

CHRISTMAS MEMORIES.

The Christmas bells across the snow
Are ringing out goodwill to men:
Away the merry skaters go
Across the fields, along the fen.
God's wind of peace and love has blown
The clouds from sorrow-stricken skies:
Yet I am sitting here alone
With my old Christmas memories.

Cease, Christmas chime! that wildly ring—
The knell of man's delayed desire:
She at the piano touched the strings,
Whilst I sat dreaming by the fire.
Tis mystical when souls entwine,
When sympathetic longings blend:
She came and placed her hand on mine,
And softly whispered, "Be my friend."

Who could that longing look resist—
The blue of those Madonna eyes,
The hair—the parted lips unkest,
The depth of all her broken sighs?
I took her hand; we seemed to trace
A storm in such a summer sea:
O God! I see her haunting face,
That pleaded, "Be a friend to me!"

One night the books were cast aside,
The poem hushed that I had read:
We only heard the wind outside,
The firelight touched her golden head.
We were alone—none other—none,
Have mercy on me, God above!
She weeping said, "What have you done?
This is not friendship—it is love!"

Yes, it was love, untamed and wild,
That through our hearts and pulses ran—
The first affection of a child,
The last great passion of a man.
No love like this was ever born,
To touch my tears, to cloud my sight:
She was my waking thought at morn,
She was my parting prayer at night.

Yes, it was love! so pure that I
Can feel it dim my eyelids yet:
It made our spring a memory,
Our summer a profound regret.
We only met to love the more,
Beneath the blossom-covered tree:
We loved in silence by the shore,
And, speechless, looking out to sea.

Cold Christmas chimes! why ceaseless ring—
Across the snow your endless knell?
Why whisper our remembered spring?
And toll for our supreme farewell?
O winged Love! for love is wild,
And has been since the world began:
It bears away the loving child,
And leaves alone the thinking man!

So, merry skaters, hand in hand,
Laugh on until the sun is set:
Together you will find love's land,
Then dream together—and forget!
Away, you lovers; off you go!
Across the fields; along the fen:
For Christmas bells across the snow
Are ringing out "Goodwill to men."

L'ENVOI.

But when you see old friends depart,
And find that love is sweet—but dies,
Pray God that all your life and heart
Be free from Christmas memories!

December, 1882.

C. S.

FATE.

BY MARION GREEN.

I was to be an exhibitor at the American Institute, and while I was at the office, purchasing a ticket, I had the agreeable surprise of meeting an old friend of mine, who was on a similar errand. His destination was New York and the American Institute, the firm of which he was a member having deputed him to represent it there, and look after its interests.

I had known Walter for a long time, and many a pleasant day had I spent at his home. A happier couple than he and his wife I never saw; and it seemed such a pity that they were childless.

For a couple of years past business had interfered with these visits of mine to my friends, although I had seen Durham several times in the interval; so I was still better pleased when he told me that his wife accompanied him. She was a lady for whom I had the greatest respect and esteem, and I anticipated a most agreeable trip.

In the lull of the conversation when the surprise of meeting was over, I noticed that there came into my friend's features an anxious, harassed look, as if some dominant idea, that the surprise had momentarily displaced, had quickly taken hold again. This was the more noticeable as Durham was the most sprightly-minded man of my acquaintance—full of *apropos* and puns, upon which he evidently prided himself.

He noticed my scrutiny, and in a very self-conscious manner assumed the gay air that I had known as habitual, but his spirits seemed fatigued, and to need spurring. Perhaps he felt the symptoms of illness, and dreaded being overtaken with a protracted illness that would be such a calamity at that time.

As we parted at the door, I sincerely hoped that neither of my guesses was correct, and that when I saw him to-morrow he would be himself again, and naturally so.

I started for Baltimore. That day I saw nothing of Durham and his wife when I arrived. I was beginning to wonder if they were on the train, and was intending to make inquiries about them. But next morning Durham appeared. I did not see his wife, but following him came a Miss Ganney, whom I had met the last time that I was at his house, two years ago.

