knock at my door. I knew it at once to be that of our tutor. He informed me that the great doctor wished to see me and the rest of my class at his study.

We were thus invited,—that is, we had as strict a summons as any soldiers could receive from their commander,—to appear at his residence, the famous house under whose roof so many illustrious men have found shelter. Long may it stand!

[Pg 200]

It could not take much time to collect the designated young gentlemen together. Before we met, each individual brain was greatly exercised with speculations, concerning the cause of our being thus summoned to the study of our venerable head. When we were a collective body the various streams of conjecture being thrown in a torrent together, the effervescence exceeded all my powers of description.

It was a trying hour when any one of us had to come face to face with Dr. Smith.

We were not aware that any evil deed had been committed of late in the college. We all felt a bold conviction of individual innocence. Indeed, all college fellows are innocent always, until they are proved to be guilty.

One poor fellow, whose shaggy head could never be reduced to smooth order by comb or brush, more than the tossing waves are subdued to a placid mirror by the shadows of passing clouds, with a nose that always reminded you of a sun-dial, and an eye, which sometimes gave him the nickname of Planet, from its ceaseless twinkling,—had indeed some troubles of conscience concerning a duck which had been killed, cooked, and eaten in his room a few nights before, after he had taken a long rural ramble in the evening. He had some reasonable fear that he could not produce the bill of its sale for the scrutiny of the President, should it be demanded. Still, on the whole, we were calm. All felt the necessity of a general sunshine of countenances. It was our wisdom to look as if we expected some compliment from the head of the college. Indeed, one fellow, who had a manly, harmless wildness in him, whom all loved and confided in, who was a good and kind adviser of us all,—whose intense life was a good element for the formation of the noble minister which he afterwards became,—was audibly preparing a reply to the doubtfully anticipated commendation of the President. It contained the most ludicrous assertion of our great modesty, and sense of unworthiness,—in which he said, we all most cordially concurred,—while in the presence in which we stood. Curiosity was in every mind. No one had the slightest clue, which appeared to guide us satisfactorily one step in the darkness.

[Pg 201]

But we reached the door of the study. One of the most respectful knocks ever given proclaimed our presence,—or rather inquired if we could be admitted. The fine, manly voice which we so well knew, called on us to enter. We were received with that courteous dignity which characterized the doctor. All scanned the noble head, and no thunder-clouds were there. It is something to have seen Dr. Smith in the pulpit, in the class-room, or in the study. He was somewhat taller than men in general, and had a frame of fine proportions. His countenance easily kindled with intelligence. A large blue eye seemed to search your secret thoughts—and yet in all manliness of inquiry—promising cordial sympathy with all that was elevated, and a just indignation at the contemplation of any moral evil. His brow was spacious. His whole face spoke of hard study—polish of mind—of patient thought—of one who walked among men as a king. His voice was full

[Pg 202]

and harmonious. His address was dignified and urbane. The stranger must trust him, and his friends confided in him, not to discover that he ever could forsake them.

Before he spoke we were at our ease. Our surprise took a new channel as he entered on the business of the hour.

"Gentlemen," said he, "I have sent for you, that I might have your co-operation in a plan, which may greatly benefit a worthy farmer, and remove superstitious fears from some ignorant minds.

"Mr. Hollman, who has a farm about two miles from the college, cannot persuade any of the laboring families to reside in a lonely stone house on his property. It is a dwelling that should be a comfortable, happy home. The situation is rather picturesque; standing, as it does, near the shade of a thick wood, and on the bank of a small stream which empties into our classical run. The people say that the house is haunted. Family after family has forsaken it in dread. I have not had patience to listen to the various narratives told concerning it. One man who is quite intelligent, and evidently honest, declares that he will take his oath that he has heard terrible noises at midnight, and has smelt strange fumes.

[Pg 203]

"Now this short story must be put an end to. Such superstition must not exist under the shadow of an institution celebrated for its learning. I should regard it as a blot on our fair reputation.

"I have been engaged in devising a plan for the refutation of this folly. It is this. I propose that you, gentlemen of the senior class, shall spend a night in the house. This will soon be known over the neighborhood. There has been much expenditure of words, over the silly narratives of people alarmed at less than their own shadows. All who have talked of the ghost, will talk of your act as having cast shame on those who pretend to see supernatural sights. You will soon have the pleasure of finding that the deserted house has become the home of some worthy family. You will do much to put an end to the belief in ghosts—for the history of your act will be narrated far and wide. Mr. Hollman will be a debtor to you for securing him from loss, and from great inconvenience. You have no fear of ghosts. In all probability you will hear no sounds to disturb you, or call for investigation. If you hear any peculiar noise, you will be assured that it is caused by some designing person,—who avails himself of the credulity of the ignorant to gain his corrupt or foolish purpose. I leave this matter in your hands. I am confident that the trust that I repose in you will be attended with the result that I desire."

[Pg 204]

We, one and all, became the personification of delight. The president was informed that it was a most agreeable adventure which he thus proposed. One fellow, who was awfully alarmed, and who had late at night told stories of ghosts who appeared in Virginia, until some of his companions were afraid to separate, was the loudest in expressing his readiness to go with the rest. He became pale with fright, when one of his class-mates suggested that it would have more effect if one stayed all night in the house alone, and that he should be selected for that solitude.

It was agreed that we should say nothing about our plan in the college. Hence, on our return from the doctor's study, our mysterious conduct, and sundry vague hints caused some eyes to be opened so wide, that one might question how they would ever close again. In vain every attempt to discover what had happened in the study of the great divine and philosopher.

[Pg 205]

Late in the afternoon a deputation from our class waited on Mr. Hollman. I had the honor to be appointed on this committee. The estimable man, a well-educated farmer, and having that simple address which enables a benevolent heart to declare itself through its courtesy, expressed great pleasure on hearing of our proposition, and uttered his thanks to us, and to the venerable doctor.

He corroborated the remark of our president, that if we put an end to the ghost story connected with the house where we were to spend the night, we should also, simultaneously, succeed in preventing the growth of superstition elsewhere. "All true—very true," he said; "I always notice that the doctor's remarks on all subjects run on alike, each of value like the other, like links in a gold chain. There is danger that this fear of ghosts will spread. I have some symptoms of it already in my household. The woman who attends to the milk, begins to look round her, and hurry home from the milk-house in the dusk of the evening with a very rapid pace, and to the neglect of some of her duties. And I think that Pompey has a decided seriousness at times,—as of a man destined to see something terrible. Perhaps this will occur on his first lonely drive at night by the grave-yard at our village beyond us. Tell me what I can do to make you comfortable to-night. I will see that the house is warmed at once, and provided with lights."

