VARIOUS

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY, VOLUME 02, NO. 09, JULY, 1858

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The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 02, No. 09, July, 1858

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Various
The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 02, No. 09, July, 1858 / A Magazine of Literature, Art, and Politics

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

A MAGAZINE OF LITERATURE, ART, AND POLITICS

VOL. II.—JULY, 1858.—NO. IX

THE CATACOMBS OF ROME

[Concluded.]

—fessoque Sacrandum Supponato capiti lapidem, Curistoque quiescam.
PAULINUS OF NOLL

Et factus est in pace locus ejus et halitatio in Sion.
Ps. LXXV. 2

V

Rome is preëminently the city of monuments and inscriptions, and the lapidary style is the one most familiar to her. The Republic, the Empire, the Papacy, the Heathens, and the Christians have written their record upon marble. But gravestones are proverbially dull reading, and inscriptions are often as cold as the stone upon which they are engraved.

The long gallery of the Vatican, through which one passes to enter the famous library, and which leads to the collection of statues, is lined on one side with heathen inscriptions, of miscellaneous character, on the other with Christian inscriptions, derived chiefly from the catacombs, but arranged with little order. The comparison thus exhibited to the eye is an impressive one. The contrast of one class with the other is visible even in external characteristics. The old Roman lines are cut with precision and evenness; the letters are well formed, the words are rightly spelt, the construction of the sentences is grammatical. But the Christian inscriptions bear for the most part the marks of ignorance, poverty, and want of skill. Their lines are uneven, the letters of various sizes, the words ill-spelt, the syntax often incorrect. Not seldom a mixture of Greek and Latin in the same sentence betrays the corrupt speech of the lower classes, and the Latin itself is that of the common people. But defects of style and faults of engraving are insufficient to hide the feeling that underlies them.

Besides this great collection of the Vatican, there is another collection now being formed in the *loggia* of the Lateran Palace, in immediate connection with the Christian Museum. Arranged as the inscriptions will here be in historic sequence and with careful classification, it will be chiefly to this collection that the student of Christian antiquity will hereafter resort. It in in the charge of the Cavaliere de Rossi, who is engaged in editing the Christian inscriptions of the first six centuries, and whose extraordinary learning and marvellous sagacity in deciphering and determining the slightest remains of ancient stone-cutting give him unexampled fitness for the work. Of these inscriptions, about eleven thousand are now known, and of late some forty or fifty have been added each year to the number previously recorded. But a very small proportion of the eleven thousand remain *in situ* in the catacombs, and besides the great collections of the Vatican and the Lateran, there are many smaller ones in Rome and in other Italian cities, and many inscriptions originally found in the subterranean cemeteries are now scattered in the porticos or on the pavements of churches in Rome, Ravenna, Milan, and elsewhere. From the first period of the desecration of the catacombs, the engraved tablets that had closed the graves were almost as much an object of the greed of pious or superstitious marauders as the more immediate relics of the saints. Hence came their dispersion through Italy, and hence, too, it has happened that many very important and interesting inscriptions belonging to Rome are now found scattered through the Continent.

It has been, indeed, sometimes the custom of the Roman Church to enhance the value of a gift of relics by adding to it the gift of the inscription on the grave from which they were taken. A curious instance of this kind, connected with the making of a very popular saint, occurred not many years since. In the year 1802 a grave was found in the Cemetery of St. Priscilla, by which were the remains of a glass vase that had held blood, the indication of the burial-place of a martyr. The grave was closed by three tiles, on which were the following words painted in red letters: LVMENA PAXTE CVMFL. There were also rudely painted on the tiles two anchors, three darts, a torch, and a palm-branch. The bones found within the grave, together with the tiles bearing the inscription, were placed in the Treasury of Relics at the Lateran.

On the return of Pius VII., one of the deputation of Neapolitan clergy sent to congratulate him sought and received from the Pope these relics and the tiles as a gift for his church. The inscription had been read by placing the first tile after the two others, thus,—PAX TECUM FILUMENA, *Peace be with thee, Filumena*; and Filumena was adopted as a new saint in the long list of those to whom the Roman Church has given this title. It was supposed, that, in the haste of closing the grave, the tiles had been thus misplaced.

Very soon after the gift, a priest, who desired not to be named *on account of his great humility*, had a vision at noonday, in which the beautiful virgin with the beautiful name appeared to him and revealed to him that she had suffered death rather than yield her chastity to the will of the Emperor, who desired to make her his wife. Thereupon a young artist, whose name is also suppressed, likewise had a vision of St. Filomena, who told him that the emperor was Diocletian; but as history stands somewhat opposed to this statement, it has been suggested that the artist mistook the name, and that the Saint said Maximian. However this may be, the day of her martyrdom was fixed on the 10th of August, 303. Her relics were carried to Naples with great reverence; they were inclosed, after the Neapolitan fashion, in a wooden doll of the size of life, dressed in a white satin skirt and a red tunic, with a garland of flowers on its head, and a lily and a dart in its hand. This doll, with the red- lettered tiles, was soon transferred to its place in the church of Mugnano, a small town not far from Naples. Many miracles were wrought on the way, and many have since been wrought in the church itself. The fame of the virgin spread through Italy, and chapels were dedicated to her honor in many distant churches; from Italy it reached Germany and France, and it has even crossed the Atlantic to America. Thus a new saint, a new story, and a new exhibition of credulity had their rise not long ago from a grave and three words in the catacombs.

One of the first differences which are obvious, in comparing the Christian with the heathen mortuary inscriptions, is the introduction in the former of some new words, expressive of the new ideas that prevailed among them. Thus, in place of the old formula which had been in most common use upon gravestones, D.M., or, in Greek, [Greek: TH.K.], standing for *Dis Manibus*, or [Greek: *Theois karachthoniois*], a dedication of the stone to the gods of death, we find constantly the words *In pace*. The exact meaning of these words varies on different inscriptions, but their general significance is simple and clear. When standing alone, they seem to mean that the dead rests in the peace of God; sometimes they are preceded by *Requiescat*, "May he rest in peace"; sometimes there is the affirmation, *Dormit in pace*, "He sleeps in peace"; sometimes a person is said *recessisse in pace*, "to have departed in peace." Still other forms are found, as, for instance, *Vivas in pace*, "Live in peace," or *Suscipiatur in pace*, "May he be received into peace,"—all being only variations of the expression of the Psalmist's trust, "I will lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." It is a curious fact, however, that on some of the Christian tablets the same letters which were used by the heathens have been found. One inscription exists beginning with the words *Dis Manibus*, and ending with the words *in pace*. But there is no need of finding a difficulty in this fact, or of seeking far for an explanation of it. As we have before remarked, in speaking of works of Art, the presence of some heathen imagery and ideas in the multitude of the paintings and inscriptions in the catacombs is not so strange as the comparatively entire absence of them. Many professing Christians must have had during the early ages but an imperfect conception of the truth, and can have separated themselves only partially from their previous opinions, and from the conceptions that prevailed around them in the world. To some the letters of the heathen gravestones, and the words which they stood for, probably appeared little more than a form expressive of the fact of death, and, with the imperfect understanding natural to uneducated minds, they used them with little thought of their absolute significance.[1]

Another difference in words which is very noticeable, running through the inscriptions, is that of *depositus*, used by the Christians to signify the *laying away* in the grave, in place of the heathen words *situs, positus, sepultus, conditus*. The very name of *coemeterium*, adopted by the Christians for their burial-places, a name unknown to the ancient Romans, bore a reference to the great doctrine of the Resurrection. Their burial-ground was a *cemetery*, that is, a *sleeping-place*; they regarded the dead as put there to await the awakening; the body was *depositus*, that is, *intrusted to* the grave, while the heathen was *situs* or *sepultus, interred* or *buried*,—the words implying a final and definitive position. And as the Christian *dormit* or *quiescit, sleeps* or *rests* in death, so the heathen is described as *abreptus*, or *defunctus, snatched away* or *departed* from life.

Again, the contrast between the inscriptions is marked, and in a sadder way, by the difference of the expressions of mourning and grief. No one who has read many of the ancient gravestones but remembers the bitter words that are often found on them,—words of indignation against the gods, of weariness of life, of despair and unconsoled melancholy. Here is one out of many:—

PROCOPE MANVS LEBO CONTRA DEVM QVI ME INNOCENTEM SVS TVLIT QVAE VIXI ANNOS XX. POS. PROCLVS.

> I, Procope, who lived twenty years, lift up my hands against God, who took me away innocent. Proclus set up this.

But among the Christian inscriptions of the first centuries there is not one of this sort. Most of them contain no reference to grief; they are the very short and simple words of love, remembrance, and faith,—as in the following from the Lateran:—

[1] It is probable that most of the gravestones upon which this heathen formula is found are not of an earlier date than the middle of the fourth century. At this time Christianity became the formal religion of many who were still heathen in character and thought, and cared little about the expression of a faith which they had adopted more from the influence of external motives than from principle or conviction.

ADEODATE DIGNAE ET MERITAE VIRGINI ETQVIESCE HIC IN PACE IVBENTE XPO EJUS

To Adeodata, a worthy and deserving Virgin, and rests here in peace, her Christ commanding.

On a few the word *dolens* is found, simply telling of grief. On one to the memory of a sweetest daughter the word *irreparable* is used, *Filiae dulcissimae inreparabili*. Another is, "To Dalmatius, sweetest son, whom his *unhappy* father was not permitted to enjoy for even seven years." Another inscription, in which something of the feeling that was unchecked among the heathens finds expression in Christian words, is this: "Sweet soul. To the incomparable child, who lived seventeen years, and *undeserving* [of death] gave up life in the peace of the Lord." Neither the name of the child nor of the parents is on the stone, and the word *immeritus*, which is used here, and which is common in heathen use, is found, we believe, on only one other Christian grave. One inscription, which has been interpreted as being an expression of unresigned sorrow, is open to a very different signification. It is this:—

INNOCENTISSISSIMĆ ETATIS DVLCISSIMO FILIO JOVIANO QVI VIXIT ANNˇ VII ET MENSES VI NON MERENTES THEOCTISTVS ET THALLVSA PARENTES

To their sweetest boy Jovian, of the most innocent age, who lived seven years and six months, his undeserving [or unlamenting] parents Theoctistus and Thallusa.

Here, without forcing the meaning, *non merentes* might be supposed to refer to the parents' not esteeming themselves worthy to be left in possession of such a treasure; but the probability is that *merentes* is only a misspelling of *maerentes* for otherwise *immerentes* would have been the natural word.

But it is thus that the Christian inscriptions must be sifted, to find expressions at variance with their usual tenor, their general composure and trust. The simplicity and brevity of the greater number of them are, indeed, striking evidence of the condition of feeling among those who set them upon the graves. Their recollections of the dead feared no fading, and Christ, whose coming was so near at hand, would know and reunite his own. Continually we read only a name with *in pace*, without date, age, or title, but often with some symbol of love or faith hastily carved or painted on the stone or tiles. Such inscriptions as the following are common:—

FELICISSIMVS DVLCIS,—GAVDENTIA IN PACE, —SEVERA IN DEO VIVAS,—

or, with a little more fulness of expression,—

DVLCISSIMO FILIO ENDELECIO BENEMERENTI QVI VIXIT ANNOS II MENSE VNV DIES XX IN PACE

To the sweetest son Endelechius, the welldeserving, who lived two years, one month, twenty days. In peace.

The word *benemerenti* is of constant recurrence. It is used both of the young and the old; and it seems to have been employed, with comprehensive meaning, as an expression of affectionate and grateful remembrance.

Here is another short and beautiful epitaph. The two words with which it begins are often found.

ANIMA DVLCIS AVFENIA VIRGO BENEDICTA QVE VIXIT ANN: XXX DORMIT IN PACE

Sweet Soul. The Blessed Virgin Aufenia, who lived thirty years. She sleeps in peace.

But the force and tenderness of such epitaphs as these is hardly to be recognized in single examples. There is a cumulative pathos in them, as one reads, one after another, such as these that follow:—

ANGELICE BENE IN PACE

To Angelica well in peace.

CVRRENTIO SERVO DEI DEP. D. XVI. KAL NOVEM.

To Currentius, the servant of God, laid in the grave on the sixteenth of the Kalends of November.

MAXIMINVS QVI VIXIT ANNOS XXIII AMICVS OMNIVM

Maximin, who lived twenty-three years, the friend of all.

