

FAR APART.

Beneath the quaint old bridge you hear
The waves make music as they pass ;
And, winding to the elm-tree near,
You see the pathway through the grass,
Where we were wont to walk, alas !

The river wanders as of old
Beneath the shade of willow-trees ;
The sunlit waters gleam like gold,
And ripple to the gentle breeze ;
But I am far from thee and these !

The sky bends over broad and blue ;
And, in the soft and mellow light,
You tread the lane our footsteps know
In former days, when days were bright :
Do these days bring such sweet delight ?

And still that lane with grass is green ;
With fragrant flowers the banks are fair ;
In golden gloss and silver sheen,
The bees still haunt the balmy air ;
But you will fail to find me there.

Again, perchance, I may not see
The rustling rows of willow-trees
(Which lent a leafy canopy
When we strolled underneath at ease
For I am far from thee and these !

Our joys forsake us. Soon does Spring
Pass by and for the Summer call :
Soon do the birds lose heart to sing,
When fading leaves in Autumn fall ;
And Winter is the end of all.

CRUEL AS THE GRAVE.

BY M. G.

"But the blow might have killed him !"
"It might." And I held up my large, sinewy
hand, thinking, with a pleasant sense of power
how a blow from it would make most men
reel.

Grace looked at it too, and, putting out her
own little white hand, she stroked the back of
mine with an affectionate, half-timid motion,
as if deprecating such an exhibition of prowess.

"And what then?" she asked, lifting her
gray eyes earnestly to my face.

"Ay, Grace—what then? But the 'What
then?' is just what an angry man never stops
to consider. That is the difference between a
man and a woman in a passion. No matter
how angry a woman is, she is always able to
calculate possible consequences, and to pull up
on the brink of the catastrophe; whereas a
man loses all control over himself, and plunges
forward headlong. Is it not so?"

"I don't know; I never was in passion."
"Good child! Few of your sex could say
the same."

"It is not I who am good; you and mamma
have always taken care that I should have
nothing to make me angry," Grace answered;
and as she said it her face looked so pure and
innocent, so full of guileless simplicity and
childlike trust, that I could hardly refrain from
pressing my lips to hers, and teaching her by
my kisses her first lesson in love.

But I resisted the temptation, as I had often
resisted it before. There was time enough yet,
I thought; she was but a child still, and I
would wait for the dawning of womanhood be-
fore I risked startling her by the betrayal of my
secret. I would go on loving her in silence for a
little longer, till she had learned to love me as
I did her, and then there would be no need to
tell it, for she would know my feeling by her
own.

Grace Armstrong was seventeen, and I was
exactly twice that age. Her father had died a
few weeks after she was born, and my father
was appointed her guardian. By his advice the
widow removed from the town where her hus-
band had practised as an attorney to a cottage
not far from our gate; so I had known Grace
almost from her birth, and when she was little
I knew no greater pleasure than to sit with her
on my knee, teaching her baby lips to copy my
rough speech. Her own mother was not more
wrapped up in the child than I was—nor so
much; for at first the intensity of her grief for
her husband seemed to render her incapable of
that absorbing love for her infant that is felt by
most young mothers. It was I who taught Grace
to talk—though, like the generality of her sex,
she soon learned to practise that accomplishment
without assistance; and it was I who taught
her to walk, sitting down on her own two
chubby legs, and then retiring to a little dis-
tance, and waiting with outstretched arms till
she would toddle up to me; and then, when she
grew older, it was I who soothed her grief when
her kitten died, or her doll broke its nose; and
when she began to go to the infant school in
Morne, it was I who took her there every
morning, and returned for her at noon, and car-
ried her home on my shoulder, while she fre-
quently relieved the tedium of the way by sing-
ing the "Whale" or the "Lion" in her clear,
ringing voice, accompanying the rhyme with
such a vigorous corresponding motion of the
hands that she was often in imminent danger
of toppling from her perch, and was only saved
by the tight hold I kept of her little red boots.

My father was as attentive in his own way to
Mrs. Armstrong as I was to Grace. He ploughed

her farm with his own horses, sowed her cereals
with his own hand, and reaped her crops with
his own laborers. If she tried to protest, he
"pooh-poohed" so impatiently that she was
afraid of offending him by saying any more—
for she was a timid, gentle little woman, who
acknowledged herself the weaker vessel, and
submitted to the authority of man to an extent
that was wonderful considering the age she
lived in.

But, yielding though she was, there was one
thing in which she was firm—she would not be
my father's wife. He took her refusal very
quietly, assured her that he bore her no ill-will,
and respected her all the more; but he never
entered the cottage again.