[Pg 206]

We walked with him over to the haunted dwelling. On our way he gave us some good practical advice, as we conversed on various subjects. It came from a practical spring of knowledge which he had acquired by reflection on all that he saw of men, and on the affairs that transpired. Indeed Saner, a lazy fellow, who smelt the instruction so amply spread for us at the literary table of Nassau Hall, but who never tasted or digested one crumb or other fragment, said to us, as we returned home afterwards—and that with a malicious sense of triumph over Latin, Greek, Philosophy, mental and moral,—Algebra, and like kindred venerable foes,—"You see a man can get sense of more real value out of the world than out of books."

"Saner," said I, "my dear fellow, is this worthy man possessed of the widely-extended sense of Dr. Smith? And do you think that any one to whom Providence has given the opportunity of collegiate education, and who will turn out an ignorant blockhead, will ever learn anything from observation? Besides our class,—or at least the deputation to the house of the ghost,—have their minds enlightened by our instruction. Now, I want to know whether this has not prepared us to glean instruction from the sensible remarks of Mr. Hollman? Do you think that the ignorant men

[Pg 207]

who work for him, learn of him in a year what we do, or some of us do, in a day?"

But this is a digression.—To return to our survey of the dwelling. Unfortunately there was nothing very romantic in the structure. The frowning shadows of larch, and other forest trees; the massive walls were not there to call forth associations with some of the descriptions of castles which were the scenes of ghosts and of banditti—such as were common in the novels of the day.

The house looked desolate only because it was deserted, and had a dark history. There were two rooms on the first floor; one was a kitchen of considerable size. The other the sitting-room,—stove-room,—or parlor,—as it might happen to be called by the inmates. This was an apartment opened a few times in the year for company on great State occasions. Yet it gave all the year round,—a fact which weak critics often overlook when they talk about a useless room, and laugh in their dreaded but unproductive way,—gave all the year round a sense of ample accommodation and dignity to the mansion. From the kitchen a winding staircase ascended to the upper rooms. The small landing-place rested on the back wall of the house. Small garrets were over these rooms. The cellar was of the size of the dwelling, and afforded no hiding-place, nor any means of access to the interior from without, which we could not easily secure. A small shed rested against the back of the house, from the inside of which there was no door by which you could enter either room. It was obvious, from the pathway to this shed from the kitchen door, that the access of the family to it, was in the open air.

[Pg 208]

The most desolate thing to me was the well. It was one of those still seen in the little State—so elbowed by its big brothers of New York and Pennsylvania, and able to bear a great deal of such pressure. It was lorded over by that huge apparatus of the great long scale-beam, with a pole and bucket on one end, and a great weight on the other. A vine had crept up the pole, which must be torn away before water could be drawn. When had the matron called the good man to draw water from the deep and damp abode of truth? when had the children, returning from school, slaked their thirst from the bucket, covered in places by the green moss?

We could discover no manner by which any one disposed to disturb the inmates of the house, could secretly enter. It was amusing to notice how some of the students, had no conception of pranks to be played upon us in any other way than those known among collegians. However, we all agreed that our regulations for self-defence must be very simple. We had to wait for the demonstrations of the enemy, before we could do more than draw up our forces in a simple line for attack or defence.

[Pg 209]

The night, of course, came on. The whole class entered the house. We had good fires in the two rooms below, and in one above. Mr. Hollman sent chairs and tables, and a good stock of solid provisions. Lights had been provided, and we had with us a number of lanterns—two of which were to be kept burning all night. Some excellent cider had been sent to us; and if any had desired it, we would not have permitted the introduction of stronger drink. Our honor was concerned; Dr. Smith having reposed such entire confidence in our proceedings. There was an implied contract between us, and there were men in the class who would see that it was complied with, not only in letter, but in spirit. It was also obvious that if we had any intoxicating beverage among us, and should report strange sights, men would account for it in their own way. Indeed, if the young gents had engaged in a noisy revel, and their intellects had become clouded, we should have tempted some mischievous creature to try and create an alarm.

We soon were a lively party. The house was cheerful with its blazing fires and lights. But as that noble-hearted K—k, who became in aftertime so eloquent a preacher in the Presbyterian church—and M—r, for so many years a representative of his district in Congress—and H—t, afterwards a distinguished Bishop, took their seats by the fire in the kitchen—they soon drew around them the whole of our little army. We became so joyous and free from care, that we regretted that there were not other haunted houses requiring our aid. We had no more thought that our talk would be exhausted before morning, than the bird that its song will cease before the season for its melody is over. It was put to the vote by the leanest fellow in the class that we should not have our supper until we had passed the midnight hour.

[Pg 210]

All remained quiet for a long time, when a dismal sound near one of the windows arrested us, and caused a strange silence. It was the common opinion, that it was the visit of an owl. Before midnight a scraping noise was heard, and as we moved about, R—k insisted that he heard a sound of moving boards, as if some one had climbed hastily over the garden fence.

All soon subsided into silence. Our animated conversations proceeded. I ought to say, that almost the whole evening had been spent in the discussion of metaphysical questions. In those days these were unfailing topics. We did wonderfully well, considering that the German school had not yet thrown open its gates, and let in its flood of waters, not muddy, but stained with all sorts of dyes, so that the eye is dazzled on the surface in place of penetrating the mass before you. The doctrine of the freedom of the will, as expounded by the great President Edwards, was a sure mountain of gold for every adventurer. I always observed that all who pretended to argue at all, could argue fluently on this subject. I also noticed that no student ever hinted that he did not understand what his opponent had said, and that none of us ever complained that those who replied to us, had misunderstood us,—a wonderful proof of the clear manner in which we all reasoned. And indeed there was so much genius among us for this branch of disputation, that it did not appear to matter whether a student had in any degree mastered the great treatise, of which a celebrated Scotchman, no profound judge to be sure, has said that it never had been refuted.

[Pg 211]

As we were thus arguing these great subjects, and saying things which Locke, Malebranche, Leibnitz, and Reid could never have said, K—k amused us by a story,—for the actual truth of which he gave us his word. He said that in a part of the country where he had spent many years, the people had a debating club. It was held in a school-house during the winter evenings, and drew large audiences. On one occasion the topic of debate was the free agency of man.

