

Poetry.

IDLENESS.

BY WM. R. SHAW.

The listless idler with his impassioned life And veriest pride, failing to accomplish The purposes of manhood's true earnestness, Sees not the false stand; a blind, vicious Infatuation interposes all fair progress To obstruct in his daily path; estimates Not by good reasoning, that indifference to time Is a crime against God's wise providence; Heeds not the improvement, each fleeting moment Would confer on him, and, by reflex on society, When rightly employed, as legitimate aid. Whilst onward struggling in the social scale— Unmindful, through lethargic ease of effects, Worth and trust, (inevitable resultants Of smallest efforts and unceasing labor,) He, imperceptibly, but as surely robs time, Of its beauty, fullness, power as he enforces A corrupt teaching, which degrades the mind, Stupifies each prerogative of humanity; Perpetrates a grave, irremedial evil On the society his province is to improve, And which, at length, enforces his punishment. At this stage, hoary old time with records Of past misdeeds and power of conviction Starts across the idler's path—his false career To impugn—whilst memory, with wizard hand Break the reveries. Apathetic minds dream away Useful, substantial and precious existence. Loss of time is a dire calamity; no subsequent Effort can e'er replace it in humanity's sphere. A fire or flood may sweep o'er our fair cities With destroying hand, but phoenix like, they rise, Renewed with double force to cheer and beautify. Not so with time misspent, the mausoleum Hides it forever, and feeble regrets, or sterile Efforts at reclamation be vain, useless; nay, worse— For past idleness in lethargic minds, a leverage Becomes, and weight added to crime, crushing man In the graduated scale—still lower in intelligence Until the idler sinks deeper from the brilliant paths. Gifts, and cycles of time, unknown, dishonored, And regretted by all provident intelligencies. —L. E. Journal.

Tales and Sketches.

ALICE LINLY.

CHAPTER I.

"And so Alice is going to town, Mrs. Linly?" asked Susan Brown, the village seamstress, and a bit of a gossip withal. "For this winter," was the quiet reply of her lady-like employer. "Well I never!" pursued Susan, letting her work drop on her lap, and lifting her hands; "I did hear you were about to send the girl away, but I said to myself, I won't believe any such nonsense till I hear it from herself." "And why nonsense, Susan?" "Why, to think of letting such a young, pretty, hair-brained thing, go among all kinds of wickedness, away from her mother and her comfortable home, to learn new manners, and catch a husband, who will never let her come back to her simple home! Why you might just as well bid good-bye to her at once." "Not so, Susan. Alice is simply going to her aunt, to stay six months in the closer retirement than she lives in even here; and to pursue her studies under more competent instructor than Brookfield affords. I hope to see my darling Alice return, if changed at all, for the better," and a tear glistened in the mother's eye. The Linlys were a small and happy family; Dr. Linly was a physician—the only one the village boasted. They lived unostentatiously and quietly; but the gentle tastes of the mother and Alice threw around and over the house the sunshine of simple refinement. At the time our story commences, Alice Linly was seventeen, radiant with health, beauty, and happiness—drinking joy from every source, gathering honey from every flower. Her character was an uncommon one, combining many fine characteristics with others which made her person, especially her mother, watch over her with deep solicitude. Sensitive, tender, and true; generous, elevated, and courageous in her actions; enthusiastic, visionary, and excitable in the highest degree—Mrs. Linly saw how hard the pathway of life would be, unless Alice attained that self-control in which she was wanting, and which it had been the mother's aim from her infancy to instill in her daughter. And Alice strove hard for it. Hitherto she had experienced none but childish troubles, and with those she had sometimes failed. Time alone would prove whether in deeper joy or sorrow the presence of the child would govern her life. After Alice came a sister, their brother

There was another brother, some years older than our heroine, but he was in town, engaged in business in a mercantile house of celebrity. How the girl had wept, when two years ago Harry had gone away; but now her eyes danced joyously in anticipation of a meeting, and she flung her arms in a transport of joy around little Willie's neck. "Why I dare say you thought I was Harry!" exclaimed the boy, so soon as he could extricate himself from her embrace—peering roguishly up into her large, brown eyes, shaded by lashes tipped with gold—maybe from the sunlight ever streaming from the orbs beneath, as Harry had once said half-playfully, half-earnestly.

