ARTHUR TIMOTHY SHAY

WORDS OF CHEER FOR THE TEMPTED, THE TOILING, AND THE SORROWING

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Содержание

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PREFACE

AS we pass on our way through the world, we find our paths now smooth and flowery, and now rugged and difficult to travel. The sky, bathed in golden sunshine to-day, is black with storms to-morrow! This is the history of every one. And it is also the life-experience of all, that when the way is rough and the sky dark, the poor heart sinks and trembles, and the eye of faith cannot see the bright sun smiling in the heavens beyond the veil of clouds. But, for all this fear and doubt, the rugged path winds steadily upwards, and the broad sky is glittering in light.

Let the toiling, the tempted, and the sorrowing ever keep this in mind. Let them have faith in Him who feedeth the young lions, and clothes the fields with verdure—who bindeth up the broken heart, and giveth joy to the mourners. There are Words of Cheer in the air! Listen! and their melody will bring peace to the spirit, and their truths strength to the heart.

AUNT MARY

A LADY sat alone in her own apartment one clear evening, when the silver stars were out, and the moon shone pure as the spirit of peace upon the rebellious earth. How lovely was every outward thing! How beautiful is God's creation! The window curtains were drawn close, and the only light in the cheerful room, was given by a night-lamp that was burning on the mantel-piece. The occupant, who perhaps had numbered about thirty-five years, was sitting by a small table in the centre of the room, her head leaning upon one slender hand; the other lay upon the open page of a book in which she had endeavoured to interest herself. But the effort had been vain; other and stronger feelings had overpowered her; there was an expression of suffering upon the gentle face, over which the tears rained heavily. For a brief moment she raised her soft blue eyes upward with an appealing look, then sunk her head upon the table before her, murmuring,

"Father! forgive me! it is good for me. Give me strength to bear everything. Pour thy love into my heart, for I am desolate—if I could but be useful to one human being—if I could make one person happier, I should be content. But no! I am desolate—desolate. Whose heart clings to mine with the strong tendrils of affection? Who ever turns to me for a smile? Oh! this world is so cold—so cold!"

And that sensitive being wept passionately, and pressed her

hand upon her bosom as if to still its own yearnings.

Mary Clinton had met with many sorrows; she was the youngest of a large family; she had been the caressed darling in her early days, for her sweetness won every heart to love. She had dwelt in the warm breath of affection, it was her usual sunshine, and she gave it no thought while it blessed her; a cold word or look was an unfamiliar thing. A most glad-hearted being she was once! But death came in a terrible form, folded her loved ones in his icy arms and bore them to another world. A kind father, a tender mother, a brother and sister, were laid in the grave, in one short month, by the cholera. One brother was yet left, and she was taken to his home, for he was a wealthy merchant. But there seemed a coldness in his splendid house, a coldness in his wife's heart. Sick in body and in mind, the bereft one resolved to travel South, and visit among her relations, hoping to awaken her interest in life, which had lain dormant through grief. She went to that sunny region, and while there, became acquainted with a man of fine intellect and fascinating manners, who won her affections, and afterwards proved unworthy of her. Again the beauty of her life was darkened, and with a weary heart she wore out the tedious years of her joyless existence. She was an angel of charity to the poor and suffering. She grew lovelier through sorrow. A desire to see her brother, her nearest and dearest relative, called her North again, and when our story opens she was in the bosom of his home, a member of his family. He loved her deeply, yet she felt like an alien—his wife

had not welcomed her as a sister should. Mary Clinton's heart went out toward's Alice, her eldest niece, a beautiful and loving creature just springing into womanhood. But the fair girl was gay and thoughtless, flattered and caressed by everybody. She knew sadness only by the name. She had no dream that she could impart a deep joy, by giving forth her young heart's love to the desolate stranger.

The hour had grown late, very late, and Mary Clinton still leaned her head upon the table buried in thoughts, when the bounding step of Alice outside the door aroused her from her revery. She listened, almost hoping to see her friendly face peeping in, but wearied with the enjoyment of the evening, the fair young belle hastened on to her chamber, and her aunt heard the door close. Rising from her seat at the table, Miss Clinton approached a window, and threw back the curtains that the midnight air might steal coolingly over her brow. Her eye fell upon the rich bracelet that clasped her arm, a gift of her brother, and then with a sad smile, she surveyed the pure dress of delicate white she wore. "Ah!" she sighed, "I am robed for a scene of gayety, but how sad the heart that beats beneath this boddice! How glad I was to escape from the company; loneliness in the crowd is so sad a feeling." At that moment the door of her room opened, and Alice came laughing in, her glowing face all bright and careless.

"Oh! Aunt Mary," she exclaimed, "do help me! I cannot unclasp my necklace, and my patience has all oozed out at the

tips of my fingers. There! you have unfastened it already. Well! I believe I never will be good for anything!" And Alice laughed as heartily, as if the idea was charming. "When did you leave the parlours, Aunt Mary? I never missed you at all. Father said you left early, when I met him just now on the stairs."

"I did leave early," replied Miss Clinton. "I chanced to feel like being entirely alone, so I sought my own apartment."

"Have you been reading, aunt? I should think you would feel lonely!"

"I read very little," was the reply, in a sad tone. No remark was made on her loneliness.

"It seems so strange to me, Aunt Mary, that you are so fond of being alone. I like company so much," said Alice, looking in her quiet face. "But I must go," she added; she paused a moment, then pressed an affectionate kiss upon her aunt's cheek, and whispered a soft "good night." Miss Clinton cast both arms around her, and drew her to her heart, with an eagerness that surprised Alice. Twice she kissed her, then hastily released her as if her feeling had gone forth before she was aware of it. Alice stood still before her a moment, and her careless eyes took a deeply searching expression as they dwelt upon the countenance before her. Something like sadness passed over her face, and her voice was deeper in its tone, as she repeated, "Good night, dear Aunt Mary!" With a slow step she left the apartment, mentally contrasting her own position with that of her aunt. Circumstances around her and the society with which she mingled, tended to

drown reflection, and call into play only the brighter and gayer feelings, that flutter on the surface of our being. She had never known the luxury of devoting an hour to genuine meditation on the world within—or the great world without. The earth was to her a garden of joy; she lived upon it only to enjoy herself. Like many selfish people, Alice's mother made an idol of her beautiful child, because she was a part of herself; and Mrs. Clinton was not one to perform a mother's duty faithfully in instilling right views of life into her daughter's mind. Thus, with a depth of feeling, and rich gifts of mind, Alice fluttered on her way like a light-winged butterfly, her soul's pure wells of tender thought unknown to her. How many millions pass through a whole long life, with the deepest and holiest secrets of their being still unlocked by their heedless hands! How few see aught to live for, but the outward sunshine of prosperity, which is an idle sunshine, compared with the ever-strengthening light that may grow in the spirit! How strong, how great, how beautiful may life be, when smiled upon by our Creator! how weak, how abject, how trampled upon, when turned away from his face!

With better and more quiet emotions, Mary Clinton retired to rest. "I can love others, if I am not beloved," she murmured, and the dove of peace fluttered its white wing over her. Her resigned prayer was, "Lord, into thy hands I commit my spirit." Tears of earnest humility had washed away all bitterness from the wrung heart of that lovely being. How beautiful was the angel smile that played over her face, in her pure dreams!

A few weeks after, Alice entered her aunt's apartment one drizzling, damp, foggy, uncomfortable day. "Such miserable weather!" she exclaimed, throwing herself idly into an arm-chair; "I believe I have got the *blues* for once in my life. I don't know what to do with myself; it makes me perfectly melancholy to look out of the window, and nothing in the house wears a cheerful aspect. Mother has a headache; when I proposed reading to her, she very politely asked me if I would not let her remain alone. She says I always want to sing, read, or talk incessantly if she wishes to be quiet. I can't ding on the piano, for it is heard from attic to basement. I don't want to read alone, for I have such a desire to be sociable—now, Aunt Mary, you have a catalogue of my troubles, can't you relieve me, for I am really miserable, if I don't look so!" Alice broke into a laugh, although it did not bubble right up from her merry heart as usual.

"If your attention was fully engaged, you would not mind the weather so much," remarked Aunt Mary, with a quiet smile. "You are not in a mood to enjoy a book just now, so what *will* you do, my dear?"

"Mend stockings, or turn my room upside down, and then arrange it neatly," said Alice in a speculative tone. "There is nothing in the house to interest me; there is Patty in the kitchen, I have just been paying her a visit. She is as busy as a bee, and as happy as a queen. I believe poor people are happier than the rich, in such weather as this, at least."

"Because they are useful, Alice; go busy yourself about some

physical labour for an hour or two, then come back to me, and I predict your face will be as sunshiny as ever. I am in earnest—you need not look so incredulous!"

"What shall I do?" asked the young girl laughing. "I don't know how to do a single thing in domestic matters. Mother says I shall never work. It would spoil my fairy fingers, I presume, a terrible consequence!"

"But seriously Alice, you are not so entirely incapable of doing anything, are you?"

"I am positively, but I can learn if I choose. I believe I will sweep my room and put it in order, as a beginning. That will be something new: now I will try my best!" Alice sprang from her chair, and tripped from the apartment quite pleased with the idea. A smile broke over Miss Clinton's features, after her niece had left her alone. "How easily Alice might be trained to better things, by love and gentleness," she said half aloud. "Oh! if she would only love me, and turn to me fondly. How I would delight to breathe a genial prayer over the buds of promise in her youthful heart, and fan them to warmer life." More than an hour flew by, as Mary Clinton sat in thought, devising plans to awaken her favourite to a true sense of her duties—to a knowledge of her capabilities for happiness and usefulness. We may be useful with a heart full of sadness; but we can rarely taste of happiness, unless we are desirous to benefit some one besides ourselves. A quietness came over the lonely one as she mused—a spirit of beautiful repose; for she forgot all thoughts of her own

enjoyment, in caring for another.

"You are quite a physician, Aunt Mary, to a mind diseased," exclaimed Alice, breaking her revery as she came in with a smiling face, after the performance of her unaccustomed labour. "I am quite in tune again now. I believe there is a little philosophy in being busy occasionally, after all."

"There is really," replied Miss Clinton, raising her deep blue eyes to Alice's face, with their pleasant expression; "and there is also philosophy in recreation—in abandoning yourself for a time to innocent gayety. An hour of enjoyment is refreshing and beneficial."

"Why, Aunt Mary!" said Alice in some surprise, "I had no idea that you thought so. You are always so industrious and quiet, I imagined you disapproved of the merriment of ordinary people. When we have a large company you almost always retire early. Why do you do so, aunt, may I ask you?"

Mary Clinton was silent a moment, then she said gently, "When I think I can add to the ease or enjoyment of any person present, I take pleasure in staying; but when I feel that I am rather a restraint than otherwise, I retire—to weep. You are yet young and beautiful, my child, for you have never known such feelings. I am too selfish, or I would not be sad so often; it is right that I should pass through such a school of discipline. I hope it has already made me better." The look of resignation that beamed from Miss Clinton's tearful eyes, caused a chord in Alice's heart to tremble with a strange blending of love, sweetness, and sorrow.

