

Ray and Her Mother

As Ray was going out she saw in a corner a soldier lying with closed eyes. His lips were moving, and thinking he was asking for something, she went to him. She heard him say:

"O kindly Death, you have ended many a poor fellow's sufferings here. Come and end mine. Do not pass me by. What can I do in the battle of life with only one arm? I found it struggle enough when I had two. Why should I want to live? It was ~~never~~ very much worth while. It will make very little difference to any one if I drop out of life. My comrades would pause a minute to exclaim, 'Poor fellow!' and my wife Nellie would be sad for a month and a day, but she is so pretty and always had so many admirers she'll soon find some one to take care of her.

"Yes, there's a hereafter. I've thought of that. I've tried to be kind and I've never been wild. I think the pitying Jesus will take these things into account, and not be too hard on me in the reckoning-up. O Death! come to me now. See how straight and decent I lie, with my hand upon my breast, waiting for your summons."

He was quite still and did not open his eyes. Ray, feeling as if she were intruding, stepped softly aside and made her way out.