

"Yes, try sister, the stones are not very far apart," said a little lad on whose brown but ruddy cheek, a dozen summer's suns had told tales of happiness.

Then Clara stepped on the glassy stone, but she drew her foot back very quickly, and dared not do it.

"Try again, Clara," said her brother.

And again and again she tried, 'till her little foot rested firmly on the damp stone, and she went boldly on. On the opposite side was a high rock, and the little girl could not reach its top, so she turned her course down the brook, after she had wistfully eyed the rock, and she said—

"Oh! how I wish I was a very little larger, that I might lead over that high bank."

I looked on those beautiful children no longer, for the little Clara's wishes had repeated the lesson—"This life is but a struggle for something yet unattained."

Time passed, and I stood on the deck of a noble steamer. Around me were clustered hundreds of both sexes, all ages, and every rank. Intent on my study of life, I silently passed from cluster to cluster. There was one group in which glowing youth and dazzling beauty made a picture of singular loveliness, and near them I paused.

"Clara, my sweet sister," said one, whose manly brow wore a slight shading of gloom. A beautiful creature turned at the sound of his voice, and the cloud passed away. But that countenance! I gazed on it, and Memory's Harp rung loud and joyously as she sung—"The buds you loved on the greensward, are before you in their full and perfect beauty."

"Clara, in the simplicity of your infant heart you toiled to be a 'leader' on the stepping-stones of a purling brook. Time sped away and the strings of the harp quivered beneath your touch, or the guitar sent forth its melodies, 'till strains which Apollo might envy entranced your admiring friends. Then, dearest, you had reached the goal for which you had toiled for weary months. Now Clara, your young heart has thirsted for the idolatry which mind awakens, 'till its tumultuous throbbings had all but destroyed its resting place. Fast as this noble boat bears you from yon crowded city, do you leave behind you the scene of your temptation. Calm, thee, sister! Come now to my home, and you shall dwell in its pure atmosphere, and shielded by those who love you, envy, jealousy, and the stings of hated criticism will not disturb your peace. There the current of your life may flow free from the taint

of worldliness, and from the darker stain of unhallowed ambition. Dost hear my reason for urging you to leave yon 'charmed circle? Dost trust in my love, sweet sister?"

"Ernest, your words fall upon my bewildered senses, and the tempest of passion is hushed even as the mad waves were stilled by His voice who now bids me look not to Earth for happiness. Brother I erred, yet now will I struggle to banish from my mind all traces of those unholy desires, which had almost embittered my life. And oh! Ernest, will you not pray that He who was tempted in all points even as we are, and yet sinned not, may grant rest to my weary soul?"

Her speaking eye as she appealed to her brother for his aid, told him more plainly than those burning words—"This life is a continued struggle."

I watched a youth as he passed through the routine of school duties. I saw him bear from 'mid a host of competitors, the medal which told that in all that assemblage of youthful intellect, none might stand before him. Did he now relax those vigorous efforts which made him what he was? No! He went forth into the world, to toil for a name which should grace the annals of his country. Severe and arduous was his application; intense the agony of "hope deferred." But he reached his mark. Ever there he rested not, for learn, that the soul of man can ill brook inaction. The senator whose wise counsel was the bulwark of the nation, the statesman whose noble soul scorned the petty arts of cunning demagogues, the orator who with mighty eloquence enchained a warring world—laboured with all the intensity of his god-like powers for his country's weal. "Man toils unceasingly."

I looked on life in the pent-up city, and there I read tales of human nature, dark as the storm cloud from which speaks the thundering voice of the *Omnipotent*; or fair as Luna's silver sheen upon the bosom of a crystal lake. I saw man calling down the vengeance of an offended God upon his guilty head, as by impious deeds, and daring wickedness he worked out his own destruction. And again was emblazoned in golden letters the story of the good man's earthly pilgrimage. I saw in that world of living beings the various characters that chequer life's page. The miser, accumulating day by day, the yellow dust which his degraded soul worshipped, and I turned with a sick heart from the loathsome wretch, and wondered much at the vile perversion of 'the Creator's image.