

He took the paper in his hand, his eyes grew dim, his breath came short and fast; then he dropped the paper and burst into tears. The peasants had been playing the allegretto of Beethoven's symphony in A. The whole family surrounded him with signs of curiosity and surprise. For some moments his convulsive sobs impeded his utterance; then he raised his head, and said, "I am Beethoven." And they uncovered their heads, and bent before him in respectful silence. Beethoven held out his hands to them and they pressed them, they wept over them; for they knew that they had among them a man who was greater than a king. Beethoven held out his arms and embraced them all—the father, the mother, the young girl and her three brothers. All at once he rose up, and sitting down to the clavessin, signed to the young men to resume their violins, and performed himself the piano part of this *chef-d'œuvre*. The performers were alike inspired; never was music more divine or better executed. Half the night passed away, and the peasants listened. Those were the last accents of the swan.

The father compelled him to accept his own bed; but during the night Beethoven was restless and fevered. He rose, he needed air; he went forth with naked feet into the country. All nature was exhaling a majestic harmony; the winds sighed through the branches of the trees, and moaned along the avenues and glades of the wood. He remained some hours wandering thus amidst the cool dews of the early morning; but when he returned to the house he was seized with an icy-chill. They sent to Vienna for a physician; dropsy on the chest was found to have declared itself, and in two days, despite every care and skill, the doctor said that Beethoven must die; and in truth life was every instant ebbing fast from him.

As he lay upon his bed, pale and suffering, a man entered. It was Hummel—Hummel, his old and only friend. He had heard of the illness of Beethoven, and had come to him with succor and money. But it was too late; Beethoven was speechless; and a grateful smile was all that he had to bestow upon his friend. Hummel bent towards him, and by the aid of an acoustic instrument enabled Beethoven to hear a few words of his compassion and regret. Beethoven seemed re-animating, his eyes shone, he struggled for utterance, and gasped,

"Is it not true, Hummel, that I have some talent after all?"

These were his last words—his eyes grew fixed, and his spirit passed away. They buried him in the little cemetery of Dobling.

#### AN OLD MAN'S STORY.

Deacon Edson was a great friend to young people, and never omitted an opportunity of

aiding, by word or deed, "the rising generation," as he called them. The old gentleman was ushered into our parlor as we sat around the evening lamp; he had come to enlist our sympathies on behalf of a wayward youth. When he had told his errand and received our promise of hearty co-operation in his plans, the conversation turned on the over-indulgence of the children of the present day—the submissive obedience of fathers and mothers to the sturdy demands of sons and daughters.

"I have no wish," said Deacon Edson, "to deny the fact, that weak parents wrong their children greatly in this way; but there is another form of injustice to the young, of which we do not so often hear; its commission is not confined to parents alone."

I looked inquiringly at my visitor, and he said:

"Let me give you a leaf out of an old man's book of remembrance, and so explain my meaning."

"Well do I remember my mother—her mild blue eyes, her earnest look and gentle voice, as she often set before me the way of wisdom and truth, and sought to place my little feet in the path of the just, and spoke of the 'love beyond a mother's.' I tried, mere child as I was, to follow her guidance; I had learned to abhor a lie and to prize the love which withheld not 'the only begotten Son.' One day, when I was about eight years old, my father told my mother at dinner that he was suddenly called away on business."

"One of our largest customers has failed," said he, "and a member of the firm must be on the spot as soon as possible, to save all we can from the wreck. I think you had better go with me; I will leave you at your sister's, go on to——, attend to my business and return for you; we shall not be away more than two weeks."

"I should like to go very much," replied my mother, "if it were not for leaving the children."

"Oh! I have provided for that," said my father, "I stopped at Cousin Mary's as I passed, she will come and stay while you are gone; she will take the best of care."

"Yes, I do not doubt her taking good care," returned mother, "but Herbert is not quite well yet."

"Why, my dear," interrupted my father, "he has been to school to-day, have you not, my son?"

"Yes, sir," said I, "but I got very tired." I do not think I was more selfish than most children; but I was just recovering from a long illness, and the thought of the absence of my kind mother, who had nursed me so tenderly, was almost a terror to me. I had not noticed that she was becoming thinner and paler every day, but my father's anxiety