

FLOWER OF SPAIN

Like a throb of the heart of midnight
I hear a guitar faintly humming,
And through the Alcazar garden
A wandering footstep coming.

A shape by the orange bower's shadow—
Whose shape? Is it mine in a dream?
For my senses are lost in the perfume
That out of the dark tangle stream.

'Mid the tinkle of Moorish waters,
And the rush of the Guadalquivir,
The rosemary breathes to the jasmine,
That trembles with joyous fear.

And their breath goes silently upward,
Far up to the white burning stars,
With a measure of sweetest, half-sorrow,
Unknown but to souls that bear scars.

Here, midway between stars and flowers,
I know not which draw me most:
Shall my years yield earthly sweetness?
Shine I shine from the sky like a ghost?

A spirit I cannot quiet
Bids me bow to the unseen god,
I dream of a lily transplanted,
To bloom in the garden of God.

Yet the footsteps come nearer and nearer:
Still moans the soft-troubled strain
Of strings in the dusk. Well I know it:
'Tis called for me "Flower of Spain."

Ah, yes, my lover he made it,
And called it by my pet name:
I hear it, and—in but a woman—
It sweeps through my heart like a flame.

The night's heart and mine flow together:
The music is beating for each,
The moon's gone, the nightingale silent:
Light and song are both in his speech.

As the murky shadows that mingle,
As star-shine and flower-scent made one,
Our spirits in gladness and anguish
Have met. Their waiting is done.

But over the leaves and the waters
What echoes the strange changing bells
Send adown from the dim arched *M-zquita*?
How mournful the cadence that swells

From the lonely roof of the convent
Where pale nuns rest! On the hill,
Far off, the hermits in vigil
Are bowed at the crucifix still.

And the brown plain slumbers around us,
O land of remembrance and grief,
If I am truly the flower,
How withered are you, the leaf!

GEO. P. LATHROP, in *Harper's*.

STONY-HEART HOUSE.

BY NED P. MAH.

I.

While I was still quite a child, my father and mother died. I was sent away from the happy home of my infancy, which I faintly remember as being situate in a smiling, undulating country full of cornfields, and woods, and pasture lands, to be placed under the charge of my uncle in his bleak house among the hills. My uncle had been in the army. He lived in a square, angular house, built of flints, cold and glittering—an erect, uncompromising house, narrow and high, and bolt upright like a soldier struck motionless in the attitude of attention. The grounds were laid out with military precision. They were surrounded with cold, glittering flint walls. They were on a dead level, without an undulation in the whole expanse. The walls were guileless of a curve, straight and clean, and cold and glittering too, from the large admixture of flint with the gravel. The lawn was trim and rectangular, with sharply-defined edges, kept newly cut by means of a sharp spade and a string stretched between little iron pins. The flower-beds were square, and trim, and angular, and the very flowers had the air of regiments. The tulips, and lilies, and jonquils stood up erect and stiff as if undergoing an unrelaxing drill. Here and there a weaker, tender plant drooped against a stick, appearing to stand at ease only on sufferance. The roses were all standard roses. The espaliers trained against the wall in the sunny side of the garden, looked strained and unnatural, as though struck still in the midst of some extension motion. The very rockworks were prim and forbidding; they glittered coldly, too, for they were composed principally of flints. There was no clustering ivy, no tendrilled creeping thing to relieve the monotony of the bare stone work. There was no curved line anywhere to relieve the weary eye. All was straight, and spick and span, and regular.

Amid the monotony of this prospect, with martial carriage, with commanding air, my uncle paced. I believe he counted the number of turns which formed his daily exercise. I can see him now, clad in a grey frock coat, tightly buttoned, with military trowsers strapped tightly over the speckled boots, with short grey hair, parted with painful precision, brushed painfully smooth. With white, trimly-cut moustache shadowing the firm, decisive mouth; with white bushy brows penthousing the keen, cold, grey eyes; with aciline nose, clear complexion, and smooth shaven cheeks. A man to inspire awe, rather than love; to be admired, but not approached; respected, but not caressed. I used to look upon him with wonder in my childish eyes and think I should not like to be such a man.

