

Italy. Of course Clara was my companion. I don't know why it was, but even these genial skies could do little for a malady which was not of the flesh; and yet more and more I grew in love with Italy. I used to sit and dream for hours on the banks of the silvery Arno, trying to people the far land with its old-time duties; but somehow, every sylph used to wear your face. I wonder if it was sin thus to worship you? I could not help it, and I believe God has forgiven me. And this brings me to something I must tell you; it took place last summer. I had been very ill, and just able to go out of doors. I sat alone, (for I had sent Clara away from me,) feeling miserable and despondent. I thought of you, and oh! Agnes, I cannot tell you how my soul longed and pined for you. I knew it would be sin to see you then, but I remembered your promise to come to me at my dying hour; wickedly, madly, I knealt down before God, and my heart uttered a wail—a cry, a wild, mad, earnest prayer for death! I longed for it, Agnes, for I felt that thus only could I gaze again on my heart's treasure; and yet, when I had uttered the words, I was frightened at their terrible meaning, and I grew still and held my breath. I am not superstitious, Agnes, I am a Protestant, and do not believe in miracles and visions; but I know I heard a voice then, and it was no human voice; it said—"Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest!" There was a struggle in my soul, and then once again I prayed, and this time the words of my prayer were, "Thy will be done!" And then unto my soul there came a holy peace and calm.

"Since then, I have longed for you, Agnes, as I sat under the orange trees; but it has not been that I might fold you in the arms of earthly love; oh no! for I knew I was a dying man, but that I might take your little hand in mine, and point you to that other land, where nevermore will the white day wrap her robe about her, and go mournfully down the sunset slopes, trembling to her death. You must meet me there, Agnes, where there is no need of the sun by day or the moon by night.

"Agnes, it is weeks since I wrote the above. I was at Genoa then; you will see by the post-mark I am at Florence now. I have a mission for you, my Agnes; come quickly, and you will find me here. I was taken very ill at Genoa, but I travelled here by easy stages, and now I am writing, propped up by pillows, to summon you to my dying bed! Do not start, Agnes, or sigh or weep! I am a happy a man. I am going home, where there will be no more sickness, nor sorrow—home to a friend whom I know; a Redeemer, whom I trust. You must meet me, Agnes; I shall wait for you, and you must come. But you will see me here first, you will come to me immediately, for you have vowed to stand by my dying bed. My soul will wait for you; I shall not die till you are here! Come then quickly, for I am in haste to begone!

"I said I had a mission for you. I give Clara to your care. She was an orphan when I married her, and she has no one left to care for her. She is a good, gentle little being, but not a strong woman like you. You can guide her, you can care for her, for I know you have left the stage. You will promise me to stay with her as long as she shall need your care. She knows but little of our past—nothing, save that you are dear to me, and I have sent for you. God in Heaven bless you, Agnes, not of my claiming, but of my loving, come quickly!" "HORACE MAXX."

Two days more, and I stepped from my travelling carriage, at the door of a beautiful Italian villa. It was an earthly paradise, I saw, in the faint glimpse as I hurried up the steps. An English housekeeper met me at the door.

"You have been expected, ma'am," she remarked; "my master is just alive!" And there, in that pleasantly furnished room in the Italian villa, I saw Horace Mann once more, and for the last time. He was handsomer than ever, but his face wore the beauty of an angel. His large eyes were unearthly in their brightness, and on his forehead sat a radiance as of Heavenly glory.

His whole face kindled as he saw me, and a smile of welcome played around his lips. He stretched forth his hand:

"You are in time, Agnes," he said; "I know you would be—I am waiting for you. Will you care for her?" and with his thin finger he pointed to Clara, who was kneeling in a stupor of grief, at the bed's foot.

"Yes, Horace," I answered, with faltering voice and filling eyes, "as long as she has need of me!"

"God bless you, darling," he whispered, tenderly, and then he closed his eyes as if in prayer, "Agnes," he said once more, "you will find in that little desk, what I have meant for you. You must look for it when I am gone, and use it often. You will come, Agnes, I know it. He giveth His beloved sleep." Think of that, and be comforted, when I am lying low. Sit down now, Agnes, and take my hand in yours, and sing some grand old hymn. Good-bye, darling!"

I took his hand in mine, and I sat beside him. I steadied my nerves and my voice, choking back the tears, and I sang that grand old hymn, "Saviour, when in dust to thee." Before I had finished, the hand I held in mine grew cold; the dark eyes closed—Horace Mann was dead!

We buried him there in sunny Italy—we placed a white stone at his head, and on that stone was engraven—"He giveth His beloved sleep."