A stone-mason who had attended the meeting during the discussion gave an animated account of the scene. The teacher of the school was his particular hero. He acknowledged that the opponent had merit,—was, in country parlance, "a smart man." But little Charlie the teacher was too much for him,—he was still "smarter." It had been a long argument. The little teacher held that man was not a free agent. The evening was passing away. The friends of each champion were much perplexed. Would it be a drawn battle? Just at the happy time, the little teacher thought of a happy argument. "Man," he said, "could not be a free agent; for if he was, he would never die." "That settled it," was the comment. Man would never die, if he was a free agent. So we gave him the vote. He is an "uncommon smart man." We laughed,—and Thompson said that a story was not an argument, and was preparing for a new onset, when the lean student,—whom some called, improperly, Bean-pole,—interposed with the assurance, that it was time for our repast. Some said not yet,—but he who argued on the side of the lean one, had one vast advantage; that is to say, his statements, particularly his reference to the tender ham, and tempting bread and butter, created an appetite even in his opponents. So the night was carried,—and we soon arranged our viands. The metaphysical discussions ceased,—probably from the instinctive conviction that such severe exercise of the mind was unfavorable to health, when one was making a hasty repast.

[Pg 212]

[Pg 213]

While we were engaged in this agreeable duty, one of our number, Shockford, a fellow of the kindest disposition, but always saying things in a grumbling way, declared that he had some scruples of conscience, as to the nature of our present occupation. What business had we to interfere with ghosts? They had never done any harm to us. He used to groan over the dull, unimaginative brains of the people of his neighborhood. One day a weight of lead was taken off from his mind. He sang his triumph in the best Latin and Greek which he could summon. He thought that his neighborhood was about to improve. Could it be credited, some of the people had seen a ghost. He knew a part of the country where the inhabitants were too mean ever to have seen a spirit. Lonely places, awful shadows by the woods, grave-yards, bridges in dark hollows, were all thrown away upon them.

And no man ever heard of a generous thought that originated there, or, being sent there, found a hospitable reception. They are as dry in their natures as the old posts in their fences. They never saw anything in the grand old woods, which are rapidly disappearing, those majestic trees with their deep shades, that elevated their souls higher than the furrows, which they turn over year by year. The trees are but so much fire-wood, so much material for lumber,—so many posts and rails. All the beauty of the harvest, is submerged in the expectation of the silver for which it could be sold. Is it any marvel that such clods are despised by the ghosts? If you were one, and had your own way, would you appear in such a dreary society? Would you go before the stupid eye, that never gleamed at the glorious unfolding of the stars, or rolled, in some little transport, as the autumnal clouds drifted towards the sunset, and were so radiant in the beams of the setting orb, that they were too grand a canopy, for a world on whose surface men do so many deeds contrary to the holy will of the Great Ruler of the universe?

[Pg 214]

Happy he was to say that he knew other parts of the country where the sojourners are a people of different characteristics. Many ghosts were seen in the favored spot. What was the consequence? The young ladies are, as it might naturally be expected, much more attractive in their personal appearance, of gentler voices, of more sympathizing manners, and form husbands on a much more elevated plan. Of course there is much variety in their descriptions of the ghosts which they have seen. One most commendable trait which I have observed among them, is that the sights which they have witnessed enhance their social respectability. There are slight grades in rank among the ghost-seers. Those who have seen a spirit at midnight, are superior to those who have beheld one early in the evening. Those who have seen one near the graves, rank above those who have met one only in the fields. But the crowned head of all is my old neighbor, who begins apparently to tell you an awful history,—his manner indicating that he can give strange circumstantial evidence of the truth of the event which he is about to narrate,—and all at once the blood, which began to cool, flows freely, as he cuts short his tantalizing narrative, with the information that he shall never inform any soul what he saw that night. No one of our neighbors dares to think that he has ever approached such a transcendent vision. The shake of the head with which the old man concludes his last sentence, is too impressive for the most presumptuous man, having a tendency to a doubt.

[Pg 215]

After our meal, and many a hearty laugh, a number composed themselves in the different rooms for a good sleep. It was determined that three of the class should sit up awake before the fire in case of emergency. I must say that there was an undefined doubt over our minds whether something very exciting would not happen before morning. I felt this even in the gayety of the room. The young men laughed and talked as if their minds were wrought up to an unnatural state.

[Pg 216]

The hours sped on,—rapidly for those who slumbered, and heavily for those who did duty as waking guards before the fire. Now and then some one would awaken, as if from a dream, and ask in bold speech whether the ghost had yet come.

I remember that it was my turn to be off guard, and to join the sleepers. The fires were kept up



brightly, and gave a cheerful light to all the apartment. I was watching the flickering of the flames, and had forgotten almost entirely the place and position which we occupied, and was philosophizing on the nature of sleep, and recalling some observations I had read on the happy state of healthy little children who are sinking to their sleep. I recalled the evidence I had received of that kind arrangement of Providence, in the case of the little ones at home, smiling on you in such perfect benignity and peace, as you drew near them in their little beds. This, of course, recalled the home. As I was bringing loved faces and scenes before me, the whole house was thrown into a sudden commotion,—just like that which you may imagine to occur when a whole ship's crew, having been devoid of fear, is suddenly startled with the report, communicated as by some mysterious power from man to man, that an iceberg is near at hand, or breakers, or that the good vessel has been subjected to some shock which endangers the common safety.

[Pg 217]

A loud sound was heard, evidently in the centre of the house, and all agreed that it was occasioned by the discharge of a large pistol. The dwelling was shaken by the report, and the windows rattled. In a moment all was activity. By a common impulse all above and below gathered at the staircase. We distinctly smelt the fumes of the powder, and holding up lights, were satisfied that we detected the lingering smoke.

Then commenced a new and perfect scrutiny of the building. Notwithstanding the evidence that earthly elements had entered into the cause of the shock, some were rather awed.

All our search was in vain. There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy. Yet, in this instance, we looked on the earth for that which we could not find.

Not the slightest trace could be discovered to throw us on the true path of investigation. We could form no possible conjecture as to the manner in which the pistol had been discharged. After daylight we re-examined the house. But all was in vain. The external and internal scrutiny gave us not a hint as to the manner in which the deed could have been accomplished.

I must confess that we returned to Princeton in no enviable mood. We all dreaded an interview with Dr. Smith. We sought him at once,—as nature inclines us often to go through a painful duty as soon as we can, and to have it over.

[Pg 218]

But the President listened to our story in a manner which relieved us of our apprehensions. He did not seem greatly surprised; and his remarks satisfied us that we had not been made ridiculous, and we were prepared to face the world, or rather the worst part of it,—with reference to our present condition,—the college.