SEPTIMVS MARCIANE IN PACE QUE BICSIT MECV ANNOS XVII. DORMIT IN PACE

Septimus to Marciana in peace. Who lived with me seventeen years. She sleeps in peace.

GAVDENTIA PAVSAT DVLCIS SPIRITVS ANNORVM II MENSORVM TRES.

Gaudentia rests. Sweet spirit of two years and three months.

Here is a gravestone with the single word VIATOR; here one that tells only that Mary placed it for her daughter; here one that tells of the light of the house,—[Greek: To phos thaes Oikias].

Nor is it only in these domestic and intimate inscriptions that the habitual temper and feeling of the Christians is shown, but even still more in those that were placed over the graves of such members of the household of faith as had made public profession of their belief, and shared in the sufferings of their Lord. There is no parade of words on the gravestones of the martyrs. Their death needed no other record than the little jar of blood placed in the mortar, and the fewest words were enough where this was present. Here is an inscription in the rudest letters from a martyr's grave:—

SABATIVS BENEMERENTI QVI VIXIT ANNOS XL

To the well-deserving Sabatias, who lived forty years.

And here another:—

PROSPERO INNOCENTI ANIMAE IN PACE.

To Prosperus, innocent soul, in peace.

And here a third, to a child who had died as one of the Innocents:—

MIRAE INNOCENTIAE ANIMA DULCIS AEMILEANVS QVI VIXIT ANNO VNO, MENS. VIII D. XXVIII DORMIT IN PACE

Aemilian, sweet soul of marvellous innocence, who lived one year, eight months, twenty-eight days. He sleeps in peace.

At this grave was found the vase of blood, and on the gravestone was the figure of a dove.

Another inscription, which preserves the name of one of those who suffered in the most severe persecution to which the ancient Church was exposed, and which, if genuine, is, so far as known, the only monument of the kind, is marked by the same simplicity of style:—

LANNVS XPI MA
RTIR HC*[Hic?] REQVIESC
IT SVR [E-P-S] DIOCLITI ANO PASSVS
Lannus Martyr of Christ here rests. He suffered under Diocletian.

The three letters EPS have been interpreted as standing for the words *et posteris suis*, and as meaning that the grave was also for his successors. Not yet, then, had future saints begun to sanctify their graves, and to claim the exclusive possession of them.

But there is another point of contrast between the inscriptions of the un- Christianized and the Christian Romans, which illustrates forcibly the difference in the regard which they paid to the dead.

To the one the dead were still of this world, and the greatness of life, the distinctions of class, the titles of honor still clung to them; to the other the past life was as nothing to that which had now begun. The heathen epitaphs are loaded with titles of honor, and with the names of the offices which the dead had borne, and, like the modern Christian (?) epitaphs whose style has been borrowed from them, the vanity of this world holds its place above the grave. But among the early Christian inscriptions of Rome nothing of this kind is known. Scarcely a title of rank or a name of office is to be found among them. A military title, or the name of priest or deacon, or of some other officer in the Church, now and then is met with; but even these, for the most part, would seem to belong to the fourth century, and never contain any expression of boastfulness or flattery.

FL. OLIVS PATERNVS CENTVRIO CHOR. X VRB. QVI VIXIT AH XXVII IN PACE

Flavius Olius Paternus, Centurion of the Tenth Urban Cohort, who lived twenty-seven years. In peace.

It is true, no doubt, that among the first Christians there were very few of the rich and great. The words of St. Paul to the Corinthians were as true of the Romans as of those to whom they were specially addressed: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." Still there is evidence enough that even in the first two centuries some of the mighty and some of the noble at Rome were among those called, but that evidence is not to be gathered from the gravestones of the catacombs. We have seen, in a former article, that even the grave of one of the early bishops,—the highest officer of the Church,—and one who had borne witness to the truth in his death, was marked by the words,

CORNELIVS MARTYR EP.

The Martyr Cornelius, Bishop.

Compare this with the epitaphs of the later popes, as they are found on their monuments in St. Peter's,—"flattering, false insculptions on a tomb, and in men's hearts reproach,"—epitaphs overweighted with superlatives, ridiculous, were it not for their impiety, and full of the lies and vanities of man in the very house of God.

With this absence of boastfulness and of titles of rank on the early Christian graves two other characteristics of the inscriptions are closely connected, which bear even yet more intimate and expressive relation to the change wrought by Christianity in the very centre of the heathen world.

"One cannot study a dozen monuments of pagan Rome," says Mr. Northcote, in his little volume on the catacombs, "without reading something of *servus* or *libertus, libertis libertabusque posterisque eorum*; and I believe the proportion in which they are found is about three out of every four. Yet, in a number of Christian inscriptions exceeding eleven thousand, and all belonging to the first six centuries of our era, scarcely six have been found containing any allusion whatever—and even two or three of these are doubtful—to this fundamental division of ancient Roman society.

"No one, we think, will be rash enough to maintain, either that this omission is the result of mere accident, or that no individual slave or freedman was ever buried in the catacombs. Rather, these two cognate facts, the absence from ancient Christian epitaphs of all titles of rank and honor on the one hand, or of disgrace and servitude on the other, can only be adequately explained by an appeal to the religion of those who made them. The children of the primitive Church did not record upon their monuments titles of earthly dignity, because they knew that with the God whom they served 'there was no respect of persons'; neither did they care to mention the fact of their bondage, or of their deliverance from bondage, to some earthly master, because they thought only of that higher and more perfect liberty wherewith Christ had set them free; remembering that 'he that was called, being a bondman, was yet the freeman of the Lord, and likewise he that was called, being free, was still the bondman of Christ.'

"And this conclusion is still further confirmed by another remarkable fact which should be mentioned, namely, that there are not wanting in the catacombs numerous examples of another class

of persons, sometimes ranked among slaves, but the mention of whose servitude, such as it was, served rather to record an act of Christian charity than any social degradation; I allude to the alumni, or foundlings, as they may be called. The laws of pagan Rome assigned these victims of their parents' crimes or poverty to be the absolute property of any one who would take charge of them. As nothing, however, but compassion could move a man to do this, children thus acquired were not called *servi*, as though they were slaves who had been bought with money, nor *vernae*, as though they had been the children of slaves born in the house, but *alumni*, a name simply implying that they had been brought up (*ab alendo*) by their owners. Now it is a very singular fact, that there are actually more instances of *alumni* among the sepulchral inscriptions of Christians than among the infinitely more numerous inscriptions of pagans, showing clearly that this was an act of charity to which the early Christians were much addicted; and the *alumni*, when their foster-parents died, very properly and naturally recorded upon their tombs this act of charity, to which they were themselves so deeply indebted."

So far Mr. Northcote. It is still further to be noted, as an expression of the Christian temper, as displayed in this kind of charity, that it never appears in the inscriptions as furnishing a claim for praise, or as being regarded as a peculiar merit. There is no departure from the usual simplicity of the gravestones in those of this class.

[Greek:
PETROS
THREPTOS
RAUKUTA
TOS EN THEO]
Peter, sweetest foster-child, in God.
And a dove is engraved at either side of this short epitaph.

VITALIANO ALVMNO KARO EVTROPIVS FECIT.

Eutropius made this for the dear foster-child
Vitalian.

ANTONIVS DISCOLIVS FILIVS ET BIBIVS FELLICISSIMVS ALVMNVS VALERIE CRESTENI MATRI BIDVE ANORVM XVIII INTET SANCTOS

Antonius Discolius her son, and Bibius Felicissimus her foster-child, to Valeria Crestina their mother, a widow for eighteen years. [Her grave is] among the holy.[2]

These inscriptions lead us by a natural transition to such as contain some reference to the habits of life or to the domestic occupations and feelings of the early Christians. Unfortunately for the gratification of the desire to learn of these things, this class of inscriptions is far from numerous,—and the common conciseness is rarely, in the first centuries, amplified by details. But here is one that tells a little story in itself:—

DOMNINAE INNOCENTISSINAE ET DVLCISSIMAE COIVGI QVAE VIXIT ANN XVI M. IIII ET FVIT IMARITATA ANN. DVOBVS M. IIII D. VIIII CVM QVA SON LICVIT FVISSE PROPTER CAVSAS PEREGRINATIONIS NISI MENEIE VI QVO TEMPORE VT EGO SENSI ET EXHBVI AMOREM MEVM NVLLI SV ALII SIC DILEXERVNT DEPOSIT XV KAL. IVN.

> To Domnina, my most innocent and sweetest wife; who lived sixteen years and four months, and was married two years, four months, and nine days; with whom, on account of my journeys, I was permitted to be only six months; in which time, as I felt, so I showed my love. No others have so loved one another. Placed in the grave the 15th of the Kalends of June.

[2] This inscription is not of earlier date than the fourth century, as is shown by the words, *Inter sancios*,—referring, as we heretofore stated, to the grave being made near that of some person esteemed a saint.

Who was this husband whose far-off journeys had so separated him from his lately married wife? Who were they who so loved as no others had loved? The tombstone gives only the name of Domnina. But in naming her, and in the expression of her husband's love, it gives evidence, which is confirmed by many other tokens in the catacombs, of the change introduced by Christianity in the position of women, and in the regard paid to them. Marriage was invested with a sanctity which redeemed it from sensuality, and Christianity became the means of uniting man and woman in the bonds of an immortal love.

Here is an inscription which, spite of the rudeness of its style, preserves the pleasant memory of a Roman child:—

ISPIRITO SANTO BONO FLORENTIO QVI VIXIT ANIS XIII QVAM SI FILIVM SVVM ET COTDEVS MATER FILIO BENEMERETI FECERVNT.

> To the good and holy spirit Florentius, who lived thirteen years, Coritus, his master, who loved him more than if he were his own son, and Cotdeus, his mother, have made this for her well-deserving son.[3]

ATROX O FORTVNA TRVCI QVAE FVNERR GAVDES QVID MIHI TAM SVBITO MAXIMVS ERIPITVR QVI MODO JVCVNDVS GREMIO SVPERESSE SOLEBAT HIC LAPIS TN TVMVLO NVNC JACET ECCE MATER

C. Julius Maximus, Two years, five months old.

> Harsh Fortune, that in cruel death finds't joy,
> Why is my Maximus thus sudden reft,
> So late the pleasant burden of my breast?
> Now in the grave this stone lies: lo, his mother!]

And Coritus, his master, and Cotdeus, his mother, might have rejoiced in knowing that their poor, rough tablet would keep the memory of her boy alive for so many centuries; and that long after they had gone to the grave, the good spirit of Florentius should still, through these few words, remain to work good upon the earth.—Note in this inscription (as in many others) the Italianizing of the old Latin,—the *ispirito*, and the *santo*; note also the mother's strange name, reminding one of Puritan appellations,—Cotdeus being the abbreviation of *Quod vult Deus*, "What God wills."[4]

Here is an inscription set up by a husband to his wife, Dignitas, who was a woman of great goodness and entire purity of life:—

QUE SINE LESIONE ANIMI MEI VIXI MECVM ANNOS XV FILIOS AVTEM PROCREAVIT VII EX QVIBVS SECV ABET AD DOMINVM IIII

> Who, without ever wounding my soul, lived with me for fifteen years, and bore seven children, four of whom she has with her in the Lord.

We have already referred to the inscriptions which bear the name of some officer of the early Church; but there is still another class, which exhibits in clear letters others of the designations and customs familiar to the first Christians. Thus, those who had not yet been baptized and received into the fold, but were being instructed in Christian doctrine for that end, were called *catechumens*; those who were recently baptized were called *neophytes*; and baptism itself appears sometimes to have been designated by the word *illuminatio*. Of the use of these names the inscriptions give not infrequent examples. It was the custom also among the Christians to afford support to the poor and to the widows of their body. Thus we read such inscriptions as the following:—

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[3] Compare an inscription from a heathen tomb:– **C. JVLIVS MAXIMVS ANN. II. M. V.**

[4] Other names of this kind were *Deogratias*, *Habetdeum*, and *Adeodatus*.

RIGINE VENEMEREMTI FILIA SVA FECIT VENERIGINE MATRI VIDVAE QVE SE DIT VIDVA ANNOS LX ET ECLESA VIXIT ANNOS LXXX MESIS V DIES XXVI

Her daughter Reneregina made this for her well-deserving mother Regina, a widow, who sat a widow sixty years, and never burdened the church, the wife of one husband, who lived eighty years, five months, twenty-six days.

The words of this inscription recall to mind those of St. Paul, in his First Epistle to Timothy, (v. 3-16,) and especially the verse, "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged."

