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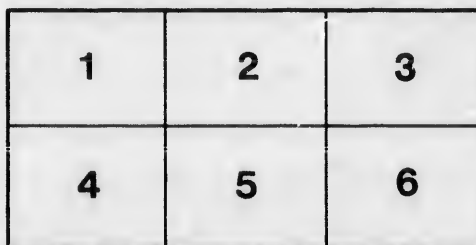
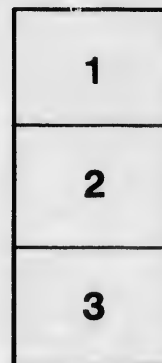
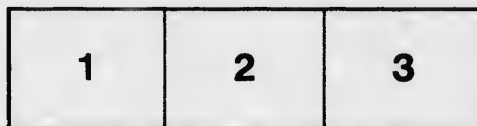
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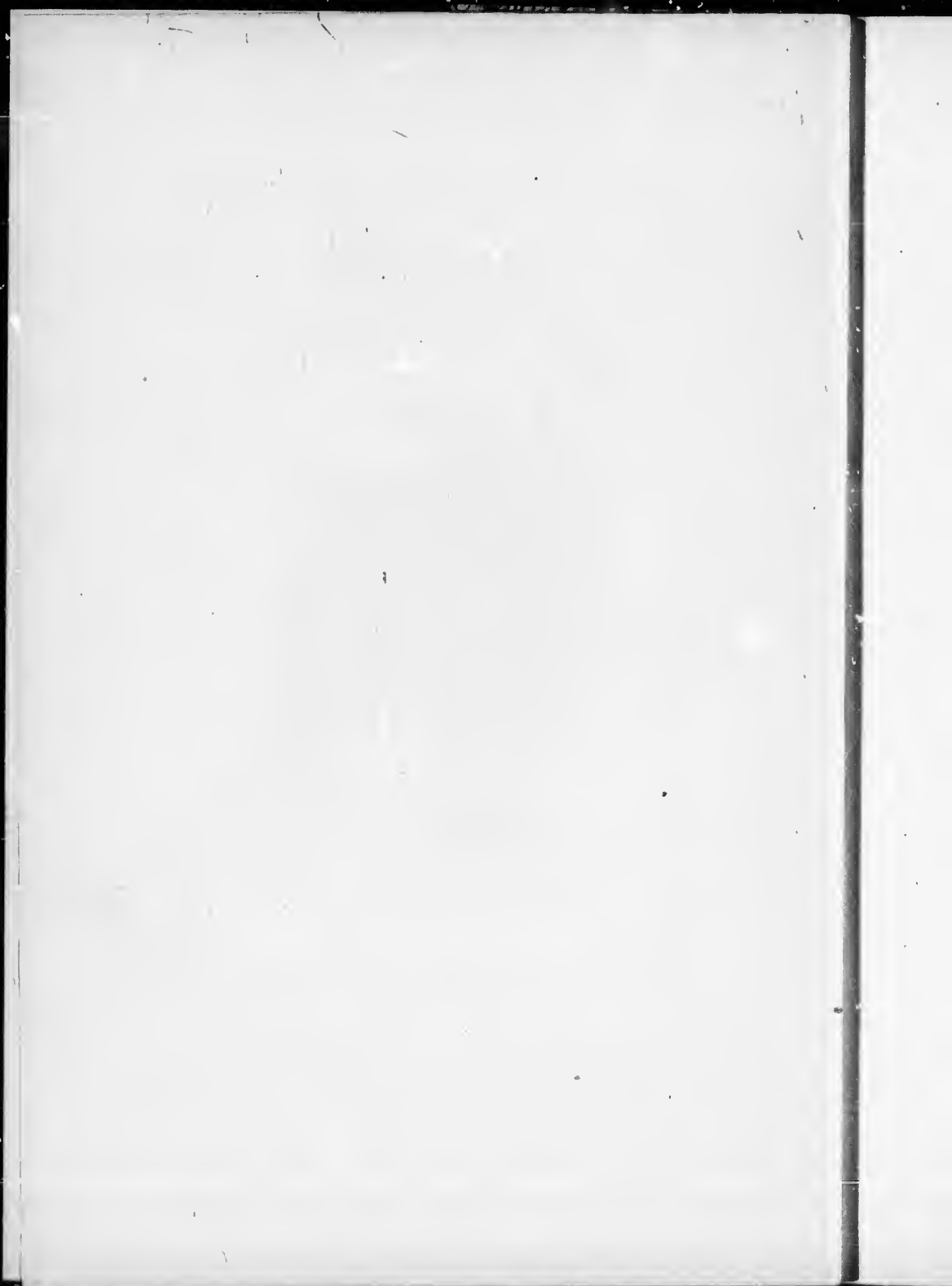
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ONLY BUDS.

BY
BERTHA.

The works of an author present the aspect of a flower garden.
He who wanders through may gather what he loves the best,
and pass by those which offend his vision.—*L. E. H.*

1884.
FINLAY A. GRANT, PUBLISHER,
NEW GLASGOW, NOVA SCOTIA.

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TO
FINLAY ARNON GRANT,
A TRUE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CAUSE SHE HAS HUMBLY
ENDEAVORED TO AID,
THIS VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY
THE AUTHOR.

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PREFACE.

This volume of poems and sketches represents by individuality what Amateurdom is collectively. The idiomatic term, *Amateurdom* — sanctioned by its usage since the inception of the institution which it defines — represents the embryotic elements of American literature. The youth of the country who possess literary inclinations and are desirous of cultivating those germinal impulses, are its members. Amateurdom may then be analyzed as the period of literary matriculation. Many of the young men and women who are identified with it never attain proficiency with the pen, but in the cultivation of their appreciative faculties, enabling a full comprehension of the beautiful which derives its nativity, Minerva-like, from the brain of others, they receive vast benefit through their connection with Amateurdom.

By far the lesser element of the members of Amateur Journalism is constituted by those who display ability in the creative field of literature. It is more distinctively this class which is represented in the current volume.

This, briefly told, is Amateurdom and its objects. Is it not as essential for the cultivation of literary taste among the people as is the school-room for expanding the mental faculties of childhood, the gymnasium for the development of the physical possibilities of mankind?

A bounteous nature scattered the tokens of Flora in every quarter of the globe to gladden the vision of mankind. While

in the tropics the richest tints mingle in the harmony of nature, the more delicate, but no less beautiful hues, are given the regions embraced by the temperate zone. Even on the craggy Alpine heights the virgin edelweiss greets the tourist's eager eyes. All are adapted to condition and circumstance. So Amateurdom has its flowers; though mayhap they are only buds. Whether they are to unfold and breathe forth the rich perfume of full-blown flowers depends upon the public. Its opinion can either touch the blossoms with its icy touch, and the petals lie withered and dead; or it can instil new life into the parent stem, and the buds may expand and grow to the grander possibilities of maturity.

THE PUBLISHER.

