rich; but now the pretty spendthrifts had but empty purses and no time to lose. Money there was none, but fabulously rich were Annie's jewels, and these stood stead. She dare not leave the house, but her friend obtained a suit of male attire, shaded her lip in imitation of a downy moustache, crept from the window on to the porch, clung to lattice and vines with the super-ease of a cat, let herself down over the door of the Professor's study, and made her way to a lawyer.

In such a night
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew,
And with an unthrift love did run from Venice
As far as Belmont.

soliloquized the laughing masquerader. The case was laid before the man of briefs, who listened in silence, then questioned respectfully; but a closer observer than the innocent but reckless girl would have seen that he penetrated her disguise, and believed it some love-affair of her own. His services were engaged, and the jewels left as security for payment. When the trial came on, and gossip mixed Miss Mason's name with the prisoner's, he learned his mistake. A most able defence cleared Mr. L—— : but so strong was public opinion against him that he was obliged to leave the town. We will not intrude upon the last sad interview, but vows of constancy were exchanged, to be kept sacredly by one, who believed then that

Fate, in its bitterest mood,
Had no pain for her like the pain of that night.

Miss M—— spent the winter with her grandfather in Cuba, and here met for the first time the lawyer who had conducted the case for Mr. L——. Thrown much together in society, the acquaintance ripened into friendship on her part, love on his, and an offer of marriage ensued. Surprised and grieved, the gentle girl firmly but kindly declined the honor, when, to her astonishment, he presented a casket containing her own jewels. To that moment she had not known him; and pride, humiliation, and regret struggled with her gratitude. "Forgive me," she sobbed, "that I cannot love you." He listened as a doomed man listens to a sentence he knows is irrevocable—calm, firm, and pale, too proud to plead for what he craved more than life, then bent over her hand a moment in silence, and left her alone. I do not think that then, or ever, Annie realized that Mr. L——'s regard for her was not the same as hers for him. She loved him with all the passionate love of her nature—would have bestowed upon him her wealth and social rank, or have gone out from them gladly, as her mother had done, to share his exile and poverty. He loved her as we love those who are kind to us in the dark hours of our lives—as one who had stood between himself and a blow he was powerless to avert—as his angel of deliverance—and with a calm affection that was tempered by wisdom. He never knew how full of pain those days were for her, or that the thought that came first at dawn and last at night was, "I will be true to him."

From Cuba Annie and her grandfather went to Europe, and made the tour of the Continent at their leisure.

They looked at the works of the masters in the art-galleries of the Old World; ate grapes on the sunny hill-sides of France; took part in the festivities of her gay but wicked capital; drank Imperial Tokay of Hungary's richest vintage in the lands of its own press; stood in the palaces of Moscow and the silent streets of Pompeii; floated down the canals of the "Mistress of the Sea" to the dreamy music of their boatman's song; but, feted, honored, worshipped almost for her magnificent beauty and enormous wealth, with nobles for her slaves and princes at her feet, who would have laid down title and power for one smile of favor, and thought it cheaply bought, she was as cold, as calm, as proud and unbending as a statue; and still, amid an adulation that would have turned the brain of another girl, her lips echoed the refrain of her heart, "I will be true."

Yet, five years later, we find her married to a gentleman belonging to a prominent family in the South. When he asked her to be his wife, she told him the history of her life, and ended with the prophetic words, "I have no heart to give you; I shall never love again." He was one of the most polished, chivalrous men of his day, elegant and handsome; and the imperious, impassioned lover, who had never asked but to receive, who had never knelt to mortal woman in vain, who counted his amours by the score—this petted darling of society, this "glass of fashion," whose word was law—world-weary before his time, blasé ere one thread of silver shone in his crisp black curls—this man, who was used to be flattered and courted, listened to his refusal only to repeat the proposal again and again, begging only for such esteem as she gave him now, incredulous but that he should make a stronger love in her heart than the one he believed to be only a girlish fancy. But, even in the last hour before their marriage, she had said with tearfully beseeching eyes: "I shall never love again;" and he had kissed away the tears with tender assurances that he would be content. The prediction was but too true, and the gloom that lay on her heart chilled and clouded his life, though no word of reproach was ever spoken.

When the storm that had long threatened our beloved Union burst in fury over the land, he joined the Confederate army, and fell in battle. Where the fray was thickest and hottest; where blood had baptized the soil like water, he had led on his men to face the leaden hail; and, when it was ended, they found him dead on the field, his head resting on his arm, his broken sword by his side, and a more peaceful look on his face than he had worn of late.