They sat down opposite me, and I at once saw that Durham was indeed himself again. After explaining the absence of his wife, who

had been taken suddenly ill on the train, he went on with an apology in a mock, candid manner; saying that although Miss Ganney was present, he must say that it had just occurred to him that he had forgotten to mention to me that she had been induced by his wife to accompany her. This being first and foremost a business trip, that arrangement would relieve his anxiety when compelled to leave his wife, Miss Ganney and she being very intimate and dear friends.

Mrs. Durham's illness continued nearly the whole trip, as she only made her appearance, and in a very weak state, just before we reached Philadelphia.

I was very much shocked at the change her sickness had wrought in her. I forgot that I was contrasting the genial hostess of two years ago with a poor lady just recovering from a distressing disease.

Soon we were in New York; and although Durham and his wife and her friend put up at the same hotel with myself, business on both sides prevented all but the most meagre intercourse for several weeks. Then, when things were moving smoothly at the Institute building, Durham and I found time to carry out a plan we had prepared to "see" New York.

At the end of the first week of sight-seeing, in which museums, picture galleries and public buildings had been visited, we reached on our list the Trinity steeple.

Our party had been a very pleasant and harmonious one. I never saw Durham in better spirits. He was as kind and thoughtful to his wife as I had ever known him, and gay and gallant toward Miss Ganney, which was natural with him. His wife enjoyed herself thoroughly; but it seemed to me that she would have done so fully as well almost anywhere, providing Durham was at her side.

Miss Ganney was very appreciative and enthusiastic. She impressed me favorably, being a lady of considerable talent and intelligence. One peculiarity about her affected me disagreeably, although I could not justify myself in feeling so about it, and that was that she was under perpetual high pressure every moment of the time. It must have been a strain upon her similar to that undergone by the actress of a long leading part. Not that she was artificial, and assumed an interest where she had it not. It is only because that otherwise she was such an addition to any party that I have set down this peculiarity with the impression it gave me.

Another speck I discovered: Miss Ganney was a lady in the usual acceptance of the term, and yet she never missed an opportunity to make what I fancied was an ostentatious display of her love of children. This must have been painful to Durham, and especially so to his wife, both dearly loving children. They had been married fifteen years, and were still childless.

To resume: when we came to the Trinity steeple, and it was proposed to ascend to the top, Mrs. Durham hesitated, but only for a moment, as Miss Ganney was anticipating the splendid view to be had from such a height. So we began the ascent to the spiral stairway, ending so far overhead.

At intervals, a little daylight came through the narrow windows that seemed chiseled in the solid masonry. It was a long, long way up, and we were quite weary when, at length, we reached the open air.

After resting awhile, we began to view the great city from our great height. A number of people, principally men, were enjoying the magnificent sight: those who were familiar with the city pointing out the buildings and parks to the others. We had been looking for twenty minutes, and Miss Ganney and I were separated from Durham and his wife a short distance. Something we had been looking for was discovered by Miss Ganney; she called out to Durham to come to her, as she had found it: and a moment after, Durham was at her side.

What followed in the next few minutes is indelibly stamped upon my memory, for while life endures it will never be erased. I heard Durham utter a cry of horror, and turning quickly I saw that Miss Ganney had seized his arm as if in terror, while he was looking in the direction of his wife. It turns me deathly sick, even after this lapse of time, to remember the sight of that moment. Durham's wife was flinging herself over the massive stone railing.

Half a dozen men, myself among the number, sprang to the spot. Durham was there first. But it was too late. She had shot half-way downward to destruction. Had we not drawn Durham away by force, the tragedy would have been a double one, so powerfully was he affected.

In the autumn of 1880 I was in Baltimore. Having finished the business taking me there sooner than I expected, I thought to treat myself to a day or two's holiday down the Chesapeake. I had scarcely made up my mind before some new arrivals drew up to the hotel. They were Mr. and Mrs. Walter Durham.

On the impulse of the moment I sent up my card to their room, but regretted having done so when the servant had disappeared. Durham had not informed me of his marriage. He must have had some reason for it, which reason was just as good to-day as when the event had happened.

While I stood thinking, a message came down from Durham that I was to come up. He met me at the door of his room with both hands extended, and gave me the most cordial welcome that even he could give.

"You will not need to be introduced to Mrs. Durham," said Walter, as she came forward.