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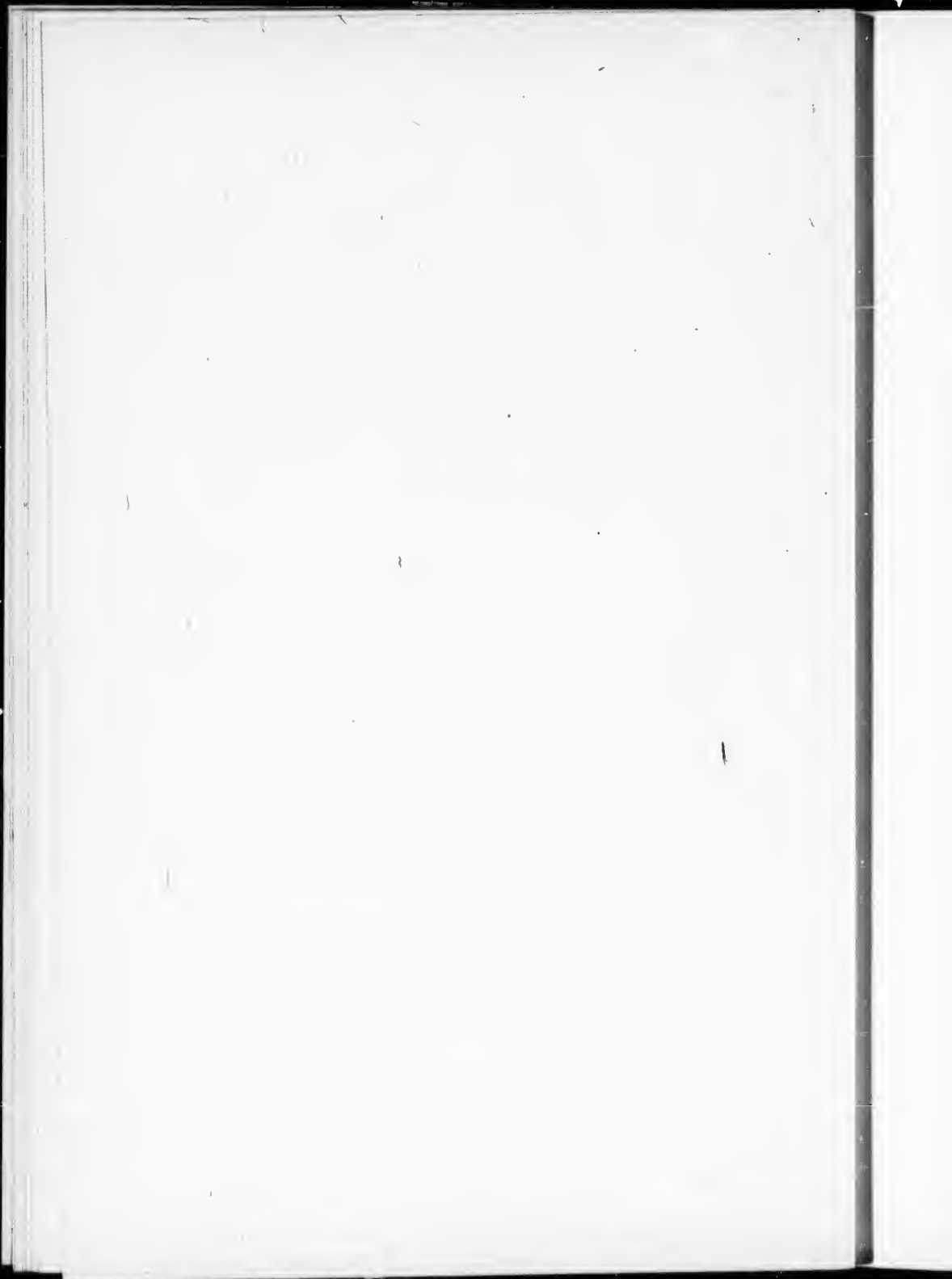
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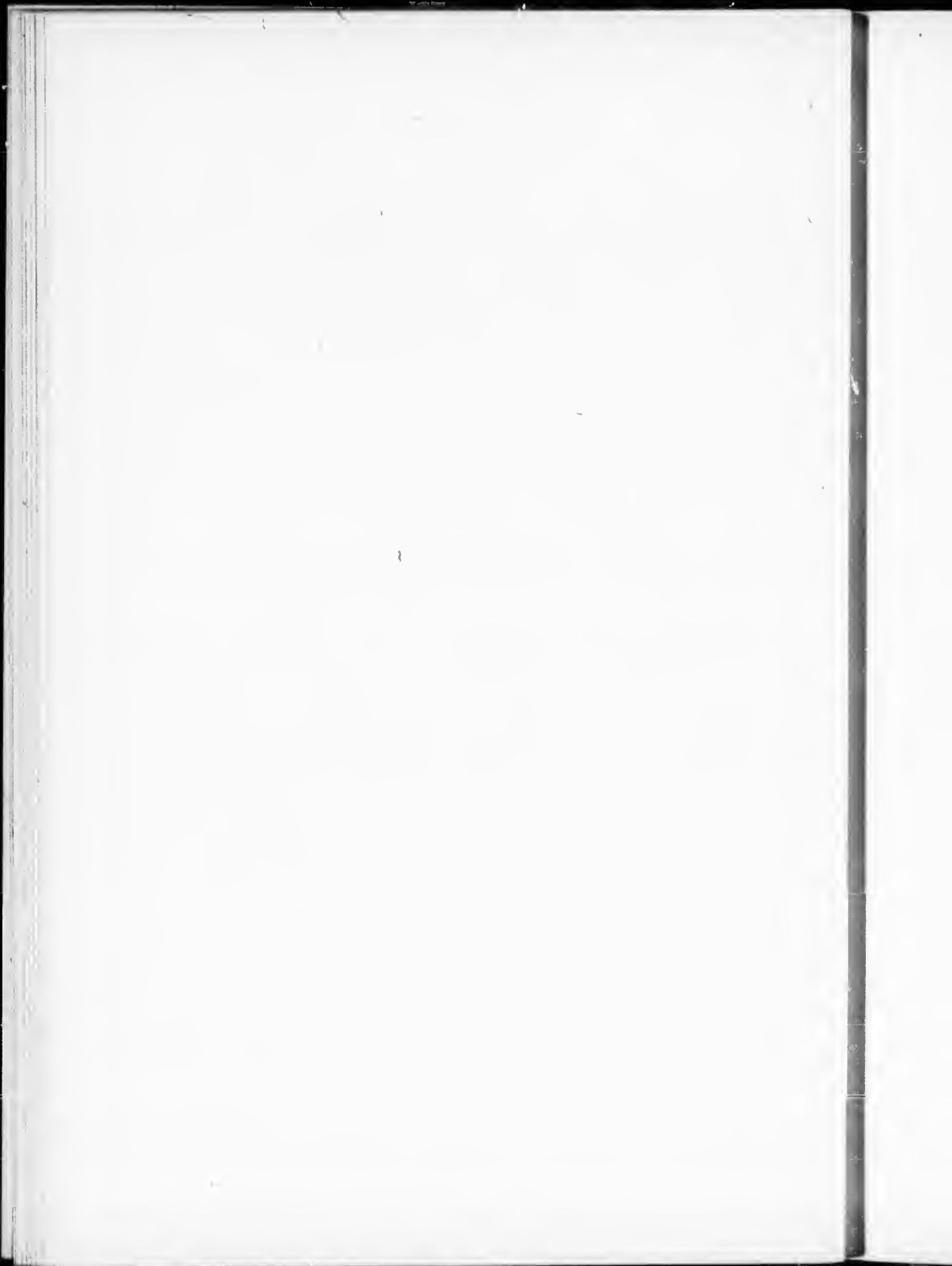
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TO MY FRIENDS.

One time my guardian angel strayed,
 And showed to me a garden fair:
 Truth, Hope, and Faith, and tender Love,
 Were the strange flowers growing there.
 I tried to grasp them; tried to bind
 About my soul their perfume rare.
 To give my friends. When lo! I learned
 Bloomed in their lives more than I dare
 To ever crave. I turned away;
 Then, with a sudden yearning pain,
 Retraced my steps: There smiled at me
 A few sweet buds, that I might gain.

From out the gardens of rich Thought
 Rare blossoms ever have been culled;
 They have been worn upon your hearts,
 And often has their perfume lulled
 The fever of your brain. My friends,
 Had I the power, such would I give.
 But now I can give ONLY BUDS,—
 Unknowing if they die or live.
 But in the time that is to be,
 God grant, as kindred spirits meet,
 Within your souls I then may find
 One of my buds, a blossom sweet.



A LIFE'S POEM.

AWAKENING.

I.

The gentle breeze strayed through the casement wide
And mingled with soft whispers, few and low ;
The birds trilled sweetly from their nests outside ;
The sun shed o'er the earth its golden glow.
Two pretty eyes ope'd to the light of day,
Bewildered, closed: a faint and pleading cry
Declared in subtle, undefined dismay,
A new-born soul — a nameless prophecy.

II.

'Mid the clover and the daisies
Two soft hands wreathed flowers bright ;
Two red lips sang pretty praises,
Two blue eyes drank in God's light.
In a chamber's holy silence,
Childhood's faith asked Heaven to keep ;
Lightly rose a pure soul's incense —
Wondering eyes then closed in sleep.

THE SONG.

I.

Love strayed with the sunlight,
It roamed in the garden,
It kissed the sweet flowers
All dripping with dew.

A Life's Poem.

Love stole to that bosom,
 It blessed that chaste spirit,
 It thrilled all that being:
 Its heart throbbed anew.

II.

The sun was low-sinking;
 A soft breeze in mischief
 Rare flowers' rich perfume
 Half stealthily won.
 The sweet bells were chiming,
 Soft words were low-echoed,
 A bosom wild throbbing —
 Two lives were made one.

DARKNESS.

I.

Upon the shores of Error's barren sands
 A proud wreck—furious, trembling—faced rude storms;
 No human aid came from the neighboring strands —
 But peopled fast the waste with seeming forms
 That were foul thoughts from drear Despair's abyss,
 Sprang up to make a suicide's mad brain;
 Through all that aching void Death lured to bliss;
 Life held supreme grim Torment's bitter pain.

II.

The storm swept slowly past. The wretched soul
 Grasped gentler thoughts; felt breezes mild and light;
 Beyond the dreary waters' threatening roll
 Gleamed 'neath the tender sun a far-off height,
 A ray of light soft beckoned; — stirred the wreck,
 Quick shivered — turned away — turned back; at length,
 Slow-moving, glided toward the distant speck
 An eager soul, lured on by heaven-born strength.

DAWN.

Grief had pierced e'en Time's dull breast,
Yet its heart ne'er ceased to beat ;
And its tender, healing touch
Proved a balm, for all wounds meet.
Golden rays from Hope's fair dawn
Shed their blessings manifold ;
Trust reached out its tender arms,
Nor did Faith its peace withhold.

COMPENSATION.

A faint though pretty smile. Soft, dimpled hands,
That gently strayed o'er mother's bosom fair ;
Then childhood — wavering in its demands —
Leaped to its father's arms, and nestled there.
A pulsing, mystic throb of peace divine
Stole gently to the bosom soft-caressed ;
Unclouded light of trusting faith sublime
Shone from the childish eyes, and all were blessed.

A love that conquers. Sorrow's pain withdrawn.
Life's promise won ; lips that once more can pray ;
A trusting soul that waits a glorious dawn
Afar, beyond life's evanescent day.

THE SHADOW PICTURE.

Long years ago, in lands afar,
 There lived a maiden, fair Orille.
 Beneath the shadows of old trees,
 And close beside a rippling rill,
 Stood a small cottage, her dear home :
 Wherein she dreamed in silence grave,
 Or crept in wonder, after hours
 Of rapturous joys that Nature gave.

