

FADED FLOWERS.

It was on a pleasant day, not long since, that, looking over an old box which I had not seen in some time, I discovered a cluster of faded flowers. I was about examining them more closely, when I heard a gentle rap at the door. On opening it, whom should I see but dear aunt Patience. Aunt Patience is a widow lady, about sixty years of age. She lives with a maiden daughter, in a little vine-covered cottage a few miles from us, and, though she enjoys good health, she but seldom visits us, on account of the distance. She keeps her eyes open, and by this means has become quite a wise woman. There is not one among her acquaintances for whom she has not a kind word; and her pleasant yet dignified face always seems to bring peace with it. The little children leave their sports and run to meet her, crying, "Aunt Patience is coming;" and the quiet housekeepers smile a satisfied smile, as they place the rocking chair for her by the open window. Always "patient and loving," we think she is rightly named.

"I am glad you have come," said I, taking her bonnet and shawl, and putting them carefully away. Aunt Patience smiled; then, taking her knitting, commenced her work.

"Always at work, aunt," said I.

"Don't you know that

'Satan finds some mischief still,
For idle hands to do?'

Ah! you must never be idle, Alice. But what have you there?"

"'Tis a withered nosegay, aunt, Fannie gave it to me—and you know Fannie is dead now," said I softly, as the memory of that dear friend came over me.

"Yes, yes, Alice, I know it full well. She was a faded flower on earth, but her pure spirit blooms in Heaven."

"Yes, aunt, and when she gave them to me she said, 'Think of me often, Alice.' I do very often, aunt. This little bud she wore in her hair the last evening I saw her,—I begged it to put with other flowers that she had just given me. They retain their fragrance, if not their color," said I, as I carefully laid them away.

"Alice, dear, on that never-to-be-forgotten day on which Fannie died, did not the Angel of Death beg that sweet bud to place with others which he had that day gathered? The jewel,—her soul,—was taken away, and the casket only remained. Go with your flowers, Alice,—the life of

them has departed,—the faded flowers only remain. The sweet fragrance which they even yet give is like the good deeds, kind words, and pleasant smiles which Fannie herself has given, which, though past, are not forgotten. That sweet bud is a fit emblem of herself, thus early transplanted to the bright land where is no parting, and where the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of 'their Father.' "

"Ah," said I, "you have found the true secret of happiness. You hope to meet Fannie in that better land. Is it not so, dear aunt?"

"Yes, Alice. 'The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want,' even in the hour of death." After a few moments' pause, aunt resumed:

"Do you know of any other faded flowers?"

"I think not, aunt."

"There are very many faded flowers, Alice,—more than is sometimes supposed. How many flowers that once grew in human gardens are faded. They lie cold, and alone,—they sleep the dreamless sleep,—their bright eyes are closed, never to be opened here,—their merry, laughing voices, that once sounded in joyous glee through their happy homes, are hushed, and the little dimpled hands lie folded over bosoms that are never to know more of pain or care. How many of these are in the old church-yard,—how many faded in years gone by, and whose graves are forgotten,—how many lie in the depths of the sea,—how many whose last resting places will never be known till the earth and sea shall give up their dead. Another faded flower, Alice, is the aged, respected mother, cared for and loved with the pure affections of a child's heart. Mother toiled against poverty to give her children an education and to clothe them, and shall they refuse to provide for her wants, and to increase her comfort by every means in their power? What if the infirmities of age rest heavily upon her? They will never leave her,—never turn her upon the cold charities of the world alone. 'Honor thy father and thy mother,'—how often in childhood have they heard it from her venerable lips, and now they obey the command cheerfully. May you, Alice, ever remember to love and cherish this faded flower."

Aunt Patience continued:—"The wife, worn down with care and watchfulness, is another faded flower. Care has taken the rose-tint from her cheek and the once bright and beaming expression

from her eye. The hilarity of youth is gone,—the step is slow. Husbands need not remind them of it,—it is enough that it is so. We know, ourselves, that 'we do fade as a leaf.' Let them lessen our cares; let them take more of the responsibility of the family upon themselves, and they will not be so ready to perceive the inroads of decay; or, perceiving, and knowing the cause, will wisely refrain from the reminders in which some husbands are inclined, either unwittingly or heartlessly, to indulge. Many a wife toils on alone, as far as the interest or care taken by the husband is concerned, and then, added to all their trouble, is the taunt, 'How you have faded.' By-the-by, Alice, I find that husbands are very apt to see 'faded flowers' in the persons of their weary wives on their return from an evening's pastime amid the young and gay. I saw Mrs. S., and Mrs. H., last Sabbath, at church. They wore a look of care, and I thought, Alice, perhaps their husbands had seen 'faded flowers' on their return from the last party."

Aunt's conversation was suddenly broken off by a rap at the door, which proved to be a call upon her to visit the sick, and thus ended her descriptions of 'faded flowers.' Very sorry was I that we were interrupted,—for I was being educated, and wished to learn more. Dear me, I did not know before that there were such flowers as aunt has last described,—my idea was that husbands and wives faded together.

ALICE.

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CONVERSATIONAL POWERS.

The late William Hazlitt, a man gifted with great powers of observation and expression, was of opinion that actors and authors were not fitted, generally speaking, to shine in conversation. "Authors ought to be read and not heard;" and as to actors they could not speak tragedies in the drawing-room, and their wit was likely to be comedy and farce at second-hand.—The biography of men of letters, in a great measure, confirms this opinion.—Some of the greatest names in English and French literature, men who have filled books with an eloquence and truth that defy oblivion, were mere mutes before their fellow-men. They had golden ingots, which, in the privacy of home, they could convert into coin bearing an impress that would insure universal currency; but they could not, on the spur of the moment, produce the farthings current in the market-place. Descartes, the famous mathe-