

* * The Story Page * *

A Voice From Heaven.

I shine in the light of God,
His likeness stamps my brow,
Through the shadows of death my feet have trod;
And I reign in glory now;
No breaking heart is here,
No keen and thrilling pain,
No wasted cheek, where the frequent tear
Hath rolled and left its stain.

I have found the joy of heaven,
I am one of the angel band,
To my head a crown is given,
And a harp is in my hand;
I have learned the song they sing,
Whom Jesus hath made free,
And the glorious walls of heaven still ring
With my new-born melody.

No sin—no grief—no pain—
Safe in my happy home—
My fears all fled—my doubts all slain—
My hour of triumph come—
Oh! friends of my mortal years,
The trusted and the true,
Ye're walking still in the valley of tears,
But I wait to welcome you.

Do I forget? Oh! no;
For memory's golden chain
Shall bind my heart to the hearts below
Till they meet and touch again;
Each link is strong and bright,
And love's electric flame
Flows freely down like a rain of light
To the world from whence I came.

Do you mourn when another star
Shines out from the glittering sky?
Do you weep when the voice of war
And the rage of conflict die?
Then why should your tears roll down,
And your heart be sorely riven,
For another gem in the Saviour's crown,
And another soul in heaven!

—Sel.

The Protest of the Silent.

There was a trail, a rustle, a flutter, a creak. Something was drawing near; something closing ranks all about her; something that had come with a demand. Geraldine felt that before she opened her eyes.

"Oh!" she said as she glanced bewildered at the phalanx gathered around her. "My gowns!"
Yes, there they were; each with some faint lady-shadow filling its outlines, swaying, bending, closing in with folds, soft, rich, and bright, around the couch where Geraldine lay.

"My white silk!" she said, eyeing the soft, pale robe nearest her elbow. "I always thought it a lovely dress, but too cold for one so colorless as I. It proved so unbecoming I have never really worn it since it came home."

"That Scotch plaid," she reflected. "I was so delighted with it when I bought it, and then I fancied it was too school-girlish. I looked well in it, yet I have worn it only twice this winter."

"My black faille," she mused. "I thought I was ruined when I got the bill for that. But, it's horrid to wear. Those jet ornaments and the train makes it so heavy, and it's so stiff, and squeaks when you breathe. I never wear it when I can help it."

The silk and jet flashed ominously as Geraldine, with these comments, turned her glance to the pretty combination of pink silk and cashmere half-hidden at its elbow.

"I always liked that so," said Geraldine. "But it didn't seem so much like a new one as I hoped it would after it was made over. I really haven't needed it."

There was a jaunty stripe making itself obnoxious against the pink, a fine brown cloth in severe folds beyond that; then a black, clinging riding-habit, with much stiffened body; then some delicate gauzes of blue and silver, and white and yellow and black.

"I never really played tennis enough to want that suit," mused Geraldine. "That brown tailor-made would be worth its cost if I ever walked, I suppose. There's my dear Redfern habit. I hope the moths won't get into that. Really, I must have another canter with Paris some day. Those old evening dresses—what are they for? What did you all want?" she asked. It was the black silk which gloomed and flashed in answer.

"Dismiss us," she creaked, "and let us go!"

"Dismiss you!" said Geraldine.

"Yes, we are tired of imprisonment. Dismiss us to the service of some maiden who needs us. Dismiss us or dissolve us."

"Dissolve you?" said Geraldine.

"Yes, dissolve us. Let us become gases and residuum so we may be free. Let us be dust and ashes, buried in the ground, blown in the winds, mingled with elements, so that we may receive some new form, and at last find the end of our being!"

"What do you mean?" asked the bewildered Geraldine.

"Service, worthy service," creaked the silk. "What

else should be the end of our being. What is five dollars a yard shut everlastingly up in the wardrobe, to five cents a yard in a clean gingham apron upon an orphan child?"

"Oh!" said Geraldine.

