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Autumn.

For The Ladies' Journal.

Song and singing soon are over
For no longer song birds hover,
Up above the fragrant clover;
Through the meadow passed the reaper
Where the grass grew deep and deeper,
Now the sparrow calleth only
From the meadow, bare and lonely,
And the wind goes sadly sighing
For the summer that is dying.

Faded are dawn's rosy blushes,
Fall the leaves all hectic flushes,
From the pool where grows the rushes,
There floats many a plaintive note
A minor cord in dismal rote.
Song and singing soon are ended,
Joy and sadness close are blended,
Early shadows bend and hover
Up above the faded clover.

—WYNDOM BROWN.

ONE NIGHT.

PREPARATIONS for the long night watch are all complete. Shutters have been gently closed, curtains quietly drawn; every movement having reference to the pain racked nerves of the dear sufferer whose form is so sharply outlined beneath the white coverlet of the bed.

The light stand, happily hidden behind the screen during the day, is drawn close to the bedside, holding the necessary articles for the night's requirements.

The light of one gas burner, subdued by its shade, leaves the room in a soft twilight very soothing and sleep inducing; while the cheerful grate, centre of a circle of living light, robs the obscurity of any hint of gloom, comforting with the feeling of both parent and nurse.

Like everything else, however, in this room the blazing firelight has to be carefully attended to, lest the fantastic shadows are apt to prove disturbing to those weary wakeful eyes, and the much needed rest is interfered with.

The brighter and redder the coals glow, the more possibility there is that some phantom, with one arm very likely menacingly extended, will emerge from the unlightened closet corner, creep along unsteadily until it meets another of its kind, probably a headless object with one leg, and then they will bow and courtesy and threaten each other until the staring eyes on the bed reveal the disturbing pantomime. Then the arm chair and flower stand, cause of this distressing display, are ignominiously banished to safe corners where the shadows hold undisputed possession.

But try as the thoughtful watcher may, these

children of the night will not "out at her bidding."

They are continually appearing and re-appearing in the most unexpected manner. The vase on the table, a perfume bottle on the mantel, the corner of a picture frame, anything however insignificant and innocent in the daylight seems quite capable of conspiring to make the wall a picture gallery of disturbing objects. Particu-

Nothing but the sunshine of the Eternal Day can banish it, for it is the "shadow of death."

Night is only just beginning, and the children wait to say their loving good-night.

The smile is very faint that greets them as they gather around "mother's bed," but there is the same love and tenderness in it that ever made it so precious. Tommy bends down and kisses the placid brow, while she murmurs "my boy."

He is the oldest, a grayed haired D. D., president of a theological institute, but he is just "my boy" to her.

Sam holds her poor wrinkled hand, and with a strange break in his voice says "dear motner." Although he is a railroad manager, she is his mother and he loves her. While Polly, always pretty Polly, though a middle aged woman with grown children of her own, kneels by the bedside and lays her face close to the thin white cheek, with a great sob of love and regret for all that is slipping so surely away from them. They comprehend the wistful look that rests for a moment on the Bible on the stand, and Tom repeats a few verses from the beloved book which had been her guide and comfort all these four score years of: "He showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

"In the midst of the street of it, and on the other side of the river was there the tree of life, which bear twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

"And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him.

"And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign forever and ever."

The flame of life burn so feebly that only a few words of prayer, commending her to the keeping of the Beloved, may be allowed.

Loving words and clinging caresses, through tears that may not be wholly repressed, are given, and she is left alone with the faithful watcher.

Outside the door they cling to each other like little children for she is their mother, and she is dying.

After a time the excited nerves are quieted, the usual calm restored and the tired eyes close wearily. The breathing gradually is less labored; features lose their look of suffering, becoming peacefully calm, and she sleeps. From long



"The little Autumn maiden with hair of yellow gold."

larly when it takes but one or two strokes of the cathedral bell to tell the hour, do they crowd and throng in from the surrounding darkness, until everything grows indistinct and uncertain, becoming as unreal as they themselves.

And then the very darkest of all shadows draws closer and closer, benumbing and chilling the very springs of life, attracting the fire on the hearth and shrouding everything in its funeral gloom.