

"It is nothing but wood, hay, and stubble,"  
I said; "it will all be burned—  
This useless fruit of the talents  
One day to be returned.

"And I have so longed to serve Him,  
And sometimes I know I have tried;  
But I'm sure when He sees such building  
He will never let it abide."

Just then, as I turned the garment,  
That no rent should be left behind,  
My eye caught an odd little bungle  
Of mending and patchwork combined.

My heart grew suddenly tender,  
And something blinded my eyes  
With one of those sweet intuitions  
That sometimes make us so wise.

Dear child, she wanted to help me;  
I knew 'twas the best she could do;  
But oh, what a botch she had made it—  
The grey miss-matching the blue!

And yet—can you understand it?  
With a tender smile and a tear,  
And a half-compassionate yearning  
I felt she had grown more dear.

Then a sweet voice broke the silence,  
And the dear Lord said to me,  
"Art thou tenderer for the little child  
Than I am tender for thee?"

Then straightway I knew His meaning,  
So full of compassion and love,  
And my faith came back to its Refuge,  
Like the glad returning dove:

For I thought, when the Master Builder  
Comes down His temple to view,  
To see what rents must be mended,  
And what must be builded anew:

Perhaps as He looks o'er the building,  
He will bring my work to the light,  
And seeing the marring and bungling,  
And how far it all is from right.

He will feel as I felt for my darling,  
And will say, as I said for her,  
"Dear child, she wanted to help me,  
And love for me was the spur.

"And for the true love that is in it,  
The work shall seem perfect as mine,  
And because it was willing service,  
I will crown it with plaudits divine."

And there in the deepening twilight  
I seem to be clasping a Hand,  
And to feel a great love constraining me,  
Stronger than any command.

Then I know by the thrill of sweetness  
'Twas the hand of the Blessed One,  
Which would tenderly guide and hold me  
Till all the labour is done.

So my thoughts are nevermore gloomy,  
My faith no longer is dim;  
But my heart is strong and restful,  
And my eyes are unto Him.

Mrs. Herrick Johnson.

## THE GRAVES OF THE GREEDY.

NUMBERS xi. 34.

**S**URE is the meaning of a name which Moses gave to a place where a great multitude of the people of Israel died. They had murmured at what they thought the fewness of their mercies, and had longed for fleshly comforts God had seen fit to withhold. They cried to God for them with impatience and distrust. Then God did with them as He sometimes does with us: He punished their foolish prayer by answering it. He gave them the meat they sought, without the blessing which they despised. Accordingly, as soon as it came they ate; and multitudes only ate to die. So Moses called the place The Graves of the Greedy, for a warning to all who were left alive, and to all who have wisdom to take warning from it. Let us try and learn the lesson of this striking name, understanding by it a covetous lustful hankering after, not rich food only, but anything presented to the eye or the mind as an object to be desired.

Greed always leads to a grave. God has joined the two things together, and man cannot put them asunder. Contentment is a tree of life, bearing many kinds of blessed fruit, gladdening all who dwell beneath its shadow, but greed casts a shadow of death over all who cherish it.

"They that will be rich," says St. Paul, "fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts that drown men in perdition." In fact, the life of every greedy man has graves for milestones. Every day something good about him dies and drops into a grave, till at last the great grave takes all that is left of his soul.

"Therefore, take heed and beware of covetousness." True life lies not in having goods, but in being right. Remember greed grows apace, that you can never keep it in bounds. The Saviour, knowing this, bids us deny—that is to say, dethrone—self. Remember, some who are poor are very rich, and some who are rich are very poor. Seek to have God—not gold; His grace and joy in the heart—not plenty in the barns. Watch your heart, and see it does not get so absorbed with care as to wither, and shrink, and die. "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his soul?" "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all other things will be added thereto."