A year after this he fell ill. He kept about
on his feet for a week, and then took to his bed.
There was a yearning look in his eyes that I
did not understand, but he never complained;
and, if I asked was there anything he wanted,
he would smile at me, and say, "Nothing, my
boy. I'm quite comfortable—only weak;" and
then the next time the door opened, and our
housekeeper came in, the same longing look
came into his eyes, and he would toss restlessly
on his bed as if in pain.

The second day after he lay down, while he
slept, I ran to the cottage to account for my
absence the previous day. Grace received me
in pretended wrath at my neglect, but her
mother met me at the door, looking very
anxious; she had heard that my father was not
well. When I told her how ill he was, she said,
"I will go and nurse him."

So I took Grace on my shoulder, and we went
up to the house together.

He was just waking as we entered the room,
and she went up and laid her hand on his fore-
head, saying, in her quiet way—

"I am come to take care of you, Mr. Roe."
"It's time I had my medicine. Allan will
show you the bottle," he returned, composedly;
but I saw that the longing look was gone from
his eyes, and it did not return.

Mrs. Armstrong never left him for the next
three weeks. He liked to have Grace and me
with him too; but it was to her he looked for
everything; and, if care could have saved him,
he would not have died. He sank so gradually
that, in spite of the doctor's warning, I could not
realize that he was sinking, till one day, as
Grace sat on the foot of his bed, playing with
her doll, and Mrs. Armstrong and I were on
each side of it, I saw his face change suddenly.

He put out his hand, and took Mrs. Arm-
strong's, saying, "God bless you, Mary!" And
then he turned his fading eyes on Grace, and
next on me, and said, "Be kind to them."

He fell asleep after that, and never spoke
again till just before he died, and then his words
were not of us or of any of the things of earth.

I was a young man then, and people told me
that I must marry—that I could not do without
a wife, it would be so lonely for me now that
my father was gone. I wanted Mrs. Armstrong
to give up her cottage and live in my house;
but she refused—and she too said I must
marry.

"There are many nice girls who would gladly
be mistress of your house, and you must not
allow it to remain long without one," she told
me.

But I allowed it to remain without one for
twelve years, for I thought of the time when
my little Grace would be a woman, and waited.

The years passed so quickly that I scarcely
noted their flight, and my darling was almost a
woman now. During the last year I had many
a time been on the point of making the one
hope of my life known to her; but still I re-
frained, as one refrains from breaking the seal
of a long-looked-for letter, and prolongs the
pleasure of anticipation by lingering over the
outside of the envelope. I forgot that, while I
held my peace, another might step in and rob
me of my one ewe lamb; or, rather, I had so
long considered her as my own that the possi-
bility of another's laying claim to her never en-
tered my mind. I used to picture to myself
the startled look that would come into my
darling's face when I asked her to be my wife,
succeeded by one of shy happiness; and I have
wakened up at night with the excess of joy
caused by dreaming that I was folding her in
my arms as I listened to her timid confession
of love.

This day that I am speaking of we were
standing before the cottage door, Grace plucking
a rose now and then to add to the bouquet she
already held in her hand, while I told her of an
agricultural dinner I had been at the night be-
fore, where words had ran so high between two
gentlemen that they had come to blows. I tried
to excuse the one I liked best by saying that he
had not struck first, though, being the stronger
man, he had struck hardest; and it was then
that Grace, siding with the weaker, as women
generally do, said—

"But the blow might have killed him!"

Ah, with what a terrible meaning those words
rang in my ears in after-days!

"There's an excursion steamer just coming in
from the Isle of Man, Mr. Roe," a young man
called to me as he passed the gate.

"Oh, Allan, come to the quay and see the
excursionists land!" Grace exclaimed, throwing
down her flowers in her eagerness.

I should have been superintending the weed-
ing of a field of flax, but, as soon as she spoke,
I forgot all about it, and while I picked up her
flowers Grace ran to tell her mother where we
were going, and then we set off together, like
two happy children. It was a clear June day,
not warm, for, though the sun was shining
brightly, there was a strong wind blowing off

the sea, which we felt even at the cottage, half
a mile inland.

A quick walk soon brought us down to the
shore road, which ran along the cliffs that stayed
the further progress of the sea—not altogether,
though, for we could hear it roaring through
chasms and caves where it had forced a passage
for itself among the rocks. A high wall hid it
from our sight here, but farther away the white
sea-birds were breaking the smooth blue of the
water, as they dashed in after their prey, and
farther off still—beyond the village of Morne—
the banks of sand where the sea had once rolled
rose up against the sky. At the quay the
steamboat was just stopping, and when Grace
saw it she exclaimed—

"Oh, Allan, hurry, or we shall be too late to
see them land!"