Within the house the same stern precision reigned. Everything was trim, and bright, and polished, and distressingly speckless. The fur-

niture was tasteful and costly, the pictures well chosen and well hung. The meals were punctual to a minute, the viands simple, but excellent of their kind. My uncle's own apartments were gems of neatness and forcible exponents of simple taste. His personal attendant was an old soldier, as erect and stern, and manly and martial as himself. The women servants of the house were pretty and trim, and wore an exquisite uniform of lavender and white. My uncle was a widower. In the drawing-room hung a portrait of my aunt, whom I had never known. I used to gaze with awe upon the face of the woman who had dared to love such a man. It was a face at once exquisitely beautiful and exquisitely sweet. As one gazed, one felt it was the work of no mean master of his art; one felt intensely that it was a likeness, for while one looked the picture seemed to grow into life. The eyes—how could he see to do them!—so mild, so intelligent, so wistful, so full of truth, so courageous, the little mouth at once so sweet and so firm, the wealth of golden hair, fine and shining as floss silk, arrayed in great Madonna braids upon the low white forehead—the expression at once so angelic and so human—the costume, at once so simple and so rich. One felt instinctively that this was the one woman who could have found the one romance in the life of such a man. How I wished that she had lived, that to her I might have told my little griefs and puny sorrows, that to her I might have confessed and been forgiven, and received the caresses for which I yearned.

For it was a terrible home to which to bring a child.

My uncle charged himself with my education. Each lesson had its appointed hour, nay, its appointed minute. He bought me a little pony, and I took riding lessons before breakfast in the little square paddock, where my miniature steed soon wore a circle barren with his hoofs. "Head up, shoulders well back, toes in, heel down!" the old words of command are still ringing in my ears. How stiff and sore and tired I used to grow, how I longed for a good unrestrained scamper out of sight of those cold, grey, piercing eyes.

After breakfast came the lessons in his sanctum—half library, half study; reading, writing, arithmetic and Latin. History and geography in the afternoon, which I read up privately, and learnt in conversation lessons. After these appointed subjects were dispensed with, I was at liberty to ask questions on any topic which occurred to me, and no doubt I often astonished my instructor by the quaint inquiries which emanated from my inquisitive, old-fashioned, weird, child-brain.

For how could I fail to grow weird and old-fashioned, shut up with my own thoughts in that grim, desolate house, with no companion of my own age!

Weird and old-fashioned I must have appeared too, to other eyes, for my guardian's instructions directed my costume. At six—in the winter of my sixth year—I was dressed in a little tight overcoat with tails. I think I see myself now marching down town on some prescribed errand, a tiny, wizened old man, laughed at by the village boys, gazed at with sly smiles and titters by the village girls—regarded as a curiosity by the grown people whom I met—what wonder if I grew isolate, shy, retropective?

In the evening my uncle's friends would drop in—the clergyman, the schoolmaster, the doctor, or the Major. Then the long, white clay pipes, which were never smoked on more than one occasion, but sent to the baker's to be burnt clean again, were brought out, and the huge pewter tobacco box, and the silver spirit stand, with its decanters of choicest liquors, supplied by a London merchant.

I used to sit prim and upright in a corner with my hands before me, or, mayhap, with a newspaper upon my knees to catch the chips, while I fashioned the rudder or other portion of a model ship, and listen to an argument on theology, or science, or medicine, or anecdotes and recollections, more or less good or wicked, or innocent, or worldly-wise, till Hannah came and seized on me, and bore me off to bed.

Thus I drank in deep draughts of precocious learning, and ate of the forbidden fruit of knowledge of good and evil, for no one took notice of the quiet, still child in his shadowy corner, and thus, unwholesomely early, I grew wise with that knowledge whose increase is more than of any other the increase of sorrow also—the knowledge of human nature.

II.

By Heaven's mercy I was not to be left altogether to the training my present surroundings would have entailed. The time was at hand when a young, lovely, affectionate woman was to illumine with her presence the apartments of the dull, prim house. At present the only females I saw were Hannah, the housemaid, who brushed my hair extremely hard, and kissed me now and then—extremely hard, too; the cook, who scolded vehemently whenever I ventured in the neighborhood of her domain, and Mrs. Rivers, the housekeeper, who had once had the audacity to smack me, extremely hard, also.

It was a bright day for me when my cousin Polly, having finished her school-life, came to live at Stony-Heart. To me she was to be more than cousin, she was to prove to me at once mother, sister, companion, friend, the consoler of my grief, the partner of my romps, the adviser of my dilemmas, the soother of my fears, the present help of all my childish needs. She

was in living! And blood the realization of the portrait in the drawing-room, only younger, fresher, more beautiful still.

I was the only creature in that comfortable, trim household, which must at first have seemed to her a prison, with which her nature could fully sympathize. On me she lavished the wealth of affection which found no other object on which to bestow its love and its caresses, and my little heart which had grown chill and desolate in the unnatural atmosphere of that drear home, gushed forth to her with a long repressed flood of affection and adoration.

