Shorts.

Thou turnest from us, sweet-faced, joyous summer,
And how with dread our spirit pulses beat,
As shade on shade strike through thy mellow beauty,
Till the flushed forest signals thy retreat.

The sun droops low, now, and the shadowy gloaming,
Falls quicklier downward to the browning hills,
The bright green fern pales fast away to silver,
The chill wind sends sad notes through the sweet ones of the rills.

Among the banks where laughed the water lilies,
The autumn clouds look sadly back instead,
And on the bough that dipped in the still water,
The lonely nest looks out, the birds have long since fled.

Thy wondrous chorus passeth to the distance,
The liquid birdland flaw the young winds song,
The solemn rolling of the cloud-wrapt thunder,
In weird fragments brokenly, then pealing loud and long.

Grant us thy blessing, woven out of June breaths
Into a spirit song intense and clear,
To set the white gloom glowing with the brightness,
Of faith and trust that fell despair and fear.

And let the strain rap high, through bitter losses,
Exhausted love-light anfiling into death,
Through empty room, and summer glories faded,
Let human vials still pore tuneful breath.

'Tis weak libation, rising out of anguish,
Impompetent of power, so stilled with pain,
Yet glory to God rings faint, but not uncertain;
And though he sits high up, loves well the low refrain.

In and about the soft tuned hallelujahs,
If dead wood violets wind in fragrant breath,
To all thy lights put out on earth, sad human,
Perfection still awaiteth thee at death.

LIVERPOOL, N. S., Sept. 15, 1885.

Selected Serial.

SHILOH:

OR,

WITHOUT AND WITHIN.

BY W. M. L. JAY.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

A RE-FLOW OF TROUBLE.

An artist of wonderful power has appeared in Shiloh, and is painting the quiet little hamlet with a gorgeousness of colour, a boldness of treatment, a breadth of effect, a brilliancy of tone, beyond all that Ruskin could conceive, or Turner dare to paint. She charges the forests with great masses of glowing reds, shading, at the edges, into orange. She makes a tree on the hillside—otherwise green—to hold out one bough burning as with flame, and another reddened as with blood. She paints the oaks in rich raiment of purple and crimson, blotched with golden brown. She dips her pencil in bright scarlet for the sumach, and pale yellow for the beeches. Here and there, in the meadows, an isolated maple becomes a fixed, earthly embodiment of the sunset's celestial and evanescent glories. At last, having emptied her palette of all its most brilliant colours, she tones down the dazzling effect by drawing over the picture soft, gauzy veils of azure and amethystine haze. Needless to say that her name is Autumn!

Yes, Frances, the feet of October are bright on the hilltops, and still I am in Shiloh! Two weeks ago, Uncle John wrote to ask if it was not time for the "rose crop" to be in, and Flora ended a *resume* of her winter's plans with a threat to come and see for herself what mischief I was about, if I did not at once return to help in their execution. Even Aunt Belle added a gracious postscript to the effect that a kindly welcome home was ready for me whenever I chose to claim it; to characters so radically dissonant as hers and mine an occasional separation is a wonderful promoter of harmony. We shall tolerate each other all the more cordially through the winter for the summer's escape from the necessity of toleration.

First, I was kept in Shiloh by the autumn pictures, to which every day added some new effect that I could not bear to miss; then, by a new wave of trouble, or rather, the reflow of an old one. In the fair, still, sunny days of late September, the fever, so long held in abeyance, broke out again. My child-woman, Libby, was one of the first to sicken. She was so unmistakably a child of God that, when Bob burst into my room crying out "Libby's got the fever!" I felt how fit it was that she should be called to enjoy her heavenly inheritance, and knew that I had not a thread to hang an earthly hope upon. A few days later her mortal part went to swell the immortal harvest to be finally reaped from Shiloh burial ground.