When I next met Annie we were prisoners at a Southern village. One day, a Union officer, who was passing a window were we stood, glanced carelessly up; but, as his eyes caught hers, a look of recognition and astonishment passed over his face, then it grew white as death. Annie was scarcely less moved, for the man who had lifted his cap and passed on was Charles L——. Later in the day they met, and she listened to his story, never having heard from him since they parted a Wheeling. He had amassed a fortune, and married, upon short acquaintance, a lady in the North. The union was a wretchedly miserable mistake, without one palliating circumstance; and he was repenting at leisure. His wife was a stylish, artful, superficial, narrow-minded woman. He had dreamed of the angels, and waked to find himself fettered to a mockery of womanhood, who made his home a hell; and a separation, partial in one sense, entire in another, took place between them; by his forbearance she still wore the name she dishonored; but for four years they had neither met nor spoken. Heretofore there had been no strong motive for taking legal steps towards a separation; perhaps he had never really loved; but the knowledge of Annie's changeless devotion, even while she was the wife of another; her desolation; her radiant beauty, that as far outshone the beauty of the girl he had known years ago as the beauty of the morn exceeds that of dawn—stirred his heart as it never had stirred before.

This gratitude he had cherished all this years swelled into a love that was almost worship. It was the love of the boy magnified a hundred-fold, and he begged with passionate entreaties to be allowed to protect her; that she would be his wife when he had put away from him one who was but a wife in name—a hated burden. Until this time Annie had loved him devoutly, and, even with her head pillowed on the loyal breast of her noble husband, dreamed of the absent lover, until it broke that heart and sent it to an early grave. But now that he—married, bound, though but by an empty form, to another—dared to speak such sentiments, and asked of her a promise so near allied to dishonor, she answered with contemptuous refusal, and sent him from her with scorn. In that hour the love of a life time lay apparently dead, shrouded for sepulture—waiting for a burial from which there would be no resurrection. There was never, in all her life, an hour of such utter loneliness—such weary hopeless despair; and she wept aloud with sobs and moans, as if her heart had at last broken. I am afraid I did not pity her then. Soon after this she was freed and made as comfortable as possible; but her property was confiscated, and she became a dependent upon bounty.

Six months later she was on a Mississippi River steamer. The boat was crowded with passengers, gathered in groups on the deck or in the cabin; and from the brevities of the day, conversation turned upon the ever-present subject of the sad difference between the North and South. Ladies and gentlemen took part in it, and Annie, whose deep mourning, beauty, and air of refinement had attracted attention, was kindly drawn into the discussion. She told her experience of suffering, bereavement, and loss of home and wealth, with an unaffected simplicity; and her sorrow, unmixed with bitterness or a spirit of retaliation, touched every heart but one, and tears stood in many eyes.

Opposite, and near her, sat a woman whom Annie had already noticed on account of her peculiarly repellant personal appearance, who in a venomous manner assailed Southern refugees at the close of the unvarnished tale told at the request of the passengers. She so evidently hated Annie for the interest others felt in her, and looked it so plainly, that my poor little friend shrank into the corner of her sofa, and gazed at her with eyes dilated with terror. In some unaccountable way she felt her to be connected with all the pain of her life. On the boat she had met by accident Colonel and Mrs. A——, old friends, whom she had known in brighter days, and renewed the acquaintance with pleasure. When the bell rang for supper Colonel A—— gave her his arm to the table, and seated her beside himself and wife as politely as if she had been a princess of the House of Hanover.

The hungry passengers seated themselves with pleasant bustle and good-natured jest that amused her, and as she listened, smiling at the waiter's volubly strung-out bill of fare, she heard a sharp, querulous, fretful tone, and her first glance froze her blood with a horrid revelation. Opposite sat Captain L—— and the woman whose uncharitable attack upon her had been as cruel and unjustifiable as would have been blows upon a chained and defenceless captive. Worse than all, this was his wife, the woman of whom he had told her, and his manner to her, icily courteous, said more plainly than words, "I hate you; I detest and loathe you; but the world looks on." For a moment the table seemed to whirl and the floor to slide from beneath her feet; then, with a mighty effort, she recovered, excused herself on the plea of sudden illness, and retired. Mrs. A—— soon came to her with refreshments, but she could not taste them, and lay with eyes fast closed as if she would shut out the horrid vision. So this was the end of her romance—this the woman he had sworn to cherish—this the creature who having voluntarily abdicated her place in his heart, he had proposed to compel to abdicate his home that he might give her, legally and honorably, the vacated place.

