

THE

BRIDE

CANADIANA

OF

DEATH

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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c J. M. Grant's

—GRANT BALFOUR

c pseud.

AUTHOR'S NOTE.

Not long ago I went to a prayer meeting in one of the churches of our city. The aged minister told in simple words the sad story of his work among the afflicted. Of all the sad things described, the most impressive was the hard road that faced the Consumptive. And this in a rich religious city! Based in part on the facts the minister furnished, the following story, "The Bride of Death," is none too tragic for the sore necessity. We need our arm nerved with love and compassion. The story has, of course, no reference to the struggling work of mercy going on in the Muskoka Free Hospital for Consumptives, near Gravenhurst, for a few years back, nor to the Toronto Free Hospital for Consumptives (advanced cases) that was recently opened near Weston. These institutions need support, and that should and will be sufficient information for them whose hearts are moved at the prevalence of the white plague.

—GRANT BALFOUR.

Toronto, 1904.



ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, MUSKOKA FREE HOSPITAL FOR CONSUMPTIVES.

THE BRIDE OF DEATH.

BY GRANT BALFOUR.

Her last morn there,
The orphan girl arose in yonder ward,
Where she had lain for many weary months :
The old physician's sympathetic touch
And voice of hope sincere had made her well.
And she was proud to feel the power of life
In heart once weary, and in limb once weak,
Tho' still, and would remain, a tender plant.
On prior sunny days, with growing health,
The girl had risen, and, among the flowers
Of early June, in soft and shaded walks,
Inhaled with ease the genial breath of heaven.
But now, she was to say farewell !

Her scanty toilet did not hinder long,
And yet she dressed with care, attending last
To glorious tresses shedding golden light.
Her face, by suffering chastened into grace
Of patience, woven with sweet sympathy,
Appeared, with natural grace, most beautiful.

She knew her graces and the witching power
Of dreamful, dark grey eyes o'er manhood strong.
The day, mayhap, will come, she mused, when I
Shall lean on some strong arm, the arm of one
All worthy of my life and deepest love.
So saying, half in mirth, she tossed her head
With conquering air, and, blushing, smiled.

With satchel scratched and worn
The maiden passed alone into the street.
Her pure, undaunted heart, in full accord
With brightness near, regarded not the cloud—
Portending storm—that hid the distant east.
In that direction lay the lodging place
To which the girl, expectant, made her way.
Arriving pale and tired, she was received
With doubt, tho' she had shown the written proof
Of health. . . . From that abode she went each morn
Adown a narrow lane to needlework
Within a high-walled factory.

But overstrain at work awhile
Had lowered her vital tone, and night's chill breath
Embraced the chance the tender bosom gave.
A little cough, subdued in vain, a flush

Of pretty pink on snowy white. Enough—
The lonely struggling girl must forthwith leave
As if a leper. For the Boarding House
Must have no taint of death. Haste, haste away!
And the girl went out into the desert,
Into the wealthy city's hardened streets,
To seek some pillow, poor (of course), whereon
To lay her head.

But sought from street to street
In vain, receiving answers cold or kind;
Yet one result—the ghastly scourge must find
No entrance anywhere. Till, narrowly
Escaping refuge in the prison cell,
The fragile girl, exhausted, found herself
Upborne a broken stair at dead of night,
In huge, uncouth, yet kind official arms,
And laid upon a waiting widow's bed
Within a garret.

Were there no hospitals
That would receive the wanderer quarantined
In public street and hidden garret? None!
The only hospital that could or would
Receive "the scourge" was full. Ay, somewhere else,



VIEW OF ONE OF THE CHERRY WARDS OF THE MUSKOKA FREE HOSPITAL.

There was a room in which, the minister
Of mercy said, he would not put his dog !

O ye that slept in guarded, cosy rooms
That night your moonlit spires looked down
And mocked the unprotected, gasping wanderer
In search of barest refuge, craving rest—
Heard ye the solemn public call for help ?
Ye heard and heeded not until too late.

Awake, Conscience ! Awake, Mercy !
Awake, O wealthy City ! Wake again
And give the sufferer speedy refuge !
Awake, awake, ye guilty ! for your God
Doth hold you guilty !

On golden sands
That fringed a silver sea, where children played,
The pale girl sat, a little way apart,
Beneath the shading trees. Alone, unknown,
Yet craving love, her hungry, brilliant eyes
Devoured the children's joyous ways awhile,
And then her head, aweared, drooped upon her breast.
Asleep, she dreamed she was a child again
Within a gardened home, where lavish love



A LETTER FROM HOME—DISTRIBUTION OF DAILY MAIL.

Gave purest joy.— Among her golden curls
She felt a mother's hand.

Asleep, how long
She knew not, till a flash and thunderpeal
Awoke her, laughing, and she gazed around bedazed,
Beholding nothing but the coming storm,
The gloom on moaning waves, the empty sand.
The young had fled and were with yonder crowd
That waited to be swiftly carried home.
She bowed her head, regarding not the storm,
And, yearning for her dream again, she sobbed—
“Come back, O mother, come !”

Afar into the night
The battling tempest swept, then, sighing, passed away.
The eager moon glanced thro' the vanquished clouds,
And, down along the lonely shore, beheld
A Figure deathless tread the silvered sand.
He came and stood beside the prostrate form ;
He stretched his fleshless hand and touched
Her wet-flat, golden hair. The maiden raised her hollow
eyes
And smiled. She took his proffered hand, arose,
And, leaning on his marble arm secure,
She walked away,—the bride of Death.



DIVINE SERVICE AT MUSKOKA FREE HOSPITAL.

CONSUMPTION FAST BEING STAMPED OUT.

GOVERNMENT REPORTS SHOW DECREASE OF 40 % IN 3 YEARS.

Deaths in Ontario Reduced During the Past Three Years from 3,484 to 2,072, notwithstanding an Increasing Population.

IN 10 YEARS, WHY SHOULD THERE BE 200 DEATHS

If Necessary Money and Help be Given ?

Following diagram, giving figures from the Report of the Secretary of the Provincial Board of Health, tells a wonderful story of a decreasing death-rate from consumption since the beginning of our crusade. Note that in the first four years there had been a gradual increase in the death-rate :—

<i>Deaths from Tuberculosis in Ontario.</i>	<i>Increase</i>	<i>Decrease</i>	<i>Year</i>	
Not Available			1896	National Sanitarium Association Formed.
3154			1897	Muskoka Cottage Sanatorium Opened.
3291	137		1898	116 Patients Treated.
3405	114		1899	147 Patients Treated.
3484	79		1900	189 Patients Treated.
3243		241	1901	186 Patients Treated.
2694		549	1902	251 Free Hosp. opened. Patients Treated.
2072		622	1903	321 Patients Treated.

YOUR DOLLARS HAVE HELPED IN SAVING A LIFE.