From the clods and the flowers laid gently upon her small grave, I went to Mrs. Burcham's bedside. She had been stricken down by the fever, about a week previous. Soon after, Major Burcham had sought Aunt Vin and begged her, with tears in his eyes, to take charge of the sick-room; his wife had no relatives within easy distance, none of them could reach her under some days; meanwhile, she would be left to such care, willing but unskilful, as he could give her, and the various assistance of the neighbours. The appeal was not made in vain. For five days the faithful old nurse had been at her post; for the past three days and nights she had scarcely slept. That morning I had looked in upon her, on my way to Libby's corpse, and found her looking nearly as haggard as her patient.

"You are killing yourself," I remonstrated; "surely, you can have watchers at night."

"Don't you be troubled! I'm made of tougher immaterial than you think. As to the watchers, there's plenty of 'em to be had for the askin'—good, bad, and different. But the truth is, that every time I've left her she's run down amazingly—pulse all gone to most nothin'—and its took all my wits to bring her up again; so I've made up my mind that its easier to stick to her as long as she's in such a 'carious situation, or, at least, till you have done your last good deed for poor little Libby, and can come and stay with Mis' Burcham while I refute myself with a nap. I ain't afraid to trust her with you, but there ain't another person in all Shiloh that I'm willing to leave her with, though it does sound a little like self-glorious-ness!"

So Mr. Divine drove me directly from the graveyard to the house of Major Burcham. That gentleman was standing by the gate, and assisted me to alight. I saw him look at Leo (who was with us, as usual) in a way that I could not understand; I saw Leo look at him grimly, fiercely, giving utterance to a low growl.

"Leo!" said Mrs. Divine, sharply; yet with no intonation of surprise.

It was plain that the dog had an antipathy to Major Burcham, and that Mr. Divine understood it well.

Mrs. Divine began to make kind inquiries after Mrs. Burcham. Before they came to an end, I discovered that the soft, warm slippers, in which I had expected to be "shod with silence" and with comfort, during the night watch, had been left behind; and I begged Mrs. Divine to send them to me, by Leo, sometime in the course of the evening.

"He has sent me a light here," said I, in conclusion, "and will know where to find me."

"Yes-es," returned she hesitatingly. Then, seeing that Mr. Divine had engaged the Major's attention, she leaned over, and whispered—"Leo'll bring them, I guess, seeing it's you; but you had better keep a little look out for him, for I doubt if he'll come inside the gate—that is, unless he sees you somewhere round. I'll send him about eight o'clock."

The wagon rolled away; Leo, after a long, wistful look at me, as he saw me turn toward the house with Major Burcham, bounded after it; and I went in, wondering what possible cause of feud could exist between the faithful, mild-tempered dog and the pompous man at my side.

"Mr. Divine told me that he had bought Leo of Major Burcham's Irishman," said I to myself. "Ah! yes, I see—the Irishman's dog, treated with contempt, possibly with cruelty, by the Irishman's master. Leo remembers and resents it."

Aunt Vin met me at the door of the sick-room. When she had made me fully acquainted with its routine I said to her—

"Now, go straight to bed, and leave every care behind."

"I'm agoin'," replied she with a long yawn, "I don't need but one such conjunction; I didn't know I was so sleepy till you come in—the very sight of you was omnivorous! Be sure and call me at nine o'clock; then it'll be time to shift her on t'other bed." Aunt Vin took herself off.

Mrs. Burcham appeared not to notice the change of nurses. She lay with her eyes closed, in a half stupor, from which (I had been warned) she roused completely only at intervals. Sometimes she slept—a troubled, uneasy sleep—wherefrom it was necessary to waken her—partially, at least—every few moments.

Two hours crept slowly away; twilight began to gather. With it heavy clouds rolled up from the east; a peal of thunder sounded from afar. Mrs. Burcham rose from a brief slumber with a start and a moan, and the sorrowful lament of David, fell brokenly from her lips—

"My son! my son! Oh, my son!"

I heard it with alarm; delirium was always a dreaded symptom in the fever—and no question but she was delirious, for, if she ever had a son, he must have been dead years ago; I had never heard of him. Indeed, I believed her to have been childless. I laid my hand upon her head, felt her pulse, listened anxiously to her breathing, but I could detect no sign of increasing fever or weakness; and I sat down again a little reassured, just as another rumble of thunder filled the air. It helped to rouse her completely; she opened her eyes and looked at me, intelligently enough; there was no sign of the delirium I had feared.

