

Choice Literature.

A POSSIBILITY.

(Concluded.)

Uncle Gregory smiled kindly into the blue eyes turned so earnestly up to his. "How shall we go about it?" he asked. "She must be sent to the city, put in — Hospital, and you —"

"Edna, Edna, don't talk nonsense!" interrupted her uncle.

Edna always found Dr. Gregory Gray quite a different person from her merry, genial uncle. He permitted no trifling in his office, and Edna generally discreetly avoided any meddling with professional matters, but to-day her ardour rendered her bold.

"You can do anything. I am sure you can make her well," she urged, with that blind belief which is so distasteful to an intelligent physician.

Dr. Gray was evidently annoyed.

"Stop, stop, Edna; you are discussing a subject of which you are totally ignorant," he said. "Neither you nor I know yet the extent of this poor girl's helplessness, or whether or not it be possible to relieve her. Besides, people of her class often entertain strong prejudices against hospitals; she might refuse to enter one, and probably has not the means to go to the city anyway. You do not even know her name, do you? Ah, I thought not," as Edna shook her head. "Well, I can help you out there. It is Agnes White. She is the orphan niece of Captain Watson, with whom we go out sailing and fishing—an honest, intelligent fellow, but a poor one, with a large family."

"Uncle Gregory," began Edna, very timidly, "Mamma gives me a dollar every day for a ride on the beach. In two weeks that would be fourteen dollars—no, only twelve, as I do not ride on Sundays. Surely that would be enough for— for Agnes White; and I know mamma will be willing to let me spend it as I like."

A wave, larger than any previous, glided swiftly toward the wreck, but so smoothly, so quietly, that Edna carelessly watched its advance, certain every instant that the next it would recede. But on and on it came, and at length she was only saved from a good wetting by Dr. Gray's strong arm. Swinging her to a place of safety, he laughed:—

"Evidently, my little niece, it is time for you to leave the beach if you propose disputing old Ocean's rights in this way."

But Edna was in no joking mood.

"Suppose, Uncle Gregory," she began, dreamily—"suppose it had been a strong, strong wave—suppose it had caught me and carried me away, way out there," pointing to the distant horizon, "you must always have thought of me with a doubt—an uncertainty as to whether I really would have amounted to anything or not. I think it would be very hard to die only a post—oh, Uncle Gregory, we must make Agnes White a possibility!"

Five hoary winters aroused old Ocean's stormy passions, and five gentle summers lulled him to rest again, before Edna Gray and her parents revisited that pleasant spot on the Jersey coast. The little party returned one fair June morning, when a thin mist, like a silvery veil, hung over the sea, and almost obscured that line where the sky and water meet.

The five years had not left Edna unchanged.

Herr Lunde was no longer so harsh in his criticisms as in those other days, and was wont to rest in his chair with head thrown back, and a certain satisfied expression in his blue eyes, when Edna sat at his beloved piano. True, old Bridget still predicted wonderful possibilities for "the little mistress," as she was fond of calling her; but when one observed the reliance and dependence her father was beginning to place in her, he would be very apt to fancy the "possibility" of five years ago was fast approaching fulfilment.

"Now, Edna, I have a fancy to let you select your own boarding place," said Dr. Gregory Gray to his niece, on the morning of their arrival. He had joined his brother's family for the day, just to bid them welcome, and see them nicely settled, he said.

"But you wrote mamma you had already engaged rooms for us," objected Edna.

"And so I have," replied her uncle; "but I am curious to see how our tastes agree. Now, for example, what do you think of this hotel?"

"Out of the question," pronounced Edna, decidedly. "Mamma never in the world could endure the noise and confusion of so large a place, we"—she broke off here, to turn to see if her father and mother were following in the queer, rickety little stage. But no, they had not yet turned the corner.

"And what of this?" questioned Dr. Gray, passing on to the next house.

Again Edna shook her head. "It would give me the jaundice to live in such a yellow house!" she declared.

Thus uncle and niece passed from street to street, laughing merrily as they went, at their own little jokes and criticisms. In her desire to know whether or not she had passed the house her uncle had chosen, Edna quite forgot to look behind them for the stage in which her father and mother were to have followed with the baggage.

They had neared the end of the village, and were at last approaching the sea, when Edna came to a sudden halt.

