There is no Death.

Sir Rulwer Lytton.

There is no death! The stars go down
To rise upon some fairer shore;
And bright in heavens' jewelled crown
They shine forever more.

There is no death! The dust we tread
Shall change beneath the summer showers
To golden grain or mellow fruit,
Or rainbow-tinted flowers.

The granite rocks disorganise
To feed the hungry moss they bear.
The leaves drink daily life
From out the viewless air.

There is no death! The leaves may fall
The flowers may fade away,
Then only wait through the wintry hours
The coming of the May.

There is no death! An Angel form
Walks o'er the earth with silver tread.
He bears our best loved things away,
And then we call them "dead."

He leaves our hearts all desolate;
He plucks our fairest, sweetest flowers;
Transplanted into bliss, they now
Adorn immortal bowers.

And where he sees a smile too bright,
Or heart too pure for taint or vice,
He bears it to that world of light,
To dwell in Paradise.

Born unto that undying life,
They leave us but to come again;
With joy we welcome them—the same
Except to sin and pain.

And ever near us, though unseen,
The dear immortal spirits tread;
For all the boundless universe
Is life—there is no dead;

My Mother's Hymn.

What an unconsciously long time seems to have elapsed since the old days on the far away homestead on the Berkshire Hills. How the years have dragged themselves along, so that, although I have several more birthdays to come to me (if I live) in "the twenties." I seem to be already an old man when I think upon the farm and mother and the old meeting house and all the sweet memories of the time when I was a boy and knew nothing—absolutely nothing—of sorrow and trouble and hard knocks.

Even to day, when, young as I am, I have to confess myself worn and wearied, battered, bruised and broken, scarred and seared by contact with the roughness, the rudeness, the dirt, the grime, the sin and heartlessness of the world—even yet I bless God for the halo of goodness that has followed me, in all my wanderings, from my Massachusetts home.

I was the youngest of the merry youngsters who had grown up, under our family roof tree, to youth and manhood, and was the last to break away from the comparative quiet of New England for the bustle and hurly-burly of the great west.

My two brothers were full grown men when I was still a small boy, attending our village school, and nothing could keep them at home when the gold excitement broke out in the Black Hills. After they went away my mother and father never saw them more. The next events of importance in our family were the weddings of my two sisters, following in rapid succession.

Then, more than ever, I became my mother's companion and might have remained so, perchance, to this day had not death claimed her and father for his prey within a few short weeks of each other.

Father was a good man and I always loved, honored, and respected him; but to me I think, nay, I am certain, he was never as dear as mother—and I felt this more during the few short weeks that mother lingered after father's death.

How she liked to have me sit by her bedside and read to her—sometimes from one of Dickens' masterpieces and sometimes from her well used Bible! How it pleased her when I would sing (as a boy, I believe I had a pleasant musical voice) one of her favorite songs or a hymn from the little brown covered hymn book!—How contented she was, on the day that she passed away, to have me place my hand in hers while she whispered her farewell words. "Give me the hymn book, Rod," she said toward the last. I gave it to her and watched her as with much feebleness she tore from it one of the pages—worn so thin and much soiled by constant handling.

"Keep it, Rod, my boy; keep it always, and when you are a man read it and sing it—it is mother's favorite hymn."

I have never parted with that torn scrap, and while I live it will never be bartered for the largest bank note in existence. Sickly sentiment is it? Be it so; there has, God knows, been little enough of sentiment in my life, and I can afford to indulge this one soft feeling which I possess and treasure.

Ten years passed away. Amid a group of rough men assembled in a saloon in a small frontier town I was the central figure. I was arraigned as a culprit before a mock judge and a mock jury, undergoing a mock trial for stealing a man's entire outfit—coat, pants, belt, pistols and boots. I was innocent, quite innocent—but the circumstantial evidence was strong against me, and besides I had certainly been associating with a very "hard" set. I know full well that the chances were greatly against a verdict of "not guilty," and I was also well aware that punishments were not graded in that locality. Sentences for all crimes were uniformly severe and execution prompt. The evidence was taken in five minutes and then the judge (a miner like the rest of us) turned to me.