She dwelt apart from petty cares,
 And far remote from tainting strife :
 Nor dreamed of aught but purity,
 Nor wearied of her peaceful life.
 A blithesome, careless child she seemed,
 Yet 'neath that dainty, childish guise
 There lay unguessed, at swooning depths,
 Thoughts that when roused, well might surprise.

Fair, sweet Orille! her wondrous eyes,
 That gazed on sunset-tinted clouds,
 Grew dark as midnight, and expressed
 A childish awe, as though dim shrouds
 Gleamed through the pearly clouds above.
 That paler grew with dying day,—
 And in those lustrous, humid orbs
 The smouldering fire of Genius lay.

The years rolled on. And sweet Orille
Stood blushing on the verge of time
That casts fair girlhood with a pang
Into a trembling woman's clime.
No lover came in earthly guise
To woo that chaste and loving heart,
Yet in its pure and sacred depths
There lay sweet thoughts, alone, apart,—

That oftentimes in the silent hour
Arose to strange and thrilling speech
Upon her dewy lips; and grew
At last to wondrous lessons teach.
Within sweet Fancy's tender realm
There dwelt a fondly-loved Ideal;
And oftentimes to the scented winds
Her soft, white hands threw an appeal

To waft her hero in warm life
Unto that silent, peaceful spot,
To claim her wealth of youth and love,
And turn to bliss her lonely lot.
But days fled past, and fickle winds
Revealed to none that trusted prayer;
Yet subtly flung to pure Orille
Sweet words that grew, strange fruit to bear.

One calm, fair day — a day so warm
It lured the sweetest, straying breeze —
A strange idea, yet pleasing well,
Stole softly in her heart to ease;
And yet, amazed at daring thought,
Her senses 'neath the witching spell
Felt bound with cords of finest steel:
Grew faint within their prison cell.

The Shadow Picture.

Thought grew resolve ; and tranced still,
 She sought the room, unused and dim,
 That held the brush she fain would touch
 To bring to life her girlish whim.
 O wondrous power ! O gifted hands !
 The sun-rays, as they sank to rest,
 Smiled last upon a canvas there,
 That held, outlined, Orille's unrest.

How should that form and face appear ?
 She pondered not ; but placed with care,
 In broad, bold sweeps, a manliness
 That drew her blushes. Gazing there,
 She wept with tender, saddened tears ;
 She ne'er had seen such manly grace
 In glowing life ; and wept but more
 At thought of colors she must trace

To make complete those outlines rough.
 She slept, to see a colored weft ;
 And waked, to find what perfectness
 Should glow with touches fond and deft.
 Time sauntered past with lingering feet,
 Her favorite haunts knew her no more ;
 Within that chamber grew a face
 That richest tints of beauty wore.

The good dame of the cottage oft
 In mild though gravest wonder, pondered
 O'er the changes in her restless pet ;
 And yet her straying thoughts ne'er wandered
 To such a truth as posed above
 Orille's unrest. Her fancied peace
 None ever thought they could molest,
 So from her task how could she cease ?

Was it complete? Alas! Orille
Sank breathless in a silent prayer,—
But oh! 'twas such a daring one,
'T was lost in depths of wild despair.
Oh, for a gracious Master-hand!
To touch the beauty glowing there,
And breathe a breath of pulsing life
On those moist lips unknown to care.

The longing of her gentle heart
Grew anguish in its wild extreme,
Until in dreamland faded pain,
And grew to ecstasy supreme.
But dreams fade out. 'T was toward morn,
When o'er her senses softly steal
The glamour of a heavenly dream,
Bringing to life things most unreal.

The form upon the canvas there
Swayed forward with a half caress,
The lips breathed kisses moist with love,
The lustrous eyes beamed tenderness.
Orille rose in her restless sleep,
Her warm lips sought the fond caress,
Her cup of bliss at last flowed o'er;
But life ran out with its excess.

* . * * *

Hours fled apace. The sun arose
And shone upon a strange, sad scene,
Then crept behind a friendly cloud,
Abashed at its own glare and sheen.
But gathering courage, stole once more
To view the wreck of one still night,

The Shadow Picture.

And touch with loving, softened gleam,
The features of the fallen knight.

With loving rays it sought the sheen
Of fair Orille's luxuriant hair,
And threw a halo soft and mild
On all the lifeless beauty there.
Before that picture faces paled,
Yet one knew how her loved was blest,
And felt, though filled with stony grief,
"He giveth His beloved rest."

THE LAY OF THE LILY.

There were clouds, and clouds rare-tinted,
 Floating through the summer air,
 O'er the waters that reflected
 All the softness floating there ;
 And the children' happy voices,
 Murmuring from the distant strand,
 Drifted like sweet strains of music
 From some unseen secret band.

There a sail-boat idly floated
 O'er the rippling waters' foam,
 Toward the field of white far-gleaming,
 That suggested paths to roam
 'Mid the garden of the waters —
 Ah, what bliss strayed o'er the wave !
 Thus together dreamed two idlers,
 While all earth its sweetness gave.

He had gathered a lake lily,
 And its calm and lovely face
 Placed upon her heaving bosom,
 Where it hung in dainty grace ;
 While its heart of gold slow-trembled
 'Mid the fragrance, snowy-leaved,
 As it shed its sweetest perfume,
 That the soft air subtly breathed.

The Lay of the Lily.

Sweet the calm, as on they floated:
 Happiness is worthy fame.
 But unto that happy Eden
 Slow the storied serpent came.
 By a movement all too careless
 Swift there lay at Margie's feet,
 Smiling, fair as any snowdrop,
 A likeness strange, but fair and sweet.

Margie's dark eyes grew still darker
 As she saw a half-formed fear
 Staring from her idol's blue ones:
 Then upon her soul smote clear
 With the grasp of fiendish fingers,
 Rumors that once passed her by:—
 Was the time now come to heed them?
 Stifled, fled an anguished cry.

'T was his face. Ah, he had loved it!
 Yes, perchance he loved it now;
 Banished were all thoughts of gladness,
 As o'er lip, and cheek, and brow,
 Swept a cloud, a sombre shadow:
 Grim despair at last prevailed:
 Downward swept the silken lashes —
 Fury, madness, hate, were veiled.

No words came of explanation:
 Oft they prove of no avail;
 For a glance, a touch, a something,
 O'er grim Doubt sometimes prevail.
 Useless were his pleading glances,
 For that sweet face calmly smiled
 Into her's, from Harold's feet there —
 Frienzied hate was speaking mild

Of the thoughts that swayed her being,
On the lily's heart of gold
Harold's lips fell, mutely pleading:
Yet, alas! too rash! too bold!
As his kisses shook the petals,
One white hand gleamed in the air:—
Heaven, seeing, smiled in splendor
Upon Margie, lonely there.

Still the soft waves rippled music,
Still the cloudlets floated by,
Still the lily shed its perfume —
What cared they for smile or sigh?
Did the sweet pathetic silence
Stir her heart to wilder woe?
Did that yonder circling ripple
Move her pulses fast, or slow?

What had been? What fiendish spirit,
Floating o'er the waters deep,
Flashed into those supple fingers
That they made so true a sweep?
And what dreadful, unseen presence,
Or what strange and awful power,
Left a warmly brilliant blood-stain
On the heart of that white flower?

* * * * *
After months — and long months after —
Trembling 'neath the harvest moon,
Came the fairest flowers of summer,
Lilies with their virgin bloom.
And upon those placid waters,
Drifting like a phantom pale,

The Lay of the Lily.

Swayed a boat amid the shadows,
With a burden ghostly frail.

Just amid the fragrant lilies,
From the waters darkly deep,
With a nervous, trembling motion,
Plucked from out its dreamy sleep,
Came a dewy, fragrant blossom —
On a ghastly breast 'twas lain —
When, from out its chaste-like glory,
Gleamed a brilliant carmine-stain.

Wan-white lips were pressed upon it:
Prayer moaned o'er the waters wide,
Then a something smote the water —
Margie slept by Harold's side.
And the moon gleamed on the lilies,
And the waters mirrored moons
That with every flowing motion
Fell back into paling swoons.

Now with every summer season —
So the ancient story runs:
'Mong the lilies' stately blossoms,
One with heart of blood still comes;
And to wish in firm believing,
When the moon swings o'er that grave,
Is to know a Fate most kindly —
Grants whatever boon you crave.

RETROSPECTIVE.

—

“Tell me no more, no more
Of my soul's lofty gifts! Are they not vain
To quench its haunting thirst for happiness?
Have I not loved, and striven, and failed to bind
One true heart unto me, whereon my own
Might find a resting-place, a home for all
Its burden of affections?”

As one who often strives with yearning gaze
To pierce the rayless gloom of solemn Night,
And tossing fevered arms across its breast,
Sheds bitter tears upon its gloomy brow,
Crying for rest and peace with mute, parched tongue,—
Thus ever on the disc of by-gone years
Circled the fireless ghosts of my sad heart,
And ever on the grave of buried Love
Dripped tears of blood from that same throbbing source.

The busy world ran on; it heeded not
The mournful eyes of its young votary,
That ever turned upon its baffling face
In weary questioning; its careless heart
Recked not: its ruthless feet sped gayly on,
Nor stayed themselves for mortal's weal or woe.
So speechless Sorrow grew familiar with
The sight of Love's fair, precious, sweetened gifts
Thrown sadly down, or thrust in breathless haste
Upon the reckless world's wide, carnal heart:
And grew to court absorbing Bitterness,—

That twines itself too oft among the mind's
 Strong clinging tendrils, near the fruitful vines,
 To spread the germs of hatred and of woe.