She took such complete possession of my whole soul, that it was not without deep grief I learnt—as she soon bestowed on me her complete confidence—that I was not without a rival in her affection. She used to call for mysteriously-directed letters at the village post-office. She used to kiss these letters rapturously, and devoured their contents with eagerness. They were the letters of her lover.

It was the habit of my uncle to attend church with us once only on Sunday—in the morning. In the afternoons Polly and I used to go alone. One memorable Sunday afternoon we started at the usual hour, but we did not go to church. We met a handsome young gentleman instead, out on the downs, over the crest of the hill, however, and well out of sight of home. This handsome young gentleman placed his downy upper lip just under Polly's nose and kissed her, which made me very jealous. Then he caught me up in his arms and tickled the tip of my nose with his downy upper lip, and made pretence to kiss me too. He wounded me deeply by the flippant way in which he spoke of me as "the kid." Then he sat me down again, and both he and Polly became oblivious of my existence till we reached the little station at Chalk Vale, whence he left by the four o'clock train, and I and Polly ran all the way home again to be in time to prevent suspicion of our not having been at church. We were late, nevertheless, and Polly, who was not used to telling fibs, had to make excuses about having visited some poor woman who was sick; and colored as she made them, and was looked at with stern suspicion out of my uncle's keen, grey eyes.

Soon after this a confession must have been made, either by Polly herself or by the handsome young gentleman, in a letter, or by both, for one day he came boldly up to Stony-Heart and was closeted with my uncle for a whole hour, during which time Polly, nervous and trembling, fluttered up and down the cold, trim, glittering gravel walks in the garden, holding my hand tight with a nervous, feverish grasp all the time. Then the handsome young gentleman came out radiant, and Polly flew into his arms, and I became of no consequence whatever immediately.

After some months, however, another rival appeared upon the scene, who threatened to put both the nose of the handsome young gentleman as well as mine out of joint. Listen, and I will tell you how it all happened:

My uncle's enemy, the doctor, had a hydro-pathic establishment among the hills, commanding, as his advertisements stated, "a most delightful prospect." About this time, a certain Captain Hartwright, who had been wounded in the Crimea, came to him for treatment. He used to take long walks upon the downs, as exercise was to form part of the curative treatment prescribed, and in these walks it appears he frequently encountered Polly, who used to take long rambles by herself when I was ineligible as a companion, being closely imprisoned at my tasks in my uncle's study. After a time the doctor introduced his patient, who became a frequent visitor at Stony-Heart. To introduce him to Polly, remarked the Captain, seemed almost a work of supererogation; they had met so often he regarded her quite as an old friend already. To which Polly said yes, something would have seemed wanting from the daily routine if she missed meeting him, and the Captain's black eyes flashed with gratified vanity.

He was a strange, weird-looking man, this Captain Hartwright, with his large, glittering black eyes set in his pale face—eyes with a strange power of fascination—eyes which seemed to look through and through the person on whom he gazed—with his carelessly-arranged straight brown hair, which he had suffered to grow far beyond regulation length, possibly because he did not choose to submit himself to the tender mercies of the village barber—with the meagre, dark moustache shadowing the melancholy mouth. He had been so near death's door that he had the air of a man who had died and had been resurrected.

That his presence exercised a strange power of attraction and that his influence had a sort of fascination for Polly, against which she secretly struggled and rebelled in vain, I, with the intuitive perception of childhood, soon discovered. I learned to hate this man, I knew not wherefore, for his bearing to me was of the kindest. I shunned his glance as though he possessed the evil eye. I feared the fascination of his manner, as though there were something baneful in its influence.

One day I had been with Polly to visit a cottage where there was sickness, and we had taken a little basket of delicacies for the patients. At a point where two paths—one leading upwards in the direction of Chalk Vale, the other downwards to Stony-Heart—met, Polly declared herself tired and decreed a rest. The rest was a long one, and I grew impatient.

"I know why you are waiting," I said tauntingly; "you are waiting to see Captain Hartwright."

Polly blushed.

"How funny it would be, Polly," said I, "if Captain Hartwright was to ask you to marry him, and you all the time Willie's sweetheart."

"If that was to happen, Kid," said Polly ingenuously, but with a still deeper blush, "I'm afraid Willie would have a very poor chance."

"If that was to happen," said I, "taking refuge in a babyish way of speaking—it was a way I had when I felt shy of saying anything—"I know what would happen to Willie. His little heart 'ood break and all the 'ittle blood would gush out."