CHAPTER II.

And Alice went away from her childhood's home to the great, bustling city. Sad were the tears she shed as she nestled in her parent's arms, and sad for a time her meditations after the parting. But the girl was a genuine honey-gatherer, and so the light shone again beneath the bright curtains of her eyes, and the color overspread again her oval cheek. The fair girl wrote often, and spoke gratefully and affectionately of her aunt, and rapturous of her brother, who she affirmed, was "Just the same dear, merry fellow, and his bright, black curls the same as ever!" It seemed so natural to run her fingers through the shining masses. "And dear mother," she wrote, "I could not help thinking what a splendid soldier Harry would make! It is such a pity he is not one!" Then the girl went on to speak of her studies in the same glad strain; but every few moments she reverted again to "dear, handsome Harry!"

Alice had been nearly six months in town, and was about returning home, when she went, one evening, to the elegant mansion of Mrs. Horton, an intimate and fashionable friend of her aunt, who had seen the secluded beauty, and felt a romantic disposition to "patronize" her. The guests, with the exception of some half-dozen, were complete strangers to our heroine. Her hostess introduced and introduced, and doubtless intended to make her acquainted with all, but probably became weary, or forgot some in the endless throng; and so it was that the noblest star stewart the giddy circle remained unacquainted and unaware of her presence. For Alice shrank from observation, and remained in one of the reception rooms; and the complete realization of her "ideal" scarcely stirred from the corner, in the other room, where were gathered around him an admiring crowd, listening to his strange eloquence.

"Harry, do tell me who is that gentleman by the piano?" "What the one with light hair?" "Oh, no! the one with those splendid eyes! Can't you see how their light seems to fall on those around him? Now he is talking to Madame L—"

"I do not know him, sister mine, but as you seem 'clean daff' on the subject, I will make inquiries." Mrs. Horton, turning to that lady, and disregarding with a mischievous smile the effort Alice made to keep him back—

"Mrs. Horton, Ally wants to know who that superb cavalier in black is? There, in the other room!" "What! enchanted, my beauty?" playfully tapping her under the chin with her fan; "that is Mr. Conrad Etherington! Wait a moment, and I will introduce him. It was a strange oversight in me not to make the 'lion' acquainted with the 'lioness'" moving away as she spoke.

"Oh, pray don't!" cried the alarmed girl, springing after and detaining her.

"Why not?—but I will!" said Mrs. Horton, laughing at the girl's consternation.

"Oh, do not, do not!" pleaded Alice. "You forget that I am but a simple child, unlearned in the ways of the city; indeed I would much rather not! The knowledge of its being a premeditated thing would make me awkward and confused. Pray, do not; I am very happy as I am, and you would not destroy all my enjoyment?" said Alice, looking up with coaxing eyes.

"You are a silly girl, but if you would really rather not be introduced, I suppose I must indulge you, though it is such a sacrifice that I hardly know how to forgive you," looking admiringly down at the deep bloom on the agitated girl's face.

"Thank you, thank you!" exclaimed Alice, sinking back upon a couch with a look of relief.

Yet that evening, whenever Alice Linly was free for a moment from the admiring throng, did she follow with her intense and earnest gaze the noble form of Conrad Etherington, who, with his quiet, almost saintly brow, his full dark eyes and firm, proud mouth, fixed himself, although unconsciously, not the less securely, in the fond memory of the young and ardent girl. She had not expected to meet him, and silently retreating to a corner of the room, listened for a long time with clasped hands, and parted, breathless lips, to the stream of melody which issued from the noble form, and carried away the heart of Alice Linly.

"Gone, gone," murmured the girl to herself, as she paced her apartment that night, and pressed with her small, slender fingers, her cold bosom, which gave back no throbbing from its marble depths—"Gone from me, and in a few short hours I shall be far away!

My heart! Oh! why did I leave my happy home!"