Sometimes the peace of heaven falleth down
 Upon the mourning spirit swift and sure
 As doth the lurid lightning cleave the sky ;
 Sometimes it steals as gently o'er the soul
 As doth the warmly-tinted rays of light
 Creep o'er the mountain tops to herald day.

Wan Sadness turned away from the wide pool
 That seethed within the luring city's breast,
 And sought the glowing solitude : — when lo !
 A strange, warm hand clasped her's, and face to face,
 And heart to heart, she met, and viewed, and loved
 Fair Nature.

Mortal well may sing thy praise,
 O gentle spirit ! Thy sweet voice instils
 A happiness and calm that is not born
 Of social joys, nor close companionship,
 Nor friendships made with kindred heart of man.
 And yet thy deep instructions light the way
 We all must walk, to bless that which we flee.
 Regardless of the source from which they spring,
 The gleaming lilies on the waters' breast,
 Unfold their petals chaste with calmest grace,
 And shed their subtle sweets upon the air.
 Conscious of ugly thorns, the sweet-briar bush
 Grows fragile gems of blushing light, and casts
 Its golden hearts' frail fibres to cold earth —
 Heavily out-blooming flow'rs of sterner mould.
 May's dainty blossoms struggle into life
 From 'neath the fett'ring vines that strive to blight.

And turn their fragrant hearts to far-off heaven,
Giving their all unto whoe'er shall seek.

Upon the virgin soil that covered o'er
Love's sad, sad wounds, the flow'rs that greet the dawn
Of lightsome childhood sprang once more. They bloomed
By day, and nightly turn'd their perfumed souls
To heav'n for drops of spirit-dew; and peace
Fell on grim, restless Woe, until it stood
Transfigured — and no more the faintest trace
Of sadness held mute reign o'er Hope's rapt heart.

Since that glad hour hath there been no more need
Of human love? Is granted swift desire
All that for which it pleads? Ask me no more.
Within the temple of each human heart
The quenchless fire of passion burns innate,
And ev'ry soul that nobly does and well,
And ev'ry heart that owns a pure Ideal,
Forever yearns a fond, congenial mate.
To some it hath been given to know the joys
That fall like tend'rest benedictions o'er
The home of purest, sweetest, truest Love.
Its bosom is a haven of real rest,
Where fervid heart-throbs meet responsive ones;
All thoughts, all hopes, all aims, all fond desires
Meet thoughts and hopes and aims as deep, as sweet,
As noble and as warm; and none so blest
As they who never weep and long in vain
For all the blissful peace and sweet repose
That comes from sacred love and perfect faith.

For there are some to whom the garnered wealth
That snuggles in the untouched, secret depths

Of their warm hearts' rich mine, is but a source
 For restlessness and sorrow — vague unrest:
 While also, many who are lavishing
 The fresh, sweet passion of their youthfulness
 Upon a selfish idol, soon will know
 The grief that saps the founts of unwise love.

And still the years sweep on — hour follows hour,
 Day succeeds day, and tender Night oft folds
 Its sombre robes about earth's weary child,
 That it may gain, through wild outbursts of grief
 That Day keeps ever pent within the breast,
 New courage and relief: wherewith to cope
 Successfully with all the deep and chill
 Perplexities Time daily gives fresh birth.—
 And happy they who find fulfilled in age
 The luring promises of joyous youth.

Thus they are flitting by, life's sunny years;
 And though they fail to quell each lonely heart's
 Mute cry for tranquil love, in vain their strife
 To hurl the spirits' haven from its fair,
 Calm resting-place. There is a sweet, sweet peace
 That cooling winds from far-off azure clouds
 Bear gently down to all who silent mourn;
 There is a voiceless peace that dwells within,
 Called into steadfast life from the calm sense
 Of duties faithfully performed: Replies,
 For all earth's tireless, eager questioners,
 Than fame — naught but a name, oft dearly bought:
 Than love — unconscious harbinger of woe:
 More sweet the calm, low-brooding o'er the soul
 That owes its hourly rest to glad Content.

HER BOOK OF LOVE.

It lay before her enraptured vision,
 Long streaks of light athwart its side,
 And as a diamond's golden setting,
 Gleamed thread-like letters glowing wide.

She oped it with a nervous trembling,
 And glanced adown the lettered leaf,
 And something she had thought long-buried,
 Returned, with unforgotten grief.

She deemed her love so firmly granite,
 That crumbled to dust. Upon that page
 She saw all the grim and ghastly ruins
 Grown gloomy and dark and heavy with age.

She turned those first leaves slowly over,
 With aching heart, but tearless eyes,
 Viewing what Time had tried to cover,
 And piercing its filmy, vain disguise.

How odious seemed those girlish follies ;
 How much she read below the stains
 That marked the death of each frail passion —
 Buried with stern remorseful pains.

The fluttering leaves seemed almost countless,
And misty and blurred with anguished tears,
That laid on that heart with voiceless pathos,
The old-time weight of troubles and fears.

Then one by one the leaves grew lighter,
Till only six in the book remained:
A nameless terror consumed her being,
As she vaguely wondered what they contained.

She turned the leaf, and there lay gleaming
A beautiful letter — the letter A.
Was this but the symbol of some love-story
Shining out from the past at this late day?

Nothing but that one beautiful letter
On that smooth surface of white and gold,
Yet a strange, sweet thrill of yearning fondness
Flashed to the heart that would never grow cold.

The leaf fell over; and shone there one letter —
A mystical one, as full many could tell:
Emblematic for ages of life's dearest language:
The sweet, pretty letter — the letter L.

Strong, eager love, so tender and faithful —
It whispered the song as a bird to its mate;
How could it but bless in fulfilling its mission?
Why should she reject it, to scorn her changed fate?

Over again, and — wonder of wonders!
Only one letter — the letter B.
Bewildered, she gazed there, then turned the leaf over:
She sought in those pages for more than a key.

The firm, creamy paper, so brilliantly flashing,
Held on its surface the letter E.
She smiled: then she kissed it, and grasped the sweet meaning
That gleamed on her soul as the sun on the sea.

She knew the next letter before she beheld it;
It smiled at her mutely — the letter R.
How dear and how joyful all looks through Faith's eye-sight,
How near grows the hope that of old seemed so far!

The last leaf fell over. Her tears dimmed the glory
That from the T's lustre shed Truth's pearly hue;
But felt she the burning of Love in its waking,
And deep in her heart lay its faith, proven true.

She kissed the dear letters and wept o'er them blindly;
She breathed sacred secrets through all their mute veins;
Then drew back in sadness that time could ne'er alter,—
Her book understood not love's pleasures and pains.

Long lay the leaves open. She dreaded to close them.
Through this life, forever, all love dreams were o'er.
That strange book decreed it; she wished not to change it.
Most simply 'twas written, yet naught could tell more.

The streams of white love that lit up the shadows,
And gleamed on that Present with dimples of light,
Lay sealed 'tween the covers, to gild all the Future:
Lay closed, clasped, and sealed: hidden far from her sight.

And all the grave terrors of shadowed hereafters
Ne'er tears from her being the deep, solemn bliss
That stole o'er her senses, while Love's song was ringing,
And drowning life's sorrows with one sacred kiss.

But if from her lips Faith shall claim the key rosy,
That locks the fond treasure, more precious than gold,
Then will her heart weary find rest on Love's bosom,
And live out its glorious promise of old.

And yet, though still trembling with fondest desire,
Love claims not its heritage, early or late —
Love's kingdom, that lies in the life of her dreaming,
Will still be unsullied: forever shall wait.

OUR CACTUS.

The house-plants stood in the glowing sun,
 And sparkled with glistening water drops,
 While the cactus, old, and tough, and grim,
 Grew bright, with the sun in its thorny tops.
 Baby, in innocent, glad content,
 Crept to the plant that seemed to charm;
 But his tiny hand touched not the green,
 For the cruel thorns pierced his dainty palm.

One day, soon after, an older child
 Drew near the plant in a curious vein:
 And his hand felt a cruel, thrilling sting,—
 But he tossed his head, and scorned the pain.
 A curious fancy sought and found
 A place in my restless, weary brain;—
 One tender heart smiled grief afar,
 Another wept o'er transient pain.

The world 's but a cactus of larger growth:
 In our childish days it seemeth fair,
 But alas! too soon we feel its thorns
 Through gleams of hope, that turn to care.
 While young, we dread e'en sorrows light,
 And o'er our griefs shed bitter tears;
 Yet those warm drops cannot presage
 The woe that cometh in after years.

Time's wheel rolls on ; we are but spokes
That with it' whirl, nor care to pause ;
We now brave grief with scornful smiles —
Smiles born of tears — that spurn applause.
We even laugh. On our broken hearts
Love's flower lies dead,— we are filled with scorn.
For, striving to grasp life's hidden green,
We clasp but closer a merciless thorn.

TO THE LOVER.

[Suggested upon reading "The Lover to the Moon," by Geo. E. Day.]

As I wandered aimlessly out, one eve,
 Beneath the pale moon's mellow light,
 A face filled with sadness I did perceive,
 Yet saw it transfigured in beauty bright.