Some of the inscriptions preserve a record of the occupation or trade of the dead, sometimes in words, more often by the representation of the implements of labor. Here, for instance, is one which seems like the advertisement of a surviving partner:—

DE BIANOBA POLLECLA QVE ORDEV BENDET DE BIANOBA

From New Street. Pollecla, who sold barley on New Street.

Others often bear a figure which refers to the name of the deceased, an *armoirie parlante* as it were, which might be read by those too ignorant to read the letters on the stone. Thus, a lion is scratched on the grave of a man named Leo; a little pig on the grave of the little child Porcella, who had lived not quite four years; on the tomb of Dracontius is a dragon; and by the side of the following charming inscription is found the figure of a ship:—

NABIRA IN PACE ANIMA DULCIS QVI BIXIT ANOS XVI M V ANIMA MELEIEA TITVLV FACTV APARENTES SIGNVM NABE

Navira in peace. Sweet soul, who lived sixteen years, five months. Soul honey-sweet. This inscription made by her parents. The sign a ship.

The figures that are most frequent upon the sepulchral slabs are, however, not such as bear relation to a name or profession, but the commonly adopted symbols of the faith, similar in design and character to those exhibited in the paintings of the catacombs. The Good Shepherd is thus often rudely represented; the figure of Jonah is naturally, from its reference to the Resurrection, also frequently found; and the figure of a man or woman with arms outstretched, in the attitude of prayer, occurs on many of the sepulchral slabs. The anchor, the palm, the crown, and the dove, as being simpler in character and more easily represented, are still more frequently found. The varying use of symbols at different periods has been one of the means which have assisted in determining approximate dates for the inscriptions upon which they are met with. It is a matter of importance, in many instances, to fix a date to an inscription. Historical and theological controversies hang on such trifles. Most of the early gravestones bear no date; and it was not till the fourth century, that, with many other changes, the custom of carving a date upon them became general. The century to which an inscription belongs may generally be determined with some confidence, either by the style of expression and the nature of the language, or by the engraved character, or some other external indications. Among these latter are the symbols. It has, for instance, been recently satisfactorily proved by the Cavaliere de Rossi that the use of the emblem of the fish in the catacombs extended only to the fourth century, so that the monuments upon which it is found may, with scarcely an exception, be referred to the preceding period. As this emblem went out of use, owing perhaps to the fact that the Christians were no longer forced to seek concealment for their name and profession, the famous monogram of Christ, [Symbol] the hieroglyphic, not only of his name, but of his cross, succeeded to it, and came, indeed, into far more general use than that which the fish had ever attained. The monogram is hardly to be found before the time of Constantine, and, as it is very frequently met with in the inscriptions from the catacombs, it affords an easy means, in the absence of a more specific date, for determining a period earlier than which any special inscription bearing it cannot have originated. Its use spread rapidly during the fourth century. It "became," says Gibbon, with one of his amusing sneers, "extremely

fashionable in the Christian world." The story of the vision of Constantine was connected with it, and the Labarum displayed its form in the front of the imperial army. It was thus not merely the emblem of Christ, but that also of the conversion of the Emperor and of the fatal victory of the Church.

It is a remarkable fact, and one which none of the recent Romanist authorities attempt to controvert, that the undoubted earlier inscriptions afford no evidence of any of the peculiar doctrines of the Roman Church. There is no reference to the doctrine of the Trinity to be found among them; nothing is to be derived from them in support of the worship of the Virgin; her name even is not met with on any monument of the first three centuries; and none of the inscriptions of this period give any sign of the prevalence of the worship of saints. There is no support of the claim of the Roman Church to supremacy, and no reference to the claim of the Popes to be the Vicars of Christ. As the third century advances to its close, we find the simple and crude beginning of that change in Christian faith which developed afterward into the broad idea of the intercessory power of the saints. Among the earlier inscriptions prayers to God or to Christ are sometimes met with, generally in short exclamatory expressions concerning the dead. Thus we find at first such words as these:—

AMERIMNVS RVFINAE COIV GI CARISSIME BENEMEREN TI SPIRITVM TVVM DEVS REFRIGERET

> Amerimnus to his dearest wife Rufina well-deserving. May God refresh thy spirit!

And, in still further development,—

> [Greek: AUR. AIANOS PAPHLAGON THEOU
> DOULOS PISTOS
> EKOIMNON EN EIPNIN MINSON
> AUTOU
> O THEOS EIS TOUS AIONAS]

Aurelius Aelianus, a Paphlagonian, faithful servant of God. He sleeps in peace. Remember him, O God, forever!

Again, two sons ask for their mother,—

DOMINE NE QVANDO ADVMBRETVR SPIRITVS VENERES

> O Lord, let not the spirit of Venus be shadowed at any time!

From such petitions as these we come by a natural transition to such as are addressed to the dead themselves, as being members of the same communion with the living, and uniting in prayers with those they had left on earth and for their sake.

VIBAS IN PACE ET PETE PRO NOBIS

> Mayst thou live in peace and ask for us!

Or, as in another instance,—

PETE PRO PARENTES TVOS MATRONATA MATRONA QVE VIXIT AN. I. DI. LII.

> Pray for thy parents, Matronata Matrona!
> Who lived one year, fifty-two days.

And as we have seen how in the fourth century the desire arose of being buried near the graves of those reputed holy, so by a similar process we find this simple and affectionate petition to the dead passing into a prayer for the dead to those under whose protection it was hoped that they might

be. In the multitude of epitaphs, however, these form but a small number. Here is one that begins with a heathen formula:—

SOMNO HETERNALI AVRELIVS GEMELLVS QVI BIXIT AN— ET MESES VIII DIES XVIII MATER FILIO CARISSIMO BENAEMERENTI FECIT IN PA— [C]ONMANDO BASSILA INNOCENTIA GEMELLI

> In Eternal Sleep. Aurelius Gemellus, who lived – years, and eight months, eighteen days. His mother made this for her dearest well-deserving son in peace. I commend to Basilla the innocence of Gemellus.

Basilla was one of the famous martyrs of the time of Valerian and Gallienus.

Here again is another inscription of a curious character, as interposing a saint between the dead and his Saviour. The monogram marks its date.

RVTA OMNIBVS SVBDITA ET ATFABI LIS BIBET IN NOMINE PETRI IN PACE

> Ruta, subject and affable to all, shall live in the name of Peter, in the peace of Christ.

But it would seem from other inscriptions as if the new practice of calling upon the saints were not adopted without protest. Thus we read, in contrast to the last epitaph, this simple one:—

ZOSIME VIVAS IN NOMINE XTI

O Zosimus, mayst thou live in the name of Christ!

And again, in the strongest and most direct words:—

SOLVS DEVS ANIMAM TVAM DEFENDAD ALEXANDRE

May God alone protect thy spirit, Alexander!

One more inscription and we have done; it well closes the long list:—

QVI LEGERIT VIVAT IN CHRISTO

Whoever shall read this, may he live in Christ!

As the fourth century advanced, the character of the inscriptions underwent great change. They become less simple; they exhibit less faith, and more worldliness; superlatives abound in them; and the want of feeling displays itself in the abundance of words.

We end here our examinations of the testimony of the catacombs regarding the doctrine, the faith, and the lives of the Christians of Rome in the first three centuries. The evidence is harmonious and complete. It leaves no room for skepticism or doubt. There are no contradictions in it. From every point of view, theologic, historic, artistic, the results coincide and afford mutual support. The construction of the catacombs, the works of painting found within them, the inscriptions on the graves, all unite in bearing witness to the simplicity of the faith, the purity of the doctrine, the strength of the feeling, the change in the lives of the vast mass of the members of the early church of Christ. A light had come into the world, and the dark passages of the underground cemeteries were illuminated by it, and manifest its brightness. Wherever it reached, the world was humanized and purified. To the merely outward eye it might at first have seemed faint and dim, but "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation."

THREE OF US

Such a spring day as it was!—the sky all one mild blue, hazy on the hills, warm with sunshine overhead; a soft south-wind, expressive, and full of new impulses, blowing up from the sea, and spreading the news of life all over our brown pastures and leaf-strewn woods. The crocuses in Friend Allis's garden-bed shot up cups of gold and sapphire from the dark mould; slight long buds nestled under the yellow-green leafage of the violet-patch; white and sturdy points bristled on the corner that in May was thick with lilies-of-the-valley, crisp, cool, and fragrant; and in a knotty old apricot-tree two bluebirds and a robin did heralds' duty, singing of summer's procession to come; and we made ready to receive it both in our hearts and garments.

Josephine Boyle, Letty Allis, and I, Sarah Anderson, three cousins as we were, sat at the long window of Friend Allis's parlor, pretending to sew, really talking. Mr. Stepel, a German artist, had just left us; and a little trait of Miss Josephine's, that had occurred during his call, brought out this observation from Cousin Letty:—

"Jo, how could thee let down thy hair so before that man?"

Jo laughed. "Thee is a little innocent, Letty, with your pretty dialect!

Why did I let my hair down? For Mr. Stepel to see it, of course."

"That is very evident," interposed I; "but Letty is not so innocent or so wise as to have done wondering at your caprices, Jo; expound, if you please, for her edification."

"I do not pretend to be wise or simple, Sarah; but I didn't think Cousin Josephine had so much vanity."

"You certainly shall have a preacher-bonnet, Letty. How do you know it was vanity, my dear? I saw you show Mr. Stepel your embroidery with the serenest satisfaction; now you made your crewel cherries, and I didn't make my hair; which was vain?"

Letty was astounded. "Thee has a gift of speech, certainly, Jo."

"I have a gift of honesty, you mean. My hair is very handsome, and I knew Mr. Stepel would admire it with real pleasure, for it is a rare color. I took down those curls with quite as simple an intention as you brought him that little picture of Cole's to see."

Josephine was right,—partly, at least. Her hair was perfect; its tint the exact hue of a new chestnut-skin, with golden lights, and shadows of deep brown; not a tinge of red libelled it as auburn; and the light broke on its glittering waves as it does on the sea, tipping the undulations with sunshine, and scattering rays of gold through the long, loose curls, and across the curve of the massive coil, that seemed almost too heavy for her proud and delicate head to bear. Mr. Stepel was excusably enthusiastic about its beauty, and Jo as cool as if it had been a wig. Sometimes I thought this peculiar hair was an expression of her own peculiar character.

Letty said truly that Jo had a gift of speech; and she, having said her say about the hair, dismissed the matter, with no uneasy recurring to it, and took up a book from the table, declaring she was tired of her seam;– she always was tired of sewing! Presently she laughed.

"What is it, Jo?" said I.

"Why, it is 'Jane Eyre,' with Letty Allis's name on the blank leaf. That is what I call an anachronism, spiritually. What do you think about the book, Letty?" said she, turning her lithe figure round in the great chair toward the little Quakeress, whose pretty red head and apple-blossom of a face bloomed out of her gray attire and prim collar with a certain fascinating contrast.

"I think it has a very good moral tendency, Cousin Jo."

The clear, hazel eyes flashed a most amused comment at me.

"Well, what do you call the moral, Letty?"

"Why,—I should think,—I do not quite know that the moral is stated, Josephine,—but I think thee will allow it was a great triumph of principle for Jane Eyre to leave Mr. Rochester when she discovered that he was married."

Jo flung herself back impatiently in the chair, and began an harangue.

"That is a true world's judgment! And you, you innocent little Quaker girl! think it is the height of virtue not to elope with a married man, who has entirely and deliberately deceived you, and adds to the wrong of deceit the insult of proposing an elopement! Triumph of principle! I should call it the result of common decency, rather,—a thing that the instinct of any woman would compel her to do. My only wonder is how Jane Eyre could continue to love him."

"My dear young friend," said I, rather grimly, "when a woman loves a man, it is apt, I regret to say, to become a fact, not a theory; and facts are stubborn things, you know. It is not easy to set aside a real affection."

"I know that, ma'am," retorted Jo, in a slightly sarcastic tone; "it is a painful truth; still, I do think a deliberate deceit practised on me by any man would decapitate any love I had for him, quite inevitably."