"Gentlemen," said he, "some effort to continue this imposition was to have been expected. I presumed that such a series of inmates would not have been driven from the house, had not some skill been shown in the manner of causing alarm. Now, the affair is more serious than ever. If you allow this to rest here, the fate of the house is sealed. Ghosts will be seen all around the land. Perhaps we shall even have one to disturb the college. Malicious and designing men will be able to torture their victims, and often render the property of those whom they hate, perfectly worthless. You must continue to sleep in this building until you unravel this mystery. For my own part, I would say to you, do not be discouraged. You have made an advance. It is now evident that the noises heard in the house, perhaps sudden flashes that have been seen, are not the work of imagination. A pistol fired there, gives you a clear indication that some man is to be detected. Go there again. Let a portion of the class go to the house, and take possession. Have your fires and lights. At a later hour let another body of these gentlemen go quietly in the dark, and secrete themselves outside of the dwelling, so that they can watch it during the night. Place yourselves so as not to intercept the most natural approaches to the house. Do not let any one know of your plans. I shall wait to hear from you again, and am sure that you will succeed."

[Pg 219]

Before the evening had arrived we had proof that Dr. Smith was correct in his judgment as to the necessity for the prosecution of this adventure. Night promised to become hideous to the surrounding country. It was already reported on the most indisputable evidence; nay, some of the narrators had heard it directly from the lips of the students themselves, that as we were assembled in the dwelling, the lights suddenly became dim, the fires ceased to blaze, and then an awful stately lady, with the famous red ring around her throat, indicating clearly that a murder had been committed on the premises, walked through the rooms and looked on us, and seemed to enjoin on us the duty of bringing the men who had stained their hands with her blood to justice, and then suddenly withdrew with a terrific noise. Another report was to the injury of an unpopular man, who had owned the property before it was purchased by Mr. Hollman. Its version of the affair was, that the ghost disclosed a secret place in the house where some papers were concealed,—proving that the property had in former times been acquired by the most wicked means. Great satisfaction was intimated that the man would be exposed, and attain his deserts,—a prison having long been supposed to be his appropriate destination.

[Pg 220]

In the evening we followed the injunctions of the president. The late party left the college one by one, issuing in the dark from the basement of the building, so that no one watching us could know of their departure. They crept along over fields, and by the skirt of the woods. They hid themselves under a thicket, through which no one would attempt to pass to the house.

The midnight came on. I was one of those in the interior of the building. About the same time of the night we heard the strange pistol again. I also thought I heard an additional sound, but could not imagine its cause. Our chief trust was in those without. And we were not disappointed. A

moment after the discharge of the pistol, we heard a rush of feet, and many cries. Then there arose a noise of unmistakable triumph.

The noise, and a flash revealed to the watchers without, the direction they must pursue. They surrounded the shed, back of the building. There they seized a form, a base—unspiritual—rough form. It was that of a young negro man, who was brought into the light in the house, and subjected to investigation.

[Pg 221]

He confessed that his design was to obtain vengeance of Mr. Hollman, who had given him some offence. It seems that above the shed on the back of the house, where he was secured, there was a small trap-door, opening into the interior. It was so cut out of the boards, and so often white-washed within and without, that we had never observed it. He had once lived in the house, and knowing of this small opening, had availed himself of it, for the success of his wicked design. Climbing up the shed, he lifted the door, held the large horse-pistol deeply loaded, as far as he could over the landing of the winding staircase, and then discharging it, dropped the door, slid from the shed, and was soon far off, and free from all suspicion.

He had heard from the people at Mr. Hollman's, that we were to attempt to satisfy the public mind, that the house was not haunted, and that any family might reside on the premises in peace. Hence he resolved to alarm us all, and drive us away.

Some of the class were for summary vengeance on the fellow. We determined to take him into Princeton, and hand him over to the magistrate. You may imagine that we entered our town on the following morning, with an air of triumph,—which was quite a contrast to our looks on the preceding day. We went in figuratively speaking, with banners flying, and drums beating. And we had some literally blowing their trumpets.

[Pg 222]

The ghost attracted some curiosity, and some said that as we looked for something in white, we were disappointed.

Dr. Smith was as well pleased as we were, with our success. The house was soon reoccupied. I went there some time after our adventure, and found it the home of a respectable family, who treated me with special consideration, and a satisfactory portion of a large pie, when they heard that I was one of the celebrated party that caught the ghost. Ghosts in troops forsook Princeton. They found their occupation gone. Men and women, boys and girls, darkies of all ages, saw shadows in the evening, mists, indistinct lights, flickering candles, passed by graves, and graveyards, and had no longer any special dread. And had any ghost in fact, dared to appear anywhere around, I have no doubt that our class would have been summoned to do, what daylight always does, send the wandering and terrible spirit to the regions where such dwell,—far from all human cognizance. May Nassau Hall ever have such success in all her laudable enterprises! May all her classes, be as great victors over all that can cause dread to a student, as we were over the ghost at Hollman's.

[Pg 223]

---

## XII.

[Pg 224]

### *MRS. DIGBY'S ECONOMY.*<sup>[1]</sup>

"Father," said one of Mr. Digby's children, just let loose from school, and fluttering about as if on the eve of a great flight of play,—"father, look at my copy-book."

The face of the one thus appealed to, which generally bore a care-worn look, relaxed into an attentive and gentle interest. He gave the labored page the appropriate scrutiny. When the right of criticism was thus justly earned, he bestowed due meed of praise. In line after line he read, ECONOMY IS WEALTH.

The children soon left him, and he turned down a path leading to the gate. All the way he repeated in various intonations of voice, the tones changing with various trains of thought, economy is wealth.

[Pg 225]

He said to himself, "Who was the great inventor of that most absurd of proverbs? Economy is wealth. Nonsense! The man who first spoke that sentence, never had a saving wife. Economy wealth! Pooh! Pooh! I say, economy is poverty."

"Our house is full of economy. The more it becomes a bank full of that article, so ridiculously misrepresented, the more poor I am. We have a great linen-closet, never opened for use, full of economy. We have a garret where economy is packed away. There are things ancient and modern, big and little, shining and rusty, known and unknown, bought as bargains, and patiently waiting under loads of dust to become useful, and to save us several fortunes. There is a huge chest of economy in the entry near the spare room door. It contains plated ware, spoons, urns, tea-pots, toast-racks, branches for candle-sticks, all ready for use some fifty years hence, when we shall give parties to the fashionable people in our village, increased from eight or ten to one hundred."

"And there is the fat boy in the kitchen, who was to save me from the cost of hiring a man to cut my wood, and dig the garden, and who was to wear my old clothes. Now he is so corpulent that

he cannot get into my coats or pantaloons. If there be a tide which takes out everything, and brings in nothing, then it is economy. Yes. Economy is wealth."

