

full of pride and ambition, for I was to become a great singer. Now I had returned having gained my heart's desire, but mother, father, home and friends had fled, some to the eternal home, and others but for a journey here on earth.

It was Christmas time, and I had come to visit the home of my boyhood before making a long journey.

Hurriedly walking on, I soon came to an old iron gate and, turning hastily aside, I pushed it open. I entered and walking swiftly up the path, at last came to where the old granite Cathedral rose before me in all its shattered glory. In some places the bricks, crumbled with age, had fallen down, and some of the windows were broken.

The trees around were leafless, but I was reminded that nature had not forsaken the place, when a little bird fluttering to my feet looked up trustingly at me and burst forth in a song of praise to Him who made it. I waited patiently until the little songster had finished his carol, and then pushing open the door of the Cathedral, crept into our old family pew. Leaning back I shut my eyes, and my thoughts went back to a Christmas morn years before, when here I sang my first song.

For the first time I am to sing a solo and, dressed in my surplice I sit in the choir awaiting my turn. Soon it comes, and as the organ peels forth the prelude I step timidly forward. Glancing at the sea of upturned faces my heart sinks, but as I catch sight of my mother's face I take fresh courage and, raising my head, I begin in a low, timid voice, sinking, then rising in soft ripples. The tone changes and my voice rings out wild notes; but soon it again changes and my heart seems filled with despair, which echoes and re-echoes through the massive building. Again the tones become pleading as if praying for a lost soul; and as the answer rings out sweet and clear, my heart is filled with love. All is still. My heart seems to rest above, and my very soul to fly upwards, as I pour forth my melody. Louder, it comes, higher, still higher; up, up, it goes until the whole air is full of the praise of our Father, as the choir boys ring out the chorus. Soon their voices cease and in a calmer voice I keep on in sweet peacefulness until softer, softer it becomes and gradually dies out.

I look down and seek my mother's face. Her eyes are filled with tears, yet she has a brave smile for her boy.

Suddenly the spell broke and I found I had just time to catch the return afternoon train. With one lingering look at all around me, I turned and left.

The following evening I appeared before the public for the first time since I had been trained. For weeks I had practised for it, but when I returned from the visit to my old home, I determined to sing the song of my boyhood. I told no one of my intention, except the organist.

As the first notes rang out, a thick gloom seemed to cover everyone, and soon I discerned the form of my mother. Involuntary I held out my hands, and looking upward poured forth my song of praise. Then as the last notes died away my mother's form faded, and glancing for the first time at the audience I found that strong men were weeping and women were sobbing aloud.

Afterward, when my master spoke to me his eyes filled, and putting his hand on my shoulder said, "What made you do it so?" "I was singing to my mother," I replied.

MINNIE G. SPENCER.

A MIDNIGHT VISION.

The clock had struck one, and Tommy,
Lifting his aching head;
Sat up and stared into darkness,
Holding the sides of the bed.

Before him with beckoning gestures,
Stood twenty four books or more,
A pile in each of the corners
And scattered over the floor.

Up from the corner rising,
A grim Physiology;
And stretching one skeleton finger
Said, "Hush! now listen to me."

"Sad and hurt, I've been feeling,
As you idly turned each page,
Because you loved not study,
As boys should of your age.

"To see you ever copying
The habits of lazy drones,
Ah! why not listen to me, now
While I tell you about your bones."

But Tom, with a yawning and sighing,
Settled down for a little doze;
When up from behind the bureau
Another book arose.

"Thomas," it said in accents
That haunted the room for years,
And now brought to the eyes of Tommy
Frozen drops that might have been tears.

"Thomas," it said, "I'm a language,
And people call me dead."
"Ghosts!" cried Tommy, wildly,
Grabbing hold of the bed.

"You must learn my verbs and my adverbs,
Say *ago* correctly all through,"
"Oh dear!" cried Tommy dully,
"I wish I had died with you."

And he tried with his hardest effort,
To once more go to sleep,
But, from under the bed uprising,
Did the *Sketch Book* gently creep.

"Tommy," it said, and its accents
Were merry, playful and mild,
"Come with me and I'll tell you stories,
Wake up, my dear little child."

Behind it *Geometry* followed,
"Let us reason it out," it said,
"Come! Tommy! with a little exercise,
Let me help you out of bed."

"I am always dealing with figures,
And a figure you'd surely make,
Shivering and rubbing your eyelids,
Why you're only half awake."

But Tommy, his sigh was heavy,
"I am sick of it all," he said,
"I wish you would let me be quiet,
There is too much crammed in my head."

"No, no! that would never do, Tommy,"
The *Chemistry* then replied,
"I'm afraid that your nerves are fast weakening,
I must get you some Iron-Sulphide."

"I can teach you all the rubbish,
That you would care to know,
You must never speak of water
Except as H₂O."