"So it might, in your case," replied I; "for you never will love a man, only your idea of one. You will go on enjoying your mighty theories and dreams till suddenly the juice of that 'little western flower' drips on your eyelids, and then I shall have the pleasure of seeing you caress 'the fair large ears' of some donkey, and hang rapturously upon its bray, till you perhaps discover that he has pretended, on your account solely, to like roses, when he has a natural proclivity to thistles; and then, pitiable child! you will discover what you have been caressing, and—I spare you conclusions; only, for my part, I pity the animal! Now Jane Eyre was a highly practical person; she knew the man she loved was only a man, and rather a bad specimen at that; she was properly indignant at this further development of his nature, but reflecting in cool blood, afterward, that it was only his nature, and finding it proper and legal to marry him, she did so, to the great satisfaction of herself and the public. *You* would have made a new ideal of St. John Rivers, who was infinitely the best material of the two, and possibly gone on to your dying day in the belief that his cold and hard soul was only the adamant of the seraph, encouraged in that belief by his real and high principle,– a thing that went for sounding brass with that worldly-wise little philosopher, Jane, because it did not act more practically on his inborn traits."

"Bah!" said Josephine, "when did you turn gypsy, Sally? You ought to sell *dukkeripen*, and make your fortune. Why don't you unfold Letty's fate?"

"No," said I, laughing. "Don't you know that the afflatus always exhausts the priestess? You may tell Letty's fortune, or mine, if you will; but my power is gone."

"I can tell yours easily, O Sibyl!" replied she. "You will never marry, neither for real nor ideal. You should have fallen in love in the orthodox way, when you were seventeen. You are adaptive enough to have moulded yourself into any nature that you loved, and constant enough to have clung to it through good and evil. You would have been a model wife, and a blessed mother. But now—you are too old, my dear; you have seen too much; you have not hardened yourself, but you have learned to see too keenly into other people. You don't respect men, 'except exceptions'; and you have seen so much matrimony that is harsh and unlovable, that you dread it; and yet—Don't look at me that way, Sarah! I shall cry!—My dear! my darling! I did not mean to hurt you.—I am a perfect fool!—Do please look at me with your old sweet eyes again!—How could I!"–

"Look at Letty," said I, succeeding at last in a laugh. And really Letty was comical to look at; she was regarding Josephine and me with her eyes wide open like two blue larkspur flowers, her little red lips apart, and her whole pretty surface face quite full of astonishment.

"Wasn't that a nice little tableau, Letty?" said Josephine, with preternatural coolness. "You looked so sleepy, I thought I'd wake you up with a bit of a scene from 'Lara Aboukir, the Pirate Chief'; you know we have a great deal of private theatricals at Baltimore; you should see me in that play as Flashmoria, the Bandit's Bride."

Letty rubbed her left eye a little, as if to see whether she was sleepy or not, and looked grave; for me, the laugh came easily enough now. Jo saw she had not quite succeeded, so she turned the current another way.

"Shall I tell your fortune now, Letty? Are you quite waked up?" said she.

"No, thee needn't, Cousin Jo; thee don't tell very good ones, I think."

"No, Letty, she shall not vex your head with nonsense. I think your fate is patent; you will grow on a little longer like a pink china-aster, safe in the garden, and in due time marry some good Friend,—Thomas Dugdale, very possibly,—and live a tranquil life here in Slepington till you arrive at a preacher-bonnet, and speak in meeting, as dear Aunt Allis did before you."

Letty turned pale with rage. I did not think her blonde temperament held such passion.

"I won't! I won't! I never will!" she cried out. "I hate Thomas Dugdale, Sarah! Thee ought to know better about me! thee knows I cannot endure him, the old thing!"

This climax was too much for Jo. With raised brows and a round mouth, she had been on the point of whistling ever since Letty began; it was an old, naughty trick of hers; but now she laughed outright.

"No sort of inspiration left, Sally! I must patch up Letty's fate myself. Flatter not yourself that she is going to be a good girl and marry in meeting; not she! If there's a wild, scatter-brained, handsome, dissipated, godless youth in all Slepington, it is on him that testy little heart will fix,—and think him not only a hero, but a prodigy of genius. Friend Allis will break her heart over Letty; but I'd bet you a pack of gloves, that in three years you'll see that juvenile Quakeress in a scarlet satin hat and feather, with a blue shawl, and green dress, on the arm of a fast young man with black hair, and a cigar in his mouth."

"Why! where *did* thee ever see him, Josey?" exclaimed Letty, now rosy with quick blushes.

The question was irresistible. Jo and I burst into a peal of laughter that woke Friend Allis from her nap, and, bringing her into the parlor, forced us to recover our gravity; and presently Jo and I took leave.

Letty was an orphan, and lived with her cousin, Friend Allis. I, too, was alone; but I kept a tiny house in Slepington, part of which I rented, and Jo was visiting me.

As we walked home, along the quiet street overhung with willows and sycamores, I said to her, "Jo, how came you to know Letty's secret?"

"My dear, I did not know it any more than you; but I drew the inference of her tastes from her character. She is excitable,—even passionate; but her formal training has allowed no scope for either trait, and suppression has but concentrated them. She really pines for some excitement;—what, then, could be more natural than that her fancy should light upon some person utterly diverse from what she is used to see? That is simple enough. I hit upon the black hair on the same principle, 'like in difference.' The cigar seemed wonderful to the half-frightened, all-amazed child; but who ever sees a fast young man without a cigar?"

"I am afraid it is Henry Malden," said I, meditatively; "he is all you describe, but he is also radically bad; besides, having been in the Mexican war, he will have the prestige of a hero to Letty. How can the poor girl be undeceived before it is quite too late?"

"What do you want to undeceive her for, Sally? Do you suppose that will prevent her marrying Mr. Malden?"

"I should think so, most certainly!"

"Not in the least. If you want Letty to marry him, just judiciously oppose it. Go to her, and say you come as a friend to tell her Mr. Malden's faults, and the result will be, she will hate you, and be deeper in love with him than ever."

"You don't give her credit for common sense, Jo."

"Just as much as any girl of her age has in love. Did you ever know a woman who gave up a man she loved because she was warned against him?—or even if she knew his character well, herself? I

don't know but there are women who could do it, from sheer religious principle. I believe you might, Sarah. It would be a hard struggle, and wear you to a shadow in mind and body; but you have a conscience, and, for a woman with a heart as soft as pudding, the most thoroughly rigid streak of duty in you; none of which Letty has to depend on. No; if you want to save her, take her away from Slepington; take her to Saratoga, to Newport, to Washington; turn her small head with gayety: she is pretty enough to have a dozen lovers at any watering-place; it is only propinquity that favors Mr. Malden here."

"I can't do that, Josephine. I have not the means, and Miss Allis would not have the will, even if she believed in your prescription."

"Then Letty must stay here and bide her time. You believe in a special Providence, Sarah, don't you?"

"Yes, of course I do."

"Then cannot you leave her to that care? Circumstances do not work for you. Perhaps it is best that she should marry him, suffer, live, love, and be refined by fire."

My heart sunk at the prospect of these possibilities. Josephine put her arm round me. "Sally," said she, in her softest tone, "I grieved you, dear, this afternoon. I did not mean to. I grieved myself most. Please forgive me!"

"I haven't anything to forgive, Jo," said I. "What you said to me was true, painfully true,—and, being so, for a moment pained me. I should have been much happier to be married, I know; but now I daren't think of it. I have lost a great deal. I have

"—'lost *my* place, *My* sweet, safe corner by the household fire, Behind the heads of children';

"and yet I do not know that I have not gained a little. It is something, Jo, to know that I am not in the power of a bad, or even an ill-tempered man. I can sit by my fire and know that no one will come home to fret at me,—that I shall encounter no cold looks, no sneers, no bursts of anger, no snarl of stinginess, no contempt of my opinion and advice. I know that now men treat me with respect and attention, such as their wives rarely, if ever, receive from them. Sensitive and fastidious as I am, I do not know whether my gain is not, to me, greater than my loss. I know it ought not to be so,—that it argues a vicious, an unchristian, almost an uncivilized state of society; but that does not affect the facts."

"You frighten me, Sarah. I cannot believe this is always true of men and their wives."

"Neither is it. Some men are good and kind and gentle, gentle-men, even in their families; and every woman believes the man she is to marry is that exception. Jo,—bend your ear down closer,—I thought once I knew such a man,—and,—dear,—I loved him."

"My darling!—but, Sarah, why"—

"Because, as you said, Josey, I was too old; I had seen too much; I would not give way to an impulse. I bent my soul to know him; I rang the metal on more than one stone, and every time it rang false. I knew, if I married him, I should live and die a wretched woman. Was it not better to live alone?"

"But, Sarah,—if he loved you?"

"He did not,—not enough to hurt himself; he could not love anything so much better than his ease as to suffer, Josey: he was safe. He thought, or said, he loved me; but he was mistaken."

"Safe, indeed! He ought to have been shot!"

"Hush, dear!"

There was a long pause. It was as when you lift a wreck from the tranquil sea and let it fall again to the depths, useless to wave or shore; the black and ghastly hulk is covered; it is seen no more; but the water palpitates with circling rings, trembles above the grave, dashes quick and apprehensive billows upon the sand, and is long in regaining its quiet surface.

"I wonder if there ever was a perfect man," said Jo, at length, drawing a deep sigh.

"You an American girl, Jo, and don't think at once of Washington?"

"My dear, I am bored to death with Washington *á l'Américain*. A man!– how dare you call him a man?—don't you know he is a myth, an abstraction, a plaster-of-Paris cast? Did you ever hear any human trait of his noticed? Weren't you brought up to regard him as a species of special seraph, a sublime and stainless figure, inseparable from a grand manner and a scroll? Did you ever dare suppose he ate, or drank, or kissed his wife? You started then at the idea: I saw you!"

"You are absurd, Jo. It is true that he is exactly, among us, what demigods were to the Greeks, —only less human than they. But when I once get my neck out of the school-yoke, I do not start at such suggestions as yours; I believe he did comport himself as a man of like passions with others, and was as far from being a hero to his *valet-de-chambre* as anybody."

By this time we were at home, and Jo flung her parasol on the bench in the porch, and sat down beside it with a gesture of weariness and disgust mingled.

"Why will you, of all people, Sarah, quote that tinkling, superficial trash of a proverb, so palpably French, when the true reason why a man is not a hero to his lackey is only because he is seen with a lackey's eyes, —the sight of a low, convention-ridden, narrow, uneducated mind, unable to take a broad enough view to see that a man is a hero because he is a man, because he overleaps the level of his life, and is greater than his race, being one of them? If he were of the heroic race, what virtue in being heroic? it is the assertion of his trivial life that makes his speciality evident,—the shadow that throws out the bas-relief. We chatter endlessly about the immense good of Washington's example: I believe its good would be more than doubled, could we be made, nationally, to see him as a human being, living on 'human nature's daily food,' having mortal and natural wants, tastes, and infirmities, but building with and over all, by the help of God and a good will, the noble and lofty edifice of a patriot manhood, a pure life of duty and devotion, sublime for its very strength and simpleness, heroic because manly and human."

The day had waned, and the sunset lit Josephine's excited eyes with fire: she was not beautiful, but now, if ever, beauty visited her with a transient caress. She looked up and met my eyes fixed on her.

"What is it, Sally?—what do I look like?"

"Very pretty, just now, Jo; your eyes are bright and your cheek flushed: the sunshine suits you. I admire you tonight."

"I am glad," said she, naively. "I often wish to be pretty."

"A waste wish, Jo!—and yet I have entertained it myself."

"It's not so much matter for you, Sarah; for people love you. And besides, you have a certain kind of beauty: your eyes are beautiful,—rather too sad, perhaps, but fine in shape and tint; and you have a good head, and a delicately outlined face. Moreover, you are picturesque: people look at you, and then look again,—and, any way, love you, don't they?"

"People are very good to me, Jo."

"Oh, yes! we all know that people as a mass are kindly, considerate, and unselfish; that they are given to loving and admiring disagreeable and ugly people; in short, that the millennium has come. Sally, my dear, you are a small hypocrite,—or else—But I think we won't establish a mutual-admiration society to-night, as there are only two of us; besides, I am hungry: let us have tea."

The next day, Josephine left me. As we walked together toward the landing of the steamer, Letty Allis emerged from a green lane to say good-bye, and down its vista I discerned the handsome, lazy person of Henry Malden, but I did not inform Letty of my discovery.