"*You* should be happy, if any one should, dear aunt," she said in a low voice, and she partly averted her head, to conceal the tears that started down her cheek. "I am happy so often," she resumed, turning around and seating herself upon an ottoman at her aunt's feet. "You deserve so much more than I—to be as good as you are, Aunt Mary, I would almost change situations, for then I should be sure of going to heaven."

"You can be just as sure in your own position, as in that of any other person. But, dear child, the more deeply we scan our hearts, the more we see there to conquer, in order that we may become fit companions for the angels."

Alice remained thoughtful for some moments, then she folded her hands over Aunt Mary's lap, and lifted her eyes to the loving face that bent over her. "Be my guardian angel," she prayed tearfully, "your love is so pure; a gentleness comes over me, when I am with you. All tumultuous feelings sink down to repose. I have not known you, Aunt Mary; you have shown me to-day how lovely goodness is. I can feel it in your presence. Oh! to possess it! I fear it will be long years before I grow so gentle in my spirit —so unselfish—so like a child of Heaven!"

"Hush, hush!" was Mary Clinton's gentle interruption. "You do not know me yet, Alice. Perhaps I appear far better than I am."

Alice smiled, and laying her arm around Aunt Mary's neck, drew down her face, and kissed her affectionately, whispering, "You will be my guide, I ask no better."

"Thank you, thank you," broke from Aunt Mary's lips; she

pressed Alice's cheek with the ardent haste of love and gratitude; then yielding to the emotions that thrilled her heart, she burst into tears, and wept with a joy she had long been a stranger to. She felt that her life would no longer be useless, if she could live for Alice, and lift up to God her heart. How beautiful in its freshness, is the early day when the light of a good resolve breaks like a halo over the soul, and by its power, seeks to win it from its selfish idols! Earnest and strong is the hopefulness that bids us labour trustingly to become all we yearn to be—all we may be. How tremblingly Mary Clinton leaned upon her Saviour! experience had taught her the weakness of her fluttering heart; sorrow was familiar, yet she prayed not to shrink from it. How clear and vigorous was the mind of Alice—how shadowless was her unerring path to be—how all weakness departed before the sudden thought that rose up in her soul! How rich was the light that beamed from her steady eye—how calm and trusting the slight smile that parted her lips! How meek and confiding she was, and yet how full of strength! She was a young seeker after truth, and she realized not yet, that that same truth was the power to which she must bow every rebellious thing within her. Months rolled on, and the quiet gladness in her heart made it a delight to her to do anything and everything it seemed her duty to do. The unexplored world within opened to her gaze, and threw a glory upon creation. Infinitely priceless in her eyes, were the thousand hearts around her, in which the Lord had kindled the undying lamp of life.

One evening, at rather a late hour, Alice Clinton sought the chamber of her aunt and seated herself quietly beside her, saying in a subdued voice as she took her hand, "I am inexpressibly sad to-night, Aunt Mary. There is no very particular reason why I should feel so; no one can soothe me but you. Put your arms around me, Aunt Mary, and talk to me—give me some strength to go forward in the way I have chosen. I almost despair—I have no good influence, no moral courage. Perhaps, after all, my efforts have been in vain to become better, and I shall sink back into my former state. If all who are my friends were like you, it would be an easy thing to glide on with the stream. But I am in the midst of peril—I never knew until to-night that it was hard to speak with a cold rigour to our friends when they merit it. If I were despised, or neglected, I could more easily fix my thoughts on heaven. I dread so to hurt the feelings of any one."

"What do you refer to, dear?" inquired Aunt Mary, tenderly.

"My friend Eleanor Temple, and her brother Theodore, have been spending the evening with me. You know how gay and witty they are. In answer to a remark of mine, Theodore gravely quoted a passage of Scripture, which applied to my observation in an irresistibly ludicrous manner. I yielded to a hearty laugh which I could not restrain; it came so suddenly I had no time for thought. But in a moment after my conscience smote me, and I felt that my respect for Theodore had lessened. I had no right to rebuke him, even if I had the moral courage, for my laughter was encouragement. I turned away from him and spoke

to Eleanor; I was displeased with myself, and I felt a sort of inward repugnance to him. But that was not the end; several times afterwards Theodore did the same thing.

"'There are subjects which are not fit food for merriment;' I said once in an embarrassed manner. 'If I do wrong, it is not deliberately done.' Theodore was silent a moment, and he looked at me as if he hardly knew how to understand me—then smiling, he turned the conversation, and was as gay as ever. When they had taken their leave, I entered the parlour again, and threw myself in a seat by the open window. I turned the blind, and looked out after them. Eleanor had caught the fringe of her mantilla in the railing of the area. I was about to speak with her on the little accident, when Theodore laughed, and said to his sister, 'Alice is as fond of taking characters, as an actress. She attempted to reprove me, for the very thing she had laughed at a little while before. Rather inconsistent in our favourite, Nelly, don't you think so?' Eleanor laughed, and said good-naturedly, 'Alice is impulsive, she don't measure what she says, before it comes out.'

"I rose, and left the window. I felt sad, and peculiarly discomposed and dissatisfied with myself. I knew that I had tried to do right in some degree, and it grated on my feelings that my effort should be called 'a taking of character.' Oh! if I could only live with good people altogether, who would bear with me, and trust my motives! You have my story, Aunt Mary, it amounts to nothing, but I am so sad."

"Life is made up of trifles," said Miss Clinton. "Few circumstances are so trivial that we may not draw a lesson from them. Do not feel sad, Alice, because you are misunderstood. Do not repine on account of your position; no one could fill it but yourself, or you would not be placed in it. Be resigned to meet those who call out unpleasant feelings; they teach you better your own nature than ever the angels could. They bring forth what is evil in you, that it may be conquered. Do not understand me to mean that you should ever seek those who may harm you. But a day can hardly pass over our heads, that we do not meet with persons who ruffle that harmony of soul we so labour after. It is keenly felt when one is as young in a better life as you are. You need strength, and then you will be calm and even. Time, patience, combating, prayer, good-will to man, must bring your soul to order, then you will bear upon the spirits of others with a still, purifying power which will soothe and soften like far-off music. You have it in your power to do much good; your Creator has blessed you with that inexpressible sympathy which may glide gently into another human heart and open its secret springs almost unconsciously to the possessor. I have watched you, child of my love, and perhaps I know you better than you know yourself. There are many latent germs within your being; Oh! Alice, pray God to expand them to heavenly life. Bear on—and live for something worthy a creature God has made." Mary Clinton paused in an unusual emotion; her cheek glowed deeply, and the burning softness of her eyes chained Alice's look as

with a spell, to their angel expression. The heart of the young girl throbbed almost to bursting, with the world of undeveloped feeling that rushed over her. It was a moment which many have experienced—a moment which breaks over the young for the first time with such a thrill—she realized that God had gifted her with power—with a soul that might and *must* have its influence. Bowing her head upon Aunt Mary's knee, she wept; and a flood of joy, humility, and thanksgiving came over her, as she more deeply dedicated herself to the holy Lord, and laid her gifts upon His altar. Aunt Mary's words sunk peacefully into her soul, and a clear light irradiated it and filled it with a calmness that made all things right. With a look of irrepressible tenderness, and a voice full of low music, Alice said to Aunt Mary, as she rose to retire, "You have charmed away every discordant note that was touched to-night, dear aunt. How unaccountable are our sudden changes of mood! You have now thrown over me your own spirit of peaceful repose and contentment. Good-night, and think you!"

"Well, I am content, entirely content," soliloquized Mary Clinton, when the loved form of the child of her heart had disappeared. "To try to bless another, how richly does the blessing fall back upon my own soul! Yes! I have my joys. Why am I ever so ungrateful as to murmur at aught that befalls me? I am blest—a sunshine is breaking over the tender earth for me; all clouds are gone." With feelings much changed from what they were a few months previous, Mary Clinton sought the window, and with loving and devoted eyes dwelt upon the

night and stillness of the heavens—so boundless and so pure. The moon was full; near it was one bright cloud of silver drapery, upon the edge of which rested a single star. "So shall it be with me," she murmured, "be the clouds that float over the heavens of my soul bright or dark, the star of holy trust shall linger near, ever bringing to my bosom—peace."

About two years after, on a winter evening, there was a large company assembled at Mr. Clinton's dwelling. It was in compliment to Alice, for that day completed her twentieth year. As she moved from one spot to another, her sweet face radiant with happiness, Aunt Mary's eyes followed her with a devoted expression, which betrayed that the lovely being was her dearest earthly treasure. The merry girl was now a glad-hearted, but thoughtful woman. An innocent mirthfulness lingered around her, which time itself would never subdue, except for a brief season, when her sweet laugh broke out with a natural, rich suddenness; there was a catching joy in it, that could not be withstood. She was the gentle hostess to perfection; with tact enough to discover congenial spirits, and bring them together, finding her own pleasure in the cheerful home thus made. She possessed the rare but happy art of making every body feel perfectly at home, one knew not why. For a moment, Alice stood alone with her little hand resting upon the centre-table. Behind her, two rather fashionable young men were talking and laughing somewhat too loud, and jesting upon sacred things. A look of pain passed over the face of the fair listener as

she slowly turned round, and said in a low but earnest tone, "Don't, Theodore! Excuse me, but *such* trifling pains me." The young gentlemen both appeared mortified. "Pardon me! Alice," exclaimed Theodore Temple, "I will try to break that habit for your sake. I was not aware that it pained you so much—a lady's word is law!" and he bowed gallantly.

"No, no! Base your giving up of the habit upon principle, then it will be permanent. Much obliged for the compliment"—Alice bowed with assumed dignity, and her sweet face dimpled into a playful smile, "but I have no faith in these pretty speeches. Remember, now, I have your promise to try to break the habit; you will forfeit your word if you do not; so you see your position, don't you?" Thus saying, and without waiting for a reply, the young lady left them.

"I believe Miss Clinton is right, after all," remarked Temple's companion. "What is the use of jesting on such subjects? We never feel any better after it, and we subject ourselves to the displeasure of those who respect these things. I pass my word to give it up, if you will, Temple."

"Agreed!" was Theodore's brief answer. Without saying how mingled the motive might have been, which induced the young men to forsake the habit, they *did* forsake it permanently. Aunt Mary's lonely life was at last smiled upon by a sunbeam—and that sunbeam was the soul of Alice, which she had turned to the light. For that cherished being Mary Clinton could have offered up her life, and there would have been a joy in the sacrifice.