By a garden gate, in a musing mood,
 The sweet, sorrowful face I first beheld,
 And the strange perfume of flower and wood,
 And stranger scene, my steps withheld;

And in the shadow of flowering tree,
 I gazed upon that wondrous face
 Upraised toward heaven, as though in free,
 Resistless longing for a trace

Or sign of wondrous, faithful love.—
 And watching the face beneath the play
 Of the moonbeams that burst through clouds above,
 I saw a promise — one bright ray.

Then, bethinking me of some verses fair
 I had thoughtfully read, and read once more,
 I felt on that maid's luxuriant hair
 Lay gleams of light from thy heart's door.

To the Lover.

Then dawned a meaning. O magic scene!
From viewing those lips ever kissed and caressed
By the tremulous rays of the silver sheen,—
I envied her so strangely blessed.

And slowly retracing the lonely path,
I thought o'er the mission of the moon,
And felt to that heart there had been borne
From thine, "love's bud, to blossom soon."

THE SNOW STORM.

The great, white flakes came tumbling down,
And struck in silence mother earth,
Who oped her barren heart in joy
To grasp them in their tearful mirth.
But after the bright, cheerful calm
That smiled above the first grey belt
Of new-born snow, that turned to tears,
The flakes came down too thick to melt.

They whirled down madly through the air,
And some in laughter — though unheard —
Jumped into an old basin near,
As though a bath they then preferred.
And in a window 'cross the way,
Three children in a row I saw:
And one was cooing to the snow,
And one I saw a circle draw,—

To please the girl who looked so sad,
And keep her — so it seemed to me —
From weeping o'er an old arm-chair
That stood beneath the bare elm tree.
The chair looked grim and worn and old,
But bore in courage deep-set marks,
Scraped there by divers instruments,
By childish hands in childish larks.

Just a few happy weeks before,
 Beneath that stately old elm tree,
 I'd seen the child kiss and caress
 The sullen chair in mirthful glee.
 And viewing her in wonder mute,
 And thinking of the love that swayed
 And ruled that heart of innocence,
 My troubled heart I did upbraid.

I watched the chair in grave content,
 As flakes came tenderly adown,
 And stopped in pity at its sides,
 Then slowly robed it all in down.
 Five hours the flakes caressed the wood,
 Then glancing there — O wondrous sight!
 The snowy cushions, gleaming clear,
 To my dull mind brought odd delight.

And as I gazed, I read thereon
 In pearly letters, strangely clear:
 "See what dear Time hath brought to me;
 Thou know'st sad wounds are buried here."
 I marvelled not, for well I knew
 That to the poignant griefs of men
 Time bringeth cooling heritage,—
 Mysterious draughts, beyond our ken.

And then I prayed from my sad heart
 For deathless time to bring to me
 With hastening feet, the calm, sweet peace
 My anguished soul could not forsee,
 And it hath come. I feel, e'en now,
 Oblivion's tranquility;
 And in delight with that full cup,
 Can smile o'er woful destiny.

AUTUMN.

1883.

The wild winds vaunt thy praises to the earth,
The wild birds warble them unto the sky,
The wavelets gently laud thee in their mirth,
And yet, alas! your glories fade and die.

The leaves, so lately dressed in colors bright,
List to the gay winds murmur as they pass,
Become enamored with some distant light,
And float off in a whirling, giddy mass.

The bare trees toss their waving branches out,
And whisper their mild griefs in murmurs proud;
Then o'er their woes they muse with silent doubt,
And strangely calm, await their coming shroud.

Huge bunches of white grasses nod and smile,
And gently rustle in the merry breeze
That lingers o'er them lovingly a while,
Then rushes on, nor heeds their gentle pleas.

The partridge seeks your carpet sere and dry:
It nestles in the matted underbrush,
And, cooing, tempts the wary sportsman nigh,—
Then by a flight, his aspirations crush.

Now, dear old year, your youth has fled you by ;
Your quickened heart-throbs thrilling all the scene.
Denote that with your splendor, soon to die,
You strive to leave us some sweet, happy dream.

If mortals like to Nature sought their death
To dream the dreariness of life away ;
And like to her shed sweetness with each breath
To waken with a pulse of Spring's glad day.

Then gracious death were balm for every smart :—
For blest 'twould be in silent peace to lie,
Till, wakened by the throb of Spring's glad heart.
They live again the days that bring no sigh.

But, dear old year, you will not list nor wait ;
With Nature's chorus, chanting shrill and wild,
You hasten to your grave with steps elate,
And do not care for storms or sunshine mild.

So shall it be, kind year. The lesson 's mine.
The soft white snows of Hope shall drift upon
My fainting heart — as o'er the grave of thine —
And happy rest for each will soon be won.

FAIRY-LAND.

Blest realm! The hallowed kingdom where rapt souls demand
 The brightest dreams of youth; the spot where all the grand
 And magic scenes — Life actual seeks in vain to claim —
 Steal witchery from the Queen's own wand to richly frame
 Their glowing tracery. Where hearts, grown sad and cold,
 Live o'er and o'er the transports flaming youth foretold;
 Where spirits find sweet charms occult,—that gently strand
 All woes this side the verge of that fair, sacred land.

He, in the solemn midnight,
 Beheld through filmy snow,
 That swayed like fairy curtains,
 The sleeping town below.
 The house-tops peeped from blankets
 That could not quite obscure,
 Yet folded round their sentries
 Warm coverings, soft and pure.
 In fairy-land his spirit
 Found answering voice and smile.
 And gathered brightest visions
 About the homely stile.

She stood beside the window
 And viewed the pearly glow
 That Luna, from her highway,
 Spread o'er the earth below.

Fairy-Land.

The ice-king with grim fingers
Clutched upon the lakelet's breast,
And o'er its wondering bosom
Flung a brightly jewelled vest.
Her soul in dreamy musings
Strayed through the silvery sheen.
And peopled with sweet fancies
The wild and lonely scene.

Fair Luna rose still higher,
And vainly wooed the joy
That wrapped the straying spirits
Of the thoughtful girl and boy.
The fair, white wings of Slumber
Then fanned their souls away
From fairy-land's gay borders,
To realms of speechless day.
And softly Sleep strayed over,
With gentle, tender kiss,
The lids of each young dreamer,
That hid a tale of bliss.

O fairy-land! O wonder-land!
Ne'er yield thy mystic reign.
Sweet fairy-land! Fair wonder-land!
No mortal seeks in vain.

WAIT NOT.

Were I to die to-night —
 Then one who now is wandering far,
 Would quickly idle steps repair,
 To view the face death left so fair;
 Would gently touch the soft brown hair,
 Would press pale lips in mute despair,
 And breathe a sad, vain voiceless prayer.

Were I to die to-night —
 Another might in sorrow steal
 To gaze upon grim death's strange seal :—
 Perchance, beside its shrine to kneel
 And plead.—Ah, Death heeds no appeal.
 Stilled lips no pleading kisses feel,
 Cold hearts no tender love reveal.

Were I still lying here —
 Relentless Death's fair, happy bride,
 His signet ring this hand beside,—
 Where are the lips that then would chide!
 All errors, selfishness and pride,
 Loved ones to earth would then confide,
 By their unconscious author's side.

Ah, life is mine to-night.—
 It sees no terror in the tomb,
 It finds in death but transient gloom.

Wait Not.

The spirit bursts its narrow room,
And visions scenes that faintly loom
Beyond the gilded gates of doom,
That give to being joyful bloom.

And thus, while life is mine —
While souls may loyal faith enthrone,
While hearts may love; while lips not prone
To make all sacred feelings known,
May freely give:— while free to own
That patient striving shall atone
For grievous ills,— give not alone

To hearts that death hath chilled.—
Bestow your kind caresses now;
Let the warm, living, throbbing brow
Feel straying hands that love avow.
Let the rare fires of friendship glow:
Let votive lips their chrism bestow;
Wait not. 'T is sad Death aught to owe.

A SIMILE.

A maiden stood in a garden fair,
 And gathered a rose for her sunny hair ;
 'T was a bud that compared with the blush of her cheek,
 So fragrant, so dainty, so modestly meek,—
 For the tear-drops of Nature had dripped one by one
 On its lips opened wide for the kiss of the sun,
 While its dew-sprinkled petals all trembled with joy,
 Never thinking 'twas only a transient toy.
 For the maiden so careless but gave it a glance,
 When, directly before her — oh, sad mischance!—
 She beheld another that seemed more fair,
 And cast at her feet the rose in despair.
 Think you, if that flower could only have spoken,
 'T would have been to betray, by a sign or a token,
 The shock that was dealt to that sensitive heart,
 Or the sorrows of death that would never depart.
 Oh, no! it would never have murmured aloud,
 Though its poor faded petals were forming its shroud—
 Yet not till its beauties and fragrance so rare
 Had scattered their sweets on the summer air.

'T is thus many hearts, in a world of their own,
 Live out their sorrows, with never a groan.
 What matters it if in the long ago
 They were careless and blithe, and unknown to woe?

What can it profit to dwell on the past
That has left a deep grievance forever to last?
Ah! Life is so noble, so tender, so sweet,
When it lacks not affection to make it complete;
But when every desire and yearning for such
Have faded from view, until scarcely a touch
Of the old and delicious delights of our youth
Is left us to soften a life void of ruth,—
We must lonesomely dwell by the wayside wide,
Cruelly crushed in our youthful pride.
Though we kiss the rod drenched in Trial's blood,
That brings into blossom nor heart nor bud,
Yet we strive with never a murmuring breath
To rival the rose in its fragrant death.

A BILLET DOUX.

