

Vainly she tried to tell him the truth, that it was but a passing jest. No longer conscious of her hidden audience, she strove to right her mistake, but all in vain. He could but feel that she was true as steel, that sweet maidenly shyness would now withdraw what her heart had given.

Quietly the two auditors had slipped away, dumb with fear and horror, and in her room she found them as she rushed up in her agony.

"Oh, girls, what shall I do? what can I do? How can I tell mother? Oh, what will Harold say?"

But they stood dumb. If they had but listened to wise little Nell. But how could they know.

A step on the stairs told them that Mrs. Heriott was on her way to the drawing-room to spend the evening, as was her wont, with the young people, and they held their breath, while the dull, monotonous sound of voices reached them from below. The door closed, and Mrs. Heriott ran quickly up the steps and into the room.

"Girls,—Jessie,—What does this mean? Mr. Temple tells me that you have pledged your love, and this without a word from him to me. And what of Harold?"

"Oh, mother, mother," sobbed Jessie, "I did it in fun. I did not think he would take it seriously, the stupid—"

"What? You? What do you mean?"

Then came the short story with the sorry ending, to which she listened quietly, then said:

"Well, girls, I don't know how this may end, but I trust it will be to you a lesson never to trifle with God's most sacred things. I cannot imagine how you could dream of so humbling yourselves. Oh, Jessie, the degradation of it, that you should be so unmaidenly, that you should be so traitorous to your friend, Mr. Temple, so untrue to your lover, so rash. And you, girls, are you not ashamed of the meanness of it all? Unfortunately, Mr. Temple has yet no suspicion that it has not been all in good faith. If he see Harold to-morrow he will probably give him the story he has given me. But I trust, however it may end, that none of you will ever again sacrifice to your love of frolic, as you have to-day, honour, truth and modesty."

Sadly they said good night and left Jessie alone with her mother and her fears.

Early next morning the postman brought a note which she opened tremblingly and read with bursting heart:—

DEAR MISS HERIOTT,—Mr. Temple called last evening to tell me of his joy. I think I can see deeper than he, and can read that love of merriment, and not love of him prompted your action. But it has shocked me beyond expression, that one whom I so honoured and loved could so far forget herself as, even in jest, to trifle with what is to me sacred, to say nothing of the meanness that would hold up to ridicule a friend, and such a friend. It is only another sad case of the fallen ideal, and one more is added to the ranks of those who believe little in the sincerity of woman and much in her frivolity. Need I say that I gladly relieve you from our engagement.

Yours,

H. PULSFORD.

Was her cup not yet full? Had she yet more to suffer from her thoughtlessness?

Her mother quietly undertook to explain to Mr. Temple the true state of affairs, which she did gently, that he, too, might not despise her restless, fun-loving, but noble girl. Her true mother heart yearned over her as days passed and no word came from Harold, but she dare not speak, feeling that to the stern teacher, experience, she must leave her thoughtless daughter.

Months rolled on and lengthened into years. Florence and Edith married, but Jessie and Nellie still remained alone.

PART SECOND.—1888.

Sweet Spring, stealing softly northward, had breathed upon the icebound cliffs and from their brows had wooed the snow caps, while down their rugged cheeks coursed the limpid streams sparkling in the sunlight, murmuring in the twilight. Over the hills wanted the balmy breezes, sporting on their summits, billowing down to the town drowsily stirring from its winter sleep, stealing into the hearts and memories of the busiest with exquisite sadness. Into the dimmest, dingiest corner stole the sweet life-breathing sibyl, and over the death of winter sang her sweetest chant. Memories of the sad and glad, strangely intermingled, stirred in all hearts, and the tear shone through the smile as a dewdrop in the sunshine sparkles.

The grasp of the hardy frost-king grew lax, and from his palsied fingers slipped the joyous land and sporting waters. Sweetly they sparkled and tossed as the grim rocks around smiled down upon them.

Into Jessie's heart stole something of the bright hopefulness of nature. Through the deep abiding sorrow which pervaded her being flowed a quiet joy, as over the graves of the sweet flowers of the past sprang blossoms of rarest promise. Quietly she opened her heart to the truth they would tell:—

"That men may rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things,"

and by this truth grew brave and strong.

Filled with hopes, chastened by sorrow, the two friends one bright afternoon, leaving behind them the sound and semblance of life, climbed the hill which led to the sleeping place of those who leaving life began to live. On the brow of the hill, screened from careless eyes by guardian trees, quite away from the noise of the town, lay God's acre. But the quiet country road enticed them on, till into the silence which the birds alone had disputed, stole a subtle sound, bewildering, yet beguiling, now a gentle purling, again a muffled roar, steadily increasing in volume till the noise of many waters proclaimed the Falls.

Wrapt about by that voice, gazing on the hurrying, foaming waters as they rushed over the brink past the old mill, dashed over the jutting ledge, growing only more angry at each opposing rock, until seething and torn they reached the quiet bed a hundred feet below, the two girls did not notice amid the deep foliage at their side, two figures as silent as they. Turning suddenly, they found themselves face to face with Harold Pulsford and Mr. Temple.

With but one quick look Jessie hurried away, but Nellie stood still and quietly welcomed Mr. Temple, who stepped to her side, while Harold walked quickly after Jessie, who had disappeared among the trees. Oh, sad the bitter truth she must learn:—

"For what hath been can never be,
As if it had not been at all;
We gaze, but never more can we
Retrace one footstep's wavering fall."

