



"In this neglected spot is laid
A heart once pregarant with celestial fire
—Gray's "Elegy."



WHEN last I was here we were together. It was on a Sabbath afternoon like to this we visited the graves of our kindred, and afterwards tenderly, familiarly conversing we went down the steep footpath through the alders to the brookside. We were not only of kindred blood, but of like temper and spirit; and so we lingered, forgetful of the sinking sun, listening to the faint trickle of the rill, that mingled its tone with the low minor of our voices. He was sensitive to every influence that sways the poet-heart; the sound of a brook could enchain him, a sunset sky melt him to tears; he would pore over a book of song till roused by some brisk rallying voice to shame at the indulgence of feelings not common to the multitude; and so this hour apart was one he would wish prolonged.

To-day I came to the same place alone, after three years, and mounted the summit of rest and of vision. It is the hill of my boyish wandering and musing, and the subject of some of my earliest verses:

"I came to the hill at morning,
I stood and looked below,
And saw the silver-winding stream
Along the valley flow;
I saw the village windows fire
With flames of the ruddy sun,—
Through a golden future, coming nigher,
And a glorious life begun."

It is the burial yard of my native village, a retired place—a nook quiet as secluded, at some distance from the public way. It is

"a gentle hill,
Green, and of mild declivity,"

terminating abruptly in a slate-pit on one side; beyond which a brook, now dwindled to a rill, goes purling along its bed of gravel. Skirting the edge of this descent, forming the eastern boundary of the yard, are some fine beech and maple trees, intermingled with evergreens, against the dark of which the "mournful marbles" are seen distinctly from the road below. I found the intervening field, and the place itself, much clogged with undergrowth, and the rambling picket fence broken here and there. We came often here in the old time.

"A favourite boundary to our lengthened walks
This church yard was;"

and it saddened me to see its unkempt condition. But where is he who came hither with me last? He lies awaiting my visit on the brow of the hill; not stretched upon the grass; musing poet-wise, looking out amid the dark spires of the firs to the sheeny white Basin, so fair to-day; but, "deep in his narrow cell forever laid." A mound of red earth I find, on which the grass has not yet grown, and where some faded flowers are lying. Never mind, I have some fresh ones to scatter. A monument of red granite is at his head, and on the shaft appears in gilded letters his name and age—only 21,—and this appropriate sentiment:

"A happier lot than ours, and larger ght
Surrounds thee there."

Beside his is the mound of an infant brother, marked by the white figure of a lamb,—emblem of him whose life was pure as his mind was beautiful. While I thought of how I last saw him, and reflected whither he had gone, his own words came to my mind with cheer and comfort.

"I watch as Nature breaks and builds again,
And mark destruction mocked before my eyes;
For e'en the remnants of decay retain
'The germs from which some forms of life arise.'

"That which is once begun no end shall know,—
No link is severed from life's welded chain;
But, in the realm of Him who formed it so,
The life and death were not ordained as twain.

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"In nature see
'The signature and stamp of power divine;
Nor weigh the Swayer of Immensity
Upon those human balances of thine.

"Can ye not see a Deity in all?
'His presence is the sweetest charm they bear;
From naught they sprang, obedient to His call,
And ever live, memorials of His care.

"'Tis true they fade,—yet naught in nature dies;
The leaves that fall in Autumn to the earth,
When Spring, revived from Winter's death, shall rise,
Will mingle with the buds that gave them birth.

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For naught is lost of what God e'er hath done;
His shortest Time is great Eternity,
And *mors et vita* in His works are one."

In the Faith of Christ, and the belief of man's immortality, he calmly died. As I smoothed the grave and arranged on it some mosses, ferns and flowers, from the brush-fires burning farther over on the hill came a grey wreath of smoke and wrapt me with its cloud of incense, shutting me in from every outlying figure—swathing me as with the memory of the dead. Had he lived, I cannot doubt that earth would have been the better for his living—as, indeed, it was while he was yet here,—and that he would have woven his thoughts worthily into memorable verse; but, alas! now,

"The world, that credits what is done,
Is cold to all that might have been."

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LINES

Written on a number of graves found in a pasture now owned by M. Solomon Lawrence, at Horton Bluff.

'Twas here that the rustics found their rest,
In this shady dell where the wild flowers spring,
Where the golden beams that come from the west,
Oft smile through the trees where the wild birds sing:
No marble slab is erected here,
And over their couch the shy hares tread;
And naught save a mound that rises near,
Points out the place of the resting dead.

But these were the scenes they loved in life;
'Twas here they played in their childish glee,
Apart from the world and its busy strife,
In these wooded vales near the bounding sea.
The church from their door was miles away,
So they laid them not 'neath the churchyard sod;
In their own little lot they placed their clay,
And their spirits returned to their father's God.

What sweeter rest 'neath the heap of stones
In the Abbey grand where the great dead rest?
Though honoured be their royal bones,
Methinks this bed is likewise blest;
For nature honours the lowly grave,
The moss bespeaks its tender grief,
And sighing faintly the blossoms wave,
And minstrelsy's borne on the sleeping leaf.

'Tis here the zephyr softly sings
At midnight to the fir trees nigh,—
Plays harp-like on their drooping strings,
The wild woods' soothing lullaby;
And notes of wild bird sweet and rare
That gladness brings to other dells,
Seem changed to tones of sadness here,
Though borne on silvery syllables.