Dear Will:

The white snow lies knee deep,
 In a soft carpet o'er the earth;
 Our sweet-faced pansies lie asleep,
 And rippling brooks have lost their mirth.
 Yet fancy holds a summer sky,
 With blossoms strangely fresh and fair,
 And golden days that speed us by
 On perfumed breezes, free from care.

I see a river broad and deep,
 That rocks a boat upon its breast,
 With huge brown log a guard to keep,
 And with your oars, in vain, protest.
 We crossed the river without harm,
 And landed safely on the shore;—
 That glowing scene had a rare charm.
 Yet to admit it, I forbore.

Unquietness and needless fear?
 Yes, you are right, dear Will;
 Though even that made safety dear:
 Comparison deep thoughts instill.
 But oh, that fire! and opera!
 What caused our hearts to warmer glow,—
 The daring flames that leaped afar,
 Or faithful love of Romeo?

A Billet Doux.

Then our strolls homeward 'neath the moon!
That instilled with its changing mood
From gleaming life to darkened swoon,—
The lesson oft from life's stage wooed.
And, Will, I 'll ne'er forget the day
You, reading, held me on your knee,
When I in slumber dreamed away
A fleeting hour. You laughed at me.

The tables turned, though, after that,—
Can you remember what I mean?
I wish together we could chat —
But now, alas! miles intervene.
Yet still, through all this dreary space,
Through wastes of snow and dreary weather,
You must all thoughts of gloom efface,
For Will, you know, I 'm yours forever.

YOUR NIECE.

December, 1882.

PERFECTED LOVE.

It was the blessed, blessed Christmas morn,
 And o'er the silent house a solemn hush
 Seemed resting; and a gentle peace new born
 All through the pretty chambers seemed to steal,
 To centre in the one soft draped with blue,
 And fall upon its inmate, dreaming there,
 Like some fair flower the stately lily's hue,
 That sweetly bloomed to bless the Christmas tide.
 The soft blue eyes were dreaming o'er the gifts
 That, strewn upon the pearly colored dress,
 Suggested sunshine gleaming through the rifts
 In snowy clouds; a lingering smile half dared
 The dimples — gently playing hide-and-seek —
 That lurked about the pretty rounded chin —
 Then, wearied, nestled on each tinted cheek;—
 And all was peace and harmony within.

There came a rush and sound of bird-like voice;
 A merry laugh stole through the sleepy warmth,
 And sweetest music echoed far — "Rejoice!"
 A light, quick step went bounding o'er the stairs,
 And soon beside the happy dreamer's chair
 There glistened lustrous eyes, and smiled red lips,
 And floated curls of shadowy golden hair,—
 And eager hands had offered boughs of green.

Then straightway, with one breath from perfumed pine,
The childish form slow-faded from her sight ;
Her being was pervaded as with wine
That steals so subtly o'er the yielding sense.
Once more the summer breezes smile and sigh
About two youthful forms 'neath boughs of pine :
Again her ideal lover lingers nigh,
And smiles her hero from the shadowy past.
She sits upon the sear, dried grass and leaves,
He idles in sweet pleasure's whilom arms —
The bright-hued silks with fingers deft she weaves,
And blushes at his words of tender praise.
And on and on swift flies the golden dream,—
Until a burst of glee a guest proclaims,—
And in her presence stands the one supreme
O'er her fond heart — recalled from out the years.
Their married eyes, swift-meeting, haply smiled,—
Why should she hide her sighs or pearly tears? —
Beheld she, in the father of her child,
Her dreamed-of hero — love of childhood's years.

BOAT SONG.

We are drifting o'er the waters,
 O'er the waters rippling low,
 As they gently kiss the boat-side,
 Whispering as they onward flow,—
 As they break the happy silence,
 Murmuring soft where'er we go.

And the stars above are gleaming
 On your face, so bravely fair,—
 Gleaming through the gathering darkness,
 Smiling softly every where,—
 Winking into those blue eyes, love,
 That my kisses coyly dare.

And your arms about me twining
 Draw my warm lips nearer thine,
 Till the current of our beings
 Leaps to ecstasy divine,—
 Till we feel a thrill of pleasure
 That no language can define.

Oh, my love, how sweet the pleasure!
 As I rest within your arms,
 With my head upon your bosom,—
 Pressed above the heart that charms;
 Breathless with divinest rapture,
 Thrilled with passion's wild alarms.

Boat Song.

Floating o'er the murmuring water.
Blue above and blue below ;
With your soft lips pressing mine, love,—
Thus forgotten, friend or foe :—
Can stern life contain more bless, love ?
Can our hearts more peace e'er know ?

BETWEEN YOU AND ME.

Kind Nature gave me draughts from her deep well,
 Far sweeter than from Bacchus' fount e'er won;
 I drank with deep thanksgiving and with joy,
 As I sat upon the hill-side, in the sun.

The wild winds stirred the grasses at my feet,
 And swayed the tiny leaflets to and fro,
 That gayly swung in gold and crimson robes,
 And laughed upon the lakelet far below.

I thought of all the forests far and near,
 Of all the rolling waters' darkling blue,
 Of all the smiling valleys in the sun,
 Bathed in the dying Autumn's golden hue;

Of all the bright-eyed birds that softly sing
 Through the vast expanse of cloudlets, like a sea,—
 And drew a little breath — almost a sigh;
 It seemed so strange, all this — 'tween you and me.

I thought of all the countless happy homes,
 Where lovers with their loved ones are so free:
 That dense, expansive space far reaching out
 Said, "Wishes are but vain;" — 'tween you and me.

Between You and Me.

And yet, I felt a subtle, tender thrill —
I knew the happy future that 's to be —
So voiceless space, or happy throbbing hearts.
Unheeded, could be naught — 'tween you and me.

So happy seemed the future for us both,
Thrice blessed looked the days that are to be ;
So all those golden hours' sweet, silent joy
Seemed but a pretty song — 'tween you and me.

Strawberry Hill, Oct., 1883.

WITH A FLOWER.

Removing from its warm, soft bower,
Caressing with a lingering kiss —
I place it 'tween these leaves;
The perfume of its sweet young life
Still lingers 'mid the folds of lace
That its departure grieves.

Though faded, it shall greet thine eyes
For what it would convey to thee, —
Consider it still fair,
And deem its graces not impaired
For having blessed my life an hour
With sweet Hope's fancies rare.

Perchance within its golden heart
Here nestles, wondering, nameless, mute,
What thy soul may define.
And yet — seek not. My flower but pleads
A loving thought, — and leaves this heart
To find a home near thine.

LINES,

TO MY BRAW HIGHLAND LADDIE.

No kindred blood flows through our throbbing veins,
We are not children of the self-same mother;
Yet, dreaming, waking, in my varied thoughts,
I fondly name thee, o'er and o'er, my brother.

Life, oft relenting, gives rare gifts of love,
To bear reluctant yokes of grievous sorrow,
And oft the heart that yields some cherished hope
Finds fuller bliss at dawn of allied morrow.

So tear-filled eyes, and faltering, weary hands
That gladly turned from haunting, cheerless sadness,
Caught gleams of light and noble tasks of love,
That slowly wakened into peaceful gladness.

Responsive throbblings of a youthful heart
Send joyous songs with common speeches blending,
Set happy smiles on mutely dreaming lips,
And stem all counter-currents slow contending.

An unseen presence smiles upon and guards
Affection's shrine, where loyal truth doth hover;—
My heart thanks heaven for the boon of life:
To claim thee, name thee, love thee, faithful brother.

STANZAS,

WRITTEN IN A VOLUME OF POEMS.

A few sweet thoughts steal, one by one,
To depths eluding stern control;
To help a heart that fain would shun,
And soothe, perchance, a grieving soul.

E'en icebergs, 'neath the red-eyed sun,
Weep out their hearts in pearly tears,—
And proudest hearts, whene'er they 're won,
Banish fore'er all haunting fears.

Rare, glowing thoughts! ye subtly fling
A witching spell: and songs unsung
Now ripple, gasp, and trembling, spring
Toward warm, rich life: yet backward flung

By feeling that o'er-masters breath,
Fall deaf to voices that invoke,—
Mourn not o'er such untimely death,
But gladly claim Oblivion's cloak.

TO MY FRIEND.

Beneath my window, in huge drifts,
The snows of many storms lie deep,
And from the banks so pure and white,
No flowering tree has dared to peep ;
Yet 'neath the snowy blanket there,
Though all unseen by mortal eyes,
In patient waiting lies rich life,
That with Spring's whisper shall arise.

Beneath the surface of Time's snows,
That drifted o'er a weary heart,
There lay a faint, though struggling hope,
That ne'er felt aught but sorrow's dart.
It craved a gentle word, a smile —
For sympathy it thirsted long,—
Your listening spirit caught a sigh,
You blessed the hope with sweetened song.

HER FOOT-PRINTS IN THE SNOW.

He traced them all along the winding path
 That lost itself among the dreary hills,
 And found them straying 'neath wide hemlock boughs
 That hung like guardian angels o'er mute rills.
 Then looking, all in vain, for floating hair,
 That blushes 'neath the sun's warm, kiss-like glow,
 He sighed, then smiled: for countless books of lore
 Oped wide through those light foot-prints in the snow.