CHAPTER III.

"Alice! Alice!" shouted Willie Linly, as a carriage stopped at the door—"Alice?" flinging wide open the hall door, and receiving the first caress of the impatient girl as she sprang eagerly from the steps. And then her mother came and folded her as of old in a close embrace—gazing the while with tears upon the glowing face of her darling. And soon Alice was seated as of old, the centre of an admiring home circle, describing, with all force of her warm and vivid imagination, the life of the last six months.

"Ally," said her father, as she wound her arms around his neck before retiring, "thank Heaven that thou has come back unchanged! and pray that thou mayest long continue to be our love, and hope, and comfort—as now thou art."

"Not changed did he say? And I must pray to continue so!" murmured the girl to herself when alone. "Oh, but I am not the same! I will pray Heaven that I may go back to where I stood in thought and feeling but a few short weeks ago!"

Alice Linly was changed! Not outwardly as yet, but within, the deep, well-springing waters of affection lay roused and troubled. Mrs. Linly saw this quickly. Her temperament so resembled her daughter's that a breath could not ruffle the calm of her darling's life, and she not perceive it. If Alice was wakeful at night, though her apartment was far from her mother's, so surely would sleep fly the parent's eyes, and a few quick steps bring her to her daughter's pillow to calm her unquiet girl.

Alice Linly was young yet—but a child—scarce eighteen. We have said she was enthusiastic and visionary. She was so—and she deemed it in her ignorance a light thing to throw out the full tide of her affection on a romantic object. It accorded precisely with her unformed and unreal ideal. She knew not till the deed was done how hard it is to draw back the heart to a home it no longer values. Foolish girl! was it for an affection which received no encouragement she had cast away happiness? At first she vaguely dreamed her love might find return. What thought Conrad knew her not! She hoped he might. In all her favorite romances "things had turned out right" at last, and Alice firmly believed they were pictures of real life (she would not think otherwise), and fancied that she at last should win her gerdon; still months rolled away, and she found health, and strength, and spirits failing before her heart's struggles. Then despair suddenly seized her. She ceased to hope, and pined swiftly and surely! A few months longer and Alice Linly had been at rest, had not a sad event occurred which roused and bore away her thoughts, called up the self-control so long forgotten, and changed her whole character for life. That event was the sudden decease of Dr. Linly by an apoplectic fit.

Susan Brown had her usual complement of gossip on the subject; but now no one heeded her, for the "doctor" was universally loved and respected. He was borne away to his last earthly abode before Mrs. Linly recovered from the despairing stupor into which she had fallen on his death.

When at last she comprehended that he whom she loved she should here see no more, her grief was heart-rending! For a while she shed no tear. "Oh, if she could only weep!" exclaimed one of the sympathizing women, who had taken upon themselves the charge of affairs. At that moment Alice appeared.

"Don't let Alice go near her," whispered Susan Brown, to a kind hearted creature, who with tears in her eyes, beckoned her to approach, "it will only make her feel worse to see the shadow of a daughter, who will go next."

The mother heard the cruel words; she glanced at the pale face of her child.

"Alice, Alice! you must not die!" and she stretched out her yearning arms.

"I shall not, mother! weep here on this bosom."

And like a child the enfeebled woman poured out her griefs upon the light form of her darling. It did her good! Another day and though still sorrowing deeply, she was calm and composed, and able to attend to all necessary arrangements for their removal to town, whither, by the advice of her son and best friends, it was thought best to go. There was but little left for the family. But Harry had obtained a small share in the business with which he was concerned; and Alice expressed her intention of turning her education to account as daily governess—a situation offering most opportunely, which could be easily procured—and then Dora and Willie would have the benefit of good schooling, and so be enabled, in their turn, to cast in their mites.