[Pg 226]

Now Mrs. Digby was a great domestic statesman. Her husband had been leading a life of married astonishment. There seemed to be no end to the resources of her diplomacy. Her reasons for any departure from her ordinary expenditures, were versatile and profound.

One principle behind which the good lady invariably entrenched herself, was the impregnable one, that she never bought anything unless it was under the promptings of a strict necessity. "I never buy anything not strictly necessary, Mr. Digby," was the oil she poured on the troubled waters of the mind of her husband.

Now the man whose intellect was not able to comprehend the curious principles that regulated his household, declared that he never saw anything so comprehensive as this theory of necessity. It appeared to him to be the only law on the earth or among the stars which had no exceptions. And all these necessities, were a great perplexity under another aspect. They were all matters of life and death. If the coat of the little girl faded in a slight degree, a new one—if Mrs. Digby said so—was so necessary, that it was evident that an earthquake would come, or the sun turn aside from his path, with consequences of unending disaster, unless her will was transformed into actual ribbons, and merino, or silk, or velvet. And what was equally surprising, it sometimes happened, that before one necessity could thus be removed, another arose; and the first was forgotten. The earthquake was somehow prevented. The sun did not alter his course. It was a strange mystery.

[Pg 227]

---

It happened after they had been married a short time, that Mrs. Digby expected a visit from some friends.

"My dear," she said, "you will be so pleased with them. I would not think of treating them with any great ceremony, if it was not that they have never seen our house. First impressions are very strong. I never forget the pitcher, towels, and basin in the room where I slept, when I made a visit to the Elders. Nothing could ever eradicate from my mind the belief, that she is not as good a house-keeper as she should be. No, it would not change my mind on that point, if I was to see her in a house, where everything was cut out of newly fallen snow.

"Now, my dear, as these friends are to form their first impressions of my house, I am under the necessity of having everything very nice for them. I shall go to the expense of buying a few articles. And then our meals must be a little more particular than when we are alone. But we will make all up by increased economy. Yes, we will save all the increased expense in various ways. First impressions are so powerful. The first impressions of these friends must be favorable."

[Pg 228]

This all seemed to be very natural to Mr. Digby. But his surprise was great when he discovered that this theory of first impressions on the part of visitors, went on for years. The great portion of those who came to see them, were persons who were to receive first impressions. The Nobbs, the Stowells, the Campbells, the Lambs, and a host of others came, and all were to receive their first impressions. After ten years the theory was still in existence. As soon as Mr. Digby heard of a new comer, then the theory was the first thing in his mind.

And when any of the friends repeated a visit, Mrs. Digby had a pleasant piece of information to impart to her lord and master. She had heard that Mrs. Snobbs, for instance, had said, that their house was kept in a state of perfection. She had been in ecstasies over the appearance of the furniture, and thought the table such as would tempt one to eat who had lost all appetite. Of course, it would never do to allow her to come, and have the first impressions changed. That would be coming down to a most painful extent. It could never be. Some old furniture must therefore be displaced by some new purchases. And then their table must be a little more richly served. Indeed, it would be rather advantageous to have things a little better than in former times. Former impressions would lead her to expect some advance.

[Pg 229]

---

---this time Mr. Digby was again much perplexed. His wife received a present of three hundred dollars from an aunt. The good lady was quite triumphant, and now appeared to think, that anything but economy was not practicable. The old theory of necessity now came in like a torrent. The good husband had read of crops which sprang up in some portions of the earth, in a wonderful manner. He had heard of the plants in some of our warm climes which grew under a few suns in certain seasons, in a way which seems incredible to us who live in this northern land. But never did he imagine that anything could ever equal the sudden growth of necessities in his house, since the good aunt had sent the present. Necessity met you everywhere. It haunted you in every room. You trod upon it when you stepped upon the old carpet, or the old oil-cloth. You could not come near the window but it met you.

We must have new curtains for our parlor-windows.

But, Mr. Digby suggested, daring to run a tilt, madman as he was, against necessity, that irresistible giant, who has a perfect covering of impenetrable mail,—the expense. Think of my present, said the lady, offering terms as a conquering general would offer them to a prostrate

[Pg 230]

foe. I will give of my present a great part of the expense.

So the curtains were bought. They were put up, and Mrs. Digby was as happy as Mr. Digby was dejected and miserable.

Then the good lady discovered that the porch must be taken down, and a piazza erected. Her lord said it was impossible. Here again was he foolish enough to place his impossibility as an opponent to her necessity. She would pay for a portion of the cost out of the money which was sent her by her aunt. But Mr. Digby said that he had several debts to pay, and knew not how to meet them.

Poor man! He here made a most disastrous movement of his forces. The able general opposed to him, was too much gifted with military genius to lose sight of the proffered advantage.

Did he expect that she was to pay his debts out of the present made her by her aunt? No such thing. Her dear aunt manifestly intended that the money should be spent for her special comfort. She could read him the letter. She intended, as that kind epistle taught, that her niece should expend it in some way that would personally gratify herself. She never intended that it should be swallowed up in the ordinary expenditures of the house.

[Pg 231]

So she ingeniously carried her day, for discomfiting Mr. Digby, on the ground that he had proposed to her that she should pay his debts, which, however, it will be observed he had not done,—for he had only remonstrated against new expenditures before his old debts were expunged,—she wisely made the two questions one. As he had to retire from the field on the question of battle, as insisted on by her, despite of all his pleas to the contrary,—she took for granted that the subject of the new piazza was involved in the one issue. So the piazza was erected.

Some time after this, one of her friends wished to dispose of a new carriage, or one almost as good as new. Mrs. Digby described it in glowing terms. And then she said that she could have it at a great reduction in the price. If the fish knew that the hook was near, as well as Mr. Digby knew that the cord and hook were dangling around to secure him for a prey,—no fish would ever be caught.

It was astonishing what an eloquence Mrs. Digby could throw into such a statement. It was not merely that she was eloquent when she described the carriage. The picture she drew of the comfort in which she and her lord would appear,—nay their increased elegance and respectability, was one which could not have been surpassed. Then there was a happy contrast presented between the proposed new equipage, and their present homely wagon, in which they had of late years jogged along in a contented way, which proved that their ideas of what was desirable were in need of improvement.

