

## Poetry.

## LABOR IS HONOR.

Labor is honor! O, its spirit hath spoken:  
This is the song that His universe sings;  
Through the vast hills of creation unbroken,  
Loudly and clearly the universe sings.  
Up from the hills and the green valleys stealing,  
Seeking the light of the bright stars above,  
Lies the song to the blue heavens pealing,  
"Labor is honor, and labor is love."

All the grand deeds that are grandest in story,  
Living through centuries treasured and bright;  
All the great lives that are dearest to glory,  
Filling the world with flashes of light;  
Words from whose utterances ages are dated,  
Thoughts that have held the whole world in control,  
Names on whose echoes the proudest have waited,  
Are but the offspring of labor and toil.

Not to the eye that glances there lightly  
Both the bright look of the heaven's brightness;  
But to the spirit that turneth there rightly,  
Are all its wonders and mysteries told:  
And at each step to the soul upward springing,  
Cometh new radiance, new light from above,  
While in the heart is an angel voice slinging,  
"Labor is honor, and labor is love."

Not on her brow doth the earth bear all brightness,  
Deep in her breast do the rich diamonds shine,  
Down in the wave is the pearl's soft whiteness,  
Hiding the gold in the dust of the mine.  
Beauty and power, and riches and pleasure  
Lie in her bosom lie hidden to-day;  
Tis the key that will open her treasure,  
And at each touch she will give them away.

Light to the mind that in darkness was clouded,  
Strength to the spirit that weakness had touched,  
Joy to the soul that in sorrow woe shrouded,  
Life to the heart when its life-string was touched,  
Truth as their factotum who seek it sincerely,  
Skill to the hand when it toleth to live,  
Eyes that can look up to heaven's light clearly—  
These are the honors that labor can give!

## Tales and Sketches.

## DERRICK HALSEY.

"I life has been a rare gift—a rich gift to me. So dear to me, in fact, that I care very little when or how I lose it. It's a play not worth the candle." And Derrick Halsey, as he spoke, lifted a pained, almost defiant face to the skies above him.

Trell Saunders, who was busy putting aside plow and harrow, now turned sharply around, folding his brawny arms over a chest that might have served as a model for a Hercules, while his broad-brimmed hat, pushed off his forehead, brought out in full relief his square, honest face.

"I am sorry to hear ye say that, Derrick," a perplexed look struggling on his kindly features: "you've got health, and a good bit of this world's goods."

"But I haven't happiness. Trell. I am a lonely, miserable man. I've had a tough job of it all my life"—his voice dying in a husky whisper, his face deepening in its pallor—"you don't know—it's no use to try to tell," with a sudden gesture of impatient pain.

Trell looked humbly away. For the dumb, fading gruel mirrored in that face he could find no consolation.

"I feel fur ye, Der," he said at last, very truly. "But I must be goin'. Molly's gettin' the supper ready by this time, and the cows are waitin' to be milked; and that's the baby-a-waitin' fur me. You'll think me foolish, Der, if you knew how much store I set by that little mite of flesh and blood. I tell you, now"—putting on his coat, and taking his tin dinner-pail in his hand—"it's a pleasant thing to have a home and family. You see, I go home after working hard all day to find the house tidy and bright, and Molly, rosy-cheeked and smiling, glad to see me home again; and our baby—a little toddler, so high, just ridin' out what his feet were made fur—crows and claps his hands, and goes high mad out of pure joy at seein' me. And seein' all this makes me feel, here I'm loved, here I'm wanted; the world is wide and selfish; but no matter fur that, here's my niche, my world; here's where God has placed me; and I'm thankful fur it every day of my life."

Trell stopped suddenly, conscious of a vague remorse that his words were best said another time. "I must go now, Derrick. Good-night, and God bless you!"

The simple heartiness of the benediction touched Derrick deeply.

"I can't quite lose my faith in humanity while Trell lives," he said, watching his retreating form. "Helloo, Jennie!"

A beautiful blooded mare, who was pasturing in the meadow near by, came to him as he stood leaning negligently against the fence, and rubbed her head on his shoulder. He passed his arms around her glossy neck as if she were human, and laid his cheek to hers.

His eyes wandered wistfully to the forests so lovely in their greenness, the level meadows, the mountains defined darkly purple against the gold of the western sky. There was a hum of insects in the air, a twitter of birds down in the reedy marshes. Jennie, pricking up her delicate ears, suddenly started, a little restive at something, and Derrick, turning to see the cause of her fright, confronted a woman hurrying past.

"Why, Hetty," he said, hastily; "are you a ghost or reality?"

"There is nothing supernatural about me," she answered, in a pleasant voice. "It is all flesh and blood that frightened your horse."

"You have been to the village," he said, glancing at the packages she carried.

"Yes, and came back across lots—a saving of time and muscle."

"And an opportune arrival for me, Miss Hetty; for you have saved me the loneliness of my solitary walk home. Good-night, Jennie girl! And now, Hetty, for those traps."

She transferred her packages to him, with an easy grace, and they sauntered slowly along the grassy path.

"Do these bright spring days find you healthy and happy, Miss Hetty?" said Derrick, with a swift glance at the fair face beside him.

"Yes, I am healthy, as you can not fail to see; and I would be unreasonable indeed did I fail to extract happiness from my daily life."

"Yes, it would be strange, possessing, as you

to make hay while the sun shines. And how is René?"

"Well for him, and preaching me a sermon of content daily!"

"You are a good sister to that boy, Hetty."

"No better than I should be. He's mine—mine only. Mother left him to me. 'Be kind to him,' was her latest prayer. Life will always be a thorny pilgrimage to him, carrying about as he must his maimed, misshapen body; and it is my duty to shield him with tender love. It may take the cruel bitter from his life somewhat."