Strongly and nobly were their hearts knit together—beautiful is the devotedness of holy, unselfish love! Blest are two frank hearts, which may be opened to each other, pouring out like lava the tide of feeling hoarded in the inward soul—such revelations are for moments when the yearning heart will not be hushed to calmness. But "there is a moonlight in human life," and there is also a blessing in that subdued hour which whispers wearily to the loving one, of weaknesses and sins, with a prayer for consoling strength to triumph yet, leaving them in the dust. Thus was it with Mary and Alice Clinton; their souls were open as the day to each other. They travelled along life's pathway with earnest purpose, fulfilling the many and changing duties that fell upon them, ever catching rich gleams of joy from above. And sorrows came too! but they purified, and taught the slumbering soul its rarest wealth—its deepest sympathies with all things good and heavenly. It seemed a slight thing that took away the desolation from the heart of Mary Clinton—she turned away from *self*, and devoted her efforts to the eternal happiness of another. Is there one human being in the wide world so desolate, that he may not do likewise? Only a mite may be cast in, but God has made none of his children so poor, as to be without an influence. The humblest effort, if it is all that *can* be made, is as full of greatness at the core, as the most ostentatious display.

THE DEAD

IT is strange what a change is wrought in one hour by death. The moment our friend is gone from us for ever, what sacredness invests him! Everything he ever said or did seems to return to us clothed in new significance. A thousand yearnings rise, of things we would fain say to him—of questions unanswered, and now unanswerable. All he wore or touched, or looked upon familiarly, becomes sacred as relics. Yesterday these were homely articles, to be tossed to and fro, handled lightly, given away thoughtlessly —to-day we touch them softly, our tears drop on them; death has laid his hand on them, and they have become holy in our eyes. Those are sad hours when one has passed from our doors never to return, and we go back to set the place in order. There the room, so familiar, the homely belongings of their daily life, each one seems to say to us in its turn, "Neither shall their place know them any more." Clear the shelf now of vials and cups, and prescriptions; open the windows; step no more carefully; there is no one now to be cared for—no one to be nursed—no one to be awakened.

Ah! why does this bring a secret pang with it when we know that they are where none shall any more say, "I am sick!" Could only one flutter of their immortal garments be visible in such moments; could their face, glorious with the light of heaven, once smile on the deserted room, it might be better. One needs

to lose friends to understand one's self truly. The death of a friend teaches things within that we never knew before. We may have expected it, prepared for it, it may have been hourly expected for weeks; yet when it comes, it falls on us suddenly, and reveals in us emotions we could not dream. The opening of those heavenly gate for them startles and flutters our souls with strange mysterious thrills, unfelt before. The glimpse of glories, the sweep of voices, all startle and dazzle us, and the soul for many a day aches and longs with untold longings.

We divide among ourselves the possessions of our lost ones. Each well-known thing comes to us with an almost supernatural power. The book we once read with them, the old Bible, the familiar hymn; then perhaps little pet articles of fancy, made dear to them by some peculiar taste, the picture, the vase!—how costly are they now in our eyes.

We value them not for their beauty or worth, but for the frequency with which we have seen them touched or used by them; and our eye runs over the collection, and perhaps lights most lovingly on the homeliest thing which may have been oftenest touched or worn by them.

It is a touching ceremony to divide among a circle of friends the memorials of the lost. Each one comes inscribed—"*no more*;" and yet each one, too, is a pledge of reunion. But there are invisible relics of our lost ones more precious than the book, the pictures, or the vase. Let us treasure them in our hearts. Let us bind to our hearts the patience which they will never

need again; the fortitude in suffering which belonged only to this suffering state. Let us take from their dying hand that submission under affliction which they shall need no more in a world where affliction is unknown. Let us collect in our thoughts all those cheerful and hopeful sayings which they threw out from time to time as they walked with us, and string them as a rosary to be daily counted over. Let us test our own daily life by what must be their now perfected estimate; and as they once walked with us on earth, let us walk with them in heaven.

We may learn at the grave of our lost ones how to live with the living. It is a fearful thing to live so carelessly as we often do with those dearest to us, who may at any moment be gone for ever. The life we are living, the words we are now saying, will all be lived over in memory over some future grave. One remarks that the death of a child often makes parents tender and indulgent! Ah, it is a lesson learned of bitter sorrow! If we would know how to measure our work to living friends, let us see how we feel towards the dead. If we have been neglectful, if we have spoken hasty and unkind words, on which death has put his inevitable seal, what an anguish is that! But our living friends may, ere we know, pass from us; we may be to-day talking with those whose names to-morrow are to be written among the dead; the familiar household object of to-day may become sacred relics to-morrow. Let us walk softly; let us forbear and love; none ever repented of too much love to a departed friend; none ever regretted too much tenderness and indulgence, but many a tear has been shed

for too much harshness and severity. Let our friends in heaven then teach us how to treat our friends on earth. Thus by no vain fruitless sorrow, but by a deeper self-knowledge, a tenderer and more sacred estimate of life, may our heavenly friends prove to us ministering spirits.

The triumphant apostle says to the Christian, "All things are yours—Life and Death." Let us not lose either; let us make *Death* our own; in a richer, deeper, and more solemn earnestness of life. So those souls which have gone from our ark, and seemed lost over the gloomy ocean of the unknown, shall return to us, bearing the olive-leaves of Paradise.

DO YOU SUFFER MORE THAN YOUR NEIGHBOUR?

"WHOSE sorrow is like unto my sorrow?"

Such is the language of the stricken soul, such the outbreak of feeling, when affliction darkens the horizon of man's sunny hopes, and dashes the full cup of blessings suddenly from the expectant lips.

"Console me not; you have not felt this pang," cries the spirit in agony, to the kind friend who is striving to pour the balm of consolation in the wounded heart.

"But I have known worse," is the reply.

"Worse! never, never; no one could suffer more keenly than I now do, and live."

In vain the friend reasons; sorrow is always more or less selfish; it absorbs all other passions; it consecrates itself to tears and lamentations, and the bereaved one feels alone; utterly alone in the world, and of all mankind the most forsaken. Every heart knoweth its own bitterness, and there is a canker spot on every human plant in God's garden. Some are blighted and withered, ready to fall from the stalk; others are blooming while a blight is at the root.

What right have you to say, because you droop and languish, that your neighbour, with a fair exterior and upright mien, is

all that his appearance indicates? What evidence have you that because you suffer from want, and your neighbour rides in his carriage, that he is, therefore, more abundantly blessed, more contentedly happy than you?

As you walk through the streets of costly and beautiful mansions, you feel vaguely, that, associated with so much of beauty, of magnificence and ease, there must be absolute content, enviable freedom, unmixed pleasure, and constant happiness. How deplorably mistaken. Here, where gold and crimson drape the windows, is mortal sickness; there, where the heavy shutters fold over the rich plate glass, lies shrouded death. Here, is blasted reputation, there, is an untold and hideous grief. Here, is blighted love, striving to look and be brave, but with a bosom corroded and full of bitterness; there the sad conduct of a wayward child. Here is the terrible neglect of an unkind and perhaps idolized husband; there the wilful and repeated faults of an unfaithful wife. Here is dread of bankruptcy, there dread of dishonour or exposure. Here is bitter hatred, lacking only the nerve to prove another Cain. There silent and hidden disease, working its skilful fangs about the heart, while it paints the cheek with the very hue of health. Here is undying remorse in the breast of one who has wronged the widow and the fatherless; there the suffering being the victim of foul slander; here is imbecility, there smothered revenge. The bride and the belle, both so seemingly blessed, have each their sacred but poignant sorrow.

Have you a worse grief than your neighbour? You think you

have; you have buried your only child—he has laid seven in the tomb. Seven times has his heart been rent open; and the wounds are yet fresh; he has no hope to sustain him; he is a miserable man, and you are a Christian.

Have you more trouble than your neighbour? You have lost your all—no, no, say not so; your neighbour has lost houses and lands, but his health has gone also; and while you are robust, he lies on the uneasy pillow of sickness, and watches some faithful menial prepare his scanty meal, and then waits till a trusty hand bears the food to his parched lips.

Do you suffer more than your neighbour? True; Saturday night tests your poverty; you have but money enough for the bare necessaries of life; your children dress meagerly, and your house is scantily furnished; you do not know whether or not work will be forthcoming the following week. Your neighbour sees not, nor did he ever see, want. House, wife and children are sumptuously provided for; his barn is a palace to your kitchen. Step into his parlour and look at him for a moment; papers surround him, blazing Lehigh floods the grate, velvet carpets yield to the step; luxurious chairs invite to rest—check the sigh of envy; there is a ring at the bell—hurrying footsteps on the stairs—a jarring sound against the polished door, and in bursts the rich man's son, his brow haggard, his eyes fierce and red. He is a notorious profligate; gambling is his food and drink, debauchery his glory and his ruin. Would you be that father? Go back to your honest sons and look in their faces; throw the bright locks from their

brows, and bless God that there the angel triumphs over the brute; be even thankful that you are not burdened with corrupt gold, for their sakes; say not again that you suffer more than your neighbour.

Do you toil, young girl, from daylight to midnight, while the little sums eked out with frowns and reluctant fingers, hardly suffice to provide for you food and raiment? And the wife of your rich employer, who passes stranger-like by you, may sit at her marble toilet-table for hours, and retouch the faded brow of beauty before a gilded mirror; may lounge at her palace window till she is weary of gazing, and being gazed at; do you envy your wealthier neighbour, young sewing-girl? Go to her boudoir, where pictures and statuary, silken hangings and perfumes delight every sense, and where costly robes are flung around with a profusion that betokens lavish expenditure; ask her which she deems happiest, and she will point her jewelled finger towards you, and—if she speaks with candour—tell you that for your single soul and free spirits, she would barter all her riches. The opera, where night after night the wealth of glorious voices is flung upon the air till its every vibration is melody, and the spirit drinks it in as it would the incense of rare flowers, is to her not so exquisite a luxury as the choice songs, warbled in a concert room, to which you may listen but few times in the year; such pleasure palls in repetition, on the common mind, for nature's favourites are among the poor, and gold, with all its magical power, can never attune the ear to music, nor the taste to an appreciation

of that which is truly beautiful in nature or art. Keep then your integrity, and you never need envy the wife of your employer. A round of heartless dissipation has sickened her of humanity; and if it were not for the excitement of outshining her compeers in the ranks of fashion, she would lay down her useless life to-morrow.

Mothers, worn out and enfeebled with work, labouring for those who, however good they may be, are at the best unable to pay you for you unceasing toil, unable to realize your great sacrifices, do you look upon your neighbour who has more means and a few petted children, and wish that your lot was like hers? You pause often over your task, and think it greater than you can bear.

"Tell mothers," said a lady to us a short time since, "who have their little ones around them, that they are living their happiest days; and the time will come when they will realize it. Tell them to bend in thankfulness over the midnight lamp, to smile at their ceaseless work and call it pleasure. I can but kneel in fancy by the distant graves of my children; they are all gone. Could I but have them beside me now, I would delve like a slave for them; I would think no burden too hard, no denial beyond my strength, if I might but labour for their good and be rewarded by their smiles and their love."