"Eureka, I have found it!" she exclaimed. "What a dear little house! And what a funny name, 'The Water-Watch.' See, Uncle Gregory," she continued, excitedly, "it is painted to represent one of those curious blossoms for which it is named. The wide piazza represents the five-o'clocks and is painted dark red, then the walls are the ten-o'clocks, and are coloured a shade lighter, of course, and the roof is the green umbrella—isn't it perfect? Ah! this would be my choice for an abode; but I suppose it is a private cottage," with a sigh of regret. "What a delightful view one must have, from that deep piazza, of the ocean and just that stretch of sand where the old wreck used to lie—the old wreck, where we used to have the good long talks. I almost feel that I cannot be satisfied anywhere else, now that I have seen the Water-Watch. Do you know, I never hear that name, or see the flower, without thinking of Agnes White. I suppose you have never heard anything more of her, since she left the hospital four years ago?"

But Dr. Gray did not heed this question. He was critically examining the house, and, after a moment's hesitation, proposed that they should knock.

"It will do no harm to look at their rooms," he said; "and who knows but that we may discover the witch."

And they did discover the witch—at least Edna loves to say they did—for their hands had not reached the door before it flew open, and she bounded out to greet them. Yes, it was easier, Edna declared, to believe that plump, rosy, merry-looking girl a witch, than to acknowledge her to be Agnes White. Yet it was Agnes White's pleasant eyes which beamed upon her, and Agnes White's voice which cried joyfully:—

"Oh, Miss Edna! how glad I am to see you."

"Can it be possible!" stammered Edna, amazed.

"Yes, it is, it is—I am a—possibility."

When the wonder of it all had worn off a little Agnes White told her story.

"Oh! it has been so long to wait," she said, "so long that Dr. Gray has planned this lovely surprise! You see the summer I left the hospital you expected to come here for a visit, and we had it all arranged, the doctor and I. That was why I did not write to thank you for that for which I never, never can express enough gratitude," this with a sob which called the answering tears to Edna's eyes. "Then you went to Europe instead—oh, but I was disappointed! Dr. Gray thought surely you would come the next summer; but again you failed us, and again and again, until I almost gave up hoping for your return."

"And is it your uncle and aunt who keep this cottage?" asked Edna, eagerly, when the other stopped for want of breath.

"Yes, yes, and all through the goodness of the doctor." There was but one doctor in all the world to Agnes White. In such simple homage as this, are physicians sometimes paid for their great knowledge and skill. "He thought of it first. While I was at the hospital I heard much talk of a comfortable, cheery, quiet place on the seashore, where people could go to rest and have good, wholesome food. I wrote Uncle Will about it, and how I could help Aunt Jane, because I was getting so strong, and how the doctor thought he knew quite a number of people who wanted just such a place in which to spend a few weeks. And Uncle Will rented this cottage the very day I left the hospital—such a glad, glad day!—and last year he bought it. I wanted it named 'The Edna,'" confessed Agnes with a blush; "but the doctor said that would sound too much like a boat, and suggested instead that it be called 'The Water-Watch.' I think it a nice name, don't you?" anxiously.

"Splendid!" was Edna's enthusiastic reply. "Oh, if we were only going to rest in here!" she broke off with a cry of delight, for at that instant she caught a glimpse of their trunks in the hall, and drew her own conclusions. "The whole thing is just like a fairy tale, and you are the good fairy," she cried, turning to find herself addressing empty space; for her uncle had slipped into the house at the beginning of their conversation, as, of course, Agnes was aware.

"Yes, he is the best, the kindest, the noblest man in the world," pronounced Agnes White, with solemn conviction. "Everyone in the hospital says so; they just love him, one and all."

Involuntarily the girl's eyes wandered to the beach, where the old wreck once lay, half buried in sand, where they had met for the first time. Agnes was the first to speak, as she had been on that other day, so long ago.

"And yet it was you, Miss Edna, who first thought of making me a possibility; the doctor told me so. But you—you are no longer a possibility," she continued, looking at her companion with admiring eyes, "you are a beautiful certainty."

Edna smilingly shook her head. She passed her arm around the other's waist, and again the two girls gazed silently out upon the water. Though so unlike the blue eyes had caught something of the same fine light, as they sought together that far, far away horizon.

By and by Edna murmured gently: "No, we are, one and all of us, only a possibility, but oh—such a glorious possibility!"—*M. M. Morley, in the N. Y. Independent.*

WHITTIER.

Peaceful thy message, yet for struggling right,
When Slavery's gauntlet in our face was flung,
While timid weaklings watched the dubious fight
No herald's challenge more defiant rung.

Yet was thy spirit tuned to gentle themes
Sought in the haunts thy humble youth had known.
Our stern New England's hills and vales and streams—
Thy tuneful idylls made them all their own.

The wild flowers springing from thy native sod
Lent all their charms thy new-world song to fill,—
Gave thee the mayflower and the golden-rod
To match the daisy and the daffodil.