"It is Miss Frost," said she, feebly. "You are very kind. Is Aunt Vin resting?"

"Yes; for a little while. She needed rest; and she said she was not at all afraid to leave you with me," replied I, fearing lest she might be disturbed at finding herself in other hands than those of her accustomed and experienced nurse.

"I am very glad—that she is resting, I mean. I hope you are making yourself comfortable. There is wine in the closet; it will help you to keep up your strength; and there is an easier chair in the parlour—tell Bridget to bring it in for you."

"Do not trouble yourself about me, I am quite comfortable," I answered, much marvelling at the change that a few days of sickness had wrought in Mrs. Burcham's manner. Gratitude for kindness, and consideration for others, were not its most prominent characteristics formerly.

She insisted, and to satisfy her the chair was brought. Then she closed her eyes, and sank again into stupor.

An hour went by. Darkness was fully come. The storm, which had seemed to retreat for a time, now drew near again; heavy drops of rain fell; flashes of lightning came and went, followed by the loud roll of thunder.

Glancing at my watch, I saw that it was about time for Leo to arrive, and began to wonder how I was to manage that "look out" which Mrs. Divine had advised. The bedroom was at the back of the house; one window opened upon a dense orchard; the other, into a small recess of alcove, enclosed on three sides only, and termed in Shiloh a "shed." While I was yet considering the difficulty, I heard a sound in this shed, which, after listening a moment, I knew to be by my canine friend shaking the rain from his shaggy coat. Immediately, his huge head and chest appeared framed in the open window, his fore-paws resting on the sill, and in his mouth a small package, carefully wrapped in oiled-skin, to protect it from the rain. Instead of scratching at the main entrance, as is his wont, in his character of messenger, it would seem that the sagacious animal had quietly reconnoitered the premises, until, discovering me sitting alone in the sick-room, he had ventured to make his appearance at the window.

I rose, intending to relieve him of his burden, give him a pat on the head, and silently motion him to depart, when a fearful peal of thunder shook the house, startling Mrs. Burcham into sudden consciousness. Her eyes opened full upon Leo's dark figure.

"Who is that?" she asked, in alarm.

"It is only Leo—Mr. Divine's dog," I hastened to say, soothingly—"he has brought me some slippers that I forgot to bring myself."

The look of fright passed quickly from her eyes, and a soft, mournful expression came there instead. To my utter surprise, she said, in low, faint tones—but distinct enough, doubtless, to the dog's quick ears—

"Leo! come here!"

He leaped through the window, came to the bedside, and looked down upon her with a benignant, yet an inquisitive face. She feebly lifted her wasted hand and laid it on his great, rough head.

"Oh, Leo! Leo!" she exclaimed, mournfully, "where is your master?" Two large tears gathered in her eyes, and rolled down on the pillow.

I was amazed and alarmed. The scene was utterly incomprehensible; but I saw that it involved excitement and emotion which could not be otherwise than hurtful to my patient, and I hastened to put an end to it.

"Leo!" I began somewhat sternly, "it is time for you to go home, sir."

"Oh! no, no," exclaimed Mrs. Burcham, pleadingly—"do not send him away yet! It is so pleasant to have him here once more! Besides, he never likes to go out in a thunderstorm, you know."

It was true; Leo has a very human dislike, amounting to a species of nervous terror, of a thunderstorm; he will face one at the call of duty, but he would much prefer to have duty choose a fairer occasion. Yet I was astonished at Mrs. Burcham's intimate knowledge of his idiosyncrasy.

However, it was no time to question or argue. I pointed to a dim corner and bade Leo lie down, which he did at once. Then, seeing that it was nearly time for the patients anodyne, I ventured to anticipate it a little, and to increase the dose by two or three drops, to balance the unexpected excitements of the moment. As she swallowed it, there came another heavy clap of thunder.

