

The gentleman was tall and slender, had very black hair and eyes, wore a suit of plain black, but of costly material. He was very pale, as if in ill health. His countenance wore a sad and sorrowful expression, indicative of a grief of long standing, but of a never yielding character.

As to the little girl, my pen utterly fails in an attempt to describe her. Suffice it to say she was in all things the perfection of childish beauty, making one, as he looked upon her, think that the days of angel visitation to earth had not ended, and one, as he gazed upon her innocence and beauty, almost expected to see the bright angelic wings unfold, and the little one take flight to a world more congenial than this. Taking the girl by the hand, the gentleman entered the office of the hotel and entered upon the register in a business like hand writing, the name of Lawrence Clark and daughter, leaving the place of residence and destination blank.

As soon as a room was assigned to him, he retired with his daughter whom he called Belle, and was seen no more until at the supper table. After supper, he called the landlord aside and inquired if he could recommend to him some female of kind and gentle disposition, to whose care he could safely entrust his little daughter for a few days, while they remained at the hotel. Sherill replied in the affirmative, and conducting the stranger to the public parlor he introduced him to his daughter, the beautiful and accomplished Miss Sherill a young lady of some eighteen years, who readily consented to take the charge of little Belle for such time as the father might desire. These arrangements having been satisfactorily completed, and little Belle placed in charge of her new friend, Lawrence Clark wandered away by himself until bed time.

Days flew rapidly away, and Lawrence Clark remained the same retiring and lonely stranger to all the company of visitors at the hotel as when he first came among them. He neither sought nor accepted any companionship, except that of little Belle, for whom he exhibited an idolatrous love, and whom he daily took for an hour or two from the care of her friend Miss Sherill, and wandered with her down beside the blue waters of the Lake, or took her to ride with him upon their calm bosom. No one knew even whence he came, and no one showed any desire to intrude upon his privacy or ask him questions concerning himself or his antecedents. Mr. Clark, after spending his mornings as above described with his daughter, was in the habit of leaving the hotel after dinner and wandering away by himself until supper time; and frequently remained out until nearly bed time. Some three weeks had thus passed away, when on one bright and beautiful day, after taking little Belle to ride upon the lake in the morning, Mr. Clark walked off in the direction of French Mountain, telling his daughter that he was going to climb to the mountain's top, and if at about three o'clock she would watch a certain tree on the mountain's brow, she would see him wave his handkerchief to her. Little Belle and her kind friend, Miss Sherill, at the promised hour, saw the promised signal. Some hours after, as the sun was sinking in the west, a sudden and very severe storm arose and soon swept across the country. The winds blew almost a hurricane and the rain fell in torrents. So suddenly had the storm arisen, that many wanderers from the hotel, although but a little way off, were drenched by the rain before they could reach shelter in the house. Night had also suddenly fallen upon earth, and soon after