

LE ROI EST MORT.

BY L. G. MOBERLY.

ONE day I crowned you King in my heart,
 You seemed so true and so strong,
 That from other men I set you apart,
 For "my King could do no wrong."
 But now you are standing a King uncrowned,
 You do not care if you fling
 Your crown aside, and to-day I have found
 That the King has slain the King.

My faith was so strong in humanity,
 Because I believed in you;
 But now you have fallen, it seems to me,
 That the human race falls too.
 I wish you had broken my heart that day!
 The pain would have hurt me less
 Than to see you walk on a lower way—
 It is deepest bitterness.

Ah! King, my King, will you rise once more
 To your kingly place of old?
 For surely the crown that I thought you wore,
 Was not *all* of tarnished gold?
 Give me back my faith in the pure and true,
 Be again as straight and strong
 As I thought you once—let me say of you,
 That "My King can do no wrong."

"IF LOVING HEARTS WERE NEVER LONELY—";

OR,

MADGE HARCOURT'S DESOLATION.

CHAPTER III.

THE LONG LONG THOUGHTS OF YOUTH.

WHEN Jack at last settled himself to his fishing, Madge lay back against a bank, with her hands behind her head, and remained silently gazing into the blue sky.

She was trying to think what it was she wanted and why she was different from other girls.

They were sad, longing thoughts, and an intensely wistful expression rested on her young face, as she lay still, listening to the drowsy hum of the bees, and to the song of a skylark just above her.

Half unconsciously she repeated to herself the verse in Shelley's beautiful poem, to that sweetest of songsters, which runs:—

"We look before and after,
 And pine for what is not;
 Our sincerest laughter
 With some pain is fraught,
 Our sweetest songs are those
 Which tell of saddest thought."

Oh, how happy, how madly happy, this little creature seemed; was it possible God loved it more than He did her? After all, it would not be so very strange, for this little bird never grieved its Creator as she did. Madge's idea of God was not a very clear one, but at least she felt that her habits and thoughts were not of a kind likely to be pleasing to Him. To her He was chiefly the great Creator, and she did not, in her heart of hearts, think her personal interests were of much consequence to Him. She had read so much, and her literature had been of such a strangely varied and mixed description, and mostly of such a speculative nature, that it was small wonder her mind was in a state of chaos. She had dabbled, more or less, in various "ologies," to say nothing of metaphysics and philosophy, and having

never known the luxury of a companion with whom to talk things over, she had deduced her own views without any helpful influence whatever.

Jack was quite right when he said she thought too much. He was right too when he said she was "odd." She had already thought more in her eighteen years than many girls think in a lifetime; and she had succeeded in weaving into her mind a collection of fantastical, tangled ideas, which certainly did not tend to secure her peace of mind. As she lay there, on the green sward, with peace breathing all around her, she could not, even for that brief space, let her mind partake of the general restfulness.

Her thoughts soon soared beyond the gay songster, and, as she lay, gazing upwards into space, strange deep questionings stole into her soul.

That feeling, which Carlyle has described as "a murmur of eternity and immensity, of death and life," crept over her, and the words themselves passed through her mind.

"Eternity and immensity!" Oh, what did it all mean? What was man, in the midst of the vast universe? What was she lying there? Surely a mere atom, of no value perhaps; just one of millions of similar phenomena, as was even the very world she was on. How strange to think that above her and around were myriads of other worlds, whirling for ever and ever in their appointed courses.

How strange to think that beside her were myriads of little living creatures, each with an individual existence. The thought of it all—the thought of everything that ever was, seemed to crush her with its awful magnitude.

The sense of her own insignificance and littleness oppressed her. Up there, above her, in that smiling blue vault, of a distance so appalling that man could

not even express it, were there not other worlds, other suns, other wonders utterly beyond man's comprehension? And then the duration of it all!

The distance to which "time past" stretched! The aons that might lie before!

In remote ages gone by, had not the earth existed and sped in the same unwearying course; and in remote ages to come, would it not still speed on? And what then of the little creatures called human beings, who strutted and fretted for a paltry three-score years and ten on its surface?

They came and they went—did any man know more? Was there any more to know? Was it possible that the Creator of so stupendous a marvel as the universe could have time or inclination to think for a moment of anything so utterly minute as herself? Why should she presume to be any better than the countless myriads of tiny, life-holding phenomena, that abounded on every side?

They came and they went—did she do any more? The thought of all the mystery and complexity of everything seemed to make her mind gasp, though she was but going over old ground. She felt sometimes as if she could not bear the strain of her own thoughts, and yet she could not rest; not even now, with Jack and the sunshine and no one to bother her.

"What of this wondrous story, of the only Son of the Creator coming to be a man to die on this little planet," she mused. "Why should He come to this particular globe; were there no other creatures elsewhere? Why should God place human beings on one planet more than another, when there were possibly countless myriads of precisely the same nature. And, if others were inhabited, did this Son of God die for them too?"