He wandered near o'erhanging, cloud-like banks,
 Where silent Nature wrought, with saws more fine
 Than polished steel, rare, intricate designs
 In snowy fretwork. There, quick to divine,
 His soul beheld the radiant, raptured eyes,
 As, lost in sweetest meditation, stopped
 Fair Nature's child, communing with her God:
 While tiny snow-falls through her musings dropped

From senseless, perfumed arms, far overhead.
 Then straying on, he marked the sheltered nook,
 Where, in a solemn mood, with wide blue eyes,
 His darling read from out Earth's crystal book.
 Still on: across the lonely, sunlit vale,
 O'er shrub-decked hills, and then toward home, his slow,
 Glad wanderings traced;— his heart discerned aright
 The meaning of those foot-prints in the snow.

MY IDEAL.

'Tis he who daily, in the web of life,
Draws through, unnoted by the careless throng,
A thread of throbbing sympathy;— a song
Not set to music in *all* hearts, but rife
With hidden meaning, running through the strife
In souls responsive, making firm and strong
The strands that in the woof crowd out the wrong.
'Tis he who, chaste and pure as maid or wife,
Can seal with love's own chrism the lips of pride;
And, weaving in life's mystic pattern strands
Of loyal faith and truth, can subtly guide
The longing soul and tender, eager hands
To heights angelic:— he who can confide
In heaven, and gladly give all love demands.

A SEA-SHELL.

TO —.

—

It nestles in a growth of moss and flowers,
Giving the quiet scene a pretty grace,
Its pearly fairness wooing from the rose
A lustrous bloom to tint its dainty face.
Over a dreamless bosom pulses low
Its song of ocean-wonders far away,—
Yet lists a soul with senses stilled and rapt,
'Til strains divine swell there with ocean spray.
They touch the raptured spirit with a breath
E'en heaven's iridescent mists dispel;
They pierce the shrine of shrines; thrice blest the soul
That wins,— divinely graced, sweet guileless shell.

TROLLING.

The boat glides through the waters blue,
That flash and glow 'neath sunset smiles ;
Oars lightly dip and fling their tears
Toward shores of distant, shad'wy isles.

Low laughter, words, and pretty fears,
Each serve the warm-hued hours to while ;—
And bits of scarlet cut the waves,
In gleaming, dimpling, greedy guile.

A NAME.

In this strange some life each human heart
Holds dear some name, where memories hover;
To mine there cometh many such,
Yet none so dear or sweet as — Mother.

TO HOWARD.

My path lieth here: thine runneth there;
How kind is fate they blended ever;—
The brief, sweet merging was so fair!
Its memory naught but death can sever.

CHRISTMAS CHIMES.

Through the frosty air they 're pealing,
O'er our senses gayly stealing,
Noisy lips with smiles half-sealing ;
 Merry, merry Christmas chimes.
Now they swell in gleeful madness,
Now in richest notes of gladness,
Now an undertone of sadness,—
 Blessed, blessed Christmas chimes.

In the tones rare music lending,
Happy tears seem subtly blending,
Mortal thoughts are heavenward tending ;
 Joyous, joyous Christmas chimes.
“Peace on earth!” the tones are flinging,
“Love to men!” the echoes ringing,
Joy to all the rhymes are bringing ;
 Happy, happy Christmas chimes.

Raptured songs are gaily welling,
Peace o'er all glad earth is dwelling,
Praise from every heart is swelling
 On the joyous Christmas chimes.
Love spontaneous welds together
Hearts that naught can ever sever ;
Welcome, welcome, now and ever,
 Merry, merry Christmas chimes.

THE GLAD NEW YEAR.

Through the solemn midnight, near and far,
Gleamed myriad brothers of the storied star;
Night breezes filled with music from afar
 Ring in the glad new year.

The clamoring tongues, proclaiming blessed birth,
Send silvery echoes o'er the sleepy earth;
Exultant tones of wildly rippling mirth
 Proclaim the glad new year.

The joyous tidings wafted far and near,
Are pulsing with the grief of Time's mute tear,
That buries all things past: and then with cheer
 Welcomes the new-born year.

Blest infant! to thy keeping we confide
Life's all; and with thy parent, Time, we glide
Through Future's ever-open portals. Guide
 And bless us, glad new year.

DISCLOSED.

I write as one who oft could meet
 Thy careless glance with colder gaze ;
As one who knows no passion sweet,
 As one who deems love but a haze.
I write as one who friendship scorns,
 As one who scoffs at love and truth ;
I write as one who knows no friend,
 As one who finds in life no ruth.

I write like this. My love, I feel
 The tender flame that glows divine ;
The rapturous thrill of passion's fire :
 The sweetness grave that grows sublime.
And with unfaltering, silent trust,
 From my heart's spool the strands untwine ;
Holding the quivering love-stained threads
 With patient trust, to bind with thine.

JEALOUSY.

About my heart the slimy serpent coils :
A though I try to kill it, still it lives ;
It fills me with a fear far worse than death,
And to my soul a terror strange it gives.

Sometimes it does not move ; yet its bright eyes
With looking thrills me with the fiercest pains ;
And then, to change the fascination dread,
It writhes within the blood that fills my veins.

I strangle it sometimes ; and keep it still
With pleading words, and sighs, and soothing tears ;
But when it gains its breath it rises up
Within. and Trust's white soul it burns and scars.

But yester eve I deemed it dead at last ;
To-night it pierces with its cruel fangs
My aching heart. And I am tired of life,
And wearied of these strange and awful pangs

That torture so. How long can I endure ?
Blest Faith ! chaste Truth ! oh, bide a while with me !
Uncoil this horror that enthalls me thus ;
Oh, kill this serpent ! kill, and set me free.

FALSE FRIENDSHIP'S BURIAL.

Into the murmuring waters,
Too deep to be waked by its moan,
'T was decreed the fair, false semblance
Find a grave unhonored, unknown.
'T was firmly taken from its wounded, saddened home,
And cast far o'er the maddened waters whit'ning foam.

Reluctant, it settled slowly,
And like bubbles upon a wave,
It danced through the angry seething,
Defying its yawning grave.
A proud heart mutely struggled to be firm and brave;
It waited, watched and marvelled o'er what it freely gave.

Madly the breakers encircled
And seized upon its prey;
Its burial chant was the mingling
Of the winds and the tossing spray.
" 'T is well," decreed the heart that mockery flung away;
" 'T is well," Truth echoed. "Well," flung back the joyous spray.

A MOTHER'S DREAM.

Pausing upon the steps, and looking through the open doorway, I beheld the form of the patient house-wife. The brilliant sunlight of a blithe May morning streamed across the peaceful face and pencilled, with startling results, the lines of care upon the broad, white brow. A playful breeze—stayed not, like my footsteps, upon the threshold—slyly tossed the snowy ringlets, erstwhile so carefully smoothed, and rustled the leaves of the neglected paper that slid over the neat gown, to rest upon the golden carpet. A conspicuous heading upon the leaf corner that carelessly unfolded to my vision, solved the mystery that lurked in the undried tears upon the motionless lashes; I saw in the tremulous pearls of sorrow the uncomplaining grief of the mother-heart that ever yearned, and hopelessly, for a knowledge of the resting-place of its honored dead. Fervently wishing that some occult fingers could sweep away the curtain, heavy with the dust of long years, that hung between the unknown grave of the loyal soldier-boy and his loving mother, I turned noiselessly away, and left the weary matron in undisturbed repose. My prayer was answered.

From the far-off, perfumed, fair, fair southland,
 On the pulseless breast of a drowsy wind,
 Came floating a cloud from wierd, sweet dreamland,
 To gently brood o'er the sorrowing mind.
 It crept o'er the daylight's garish splendor,
 And the aching heart and fevered brain
 Were lulled into rest 'neath intangible shadows,
 And slipped for a season from haunting pain.
 Then hand in hand with a radiant peri
 The quieted spirit wandered afar,
 And basked in the light 'yond fair Slumberland's portals,
 Which mortal at pleasure may never unbar.
 Away on the towering mount's blue summit,
 And down through the fertile, blooming vale,
 Listening unto the founts' low murmurs,
 And gathering flowers sweetly frail;

A Mother's Dream.

Straying off with the amorous breezes,
And gazing afar o'er the restless main,
Then traversing miles of sunlit prairie,
They silently wandered, the happy twain.
Then lo! as a sudden revelation,
Or a subtile emotion that hath no name,
Swept over the mute soul nearing the southland,
A breath of strange bliss, like youth's passion flame —
As swift in the shade of a somber cannon
That grimly guarded the hallowed ground:
Filled with a rapture that burst Sorrow's shackles,
The wanderer knelt by a lowly mound.
A breeze swept the notes of a bird's wild warble
Down to the soul in the mystical gloom,
And shook o'er the strange and dusky tombstone
Light perfumed petals of daintiest bloom.
Then closer seemed leaning the iron monster,
And fainter the beautiful notes fell down,
And slower the perfume crept out from the flowers —
The dreamer stood under God's promised crown.

May 30, 18—.

UNIVOCAL.

To-night, so weary of the present life, and sad,
 With listless hand I ope'd my treasured album wide,
 And gazed upon the face that chanced to first appear;
 The deep, dark eyes looked thoughtfully away from mine,
 And held within their lustrous depths a tale of joy.
 In fancy I beheld the happy, happy sea —
 Distant, vague, and dim — whose dancing, voiceless waves
 Cast pearls of rapture, 'mid light spray, upon thy soul.
 Ther' o'er my lips a spark of longing hovered, mute
 And vain, to break the silence brooding o'er thy brow,
 And call a warm, responsive glow to those cold cheeks.
 And o'er my breast seemed laid a weight of undefined
 Sad questioning, that filled my eyes with unshed tears,
 And touched my heart with voiceless pathos. Then a sense
 Of something that my life hath missed crept o'er my soul,
 And startled with its strange, precocious, thralling spell.