Then in whatever situation we are, we should remember that even but a door from our own dwelling there may be anguish, compared with which ours is but as the whisper of a breath to the

roll of the thunder. We do not say then, let us *console* ourselves by the reflection that there are always those in the world who suffer keener afflictions than ourselves, "but let us feel that though our cup of sorrow may be almost full, there might be added many a drop of bitterness;" and never, never should we breathe the expression, "there is no sorrow like unto mine."

WE ARE LED BY A WAY THAT WE KNOW NOT

WE are to consider the facts and circumstances which confirm the doctrine that the Lord's providence is at once universal and particular; and indeed that he leads us by a way unknown to ourselves.

And who that has reflected upon his own life, or upon the life of others, or upon the current events of the day, will not bear witness to the universal application of this principle?

Look to the affairs of the world, to the nations and governments of all the earth, and tell me, where is anything turning out according to the forethought and prudence of man?

Look to the movements of our own country, and say whether human prudence ever devised what we behold? What party or what individuals have ever, in the long run, brought things about as they expected? And how is it in our own city, and under our own eyes?

In the societies of the church, and in organizations for church extension, the same rule applies. And I might ask, where does it not apply? I might give examples. But this is unnecessary, when they are so numerous, and so fresh in the memory of every one.

But when we turn to the experience of individuals, we meet with the most unlimited application of our subject. The life of

every one is a standing memento of its truth. For who is there, that has come to his present stand-point in life, by the route that he had marked out for himself? I will imagine that ten, fifteen, or twenty years ago each one of you fixed on your plan of life, for a longer or shorter period. It matters not what the original plan was. It matters not what prudence, sagacity, and forethought were employed in making it. It matters not how much money and power have come to the support of it. Still its parts have never been filled up as you originally sketched them.

Many particulars were altered and amended, from day to day, as you went along. Some things were abandoned as useless; some as hopeless; some as impossible; some as injurious; some things were neglected, and others forgotten. An unknown hand now and then interposed, turning the tables entirely. An unaccountable influence was found operating on certain individuals, changing their tone, and modifying their conduct. An unknown individual has come alongside of you, and has become your friend. He has mingled his emotions and his plans with yours. You have modified your plans. He has changed his. Business and commerce have taken an unexpected turn. You are the gainer or the loser, it matters not; your plans are changed by the event. An intimate friend has left you and become your open enemy; an open enemy has been reconciled and has returned to the affection and confidence of your heart. Your plans in life have to be changed to suit such events as these. Several friends and relatives, that were near to you, have been removed into the

spiritual world. It may be that by such providences, your feelings, thoughts, and actions have been changed—changed utterly and for ever. Darkness of mind, gloominess of life, and anguish of spirit may have come upon you, by some such unexpected providence, and thus your plans may have been changed, or even utterly abandoned.

But beyond matters of this description, which are somewhat external, and as we say accidental, and certainly incidental, to a life in this world, and in all of which we are led in a way that we know not; there are unexpected changes of another kind, that we all have experienced. I now refer to changes in the inner man, and in the inner life.

For there is a Divinity within us that shapes our ends, and while the things of the outward life remain much the same, we experience changes of the inner life, that are at times amazing and terrible. They come like the swelling of the tide, and like the beating of the waves rolling on from a distant ocean; the deep emotions of the soul arise and swell and sweep away; the fire of thought is kindled; the imagination paints the canvas; the tongue stands ready to utter the influx of love and wisdom; and the hand to illustrate it.

As these internal states of the soul change, by conjunction with the Lord and communion with Heaven, on the one hand; or by opposition to God and alliance with Hell, on the other, we see all things of the outward world in a different light.

The changes of our internal man are, to appearance, much

more directly of the Lord's Divine Providence, than the events of the outward life. Nevertheless, the two are so related by the constitution of the mind, that each individual determines, in rationality and freedom, which of the emotions and thoughts of the *inner life*, he will bring forth into *ultimate acts*; and it is here that the man may ally himself with the good and the true on one hand, or with the evil and the false on the other; and in this manner determine his destiny for heaven or hell.

The practical bearings of our subjects hinge chiefly on this; we are to confide in the Lord; lean upon his great arm; and look to Him, with the assurance that although He leads us by a way that we know not, nevertheless He is leading us aright; and if we trust to Him, and do His will, He will finally bring us to heaven.

Casting our eyes from one extreme of the Lord's vast dominions to the other, we find the same Divine Providence everywhere operating and operative. The angels of heaven, from the highest to the lowest, are continually led by the Lord in paths that they have not known; darkness is made light before them, and crooked things straight. Nevertheless they are not led into infinite good nor infinite delight. For this would be impossible. But constantly they are led into a higher degree of good than they would naturally choose; and they are defended from evil into which they would naturally subside. So also it is with us.

Hence we may rest assured, that however meagre may be the good we experience, it is vaster by far than we should inherit, if we had been permitted to carry out our own plans and to have our

own way in those numerous particulars in which we have been frustrated in our plans and disappointed in our hopes.

THE IVY IN THE DUNGEON

THE ivy in a dungeon grew,
Unfed by rain, uncheered by dew;
Its pallid leaflets only drank
Cave-moistures foul, and odours dank.

But through the dungeon-grating high
There fell a sunbeam from the sky;
It slept upon the grateful floor
In silent gladness evermore.

The ivy felt a tremor shoot
Through all its fibres to the root;
It felt the light, it saw the ray,
It strove to blossom into day.

It grew, it crept, it pushed, it clomb—
Long had the darkness been its home;
But well it knew, though veiled in night,
The goodness and the joy of light.

Its clinging roots grew deep and strong;
Its stem expanded firm and long;
And in the currents of the air
Its tender branches flourished fair.

It reached the beam—it thrilled—it curled—
It blessed the warmth that cheers the world;
It rose towards the dungeon bars—
It looked upon the sun and stars.

It felt the life of bursting Spring,
It heard the happy sky-lark sing.
It caught the breath of morns and eves,
And wooed the swallow to its leaves.

By rains, and dews, and sunshine fed,
Over the outer wall it spread;
And in the day-beam waving free,
It grew into a steadfast tree.

Upon that solitary place,
Its verdure threw adorning grace.
The mating birds became its guests,
And sang its praises from their nests.

Wouldst know the moral of the rhyme?
Behold the heavenly light! and climb.
To every dungeon comes a ray
Of God's interminable day.

THE GARDEN OF EDEN

ONE day little Alice hung about her mother's neck covering her cheeks with kisses, and saying in her pretty, childish way,

"I love you, you nice, sweet mother! You are good—so good!" But her mother answered earnestly,

"Dear child, God is good; if I have any good it is from Him; He has given it to me; it is not mine."

Then the little one unclasped her caressing arms, and putting back her hair with both hands gazed with a look of surprise into her mother's face.

Presently she said—"But if He has given it to you, it is yours."

"No, darling," replied the lady, "you do not quite understand. Listen. Suppose your dear father had a great garden full of all most beautiful things that ever grew in gardens, and he should say to you—'Come and live in my garden; you shall have as much ground as you are able to cultivate, and I will give you seeds of all fruits and flowers you love best, as many as you want. Here no evil thing can ever come to harm you, but every day you will grow happier and stronger, and then I will give you more ground and more seeds, and you shall live with me for ever!' Suppose you were so glad to hear this that you lost no time, but went in, at once, and began to plant the seeds in your little plot, close by the gate—you know it would be a tiny little plot at first, because you are small and weak; and soon your flowers were to grow up and

bloom, so tall, and so beautiful, and your trees hang heavy with such delightful fruit that every one passing by would exclaim,

"'Oh, what a beautiful garden! Are these flowers and fruit trees yours?'

"Would you not say—

"Oh, no! they are not mine; they are all my father's. This is his beautiful garden, but he said if I were willing I might stay here always, and I have come to live with him because he is good. Nothing at all here belongs to me, though my father likes me to give away the fruits and flowers that grow in my plot to all who ask for them. I am a great deal happier, all the time, when I think that even the wild flowers in this grass, and the small berries, and the little birds that eat them, belong to him, than I could be if they were mine, and I had no one to love for them.'

"Should you not feel, dearest, as though you were telling a wicked story, and almost as though you were stealing something, if you said, 'Yes, they are all mine,' so that the people would not even know you had a father?"

"Oh, yes! that would be very naughty indeed. I would give the people some of the fruit and flowers, and say they grew on my father's trees, and then they would love him too; but tell me more about the garden."

"I will tell you all I think you can understand, and you must be attentive, for I want you to remember it all your life. Did you ever hear of the Garden of Eden?"

"Yes; that is where Adam and Eve lived."

"Well, that's the beautiful garden I've been telling you about, and God is your good father. You can begin your journey there this very day if you like."

"Is it a very long journey?—and will you go with me? Is there really, *really* such a garden? Oh, tell me where it is!"

"I desire nothing in the world so much as to lead you there, but the path is rough and steep; I cannot carry you in my arms along that road; you must walk on your own little feet, and I am afraid they will sometimes get—very tired."

"You know, mother, I never do get tired when I am going to a pleasant place; but, oh, dear! I do believe now it is all a dream-story; you smiled and kissed me just as if it were."

"No, you need not look so disappointed, little one, for though it is something like a 'dream-story,' there is nothing in the world half so true and real. Think in that little head of yours, and tell me what seems to you most like this beautiful garden."

"I cannot think of anything at all like it, except heaven.—Oh, yes!—that is it! Heaven, is it not?"

"And what is heaven?"

"The place where good people go when they die."

"Think again. What is heaven?"

"I have thought again, and I cannot think of anything but the place where God and the angels are. I do not know how you want me to think."

"I want you to think why it is heaven, and why the angels are happy. Do you understand?"

"Yes. Being beautiful and so pleasant makes it heaven; and the angels are happy because they are in heaven."

"Then, of course, if you put even such wicked people into a beautiful and pleasant place they would be angels, and happy?"

"Oh, now I see! You mean the angels are happy because they are good."

"Why should that make them happy?"

"I don't know why, but I know the Bible says so. I suppose just the same as when you promise me, in the morning, that if I say my lessons all nicely you will tell me a beautiful fairy-tale after tea."

"No, my little Alice, not exactly in that way, though at first thought it does seem to be so. I want you very much indeed, to understand the truth about it, but I am afraid you will not find it easy. You know that God is good, and wise, and happy—ah, dearest! better, wiser, happier than the purest angels will ever know, though they go on learning it to eternity. When I say to you God is infinitely good, and wise, and happy, you cannot understand that, and neither can I; but one thing about it I can understand, and this I will tell you. Just as every joyous ray of light and heat comes to us from the sun, so all wisdom, all goodness, all beauty, all joy, flow forth from God, and are His, alone. Our very souls would go out of existence like the flames of a lamp when the oil is spent, if, for the least fraction of a second, He ceased to give us life. This truth that I am teaching you now is not mine, nor yours; it is only a tiny stream flowing from the

fountains of His infinite wisdom, and would be the truth, all the same, if we had never been born, or never learned to see it. The good and joyous feelings in your heart, too, are also from God, just as the truth is, though they seem to you more as if they were your own. You must never think of them as your own, never; but thank God for them very gratefully and humbly, for they are His fruits that grow in the garden of your father, the Garden of Eden."