[Pg 232]

The master-power of her eloquence did not, however, here appear in its highest manifestations. No, it was revealed when the simple description of the carriage, conveyed to the mind of the hearer, the idea that if he did not most earnestly desire to purchase it, he must be a man fit for treason, stratagems, and spoils. The reproof was carried to the heart through terrors, which in themselves seemed incapable of any such power. Those who are ignorant of such feminine power, would as soon expect the rays of the sun to bring with them the food needful for their sustenance. And when she referred to the old carriage, Mr. Digby felt as if his conscience was indeed disturbed. There were two statements addressed to him. One referred to the homely nature of the wagon. The other said, if you could allow a woman who has been a faithful wife,—a woman who has shared your fortunes for fifteen years,—who has never spared herself to order her household well,—who is the mother of seven children of whom you are very proud,—to crown all,—who has practised for fifteen years in your house, in the most untiring manner the most exact, and even unreasonable economy,—buying only what she has been forced to do under the pressure of necessity,—if you could allow such a woman to go in that old wagon, when this new and pleasant carriage could be purchased, and that too when she is willing to give part of the money which was sent her by her affectionate aunt, that aforesaid money having been intended for her own personal benefit,—why then you are one of those of whom the world may well say, that it is fortunate that you are not placed in a situation where you could become a pirate.

[Pg 233]

After all this moving eloquence, one passage was repeated in express words. Mr. Digby was told that if he would agree to the purchase of the carriage and the harness which appropriately belonged to it, she would expend in paying for it the three hundred dollars sent her by her aunt. In that case he would have to advance but one hundred dollars, and by that insignificant outlay, insignificant of course she meant in comparison of that which they would gain, for economy is wealth, and she could not throw away a dollar on any account, he would secure this invaluable vehicle, and prove himself a man who had some regard for his wife.

Mr. Digby suggested that some of this money, sent by the aunt was to have paid for the window-curtains. He intended to add in order, some other purchases, all of which were to have a partial payment from the same treasured notes. But this suggestion only brought upon him a storm of virtuous indignation. Nothing could be more unreasonable than to expect that her money should be devoted to such purposes. All that she could say, was, that the curtains were necessities. And what would they have done if the aunt had not sent the money? If the present had not come, he would never have thought that she would be the one who ought to supply the money for such necessary expenses.

[Pg 234]

So the carriage was bought, and at last the money of the aunt was expended.

Mr. Digby made a calculation, and found that the three hundred dollars of the aunt, had been expended in part payment for purchases which cost him about one thousand dollars. He uttered the fervent hope that the good aunt would not send any more of her precious gifts.

Note. The manuscript here again becomes illegible. As far as I can gather from a word which can be distinguished here and there, Mr. Digby, after much suffering, and a severe illness from mental excitement, found that his good lady, who was really a woman of affectionate nature, changed all her views. Some one, at the close of the manuscript, appears to be inquiring of him, how it is that he has attained great peace of mind. The reply seems to be to the effect, that all the old theories are exploded from their domestic arrangements, and that in place of all other questions, the one consideration now is, what their income will enable them to purchase. And there also seems to be an assertion, that he no longer feels as if he was in danger of ruin, when any of their relatives sends his wife a present. There further appears to be some apology to the proverb, which he so greatly despised in former times, that economy is wealth.

[Pg 235]

- [1] This paper was so much injured by time, that the editor could decipher only some portions. But he has concluded to publish these fragmentary hints, which may be of utility, and open some eyes, as they reveal some similar weaknesses, of a propensity to live beyond one's income, which modern progress has not yet perfectly removed from all minds.

---

### XIII.

[Pg 236]

#### *TO MY WIFE.*

The lapidary day by day  
Brightened the sparkling gem,  
And then that diamond flashed each ray  
Fit for a diadem.  
So in this trusting heart of mine  
Increases love for thee;  
A love whose rays shall brighter shine  
When earth shall close o'er me.

The lapidary knoweth nought  
But diamond-dust alone,  
By which full glory may be wrought  
Upon that precious stone.  
So day by day increaseth love  
By my true love alone;  
The love that trial shall approve  
A measure of thy own.

---

### XIV.

[Pg 237]

#### *FADING AWAY.*

From morn to night, thine eye, my dying-boy  
Is on those autumn leaves that ever wave,  
A sea of leaves on that great forest oak;  
Each wave of that wide sea a wave of fire.

Ah! boy! before those tinted leaves are sear,  
And fallen with light crush upon the earth,  
Thou wilt be gone. Oh! glorious canopy  
Around thy dying bed! All nature seems  
To yield a triumph conqueror ne'er received,  
When all the world knew that he entered Rome,  
To the Redeemer's little one who waits  
Just at the gate of life.

Blest is that tree  
That lulls thy quiet. 'Tis one beauteous flame  
Less glorious only than the burning bush,  
When God was present in the wilderness.  
Is He less present to thy spirit now?

Soon, soon a change will come, and thou wilt see  
The angels round thee. They will glow in light  
From the Redeemer's presence. Then how dim

All earth's great transport round us in this scene!  
 Why hast thou lived, my boy? Thy little life  
 Has all been sorrow: all but some few smiles  
 To thy dear mother, and to me, to him  
 Thy brother here unconscious of his loss,  
 And to thy faithful nurse who never knew  
 Her care was trouble, sorrowing but for thee.

But thou hast lived because thou art redeemed:  
 Because a life was here begun for heaven.  
 Thou livest to say, love not this passing world.  
 'Tis not our home, or surely such as thou  
 Would be exempt from sorrow. All is well.  
 Yea, blessed is the family where death  
 Enters to take an infant. Without fear  
 All look unto the world where it has rest.  
 No gentler sorrow falls on all than this.  
 No gentler sorrow nurtures mutual love.

O easy faith to know that it is gone  
 By the bright pathway to eternal realms  
 Which He first opened, when he left the cross,  
 The earth he blessed, and so ascended there,  
 Where with Him all the blessed at death have rest!

## THE END.

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK PAPERS FROM OVERLOOK-HOUSE \*\*\*

Updated editions will replace the previous one—the old editions will be renamed.

Creating the works from print editions not protected by U.S. copyright law means that no one owns a United States copyright in these works, so the Foundation (and you!) can copy and distribute it in the United States without permission and without paying copyright royalties. Special rules, set forth in the General Terms of Use part of this license, apply to copying and distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works to protect the PROJECT GUTENBERG™ concept and trademark. Project Gutenberg is a registered trademark, and may not be used if you charge for an eBook, except by following the terms of the trademark license, including paying royalties for use of the Project Gutenberg trademark. If you do not charge anything for copies of this eBook, complying with the trademark license is very easy. You may use this eBook for nearly any purpose such as creation of derivative works, reports, performances and research. Project Gutenberg eBooks may be modified and printed and given away—you may do practically ANYTHING in the United States with eBooks not protected by U.S. copyright law. Redistribution is subject to the trademark license, especially commercial redistribution.