But a voice at her side caused her again to start, then stop.

"Good afternoon, Miss Jessie. What a lovely walk you have chosen. It seems to me that Spring shows herself here in sweetest mood. Just look how swiftly the leaves have come out, and the roads are fine."

As he spoke Jessie's heart grew stiller, and into her soul again crept the exquisite sweetness which but a moment before had vanished. Truly, 'twas April in her heart as in all the world around.

Conscious of nought but sweetness and peace, she listened to Harold, who chatted quietly as they wandered on. She listened, but could not speak, the heart billows heaving beneath the surface calm. Into her bright sweet face had crept in those four years of suffering a something which told of "gold in the furnace tried." Many were the long looks which Harold stole at that face, which night and day had been at his side through these dreary years.

High on their left rose the heavy rocks from which burst silver streams leaping to the ground, hurrying over the narrow road to the edge of the ledge, then dashing down to the river bubbling many feet below. The shadows were falling thickly in this shady spot, the twittering of the birds was becoming fainter and more distant, while the muffled voice of the distant waterfall filled in the silence as the beautiful warp the woof.

"Jessie, just four years ago I tossed away from my treasures one I conceived to be worthless. Since then I have found it to be to me a pearl of greatest price, one I cannot do without. I have longed for it hourly, yet dared not ask for what I so recklessly, thoughtlessly, cast aside. But to-night I dare face all things but this constant yearning. Will you forgive me, and try once more to love one who has been made nobler and better by the memory of you and your true heart. Forget and forgive the hasty, unkind words I wrote. And—"

"Had he moved aside a little way,
She surely then could have passed him,
And would not have heard what he had to say,
Could she only aside have cast him;
It was almost dark, and the moments sped,
And the searching night wind found them,

But he drew her nearer and softly said,—
(How the pure, sweet wind grew still instead,
To listen to all that her lover said!
Oh! the whispering wind around them.)"

"I am sure he knew, when he held her fast,
That she must be all unwilling;
For she tried to go, and she would have passed,
As the night was coming with its dew at last,
And the sky with stars was filling;
But he clasped her close when she would have fled,
And he made her hear his story;
And his soul came out from his lips and said,—
(How the stars crept out where the white moon led,
To listen to all that her lover said!
Oh! the moon and the stars in glory.)"

"I know that the grass and the leaves will not tell,
And I'm sure the wind—precious rover—
Will carry his secret so safely and well,
And that no being will ever discover
One word of the many that night in the dell
From the eager lips of her lover,
Shall never reveal what a fairy-like spell
They wove about them that night in the dell
In the path through the dew-laden clover;
Nor echo the whispers that made her heart swell
As they fell from the lips of her lover."

Through the winter of his love hers had never faltered, but had flowed on after its wild reckless leap, tossing and fretting for a time, then sobbing softly, but still flowing. And now into this steady stream had rushed again his passionate love. The winter was passed and gone, the time of the singing of birds had come, and from his pride-bound heart gushed the stream of love, hurrying over the pathway of indifference and losing itself once more in hers.

And thus she learned her lesson—that heart life is too sacred and too holy to be made the passing jest.

To gentle Nellie has also come the love of her life, and she has found that under the quiet and stern exterior there lies in Mr. Temple's heart a wealth of love and tenderness so full and free, that the past is all forgotten.

KIMO.

Crows.

They stream across the fading western sky,
A sable cloud, far o'er the lonely leas;
Now parting into scattered companies,
Now closing up the broken ranks, still high
And higher yet they mount, while, carelessly,
Trail slow behind, athwart the moving trees
A lingering few, 'round whom the evening breeze
Played with sad whispered murmurs as they fly.

A lonely figure, ghostly in the dim
And darkening twilight, lingers in the shade
Of bending willows: "Surely God has laid
His curse on me," he moans, "my strength of limb
And old heart courage fail me, and I flee
Bowed with fell terror at this augury."
—From "Canada and Other Poems," by J. F. Herbin.

Sir John A. Macdonald.

Thou art not dead. The pulse in thee now stilled
Has with its quick'ning power a nation thrilled.
Thou art become a part of that new life
Thy genius fashioned 'mid the storm and strife
Of jarring factions, and the eager greed
And sleepless jealousies of race and creed.
Thou are not dead, though passed beyond our ken;
While love of country stirs the souls of men
Thy presence will abide, thy spirit dwell
In the Canadian land it loved and served so well.

Literary Notes.

In Mr. Sladen's new book, "Younger American Poets," Mrs. Sophie M. Almon Hensley—our correspondent from Nova Scotia—figures with two sonnets, "Triumph" and "There is no God."

The *New England Magazine*, through a literary friend of the poet's, has obtained several original poems written by the late Philip Bourke Marston, the English poet who lived and sang in a life-long darkness. The June and July numbers contain two gems by the blind singer, and others are promised in early issues.

Prudery is rampant at Barcelona. M. Jan Van Beer sent four of his pictures to its exhibition in response to an invitation. Certain of the jury, however, considered them dangerous to the common weal, and hit on the original idea of exhibiting them in a room apart, to ladies and gentlemen over thirty. Corbet's "Femme à la Vague," and "Le Retour de la Conférence," were once treated in a similar manner at Ghent.—*Black and White*.