"Why do you call it the Garden of Eden?"

"Because, by the Garden of Eden, is signified the state of those who live in obedience to God; and by the beauty and pleasantness of the garden we are taught that, when we receive goodness and truth from God, we, at the same time, receive happiness from Him, because He is infinitely happy, as well as infinitely good, and when His spirit fills our hearts, we are happy too. Happiness comes with goodness, just as the flowers and songs of birds come with summer."

"Then are all good people happy? I thought not."

"It is true, there are many trials in this world, but do you not see that if we were good we should acknowledge that God sent them as blessings, and should be willing to accept them from him, and should, therefore, not be made very unhappy by them. You may be sure that people are really, in their heart of hearts, happy exactly in proportion as they are good. I have known persons who had suffered a great deal in many ways, and who yet said that nothing had been so bitter to them as the consciousness of their own sins. Good people see a thousand things to love and enjoy

which the wicked world find no pleasure in; they are sure to make friends, and, what is far better, sure to love and do good to all about them. They take delight in everything beautiful that God has created. They think of Him, and all His goodness, and, in the midst of sorrow, their hearts are comforted, and filled with heavenly peace."

"Why did you say the road was rough and long to that beautiful garden?—is it so very, very hard to be good?—and does it take so very long?"

"You must not feel sad because it is not easy to be good; you must think of it bravely, and joyfully. Why, my Alice! did you not say you never felt tired when you were going to a pleasant place? It is not always easy to do right; sometimes we are sorely tempted, and then it seems very difficult; but what of that? It is possible, always, for God never requires of us what we cannot do. When you feel discouraged, remember that angels in heaven were little children once, and that some of them found it as hard as you do to be good and true, but they tried over and over again, and are blessed angels now. They love to acknowledge that it was not by their own strength they overcame evil, but that all the good and truth and happiness they have are from God. He does not love you less than He did them, for His love is infinite to all His children, and if you are willing He will lead you also into His Garden of Eden."

HAVE A FLOWER IN YOUR ROOM

A FIRE in winter, a flower in summer! If you can have a fine print or picture all the year round, so much the better; you will thus always have a bit of sunshine in your room, whether the sky be clear or not. But, above all, a flower in summer!

Most people have yet to learn the true enjoyment of life; it is not fine dresses, or large houses, or elegant furniture, or rich wines, or gay parties, that make homes happy. Really, wealth cannot purchase pleasures of the higher sort; these depend not on money, or money's worth; it is the heart, and taste, and intellect, which determine the happiness of men; which give the seeing eye and the sentient nature, and without which, man is little better than a kind of walking clothes-horse.

A snug and a clean home, no matter how tiny it be, so that it be wholesome; windows, into which the sun can shine cheerily; a few good books (and who need be without a few good books in these days of universal cheapness?)—no duns at the door, and the cupboard well supplied, and with a flower in your room!—and there is none so poor as not to have about him the elements of pleasure.

Hark! there is a child passing our window calling "wallflowers!" We must have a bunch forthwith: it is only a penny! A shower has just fallen, the pearly drops are still hanging upon the petals, and they sparkle in the sun which has again come

out in his beauty.

How deliciously the flower smells of country and nature! It is like summer coming into our room to greet us. The wallflowers are from Kent, and only last night were looking up to the stars from their native stems; they are full of buds yet, with their promise of fresh beauty. "Betty! bring a glass of clear water to put these flowers in!" and so we set to, arranging and displaying our pennyworth to the best advantage.

But what do you say to a nosegay of roses? Here you have a specimen of the most beautiful of the smiles of Nature! Who, that looks on one of these bright full-blown beauties, will say that she is sad, or sour, or puritanical! Nature tells us to be happy, to be glad, for she decks herself with roses, and the fields, the skies, the hedgerows, the thickets, the green lanes, the dells, the mountains, the morning and evening sky, are robed in loveliness. The "laughing flowers," exclaims the poet! but there is more than gayety in the blooming flower, though it takes a wise man to see its full significance—there is the beauty, the love, and the adaptation, of which it is full. Few of us, however, see any more deeply in this respect than did Peter Bell:—

> "A primrose by a river's brim,
> A yellow primrose was to him,
> And it was nothing more."

What would we think or say of one who had invented flowers —supposing, that before him, flowers were things unknown;

would it not be the paradise of a new delight? should we not hail the inventor as a genius as a god? And yet these lovely offsprings of the earth have been speaking to man from the first dawn of his existence till now, telling him of the goodness and wisdom of the Creating Power, which bade the earth bring forth, not only that which was useful as food, but also flowers, the bright consummate flowers, to clothe it in beauty and joy!

See that graceful fuchsia, its blood-red petals, and calyx of bluish-purple, more exquisite in colour and form than any hand or eyes, no matter how well skilled and trained, can imitate! We can manufacture no colours to equal those of our flowers in their bright brilliancy—such, for instance, as the Scarlet Lychnis, the Browallia, or even the Common Poppy. Then see the exquisite blue of the humble Speedwell, and the dazzling white of the Star of Bethlehem, that shines even in the dark. Bring one of even our common field-flowers into a room, place it on your table or chimney piece, and you seem to have brought a ray of sunshine into the place. There is ever cheerfulness about flowers; what a delight are they to the drooping invalid! the very sight of them is cheering; they are like a sweet draught of fresh bliss, coming as messengers from the country without, and seeming to say:—"Come and see the place where we grow, and let thy heart be glad in our presence."

What can be more innocent than flowers! Are they not like children undimmed by sin? They are emblems of purity and truth, always a new source of delight to the pure and the innocent.

The heart that does not love flowers, or the voice of a playful child, is one that we should not like to consort with. It was a beautiful conceit that invented a language of flowers, by which lovers were enabled to express the feelings that they dared not openly speak. But flowers have a voice to all,—to old and young, to rich and poor, if they would but listen, and try to interpret their meaning. "To me," says Wordsworth,

> The meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears."

Have a flower in your room then, by all means! It will cost you only a penny, if your ambition is moderate; and the gratification it will give you will be beyond all price. If you can have a flower for your window, so much the better. What can be more delicious than the sun's light streaming through flowers—through the midst of crimson fuchsias or scarlet geraniums? Then to look out into the light through flowers—is not that poetry? And to break the force of the sunbeams by the tender resistance of green leaves? If you can train a nasturtium round the window, or some sweet-peas, then you have the most beautiful frame you can invent for the picture without, whether it be the busy crowd, or a distant landscape, or trees with their lights and shades, or the changes of the passing clouds. Any one may thus look through flowers for the price of an old song. And what a pure taste and refinement does it not indicate on the part of the cultivator!

A flower in your window sweetens the air, makes your room look graceful, gives the sun's light a new charm, rejoices your eye, and links you to nature and beauty. You really cannot be altogether alone, if you have a sweet flower to look upon, and it is a companion which will never utter a cross thing to anybody, but always look beautiful and smiling. Do not despise it because it is cheap, and everybody may have the luxury as well as you. Common things are cheap, and common things are invariably the most valuable. Could we only have a fresh air or sunshine by purchase, what luxuries these would be; but they are free to all, and we think not of their blessings.

There is, indeed, much in nature that we do not yet half enjoy, because we shut our avenues of sensation and of feeling. We are satisfied with the matter of fact, and look not for the spirit of fact, which is above all. If we would open our minds to enjoyment, we should find tranquil pleasures spread about us on every side. We might live with the angels that visit us on every sunbeam, and sit with the fairies who wait on every flower. We want some loving knowledge to enable us truly to enjoy life, and we require to cultivate a little more than we do the art of making the most of the common means and appliances for enjoyment, which lie about us on every side. There are, we doubt not, many who may read these pages, who can enter into and appreciate the spirit of all that we have now said; and, to those who may still hesitate, we would say—begin and experiment forthwith; and first of all, when the next flower-girl comes along your street, at once hail

her, and "Have a flower for your room!"

WEALTH

THE error of life into which man most readily falls, is the pursuit of wealth as the highest good of existence. While riches command respect, win position, and secure comfort, it is expected that they will be regarded by all classes only with a strong and unsatisfied desire. But the undue reverence which is everywhere manifested for wealth, the rank which is conceded it, the homage which is paid it, the perpetual worship which is offered it, all tend to magnify its desirableness, and awaken longings for its possession in the minds of those born without inheritance. In society, as at present observed, the acquisition of money would seem to be the height of human aim—the great object of living, to which all other purposes are made subordinate. Money, which exalts the lowly, and sheds honour upon the exalted—money, which makes sin appear goodness, and gives to viciousness the seeming of chastity—money, which silences evil report, and opens wide the mouth of praise—money, which constitutes its possessor an oracle, to whom men listen with deference—money, which makes deformity beautiful, and sanctifies crime—money, which lets the guilty go unpunished, and wins forgiveness for wrong—money, which makes manhood and age respectable, and is commendation, surety, and good name for the young,—how shall it be gained? by what schemes gathered in? by what sacrifice

secured? These are the questions which absorb the mind, the practical answerings of which engross the life of men. The schemes are too often those of fraud, and outrage upon the sacred obligations of being; the sacrifice, loss of the highest moral sense, the destruction of the purest susceptibilities of nature, the neglect of internal life and development, the utter and sad perversion of the true purposes of existence. Money is valued beyond its worth—it has gained a power vastly above its deserving. Wealth is courted so obsequiously, is flattered so servilely, is so influential in moulding opinions and judgment, has such a weight in the estimation of character, that men regard its acquisition as the most prudent aim of their endeavours, and its possession as absolute enjoyment and honour, rather than the means of honourable, useful, and happy life. While riches are thus over-estimated, and hold such power in the community, men will forego ease and endure toil, sacrifice social pleasures and abandon principle, for the speedy and unlimited acquirement of property. Money will not be regarded as the means of living, but as the object of life. All nobler ends will be neglected in the eager haste to be rich. No higher pursuit will be recognised than the pursuit of gold—no attainment deemed so desirable as the attainment of wealth. While the great man of every circle is the rich man, in the common mind wealth becomes the synonyme of greatness. No condition is discernable superior to that which money confers; no loftier idea of manhood is entertained than that which embraces the extent of one's possessions.

There is a wealth of heart better than gold, and an interior decoration fairer than outward ornament.—

There is a splendour in upright life, beside which gems are lustreless; and a fineness of spirit whose beauty outvies the glitter of diamonds. Man's true riches are hidden in his nature, and in their development and increase will he find his surest happiness.