"It is a fearful storm!" said she, with a slight shiver. "It was in just such a storm that—"

She checked the words, or they faltered on her tongue—I could not tell which—a spasm of pain crossed her face; then, she closed her eyes and lay quite still, but neither in stupor nor in sleep, I saw plainly. I sat watching her, praying that the anodyne might quickly take effect. My anxiety was too great to allow me to wonder much at the scene which I had just witnessed; I only felt dimly, that here were memories and sorrows at work to which I had no clue—curiously connected with Leo, too—and not in the least explained by that hypothesis of the Irishman's dog and the Irishman's master which had so satisfactorily accounted for whatever was strange in the joint behavior of Major Burcham and that dumb, black animal coiled up in yonder corner—whom, by the way, I was resolved to send quietly home as soon as I could do so without attracting the sick woman's attention. I deeply regretted that he had ever been sent hither on errand of mine.

Little did I imagine that it was God's errand, and not mine, which had brought Leo there that night!

Some silent moments passed by, and I trusted that Mrs. Burcham's over-burdened heart was slowly sinking into the soft depths of slumber, when her eyes opened once more. There was no sleep, no forgetfulness in them—only thought, trouble, wistfulness.

"Miss Frost," said she, quite calmly, "how long do you think I have to live?"

"My dear Mrs. Burcham!" I exclaimed, almost in despair, "pray do not agitate yourself any further, at present! Try to leave all your cares—your life also—in the hands of God, who careth for you, who pitieth you as a father pitieth his own children; lay yourself in His mercy as in a bed, and there sleep all your cares and fears away!"

"As a father pitieth his own children," she repeated, slowly, as if thinking aloud, and paying no heed to the rest of my words—"yes that is it—that is what I must say to him. Miss Frost, please tell my husband I want to see him."

"Would it not be better to wait till morning?" I entreated; "you have had too much excitement already—I really ought to forbid any more. Do try to forget all that troubles you, and go to sleep!"

"I have tried," she answered, "and I cannot. Besides, I may not live till morning—'the night cometh, in which no man can work;' and I have something to do before I die—Leo has come here on purpose to remind me of it, to rouse me up to it, to help me through it; let me do it while I have strength and reason. Please call my husband!"

I saw that it was necessary to do her bidding. Feeling her pulse, I found it strong and regular, though quick; something—love, duty, hope—was strengthening her for the work she had to do. Dimly I began to discern the finger of Providence, of Guidance, in the strange, and, at first sight, casual incidents of the evening; whither it pointed, I would go!

As Major Burcham entered the room, I cast an anxious glance at Leo. He lifted his head, and his eyes looked gloomy and sullen, but he made no unfriendly demonstration; plainly, he respected the sanctities of the sick-chamber, or he deferred to the rights of the master of the house, or his fierceness was held in check by awe of the thunderstorm. I went out, and left the husband and wife together.

I had been in the sitting-room but a few moments when Aunt Vin joined me.

"It thundered so hard I couldn't sleep," said she, yawning, "so I insided I might as well come down. What time is it?"

"It is near nine o'clock."

She looked thoughtfully at the closed door of bed-room, through which came indistinctly the faint, beseeching tones of Mrs. Burcham's voice, and the heavier, yet subdued and broken, accents of her husband.

"I don't quite like that," said she, significantly, "though I've been participating it this three days."

It was plain that the mystery was no mystery to her!

Before I could answer, Major Burcham threw wide open the door—if that was Major Burcham!—all his pomposity and self-sufficiency gone as completely as foliage from a forest where fire hath been—tears in his eyes—a broken, shaken, grief-stricken man, whose very aspect smote me with compassion.

"Aunt Vin—Miss Frost—" he began, in faltering tones—"my wife wants me to call you to witness that I promise her to—to forgive our son Henry fully and freely, from this day forth, and to make immediate steps to find out what has become of him, and to—receive him, whenever he returns, as—loving father, whether—"

His voice failed; a great sob heaved his broad chest.

"Whether I am dead or alive," prompted Mrs. Burcham, slowly and distinctly.

"Whether she is—dead or alive—so help—me—God!" faltered the Major, in trembling, yet earnest and solemn tones.