When once a change was determined upon, Mrs. Linly was not long in carrying it into operation; and in a short time the family was quietly settled in the city. Then came a time of bitter trial for Alice! How she struggled for mastery over self! Grief for her father's loss had at once incited her to action for others, and paralyzed her selfish feelings—while amid the bustle of the funeral and removal, leisure had not been afforded her to indulge them; but now the usual routine had resumed their sway in their orderly household, rendered more serious than ever by their late affliction. The weight of years sat on the

mother's brow, and hushed were the merry voices of the children—at least in the family circle. And Alice, as every morning rose, and she returned to her arduous duties among a set of riotous, thoughtless children, felt her very soul sink at the prospect of the long, long day, few minutes of which were hers, either bodily or mentally.

When her pupils gathered round her, then she must cast thought behind her, and attend to their studies; and when school labors were over there were others at home, numerous and varied, which fully occupied hand and head, if not heart.

To soothe the aching brow of the drooping widow was hers; to force the tongue to speak which would fain have been silent, and strive, by gentle, cheerful conversation and reading, to draw her mother's mind away from her loss; to answer the thousand questions of Willie, whose active mind was ever on the alert; to attend to the studies of her sister Dora; to strive to make home the pleasantest place for her merry brother Harry; and to forget the worm at the root of her own happiness—were duties neither few nor light for Alice, and brave was the spirit required to perform them. Where gained she the spirit and the strength? Morning and evening beheld the sweet face of her so lately a happy, thoughtless child, bowed in prayer before her Maker, her small fair hands clasped upon that "best of books," which was her daily study. She had learned that—

If ever life shall seem To thee a toilsome way, And goodness cease to beam Upon its clouded day; If, like the wearied dove, O'er shoreless ocean driven, Raise thou thine eye above— There's rest for thee in Heaven!

(To be Continued.)

DIVORCED.

"He'll go to the dogs now." "Of course he will." "By all means. Only see how he acted when his wife lived with him; now that she has left him, and all restraint is removed, he'll go the rest of the downward way in no time."

"I'll give him just one year to be buried." "Pshaw! half that time will finish him."

"Well; I pity him, too, but I pity her more. He brought the misery on both."

Such was the talk of half a dozen villagers, who stood in front of one of the principal stores one summer evening, while the subject of their remarks went staggering along on the opposite side of the street.

It was evident that he was trying to walk straight, but such endeavors always seem to make a drunken man walk more crooked. However, it proved he was not lost to all sense of shame, and still retained an aversion to be ridiculed and despised.

But Harry Rogers had carried on at a fearful rate for a year or two past. He had just one vice—drink; but that was enough. He had married a worthy farmer's daughter, Nettie Ray, only a few years previous, but such had been his conduct during more than a year past that she been obliged to cut him loose to pursue his profligate course alone, and a legal separation had just been effected.

Harry's home was on a little farm a mile from town. He owned it; but then it was heavily mortgaged, and in another year foreclosure was certain. It was not likely his creditors would spare him when he made no effort to meet his obligations.

A week passed after that summer evening on which all had agreed in predicting his early ruin—two weeks—a month or two. What a mystery is here? To the utter bewilderment of the prophesying sages, Harry discontinued visiting taverns and was rarely seen in the village. When he did come to the store he speedily transacted his business and then went home—sober.

Wonders never cease when they get a start. He was reported as actually working on his farm. Had but one man told this in the village he would have been marked as lacking veracity, but as several ladies vouched for the fact it was worthy of credence.

The little farm began to look healthier as summer wore on. The fences straightened up, the weeds disappeared, the animals looked fatter and happier, the little cottage looked neater.

Time wore on, the great change was more remarkable every day. Harry's charitable creditors called in and told him he might have his own time to pay off the mortgage.

The fall came and the farm yielded an abundance of crops, and Harry found himself beginning to drift along with the tide of prosperity.

Nettie had begun to live her young girlhood over again, as it were, under her father's roof; but somehow it was not like happy, joyous girlhood of memory. It was sober and quiet now, and she fell in a train of musing; and every now and then there passed through her mind a certain thought—she was neither maid nor wife.

She avoided the vicinity of her late home, nor had she once seen Harry since the separation; but she heard of him occasionally—knew that he was a changed man. Still this knowledge brought her but a melancholy satisfaction. The reform had come too late. There was a wide gulf between them now.

been detained in the village until it was nearly dark, and she determined to hazard the near-est road home. It would be fully dark when she would pass his house, and the chances were that he would not see her. She wouldn't have him see her for the world.