HOW TO BE HAPPY

OLD Mr. Cleveland sat by his comfortable fireside one cold winter's night. He was a widower, and lived alone on his plantation; that is to say, he was the only white person there; for of negroes, both field hands and house servants, he had enough and to spare. He was a queer old man, this Mr. Cleveland; a man of kind, good feelings, but of eccentric impulses, and blunt and startling manners. You must always let him do everything in his own odd way; just attempt to dictate to him, or even to suggest a certain course, and you would be sure to defeat your wisest designs. He seemed at times possessed by a spirit of opposition, and would often turn right round and oppose a course he had just been vehemently advocating, only because some one else had ventured openly and warmly to approve it.

The night, as I have said, was bitter cold, and would have done honour to a northern latitude, and in addition to this, a violent storm was coming on. The wind blew in fitful gusts, howling and sighing among the huge trees with which the house was surrounded, and then dying away with a melancholy, dirge-like moan. The old tree rubbed their leafless branches against the window panes, and the fowls which had roosted there for the night, were fain to clap their wings, and make prodigious efforts to preserve their equilibrium. Mr. Cleveland grew moody and restless, threw down the book in which he had been reading,

kicked one of the andirons till he made the whole blazing fabric tumble down, and finally called, in an impatient tone, his boy Tom.

Tom soon popped his head in at the door, and said, "Yer's me, sir."

"Yer's me, indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Cleveland, "what sort of a way is this to build a fire?"

"I rispec you is bin kick um, sir," said Tom.

"Hey? What? Well! suppose I did bin kick um, if it had been properly made, it would not have tumbled down. Fix it this minute, sir!"

"I is gwine to fix um now, sir," said Tom, fumbling at the fire.

"Well! fix it, sir, without having so much to say about it; you had better do more, and say less," said Mr. Cleveland.

"Yes, sir," answered Tom.

"You *will* keep answering me when there is no occasion!" exclaimed Mr. Cleveland; "I just wish I had my stick here, I'd crack the side of your head with it."

"Yer's de stick, sir," said Tom, handing the walking cane out of the corner.

"Put it down, this instant, sir," said Mr. Cleveland; "how dare you touch my stick without my leave?"

"I bin tink you bin say you bin want um, sir," said Tom.

"You had better tink about your work, sir, and stop answering me, sir, or I'll find a way to make you," said Mr. Cleveland. "Bring in some more light wood, and make the fire, and shut in

the window shutters. Do you hear me, sir?"

"Yes, sir," replied Tom.

"Well, why don't you answer, if you hear, then? How am I to know when you hear me, if you don't answer?" said Mr. Cleveland.

"I bin tink you bin tell me for no answer you, sir," said Tom.

"I said when there was no occasion, boy; that's what I said," exclaimed Mr. Cleveland, reaching for his stick.

"Yes, sir," said Tom, as he went grinning out of the room.

Mr. Cleveland was, in the main, a very kind master, though somewhat hasty and impatient. Tom and he were for ever sparring, yet neither could have done without the other; and there was something comical about Tom's disposition which well suited his master's eccentric and changeable moods. Tom evidently served as a kind of safety valve for his master's nervous system, and many an explosion of superfluous excitability he had to bear.

On the night in question, Mr. Cleveland was particularly out of sorts. The truth is, he was naturally a generous, warm-hearted man, but in consequence of early disappointment, had lived a solitary life, and was really suffering for the want of objects of affection. His feelings, unsatisfied, unemployed, yet morbidly sensitive, were becoming soured, and his untenanted heart often ached for want of sympathy.

He rose and took several diagonal turns across the room. At length he opened a window, and looked out upon the stormy

night. "What confounded weather!" he muttered to himself, "it makes a man feel like blowing his brains out! There are no two ways about it, I'm tired of life. What have I to live for? If I were to die to-morrow, who would shed a tear?"

Then whispered conscience, "It is thine own fault. A man need not feel alone because there are none in the world who bear his name, or share his blood. All men are thy brethren. Thou art one of the great human family, and what hast thou done to relieve the poor and suffering around thee? Will not thy Master say to thee at the last day, 'I was an hungered, and you gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and you clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and you visited me not. Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these my brethren, *you did it not to me.*'"

This was a strong and direct appeal, and it was not without its effect. Then muttered Mr. Cleveland to himself again, "Well, how can I help it? It has not been for want of inclination. Heaven knows I am always ready to put my hand in my pocket whenever people call on me for charity. How can I help it if the poor and suffering do not make their wants known to me?"

Then again spake Conscience: "Thou art trying to deceive thyself, but thou canst not deceive nor silence *me*. Thou hast known of the existence of suffering, and thine indolence has prevented thee from going abroad to relieve it. Did thy Master thus? Did he not *go about* to do good? Did he not sit down to meat with publicans and sinners? Can you stand here, and look

out upon such a night as this, and not think of those who are exposed to its bitterness? Can thy human heart beat only for itself when thou thinkest of the thousand miseries crying to Heaven for relief? Resolve, now, before thy head touches its comfortable pillow, that with the morning's dawn thou wilt resolutely set about thy work; or, rather, thy Master's work."

"It is very hard," still muttered Mr. Cleveland to himself, "that these thoughts will continually intrude themselves upon me. They give me no peace of my life. Stifle them as I may, they come with tenfold force. People have no business to be poor. I was poor once, and nobody gave charity to me. I had to help myself up in the world as well as I could. I hate poor people; I hate unfortunate people; in fact, confound it! I hate the world and everybody in it."

Then answered once again the still, small voice: "For shame, Mr. Cleveland, for shame! You will ruin your soul if you thus darken the light within. You know better than all this, and you are sinning against yourself. You want to be happy; well, you may be so. There is a wide field of duty open before you; enter, in God's name, and go to work like a man. What you say about having helped yourself, is perfectly true, and you deserve all credit for it. But remember that the majority of the poor are entirely destitute of your advantages. You had the foundation rightly laid. A thousand circumstances in your early life conspired to render you energetic and self-relying. You had the right sort of education, and Providence also helped to train you. Besides, once more I ask you, did your Master stop to inquire how human

misery was brought about before he relieved it? Away with this unmanly, selfish policy! Follow thy generous impulses, follow out the yearnings of thy heart, without which you never can have peace; above, all, follow Christ."

Mr. Cleveland shut the window, heaved a deep sigh, and took several more turns across the room. "I believe it is all true," at length he said, "and I have been a confounded fool. I'll turn about, and lead a different life, so help me Heaven! I have wealth, and not a chick nor a child to spend it on, nor to leave it to when I die, and so I'll spend it in doing good, if I can only find out the best way; that's the trouble. But never mind, I'll be my own executor." He now rang the bell for Tom.

Tom immediately appeared, with his usual "Yer's me, sir."

"Tom," said Mr. Cleveland, "put me in mind in the morning, to send a load of wood to old Mrs. Peters."

"Yes, sir," said Tom, "an' you better sen' some bacon, 'cause I bin yerry (hear) little Mas Jack Peter say him ain't bin hab no meat for eat sence I do' know de day when. I rispec dey drudder hab de meat sted o' de wood, 'cause dey can pick up wood nuf all about."

"You mind your own business, sir," said Mr. Cleveland, "I'll send just what I please. How long is it since I came to you for advice? Confound the fellow!" he muttered aside, "I meant to send the woman some meat, and now if I do it, that impudent fellow will think I do it because he advised it. Any how, I'll not send bacon, I'll send beef or mutton."

Just at this moment, there was a knock at the door, and Tom, going to open it, admitted Dick, the coachman.

"What do you want, Dick, at this time of night?" inquired his master.

"Dere's a man down stays, sir," replied Dick, "and he seem to be in great 'fliction. He says dey is campin' out 'bout half a mile below, sir, and de trees is fallin' so bad he is 'fraid dey will all be killed. He ask you if you kin let dem stay in one of de out-houses tell to-morrow."

"Camping out such a night as this?" exclaimed Mr. Cleveland, "the Lord have pity on them! How many are there of them, Dick?"

"He, an' his wife, and six little children, sir," answered Dick.

"No negroes?" inquired his master.

"Not a nigger, sir," said Dick. "I ain't like poor buckrah, no how, sir, but I 'spect you best take dese people in, lest dey might die right in our woods."

Tom, knowing his master's dislike of advice, and fearing that Dick had taken the surest method to shut them out, now chimed in, and said, "Massa, ef I bin you, I no would tek dem in none 't all."

"What do you mean, sir?" exclaimed Mr. Cleveland; "you surely must be taking leave of your senses. Dick, you'll have to give that boy of yours a thrashing. I'll not stand his insolence much longer. Don't stand there, grinning at me, sir."

"No, sir," snickered Tom, skulking behind Dick, who was his

father.

"Let the man come up here, Dick," said Mr. Cleveland.

When the traveller made his appearance, Mr. Cleveland was startled at his wan and wo-begone appearance. "Sit down, my man," said he.

"I thank you, sir," replied the stranger, "but I must be back as soon as possible to my family. Can you grant us a night's lodging, sir?"

"Certainly, sir," replied Mr. Cleveland; "have you any means of getting your family hither? I am told you have six little ones."

"They must walk, sir," replied the stranger, "for our only horse has been killed by a falling tree; but I have not a word to say. It might have been my wife or one of my little ones, and, poor as I am, I can spare none of them."

Mr. Cleveland, whose feelings were at this time in an usually softened state, got up, and walked rapidly to the book-case to conceal his emotion, dashed away a tear, and muttered to himself, as was his wont, "'Tis confoundedly affecting, that's a fact." Then turning to the stranger, who was in the act of leaving the room, he said, "If you will wait a few moments I will have my carriage got; your wife and little ones must not walk on such a night as this."

"God bless you, sir!" said the stranger, in a trembling voice; "but I am too uneasy to stay a moment longer."

"Well, go on," said Mr. Cleveland, "and the carriage shall come after you, and I will go in it myself." The stranger brushed

his hand across his eyes, and left the room without speaking a word; while Dick and Tom exchanged glances of surprise at their master's uncommon fit of philanthropy; Tom feeling fully assured that the "poor buckrahs," as he termed them, owed their good fortune to his seasonable interference.

The carriage was soon in readiness, and Mr. Cleveland rode in it to the spot. He found the family all gathered around the dead horse, and lamenting over it; while the father, having just arrived, was expatiating upon his kind reception by Mr. Cleveland. It took them some little time to stow themselves away in the carriage, and Mr. Cleveland actually carried two sturdy children on his knees. Yes, there he was, riding through the dreadful storm, in danger every moment from the trees which were falling all around him, with an infant in its mother's arms squalling with all its might, and a heavy boy on each knee, and squeezed almost to death into the bargain—for there were nine in the carriage—and yet feeling so happy! ay, far happier than he had felt for many a long day. Truly, charity brings its own reward.