Polly was strangely silent, and she looked away right across the village steeple, and the graveyard, and the cottages, and the cultivated fields, away over Bickley woods into the far distance. I don't think she saw either steeple, graveyard, cottages, fields, or woods, very clearly, for her eyes were blinded with tears. Suddenly she caught me up and kissed me passionately, and threw me over her shoulder pick-a-back, and scampered with me down the hill. My little hands were wet with the tears that stood from her eyes as she ran, as they clasped her neck among her curls. Then she sat me down, but never let go my hand till we reached Stony-Heart. As we turned in at the great gates we saw a black speck in the distance descending the path from Chalk Vale.

Next day the Captain called. My uncle was out. I heard him asking Hannah where I was, as he folded up his cloak and put it on the hall table. She thought I had gone out, too. The sound of their voices came up to me as I put my head through the balusters on the top landing at the door of the attic, which was my play-room, and looked down the wall. Then I saw him walk across the floor cloth and go into the drawing-room where Polly was. Curious to know why he had wanted me, I crept downstairs and, seeing a piece of tissue paper sticking out of his cloak pocket, cautiously examined its contents, and saw there a beautiful ivory humming top. Presently the Captain came out in a hurried, angry way, with a stranger glitter in his eyes than ever. He flung his cloak around him in the passage and let himself out at the front door, top and all, without so much as looking at, or speaking to me.

He left the village next day and we never heard of him again, till we saw his name in the papers, killed at the head of his men in the Indian mutiny.

Polly went about the house for a week in a strangely subdued, silent manner. When Willie came down she never rested till she had sold out her confession on his breast and been forgiven. After that he never ignored my presence, or treated me as a thing of no consequence any more.

It is a strange thing to think of, isn't it, what an influence our slightest words or actions may have on our fellow-creatures! You see what one little sentence from a small, old-fashioned, eight-year-old child once did. It secured the happiness of two lives.

HUMOROUS.

A QUERY.—May a police-van be accepted as a legal conveyance?

AFTER man came woman, and she has been after him ever since.

How the question was answered at a fashionable seaside resort—"Do you enjoy good health?" "Yes; who doesn't?"

"YOUNG man," said the master, "I always eat the cheese-rind." And the new apprentice replied, "Just so; I am leaving it for you."

"MISERY may like company," says a colored philosopher; "but I'd rather hab de rheumatiz in one leg den ter hab it in bot."

WHEN a man is about to be told a secret, he shuts the door; when it is a woman, she opens the door to be sure no one is listening outside.

"So your daughter has married a rich husband?" "Well," slowly replied the father, "I believe she has married a rich man; but I understand he is a very poor husband."

"MR. GRIPES, I understand you said I sold you a barrel of cider that had water in it?" "No, no," was the reply, "I only said that you sold me a barrel of water with a little cider in it."

ON THE MOUNTAINS.—(from a private reporter.)—Arabella, whose soul is wrapped in science: "Charles, isn't this gnosis?" Charles, who is deeply interested in Arabella: "Nonsense! It's delicious!"

THE MEANEST MAN ON RECORD sent through a post-office presided over by a woman a postcard on which was written, "Dear Jack,—Here are the details of that scandal." And then the rest was in Greek.

THE COMMON SENSE OF IT.—"What a change," exclaims a novelist, "one little woman can make in a man's life!" Exactly, says a victim; and what a heap of "change" she requires while doing it!

ALLUDING to the fact that three steamers have been fatally weakened by additions to their length, the *Christian Register* says: "Many fine sermons have been ruined the same way."

A SATIRICAL inn-keeper in Wytheville, Va., advertises his house as "the only second class hotel in the world."

"I'll teach you to lie, and steal, and smoke, and use profane language," said an irate (Galveston) parent. "Never mind, father, I know all them branches already," was the reply.

A PRINTER'S EXCUSE.—A writer called at his printer's and accused the compositor of not having punctuated his poem, when the type earnestly replied, "I'm not a pointer—I'm a setter."

AN English statesman paid a visit to Ireland; but it rained continuously during the whole of his stay there. Afterwards, whenever he met an acquaintance who had just returned from the Emerald Isle, he would inquire whether "that shower" was over yet.

TEACHER: "Who was the first man?" "Heed scholar: "Washington; he was the first in war, first in peace." Teacher: "No, no; Adam was the first man." Heed scholar: "Oh, if you're talking of foreigners, I a posse he was!"