Nor did I. The present Mrs. Durham I had known eighteen months before as Miss Ganney. She greeted me very cordially, and we were soon chatting away as pleasantly and unreservedly as if no image were lurking in the shadow of each of our minds.

The time passed pleasantly till dinner, when I left them, after promising to make one of a party that was going down the bay as far as Ocean City in the afternoon.

In all the time we had been talking together, not one word had been said that would, in the most remote manner, suggest that there ever had been a Mrs. Durham before the present one. Of course, such a remembrance, in any case, painful, was rendered doubly so under the peculiar circumstances. Yet, considering everything, I could not get rid of the idea that the subject was avoided in an absolute manner that even the present and my presence did not furnish a complete explanation of.

The party consisted of twelve, besides myself. After arriving at Ocean City we halted, and while resting, some luncheon that had been brought was shared. The party then broke up into twos and threes, who read, or sketched, or talked.

Durham and his wife and I sat on the river bank, talking about old times and old scenes.

The party beginning to gather together again, we arose to join. Durham and I stood for a moment talking, while his wife stooped over to wet her handkerchief in the river.

We had been sitting upon an uneven log, one end of which Durham was now standing upon, while his wife, upon the other end, was stooping over the river bank.

I inadvertently used an expression that we both knew to be original and peculiar to his first wife, when, glancing at Durham I saw that the effect upon him was fearful.

His face grew ghastly, his arms twitched, a convulsive quiver passed through him, and he stepped off the log on which he was standing!

A scream and a splash followed. The log, relieved of Durham's weight, had thrown his wife into the river!

In a moment she was carried off with the current, and was gone! She rose once to the surface, far away from help, then she was seen no more.

Three months afterwards I received a letter from Durham begging me to come to his house and to come at once, if I possibly could, as he had urgent business of great importance to consult me about. He would expect me on Friday, he said, and would send a carriage to the station, a mile from the house, with instructions to wait for me until the midnight train had passed.

It was then Friday afternoon, but I at once made my arrangements to take the 6.30 P.M. train for Altoona, the nearest point to Durham; and where he proposed to have a conveyance waiting for me. But, after all, I was forced to wait till nine o'clock, as the 6.30 train did not stop at his station. This nine o'clock train arrived at Altoona a few minutes past twelve o'clock, and was the midnight train that Durham had mentioned in his letter.

Nothing delayed the train, and it made its time at each station on the way, and at twelve o'clock by my watch I prepared to leave the train at Altoona, where it would arrive in less than two minutes. In less time than that the whistle sounded and the train came to a sudden standstill, and I knew that something was wrong. Being near the door, I opened it and looked out. We were several hundred yards from the station. The engineer was telling the conductor that he had blown the whistle because a man had jumped or fallen on the line just before the engine, and been struck and killed instantly, he had no doubt.

We pulled up to the station, and men were sent back to find the man's body and take it to where it might be identified. I had no time to wait for their return, as I found Durham's carriage awaiting me. In a very little time I was at his house. I was taken by a servant to a library, where a light was burning low. I was told that Mr. Durham had been waiting for me all the evening, until a half hour ago, when he had stepped into the garden, leaving word for me, if I came, that he would join me immediately.

I was familiar with the room, and crossed to a reading-table near the book-case, and sat down. In looking over the table to see something to read while waiting, my eye fell upon an official envelope, addressed to myself.

A strange feeling made my hand shake as I picked up the envelope. It was not sealed, yet I hesitated to open it. At last, with a great effort, I drew forth a paper, which I unfolded, and found to contain these words:—

"MY FRIEND,—

"You, who know more about me than any one living, and who yet know so little—you were present at the two crises of my life. You believe me to be a much-afflicted man, and you sympathize heartily with me. You will do so no longer, for I shall tell you all!

"Why did I take my wife to the top of the column? I knew that she was one of those who have an insane desire to leap off from a high point. That was a dangerous folly in me. Why did I leave her for a moment exposed to an attack of that frenzy? That was criminal in me! Why did I let myself be held for one moment, when that one moment would have saved her? That was murder!

"Yes; I murdered her! Why? I might

write a long while without giving you any intelligent answer.

"Then I married again. That was our blood-money. She knew of my unsatisfied longing for children. She knew of my wife's fatal impulse.

