

## JUST ONE BLUE BONNET.

color, all birds of gayest plumage, all gems of sweetest hue.

And there it is—most lovely of all earth's loveliest sights to me—the blessed flag, with its infinite meaning, "the flag with the star in the centre."

Yet this must be a phantom flag. How strange I can see it clearly. It is resting against the screen at the foot of my bed. It is there, the flag of our own brave corps.

The flag of a thousand fights. And how far I have followed that star. Yes, far over ice and snow, through blizzards and storms, by burning sands and blistering streets. Yet I counted it all joy if only my feet might follow—if only the standard of blood-and-fire went first.

Yet is my fight indeed all done? Finished? "Life's little day"? "The mist in my face"?

But this phantom flag hangs limp and twisted where it leans and rests. Oh, if only my poor, feeble fingers could reach those folds!

Now a tiny breeze is rising, it flutters the hem towards me. I can catch it at the corner when it comes. I have it, I hold it fast as the folds fly out, full and free. "The heavenly gales are blowing." My flag has become a sail for my floating boat.

Now I know, I am sailing away to heaven. There is radiance, peace, light in my soul. Oh, those marvellous colors, they wave to and fro and out again over the silvery waves in an endless play of hue and tone, in rainbow reflection of blending light. "The Yellow, Red, and Blue."

But those shining waves have a shadow side.

Something moves on the shadow.

Hands? Yes, hands—clutching hands!

Oh, those poor human hands—drowning hands! They reach up, they stretch out, they catch out as each fleeting reflection of the flag passes over.

The waters are full of them. Hands! Such fever, such eagerness, such tragedy, when those fingers sink down in the tide of time—with the colors untouched, unreachd.

Alas! and is it for me to go floating away with my day's work half undone?

Is that how the General fights?

Perish such selfishness! I shall still stay on earth with the flag unfurled before me.