

in Virginia. John, he said, had been desperately wounded, and as for William Brightman, he had, alas, received more than one mortal wound and died on the field. He said that he was with the poor fellow in his dying moments and received his last message, which was, that if he was ever able, he should call on me and place in my hands his (William's) watch, as a token of his fond remembrance. As for John, he said, he had been taken to the hospital in an unconscious state, and for many months his recovery was considered doubtful. He said he knew that if John ever got able to travel he would return home, if but to die among his friends.

She told us much more of what the old soldier had to communicate. He had called on her first as she was in the way of his line of travel. He had heard of her from William; and as soon as he had rested and gained a little more strength, he intended to visit us also and deliver me William's watch; the token which he had received for me from his dying comrade. Anna also stated, that the poor man's sad story had so overcome her that she had to weep in his presence. Her friends, full of sympathy for the old soldier, would not let him depart then, but insisted on his remaining with them for a time until he got better able to travel. She said he had been with them now for nearly a week, and that she would have written sooner were it not that she had been so overcome by the appearance of this visitor and his mournful tale, as to leave her for some days unable to write a word.

It must have been three weeks from the time I read that terrible letter, before I was able to leave my bed. My mother afterwards told me that I had read the letter through to the end; that then it had dropped from my hand, and that I looked or rather stared at her with an expression of face so woeful as to cause her to imagine the worst concerning my mental condition. Up to the time of my reading that letter, I felt almost positive that both John and William were lost to us forever. But yet, when the blow came, when the dreadful assurance was certain, when the last lingering hope was banished, I must have given way, for I know nothing of what followed. An affection of

the brain deprived me of all sense, leaving me utterly prostrate, and for more than two weeks I remained in this condition—happily without the recurrence, even in a dream, of the calamitous news—and at the end of that period, when my reason was gradually restored, the fearful truth came back to afflict me in another manner, giving my dear mother but little hope that I should ever leave my room alive. The necessities of our condition required, however, that I should make an effort, even while I was in a weak state, to assist my mother in our household duties. There was work to be done, and I must help to do it; we could not afford to pry for the assistance we needed. As it was, the payment of doctors' bills and for such aid as we were obliged to get during my sickness, left our resources very low.

Another month passed and I was almost restored again. I knew not how it was, but believing that the future had no happiness in store for me, I managed to cultivate a feeling of resignation, and went through my daily routine of duties with a placid mind, though bereft of an aspiration for anything beyond that which now seemed allotted to me. I felt quite submissive, a burden of care and sorrow had been laid on me—were there not thousands in the same condition—I cared but little for future consequences. I did not desire to live; I did not wish to die. I simply knew that others were, to a certain extent, depending on me, and out of my love and regard for them I went mechanically as it were, and did what I could at home, ready and willing to lie down and rest when my time came.

About the annual return of Christmas I always felt a recurrence of increased sadness. Whenever Christmas came it always brought back a revival of that parting scene from my brother, and my dearest friend, never to be forgotten. Since that time, Christmas has ever been to us a season for silent sorrow instead of rejoicing. At such periods, instead of being together we generally separated and sat somewhere alone, as if each was desirous of hiding from all others the painful and depressing thoughts which were then sure to be uppermost in our minds.

It was Christmas Eve again. The day