When they arrived at Mr. Cleveland's house, instead of being stowed away in an out-building, as the poor man had modestly requested, they were comfortably provided for beneath his own roof. That night, as he laid his head upon his pillow, he could not help feeling surprised at his sudden accession of happiness. "Well, I will go on," he soliloquized; "I will pursue the path I have this night taken, and if I always feel as I do now, I am a new man, and will never again talk about blowing my brains out." He

slept that night the sleep of peace, and rose in the morning with a light heart and buoyant spirits.

His first care was to take the father of the family aside, and gather from him the story of his misfortunes. It was a long and mournful tale, and Mr. Cleveland was obliged, more than once, to pretend a sudden call out of the room, that he might hide his emotion. And the tale was by no means told in vain. True to his new resolutions, Mr. Cleveland thankfully accepted the work which Providence had given him to do, and the family of emigrants, to this day, mention the name of Cleveland with tears of gratitude and love, and, when they implore God's mercy for themselves, never forget to invoke, for their kind benefactor, Heaven's choicest blessings. Nor is that the only family whose hearts glow at the mention of Mr. Cleveland's name. Far and wide his name is known, and honoured, and beloved.

And Mr. Cleveland has found out the real secret of happiness. It is true that he and Tom still have their squabbles, for Tom is really a provoking fellow, and Mr. Cleveland is, and always will be, an eccentric, impulsive man, but his heart, which, when we first introduced him to our readers, was far from being right with God, or with his fellow-men, is now the dwelling-place of love and kindness, and the experience of every day contributes to strengthen the new principles he has imbibed, and to confirm him in the right.

Reader! art thou sad or solitary? I can offer thee a certain cure for all thy woes. Contemplate the life of Him who spake as

never man spake. Follow him through all those years of toil and suffering. See him wherever called by the sorrows of his human brethren, and witness his deeds of mercy and his offices of love, and then—"go thou and do likewise."

REBECCA

HER words were few, without pretence
To tricks of courtly eloquence,
But full of pure and simple thought,
And with a guileless feeling fraught,
And said in accents which conferred
Poetic charm on household word.

She needed not to speak, to be
The best loved of the company—
She did her hands together press
With such a child-like gracefulness;
And such a sweet tranquillity
Upon her silent lips did lie,
And such unsullied purity
In the blue heaven of her eye.

She moved among us like to one
Who had not lived on earth alone;
But felt a dim, mysterious sense
Of a more stately residence,
And seemed to have a consciousness
Of an anterior happiness—
To hear, at times, the echoes sent
From some unearthly instrument

With half-remembered voices blent—
And yet to hold the friendships dear,
And prize the blessings of our sphere—
In sweet perplexity to know
Which of the two was dreamy show,
The dark green earth, the deep blue skies,
The love which shone in mortal eyes,
Or those faint recollections, telling
Of a more bright and tranquil dwelling.

We could not weep upon the day
When her pure spirit passed away;
We thought we read the mystery
Which in her life there seemed to be—
That she was not our own, but lent
To us little while, and sent
An angel child, what others preach
Of heavenly purity, to teach,
In ways more eloquent than speech—
And chiefly by that raptured eye
Which seemed to look beyond the sky,
And that abstraction, listening
To hear the choir of seraphs sing.

We thought that death did seem to her
Of long-lost joy the harbinger—
Like an old household servant, come
To take the willing scholar home;
The school-house, it was very dear,

But then the holidays were near;
And why should she be lingering here?
Softly the servant bore the child
Who at her parting turned and smiled,
And looked back to us, till the night
For ever hid her from our sight.

LIFE A TREADMILL

WHO says that life is a treadmill?

You, merchant, when, after a weary day of measuring cotton-cloth or numbering flower barrels, bowing to customers or taking account of stock, you stumble homeward, thinking to yourself that the moon is a tolerable substitute for gas light, to prevent people from running against the posts—and then, by chance, recall the time when, a school-boy, you read about "chaste Dian" in your Latin books, and discovered a striking resemblance to moonbeams in certain blue eyes that beamed upon you from the opposite side of the school-room.

Ah! those were the days when brick side-walks were as elastic as India rubber beneath your feet; shop windows were an exhibition of transparencies to amuse children and young people, and the world in prospect was one long pleasure excursion. Then you drank the bright effervescence in your glass of soda-water, and now you must swallow the cold, flat settlings, or not get your money's worth. Long ago you found out that the moon is the origin of moonshine, that blue eyes are not quite as fascinating under gray hair and behind spectacles, and that "money answereth all things."

You say so, clerk or bank-teller, when you look up from your books at the new-fallen snow glistening in the morning light, and feel something like the prancing of horses' hoofs in the soles of

your boots, and hear the jingling of sleigh bells in your mind's ear, long after the sound of them has passed from your veritable auriculars.

You say so, teacher, while going through the daily drill of your A B C regiments, your multiplication table platoons, and your chirographical battalions.

You say so, factory girl, passing backward and forward from the noise and whirl of wheels in the mills, to the whirl and noise of wheels in your dreams.

You say so, milliner's apprentice, as you sit down to sew gay ribbons on gay bonnets, and stand up to try gay bonnets on gay heads.

You say so, housemaid or housekeeper, when the song of the early bird reminds you of crying children, whose faces are to be washed; when the rustling of fallen leaves in the wind makes you wonder how the new broom is going to sweep; when the aroma of roses suggests the inquiry whether the box of burnt coffee is empty; and when the rising sun, encircled by vapoury clouds, brings up the similitude of a huge fire-proof platter, and the smoke of hot potatoes.

There is a principle in human nature which rebels against repetitions. Who likes to fall asleep, thinking that to-morrow morning he must get up and do exactly the same things that he did to-day, the next day ditto, and so forth, until the chapter of earthly existence is finished!

It is very irksome for these soaring thoughts winged to

"wander through eternity," to come down and work out the terms of a tedious apprenticeship to the senses. And yet, what were thoughts unlocalized and unembodied? Mere comets or vague nebulosities in the firmament, without a form, and without a home.

All things have their orbit, and are held in it by the power of two great opposing forces.

Outward circumstances form the centripetal force, which keeps us in ours. Let the eccentric will fly off at ever so wide a tangent for a time, back it must come to a regular diurnal path, or wander away into the "blackness of darkness." And if these daily duties and cares come to us robed in the shining livery of Law, should we not accept them as bearers of a sublime mission?

"What?" you say, "anything sublime in yardstick tactics or ledger columns? Anything sublime in washing dishes or trimming bonnets? The idea is simply ridiculous!"

No, not ridiculous; only a simple idea, and great in its simplicity. For the manner of performing even menial duties, gives you the gauge and dimensions of the doer's inward strength. The power of the soul asserts itself, not so much in shaping favourable circumstances to desired ends, as in resisting the pressure of crushing circumstances, and triumphing over them.

Manufactures, trades, and all the subordinate arts and occupations that keep the car of civilization in motion, may be to you machines moving with a monotonous and unmeaning buzz, or they may be like Ezekiel's vision of wheels involved in wheels,

that were lifted up from the earth by the power of the living creature that was in them.

Grumbling man or woman, life *is* a treadmill to you, because you look doggedly down and see nothing but the dull steps you take. If you would cease grumbling, and look up, your life would be transformed into a Jacob's ladder, and every step onward would be a step upward too. And even if it were a treadmill, to which you and other mortals were condemned for past offences, a kindly sympathy for your fellow-prisoners could carpet the way with velvet, and you might move on smilingly together, as through the mazes of an easy dance.

It is of no use to preach the old sermon of contentment with one condition, whatever it may be, a sermon framed for lands where aristocracies are fixtures, in this generation and on this continent. Discontent is a necessity of republicanism, until the millennium comes.

Yet it is not sensible to complain of the present, until we have gleaned its harvests and drained its sap, and it has become capital for us to draw upon in the future. Most of the dissatisfied grumblers of our day are like children from whom the prospect of a Christmas pie, intended for the climax of a supper, takes away all relish for the more solid and wholesome introductory exercises of bread and butter.

What is it we would have our life? Not princely pop and equipments, nor to "marry the prince's own," which used to form the denouement of every fairy tale, will suffice us now; for every

ingenious Yankee school-boy or girl has learned to dissect the puppet show of royalty, and knows that its personages move in a routine the most hampered and helpless of all.

The honour of being four years in stepping from one door of the "White House" to the other, ceases to be the meed of a dignified ambition when it results from a skilful shuffling of political cards, rather than from strength and steadiness of head and an upright gait.

If we ask for freedom from care, and leisure to enjoy life—until we have learned, through the discipline of labour and care, how to appreciate and use leisure—we might as well petition from government a grant of prairie land for Egyptian mummies to run races upon.

If one might get himself appointed to the general overseership of the solar system, still, what would his occupation be but a regular pacing to and fro from the sun to the outermost limits of Le Verrier's calculations, and perhaps a little farther? A succession of rather longish strides he would have to take, to be sure; now burning his soles in the fires of Mercury; now hitting his corns against some of the pebbly Asteroids, and now slipping upon the icy rim of Neptune. Still, if he made drudgery of his work by keeping his soul out of it, he would only have his treadmill life over again, on a large scale.

The monotony of our three-score years and ten is wearisome to us; what can we think then of the poor planets, doomed to the same diurnal spinning, the same annual path, for six

thousand years, to our certain knowledge? And, if telescopes tell us the truth, the universe is an ever-widening series of similar monotonies.

Yet space is ample enough to give all systems variety of place. While each planet moves steadily along on the edge of its plane, the whole solar equipage is going forward to open a new track on the vast highway of the heavens.

We too, moving in our several spheres with honest endeavours and aspirations, are, by the stability of our motions, lifting and being lifted, with the whole compact human brotherhood, into a higher elevation, a brighter revelation of the Infinite, the Universe of Wisdom and Love.

And in this view, though our efforts be humble and our toil hard, life can never be a treadmill.

ARTHUR LELAND

ARTHUR LELAND was a young lawyer of some twenty-seven years of age. His office stood a stone's throw from the court-house, in a thriving town in the West. Arthur had taken a full course in a Northern college, both in the collegiate and law department, and with some honour. During his course he had managed to read an amazing amount of English literature, and no man was readier or had a keener taste in such things than he. He had a pleasing personal appearance, a fluent and persuasive manner, an unblemished character. Every morning he came to his office from one of the most pleasant little cottage homes in the world; and if you had opened the little front gate, and gone up through the shrubbery to the house, you would have seen a Mrs. Leland, somewhere in-doors, and she as intelligent and pleasant a lady as you ever saw. You would have seen, moreover, tumbling about the grass, or up to the eyes in some mischief, as noble-looking a little fellow of some three years old as you could well have wished for your own son.

This all looks well enough, but there is something wrong. Not in the house. No; it is as pleasant a cottage as you could wish—plenty of garden, peas and honeysuckles climbing up everywhere, green grass, white paint, Venetian blinds, comfortable furniture.