### START: FULL LICENSE THE FULL PROJECT GUTENBERG LICENSE PLEASE READ THIS BEFORE YOU DISTRIBUTE OR USE THIS WORK

To protect the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting the free distribution of electronic works, by using or distributing this work (or any other work associated in any way with the phrase “Project Gutenberg”), you agree to comply with all the terms of the Full Project Gutenberg™ License available with this file or online at [www.gutenberg.org/license](http://www.gutenberg.org/license).

## **Section 1. General Terms of Use and Redistributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

1.A. By reading or using any part of this Project Gutenberg™ electronic work, you indicate that you have read, understand, agree to and accept all the terms of this license and intellectual property (trademark/copyright) agreement. If you do not agree to abide by all the terms of this agreement, you must cease using and return or destroy all copies of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works in your possession. If you paid a fee for obtaining a copy of or access to a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work and you do not agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement, you may obtain a refund from the person or entity to whom you paid the fee as set forth in paragraph 1.E.8.

1.B. “Project Gutenberg” is a registered trademark. It may only be used on or associated in any way with an electronic work by people who agree to be bound by the terms of this agreement. There are a few things that you can do with most Project Gutenberg™ electronic works even without complying with the full terms of this agreement. See paragraph 1.C below. There are a lot of things you can do with Project Gutenberg™ electronic works if you follow the terms of this agreement and help preserve free future access to Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. See paragraph 1.E below.

1.C. The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation (“the Foundation” or PGLAF), owns a compilation copyright in the collection of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works. Nearly all the individual works in the collection are in the public domain in the United States. If an individual work is unprotected by copyright law in the United States and you are located in the United States, we do not claim a right to prevent you from copying, distributing, performing, displaying or creating derivative works based on the work as long as all references to Project Gutenberg are removed. Of course, we hope that you will support the Project Gutenberg™ mission of promoting free access to electronic works by freely sharing Project Gutenberg™ works in compliance with the terms of this agreement for keeping the Project Gutenberg™ name associated with the work. You can easily comply with the terms of this agreement by keeping this work in the same format with its attached full Project Gutenberg™ License when you share it without charge with others.

1.D. The copyright laws of the place where you are located also govern what you can do with this work. Copyright laws in most countries are in a constant state of change. If you are outside the United States, check the laws of your country in addition to the terms of this agreement before downloading, copying, displaying, performing, distributing or creating derivative works based on this work or any other Project Gutenberg™ work. The Foundation makes no representations concerning the copyright status of any work in any country other than the United States.

1.E. Unless you have removed all references to Project Gutenberg:

1.E.1. The following sentence, with active links to, or other immediate access to, the full Project Gutenberg™ License must appear prominently whenever any copy of a Project Gutenberg™ work (any work on which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” appears, or with which the phrase “Project Gutenberg” is associated) is accessed, displayed, performed, viewed, copied or distributed:

This eBook is for the use of anyone anywhere in the United States and most other parts of the world at no cost and with almost no restrictions whatsoever. You may copy it, give it away or re-use it under the terms of the Project Gutenberg License included with this eBook or online at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org). If you are not located in the United States, you will have to check the laws of the country where you are located before using this eBook.

1.E.2. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is derived from texts not protected by U.S. copyright law (does not contain a notice indicating that it is posted with permission of the copyright holder), the work can be copied and distributed to anyone in the United States without paying any fees or charges. If you are redistributing or providing access to a work with the phrase “Project Gutenberg” associated with or appearing on the work, you must comply either with the requirements of paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 or obtain permission for the use of the work and the Project Gutenberg™ trademark as set forth in paragraphs 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.3. If an individual Project Gutenberg™ electronic work is posted with the permission of the copyright holder, your use and distribution must comply with both paragraphs 1.E.1 through 1.E.7 and any additional terms imposed by the copyright holder. Additional terms will be linked to the Project Gutenberg™ License for all works posted with the permission of the copyright holder found at the beginning of this work.

1.E.4. Do not unlink or detach or remove the full Project Gutenberg™ License terms from this work, or any files containing a part of this work or any other work associated with Project Gutenberg™.

1.E.5. Do not copy, display, perform, distribute or redistribute this electronic work, or any part of this electronic work, without prominently displaying the sentence set forth in paragraph 1.E.1 with active links or immediate access to the full terms of the Project Gutenberg™ License.

1.E.6. You may convert to and distribute this work in any binary, compressed, marked up, nonproprietary or proprietary form, including any word processing or hypertext form. However, if you provide access to or distribute copies of a Project Gutenberg™ work in a format other than “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other format used in the official version posted on the official Project Gutenberg™ website ([www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org)), you must, at no additional cost, fee or expense to the user, provide a copy, a means of exporting a copy, or a means of obtaining a copy upon request, of the work in its original “Plain Vanilla ASCII” or other form. Any alternate format must include the full Project Gutenberg™ License as specified in paragraph 1.E.1.

1.E.7. Do not charge a fee for access to, viewing, displaying, performing, copying or distributing any Project Gutenberg™ works unless you comply with paragraph 1.E.8 or 1.E.9.

1.E.8. You may charge a reasonable fee for copies of or providing access to or distributing Project Gutenberg™ electronic works provided that:

- You pay a royalty fee of 20% of the gross profits you derive from the use of Project Gutenberg™ works calculated using the method you already use to calculate your applicable taxes. The fee is owed to the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, but he has agreed to donate royalties under this paragraph to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation. Royalty payments must be paid within 60 days following each date on which you prepare (or are legally required to prepare) your periodic tax returns. Royalty payments should be clearly marked as such and sent to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation at the address specified in Section 4, "Information about donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation."
- You provide a full refund of any money paid by a user who notifies you in writing (or by e-mail) within 30 days of receipt that s/he does not agree to the terms of the full Project Gutenberg™ License. You must require such a user to return or destroy all copies of the works possessed in a physical medium and discontinue all use of and all access to other copies of Project Gutenberg™ works.
- You provide, in accordance with paragraph 1.F.3, a full refund of any money paid for a work or a replacement copy, if a defect in the electronic work is discovered and reported to you within 90 days of receipt of the work.
- You comply with all other terms of this agreement for free distribution of Project Gutenberg™ works.

1.E.9. If you wish to charge a fee or distribute a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work or group of works on different terms than are set forth in this agreement, you must obtain permission in writing from the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the manager of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark. Contact the Foundation as set forth in Section 3 below.

