

it to be a few lines from Stanford, inclosing a ring entirely plain, with the exception of the small letter G on the upper side. The note was as follows :

"MY DEAR MARY :—Your father has forbidden our further correspondence; but both duty and inclination prompt me to seek a knowledge of your pleasure before conceding to his wishes. I love the Masonic institution, and cannot, consistently with my feelings, and with my sense of duty and honor, renounce it. The ring I send you, is ornamented with the letter G—a Masonic emblem. If you are willing to become the wife of a Freemason, wear the ring for my sake, and I will protect you while I live; if not, its return will signify to me that we must henceforth be strangers.
GEORGE."

On the following morning, Mary sought the presence of her father. She was very pale and moved wearily, for sleep had not visited her eyelids.

"Well, child," said Mr. Carleton, "I trust a few hours' reflection has served to show you your duty, and that I have this morning an obedient daughter."

For reply, she held up her hand, upon which was the ring sent her by Stanford.

"What means that ring?" said the old man, starting violently.

"It means," said Mary, in a voice low, but firm, "that I have decided to wear it while I live, for the sake of Mr. Stanford, who will soon be my husband."

Mr. Carleton was dumb with astonishment. He had not believed his daughter would dare to meet his displeasure.

Mistaking the cause of his silence, Mary advanced to his side, and, twining her arms about his neck, she kissed his cheek.

"Oh, father!" she said, "do not, I pray you, turn me from you. You will be lonely without me, and I cannot endure your frowns. Let me beg of you to consider that Washington, Warren, Lafayette, and the pious Wesley, were Masons. Surely that cannot be evil which was honored and loved by so much nobleness and talent."

Mr. Carleton pushed his daughter from him angrily "Go, foolish child," he exclaimed, "never dare to speak to me again. You have no longer a father or a home."

Poor Mary was too wretched to reply; but the yearning look she cast upon her father, as she glided, ghost-like, from the room, haunted him for years afterwards.

In a week she and Stanford were married. With a view to remove his wife from all unpleasant associations, George emigrated to a western city, and became a partner in a mercantile house. His business prospered, and a beautiful house was purchased on the shore of one of those crystal lakes so common in the West.

But the tocsin of war was sounded, and leaving his business in the care of his partner, Stanford collected a company of volunteers, and bidding adieu to his wife and infant son, hastened to Washington.

It was now Mary Stanford's lot, with thousands of others, to watch eagerly for news from the army, to pray for a husband's safety, and wait for his return.

But there came a day when news of a terrible battle went flashing over the country, and a telegram reached the city of L—, stating that Company A had suffered severely, and that Captain Stanford was

among the missing. Gently as possible was Mary made to understand that she was a widow: but the shock was too great for her delicate frame, and for weeks she raved in the delirium of fever.

When at length she slowly recovered, it was to find that her husband's partner had proved recreant to his trust. He had taxed the credit of the firm to the utmost, by borrowing, and with the money thus obtained left the country.

"Mary's elegant house was hers no longer. She now wrote to her father, acquainting him with her bereavement and misfortunes, and begged him to receive her again into the home of her childhood. Long and anxiously she waited for a reply, but none came. Then she determined to go to her father, and in person entreat him to receive and care for her child, while she would support herself by teaching.

With what means she had remaining—only about three hundred dollars—she set out upon her journey to New York. She proceeded in safety until she arrived at the city of B—. Here a brief but severe illness of her child detained her for a few days; and when she was ready to proceed, she found that she had been robbed of all the money she possessed. Deprived of the means of going to her father, she determined to make one more effort to communicate with him. She addressed a letter to a gentleman who had been a friend of her father's, asking him to inform her whether he still lived, and if he was in the city. In a few days came a reply to the effect that Mr. Carleton had left New York some two months previously, and that he was not expected at home for a year, as business would detain him in a distant city.

It now seemed to Mary Stanford that heaven had indeed deserted her, and she could only caress her child, and pray that God would interpose in her behalf. There remained but one course for her to pursue. She sought for and obtained an humble room in an obscure street; and disposing of her jewelry and some few articles of wearing apparel, discharged her indebtedness to the landlord of the W— hotel; and, taking the little Willie by the hand, set out for her new lodgings with a sad heart. She hoped to be able to earn a subsistence by her needle, until her father should return to his home, when she firmly believed he would relieve her sufferings, if not for her own, for his grand-child's sake.

Bravely she entered upon her new life. Morning, noon and night found her bending over her sewing or embroidery. Her form drooped, her cheek grew paler and paler, her eyes were dim with weeping. No answers came to the many letters she addressed to her father, and hope at length died out of her heart. To add to her misery, the winter was at hand, and she was forced to the conviction, that the avails of her needle were not sufficient to supply her wants. But there was no alternative, and, with a sort of dumb despair, she still toiled on.

The morning of January 1st, 1864, found Mrs. Stanford placing in the grate the last of her little store of fuel. The cold was intense, and she covered closer the form of the sleeping Willie, now nearly three years of age. She knelt by his side, and imprinted kiss after kiss upon his pallid brow. Never before had she felt as now the meaning of the sunken cheeks and bloodless lips. She shuddered