When she arrived, opposite the house, she perceived a light in the sitting-room. Her first impulse was to hurry by; but some powerful impulse prompted her to stop. She did so, and stood timidly at the other side of the road, gazing longingly at the house that had once been her home—first of happiness then of misery. By and by she felt an irresistible yearning to look at the interior once more. He was evidently within, and there was no danger that he would see her. She walked hurriedly across the road, opened the gate, and softly stepped into the lawn. Another minute she was at the window looking in. What singular behavior. But she could not help it.

The little room was as neat as when she herself had watched over it. A cheerful fire was burning in the grate, although the night was not cold. A lighted lamp stood on the table. He held in his hand a book from his scanty library.

She recognized it at once; but he was not reading now. Was he asleep, or was he buried in a sad reverie? Nettie thought the latter was the case, and her heart was touched.

"I wish I had borne with him," she said. But a moment later her heart was touched when she saw a tear roll down his cheek and drop upon the book. The lonely man was not asleep—he was crying.

She could not help it. All the woman in her was aroused, and she was at the door in a moment. No ceremony—she burst into the sitting-room, and was at his side.

"Oh, Harry!"

"Her voice quivered with emotion. "Why, Nettie!" he exclaimed trying to hide his tears—men are ashamed of tears—"is it you?"

"Yes Harry, I was passing, I looked in, I saw you were sitting here so lonely, and couldn't help coming in. I thought of the time we were happy here, and—"

Then her womanly tears could be suppressed no longer. There was no use trying to hide them. Besides, her voice broke down and she could say no more at that moment.

He rose and took both her hand from her face, and held them in his own. "I thought that you had blotted me out from your memory."

"No, no, Harry," she sobbed. "I could not do that. I could not help leaving you, but I left you loving you more than ever. Oh, I have been unhappy."

"Nettie, you have heard that I—"

"Yes. I have heard that you have changed, that you do not drink any more, that again you are manly and industrious as you used to be, but how lonely you must be here," and the tears gushed forth anew as her heart felt what her lips spoke.

"Yes, I am lonely, Nettie—more than you may think; but I have deserved this punishment for the way I have acted. I had no discouragement—I had nothing to make me do so. It was only a passion for drink that seemed impossible for me to overcome worse than ever. Only a day or two after you left me I was in town drunk and I heard some village people—they thought I could not hear them across the road—passing all sorts of remarks upon me, saying I was a doomed man, and that destruction was near. Although intoxicated, it startled me, and for the first time I felt the full force of my separation, and realized that destruction stared me in the face. I had a bottle of whisky in my pocket at the same time; when out of town I smashed it and washed my face in the dam by the roadside, and resolved never to touch liquor again! It was hard to keep my resolve for the first week or two, but I stood it, and soon my taste for drink disappeared. I care nothing for it now and would not touch it if it ran in streams. Now, Nettie, if you love me as ever, and God knows I love you the same—let us get married over again, and the bitter experience of the last few years will only enhance our happiness. Nettie dear what do you say?"

She could not answer; she was crying as if her heart would break, and her head was pillowed upon his breast. It was a more eloquent "yes" than the tongue could speak.

The moon was rising as he walked home with Nettie to her father's.

So Harry Rogers and Nettie Ray were married again, and there is no divorce that can part them now.

SHAKING HANDS

There are many ways of shaking hands, and most of them are disagreeable ones. There is the fishy way, the snubbing way, the pumping way, and, worst of all, the hearty way. When a friend is so glad to see you that he crushes your hand in his joy, and renders you incapable of manual labor for eleven years, it is nearly time that friendship should become a lost sentiment. This is what happened to a poor fellow in New Hampshire, whose sad case should serve as a warning to the American people—the most inveterate and unreasonable hand-shakers in the world.

"An attorney, about to finish a bill of costs, was requested by his client, a baker, to make it as light as he could." "Ah!" replied the attorney, "that's what you say to your foreman, but it's not the way I make my bread."