

Select Literature.

Casper Athwold's Story.

I am Casper Athwold. I was born in the old Athwold mansion, on the banks of the Hudson, where I live to-day. Shall I tell you how many years ago? I think

not. A man may keep that for his own secret, and be young or old, as Providence gives him the heart. Some are young all their lives.

They say He made me beautiful; but, she rocked her sister's youngest child up her knee.

At my door the elm shadows lay thick and in them stood a bent, crooked figure clothed in rags—that of a beggar, who

one day, a tipsy crew dropped me from her arms down the whole length of the steep oak stair-case. Shall I say any more? I had rather not; I think there is no need.

Yet I was a happy child; a hurt child at times in the prophetic decline down

As I grew up, I built such castles in the air as other youths build; oftener when my dear parent had gone from me to Heaven, and the world was very lonely.

Then in my castle, I began to see Kate Norman's figure. Kate Norman's dark eyed, crimson-check face smiled on me from visionary firesides there, and I heard her voice sing-

[illegible]

her, I went in the heat of the afternoon to a shady spot by the river-side—my own ground—though it was so pleasant for the neighbor's children that I never had the heart to fence it in. I lay upon the grass, reading a rare old book, a poet's

dream, with love for its text—a book to read in such a place—when, behind the glossy leaves of some shrubs, I heard the sparrow-like twitter of young girls' voices, chattering with each other.

'She'll have him,' said one.
'She fancy such a bridegroom!' said the other. 'All his money couldn't buy me.'
'He doesn't want you but Kate Norman,' said the first.

'As if I envied her! One must be at one's last prayer, to want such an admirer! No one could like Casper Athwold.'

'Of course not,' said the first. 'But he's rich, and Kate poor enough.'

'You are right, no won an could love

'You are right, but money will marry anybody. It will turn out as I say. Hush !'
'What ?' cried the other.
'I heard steps, I'm sure,' said the first ;
'fancy him coming upon us ! These are
'He had best go and offer his hand a-
heart to Miss Kate Norman,' I said.
'They would make a well-matched
couple. Does he look like me in
clothes, I wonder. They fit him well.'

There was a rustle—a sound of feet on the grass. The chirping voices died away in the distance, and looking over the bush-

es where they had been. I saw a couple of orange-rinds and a paper stuck with sugarcandy. They were boarding-school girls, from the establishment on the hill; the confectioneer's chief patrons—stilly, vapid creatures, whose search for nice little pastries and

I stopped all my other thoughts to think that over. I was not vain or blind; but we are to ourselves what we know ourselves to be—that which goes on into

eternity, not the clay-mold at which people look from afar off, and to which they bid adieu, as it lies in the coffin—and I, to myself, was a man with more tenderness and passion, more power and will to love and care for life.

loved!

Just for ten minutes, I hated the world ; I hated the jolly, broad-shouldered farmer, tramping along with his clear, shrill whistle, his hat, the back of his hand, the sleeve of his coat, his boots, his trousers, his shirt, his

my little boat.

After that I knew nothing until I came to myself in a strange room in a strange hotel.

The captain of the steamer which I was in, when I was shot, had fancied that I

hated the yellow-haired child in the bottom of the boat, at his feet ; hated all who lived and breathed, and walked, tall and straight, under the sky. Then my heart softened and I wept. I had loved Kate

Norman, and I loved her still. The night before, never thinking of myself at all, I had thought of her as some time to come mine. The girls' chatter had awakened me to the truth. Just as I lived now.

alone in the old homestead among the maples, so I must live unless I bought a wife with my gold—a wife that could not love me.

That ended my brief wooing-time. I stood alone, facing the gateway in the great

I shut myself up in the old house, among

my books, and shunned the sight of fair faces, and the sound of sweet voices. It was the best thing that a man whom no one could love could do.

So the months wore away. Sometimes I

had met her, but I always looked another way; and our pleasant greetings had come to an end. I had seen a flush of annoyance on her face, and taken no heed of it. I had even been discourteous—but I loved her, and I had loved her all alone. Right at the railway station; but I reached it in time to find the train gone. Another hour or so must pass. They were against me. She should not read the letter which I lived—she should not!

her just as I had loved her all along. I had kept me from showing it. But, when I was dead—when I could no longer blush for shame of such a hopeless love, then I should not care to have the dreams I had once cherished hidden any longer. Then, when she would not laugh at me—for all

are tender of the dead—I should like her to know exactly how I had felt toward her. So, one day, I went to the good old lawyer who had had charge of our estate for forty years, and had him draw me up a will, in which I left all the wealth that I possessed to Kate Norman, with a letter

which only her hands were to unveil, only her to read, after I was gone to my churchyard home.

This was the letter: "KATE NORMAN—You never cared for me—you could not; once I heard a woman speak; and now there was a secret at all? It seemed not. Only a space lay between the station and house. The railroad encroachments been my mother's greatest troubles in last years of her life. Now this fact

man say no womanould : but I loved you
better than my life. Had I cherished one
faint ray of hope, I would have striven to
win your heart as man never strove before;
but I learnt, in time, what folly mine was;
and, in pity for myself, I held aloof from
society. Had I heark as other men are you

should have shared all that I possessed with me. As it is, it gives me some pleasure to think that you will dwell under this roof, and tread those garden walks when I am gone; and surely, if spirits ever revisit this world, mine will return, and I shall be able to tell you how well you read—*for, through the Venetian shutters, long bars of light fell across the porch and looking in, unseen myself, I saw the Norman with a letter in her hand, go through the opposite door. The will be read. Before I could interpose*

At times, to look upon you, Kate Arnold
in this house when my sad life has passed.
'Adieu. When you read this, the hand
that writes those words will have moulder-
ed into dust—and you will ply, not decide
the love of
'CASTER ATHWOLD.'

