

After this he spent a few months as a newspaper correspondent. When the war began he enlisted in an Illinois regiment (the 88th), in which he served till he was transferred to a captaincy in the 50th Coloured Infantry, which he left as Brevet Lieutenant-Colonel. At the close of the war he declined a commission as lieutenant in the regular army, and soon after enlisted as a private, with the hope, as he said, that a kindly bullet would close the scene. Soon after, he married, unhappily and disreputably, from which he was relieved by a divorce. In 1868, he was teaching a negro school in South Carolina, and soon after held a position on the editorial staff of the *Pittsburgh Commercial*. Thence he drifted to New York, where, having married again, he was reduced to the severest straits to live. His health, and particularly his sight, failed, and he was thrown upon the charity of friends. These interested themselves, and raised the means to send him to California, to retrieve his health and fortune. A recent account from Oakland tells us that he closed his fitful and varied career by suicide, on the 28th of October last.

Thus ended the unhappy story of a broken life, a shattered genius—splendid in the ruins of unavailable talent. Wherever he wrote or spoke, he was brilliant and grand. When he acted he was fated to fail—one of the many wrecks that strew the shores of life's sea, whom we mourn and love, but cannot praise.

What he might have been under other stars we cannot say. Born to poverty, a poet and a chartist, he might, perhaps, have borne fruit, though wild, in his native sphere; transplanted to the aristocratic association of his early patrons, he withered into barren acerbity and fruitless ruin. We point to such lives as warnings of danger, and mourn the loss of what might have been.

Perhaps nothing can tell his story better than this one of his poems—

a witness of his talent and his sorrow :

MY SLAIN.

This sweet child which hath climbed upon my knee,
This amber haired, four-summered little maid,
With her unconscious beauty troubleth me,
With her low prattle maketh me afraid.
Ah, darling ! when you cling and nestle so
You hurt me, though you do not see me cry,
Nor hear the weariness with which I sigh,
For the dear babe I killed so long ago.
I tremble at the touch of your caress ;
I am not worthy of your innocent faith ;
I who with whetted knives of worldliness
Did put my own child-heartedness to death,
Beside whose grave I pace forever more,
Like desolation on a shipwrecked shore.

There is no little child within me now,
To sing back to the thrushes, to leap up
When June winds kiss me, when an apple bough
Laughs into blossoms, or a butter cup
Plays with the sunshine, or a violet
Dances in the glad dew. Alas ! alas !
The meaning of the daisies in the grass
I have forgotten ; and if my cheeks are wet,
It is not with the blitheness of the child,
But with the bitter sorrow of sad years.
O, moaning life, with life irreconciled ;
O backward-looking thought, O pain, O tears,
For us there is not any silver sound
Of rhythmic wonders springing from the ground.

Woe worth the knowledge and the bookish lore
Which makes men mummies, weighs out every
grain
Of that which was miraculous before,
And sneers the heart down with the scoffing brain
Woe worth the peering, analytic days
That dry the tender juices in the breast,
And put the thunders of the Lord to test,
So that no marvel must be, and no praise,
Nor any God except Necessity.
What can ye give my poor, starved life in lieu
Of this dead cherub which I slew for ye ?
Take back your doubtful wisdom, and renew
My early foolish freshness of the dunce,
Whose simple instincts guessed the heavens at
once.

But perhaps the following lines, found among his effects after he had committed suicide, best describe him and his wild and shattered life. They certainly say what one would like to say of him, in the best way possible, terms and manner :

' *De mortuis nil nisi bonum.* ' When
For me the end has come and I am dead,
And little voluble, chattering daws of men
Peck at me curiously, let it then be said
By some one brave enough to speak the truth,
Here lies a great soul killed by cruel wrong.
Down all the balmy days of his fresh youth
To his bleak, desolate noon, with sword and song
And speech that rushed up hotly from the heart,
He wrought for liberty ; till his own wound,
(He had been stabbed) concealed with painful art
Through wasting years, mastered him and he
swooned.
And sank there where you see him lying now
With that word ' Failure ' written on his brow.
But say that he succeeded. If he missed
World's honours and world's plaudits and the
wage
Of the world's deft lackeys, still his lips were kissed
Daily by those high angels who assuage