"You may be thinking that he has a pure soul in his misshapen body; you may be thankful for it. You may go down on your knees and thank God that it is no worse—that he is not maimed in both soul and body." He checked himself suddenly.

"Trell Saunders has a pretty little place," he continued, as they passed a white frame house standing back from the road; greenness around it, flowers blossoming along the pathway, roses and honeysuckles clambering up the stoop. "Who'd think, to see Trell standing in the door kissing and tossing that youngster of his, that he'd been working like an ox all day? He is hard-working and poor, and yet a king might envy him. I envy him at times. Hard and rough as I am, I have longed for wife and children of my own—my own flesh and blood. I've longed for a love that would bear with my weaknesses and faults, cling to me whatever might betide, and go with me to the portals of the grave. I knew such a love once when I was a little shaver so high," reaching out his brawny hand to show her. "What other love could it be but a mother's? She was a hard-working, godly woman—a saint, if ever there was one. Hers was a slavish life. She gave her brain, blood, and muscle to her work, used up her vitality, and went down to the grave years before her time. She loved me with the true, unselfish, mother-love. I never had a childlike grievance she was not willing to hear, a pain with which she was not ready to sympathize. I was working at Squire Decker's the summer she died. It was father's idea that I was old enough to help myself little. 'A big sturdy lad of ten,' he called me, 'far too old to be babied by her.' so I went that summer to the Squire's as a sort of chore-boy, doing light jobs, and going home two or three times weekly. Well, one Monday morning I went away from home as usual, and mother walked with me to the turn of the road. 'Be sure and come home Wednesday night, Derrie,' she said as we parted.

"Wednesday came, and that morning the Squire came to me as I was picking apples in the orchard. 'Derrick,' said he, 'your mother is dead!' That's the way it came upon me; a thunder-bolt; no warning, no preparation, only the cruel, cruel word that she, who was all the world to me, was dead. You can imagine my feelings—I can't describe them. But how can you imagine them? You have never had all brightness, hope, and life almost, struck out of your existence so suddenly that a breath of joy ended in a gasp of anguish; a struggling against an adversary who held you down, pinioned, throttled. Ours was a strange home to me after mother was carried out from it forever. Father never understood or had patience with his children, and Susie and I feared and crept away from him. Susie was a shy, tender little thing of six, mother's baby and pet.

"Mother said you must be kind to me, Derrie," sobbed the baby, nestling her pink cheeks against my rough jacket. "She said, 'Always love me for her sake, Derrie—'

"And you know I do all for your good, my child," I could not help saying.

"Yes, Derrie, I believe you do. You have always been a good brother to me!" No music was ever sweeter to my ear than those sobbingly-spoken words.

"Well, I was gone for a couple of months, and came back in good spirits. I began to see my way clear now to build the home I had so often dreamed of. Squire Decker seemed out of sorts when I squared up accounts with him. 'It's too bad, Derrick, that that pretty sister of yours has married so miserably,' he said, irritably.

"Another thunder-bolt! How I found words to utter forth the emotions convulsing me I could not tell.

"You don't mean she has married Joe?"

"'Eh?' with a keen, surprised look at me: 'unknown to you? worse an' worse! and, to beat all, he's taken that foolish little thing out West pioneering. Why, any stronger-framed, stronger-willed woman would break down under the hardships she'll have to endure. It's a sin; it's a shame!'

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mended matters not one whit—rather precipitated affairs. So Susie was taken to Boston, and placed under the supervision of a long-headed, scheming woman—hustled in with a crowd of apprentices, some of them wild, rude girls, unfit companions for my lily-bud. It all came about as I knew it would. She was overworked, snubbed, and bullied, and she grew prematurely. She was a woman in feeling and appearance when she should still have been a guileless child.

"She was a wondrously pretty creature, and I tell the plain, impartial truth when I say I've never seen the girl or woman whose beauty could rival that of my little sister when she was fifteen. Her head seemed fairly burdened with curly, gold-brown hair, and her eyes were deep violet, a color beautiful as rare, and her features were faultless. You may think I was proud of her, and how I loved her! She was mother's legacy to me. My love was idolatry almost. I would have died for her had it been necessary.

"I was working very hard about that time. My first aim being to gain a home for Susie and myself. Such a home as I meant that to be, and we could be so happy together! I was a youthful, hot-blooded enthusiast then; my visions of our future lives were noble indeed, a fine, sad smile crossing his face as he thought of those long-gone hopes and early dreams.

"By-and-by I heard that Joe Sharply was waiting on Susie. That put me in a white-heat of rage, for I knew Joe well—a miserable, licentious fellow, handsome enough to turn a silly girl's head, heartless and unprincipled, living on his wits. You must have known such men, stolid and cunning, thoroughly bent on carrying out their inclinations, at once bullies and cowards. But for once Susie turned a deaf ear to my admonitions, counsels were of no use, and then I forbade her to receive his attentions. She coaxed, cried, and treated me coldly, with no avail. For once I was stern with her. God knows I had her interest at heart, and thought only of her welfare. I had never thought another could come between us; but so it proved. Susie was cold and martyr-like. I was deeply hurt. She spoke no more of the home we were to share together, the pleasures in store for us. Still I kept up a brave heart. I felt by-and-by she would see the danger from which I had preserved her.

"That summer I went away to Boston for Squire Decker. He had business there that required seeing to; but he was poorly, and trusted me in his stead. I found my old Susie when I bade her good-bye. She threw her arms around my neck in her impulsive child-fashion, and cried bitterly:

"'You've been so cross to me lately, Der,' she sobbed, 'and I want to be good friends again, for I do love you, Der.'

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