"Don't you know the law of material things, Miss Banks?" said the tailor-made, with a gentle, measured little courtesy. "It is my nature to be true and logical, you know. When God has no more service for his material things, he quietly dissolves them, and they pass into some other form."

"Oh!" said Geraldine again.

"Yes, and we are praying for speedy dissolution. If you will not set us free, we must cry to the moth and the buffalo-bug, who will not listen in vain to our entreaty."

"Oh!" said Miss Geraldine, this time with anxiety. And now a startling break occurred in this strange interview. Through the throng of fairy evening dresses an uncouth form was elbowing its way. Two poles of stiff, but earnest demeanor, wrapped about and about in a garment of rough netting, were presently facing Miss Geraldine, and from their knees two rackets started forward, turned a lively somersault, and laid themselves in entreaty at her feet.

"Oh!" said Geraldine, "my tennis set!"

"Yes," said the twin poles. "How long will you keep us bound hand and foot, the lodging places of spiders in the stable loft? We had gifts for you. We hoped to bring you firmer muscles, and rosier cheeks, and warmer hands and feet, and a pleasant interest to knit you to your young companions. But you have put us by. We are only a temptation to covetousness to the coachman's little boys. Better take the stumbling-block out of their sight. Make us theirs, or somebody's, by right, that we may be set out in the blessed sunshine and somebody may grow by us."

"Really!" gasped Geraldine.

And then her eyes were riveted by a pair of large brown ones looking mournfully over the shoulder of the tennis net. A long brown nose, also, was thrust forward with a gentle whinny.

"Oh, Paris, you dear horse; are you there, too?" said Geraldine. "Yes, it's a long time since I have been to give you a lump of sugar. Did you come for that, now?"

Paris shook his head impatiently, and thrust one slender hoof from behind the net.

"I remember," said Geraldine, "that William said once your hoofs would soften unless you had more exercise. But father said it was his business to see to that. That was what he was hired for. Has he been neglecting you, Paris?"

"Was I born only to consume the time of a groom?" said Paris, reproachfully. "'Tis a weary, useless task for him and me, this pacing out just for exercise. See how stout and idle-looking William grows. Come, free as both from bondage. Are food and exercise enough for the soul of a true horse? I had better hopes. I hoped to give you a quicker, stronger pulse, long breaths of pure air on the hills about here. I hoped to make you acquainted with the fields and by-paths, all the beautiful country around your home. But you love your hammock and couch better than me."

"Oh, no," cried Geraldine, "only—only—"

"There's the pale minister," said Paris, "the doctor told him to try riding, he shook his head at a proposition so impossible. At least send me down there for an hour or two daily."

The suggestion gave a painful wrench to Geraldine's heart, but she had no time to consider it then. A stir among the gowns betokened other visitors.

"My phaeton," murmured Geraldine, "and my village cart."

The phaeton sulked in olive green, the village cart was aggressive in black and yellow.

"Have we not wheels," said the latter. "Come, it is four weeks since I was out of the carriage-house."

"And it is two years since you were done with me," said the aggrieved phaeton. "I would rather dissolve in dust like the deacon's one-hoss shay than bear it longer."

"Really, I think you are more comfortable than the village cart," said Geraldine, "I might like to use you again perhaps."

"But, meantime, the moths are in my cushions. Meanwhile William has promised to take his sweetheart out in me the first moonlight night."

"How dare he?" cried Geraldine, angrily.

"No wonder he forgets I have lawful ownership to see me lying so unused," said the phaeton.

But there was no more time to discuss William's blame. Suddenly the gowns, the wagons, and all the rest began to scurry away before the falling of a shower. No, it was not a shower of rain, but of small articles—shoes, high and low, gloves, picture-cards, games, fans; last of all, books. They flew out from the shelves, and landed upon the heaped floor, upon the couch, upon Geraldine's helpless hands and feet. "Oh, how good the air feels!" cried some, fluttering all their leaves, and

respiring with deep breath. One with clasped lids, laid heavily on her chest, murmured hoarsely, "Where are the thirsty souls for whom we are keeping our wells of living water?"