So we took hands, and ran; there was no
one to laugh at us, and, if there had been, she
would not have cared. When we reached the
landing-place, the passengers had begun to
crowd up the steps. They were nearly all work-
ingmen, with their wives and families; but a
few people of higher station had taken advan-
tage of the excursion steamer to visit Morne,
which had begun to be celebrated for its beauti-
ful scenery, although then but a small fishing
village, little frequented as a seaside resort ex-
cept by some nervous invalids, who preferred its
quiet to the bustle of a more fashionable water-
ing-place. The better class of passengers
seemed all to belong to the same party, and
passed us laughing and joking each other about
being sea-sick.

After them, the last to leave the boat, came a
young man with fair hair and moustache, and a
handsome face with an open, amiable expres-
sion. He was below what I considered the
middle height, accustomed as I was to the strap-
ping sons of Morne, but he was above the me-
dium size of town-bred men, and had a good
figure and free, graceful carriage. I saw him
look at Grace as she stood leaning against a
post. I looked at her too, and, for the first time,
it struck me how lovely she had grown. Her
face was so familiar to me that I had never be-
fore thought whether nature had endowed her
with beauty or not; now I tried to see her with
this stranger's eyes, and I said that she was
beautiful. Her brown hair, which she wore in
natural ringlets, was blown away from her
face, the walk and sea-breeze had given to her
usually pale cheeks a most exquisite bloom, and
her deep gray eyes were sparkling with anima-
tion. I was no judge of features, but I saw that
her mouth, though larger than a connoisseur
might have approved, was beautifully shaped,
and that her forehead was low and broad, and
very white, and that it and her small straight
nose were like those of the old Grecian statues I
had read of but had never seen. No wonder
the stranger looked at her; and yet I resented
his doing so just as I had resented, when a child,
any other boy's claiming a bird's nest that was
mine by right of discovery.

He stopped in front of us and raised his hat.
"Is there a decent hotel here where one could
put up for a few days?" he inquired.

I directed him to the only hotel in the village,
and, thanking me for the information, he
passed on with another bow, and another ad-
miring but most respectful glance at Grace. As
soon as he was out of sight she exclaimed, in
her impulsive way—

"Oh, Allan, isn't he nice?" And when I did
not reply she added, "He is evidently not a
Manxman; his face is pure Saxon, and he has a
beautiful accent."

I winced, thinking of my own broad "tongue,"
and answered drily—

"He dropped his 'h's,' so probably he hails
from London."

"No, he didn't drop his 'h's,' you stupid old
boy!" she said, squeezing my arm affectionately;
and then we left the quay and wandered
away along the brown sands, and no foreboding
of coming darkness clouded the brightness of
that happy time.

A few days afterwards I went to Mrs. Arm-
strong's cottage, and finding the door open, went
in without knocking. As I was hanging my
hat upon the stand I heard sounds of talking
and laughing in the parlor; and that surprised
me, for, except the curate and Marianne Halli-
day, a staid girl about half-a-dozen years older
than Grace, Mrs. Armstrong had few visitors.
Marianne's voice was audible among the others
now, and there was a man's also, but it was not
the curate's, and wondering who could be the
promoter of so much merriment, I opened the
parlor door and looked in. Mrs. Armstrong was
knitting in her own rocking-chair, and was evi-
dently straightening her countenance after a
hearty laugh. Grace and Marianne were sit-
ting listening to some one who was reclining at
his ease in my usual seat, talking volubly.

A second glance showed me that "some one"
to be the gentleman who had spoken to us on
the quay, and when I recognised him I felt, as if
a cold hand had been laid upon my heart.

"Mr. Roe, Mr. Dalton," Grace's mother said,
introducing us. I bowed coldly, but he, retain-
ing his seat, held out his hand with a mixture
of frankness and nonchalance, saying—

"Excuse my not rising—Mrs. Armstrong
kindly forbids it."

Then I saw that one of his feet was swathed
in flannel, and supported on a cushion—the
same cushion that Grace gave me to rest my head
upon when I came to the cottage tired after
being in the fields all day. I could not refuse
to take the hand he offered, but I allowed it to
slip limply through my fingers, and sat down
near the door, feeling more awkward and angry
than I had ever felt in my life before.