A year passed away,—to me with the old monotonous routine; full of work, not wanting in solace; barren, indeed, of household enjoyments and vicissitudes; solitary, sometimes desolate, yet peaceful even in monotony. But this new spring had not come with such serene neglect to the other two of us three. Against advice, remonstrance, and entreaty from her good friends, Letty Allis had married Henry Malden, and, in attire more tasteful, but quite as far from Quakerism as Josephine had predicted, beamed upon the inhabitants of Slepington from the bow-window, or open door, of

a cottage very *ornée* indeed; while the odor of a tolerable cigar served as Mr. Malden's exponent, wherever he abode. And to Josephine had come a loss no annual resurrection should repair: her mother was dead; she, too, was orphaned,—for she had never known her father; her only sister was married far away; and I kept an old promise in going to her for a year's stay at least.

Aunt Boyle's property had consisted chiefly in large cotton mills owned by herself and her twin brother,—who, dying before her, left her all his own share in them. These mills were on a noisy little river in the western part of Massachusetts,—in a valley, narrow, but picturesque, and so far above the level of the sea that the air was keen and pure as among mountains. Mrs. Boyle had removed here from Baltimore, a few years before her own death, that she might be with her brother through his long and fatal illness; and, finding her health improved by change of air, had occupied his house ever since, until one of those typhoid fevers that infest such river-gorges at certain seasons of the year entered the village about the mills, when, in visiting the sick, she took the epidemic herself and died. Josephine still retained the house endeared to her by sad and glad recollections; and it was there I found her, when, after renting the whole of my little tenement at Slepington, I betook myself to Valley Mills at her request.

The cottage where she lived was capacious enough for her wants, and though plain, even to an air of superciliousness, without, was most luxurious within,—made to use and live in; for Mr. Brown, her uncle, was an Englishman, and had never arrived at that height of Transatlantic *ton* which consists in shrouding and darkening all the pleasant rooms in the house, and skulking through life in the basement and attic. Sunshine, cushions, and flowers were Mr. Brown's personal tastes; and plenty of these characterized the cottage. A green terrace between hill and river spread out before the door for lawn and garden, and a tiny conservatory abutted upon the brink of the terrace slope, from a bay-window in the library, that opened sidewise into this winter-garden.

I found Jo more changed than I had expected: this last year of country life had given strength and elasticity to the tall and slender figure; a steady rose of health burned on either cheek; and sorrow had subdued and calmed her quick spirits.

I was at home directly, and a sweeter summer never glowed and blushed over earth than that which installed me in the Nook Cottage. Out of doors the whole country was beautiful, and attainable; within, I had continual resources in my usual work and in Jo's society: for she was one of those persons who never are uninteresting, never fatiguing; a certain salient charm pervaded her conversation, and a simplicity quite original startled you continually in her manner and ways. I liked to watch her about the house; dainty and fastidious in the extreme about some things, utterly careless about others, you never knew where or when either trait would show itself next. She was scrupulous as to the serving of meals, for instance,—almost to a fault; no carelessness, no slight neglect, was admitted here, and always on the spotless damask laid with quaint china stood a tapered vase of white Venice glass, with one, or two, or three blossoms, sometimes a cluster of leaves, the spray of a wild vine, or the tasselled branch of a larch-tree jewelled with rose-red cones, arranged therein with an artist's taste and skill: but perhaps, while she sharply rebuked the maid for a dim spot on her chocolate-pitcher or a grain of sugar spilt on the salver, her white India shawl lay trailed over the divan half upon the floor, and her gloves fluttered on the doorstep till the wind carried them off to find her parasol hanging in the honeysuckle boughs.

But, happily, it is not one's duty to make other people uncomfortable by perpetually tinkering at that trait in them which most offends our own nature; and I thought it more for my good and hers to learn patience myself than undertake to beat her into order; the result of which was peace and good-will that vindicated my wisdom to myself; and I found her, faults and all, sufficiently fascinating and lovable.

A year passed away serenely; and when spring came again, Josephine refused to let me leave her. Our life was quiet enough, but, with such beautiful Nature, and plenty to do, we were not lonely,—less so because Jo's hands were as open as her heart, and to her all the sick and poor looked, not

only for help, but for the rarer consolations of living sympathy and counsel. Her shrewd common sense, her practical capacity, her kindly, cheerful face, her power of appreciating a position of want and perplexity and seeing the best way out of it, and, above all, her deep and fervent religious feeling, made her an invaluable friend to just that class who most needed her.

In the course of this spring we gained an addition to our society, in the person of Mr. Waring, the son of the gentleman who had bought the mills at Mrs. Boyle's death, but who had hitherto conducted them by an overseer. He had recently bought a little island in the middle of the river, just below the dam, and proposed erecting a new mill upon it; but as the Tunxis (the Indian name of our river) was liable to rapid and destructive freshets, the mill required a deep and secure foundation and a lower story of stone.

This implied some skilful engineering, and Mr. Arthur Waring, having studied this subject fully abroad, came on from Boston, and took up his abode in Valley Mills village. Of course, we being his only hope of society in the place, he made our acquaintance early. I rather liked him; his manner was good, his perceptions acute, his tastes refined, and he had a certain strength of will that gave force to a character otherwise common-place. Josephine liked him at once; she laid his shyness and *brusquerie*, which were only the expression of a dominant self- consciousness, to genuine modesty. He was depressed and moody, because he was bored for want of acquaintance, and missed the adulation and caresses that he received at home as an only child; but Jo's swift imagination painted this as the trait of a reflective and melancholy nature disgusted with the world, and pitied him accordingly; a mild way of misanthropic speech, that is apt to infest young men, added to this delusion; and, with all the energy of her sweet, earnest disposition, Josephine undertook his education,—undertook to teach him faith and hope and charity, to set right his wayward soul, to renovate his bitter opinions, to make him a better and a happier man.

It is a well-known fact in the philosophy of the human mind, that it is apt to gain more by imparting than by receiving; and since philosophy, where it becomes fact, does not mercifully adjust its results to circumstance, but rushes on in implacable grooves, and clears its own track of whatever lies thereon by the summary process of crushing it to dust, it did not pause now for the pure intentions and tender heart which, in teaching another love to men, taught herself love to a man, and learnt far better than her pupil.

Mr. Waring was but a man; he did not love Josephine,—he admired her; he loved nothing but himself, his quiet, his pleasure; and while she ministered to either, he regarded her with a species of affection that put on the mask of a diviner passion and used its language. A thousand little things showed the man fully to me, a cool spectator; but she who needed most the discerning eye regarded this gay bubble as if it had been a jewel.

Perhaps I blame him too severely, for it was against the very heart of my heart that he sinned; possibly I do not allow for the temptation it was to a young man, quite alone in a country village, without resources, and accustomed to the flattery and caresses of a devoted mother, to find himself agreeable in the eyes of a noble and lovable woman. Possibly, in his place, a better man might have sought her society, drawn her out of her reserve for his own delectation, confided in her, worked upon her pity, claimed her care, played on her simplicity and ignorance of the world, crept into her heart and won its strength of emotion and its generous affection,—in short, made love to her, without saying so, honestly and openly. Yet there are some men who would not have done it; and even yet, while I try to regard Arthur Waring with Christian charity, I feel that I cannot trust him, that I do not respect him,—that, if I dared despise anything God has made, my first contempt would light on him.

In the autumn, while all this was going on, I received a painful and wretched letter from Letty Malden, begging me to come to her. I could not resist such an appeal; and one of Josephine's little nieces having come to spend the winter with her, I hurried to Slepington,—not, I am sure, in the least regretted by Mr. Waring, who had begun to look at me with uneasy and sometimes defiant eyes.

I found a miserable household here. Mr. Malden had in no way reformed. When did marriage ever reform a bad man? On the contrary, he was more dissipated than ever; and whenever he came home, the welcome that waited for him was one little calculated to make home pleasant; for Letty's quick temper blazed up in reproach and reviling that drew out worse recrimination; and even the little, wailing, feeble baby, that filled Letty's arms and consoled her in his absence, was only further cause of strife between her and her husband. Often, as I came down the street and saw the pretty outside of the cottage, waving with creepers, and hedged about with thorns, whose gay berries decked it as if for a festival, I thought of what a good old preacher among the Friends once said to me: "Sarah, thee will live to find shows are often seems; thee sees many a quiet house, with gay windows, that is hell inside."

I soon found that I must stay all winter at Slepington. I had a hard task before me,—to try and teach Letty that she had no right to neglect her own duties because her husband ignored his. But six months of continual dropping seemed to wear a tiny channel of perception; and my presence, as well as the efforts we made together to preserve order, if not serenity, in the house, restored a certain dim hope to Letty's mind, and I began to see that the "purification by fire" was doing its work, in slow pain, but to a sure end.

Selfish as it was, I cannot say that I felt sorry to return to Jo, who wrote for me in April, urging me to come as soon as I could, for Mr. Waring had fallen from the mill-wall and broken his leg, and the workmen, in their confusion, had carried him to her house, and she wanted me to help her. I learned, on reaching Valley Mills, that the new building on the island had not been completed far enough to resist a heavy freshet, that had swept away part of the first story, where the mortar was not yet hardened; and it was in traversing these wet stones to ascertain the extent of the damage that Mr. Waring had slipped, and, unable to recover his footing, fallen on a heap of stones and received his injury.

My first question to Josephine was, "Where is Mr. Waring's mother?"

"He would not send for her, Sally," said she, "because she is not well, and he feared to startle her."

"H'm!" said I, very curtly.

Josephine looked at me with innocent, grave eyes,—dear, simple child!– and yet, for anybody but herself she would have been sufficiently discerning. This love seemed to have remodelled her nature, to have taken from her all the serpent's wisdom, to have destroyed her common sense, and distorted her view of everything in which Arthur Waring was concerned. She had certainly got on very fast in my absence. I had returned too late.

I had little to do with the care of the invalid; that devolved on Jo; my offers of service were kindly received, but always declined. Nobody could read to him so well as Miss Boyle. Nobody else understood his moods, his humors, his whims; she knew his tastes with ominous exactness. It was she who arranged his meals on the salver with such care and grace, nay, even cooked them at times; for Jo believed, like a rational woman, that intellect and cultivation increase one's capacity for every office,—that a woman of intelligence should be able to excel an ignorant servant in every household duty, by just so much as she excels her in mind. In fact, this was a pleasant life to two persons, but harassing enough for me. Had I been confident of Arthur Waring's integrity, I should have regarded him with friendly and cordial interest; but I had every reason to distrust him. I perceived he had so far insinuated himself into Jo's confidence, that his whole artillery of expressive looks, broken sentences, even caresses, were received by her with entire good faith; but when I asked her seriously if I was to regard Mr. Waring as her lover, she burst into indignant denial, colored scarlet, and was half inclined to be angry with me,—though a certain tremulous key, into which her usually sweet and steady voice broke while she declared he had never spoken to her of love, it was only friendship, witnessed against her that she was apprehensive, sad, perhaps visited with a tinge of that causeless shame which even in a pure and good woman conventionality constrains, when she has loved a man before he says in plain English, "I love you," though every act and look and tone of his may have carried that significance

unmistakably for years. Thank God, there is a day of sure judgment coming, when conventions and shields of usage will save no man from the due vengeance of truth upon falsehood, justice upon smooth and plausible duplicity!

In due time Mr. Waring recovered. If there was any change in his manner to Jo, it was too slight to be seen, though it was felt, and was, after all, the carelessness of a person certain of his foothold in her good graces, rather than the evident withdrawal of attention,—which I could have pardoned even then, had it been the result of honest regret for past carelessness, and stern resolution to repair that past. Whatever it was, Jo perceived that her ideal man was become a real man; but, with a tenacity of nature, for which in my fate-telling I had not given her credit, she was as constant to the substance as she had been to the dream; and while she lost both health and spirits in the contemplation of Arthur Waring's fitful and heedless manner toward her, and was evidently pained by the discovery of his selfish and politic traits,—to call them by no harsher name,—it was inexpressibly touching to hear the excuses she made for him, to see the all-shielding love with which she veiled his faults, and kept him as a mother would keep her graceless, yet dearest child from animadversion and reproach.

In the mean time I heard often from Letty,—no good news of her husband, but that her child grew more and more a comfort, that her friends were very kind, and always in a tiny postscript some such phrase as this: "I try to be patient, Sarah," or "I don't scold Harry so much as I did, dear." I hoped for Letty, for she persevered.