Here let them rest, till the wakening day,
Where a common bar doth mankind await;
When we stand devoid of dust and decay,
Where the poor are rich and the lowly great;
Let them rest in the spot that they loved so dear,
Beneath the shades that the wild woods spread;
'Tis such haunts as these where God is near,
And He, too, honours the humble dead.

W. M. LOCKHART.

Lockhartville.

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MONODY,

on the death of Wm. Mortimer Lockhart, who died at Mt. Allison, N.B., Dec. 7th, 1889.

Was *thy* life brief? Then so, dear soul is *ours*.
Who draw the breath, which thou did'st soon forego
For purer, sweeter. Thou forsak'st these bowers
For the unfading,—this shade for the glow
That the eternal morn doth round thee throw;
These russet fields for the unwithering flowers.

Was *thy* life *brief*? 'Twas long enough for love,
For tears, for virtue, and for beauty, too;
To feel th' poetic heart within thee move;
Too brief, for ills and sorrows, not a few,
Which they must bear who linger 'yond the dew
To greet the frost, here in Grief's wintry grove.

Was *thy* life *brief*? Thou livest,—did'st but pass
From Learning's porch to her supreme degree,—
From out "life's dome of many coloured glass,"
To "the white radiance of eternity;"
Our lives are brief; but long *thy* life shall be,
Where Song dies not, nor Misery cries "alas!"

Was *thy* life *brief*? 'Tis well, since it was true,
Here, brief our portion, as the wise have sung;
Thou dwellest constant in the memory's view,—
We look upon thee ever, bright and young;
The lay of Hope dies not from off thy tongue,
Fraught with Love's generous fire. Dear Soul, adieu

ARTHUR JOHN LOCKHART

A friend writes: "You do not see much of my verse now, say you? Nor do I. But I mean to try my hand again, when the spirit moves. I will not coax or goad the muse. It does not pay. Your brother struck the nail on the head when he said there should be the indication of inevitableness in every poetical composition. If a man plod and plod, and tug and tug, his poem will say that he did so, as a rule." There is a notable exception in Gray's 'Elegy.' It has always seemed to me that Burns opened his mouth and the song came forth like a singing bird from its cage. Burns seems to have made songs as a hen lays eggs—because he could not help it." True, it is useless and disappointing to vex the muse with goading. In a sense the poem must make itself, as I believe even Gray's did; though by his fastidiousness it was kept a long time, and it is a wonder it ever got quit of him. The poem aggregates itself in the mind like butter after long churning; but there may be much art and labor in stamping it out, at last. But think how "Tam O' Shanter" came—at a heat, and before a pen. I wonder who could polish that into better form? Indeed his song was burning necessity. Plenty of "inevitableness" there; nothing there was born of pure vanity; never anything more native or spontaneous. We have not "crumpets of frost" in his lyrics, but living things quivering with emotion."

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More beautiful days were surely never had in any November than these latest. So mild was it this morning we could comfortably sit with open windows; and at midnight I write in a room without fire. The sky beyond the dark shoulder of the hill westward was an amber gleam long after sunset; and through the dusky boles of trees now almost leafless the river shone with a wonderfully witching light, much like that from the eyes turned up to me from a certain little white face full of mirth and gladness at my recognition. We do not always get our strongest, most moving effects of light and color amid the flush and bloom of summer; but, rather, out of the bareness and austerity of this later season; even as beauty and tenderness are rarely so strikingly manifested by any poet as amid the musical glooms, the repressions, repulsions and austerities of Dante. There is an eloquence in these leafless trees, a language in the gleam of this river amid the russet hills, a pathos in these evening skies in November that effects me as natural objects rarely can.

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We always delight to call attention to a worthy sentiment, or a truth uniquely and adequately expressed; and such are the following sentences forming the close of Mr. Nicholas Flood Davin's "forcible article" on "The Reorganization of the Cabinet," in the *Week*, of November 6th—a worthy companion piece with that of Principal Grant on the Franchise: "To have the opportunity and capacity for serving one's country will be more highly prized by a statesman worth his salt than portfolios or political honors, or the distribution of patronage. There is no service to one's country in distributing patronage, or having 'honorable' before your name, or drawing eight or nine thousand a year; but there is in devising wise measures, in redressing grievances, in allaying perilous passions, in sweeping away prejudices, in seeing as far as in you lies that the poor shall not be squeezed and plundered by the rich and powerful. If these things can be done even though the gorge may rise, as Shakespeare's did, so that even death seemed happiness before—

'The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,'

and, as he sighs in his sixty-sixth Sonnet, the thought of suicide again recurring when he beheld

"Gilded honor shamefully misplaced,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill."

What matter? The creatures of fortune who were unworthy to black his boots—verily they had their reward. He had his own glorious thoughts, and stands forever the greatest of mankind. So with Edmund Burke in politics. He did more for the three kingdoms, for America, for mankind than any statesman of his time or since, and he had little of the "good things." His essay on the French Revolution was worth a hundred armies in rolling back the tide of anarchy. The Shakespeare of politics, he too had his reward in the reverence of mankind."

* Now I've a notion if a poet
Beat up his themes his verse will show it,
I wait for subjects that hunt me, etc.
—Lowell; "Familiar Epistle to a Friend."