Mrs. Burcham's face, while these sentences were in progress, was a sight to see!—the eager, hungry look with which she waited, at every break, for the next words, seeming to draw them forth by the very force of her expectation—the perfect satisfaction and peace that settled upon her features as the Major ended, transfiguring them into a soft and beautiful unearthliness.

"I can die happy now!" she murmured, reaching up her arms to her husband, the dew of a new birth of wifely love shining in her eyes.

Aunt Vin softly closed the door upon them. "I'll give 'em jest two minutes, by the clock," said she, almost fiercely; "then, I shall gravitate that man out of that room so quick, he'll think he's an extant race!"

Getting no answer, she turned and saw my face of mute perplexity.

"Goodness! child!" she exclaimed, "didn't you ever hear about Henry Burcham?"

"Never."

"Then I s'pose I must give you an exclamation. Well! he was Major and Mis' Burcham's only child, and as bright and handsome and good-hearted a boy as ever you see—high-sperited, too, as you might demise, seein' what stock he come from—but a boy that everybody liked and made much of, in Shiloh. Well, his father was sort on makin' him a lawyer, but Henry wanted to be a painter—he took to brush and pellet jest as natural as a duck takes to water; couldn't help makin' picture no more than he could help breathin,' poor fellow! His father forbid it, in extinct terms, over and over again, but his mother derives at it, in secret, I guess;—anyhow, Henry had his canvas-backs and his boxes of brushes and collars up in his own room, and painted all the time that he could get. Well, the upshot of it all was that Major Burcham found it out, one day, and flew into a tearin' passion, and told Henry that if he was bent on disgracin' his name by being a poor miserable painter, he wished he'd clear out and never show him his face agin. The boy took him at his word—it was an awful, stormy night, jest like this; and in the morning, they found his room empty, and him miners; and he's never been heerd on since. That's most eight years ago. It's strange you never happened to hear on't, and you a-stayin' at the Divines, too! Why, if you say, 'Henry Burcham!' to that great dog of theirs, now, to this day, he'll whine and take on like mad."

"Leo!" I exclaimed, "what has he to do with it?"

"Why, Leo was Henry Burcham's dog, first. Somebody made him a present of him, when he was a pup, and they were uncommonly detached to each other. You never saw one without t'other; Mr. Dragner used to call 'em 'Damon and Pathos.' When Henry went off, he gave the dog to Mike, his father's Irishman, to keep for him; but the Major never could bear the sight of him—I guess he was an unpleasant momentum of his son!—and he kicked him, one day, and the dog sprang at his throat, and like to choke him to death afore they could pull him off; and so the Irishman had to sell him to Mr. Divine."

For some moments I sat silent, slowly digesting these various items of information. Then I took out my tablets and began writing rapidly.

"What are you doin'?" asked Aunt Vin, with surprise—"takin' notes?"

"No; I am writing these words—'Your mother is dangerously ill, and longs to see you. Come immediately.' I sign it with my name, and I am going to send it, by Leo, to Henry Burcham—alias, Harry Archum—alias, Mr. Cambur!"

"Good land!" exclaimed she, settling into the nearest chair, and jerking her head in her grimmest fashion, "if that don't beat all! And to think that I never once inspected him! Yet I've told him a dozen times, that he dissembled somebody I'd seen afore!"

"And now," said I, wrapping my tablets in a part of the oiled-skin so seasonably provided, "if you think you can venture to open that door, I will call Leo out, and send him on his errand."

"Bless us!" ejaculated Aunt Vin, recalled to the recollection of her patient's situation, "I ought to have done it afore!"

I led Leo quietly into the porch, and closed the door behind us.

"Take this," said I, slowly and distinctly, and strongly emphasizing the underscored words—"take this, quickly, to Henry Burcham. He may be at the studio, or at Mrs. Danforth's or at the depot. Find Him!"

