

of childish hymns, broken by recollections of childish duties, such as "sweeping up the hearth before mother came home," or "hotting the water to wash baby-brother with,"—sudden gushes of childish tenderness for her pet kitten,—sudden gleams of childish mirth over some remembered "fun with Nelly;" all strangely mingled up with scraps of prayer, and broken words of awe and worship, too deep to be called childish. At times all this was merged in the overwhelming sensations of pain and bodily anguish. But for these she had no words; only wails and sobs and moans, and shakings of the little weak head, and restless shiftings to and fro, most pitiful to see and hear.

And so the long night wore out, and the next morning, and the brief winter afternoon. Then came a change. The quick rambling talk sank into inarticulate murmurs, the white eyelids drooped languidly over the bright, restless eyes, and a heavy sleep stole over her. I had sat up with her on the preceding night, keeping up to a warm and ruddy glow the fire that was so much needed by the chilled and suffering child, and striving,—alas! striving vainly,—to keep up that more precious fire of human life within her little frame. Slowly and surely that fire had died down despite our best efforts, and it was quite without hope of recovering her that I took up my second night's watch at her side. But I had seen enough to be sure that in this one case at least the pagan saying might be used in a Christian sense, "Whom the gods love die young." For little Annie was very poor and very beautiful,—sure to be exposed to much temptation if she lived,—very open, with that self-sacrificing, loving nature of hers, to much suffering; and now she was so pure and holy, and soon to be as happy as those Holy Innocents whose annual day of commemoration, by a singular coincidence, had just come round.

A brief watch was mine that night. For just as midnight sounded Annie started from the heavy sleep in which she had lain motionless for some seven or eight hours,—started suddenly,—as a person does who is roused by hearing some unexpected voice speaking close to them.

Did she indeed hear an actual call?

Who shall say? I shall always cling to the belief that she did. But all that I know is, that after the first start of her sudden waking, she slightly raised her little head from the pillow, and looked up full and clear, with no trace of delirium, no trace of coma, in those beautiful blue eyes; and so, gazing upwards with a strange, wistful intensity, she smiled a smile of unearthly joy and ecstasy, such as I never saw on any other face. It lasted but a few moments; then the eyelids dropped again, and the little head sank back heavily, and the light forever passed out of the half-closed eyes. But that strangely radiant smile lingered about the lips all night, making me say, whenever I looked at the sweet, still figure, "Surely the angels,—aye, and another more awful and more holy Presence,—have been very near us to-night in this little, bare-walled, humble sick-ward."

I have seen many deaths before and since,—most of them calm, many of them happy,—but never one like this. And I never watch now by night keeping up the fire, but my thoughts stray back lovingly and tenderly to my little Annie Anderson, and to the bleak December night when I sat by her side in the ruddy fire-glow, and seemed for a moment to look, with her, straight up into the open gates of Heaven.—*Selected.*

If I were called to point out the most alarming sins to-day—those which are most deceitful in their influence, and most soul-destroying in their ultimate effects—I would not mention drunkenness with all its fearful havoc, nor gambling with its crazed victims, nor harlotry with its hellish orgies; but the love of money on the part of men, and the love of display on the part of women. While open vice sends its thousands, these fashionable and favored indulgences send their ten thousands to perdition. They sear the conscience, incrust the soul with an impenetrable shell of worldliness, debauch the affections from every high and heavenly object, and make man or woman the worshipper of self. While doing all this, the poor victim is allowed by public opinion to think himself or herself a Christian; while the drunkard, the gambler, or the prostitute, is not deceived by such a thought for a moment.—*Dr. Crosby.*