That summer we saw less than ever of Mr. Waring; he was very busy at the mill in order that it might be far enough advanced to resist the inevitable spring freshets; and besides, we were absent from the Valley some weeks, endeavoring to recruit Jo's failing health at the sea-side. But this was a vain endeavor; that which sapped the springs of her life was past outward cure. She inherited her father's delicate and unreliable constitution, and a nervous organization, whose worst disease is ever the preying of doubt, anxiety, or regret. As winter drew on, she grew no better; a dim, dreamy abstraction brooded over her. She said to me often, with a vague alarm, "Sally, how far off you seem! Do come nearer!" She ceased to talk when we were alone, her step grew languid, her eye deeper, —and its bright expression, when you roused her, was longer in shooting back into the clouded sphere than ever before. She sat for hours by the window, her lovely head resting on its casement, looking out, always out and away, beyond the hills, into the deep spaces of blue air, past cloud and vapor, to the stars. Sudden noises startled her to an extreme degree; a quick step flushed her cheek with fire and fluttered her breath. How I longed for spring! I hoped all from the delicate ministrations of Nature; though the physician we called gave me no hope of her final recovery. Mr. Waring himself seemed struck with her aspect, and many little signs of friendly interest came from him. As often as he could, he returned to his old haunts; and while the pleasure of his presence and the excitement of his undisguised anxiety wrought on her, Jo became almost her old self for the moment, gay, cheerful, blooming,—alas! with the bloom of feverishness and vain hope.

So spring drew near. The mill was nearly finished. One day in March a warm south-wind "quieted the earth" after a long rain, the river began to stir, its mail of ice to crack and heave under the sun's rays. I persuaded Jo to take a little drive, and once in the carriage the air reanimated her; she rested against me and talked more than I had known her for weeks.

"What a lovely day!" said she; "how balmy the air is! there is such an expression of rest without despair, such calm expectation! I always think of heaven such days, Sally!—they are like the long sob with which a child finishes weeping. Only to think of never more knowing tears!—that is life indeed!"

A keen pang pierced me at the vibration of her voice as she spoke. I thought to soothe her a little, and said, "Heaven can be no more than love, Jo, and we have a great deal of that on earth."

"Do we?" answered she, in a tone of grief just tipped with irony,—and then went on: "I believe you love me, Sally. I would trust you with—my heart, if need were. I think you love me better than any one on earth does."

"I love you enough, dear," said I; more words would have choked me in the utterance.

Soon we turned homeward.

"Tell John to drive down by the river," said Josephine,—"I want to see the new mill."

"But you cannot see it from the road, Jo; the hemlocks stand between."

"Never mind, Sally; I shall just walk through them; don't deny me! I want to see it all again; and perhaps the arbutus is in bloom."

"Not yet, Jo."

"I can get some buds, then; I want to have some just once."

We left the carriage, and on my arm Jo strolled through the little thicket of hemlock-trees, green and fragrant. She seemed unusually strong. I began to hope. After much searching, we found the budded flowers; she loved most of all wild blossoms; no scent breathed from the closed petals; they were not yet kissed by the odor-giving south-wind into life and expression; but Jo looked at them with sad, far-reaching eyes. I think she silently said good-bye to them.

Presently we came out on the steep bank of the river, directly opposite the mill. A heavy timber was thrown across from the shore to the island, on which the workmen from the west side had passed and repassed; it was firm enough for its purpose, but now, wet with the morning's rain, and high above the grinding ice, it seemed a hazardous bridge. As we stood looking over at the new mill, listening to the slight stir within it, apparently the setting to rights by some lingering workman of such odds and ends as remain after finishing the great whole of such a building, suddenly the cool wind, which had shifted to the north, brought on its waft a most portentous roar. We stood still to listen. Nearer and nearer it swelled, crashing and hissing as it approached. Josephine grasped my arm with convulsive energy, and at that instant we perceived Mr. Waring's plaid cap pass an open casement. She turned upon me like a wild creature driven to bay. I looked up-stream;—the ice had gathered in one high barrier mixed with flood-wood and timber, and, bearing above all the uprooted trunk of a huge sycamore, was coming down upon the dam like a battering-ram. Jo gasped. "The river is broken up and Arthur is on the island," said she, in a fearfully suppressed tone, and, swifter than I could think or guess her meaning, she had reached the timber, she was on it,—and with light, untrembling steps half across, when both she and I simultaneously caught sight of Mr. Waring running for dear life to the other and stronger bridge. Jo turned to come back; but the excitement was past that had sustained her; she trembled, she tottered. I ran to meet and aid her. Just then the roots of the great sycamore thundered against the dam; the already heavily pressed structure gave way; with the freed roar of a hurricane, the barrier, the dam, the foot-bridge swept down toward us. She had all but reached the end of the timber,—I stood there to grasp her hand,—when the old tree, whirled down by the torrent, struck the other end of the beam and threw Josephine forward to the bank, dashing her throbbing, panting breast, with all the force of her fall, against the hard ground. I lifted her in my arms. She was white with pain. Presently she opened her eyes and looked up, a flush of rapture glowed all over her face, and then the awful mist of death, gray and rigid, veiled it. Her head dropped on my shoulder; a sharp cry and a rush of scarlet blood passed her lips together; the head lay more heavily,—she was dead. But Arthur Waring never knew how or for what she died!

Five years have passed since that day. Still I live at Nook Cottage; but not alone. Of us three, Josephine is in heaven. Letty is still troubled upon earth; her husband tests her patience and her temper every hour, but both temper and patience are in good training; and if ever Henry Malden is reclaimed, as I begin to see reasons to hope he will be, he will owe it to the continual example and gentle goodness of his wife, who has grown from a petulant, thoughtless girl into a lovely, unselfish, religious woman, a devoted mother and wife, "refined by fire." For me, the last,—whenever now I say, as I used to say, "Three of us," I mean a new three,—Paul, baby, and me; for Jo was not a prophet. Four years ago, while my heart- ache for her was fresh and torturing, a new pastor came to the little village church of Valley Mills. Mr. Lyman was very good; I have seen other men with as fine natural traits, but I have never seen a man or woman so entirely good. He came to me to console me; for he, too, had just lost a sister, and in listening to his story I for a moment forgot my own, as he

meant I should. But I did not love him,—no, not till I discovered, months afterward, that he suffered incessantly from ill-health, and was all alone in the world. I was too much a woman to resist such a plea. I pitied him; I tried to take care of him; and when he asked me if I liked the office of sick-nurse, I told him I liked it well enough to wish it were for life; and now, when he wants to light my eyes out of that dreamy expression that tells him I am re-living the past, and thinking of the dead, he tells me, for the sake of the flash that follows, that I offered myself to him! Perhaps I did. But he is well now; the air of the Tunxis hills, and the rest of a quiet life, partly, I hope, good care also, have restored to him his lost health. And I am what Jo said I should have been,—a blessed mother, as well as a happy wife. The baby that lies across my lap has traits that endear her to me doubly,—traits of each of us three cousins: Josephine's hair on her little nestling head, Letty's apple-blossom complexion, and my eyes, except that they are serene when they are not smiling. I ask only of the love that has given me all this unexpected joy, that my little Jo may have one better trait,—her father's heart; a stronger, tenderer, and purer heart than belonged to any one among "Three of us!"

WHAT A WRETCHED WOMAN SAID TO ME

All the broad East was laced with tender rings
Of widening light; the Daybreak shone afar;
Deep in the hollow, 'twixt her fiery wings,
Fluttered the morning star.

A cloud, that through the time of darkness went
With wanton winds, now, heavy-hearted, came
And fell upon the sunshine, penitent,
And burning up with shame.

The grass was wet with dew; the sheep-fields lay
Lapping together far as eye could see;
And the great harvest hung the golden way
Of Nature's charity.

My house was full of comfort; I was propped
With life's delights, all sweet as they could be,
When at my door a wretched woman stopped,
And, weeping, said to me,—

"Its rose-root in youth's seasonable hours
Love in thy bosom set, so blest wert thou;
Hence all the pretty little red-mouthed flowers
That climb and kiss thee now!

"*I* loved, but *I* must stifle Nature's cries
With old dry blood, else perish, I was told;
Hence the young light shrunk up within my eyes,
And left them blank and bold.

"I take my deeds, all, bad as they have been,—
The way was dark, the awful pitfall bare;—
In my weak hands, up through the fires of sin,
I hold them for my prayer."

"The thick, tough husk of evil grows about
Each soul that lives," I mused, "but doth it kill?
When the tree rots, the imprisoned wedge falls out,
Rusted, but iron still.

"Shall He who to the daisy has access,
Reaching it down its little lamp of dew
To light it up through earth, do any less,
Last and best work, for you?"

SONGS OF THE SEA

Not Dibdin's; not Barry Cornwall's; not Tom Campbell's; not any of the "Pirate's Serenades" and "I'm afloats!" which appear in the music-shop- windows, illustrated by lithographic vignettes of impossible ships in impracticable positions. These are sung by landsmen yachting in still waters and in sight of green fields, by romantic young ladies in comfortable and unmoving drawing-rooms to the tinkling of Chickering's pianos. What are the songs the sailor sings to the accompaniment of the thrilling shrouds, the booming double-bass of the hollow topsails, and the multitudinous chorus of Ocean? What does the coaster, in his brief walk "three steps and overboard," hum to himself, as he tramps up and down his little deck through the swathing mists of a Bank fog? What sings the cook at the galley-fire in doleful unison with the bubble of his coppers? Surely not songs that exult in the life of the sea. Certainly not, my amateur friend, anything that breathes of mastery over the elements. The sea is a real thing to him. He never is familiar with it, or thinks of it or speaks of it as his slave. It is "a steed that knows his rider," and, like many another steed which the men of the forecastle have mounted, knows that it can throw its rider at pleasure, and the riders know it too. Now and then a sailor will utter some fierce imprecation upon wind or sea, but it is in the impotence of despair, and not in the conscious, boastful mastery which the land-songs attribute to him. What, then, does the sailor sing?—and does he sing at all?

Certainly the sailor sings. Did you ever walk through Ann Street, Boston, or haunt the purlieus of the Fulton Market? and when there did you never espy a huckster's board covered with little slips of printed paper of the size and shape of the bills-of-fare at the Commonwealth Hotel? They are printed on much coarser paper, and are by no means as typographically exact as the aforesaid *carte*, or as this page of the "Atlantic Monthly," but they are what the sailor sings. I know they are there, for I once spent a long summer's day in the former place, searching those files for a copy of the delightful ballad sung (or attempted to be sung) by Dick Fletcher in Scott's "Pirate,"—the ballad beginning

> "It was a ship, and a ship of fame,
> Launched off the stocks, bound for the main."

I did not find my ballad, and to this day remain in ignorance of what fate befell the "hundred and fifty brisk young men" therein commemorated. But I found what the sailor does sing. It was a miscellaneous collection of sentimental songs, the worn-out rags of the stage and the parlor, or ditties of highwaymen, or ballad narratives of young women who ran away from a rich "parient" with "silvier and gold" to follow the sea. The truth of the story was generally established by the expedient of putting the damsel's name in the last verse,—delicately suppressing all but the initial and final letters. The only sea-songs that I remember were other ballads descriptive of piracies, of murders by cruel captains, and of mutinies, with a sprinkling of sea-fights dating from the last war with England.

The point of remark is, that all of these depend for their interest upon a human association. Not one of them professes any concern with the sea or ships for their own sake. The sea is a sad, solemn reality, the theatre upon which the seaman acts his life's tragedy. It has no more of enchantment to him than the "magic fairy palace" of the ballet has to a scene-shifter.

But other songs the sailor sings. The Mediterranean sailor is popularly supposed to chant snatches of opera over his fishing-nets; but, after all, his is only a larger sort of lake, with water of a questionable saltness. It can furnish dangerous enough storms upon occasion, and, far worse than storms, the terrible white-squall which lies ambushed under sunny skies, and leaps unawares upon the doomed vessel. But the Mediterranean is not the deep sea, nor has it produced the best and boldest navigators. Therefore, although we still seek the sources of our maritime law amid the rock-poised huts (once palaces) of Amalfi, we must go elsewhere for our true sea-songs.

The sailor does not lack for singing. He sings at certain parts of his work;—indeed, he must sing, if he would work. On vessels of war, the drum and fife or boatswain's whistle furnish the necessary movement-regulator. There, where the strength of one or two hundred men can be applied to one and the same effort, the labor is not intermittent, but continuous. The men form on either side of the rope to be hauled, and walk away with it like firemen marching with their engine. When the headmost pair bring up at the stern or bow, they part, and the two streams flow back to the starting-point, outside the following files. Thus in this perpetual "follow-my-leader" way the work is done, with more precision and steadiness than in the merchant-service. Merchant-men are invariably manned with the least possible number, and often go to sea shorthanded, even according to the parsimonious calculations of their owners. The only way the heavier work can be done at all is by each man doing his utmost at the same moment. This is regulated by the song. And here is the true singing of the deep sea. It is not recreation; it is an essential part of the work. It mastheads the topsail-yards, on making sail; it starts the anchor from the domestic or foreign mud; it "rides down the main tack with a will"; it breaks out and takes on board cargo; it keeps the pumps (the ship's,—not the sailor's) going. A good voice and a new and stirring chorus are worth an extra man. And there is plenty of need of both.

