

much disconcerted, as it might perhaps have a depressing effect on my noble brother who was to be with us but a few hours longer. What a struggle it was for us all to appear reconciled to have him go away from us on such a mission, and every time that poor Anna Strong tried to smile that night a sigh would accompany the smile, and more than once in the midst of our forced hilarity I saw her turn aside her head to hide a tear which she would quickly brush away.

Ah me! Besides Anna Strong there was another present that night who felt a peculiar pang at the thought of parting with another very dear friend. When my brother came back from the drill shed he was accompanied by William Brightman whom we all had known for many years; he had been the almost constant companion of my brother from boyhood, and he had now resolved to go with him and join the Federal army. He was a fine young man of kind disposition, very intelligent, the pride of his parents and one every way esteemed. How could he be otherwise than interesting to me. If I know my own heart he held a place in it next to my brother. I may confess it now, for the crimson avowal was often seen on my cheek in times long ago when his name was insidiously mentioned by some prying acquaintance. And how could I disbelieve him when he often and often told me that I was dearer to him than even a sister could be. I believed him, for sincerity was in his eye when he spoke, and—how I remember it!—one pleasant evening late in the autumn, while taking a walk together along the river bank, when he asked me if I would consent to be the mistress of his new house, which was to be finished in a short time, I scarcely hesitated to accept the trust, and oh, what happiness I felt in witnessing the pleasure which my consent gave him and in listening to his plans for the future.

What a task it is to appear happy when your heart is sad. How difficult to wear a smile and appear joyous when tears are ready to start and run down your cheeks. The season was the time when rejoicing was most general, when happy reunions took place, and when friends long separated came back, many

from far distances, to spend one day together, if but one day in the year, to talk of old friends, old times and old places. We had now met, but it was a preliminary to parting, to a parting perhaps forever. And oh how difficult I found it now to seem cheerful, to act as if the scene were one of gladness, to go through the dance without getting astray and confusing others; but, alas, I was not the only one on that occasion who appeared to have forgotten the proper movements and to keep the right place in the quadrille, or to get so bewildered as to be unable to keep time to what sounded to me like the most melancholy music.

We danced for some hours, then we had supper: after that there were songs and duetts, and then a general chorus; and John and William—the two who were about to leave us—told us humorous anecdotes and stories to make us laugh. What hollow laughter that was! and then at the height of our seeming hilarity, long before the dawn, we heard the storm outside, then the sound of sleigh bells, a sound that reached my heart like a knell—no knell could ever be more depressing—and I felt as it were the color steal away from my cheek when, with this, I saw Anna Strong standing, motionless as a statue, listening to the same sound with frightened look and quivering lip again, like one suddenly awakened from a pleasant dream to realize some terrible calamity.

Why was it that the jingle of the sleigh bells at that particular time caused Anna and me to look at each other with such deep meaning? I felt her hand tremble as she suddenly caught my arm. The sound of the bells on other occasions had brought pleasing excitement and there used to be such a glad rush for fur caps, and mittens, and muffs; for shawls and cloaks, and overshoes. Now, how different! no one stirred, but for a few moments there was a solemn stillness, all as if listening to the wind and to the bells like doleful voice calling on us to prepare for a long, long separation.

The bells again gave a hasty ring as if to tell those who were to leave us to get ready and hurry up. We heard the cranch of the sleigh runners on the dry snow: the door opened and in came the