"Hev you got owt to say for yosself, Red Kimberly?"

"Only this," said I: "I am not guilty."

"Is that all?" said the judge, while a low rude laugh went around the room.

"We all thought you was squar', Rod," went on the judge, "and we feel like giving you a fair show. Why don't you own up, now, and throw yourself on the mercy of the court?"

"Judge," I replied, giving the man his mock title, "I am square. All you boys know me," I went on, appealing to the crowd, on whose faces I failed to see much expression of sympathy. "You fellows know I don't pretend to be any great shakes, but, before God, I have never told a lie to you or any one else, and neither have I ever taken what don't belong to me. I swear I am innocent of this affair."

"Is that all?" again asked the judge.

"Yes, sir. Stay"—and I fumbled in my pocket for a piece of paper, which I kept inside my shirt. "You fellows all had mothers?"

There was a coarse, loud guffaw, while one man exclaimed:

"Thet's a reg'lar bald headed, palsied old bluff game, jedge, an' I guess it won't wash with this gang!"

But just then a tall, broad shouldered man—a stranger—entered the saloon. He had heard my appeal and had also heard the rough words of the miner who had last spoken.

"By the court's leave," said the new arrival, "I am an old regulator, judge, and think the young fellow ought to have his say, whatever it is."

"Good," came from the lips of the judge: "go on, my lad."

"I was going to say, judge, that I have a little scrap of paper here—not much account, certainly, to anybody but myself; but my dead mother gave it to me and I've treasured it about ten years. It isn't scripture, but it's mighty near it, and I couldn't say anything more solemnly than what I would say with my right hand on that page torn from my mother's hymn book. Judge, I am innocent!"

"Gentlemen of the jury, what do you say? Is the prisoner guilty or not guilty?"

"Guilty!" came from a score of throats.

Now I was not greatly afraid of death, though I would ave preferred to live, and anyhow did not particularly fancy leath by means of a hempen rope. I felt that I was hardly prepared to die, for I had of late given very little thought to religion and to the teachings of my earlier life. So it was not any morbid or false notion of religion nor yet the promptings of fear which led me to make a last request of my prosecutors.

"Judge," I said, "I should like you to grant me a last request before you pass sentence. On this scrap of paper there is a hymn, which I have a fancy to hear sung before you begin business. Jerry Davis here, can play and knows all the church tunes. I'd would him to play and sing this one. And, judge, ask the boys that don't want to hear it to step outside, because I shouldn't like to see them poking fun at it."

"Boys, you hear," said the judge, and strangely enough there was absolute silence while not a man left the room.

There was an old piano in that western saloon, used for free and easys, noisy concerts and occasional dances, though it is doubtful if sacred songs had ever been played upon in during its sojourn at that settlement.

Jerry Davis took the little torn page, struck a cord or two, and then commenced to sing in his rich tenor voice:

"'There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.

The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day,
And there may I, though vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.'"

Somehow Jerry Davis' voice weakened and he could not finish the hymn, which must have been familiar to many a hardened man in that strange company. As for me, I was sobbing violently—not so much moved by the words of the hymn as by the sadly sweet memories which it brought me. There was absolute silence for several minutes, when the stranger who had spoken a word on my behalf walked over to the piano where Davis sat with his fingers listlessly resting on the keyboard. He took the torn leaf, examined it critically and then walked over to me. Taking my hand in his strong grip he spoke in a loud, if rather husky voice.

"Judge," he said, "I feel certain there is some mistake here, and I ask for a postponement of these proceedings for further investigation. This lad is my brother; my name is Phil Kimberly. I own the Kimberly claim over the hill, and am pretty well known along the Turtle valley."

It was indeed my oldest brother, whom I had not seen for sixteen years.

That hymn of my mother's had somehow softened the feelings of the boys, for they willingly acceded to Phil's request. Two days latter I was cleared of all suspicion and became for a time the most popular man in camp.

It is almost needless to add that I now treasure with more care than ever the little scrap of paper upon which is printed, in old style type, my mother's favorite hymn.—*Detroit Free Press.*

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