

above that class, and many of them of decidedly intellectual tastes and pursuits.

All this was, to me, like entering a new world. My cousin insisted on my devoting a portion of each day to my studies, and my writing. I was not expected to "go into society," on account of my deep mourning,—such conventionalities were something quite foreign to the unceremonious manners of Mayfield. Nor could I see the difference between meeting a dozen or twenty individuals in Mrs. Gleason's parlors, and seeing the same persons with a dozen or twenty more, in some other mansion. But I was well content. And besides, I had now a new project. I would publish a volume of poems, and I set resolutely to work, encouraged by Cousin Eleanor, who soon divined and highly approved my intention.

The next summer we made a flying visit at Mayfield, after which, at cousin's entreaty, I laid aside my sable robes, and wore the delicate shades of second mourning, purple, lavender, or white. I knew that this was a mere form, and yet it seemed almost sinful so soon to throw off the outward badge of my sorrow which was still fresh in my heart and mind.—At this time the little book which I had placed in the hands of a publisher was issued from the press. Neatly printed and bound, it wore quite an attractive look; although its title was simple enough,—"*Lays and Lyrics*,"—By Mellie."

Cousin Eleanor was in her element, and daily rehearsed the compliments which she managed to obtain for me from her numerous friends. I should have been in great danger of becoming vain, had not egotism been entirely at variance with my nature. As it was, I felt pleased with my success, and sent copies of the work to my friends at home with sincere joy. Their approval was what I most thought of; I only wished that mother could have seen it.

In the early winter Mrs. Gleason gave a large party in my honor, she said, as it was right and proper that I should increase the circle of my acquaintance, and she wished to present "the young poetess" to all her friends. I followed my own taste in my toilette that evening.—My dress was of snowy muslin, gossamer-like in its texture. My hair, which, with care, had become soft and silky, and was usually termed "auburn" in hue, was disposed in classic braids, and a few green-house flowers were twined therein. I was aware that I looked unusually well; and yet I felt no particular exhilaration,—indeed I was quite indifferent to the opinion of the world. I wanted to please Cousin Eleanor, because she had been kind to me. I wished that father, and the boys, and Aunt Loey could see me; I thought with a sigh of my dead mother, and then my heart yearned for the approving smile of that dear friend, of whom I now knew nothing. Mrs. Gleason tapped at my door.

"Ah! Mellie, my white rose-bud, you are all ready,—yes, that will do,—simple and artistic,—I feel very proud of you," and she kissed me kindly. I could not help sighing, for I remembered another kiss, and the words, "I feel proud of you." Ah! pride was not love, and I longed more than ever for that affection

which alone can answer the yearnings of a woman's heart.

We went down into the parlors, and in a short time the guests began to assemble. I was soon the centre of a large circle who seemed anxious to do me homage. I knew they would gather as eagerly around the next person who might win the name of a "star" among them, and feeling, as I did, my own weakness and ignorance, I could not be flattered by their attentions.

Thus passed an hour or two, when I heard a manly voice near me. I started,—for surely I had heard that voice before. The individual who had spoken was standing behind me, and I heard him say, "I must be introduced to this new poet of whom you are all talking.—I saw her book for the first time, to-day, and it quite delighted me,—so chaste in conception, so fresh and artless in style. Where is she?" A moment more, and one of my new acquaintances presented "Professor Howard" to "Miss Grant."

"Mellie Grant! is it possible!" was his first greeting, while I, who had no less cause for surprise, responded, "Indeed, Mr. Howard, I am as much pleased as surprised to meet you once more. But it seems you have acquired new honors."

"Ah! yes, I've just been dubbed Professor of Latin and Greek, at my Alma Mater. However, that's nothing compared with the laurels you have won."

I wondered did he think of his prophecy, and could he know how much the utterance of it had to do with my success. We conversed together for some time, of other scenes, and old friends. I thought he did not look quite at ease, and once or twice he turned his face from me with a half audible sigh. At length he said, hurriedly, "I must go now, Mellie,—will you not call and see my wife?—we are stopping at the Reverend." His wife! he was married, then. My heart gave one painful throb and seemed to stop. I knew that I turned pale, I grasped a chair for support, and murmured something scarcely intelligible, about my "many engagements," and then I bade him good evening as calmly as I could; and feeling the need of concealing my emotion, I rallied as quickly as possible, and did not allow myself to think, until I was alone in my chamber. Ample time had I for reflection, for weeks passed ere I left that room. I was seriously ill. Mrs. Gleason attributed it to over-excitement; I was very glad she had no suspicion of the true cause. When I was once more able to see company, I learned, incidentally, that Professor Howard had returned to his College duties. And then I made a sepulchre in my heart, and there laid away the memory of one who must, henceforth, be even as the dead, to me. If I was a mourner, it was in silence, and no one guessed my secret.

In the early spring I went back to Mayfield. My father's health was failing, and for two years I devoted myself entirely to him. At the end of that time, I was indeed an orphan. Our family all seemed to look upon me as destined for an old maid. Indeed my father had made especial provision for my always having a home at the "old place." My older brothers were both married, and settled in

the neighborhood. Joseph, who had ever been my favorite, inherited the homestead, and was soon to bring thither a young and gentle bride. I felt I must not be wholly dependent on him, and so I resumed my teaching. For two or three years I was engaged in the public schools, but this grew irksome to me. I resolved on trying something else. I seemed to have lost all ambition for literary fame, for I had no motive to stimulate me.

Tidings of Cousin Eleanor's death now reached us, and soon after I received a handsome legacy from her estate. This, with a sum of my own earning, which had been accumulating interest for several years, would enable me to carry out my design, which was to open a select family school at my old home. Brother Joseph entered into all my plans. He was to be my steward; and we soon commenced remodeling the house to suit our purpose. Various additions were made, a new front erected, and in due time the stately mansion bore but little resemblance to the original domicile. Circulars were issued, and I had no difficulty in obtaining the twenty scholars from abroad, which was all I could accommodate. I received as many more day scholars, and very soon we had a flourishing school. I employed assistant teachers, and in the new career thus opened to me, I found peace and contentment. Years passed on, until my thirty-third birthday found me still surrounded by kind and loving pupils. I had amassed considerable wealth, and what I cared more for, influence and respect, yet not the love for which I had once sighed. I had not been wholly destitute of suitors, but none of them had been successful in winning more than my esteem. One day a carriage stopped at the entrance of the long avenue leading to our door, and soon after I was called to the reception room. There I found a gentleman, a stranger as I supposed, but a second glance showed me that, despite the traces of time and care, it was no other than Walter Howard who stood before her.

"Miss Grant?" he said, inquiringly; "but, ah! you have altered so little I could not be mistaken;" and he shook hands with his old cordiality. After a few common-place remarks, he said he had come to ask if I could receive another pupil? He had a daughter, an only child, of eleven years, now left motherless,—could he entrust her to my care? Of course I consented to receive her, and he left, promising to bring her to me the next day. She came, sweet little Agnes! and I could but love her, so innocent in her heart, so winning in her ways. She remained with us a year before her father again came to Mayfield.

—And here, kind reader, I must close "the diary of an old maid," for next week I am to become the wife of my old school teacher, Walter Howard!

REDUNDANCIES IN SPEECH.—"They are united together" should be "they are united." "I shall fall down" should be "I shall fall;" "down is superfluous. You do not lift up;" "to lift up" should be "to lift;" you cannot lift a thing down.