The gift he had left me was the pocket Bible which had been his constant companion. At first I prized it for his sake—then it became far dearer for its own—for it has guided my footsteps in the path which will one day take me home to Heaven, and him!

I watched over Clara for his sake, until the throbbings of her grief grew still; and then, still young and beautiful, she went forth to gladden another heart, another home; and standing now, among her husband and her children, I know not whether her lips murmur, at nightfall, the name of the dead.

I am old now, but my life is calm and happy. I am looking forward to that day, not very far off, when I shall stand by Horace's side in Heaven, and putting my hand in his, whisper—"Here am I, my beloved—I have been thine only, through all!"

COMPLIMENTARY.—Sir E. Bulwer Lytton in one of the early chapters of "My Novel" writes—"the stage coach stopped at the inn, as was its wont, for a good hour, and its passengers might dine like Christian Englishmen—not gulp down a basin of scalding soup, like everlasting heathen Yankees, with that cursed railway whistle shrieking like a fiend in their ears."

A SAD JOKE.—A publisher of a newspaper out west, in the first issue of his journal, returns thanks to those who have loaned him pecuniary means, and gratitude to Heaven that there is no law in that State enforcing imprisonment for debt.

Miscellaneous.

A WORD ABOUT BONNETS.—When Mr. Punch, in his fashion reports, stated that ladies' bonnets would this season be worn on the small of the back, he only slightly exaggerated the reality which has come to pass. We believe that this article of the female dress has shrunk to a proportion which renders diminution impossible. Lightly poised upon the remotest peak of the hirsute promontory which decorates the head of beauty, it is calculated to arouse feelings of wonder as to what is its practical value, and why it is worn. Certainly as a protection against the blasts of winter it is utterly worthless. If the wearers suppose it adds one iota to their personal charms, truth compels us to say that they are victims of a complete self-deception. It is destructive to that air of modesty which every one wishes to observe in a sister or a mother, and has a jaunty air of effrontery. We have a trembling hope that things in this respect will shortly grow better, for we do not think that human ingenuity can concoct anything uglier or smaller, if resort be not had to total annihilation. These gaudy monstrosities may linger a little longer, tenaciously to the outmost frontiers of weak health, but the good sense of the community, we doubt not, would rather go back to the scuttle-shaped formations that surrounded our grandmothers, than suffer their relatives and friends to go to and fro in the microscopic fixtures which the fashionable world charitably call bonnets.

OUR LITERARY MEN.—Mr. Hallam is silent, Mr. Landon has gathered in his last fruit,—Mr. Ruskin has begun to utter his eloquence in the lecture room,—Mr. Charles Dickens is in Italy,—and Mr. Douglas Jerrold has turned his hand to politics.—*Athenaeum*.

A MELANCHOLY PICTURE.—On the 23rd inst. thirty-seven thousand rats marched in solemn procession from the town of Erie, in search of a more hospitable home. The leader of the band, an aged veteran, was weary and footsore when we met him within nine miles of Buffalo; his grey beard hung from his well formed chin, and reached the ground, still his delighted eye spoke of anticipated freedom, in a State where mob law has no defenders. As rats are proverbial for leaving a falling house, it is supposed that Erie is a dooped "clearing."

FANNY FERN.—It seems that "Fanny Fern," however enchanting as a writer, is not enduringly captivating as a wife. Her husband is understood to have found it for his comfort to get a divorce. Her lord having thus taken leave of her, a wag wants to know whether this leave is one of the *Fuero Leaves*.

A CALICO CALENDAR.—Mr. Cobden: Why are the selfish agitators among the operatives like the works of a clock out of order? Mr. Bright: Because they insist upon striking, without regard to the position of the hands. Mr. Cobden: You are quite right, my dear Bright.—*Punch*.

The *Post on Post*, speaking of the proposed ocean telegraph, wonders whether the news transmitted through salt water will be fresh.

Love can get along with very little language. Two squeezes and a hug will convey more meaning to an ardent temperament than the whole five books of Moses.

Two maidens of all work, meeting in the street the other morning, had the following brief but pointed colloquy:—*Sally*:—"Well, bet, how are you?" *Del*:—"O, capital, my master has got the gout and cannot wear his boots, so I haven't got to clean them of a morning." *Sally*:—"Oh! what luck!"

Why is a clock the most humble thing in existence?

Because it always holds its hands before its face, and however good its works may be, it is always running itself down.

A wag recently appended to the list of market regulations of Cincinnati, "No whistling near the sausage stalls."

The New York papers describe a new tunneling machine in operation at Harlem. The machine is said to be, in effect, a huge seventeen foot sugar, slowly turning at the rate of one revolution per hour, and advancing at the same time from four to eight inches per hour, according to the solidity of the rock perforated.