I remember well one black night in the mid-Atlantic, when we were beating up against a stiff breeze, coming on deck near midnight, just as the ship was put about. When a ship is tacking, the tacks and sheets (ropes which confine the clews or lower corners of the sails) are let run, in order that the yards may be swung round to meet the altered position of the ship. They must then be hauled taut again, and belayed, or secured, in order to keep the sails in their place and to prevent them from shaking. When the ship's head comes up in the wind, the sail is for a moment or two edgewise to it, and then is the nice moment, as soon as the head-sails fairly fill, when the main-yard and the yards above it can be swung readily, and the tacks and sheets hauled in. If the crew are too few in number, or too slow at their work, and the sails get fairly filled on the new tack, it is a fatiguing piece of work enough to "board" the tacks and sheets, as it is called. You are pulling at one end of the rope, but the gale is tugging at the other. The advantages of lungs are all against you, and perhaps the only thing to be done is to put the helm down a little, and set the sails shaking again before they can be trimmed properly.—It was just at such a time that I came on deck, as above mentioned. Being near eight bells, the watch on deck had been not over spry; and the consequence was that our big main-course was slatting and flying out overhead with a might that shook the ship from stem to stern. The flaps of the mad canvas were like successive thumps of a giant's fist upon a mighty drum. The sheets were jerking at the belaying-pins, the blocks rattling in sharp snappings like castanets. You could hear the hiss and seething of the sea alongside, and see it flash by in sudden white patches of phosphorescent foam, while all overhead was black with the flying scud. The English second-mate was stamping with vexation, and, with all his ills misplaced, storming at the men:—"'An'somely the weather main- brace,—'an'somely, I tell you!—'Alf a dozen of you clap on to the main sheet here,—down with 'im!—D'y'see 'ere's hall like a midshipman's bag,—heverything huppermost and nothing 'andy.—'Aul 'im in, Hi say!" —But the sail wouldn't come, though. All the most forcible expressions of the Commination-Service were liberally bestowed on the watch. "Give us the song, men!" sang out the mate, at last,—"pull with a will! —together, men!—haltogether now!"—And then a cracked, melancholy voice struck up this chant:

"Oh, the bowline, bully bully bowline,
Oh, the bowline, bowline, HAUL!"

At the last word every man threw his whole strength into the pull,—all singing it in chorus, with a quick, explosive sound. And so, jump by jump, the sheet was at last hauled taut.—I dare say this will seem very much spun out to a seafarer, but landsmen like to hear of the sea and its ways;

and as more landsmen than seamen, probably, read the "Atlantic Monthly," I have told them of one genuine sea-song, and its time and place.

Then there are pumping-songs. "The dismal sound of the pumps is heard," says Mr. Webster's Plymouth-Rock Oration; but being a part of the daily morning duty of a well-disciplined merchant-vessel,—just a few minutes' spell to keep the vessel free and cargo unharmed by bilge-water,—it is not a dismal sound at all, but rather a lively one. It was a favorite amusement with us passengers on board the – to go forward about pumping-time to the break of the deck and listen. Any quick tune to which you might work a fire-engine will serve for the music, and the words were varied with every fancy. "Pay me the money down," was one favorite chorus, and the verse ran thus:—

Solo. Your money, young man, is no object to me.

Chorus. Pay me the money down!

Solo. Half a crown's no great amount.

Chorus. Pay me the money down!

Solo and Chorus. (Bis) Money down, money down, pay me the money down!

Not much sense in all this, but it served to man and move the brakes merrily. Then there were other choruses, which were heard from time to time,—"And the young gals goes a-weepin',"—"O long storm, storm along stormy"; but the favorite tune was "Money down," at least with our crew. They were not an avaricious set, either; for their parting ceremony, on embarking, was to pitch the last half-dollars of their advance on to the wharf, to be scrambled for by the land-sharks. But "Money down" was the standing chorus. I once heard, though not on board that ship, the lively chorus of "Off she goes, and off she must go,"—

"Highland day and off she goes,
Off she goes with a flying fore-topsail,
Highland day and off she goes."

It is one of the most spirited things imaginable, when well sung, and, when applied to the topsail-halyards, brings the yards up in grand style.

These are some of the working-songs of the sea. They are not chosen for their sense, but for their sound. They must contain good mouth-filling words, with the vowels in the right place, and the rhythmic ictus at proper distances for chest and hand to keep true time. And this is why the seaman beats the wind in a trial of strength. The wind may whistle, but it cannot sing. The sailor does not whistle, on shipboard at least, but does sing.

Besides the working-day songs, there are others for the forecastle and dog-watches, which have been already described. But they are seldom of the parlor pattern. I remember one lovely moonlight evening, off the Irish coast, when our ship was slipping along before a light westerly air,—just enough of it for everything to draw, and the ship as steady as Ailsa Crag, so that everybody got on deck, even the chronically sea-sick passengers of the steerage. There was a boy on board, a steerage passenger, who had been back and forth several times on this Liverpool line of packets. He was set to singing, and his sweet, clear voice rang out with song after song,– almost all of them sad ones. At last one of the crew called on him for a song which he made some demur at singing. I remember the refrain well (for he *did* sing it at last); it ran thus:—

"My crew are tried, my bark's my pride,
I'm the Pirate of the Isles."

It was no rose-water piracy that the boy sang of; it was the genuine pirate of the Isle of Pines, —the gentleman who before the days of California and steamers was the terror of the Spanish Main. He was depicted as falling in deadly combat with a naval cruiser, after many desperate deeds. What

was most striking to us of the cabin was, that the sympathy of the song, and evidently of the hearers, was all on the side of the defier of law and order. There was no nonsense in it about "islands on the face of the deep where the winds never blow and the skies never weep," which to the parlor pirate are the indications of a capital station for wood and water, and for spending his honeymoon. It was downright cutting of throats and scuttling of ships that our youngster sang of, and the grim faces looked and listened approvingly, as you might fancy Ulysses's veterans hearkening to a tale of Troy.

There is another class of songs, half of the sea, half of the shore, which the fishermen and coasters croon in their lonely watches. Such is the rhyme of "Uncle Peleg," or "Pillick," as it is pronounced,—probably an historical ballad concerning some departed worthy of the Folger family of Nantucket. It begins—

"Old Uncle Pillick he built him a boat
On the ba-a-ck side of Nantucket P'int;
He rolled up his trowsers and set her afloat
From the ba-a-ck side of Nantucket P'int."

Like "Christabel," this remains a fragment. Not so the legend of "Captain Cottington," (or Coddington,) which perhaps is still traditionally known to the young gentlemen at Harvard. It is marked by a bold and ingenious metrical novelty.

"Captain Cottington he went to sea,
Captain Cottington he went to sea,
Captain Cottington he went to sea-e-e,
Captain Cottington he went to sea."

The third verse of the next stanza announces that he didn't go to sea in a schoo-oo-ooner,—of the next that he went to sea in a bri-i-ig,—and so on. We learn that he got wrecked on the "Ba-ha-ha-hamys," that he swam ashore with the papers in his hat, and, I believe, entered his protest at the nearest "Counsel's" (*Anglicé*. Consul's) dwelling.

For the amateur of genuine ballad verse, here is a field quite as fertile as that which was reaped by Scott and Ritson amid the border peels and farmhouses of Liddesdale. It is not unlikely that some treasures may thus be brought to light. The genuine expression of popular feeling is always forcible, not seldom poetic. And at any rate, these wild bits of verse are redolent of the freshness of the sea-breeze, the damps of the clinging fog, the strange odors of the caboose-cookery, of the curing of cod, and of many another "ancient and fish-like smell." Who will tell us of these songs, not indeed of the deep sea, but of soundings? What were the stanzas which Luckie Mucklebackit sang along the Portanferry Sands? What is the dredging-song which the oyster "come of a gentle kind" is said to love?

These random thoughts may serve to indicate to the true seeker new and unworked mines of rhythmic ore. We are crying continually, that we have no national literature, that we are a nation of imitators and plagiarists. Why will not some one take the trouble to learn what we have? This does not mean that amateurs should endeavor to write such ballad fragments and popular songs,—because that cannot be done; such things grow,—they are not made. If the sea wants songs, it will have them. It is only suggested here that we look about us and ascertain of what lyric blessings we may now be the unconscious possessors. Can it be that oars have risen and fallen, sails flapped, waves broken in thunder upon our shores in vain? that no whistle of the winds, or moan of the storm-foreboding seas has waked a responsive chord in the heart of pilot or fisherman? If we are so poor, let us know our poverty.

And now to bring these desultory remarks to a practical conclusion. I have written these seemingly trifling fragments with a serious purpose. It is to show that the seaman has little or no art or part in the poetry of the seas. I have put down facts, have given what experience I have had of some of the idiosyncrasies of the forecastle. The poetry of the sea has been written on shore and by landsmen. Falconer's "Shipwreck" is a clever nautical tract, written in verse,—or if it be anything more, it is but the solitary exception which proves and enforces the rule. Midshipmen have written ambitious verses about the sea; but by the time the young gentlemen were promoted to the ward-room they have dropped the habit or found other themes for their stanzas. In truth, the stern manliness of his calling forbids the seaman to write poetry. He acts it. His is a profession which leaves no room for any assumed feeling or for any reflective tendencies. His instincts are developed, rather than his reason. He has no time to speculate. He must be prepared to lay his hand on the right rope, let the night be the darkest that ever came down upon the waves. He obeys orders, heedless of consequences; he issues commands amid the uproar and tumult of pressing emergencies. There is no chance for quackery in his work. The wind and the wave are infallible tests of all his knots and splices. He cannot cheat them. The gale and the lee-shore are not pictures, but fierce realities, with which he has to grapple for life or death. The soldier and the fireman may pass for heroes upon an assumed stock of courage; but the seaman must be a brave man in his calling, or Nature steps in and brands him coward. Therefore he cares little about the romance of his duties. If you would win his interest and regard, it must be on the side of his personal and human sensibilities. Cut off during his whole active life from any but the most partial sympathy with his kind, he yearns for the life of the shore, its social pleasures and its friendly greetings. Captains, whose vessels have been made hells-afloat by their tyranny, have found abundant testimony in the courts of law to their gentle and humane deportment on land. Therefore, when you would address seamen effectively, either in acts or words, let it be by no shallow mimicry of what you fancy to be their life afloat. It will be at best but "shop" to them, and we all know how distasteful that is in the mouth of a stranger to our pursuits. They laugh at your clumsy imitations, or are puzzled by your strange misconceptions. It is painful to see the forlorn attempts which are made to raise the condition of this noble race of men, to read the sad nonsense that is perpetrated for their benefit. If you wish really to benefit them, it must be by raising their characters as men; and to do this, you must address them as such, irrespectively of the technicalities of their calling.

THE KINLOCH ESTATE, AND HOW IT WAS SETTLED

CHAPTER I

"Mildred, my daughter, I am faint. Run and get me a glass of cordial from the buffet."

The girl looked at her father as he sat in his bamboo chair on the piazza, his pipe just let fall on the floor, and his face covered with a deadly pallor. She ran for the cordial, and poured it out with a trembling hand.

"Shan't I go for the doctor, father?" she asked.

"No, my dear, the spasm will pass off presently." But his face grew more ashy pale, and his jaw drooped.

"Dear father," said the frightened girl, "what shall I do for you? Oh, dear, if mother were only at home, or Hugh, to run for the doctor!"

"Mildred, my daughter," he gasped with difficulty, "the blacksmith,—send for Ralph Hardwick,—quick! In the ebony cabinet, middle drawer, you will find–Oh! oh!—God bless you, my daughter!—God bless"–

The angels, only, heard the conclusion of the sentence; for the speaker, Walter Kinloch, was dead, summoned to the invisible world without a warning and with hardly a struggle.

But Mildred thought he had fainted, and, raising the window, called loudly for Lucy Ransom, the only female domestic then in the house.