The last words, I knew, Leo understood perfectly. How far he comprehended the rest of my directions, I could not be sure; but, as he had often surprised me by showing that he knew the names of many persons, places, and things, which no one had taken any special pains to bring to his notice; and as he had visited all these spots with me, on several occasions, I felt tolerably at ease, even on this point—the more, that he took the tablets between his teeth, and, without the least hesitation, dashed out into the storm. The thunder was dying away in the distance, but the rain fell more heavily than ever, and an angry wind drove it in sheets against the windows and shook it from the groaning trees. It was a wild night, dark to utter obscurity; no man would have liked to face it; my messenger, I felt, was the fittest, swiftest, surest, that could have been provided. In that faith, I went back to the sick-room.

Before taking you thither, however, I will give you the explanation of my instructions to Leo. A few days previous to Mrs. Burcham's seizure the artist had gone to the city on business. He had told me that he should positively return on this (Saturday) evening. The train would be late, I knew; it would not reach the depot till after the storm had begun. He might wait there for it to cease; he might set forth, and be glad to take shelter with Mrs. Danforth; or he might persevere till he reached the studio. In one or the other of these places, I felt certain he would be found.

Mrs. Burcham was quietly falling asleep. The anodyne which I had administered, aided by the relief of mind and heart afforded by Major Burcham's promise, was at last taking effect.

I stole softly down to Aunt Vin's side and asked, in a whisper, if the mother ought not to be informed that her son was nearer than she had believed, and that she might hope to see him soon?

"Not till she's slept," answered Aunt Vin, decidedly. "That's her great consideratum, now. Time enough to break his revival to her, when he gets here. But you'd better tell Major Burcham."

He listened to the communication almost without a word. He looked even more pained than surprised to find that his son had been in Shiloh so long without making himself known; nor did the shadow wholly dissipate as I talked of his rising fame as an artist. He exhibited some fear lest my message might not reach its destination, and talked of setting forth himself; but, being made to consider the fury of the storm, and Leo's excellent qualifications for the task entrusted to him, he went sadly and wearily back to the silence and solitude of his chamber. The argument which really prevailed with him, however, was probably shadowed forth in a few words spoken as he went—

"After all, Mrs. Burcham might—want me, before I could get back again."

Together, Aunt Vin and I kept the watch in the sick-room. Neither of us could sleep, now, till this matter was brought to some conclusion. We sat and listened through the subsidences of the wind and rain.

Very slowly the hours wore away. Ten—eleven—struck; midnight drew near. It was three hours since Leo's departure. Anxiety took possession of me—perhaps he had misunderstood my directions—perhaps he had failed in his quest—possibly the artist had not arrived—a hundred ifs and peradventures, the gray, teasing progeny of suspense and expectation, thronged my mind and tormented me with their pertinacious, yet changeful, shapes. It exasperated me to see Aunt Vin's calm patience; it sickened me to think what long experience of just such vigils, such expectation, such delay and such anxiety, it argued!

Was there a sound outside? I held my breath to listen, with my eyes involuntarily resting on the outer door of the sitting-room. I saw the latch noiselessly lifted; the door swung open; two dripping figures, a man and a dog, entered. Between them and me rushed Major Burcham, mere upon the alert than I—to throw his arms around his son, and murmur some incoherent words.

It was all the work of an instant. Before Aunt Vin could turn round to see what was going on, before I could reach and close the bedroom door, Mrs. Burcham opened her eyes, saw the tableau, and read its meaning.

"My son!" she cried, in tones that thrilled every heart—"it is my son!"

(To be continued.)

—*Mr. Smiley*: "Better let me carry the poodle, my dear, and you can carry the baby." *Mrs. Smiley*: "No, no; you carry the baby. I cannot trust you with Cap. You might drop him."

—*Judge*: What is your age, Miss? *Witness*: Please, sir, I don't like to say. *Judge*: But I have to know how old you are. If you don't want to tell me what your age is now, tell me what your age was ten years ago. *Witness* (tickled to death): Only thirty-one, sir.

—Why is a newspaper like a tooth-brush? Because everyone should have one of his own, and not be borrowing his neighbor's.

—An engraver recently made this mistake: "Mr. and Mrs. Smith respectfully request your presents at the marriage of their daughter."

—*Schoolboy*—Is there any difference between a journalist and an editor? Yes; the journalist is a man who writes things for newspapers. The editor is the man who leaves out what the journalist writes.

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