Best loved and saintliest of our singing train,
Earth's noblest tributes to thy name belong.
A lifelong record closed without a stain,
A blameless memory shrouded in deathless song.

—*Oliver Wendell Holmes, in Atlantic Monthly.*

THE TESTIMONIALS

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WHAT IS PASSION IN POETRY?

What is this quality which we recognize as passion in imaginative literature? What does Milton signify, in his masterly tractate on education, by the element of poetry which, as we have seen, he mentions last, as if to emphasize it? Poetry, he says, is simple—and so is all art at its best; it is sensuous—and thus related to our mortal perceptions; lastly, it is passionate—and this, I think, it must be to be genuine. In popular usage the word "passion" is almost a synonym for love, and we hear of "poets of passion," votaries of Eros or Anteros, as the case may be. Love has a fair claim to its title of the master passion, despite the arguments made in behalf of friendship and ambition respectively, and whether supremacy over human conduct, or its service to the artistic imagination, be the less. Almost every narrative-poem, novel or drama, whatsoever other threads its coil may carry, seems to have love for a central strand. Love has the heart of youth in it,

—And the heart
Giveth grace unto every art.

Love, we know, has brought about historic wars and treaties, has founded dynasties, made and unmade chiefs and cabinets, inspired men to great deeds or lured them to evil: in our own day has led more than one of its subjects to imperil the liberty of a nation, if not to deem, with Dryden's royal pair, "the world well lost"—a strenuous passion indeed, and one the force of which pervades imaginative literature. But if Milton had used the word impassioned, his meaning would be plainer to the vulgar apprehension. Poetic passion is intensity of emotion. Absolute sincerity banishes artifice, ensures earnest and natural expression; then beauty comes without effort, and the imaginative note is heard. We have the increased stress of breath, the tone and volume, that away the list tamer. You cannot fire his imagination, you cannot rouse your own, in quite cold blood. Profound emotion seems, also, to find the aptest word, the strongest utterance—not the most voluble or spasmodic—and to be content with it. Wordsworth speaks of "thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears," while Mill says that "the poetry of a poet is feeling itself, using thought only as a means of expression." The truth is that passion uses the imagination to supply conceptions for its language. On the other hand, the poet, imagining situations and experiences, becomes excited through dwelling on them. But whether passion or imagination be first aroused, they speed together like the wind-sired horses of Achilles.—*E. C. Stedman, in the Century for October.*

MISSIONARY WORLD.

FROM CANNIBALISM TO CHRIST.

Twelve years ago the Rev. Oscar Michelson landed on the island of Tonga, in the New Hebrides, alone among cannibals. He was broken up with fever. At first he had many perilous adventures, and again and again fled into hiding to save his life. Once a savage, now one of his best teachers, levelled a rifle to kill him, but was stopped by a look. He persevered amid many threatenings and dangers. His house became known as "the Sunday House," and Christian hymns were often heard mingling with heathen songs. From heart to heart, home to home, village to village, the Gospel won its way, until now thirty Christian teachers are labouring in many different villages. Mr. Michelson's field now includes, he writes, four whole islands. The people speak three languages. During the week of prayer he held meetings simultaneously in all the villages. At one meeting 300 rose for prayer. Ten years ago they proposed to eat him. Now he lives in perfect safety. The rifles are rarely used for the purpose for which they were made, but Mr. Michelson often sees them used in pairs over the fire to hold the saucepans. If a coin or some such object is lost on the road, the owner is almost sure to find it stuck up on a post, the next time he passes that way. Peace, love, honesty, prevail in the stead of savagery. Similar transformations were reported by Mr. Richards, of our Congo Mission, and by many another missionary. The Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation.

THE CANADIAN CHURCH AND MISSIONS.

The Presbyterian Church in Canada has sent out this year eleven new missionaries. Four young ladies, two of whom are M.D.'s, are now under appointment and have gone to India. Two others have left for Honan and Formosa, and Rev. C. Webster, this Church's first missionary to Palestine, is now on the way to Jerusalem. The last week in July was the most eventful week in the history of the foreign mission enterprise in the Presbyterian Church in Canada, for in that week three missionaries were ordained and designated for service. Our Trinidad Mission has now reached an important era in its history. Twenty-five years have passed since the pioneer missionary, Dr. Morton, left Nova Scotia and commenced work among the coolie population. The general work of the mission has been very much enlarged; late, adding very greatly to its cost. The Government of Trinidad passed a new school ordinance which had to be accepted by our staff of missionaries. The law, on the whole, is favourable to the mission. A number of new buildings are to be erected, which cost the Church \$10,000. In consequence of the Government's action a debt of over \$7,000 is