Lucy, frightened out of her wits at the sudden call, came rushing to the piazza, flat-iron in hand, and stood riveted to the spot where she first saw the features on which the awful shadow of death had settled.

"Rub his hands, Lucy!" said Mildred. "Run for some water! Get me the smelling-salts!"

Lucy attempted to obey all three orders at once, and therefore did nothing.

Mildred held the unresisting hand. "It is warm," she said. "But the pulse,—I can't find it."

"Deary, no," said Lucy, "you won't find it."

"Why, you don't mean"–

"Yes, Mildred, he's dead!" And she let fall her flat-iron, and covered her face with her apron.

But Mildred kept chafing her father's temples and hands,—calling piteously, in hopes to get an answer from the motionless lips. Then she sank down at his feet, and clasped his knees in an agony of grief.

A carriage stopped at the door, and a hasty step came up the walk.

"Lucy Ransom," said Mrs. Kinloch, (for it was she, just returned from her drive,) "Lucy Ransom, what are you blubbering about? Here on the piazza, and with your flat-iron! What is the matter?"

"Matter enough!" said Lucy. "See!—see Mr."–But the sobs were too frequent. She became choked, and fell into an hysterical paroxysm.

By this time Mrs. Kinloch had stepped upon the piazza, and saw the drooping head, the dangling arms, and the changed face of her husband. "Dead! dead!" she exclaimed. "My God! what has happened? Mildred, who was with him? Was the doctor sent for? or Squire Clamp? or Mr. Rook? What did he say to you, dear?" And she tried to lift up the sobbing child, who still clung to the stiffening knees where she had so often climbed for a kiss.

"Oh, mother! *is* he dead?—no life left?"

"Calm yourself, my dear child," said Mrs. Kinloch. "Tell me, did he say anything?"

Mildred replied, "He was faint, and before I could give him the cordial he asked for he was almost gone. 'The blacksmith,' he said, 'send for Ralph Hardwick'; then he said something of the

ebony cabinet, but could not speak the words which were on his lips." She could say no more, but gave way to uncontrollable tears and sobs.

By this time, Mrs. Kinloch's son, Hugh Branning, who had been to the stable with the horse and carriage, came whistling through the yard, and cutting off weeds or twigs along the path with sharp cuts of his whip.

"Which way is the wind now?" said he, as he approached; "the governor asleep, Mildred crying, and you scolding, mother?" In a moment, however, the sight of the ghastly face transfixed the thoughtless youth, as it had done his mother; and, dropping his whip, he stood silent, awe-struck, in the presence of the dead.

"Hugh," said Mrs. Kinloch, speaking in a very quiet tone, "go and tell Squire Clamp to come over here."

In a few minutes the dead body was carried into the house by George, the Asiatic servant, aided by a villager who happened to pass by. Squire Clamp, the lawyer of the town, came and had a conference with Mrs. Kinloch respecting the funeral. Neighbors came to offer sympathy, and aid, if need should be. Then the house was put in order, and crape hung on the door- handle. The family were alone with their dead.

On the village green the boys were playing a grand game of "round ball," for it was a half-holiday. The clear, silvery tones of the bell were heard, and we stopped to listen. Was it a fire? No, the ringing was not vehement enough. A meeting of the church? In a moment we should know. As the bell ceased, we looked up to the white taper spire to catch the next sound. One stroke. It was a death, then,—and of a man. We listened for the age tolled from the belfry. Fifty-five. Who had departed? The sexton crossed the green on his way to the shop to make the coffin, and informed us. Our bats and balls had lost their interest for us; we did not even ask our tally-man, who cut notches for us on a stick, how the game stood. For Squire Walter Kinloch was the most considerable man in our village of Innisfield. Without being highly educated, he was a man of reading and intelligence. In early life he had amassed a fortune in the China trade, and with it he had brought back a deeply bronzed complexion, a scar from the creese of a Malay pirate, and the easy manners which travel always gives to observant and sensible men. But his rather stately carriage produced no envy or ill-will among his humbler neighbors, for his superiority was never questioned. Men bowed to him with honest good-will, and boys, who had been flogged at school for confounding Congo and Coromandel, and putting Borneo in the Bight of Benin, made an awkward obeisance and stared wonderingly, as they met the man who had actually sailed round the world, and had, in his own person, illustrated the experiment of walking with his head downwards among the antipodes. His house had no rival in the country round, and his garden was considered a miracle of art, having, in popular belief, all the fruits, flowers, and shrubs that had been known from the days of Solomon to those of Linnaeus. Prodigious stories were told of his hoard of gold, and some of the less enlightened thought that even the outlandish ornaments of the balustrade over the portico were carven silver. Curious vases adorned the hall and side-board; and numberless quaint trinkets, whose use the villagers could not even imagine, gave to the richly-furnished rooms an air of Oriental magnificence. Tropical birds sang or chattered in cages, and a learned but lawless parrot talked, swore, or made mischief, as he chose. The tawny servant George, brought by Mr. Kinloch from one of the islands of the Pacific, completed his claims upon the admiration of the untravelled.

He was just ready to enjoy the evening of life, when the night of death closed upon him with tropic suddenness. He left one child only, his daughter Mildred, then just turned of eighteen; and as Mrs. Kinloch had only one son to claim her affection, the motherless girl would seem to be well provided for. Mildred was sweet-tempered, and her step-mother had hitherto been discreet and kind.

The funeral was over, and the townspeople recovered from the shock which the sudden death had caused. Administration was granted to the widow conjointly with Squire Clamp, the lawyer, and the latter was appointed guardian for Mildred during her minority.

Squire Clamp was an ill-favored man, heavy-browed and bald, and with a look which, in a person of less consequence, would have been called "hang- dog,"—owing partly, no doubt, to the tribulation he had suffered from his vixen spouse, whose tongue was now happily silenced. He was the town's only lawyer, (a fortunate circumstance,) so that he could frequently manage to receive fees for advice from both parties in a controversy. He made all the wills, deeds, and contracts, and settled all the estates he could get hold of. But no such prize as the Kinloch property had ever before come into his hands.

If Squire Clamp's reputation for shrewdness had belonged to an irreligious man, it would have been of questionable character; but as he was a zealous member of the church, he was protected from assaults upon his integrity. If there were suspicions, they were kept close, not bruited abroad.

He was now an almost daily visitor at the widow Kinloch's. What was the intricate business that required the constant attention of a legal adviser? The settlement of the estate, so far as the world knew, was an easy matter. The property consisted of the dwelling-house, a small tract of land near the village, a manufactory at the dam, by the side of Ralph Hardwick's blacksmith's shop, and money, plate, furniture, and stocks. There were no debts. There was but one child, and, after the assignment of the widow's dower, the estate was Mildred's. Nothing, therefore, could be simpler for the administrators. The girl trusted to the good faith of her stepmother and the justice of the lawyer, who now stood to her in the place of a father. She was an orphan, and her innocence and childlike dependence would doubtless be a sufficient spur to the consciences of her protectors. So the girl thought, if she thought at all,—and so all charitable people were bound to think.

How wearily the days passed during the month after the funeral! The shadow of death seemed to darken everything. Doors creaked dismally when they were opened. The room where the body had been laid seemed to have grown a century older than the other parts of the once bright and cheerful house, —its atmosphere was so stagnant and full of mould. The family spoke only in suppressed tones; their countenances were as sad as their garments. All this was terrible to the impressible, imaginative, and naturally buoyant temper of Mildred. It was like dwelling in a tomb, and her heart cried out for very loneliness. She must do something to take her mind out of the sunless vault,—she must resume her relations with the dwellers in the upper air. All at once she thought of her father's last words,—of Ralph Hardwick, and the ebony cabinet. It was in the next room. She opened the door, half expecting to see some bodiless presence in the silent space. She could hear her own heart beat between the tickings of the great Dutch clock, as she stepped across the floor. How still was everything! The air tingled in her ears as though now disturbed for the first time.

She opened the cabinet, which was not locked, and pulled out the middle drawer. She found nothing but a dried rose-bud and a lock of sunny hair wrapped in a piece of yellowed paper. Was it her mother's hair? As Mildred remembered her mother, the color of her hair was dark, not golden. Still it might have been cut in youth, before its hue had deepened. And what a world of mystery, of feeling, of associations there was in that scentless and withered rose-bud! What fair hand had first plucked it? What pledge did it carry? Was the subtile aroma of love ever blended with its fragrance? Had her father borne it with him in his wanderings? The secret was in his coffin. The struggling lips could not utter it before they were stiffened into marble. Yet she could not believe that these relics were the sole things to which he had referred. There must have been something that more nearly concerned her,—something in which the blacksmith or his nephew was interested.

CHAPTER II

In order to show the position of Mrs. Kinloch and her son in our story, it will be necessary to make the reader acquainted with some previous occurrences.

Six years before this date, Mrs. Kinloch was the Widow Branning. Her husband's small estate had melted like a snow-bank in the liquidation of his debts. She had only one child, Hugh, to support; but in a country town there is generally little that a woman can do to earn a livelihood; and she might often have suffered from want, if the neighbors had not relieved her. If she left her house for any errand, (locks were but seldom used in Innisfield,) she would often on her return find a leg of mutton, a basket of apples or potatoes, or a sack of flour, conveyed there by some unknown hands. In winter nights she would hear the voices of Ralph Hardwick, the village blacksmith, and his boys, as they drew sled-loads of wood, ready cut and split, to keep up her kitchen fire. Other friends ploughed and planted her garden, and performed numberless kind offices. But, though aided in this way by charity, Mrs. Branning never lost her self-respect nor her standing in the neighborhood.

Everybody knew that she was poor, and she knew that everybody knew it; yet so long as she was not in absolute want, and the poor-house, that bugbear of honest poverty, was yet far distant, she managed to keep a cheerful heart, and visited her neighbors on terms of entire equality.

At this period Walter Kinloch's wife died, leaving an only child. During her sickness, Mrs. Branning had been sent for to act as nurse and temporary house-keeper, and, at the urgent request of the widower, remained for a time after the funeral. Weeks passed, and her house was still tenantless. Mildred had become so much attached to the motherly widow and her son, that she would not allow the servants to do anything for her. So, without any definite agreement, their relations continued. By-and-by the village gossips began to query and surmise. At the sewing- society the matter was fully discussed.

Mrs. Greenfield, the doctor's wife, admitted that it would be an excellent match, "jest a child apiece, both on 'em well brought up, used to good company, and all that; but, land's sakes! he, with his mint o' money, a'n't a-goin' to marry a poor widder that ha'n't got nothin' but her husband's pictur' and her boy,—not he!"

Others insinuated that Mrs. Branning knew what she was about when she went to Squire Kinloch's, and his wife was 'most gone with consumption. "'Twasn't a mite strange that little Mildred took to her so kindly; plenty of women could find ways to please a child, if so be they could have such a chance to please themselves."

The general opinion seemed to be that Mrs. Branning would marry the Squire, if she could get him; but that as to his intentions, the matter was quite doubtful. Nevertheless, after being talked about for a year, the parties were duly published, married, and settled down into the quiet routine of country life.

Doubtless the accident of daily contact was the secret of the match. Had Mrs. Branning been living in her own poorly-furnished house, Mr. Kinloch would hardly have thought of going to seek her. But as mistress of his establishment she had an opportunity to display her house-wifely qualities, as well as to practise those nameless arts by which almost any clever woman knows how to render herself agreeable.

The first favorable impression deepened, until the widower came to believe that the whole parish did not contain so proper a person to be the successor of Mrs. Kinloch, as his housekeeper. Their union, though childless, was as happy as common; there was nothing of the romance of a first attachment,—little of the tenderness that springs from fresh sensibilities, for she at least was of a matter-of-fact turn. But there was a constant and hearty good feeling, resulting from mutual kindness and deference.

If the step-mother made any difference in her treatment of the two children, it was in favor of the gentle Mildred. And though the Squire naturally felt more affection for his motherless daughter, yet he was proud of his step-son, gave him the advantages of the best schools, and afterwards sent him for a year to college. But the lad's spirits were too buoyant for the sober notions of the Faculty. He was king in the gymnasium, and was minutely learned in the natural history and botany of the neighborhood; at least, he knew all the haunts of birds, rabbits, and squirrels, as well as the choicest orchards of fruit.

After repeated admonitions without effect, a letter was addressed to his stepfather by vote at a Faculty-meeting. A damsel at service in the President's house overheard the discussion, and found means to warn the young delinquent of his danger; for she, as well as most people who came within the sphere of his attraction, felt kindly toward him.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.