"You thought that my act that day was a natural one, whose dire efforts were undreamed of. Not so; I knew that such a movement at that moment would precipitate her into the water, and I knew what that meant. That act was judicial. I executed her!

"This is all that I have to say. I want you to read this before we meet, so I will not go down to watch for the midnight express. It is a passion of mine. To me it is Fate rushing upon me, irresistible. Nothing affects me like the approach and passing of an express train when I am standing out of danger, and yet within arm's length of the iron monster. It seems—"

Here the writing ended. Suddenly a thought flashed upon me, and turned me hot and cold. What if the man struck by our locomotive were Durham?

Just then I heard a commotion outside that was unusual at that time or place. I went to the front door, and met a number of railroad men bearing a body. It was the mangled corpse of the unfortunate Durham. That was enough; I understood it.

FOOT NOTES.

IN writing his opinions and other documents, Justice Clifford, of the United States' Supreme Court, always avoided as much as possible the definite article. He would write page after page without a single "the." Why he did so no one ever found out, nor indeed dared to try to find out, except the jocular Justice Grier, who alone could take liberties with his dignified colleague from Maine. Once, in hope of solving the mystery, he asked, slapping Clifford on the back as he spoke, "Cliffy, old boy, what makes you hate the definite article so?" But Clifford drew himself up with Roman dignity, and replied gravely, "Brother Grier, you may criticize my law; but my style is my own."

THE uses to which asbestos may be applied received a singular application recently at Henderson, when Mr. J. A. Fisher, the Secretary of the United Asbestos Company, 161 Queen Victoria street, showed a select company some experiments with a balloon principally composed of this material. The asbestos was woven into a cloth, of which the balloon was made, and the air in it was rarefied almost instantaneously by a spirit lamp. The balloon thus inflated had all the power of the ordinary silk ones distended with gas. The asbestos cloth being indestructible by fire, the aeronaut enjoys perfect safety, and can descend at any moment by merely lowering the lamp. No ballast is required, and ascents and descents can be made in a few minutes in any part of the country. It is clear, therefore, that the new balloon stands many chances of success over the old one, and we shall watch with interest the experiments at Woolwich by the War Office authorities.

A MAN may be as cool as an icicle under extraordinary circumstances of danger or excitement; he may preserve an even mind when a ghost comes into his room at midnight; he may assume command and act nobly and well when the ship is sinking; but let that man, let any man, upset his inkstand, and he springs to his feet, makes a desperate grasp for the inkstand and knocks it half way across the table, claws after his papers and sweeps through the sable puddle to save them, tears his white silk handkerchief from his pocket and mops up the ink with it, and after he has smeared the table, his hands, and his lavender trousers with ink, as far as it could be made to go, discovers that early in the engagement he knocked the inkstand clear off the table, and it had been draining its life-ink away all that time in the centre of the only light figure in the pattern of the carpet. Then he wonders why a man always makes a fool of himself when he upsets a bottle of ink. He doesn't know why. Nobody knows why. But every time it is so. If you don't believe it, try it.

BONBONS.—The origin of the manufacture of bonbons dates from the time when sugar was first used in England—that is to say, about the commencement of the thirteenth century. The first experiments with the juice of the sugar-cane brought from the east after the Crusades were at Sicily, by Jewish traders, about the year 1230. The following curious extract relating to the production of sugar is from a letter written in Latin of the period by Frederick II. Emperor of Germany and King of Sicily and Jerusalem, to Riccardo Filangieri, Governor of Palermo, (1230)—"We invite you to take steps to find two men who know well how to make sugar, and send them to Palermo to manufacture it. You will also see that they teach the process to others, in order that the art may not be lost in Palermo." The manufacture of bonbons, which was rather rude in the commencement, improved gradually and acquired a certain perfection in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Francis I. was accustomed to give bonbons to the artists whose work he looked on at the Louvre and at Fontainebleau, and had dishes of assorted sweetmeats served at his table daily. Henry IV. carried all sorts of bonbons in his pockets; he ate them all day, and presented them to the ladies of his court. He filled the vases on the tables and consoles of Gabrielle d'Estrees with sweetmeats and preserved fruits.