"Ah! bitter, bitter, were the lees."

The dead love stirred in her heart as if it would roll away the stone with which she had sealed its grave and come forth. Sobs, stifled and deep, shook her as the winter winds shake the aspen leaf; and Mrs. A——, wise as she was kind, with delicate regard for her suffering, withdrew, expressing kindly worded hopes that she would be better. Happy wife! she did not know then—I hope she may never have learned it—later how far surpassing "the ills that flesh is heir to" are the wearisome and heart-sickness of hope deferred—the agony that is born of despair.

Later in the evening Mrs. A—— returned with her husband, who begged her to come to the parlor, and give them some of the exquisite music he remembered to have heard in her home; and in her gratitude to them, more than from a desire to please others, she consented. Her musical talents were very superior, and no expense had been spared to perfect this branch of her education.

Song after song was called for and given from the masterpieces of Beethoven to the tinkling serenade of the Spanish Troubadour; and, oddly enough, the last sad strains of the "Miserere" were followed by the merriest Bacchantine song ever given at unlicenced revel where wit and beauty graced alike the festive board, and joy was unconfined; but, as she ended with—

They hurry me from spot to spot,
To banish my regret,
And, when one lonely smile they win,
My sorrow they forget,

tears fell fast on the white keys that throbbed back their mournful response to her touch. That peculiar fascination that attracts our attention to one person in a crowd who observes us closely caused her to lift her eyes, and, through the shining mist of her tears, she saw Captain L—— standing apart from those who had gathered around her, his arms tightly folded over his chest, his proud head drooped slightly forward, his brow knitted as if in sharp pain, and his eyes bent upon her with such sorrow and reproach, such regret and unspeakable tenderness, as she never saw on a face before—something of the agony that must have been on Lucifer's when, hurled from the battlements of Heaven, he turned one last, despairing look at what had once been his own. It was as if an eternity of love were concentrated in a moment—a fierce and hungry love; as though, maddened by restraint, he would tear himself free, gather her to his bosom, and shield her in his heart from a world he was ready to defy.

At the same instant, Mrs. L——, who was attentively regarding her, followed her eyes, saw, and read as well as she, the look on her husband's face. One glance of hate she gave them, then glided silently as a serpent from the room.

When Annie landed at the place of her destination rain fell in torrents, and the midnight was as black and the sky as starless as her life. In the darkness, through which she could not distinguish one face from another, a hand led her across the plank to a carriage in waiting, and then she was clasped for an instant by strong arms, while, between kisses, the words, "My darling! my darling! I cannot live without you!" betrayed his identity. A moment later, alone, she leaned back on the cushions, and almost unconsciously repeated them again and again, as if they were all her comfort upon earth. It was their last meeting—their last parting. After the war we drifted apart, and I heard from her but at rare intervals. Now the word has come to me that she is dead; and I wonder—I cannot help it—if, in that home that is fairer than ours—that world that is brighter than this—where storms never rage, where winter never chills, where night never darkens—if, in that Heaven where the will of the Lord is the light thereof, the sweet, patient life that was so utterly a failure here will be crowned with joy? And will they be united where no human frailties mislead, where the frown of society is not feared, where misunderstandings never arise or misconceptions blind? God grant it, else how could we endure?

HANDS.

"The direct telegraphic communication of the heart is the hand." Somebody said that, and although I really don't know who it was, I agree with him perfectly.

It is the touch of the hand at greeting which warms or chills my heart, and makes me know to a certainty how much or how little I shall like the person before me.

If the fingers close about my own with a short, quick, convulsive grasp, I know that we should snap, snarl, and finally quarrel, and that the least I have to do with the owner and those wiry digits, the better off I shall be.

If a nerveless, limp hand glides into my own, and seems disposed to lie there, without life, I drop it like a hot potato; for I know that all my happiness would be as nothing in that awful palm.

Don't trust the owner of those limp hands. They grasp at nothing—they take hold of nothing. Your best possessions, if trusted to them—whether they were your jewels, your money, your talents, your secrets, or the best feelings of your heart—would all slip through those cold fingers and be lost, and their loss counted as nothing.

