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Virtue is True Happiness.

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## Poetry.

### A LESSON IN ITSELF SUBLIME.

A lesson in itself sublime,  
A lesson worth enshrining,  
Is this— I take no heed of time,  
Save when the sun is shining.  
These motto words a dial bore,  
And wisdom never teaches  
To human hearts a better lore  
Than this short sentence teaches.  
As life is sometimes bright and fair,  
And sometimes dark and lonely,  
Let us forget its pain and care,  
And note its bright hours only.

There is no grove on earth's broad chart  
But has some bird to cheer it;  
So hope sing on in every heart,  
Although we may not hear it;  
And if to-day the heavy wing  
Of sorrow is oppressing,  
Perchance to-morrow's sun will bring  
The weary heart a blessing.  
For life is sometimes bright and fair,  
And sometimes dark and lonely,  
Then let's forget its toil and care,  
And note its bright hours only.

We bid the joyous moments haste,  
And then forget their glitter—  
We take the cup of life, and taste  
No portion but the bitter;  
But we should teach our hearts to deem  
Its sweetest drops the strongest;  
And pleasant hours should ever seem  
To linger round us longest.  
As life is sometimes bright and fair,  
And sometimes dark and lonely,  
Let us forget its toil and care,  
And note its bright hours only.

The darkest shadows of the night  
Are just before the morning,  
Then let us wait the coming light,  
All boding phantoms scorning;  
And while we're passing on the tide  
Of Time's fast ebbing river,  
Let's pluck the blossoms by its side,  
And bless the gracious giver.  
As life is sometimes bright and fair,  
And sometimes dark and lonely,  
We should forget its pain and care,  
And note its bright hours only.

## Literature.

### BERTHA.—A STORY FOR THE THOUGHTFUL.

A silent group surrounded the bedside of a dying woman. The apartment showed none of the luxury of the sick room which almost tempts the healthy poor to envy the wealthy invalid. It was nearly bare of all furniture; and its scanty moveables seemed to tell the story of one who, having exhausted all that the world had conferred upon her, and used to the utmost all that she possessed, was now departing, carrying nothing with her, and literally leaving nothing to which she held any claim behind.

The sound of a distant clock came into the room with slow and funereally distinct utterance. It seemed so like a knell, that the attendants of the dying woman raised their eyes from the couch of death; and, as prompted by a common impulse, looked inquiringly, and with awe-stricken countenances, at each other. The close, warm air of the room seemed to become icy cold; the hearts of the living, no less than the dying, appeared to cease to beat. The clock struck on, and finished its tale—

ten, eleven, twelve! Imagination scarcely could resist the persuasion that each succeeding blow fell fainter as it numbered the last seconds of the parting year.

The echo died away. A smile, though a sickly one, passed over the doctor's face, that he, all used to scenes like this, had partaken of the contagion of superstitious awe. All were reassured, and ventured to breathe again—all but the dying woman. She breathed no more.

A slight convulsive struggle drew all eyes and thoughts back to the dying bed. A smile passed over the pale features transforming the gaunt in suffering into the beautiful in death. The struggle was over. A soul was released; and the thousand clocks which told the last moment of the dead year were its passing bells.

All were relieved. Near that bedside had stood neither kith nor kin. The stranger had been taken home from amid strangers; and the pity of those who had befriended her—unselfish, inasmuch as it was not that of dependents or kindred—ceased when the sufferings of the dead wore over. Tears fell, in sympathy with our common frail nature. Words were said, in a subdued voice, in praise of the heavenly meekness and patience of the sufferer—now a sufferer no longer; and expressions of pity for the distant relatives were uttered also by those who know the pangs of separation from friends. But there arose no wail of grief, no bursts of unreasonable sorrow; for all felt that the friendless and unknown, who had departed in the calm confidence of a Christian soul, submissive to the will of its Maker, and trusting in the mercy of its Redeemer, had exchanged what had been indeed a bitter journey in the vale of tears for a welcome in that heaven where tears are wiped away for ever.

There was one, indeed, who, but for the happy ignorance of childhood, might have wept—an hour or two before she had fallen asleep on the pillow while the mother strained her dying eyes over the infant's face, and breathed many, many prayers, unheard except by Him to whom they were addressed. While the babe slept she was removed. Now, as if the strange presence of death in the house had chilled and frightened the baby dreams, she waked and cried in terror. The nurse, confused in her divided duty, caught up the child and returned to the bed again. The infant in her arms danced and shouted as it saw the face which all its little life had been its shield from fancied danger and its solace in childhood's little afflictions; struggled to get down and kiss the smails which death had stamped there; clapped its little hands, and cried out "Mother."

Day had fairly broken. Music sounded without; shouts of early revellers rose; and the attendants looked abroad, almost wondering as they threw up the windows, now that the air was scarcely colder than the clay which but a few hours before needed so many appliances to its comfort. A little time gave the apartment all the formal, icy state of death,

which the decent respect of the family of man for a deceased member prescribes. The infant was carried from the house, and all unknowing what it had lost, was soon loudest in its childish glee amongst a knot of hospitable little ones, who forced upon it their toys, and shouted in its wondering ears—"A happy New Year!—a happy New Year!"

## CHAPTER II.

A happy New Year! While many raise this shout, how many others pine in sorrow! While one part of the race is rejoicing in hope, how many sink in despair! While these hear the congratulations of friends, how do those quail before the eager pursuit of enemies! As Joy turns her radiant face on one, she retires from others; and Misery's tenacious hold upon earth is only broken in one spot, that elsewhere it may fasten deeper and surer. Some good souls wonder how man can rejoice while there is so much distress in the world. Bless their honest hearts! None could ever be glad did they wait till all sorrow were off the earth. It is ungrateful not to be cheerful when heaven blesses us—and it is sinful to be an ingrate. No sin is worse.

A worse ingratitude than mere moroseness is that, however, which forgets the woes of others in our joys, their necessity in our plenteousness, and their loneliness in our troops of friends. Little Bertha's fate was better ordered, and she was not forgotten. It chanced that when in one house death was sweeping a mother into eternity, in another a child was called early to rest; and while in one a mother yearned for her child, in another a child looked despair out of its innocent eyes for a mother, Providence directed the two bereaved ones. Bertha nestled in a bosom which seemed to her at first a little strange, but soon she clung as naturally to her new mother as if she had known no other.

Years passed, and the lady who had taken her into her arms even before she had fairly laid her own dead child down, and into her heart while it was yet warm with living love for the departed, had quite forgotten that her adopted was not indeed her own child. Lovely she grew, and was reared with discriminating and anxious tenderness, for sorrow teaches the heart to love, and bereavement schools the afflicted how best to provide for those who are spared. There was only one thing in which Bertha's mother—for so we will call her—erred. That one error was, perhaps, a pious fraud. She coveted the child's whole heart, and did not tell her that she was not literally, and by the whole of woman's destiny her daughter.

She might have been less reserved—for there seemed no danger that any would dispute her claim. A cold, dark featured man did appear upon the funeral scene when the last obsequies were paid to Bertha's mother. He carefully paid every due, and cancelled every demand. Nay, he was even gracious enough to say, that the deceased was his daughter by marriage, but having of his own will accorded