Thick and fast this alarming shower continued to fall till Geraldine leaped in terror from her couch.

"My unused treasures!" she cried. "My unused treasures!"

Then, behold, all was still and orderly about her. There was no trace of Paris or the village cart. The books stood in silent rows upon the shelves. The clock ticked peacefully. Only from an engraving upon the wall a thorn-crowned head looked down upon Geraldine, and seemed to whisper, "Thou oughtest, therefore, to have put my money to the exchangers, that at my coming I should have received mine own with usury."

"My unused treasures," sighed Geraldine, softly, in penitent reply.—The Congregationalist.

"Steady Now, Keep Her Straight!"

BY REV. E. A. RAND.

It was an old-fashioned vessel, under an old-fashioned skipper, leaving an old-time wharf. Four fishing boats were towing her from her wharf. The captain on the "poop deck" was giving orders. "Bear off there from the wharf!" he shouted. It was a very animated scene—the men in the boats pulling, the sailors on the deck casting off lines, the captain shouting. The vessel was moving in a slow, stately way.

"One of you boys take the tiller!" ordered the captain, and a boy was not slow to obey the order. That is a trustworthy place at the helm, for it requires strength. And what next did the captain shout? "Port a little! Steady, now, keep her straight!" A package of good sense in that order, "Steady, now, keep her straight!" An uncertain helm, a vacillating grasp, hands gripping one moment, slipping the next—what is the result? Watch the craft going down the harbor, and reaching that gateway to the sea, the Narrows. The steersman has that uncertain grip, that vacillating hold. The vessel almost jams into that point. She escapes, but threatens to run into the rock opposite. And so she wobbles, losing time, keeping those on board anxious, and if she does not crash at last on that offending reef, "Dead Man's Bones," it will be a wonder. Watch the second vessel going into the Narrows. There is a firm, steady strain upon the helm; no shaking, fluttering, wobbling, but a straight course, an even, quick, triumphant run.

A boy at the helm? That is a responsible place; but there are many boys stationed just there. They are studying at school. They are beginning life in a store. They are following a trade at a bench. But, whatever the course entered upon, if a boy likes study or a business life, or mechanical activity, or the varying work of a farm, or if he simply revels in the sweep of the sea wind and the run of the great, rushing billows, let him remember how important is the skipper's injunction, "Steady, now, keep her straight!"

The boy jumping about among the courses at school, not knowing what he wants, and never studying anything long, will not win a laurel wreath for his scholarship. The boy who wants to succeed somewhere amid the revolving, roaring wheels of the shops, somewhere amid the revolving shafts and pounding hammers, cannot afford to change his aim as often as he feels tired or fancies that his boss is cross. The world wants men who see a thing to be aimed at, a purpose to reach it, and then to follow up that intent in a patient, prolonged persistent effort. No flopping of the helm! Columbus held his in a steadfast aim west, though grumblers growled and the faint-hearted wept. He found America just by keeping on. In that way the great astronomers voyaging in the heavens, like Galileo, Kepler and Newton, reached the golden shores of a great success by holding on. What magnificent persistency men of the Republic like Washington and Lincoln showed! In the spiritual life, we have had missionaries, like Livingston abroad and the Wesleys at home, who had a single aim, who won because they could work and wait, and having waited, they could work again.

Ho, young voyagers! "Steady, now, keep her straight!" Make it your motto in the lower things; take its help in the things that are higher. Aim at the best, to follow patiently the leading of Christ. Put principle into your religion. Expect blessings on your efforts, because the vessel heads that way.

"Steady, now, keep her straight!"—Am. Messenger.

The Church Choir.

Whatever most of our churches gain in the artistic excellence of their music by substituting the modern quartette for the old-fashioned church choir they are apt to lose in certain other valuable elements of church life. It is a most wholesome thing to bring people together in common service for the church, and the choir does this in a very effective way.