#### 1.F.

1.F.1. Project Gutenberg volunteers and employees expend considerable effort to identify, do copyright research on, transcribe and proofread works not protected by U.S. copyright law in creating the Project Gutenberg™ collection. Despite these efforts, Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, and the medium on which they may be stored, may contain "Defects," such as, but not limited to, incomplete, inaccurate or corrupt data, transcription errors, a copyright or other intellectual property infringement, a defective or damaged disk or other medium, a computer virus, or computer codes that damage or cannot be read by your equipment.

1.F.2. LIMITED WARRANTY, DISCLAIMER OF DAMAGES - Except for the "Right of Replacement or Refund" described in paragraph 1.F.3, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, the owner of the Project Gutenberg™ trademark, and any other party distributing a Project Gutenberg™ electronic work under this agreement, disclaim all liability to you for damages, costs and expenses, including legal fees. YOU AGREE THAT YOU HAVE NO REMEDIES FOR NEGLIGENCE, STRICT LIABILITY, BREACH OF WARRANTY OR BREACH OF CONTRACT EXCEPT THOSE PROVIDED IN PARAGRAPH 1.F.3. YOU AGREE THAT THE FOUNDATION, THE TRADEMARK OWNER, AND ANY DISTRIBUTOR UNDER THIS AGREEMENT WILL NOT BE LIABLE TO YOU FOR ACTUAL, DIRECT, INDIRECT, CONSEQUENTIAL, PUNITIVE OR INCIDENTAL DAMAGES EVEN IF YOU GIVE NOTICE OF THE POSSIBILITY OF SUCH DAMAGE.

1.F.3. LIMITED RIGHT OF REPLACEMENT OR REFUND - If you discover a defect in this electronic work within 90 days of receiving it, you can receive a refund of the money (if any) you paid for it by sending a written explanation to the person you received the work from. If you received the work on a physical medium, you must return the medium with your written explanation. The person or entity that provided you with the defective work may elect to provide a replacement copy in lieu of a refund. If you received the work electronically, the person or entity providing it to you may choose to give you a second opportunity to receive the work electronically in lieu of a refund. If the second copy is also defective, you may demand a refund in writing without further opportunities to fix the problem.

1.F.4. Except for the limited right of replacement or refund set forth in paragraph 1.F.3, this work is provided to you 'AS-IS', WITH NO OTHER WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY OR FITNESS FOR ANY PURPOSE.

1.F.5. Some states do not allow disclaimers of certain implied warranties or the exclusion or limitation of certain types of damages. If any disclaimer or limitation set forth in this agreement violates the law of the state applicable to this agreement, the agreement shall be interpreted to make the maximum disclaimer or limitation permitted by the applicable state law. The invalidity or unenforceability of any provision of this agreement shall not void the remaining provisions.

1.F.6. INDEMNITY - You agree to indemnify and hold the Foundation, the trademark owner, any agent or employee of the Foundation, anyone providing copies of Project Gutenberg™



electronic works in accordance with this agreement, and any volunteers associated with the production, promotion and distribution of Project Gutenberg™ electronic works, harmless from all liability, costs and expenses, including legal fees, that arise directly or indirectly from any of the following which you do or cause to occur: (a) distribution of this or any Project Gutenberg™ work, (b) alteration, modification, or additions or deletions to any Project Gutenberg™ work, and (c) any Defect you cause.

## **Section 2. Information about the Mission of Project Gutenberg™**

Project Gutenberg™ is synonymous with the free distribution of electronic works in formats readable by the widest variety of computers including obsolete, old, middle-aged and new computers. It exists because of the efforts of hundreds of volunteers and donations from people in all walks of life.

Volunteers and financial support to provide volunteers with the assistance they need are critical to reaching Project Gutenberg™'s goals and ensuring that the Project Gutenberg™ collection will remain freely available for generations to come. In 2001, the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation was created to provide a secure and permanent future for Project Gutenberg™ and future generations. To learn more about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation and how your efforts and donations can help, see Sections 3 and 4 and the Foundation information page at [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

## **Section 3. Information about the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

The Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) educational corporation organized under the laws of the state of Mississippi and granted tax exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service. The Foundation's EIN or federal tax identification number is 64-6221541. Contributions to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation are tax deductible to the full extent permitted by U.S. federal laws and your state's laws.

The Foundation's business office is located at 809 North 1500 West, Salt Lake City, UT 84116, (801) 596-1887. Email contact links and up to date contact information can be found at the Foundation's website and official page at [www.gutenberg.org/contact](http://www.gutenberg.org/contact)

## **Section 4. Information about Donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation**

Project Gutenberg™ depends upon and cannot survive without widespread public support and donations to carry out its mission of increasing the number of public domain and licensed works that can be freely distributed in machine-readable form accessible by the widest array of equipment including outdated equipment. Many small donations (\$1 to \$5,000) are particularly important to maintaining tax exempt status with the IRS.

The Foundation is committed to complying with the laws regulating charities and charitable donations in all 50 states of the United States. Compliance requirements are not uniform and it takes a considerable effort, much paperwork and many fees to meet and keep up with these requirements. We do not solicit donations in locations where we have not received written confirmation of compliance. To SEND DONATIONS or determine the status of compliance for any particular state visit [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate).

While we cannot and do not solicit contributions from states where we have not met the solicitation requirements, we know of no prohibition against accepting unsolicited donations from donors in such states who approach us with offers to donate.

International donations are gratefully accepted, but we cannot make any statements concerning tax treatment of donations received from outside the United States. U.S. laws alone swamp our small staff.

Please check the Project Gutenberg web pages for current donation methods and addresses. Donations are accepted in a number of other ways including checks, online payments and credit card donations. To donate, please visit: [www.gutenberg.org/donate](http://www.gutenberg.org/donate)

## **Section 5. General Information About Project Gutenberg™ electronic works**

Professor Michael S. Hart was the originator of the Project Gutenberg™ concept of a library of electronic works that could be freely shared with anyone. For forty years, he produced and distributed Project Gutenberg™ eBooks with only a loose network of volunteer support.

Project Gutenberg™ eBooks are often created from several printed editions, all of which are confirmed as not protected by copyright in the U.S. unless a copyright notice is included. Thus, we do not necessarily keep eBooks in compliance with any particular paper edition.

Most people start at our website which has the main PG search facility: [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

This website includes information about Project Gutenberg™, including how to make donations to the Project Gutenberg Literary Archive Foundation, how to help produce our new eBooks, and how to subscribe to our email newsletter to hear about new eBooks.