But if the hands grasp your own and hold them firmly, in strong, warm fingers, cultivate their owner, for he or she will take hold of your life, and warm and strengthen it.

Oh, these human hands! How, from the beginning they are part of our inner life, more than any other part of the human body!

What mother does not recall, with ineffable tenderness, the first touch of the baby's hands—the weak, helpless straying of tiny fingers, pleading for love and care, even before the baby-life seems to have become a reality? Who does not remember the anxious fear with which we watch those fingers as they grow older, and become mischievous and busy?

"Look out for Kitty, or Johnny!" is the household cry. "Their fingers are into everything."

It is not the tiny feet, the bright eyes or the rosy lips we guard, but the destructive little hands, that are never idle, and ever to be feared and watched.

We are sick, and doctors come and bring us healing potions, and rules of health for us to follow; and yet, after all, it is the touch of loving hands alone that brings us rest from pain.

My mother's hand has brought sleep to me many a time, when sickness has racked and agonized me: and in these later years, when pain and trouble come, I invariably mourn for the touch of "mother's hand."

I think I used to fear it, too; for my childhood was in the old-fashioned days of spanking, and many a smart correction have I received from those hands, which could be so loving.

All the greatness on earth has laid in the hollow of a hand. The books, the music, the pictures, the wonders of architecture, the intricacies of mechanism, the mysteries of science and the government of countries, with all their god-like beauties of colour, sound, symmetry, usefulness, progression and wisdom have laid within a human hand.

The highest aspirations and realizations of the brain are brought to light through the hand, and the tenderest love and charity of the heart make the hand its dispensator. They can be tender ministers of comfort and peace, and yet as cruel and full of venom as the bite of an asp.

And with all their power—with their charities, their cruelties, their tender touches, their spankings, their mischief—they are folded at last, and those who speak of us, tell of the closing of eyes and the folding of hands as the part of our going away.

THE NEW COMBUSTIBLE.

We stated, says *Galignani's Messenger*, a short time ago that a Belgian peasant had made the extraordinary discovery that earth, coal, and soda, mixed up together, would burn as well and better than any other combustible, and the fact has since then been proved beyond a doubt. The way in which he found this out is curious. He had been scraping the floor of his cellar with a shovel in order to bring all the bits of coal lying about into a heap, which, mixed as it was with earth and other impurities, he put into his stove. To his astonishment he found that this accidental compound burnt better instead of worse than he expected, and emitted much greater heat. Being an intelligent man, he endeavoured to discover the cause, and found that a great deal of soda, probably the remnant of the last wash, lay about on the floor of the cellar, and that some of it must have got into his heap. He then made a few experiments, and at length improved his compound sufficiently to render it practical. The publicity given in Belgium to this discovery caused trials to be made everywhere and it has how been ascertained that three parts of earth and one of coal dust, watered with a concentrated solution of soda, will burn well end emit great heat. Many Parisian papers talked of it, but only one, the *Moniteur*, went so far, as to make the experiment at its printing office. A certain quantity of friable and slightly sandy earth was mixed with the quantum of coal-dust prescribed; the two ingredients were well incorporated with each other, and then made into a paste with the solution above mentioned. The fire-place of one of the boilers had previously been lighted with coal, and the fire was kept up with shovelfuls of the mixture. The latter, in a few seconds, was transformed into a dry brown crust, which soon after became red-hot, and then burnt brightly, but without being very rapidly consumed. The fact of the combustion is therefore well ascertained; but before the system can be universally adopted there are some important points to be considered, such as the calorific power of the mixture compared to that of pure coal, its price, and above all, a remedy, for the great drawback attaching to it—its fouling the fire-grate considerably.

PLAIN BREAD PUDDING.—Cut stale bread into slices, butter them, and lay them in a pie-dish; sprinkle them with a little brown sugar and a few currants. Repeat this until the dish is quite full; then pour on the bread boiled milk mixed with one beat-up egg, until the bread is soaked; bake it light brown. One may make a still plainer bread pudding of odds and ends, when too stale to use otherwise, by soaking them in skim milk, then beating the bread to a pap, adding a few currants and a little brown sugar, and boiling in a cloth. Or another very palatable and economical pudding may be made as follows: Boil the pieces of bread, crust and crumb together, until so soft that it can be beaten up with a fork; add a little chopped suet of some skim milk, and a few spoonfuls of treacle; put it into a pie-dish and bake it brown; leave the top of it quite rough, or scratch it rough with a fork.