

give me strength, for the blessed Saviour to guide me in safety through the dark valley. Deep sleep fell upon me, and the pains that had racked me for the last week left me. I felt a tranquillity of rest, such as I seldom have been permitted to enjoy. Methought I stood in a narrow strait, between two immense mountains, whose tops were hid in the skies; their bare, rocky sides, forming a gigantic wall, which enclosed me on the right hand and on the left. The place was lighted by a dim twilight, which seemed to flow through an enormous black arch, which terminated the strange scene—an arch, high and deep enough to have supported the key stones of the world. I felt like an atom in that vast place. My own existence appeared absorbed in the immensity of its proportions. Still, as I gazed in wilder awe upon that great gateway of living stone, a figure became embodied in the darkness. It grew—it brightened. Its flowing robes were dazzling white, and shed a sort of glorious moonshine all around. Oh! the beauty—the surpassing beauty of that heavenly vision! It filled my whole soul with light. But the face—the face—how can I describe it? I could only gaze upon it, and admire its increasing beauty. ‘Child of earth!’ it said, in tones that awoke echoes of soft music from those eternal rocks: ‘Am I so hideous that men should shrink from me with cowardly fear, and regard me as their worst enemy?’ ‘Oh! I exclaimed, in an ecstasy of delight, ‘your face is like the Angels of the Lord, and I feel more joy in your presence than ever I experienced upon earth.’ ‘I am Death!’ he said, holding out his shining hand. ‘Death, the friend of man, the conqueror of pain! I hold in my hand the keys of the unknown world. I am the bright spirit, who heralds the good into the presence of their God.’ He took my outstretched hands, and drew me forward, and I looked beyond the black archway, into the far space. Oh! that glorious land. Those rivers of delight—those trees and flowers, and warbled songs. That paradise of living praise! My soul still struggles with the bonds of earth, ere I can realize that glorious scene. I long, my brother, to break those bonds asunder—to pass the dark archway, and to tread that heavenly shore.”

“Happy Clary,” said Juliet, softly approaching the bed. “Dear, blessed girl, who would wish to detain thee in this cold, miserable world, when Heaven offers thee a brighter home?”

“You are come to see your poor friend, dear Juliet,” said Clary, twining her thin arms about her neck. “The sight of you recalls me to earth, filling my mind with sad thoughts and dark forebodings. Brother,” she said, turning to Frederick, “leave us awhile; I must speak with Juliet Whitmore a few minutes alone.”

For some seconds the two young creatures wept in each other’s arms. Clary was the first to speak.

“The thoughts of Heaven are full of rapture,” she said; “the recollections of earth, full of anguish and tears. It is not for myself I weep. It is for the living I mourn—for the friends whom I leave behind. For me, I have lived long enough. It is better for me to go. Juliet, I am dying; will you kiss my brow, and tell me, in the simplicity of truth, that you forgive your poor friend for having dared to love one who loved you, and who was by you beloved again?”

“And was poor Anthony dear to your gentle heart, Clary?” said Juliet, stooping down, and kissing fervently the cold, damp brow of the dying girl. “Oh! dearer—far dearer are you to me, for having shared to its full extent all the deep sorrow that weighs down this aching heart.”

“My love, Juliet, had nought of sorrow: it was full of hope and joy—of blissful dreams, and visions of promised happiness. The storm came down upon my smiling morn of bliss, and the strings of life parted in the conflict. You know he stands accused of a great crime. Do you believe him guilty?”

“Do you believe yon orb of fire a cold unmeaning globe of ice?” said Juliet, pointing to the sun. “When I can believe that, I will suspect the man in whom I trusted—the man whom I fondly loved,—an unnatural parricide!”

“Then you, and you alone, Juliet, are worthy of his love; and he loves you—oh! so truly—so well. I know and feel that he is innocent; a voice from Heaven tells me so; and you and Anthony will meet again.”

“In Heaven!” said Juliet, weeping.

“On earth,” returned Clary, in feebler accents. “When you see each other, Juliet, tell him that Clary loved him, and prayed for him to the last. That dying, she blessed him, and believed him innocent. To you, Juliet, I leave my harp, the friend and companion of my lonely childhood. When you play the sweet airs I loved so well, think with kindness of me. When you wander by murmuring brooks, and through flowery paths, listening to the song of birds, the music of forest shades, and flowing streams, remember me. Ah! I have loved the bright and beautiful of this glorious earth, and I have my wish to pass hence, with sunshine about my bed; and the music of Nature’s wild minstrels in my ears. Sun of earth, farewell! Friends of earth, we shall meet again! See, Heaven opens! It’s one eternal day streams in upon my soul.

“‘Happy spirit, welcome in;
Hark! the songs of Seraphim
Hail thy presence at the throne—
Earth is lost, and Heaven is won!
Enter in.’”

The voice died away in faint low murmurings. The eye lost the living fire that had kindled it into