"Mr. Dalton has hurt his ankle, Allan," Mrs.
Armstrong said, looking deprecatingly at me,
for she saw I was annoyed.

Out of consideration for her, I forced myself
to ask the stranger how the accident had hap-
pened.

"In the most foolish way in the world," he
answered, and as he spoke I was unpleasantly
conscious how favorably his modulated voice
and clear tones must contrast with my guttural
mode of speech. "I was walking along the
road this morning, too much engrossed with the
surrounding beauty to watch where my feet
went, and before I was aware of it one of them
had slipped into a hole in the road, and my
ankle got such a twist that it quite lamed me.
Fortunately I was opposite Mrs. Armstrong's
gate at the time, so I threw myself on her mer-
ciful hospitality till I could send for a car from
Morne."

"It was fortunate," was all the answer I
made.

"Yes," said Marianne, "for Mrs. Armstrong
is very skilful in her treatment of sprains."

"I will bear testimony to that whenever I am
called upon," he put in, gaily; "the pain of my
ankle has abated wonderfully since it has been
fomented."

Grace did not speak much, but she kept her
eyes fixed on the stranger as he rattled on from
one subject to another, showing, by his manner
of touching on each, an acquaintance with the
world to which she was quite unaccustomed.
The longer I listened the more distrustful I grew
of his bright, boyish face and the frank, open-
hearted manner that seemed always inviting
confidence, and I was angry that the others
should be deceived by him. Even Marianne,
who was usually so reserved, was talking as
freely to him as if he were an old friend.

"So much for women's boasted intuition!"
I thought bitterly, as I sat unnoticed and ne-
glected—neglected for this butterfly acquain-
tance of an hour. There was no use in staying
to see Grace monopolised by another, and I
soon went away. Grace was always in the
habit of accompanying me to the gate, and I
expected her to do so now, but she sat still and
allowed me to go out alone; perhaps, from my
constrained way of bidding her good evening, she
thought I did not wish for any demonstration
of affection in the stranger's presence.

I went again to the cottage next day, still
feeling very much out of temper. There was
no Mr. Dalton there to annoy me this time, but
Grace's head was full of him, and that was al-
most as bad.

"Oh, Allan,"—she had a habit of beginning
her sentences with an "Oh,"—"Mr. Dalton is
an author; it was he who wrote that last book
you got me from the library," she said, nearly
as soon as I went in.

"Yes, and that you said was such trash," I
returned, provoked to see the yellow-covered
novel in question lying on the window-seat be-
side her.

"No, I did not say it was trash—at least I
did not mean it."

"You did say it; but I suppose your ac-
quaintance with the talented author has altered
your opinion of its merits," I rejoined, sarcasti-
cally.

"Of course it has; and, besides, thought a
book may not be very clever, still, you know, is
taken a clever man to write a book."

"Not at all—that is a popular delusion.
Writing is some men's trade, and it is usually
when they are not clever enough to get on at
other things that they take to it."

"Could you write a book, Allan?" she asked
after pondering a little the information I had
imparted. She did not like to question its cor-
rectness, but it was evident that she was pre-
pared to admire me more than she had ever
done before if I answered in the affirmative.

But truth would not admit of my doing so,
especially as Grace might in that case call upon
me to prove that I could do as I said. So I stuck
my thumbs into the pockets of my waistcoat,
and, assuming an important air that I felt did
not sit naturally, I answered—

"I can get on at other things, so have no
need to write; but, if I could not do better than
that"—indicating the yellow-covered book with a
contemptuous jerk of my head—"I would
never attempt it."

"Oh, but Mr. Dalton can do far better than
that now; he says he wrote it when he was a
boy, and feels quite ashamed of it since he has
grown up."

"He is only a boy yet," I said, trying another
tack.

"Oh, Allan, did you not see his beautiful
moustache?"

This was an unanswerable argument, so I
shifted my ground again.

"It is strange how he could have sprained
his ankle on the level road. Had he been walk-
ing among the rabbit-burrows on the sand-
banks, I could have understood it; but there
are no holes on this road that I ever saw."

"But there is one just beside our gate; he
showed it to us yesterday when we were helping
him on to the car. The road men had picked
out a large stone, and had not filled up the gap.
You can see it from here if you look."

"I can take your word for it. But, because
there is a hole in the road, that does not prove
the necessity of a man's slipping into it if he is
looking where he is going."

"Mr. Dalton was not looking where he was
going—he was looking in at our windows," she
returned, blushing.

"How do you know?" I inquired, sharply.

"Marianne and I were standing at the draw-
ing-room window, and I was pointing him out