

Her features quickly relaxed, and she muttered something which I think she could hardly have understood herself more than I did. Her voice was gentle and conciliatory, and that was all I could gather from it. I squeezed her hand gently again and departed to leave her standing in the doorway in silent reverie for several minutes, when she closed the door, and going into the parlor, lay down on the sofa, and amid mingled emotions of sorrow and joy passed several hours. The clock struck three as she retired.

Jessie's thoughts that night were of a passive nature. Her whole soul was longing for some one to love, and yet her ambition and dignity prevented her affections from centering on any individual for fear that affection might not be returned.

Alone she had been brought up, though among many, like a flower growing in the midst of weeds. No one had she for a friend, an adviser, or a far greater need of a girl of her disposition and beauty—no one for a lover. She did not reason thus, but passively felt sorrowful in spite of her active, joyous nature. When she slept, her eye lashes were sealed gently down with tears, and all unconscious of the sins of life she calmly breathed with gently heaving breast, and dreamed of curious lands and people until far into the day.

CHAPTER XI

Crowds of men and women attired in the usual costumes!
how curious you are to me!

—Walt Whitman

When I left Jessie thus at the door and passed out into the darkness, I noticed neither house nor object, nor the chilly dampness of the wind from the eastward. Few people were on the streets, and those that were, passed me like so many automatic things urged on by forces irresistible. Presently I paused and gazed from a little eminence at the few silent stragglers. Some with uneven steps that spoke intoxication came along, and others firmly forced by energetic wills would strike their heels and roll their feet with a determined tread, and hurry by. Some, I mused, as viewing closely 'neath a gas lamp near, were going homeward to a welcomed hearth from innocent amusement, while others, flushed with stimulating drink, negligent of duties to their homes, were pressing on to fierce heart wounding quarrels with bosom friends; pursuing quickly misery intense. Some young men walked with light expectant tread, yet half-reluctant were, at going from by a dear one's side. These would protrude their chests and clench their fists with a determined vigor in their eyes which told of honest and most firm resolve to work with double strength for one they loved. And others were perhaps, who like myself had lost all eager hopes of future fame or happiness of home, because spurned coldly by some thoughtless girl, whose beauty unsurpassed to them and lenient smile had led them on to hope of undivided bliss and peace through all their lives. As each one passed me standing silent there some would pass on too occupied with thought to notice me, while others passed me curiously by, and off I thought they guessed my very thoughts. At length I passed along and slowly took my way from out the city to the old homestead rejoicing at my solitude and quiet and sought my bed in silence.

That night I lay awake and meditated upon the pain that one of a warm heart can inflict without experiencing any sense of cruelty. Had I forgotten Nellie Elson? What matter though I had? Had I ever felt that she was devotedly fond of me? Her bearing in my presence was dignified yet lively, with never a touch of romance in it, exhibiting no warmth of sentiment that bursts right from the heart of a deep-loving girl, forth from her eyes and words and every act. Surely she could not love me when I had never seen any of those traits in her which characterize sincere, unbounded confidence and love. Or perhaps I had been blind to these signs in her because I had never loved her as I should. Could it be that I had sought Nellie Elson's hand because of my having the hatred of her mother to overcome, and only, in my youthful heat, for the desire of victory? I would hardly admit the possibility of this to myself. My misstep, if indeed it were such, was too galling to my spirit, and even yet I tried to fight the thought off and cry within myself that I would marry her despite my feelings.

Thus the night wore on and feverishly I lay awake till morning. When the refreshing early sun stole in and I pulled down my windows from the top and let the balmy air creep in, I slept. But not half refreshed I arose soon after, and, quickly summoned by the breakfast bell, I went down stairs and was diverted from my previous thoughts by a conversation with Arthur Drammel who seemed to possess more reason than I had ever seen him evince before. As previously stated Arthur Drammel and Werbletree had come to live with me, and the morning of which I am now speaking was not long after our return from Shulton.

But a greater cause to divert my attention soon appeared from Werbletree's statement that Sweeman was prowling around the neighborhood.

"Do you think he is here to get Arthur away from us?" I asked, unthinkingly, and I had scarce spoken when the boy grew pale and almost instantly sank senseless in Werbletree's arms.

A servant, at my bidding, brought some brandy, and Werbletree gave me a gentle, reproving look.

"He's weak, very weak yet," he said, "and I'm afraid his mind is going to give way."

I felt a cold shiver come over me at his words.

"I've seen no evidence of anything but improvement in that respect," I rejoined, incredulously.

"But you've not been with him much."

This was all that was said on the subject at the time, as Arthur Drammel was beginning to speak incoherently, and the agony and misery emanating from those sounds still sink heavily into my heart.

Like a mother, the great strong Werbletree attended the lad all day—a thorough proof of his real manliness.

That night we carefully secured the doors of the quiet old homestead and walked in the direction of "Hazelgrove."

I was eagerly expecting, yet half afraid of meeting, the miller, and I knew that my companion was expecting him too. By this time I had become accustomed to Werbletree's ways, and could talk with more ease in his company. By my own desire, the conversation turned to my father and the mission he had given me to perform.

"Did you ever know my father?" I questioned, after a while.

"Yes; I knew him many years ago, before you were born," he said slowly, taking a quiet survey of the surrounding country, and after a long pause, during which we steadily paced along the road; "I saw him once soon after you were born, and I saw you too while you were yet in your cradle."

I felt a sense of bewilderment at his words and his manner of expressing them.

We had reached "Hazelgrove" now, and as we looked along the winding avenue which led up to the dwelling, we could discern a man disappearing round the bushes.

"It's the miller trying to see her again; he's bound to see her in spite of anything."

"Why do you think he is so anxious?"

(To be Continued.)

An Epitaph.

The following epitaph on a railroad engineer is found in an English cemetery:

My engine now is cold and still,
No water does my boiler fill;
My coke affords its flame no more;
My days of usefulness are o'er;
My wheels deny their wonted speed,
No more my guiding hand they need;
My whistle, too, has lost its tone,
Its shrill and thrilling sounds are gone.
My valves are now thrown open wide,
My flanges all refuse to guide,
My clacks also, though once so strong,
Refuse to aid the busy throng;
No more I feel each surging breath,
My steam is now condensed in death,
Life's railway o'er, each station's passed;
In death I'm stopped, and rest at last.
Farewell, dear friends, and cease to weep;
In Christ I'm safe, in him I sleep.