Not in Willie, the little scamp. No; rosy, healthy, good head, intelligent eyes, a fine specimen he was of an only

son. Full of mischief, of course, he was. Overflowing with uproar and questions and mischief. Mustachios of egg or buttermilk or molasses after each meal, as a matter of course. Cut fingers, bumped forehead, torn clothes, all day long. Yet a more affectionate, easily-managed child never was.

The mischief was not in Lucy, the Mrs. Leland. I assure you it was not. Leland knew, to his heart's core, that a lovelier, more prudent, sensible, intelligent wife it was impossible to exist. Thrifty, loving, lady-like, right and true throughout.

Where was this mischief? Look at Leland. He is in perpetual motion. Reading, writing, walking the streets, he is always fast, in dead earnest. Somewhat *too* fast. There is a certain slowness about your strong man. You never associate the idea of mental depth and power with your quick-stepping man. You cannot conceive of a Roman emperor or a Daniel Webster as a slight, swift man. The bearing of a man's body is the outward emblem of the bearing of his soul. Leland is rather slight, rather swift. He meets you in his rapid walk. He stops, grasps your hand, asks cordially after your health. There is an open, warm feeling in the man. No hypocrisy whatever. Yet he talks too fast. He don't give you half a chance to answer one of his rapid questions, before he is asking another totally different. He is not at ease. He keeps you from being at ease. You feel it specially in his house. He is too cordial, too full of effort to make your visit pleasant to you. You like him, yet you don't feel altogether at home with him. You are glad when he leaves you to his more composed

wife. You never knew or heard of his saying or doing anything wrong or even unbecoming. You look upon him as a peculiar sort of man—well, somehow—but! He is at the bar defending that woman, who sits by him, dressed in mourning—some chancery case. Or it is a criminal case, and it is the widow's only son that Leland is defending. If you had been in his office for the last week, you would have acknowledged that he has studied the case, has prepared himself on it as thoroughly as a man can. He is an ambitious man. He intensely desires to make for himself a fortune and a position. His address to the judge, or to the jury, as the case may be, is a good one. Yet, somehow, he does not convince. He himself is carried away by his own earnestness, but he does not carry away with him his hearers. His remarks are interesting. People listen to him from first to last closely. Yet his arguing does not, somehow, convince. His pathos does not, somehow, melt. He is the sort of man that people think of for the Legislature. No man ever thinks of him in connexion with the Supreme Bench or Senate.

Wherein lies the defect? Arthur Leland is well read, a gentleman of spotless character, of earnest application, of popular manners. Why is not this man a man of more weight, power, standing? Why, you answer, the man is just what he is. He fills just the position up to which his force of mind raises him. Did he have more talent, he would be more. No, sir. Every acquaintance he has known, he himself knows, that he is capable of being much more than he is—somehow, somehow he does not

attain to it! It is this singular impression Leland makes upon you. It is this singular, uneasy, unsatisfied feeling he himself is preyed upon by. "He might be, but he is not," say his neighbours. "I am not, yet I might be," worries him as an incessant and eternal truth.

It broke upon him like a revelation.

He was at work one fine morning in his garden, in a square in which young watermelon plants of a choice kind were just springing. Willie was there with him, just emerged fresh for fun from the waters of sleep. Very anxious to be as near as possible to his father, who was always his only playmate, Willie had strayed from the walk in which his father had seated him, and stood beside his father. With a quick, passionate motion, Leland seized his child, and placed him violently back in the walk, with a harsh threat. The child whimpered for a while, and soon forgetting himself, came to his father again over the tender plants. This time Leland seized him still more violently, seated him roughly in the walk, and, with harsh threats, struck him upon his plump red cheek. Willie burst into tears, and wept in passion. His father was in a miserable, uneasy frame of mind. He ceased his work, bared his brow to the delicious morning air. He leaned upon his hoe, and gazed upon his child. He felt there was something wrong. He always knew, and acknowledged, that he was of a rash, irritable disposition. He now remembered that ever since his child's birth he had been exceedingly impatient with it. He remembered how harshly he had spoken to it, how rudely he had tossed it on his knee when it awoke him with its crying at night. He remembered

that the little one had been daily with him for now three years, and that not a day had passed in which he had not spoken loudly, fiercely to the child.

Yes, he remembered the heavy blows he had given it in bursts of passion, blows deeply regretted the instant after, yet repeated on the first temptation. He thought of it all; that his boy was but a little child, and that he had spoken to it, and expected from it, as if it were grown. All his passionate, cruel words and blows rushed upon his memory; his rough replies to childish questions; his unmanly anger at childish offences. He thought, too, how the little boy had still followed him, because its father was all on earth to him; how the little thing had said, he "was sorry," and had offered a kiss even after some bitter word or blow altogether undeserved. Leland remembered, too, as the morning air blew aside his hair, how often he had shown the same miserable, nervous irritability to his dog, his horse, his servants; even the branch of the tree that struck him as he walked; yea, even to his own wife. He remembered how the same black, unhappy feelings had clouded his brow, had burst from his lips at every little domestic annoyance that had happened. He could not but remember how it had only made matters worse—had made himself and his family wretched for the time. He felt how undignified, how unmanly all this was. He pictured himself before his own eyes as a peevish, uneasy, irritable, unhappy man—so weak-minded!

He glanced at the house; he knew his wife was in it, engaged

in her morning duties; gentle, lady-like, loving him so dearly. He glanced at his sobbing child, and saw how healthful and intelligent he was. He glanced over his garden, and orchard, and lawn, and saw how pleasant was his home. He thought of his circle of friends, his position in business, his own education and health. He saw how much he had to make him happy; and all jarred and marred, and cursed by his miserable fits of irritation; the fever, the plague increasing daily; becoming his nature, breathing the pestilent atmosphere of hell over himself and all connected with him.

As he thus thought, his little boy again forgot himself, and strayed with heedless feet toward his father. Leland dropped his hoe, reached toward his child. The little fellow threw up his hands, and writhed his body as if expecting a blow.

"Willie," said the father, in a low, gentle voice. Willie looked up with half fright, half amazement. "Willie, boy," said the father in a new tone, which had never passed his lips before, and he felt the deep, calm power of his own words. "Willie, boy, don't walk on pa's plants. Go back, and stay there till pa is done."

The child turned as by the irresistible power of the slow-spoken, gentle words, and walked back and resumed his seat, evidently not intending to transgress again.

As Leland stood with the words dying on his lips, and his hand extended, a sudden and singular idea struck him. He felt that he had just said the most impressive and eloquent thing he had ever said in his life! He felt that there was a power in his

tone and manner which he had never used before; a power which would affect a judge or a jury, as it had affected Willie. The curse cursed here too! It was that hasty, nervous disposition, which gave manner and tone to his very public speaking; which made his arguments unconvincing, his pathos unaffecting. It was just that calm, deep, serene feeling and manner, which was needed at the bar as well as with Willie. Arguing with that feeling and manner, he felt, would convince irresistibly. Pleading with that quiet, gentle spirit, he felt would melt, would affect the hearts as with the very emotion of tears.

Unless you catch the idea, there is no describing it, reader. Leland was a Christian. All that day he thought upon the whole matter. That night in the privacy of his office he knelt and repeated the whole matter before God. For his boy's sake, for his wife's sake, for his own sake, for his usefulness' sake at the bar, he implored steady aid to overcome the deadly, besetting sin. He pleaded that, indulging in that disposition, he was alienating from himself his boy and his wife; yea, that he was alienating his own better self from himself, for he was losing his own self-respect. And here his voice sank from a murmur into silence; he remembered that he was thus alienating from his bosom and his side—God!

And then he remembered that just such a daily disposition as he lacked was exactly that disposition which characterized God when God became man. The excellence of such a disposition rose serenely before him, embodied in the person of Jesus Christ; the

young lawyer fell forward on his face and wept in the agony of his desire and his prayer.

From that sweet spring morning was Arthur Leland another man; a wiser, abler, more successful man in every sense. Not all at once; steadily, undoubtedly advanced the change. The wife saw and felt, and rejoiced in it. Willie felt it, and was restrained by it every drop of his merry blood; the household felt it, as a ship does an even wind; and sailed on over smooth seas constrained by it. You saw the change in the man's very gait and bearing and conversation. Judge and jury felt it. It was the ceasing of a fever in the frame of a strong man; and Leland went about easily, naturally, the strong man he was. The old, uneasy, self-harassing feeling was forgotten, and an ease and grace of tone and manner succeeded. It was a higher development of the father, the husband, the orator, the gentleman, the Christian. Surely love is the fountain of patience and peace. Surely it is the absence of passion which makes angels to be the beings they are.

Men can become very nearly angels or devils, even before they have left the world.

THE SCARLET POPPY

ONE warm morning in June, just as the sun returned from his long but rapid journey to the distant east, and sailed majestically up through the clear blue sky, the many bright flowers of one of the prettiest little parterres in the world, who had opened their eyes—those bright flowers—to smile at the sunbeams which came to kiss away the tears night had shed over them, were very much surprised, and not a little offended to find in their very midst an individual who, though most of them knew her, one might have supposed, from their appearance, was a perfect stranger to them all.

The parterre, I have said, was small, for it was in the very heart of a great city, where land would bring almost any price; but the gentleman and lady who lived in the noble mansion which fronted it, would not, for the highest price which might have been offered them, have had those sweet flowers torn up, and a brick pile reared in the place—their only child, the dear little Carie, loved the garden so dearly, and spent so much of her time there.

Oh, it was a sweet little place, though it was in the midst of a great city where the air was full of dust and coal smoke; for the fountain which played in the garden kept the atmosphere pure and cool, and every day the gardener showered all the plants so that their leaves were green and fresh as though they were blooming far away in their native woods and dells. There

were sweet roses of every hue, from the pure Alba to the dark Damascus; and pinks, some of the most spicy odour, some almost scentless, but all so beautiful and so nicely trimmed. The changeless amaranth was there, the pale, sweet-scented heliotrope, always looking towards the sun; the pure lily; and the blue violet, which, though it had been taught to bloom far away from the mossy bed where it had first opened its meek eye to the light, had not yet forgotten its gentleness and modesty; and not far from them were the fickle hydrangea, the cardinal flower with its rich, showy petals, and the proud, vain, and ostentatious, but beautiful crimson and white peonias. The dahlias had yet put forth but very few blossoms, but they were elegant, and the swelling buds promised that ere long there would be a rich display of brilliant colours. Honeysuckles, the bright-hued and fragrant, the white jasmine, and many other climbing plants, were latticing the little arbour beside the clear fountain, half hiding their jewel-like pensile blossoms and bright red berries among the smooth green leaves which clustered so closely together as to shut out completely the hot sun from the little gay-plumaged and sweet-voiced songsters whose gilt cage hung within the bower. But I cannot speak of the flowers, there were so many of them, and they were all so beautiful and so sweet-scented.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.