

side of which made a convenient seat. The view from the hill was very fine. Below lay, apparently, miles of rich plain divided by numerous fences into fields and farm boundaries. On one side were rich green pastures dotted with sheep and grazing cattle, beyond were fields of ripening grain, next the ploughed acres, and, bounding all these, were belts of umbrageous forest trees which seemed to woo the summer wind that at intervals reached the ear with lulling sound. From this spot too could be seen long lines of roads and intersecting highways; here and there a stream sparkled in the sunlight; the river with its shaded margins wound slowly along on its way to the lake beyond, which on clear calm evenings reflected in the distance all the glory of the sunset.

Ah, with what feelings I many and many a time have watched from here the red retiring orb of day sink apparently into the lake, as if to steep his heated brow in the cool crystal water; how many a time have I watched the crimson light and the fading glow, those farewell tokens of a quiet Sabbath eve! How dream-like and visionary everything relating to life would then seem, and how often and often I wished that I could forget my sorrow and take my leave of earth as gradually and peacefully as the declining beams of the setting sun which were then fading away!

While in such mood I could scarcely leave this retired place. I longed to stay. It seemed as if I were in a manner away from the world, and I sat there more than once until the deepening twilight—the shadow of departing day—almost obscured every object. I would sometimes sit there until the black wings of night were spread out wide hiding the entire landscape, and while marking in the silence the faint lights in the scattered dwellings beneath and around me I would fancy that I was like one who had just left the earth, but got up among the clouds waiting as it were for a further transition.

I had no fear at such times. I was near home and could remain up there for hours together dealing with my reveries, and when these would flit away there would come ideas and feelings of increasing wonder when already the soft silvery

sheen of another dawn would be seen—the gentle dawn of the moon-day. A faint gleam would appear above the horizon; then the underlying edge of a cloud would become a luminous fringe, then a glimmer would gradually spread over the water revealing the gentle quivering of the bosom of the lake, then the placid queen of night would slowly ascend, shedding a mild glory over the whole scene, making the beautiful earth appear as the peaceful portal of heaven itself. Oh how exquisite! I could gaze here until midnight, and it was often with reluctance I had to leave such a sight and take my steps homeward and alone.

CHAPTER III.

We often heard from Anna Strong: she generally wrote to me. We had not seen her for nearly three years. Latterly her health was rather worse and she had to remain confined as an invalid most of the time. From all we could learn we had very little hope that she would ever get better. Poor Anna! I but too well knew the cause of her drooping—the flower was slowly withering; there was a worm gnawing at her heart, which would pierce it through and through. After a period of some months from the time she last wrote—an unusual delay on her part—another letter came. She wrote to tell us that she had a strange visitor. A poor old mutilated war-worn soldier or pensioner whose broken health, scarcely left him an expectation of a much longer stay in this world, had called at the house one cold, dreary evening and enquired for her. After having been invited to enter he hobbled in, breathing hard from the little exertion he had made, and though his condition was pitiful, he looked at her for some moments and seemed to be affected by her emaciated appearance. In consequence of a severe wound in the mouth and jaw his utterance was difficult, and it was hard to make out his words or understand his meaning.

After some time, however, she gathered from what he tried to say, that he had been well acquainted with my poor brother John, and also with William Brightman. He had been in the same regiment with them and had fought along with them in the battles of the Wilderness