One long, long breath, as slow I put away the book —
 Turning my nameless thoughts to streams from clearer founts:
 And then the sadness fled, as mists flee heaven's smile;
 And though I ne'er again may seek your face as then,
 And fain would cast the weird, sweet spell across thy soul
 That swept o'er mine, I call not on the vanished past
 To fill the present; nor on fate to turn the tides
 Of thy life's sea, that they may mingle, surge, and beat

With those that ever ebb and flow in ceaseless rhythm
From my soul's strand. Enough, since from that liquid light
Some magic breeze hath lightly flung a few pure drops
Down o'er the banks that fringe my heart's deep-flowing stream,
Wherein they blend to bless;— and ever gleam, my gems
Of priceless worth, upon the mystic scroll of Life.

AT TWENTY.

[Suggested by Harry Batsford's "At Fourteen."]

As a sudden shadow crossing Mirth's sweet day,
There steals from out my questioning girlhood's past,
A memory of the dreary doubts that cast
A vague, sad gloom across my youthful way.

And yet the memory only serves to make
The peaceful present glow more bright and sweet,
And shows me all the joys of trust complete
That follow those who strive for Christ's dear sake.

As e'er a man doth in his deep heart think,
So is he; and the doubts that erst were mine,
Vanish beneath the broader light divine
That floods my soul upon the gay world's brink.

The way that once seemed cold and stern and drear,
The creed that filled my childish heart with doubt,
Illumined with a sunny faith devout,
Gives room no more for disbelief or fear.

Close, close upon the fleeting steps of Life
Change pushes: breathes upon its wond'ring face,
Betrays its heart, and quickens its quick pace —
And never ends the weird and voiceless strife.

The same form clasps weak mortal to its breast,
And stirs its willing victim with strange sighs;
With hopes and fears, with loves and hates, and lies
Ofttimes upon its questioning heart, sweet Rest.

The bonds that bound my soul in cheerless gloom
Are long since riven; leaps a triumph song
From my awakened heart, and all along
The way God's sweetened, purest flowers bloom.

Now dost thou question at the blessed birth?
Recall the changes in thy heart's belief;—
My own, with strong, calm faith, with deep relief,
And with keen rapture, claims — "a soul on earth."

AFTER LONG MONTHS.

Why should we count our life by years,
Since years are short and pass away?
Or why by fortune's smiles and tears,
Since tears are vain and smiles decay? —*Hale.*

We met upon the busy street amid
The restless throng; your hat was quickly lifted,
My head inclined in friendly greeting; then,
Wending my lonely way along, I drifted
With wakened memory, and from the past
Recalled our old-time greetings, first to last.

I did not question as I might have done —
"O heart estranged, doth Memory now unfold
Its garments light to clothe thy quiet thoughts
In pretty fancies? Doth thine eyes behold
With glad remembrance? Doth my face restore,
With rapt'rous thrills, fond memories of yore?"

I did not think, as once I might have thought —
Fore'er through joyful youth or golden age
Love sways the good and bad, and sad, sad lines
Affection traces o'er Life's tear-stained page;
Nor, would that we had never, never met:
For me the vanished past held small regret.

After Long Months.

'Tis true that many by-gone things returned
To waken pleasant recollections of the hours
That gave them being: tender, loving words,
That mingled with the perfume of rare flowers;
Caresses, pretty songs, and all that give
The life on which Affection feeds and lives.

'Tis true the artist-hand that guides the mind
Of oft-recurring Past, did paint a scene
To charm the fond heart's vision: yet the soul
Looked jealously beyond the pretty screen,
And swiftly thrust into Oblivion's arms
Mem'ries that only for the weak have charms.

Then vague, sweet fancies gently drifted through
The hallowed shrine within my heart of hearts.
Hope carved a headstone for the Past's deep grave;
Then closer clasped the peace that faith imparts.
No need to mourn all that did separate,—
My heart brimmed o'er with joy inviolate.

MIDWINTER.

'Tis but a little while ago
Dear Nature knew sad Autumn's frown,
And drew about her shivering form
Soft trailing robes of gold and brown.

About her feet down drifted leaves,
And on her breast the rose-branch slept,
While to her heart, e'er warm and true,
The wildflowers' hidden tendrils crept.

Her willing fairies far and near,
Flocked forth from sheltered nooks of brown,
To rouse their dear queen's sluggish blood,
And plait anew a shining crown.

'Twas all in vain: the dainty fays,
Close nestling to the fainting breast,
Lost swift ambition's fond desires,
And gently sank to calm, sweet rest.

Fair, far-off heaven beheld the form
That trembled in the waning light,
And straightway bade a messenger
Bestow rich robes of silvery white.

Midwinter.

Dear Nature ope'd her grateful arms
And sadly claimed the dainty dress
That fell a feathery, floating mass,
To warmly fold in fond caress.

Behold! the fair queen's dreaming soul
Then roused from out its death-like trance,
To win chill Winter's holly crown
By dazzling smile and radiant glance.

His lovely ermine-broidered robes
She drew about her stately form,
And guarded all the slumbering fays
From piercing wind and cruel storm.

E'en mortals felt the witching spell,
As sheltered she with garments light
The germs that erst did wreath her brow
With perfumed blossoms fair and bright.

Dear Nature! through thy tranquil heart
Impassioned summer's joys we win;
And winter's gladness seeking there,
Find matchless blessings now begin.

LIFE VOICELESS.

[Suggested by the portrait of a friend, and stray fragments of an old poem.]

The dark, dark eyes look into mine,
And in my heart inspire
A feeling I can scarce define,
Whose source seems magic fire. — *M. H.*

So runs the pretty song, and so may sing
The lips that press with uncontrolled desire
These unresponsive ones. What reck the hands
That grope for light, if by a silent lyre
They reach the height far-off and dim: the land
Where soul greets soul: where face to face, above
The pale of common thought, sweet modesty
Is ne'er deemed bold, betraying guileless love.

Runs the song: "enshrined with thoughts of love,"
She held the worshipped being in heart,—
As treasured e'er are memories of words
That pierced unfathomed depths, and as a dart
Sped from the Archer's hands who spareth few,
Revives transfusion, springs uncalled, unguessed,
To glide in deeper channels far and lone,
Thoughts all unnamed, born of strange, sweet unrest.

Still runs the song: for, "as a hallowed shrine,"
She pressed the pictured charms to hers. All this
Brings joy; emotions shared beget no loss:
The fervent lips find likewise transient bliss.
A rich dowered heart held love's sweet cup
To lips unconscious — ne'er, in truth, caressed.
The song found ending. Unconfessed the face
That did inspire; and yet, such love is best.

PANSIES.

From out her muslin's dainty fold
 The bright sweet faces coyly peep;
 O'er the white brow a guard they keep,
 With gleams of royal blue and gold.

Their faces o'er her girdle fall,
 And on her bosom soft and white
 They rest like harbingers of light
 Strayed down from heav'n's ethereal hall.

There in the sunlight's golden sheen
 She stands, than pansies far more fair;
 Yet, nestling in her wavy hair,
 They add new beauty to my queen.

Catching a radiance from above,
 Two matchless pansies in disguise
 Seem the veiled depths of those grave eyes
 That shyly claim my life, my love.

Coy pansies! in thy gracious eyes,
 And in each warm and dewy heart,
 Lies half-unsheathed Cupid's dart —
 That swift into my being flies.

And with new rapture overcast,
 I fold each flower in fond embrace,
 And kiss each shyly lifted face,
 With love devout, that e'er shall last.

DE PROFUNDIS.

She writes the old, old story o'er,
 And clothes it in sweet words of grace ;
 She pictures with a pen of gold
 Each radiant, glowing, lovely face.

She writes of gorgeous velvet robes,
 Of bright exotics' perfume rare,
 Of all the luxury gold can buy,
 Of all in life that 's pure and fair.

She paints full oft a glowing scene,
 That holds no trace of grief or hate,
 That shows each spirit filled with joy,
 Each loving heart with tender mate.

She writes all this with scornful smiles ;
 And oft with scalding, bitter tears,
 That splash upon the paper dumb,
 And blister like tormenting fears.

She often writes with yearning strange,
 And oft with tired, aching brain ;
 And yet from all these wandering words
 She aims to keep Grief's sad refrain.

And oft her weary heart rebels :
 Yet, striving still for peace and rest,
 Bestows afar its tenderness,
 And strives to make some life more blest.

TO MY AMATEUR FRIENDS.

Silent companions of my quiet life!
 To thee in warmest greeting turns my heart;
 Careless of all the weary space between,
 Fain would my soul to thine some joy impart.

The warm, clipped wings that fan my thoughts to thee,
 Beat tirelessly against their prison bars,
 And strive to higher soar: a thirst intense,
 Spontaneous,— a child's vain cry for stars.

What seems the petty cares along our way,
 When soul responds to all in blessed truth?
 Ah, question what in common hath dark Woe
 With all the radiant dreams of happy youth.

What power hath venom'd shafts to pierce the faith
 That fills our yearning spirits with glad life?
 O friends! we know, forsooth, that highest planes
 Are only reached through sorrow and through strife.

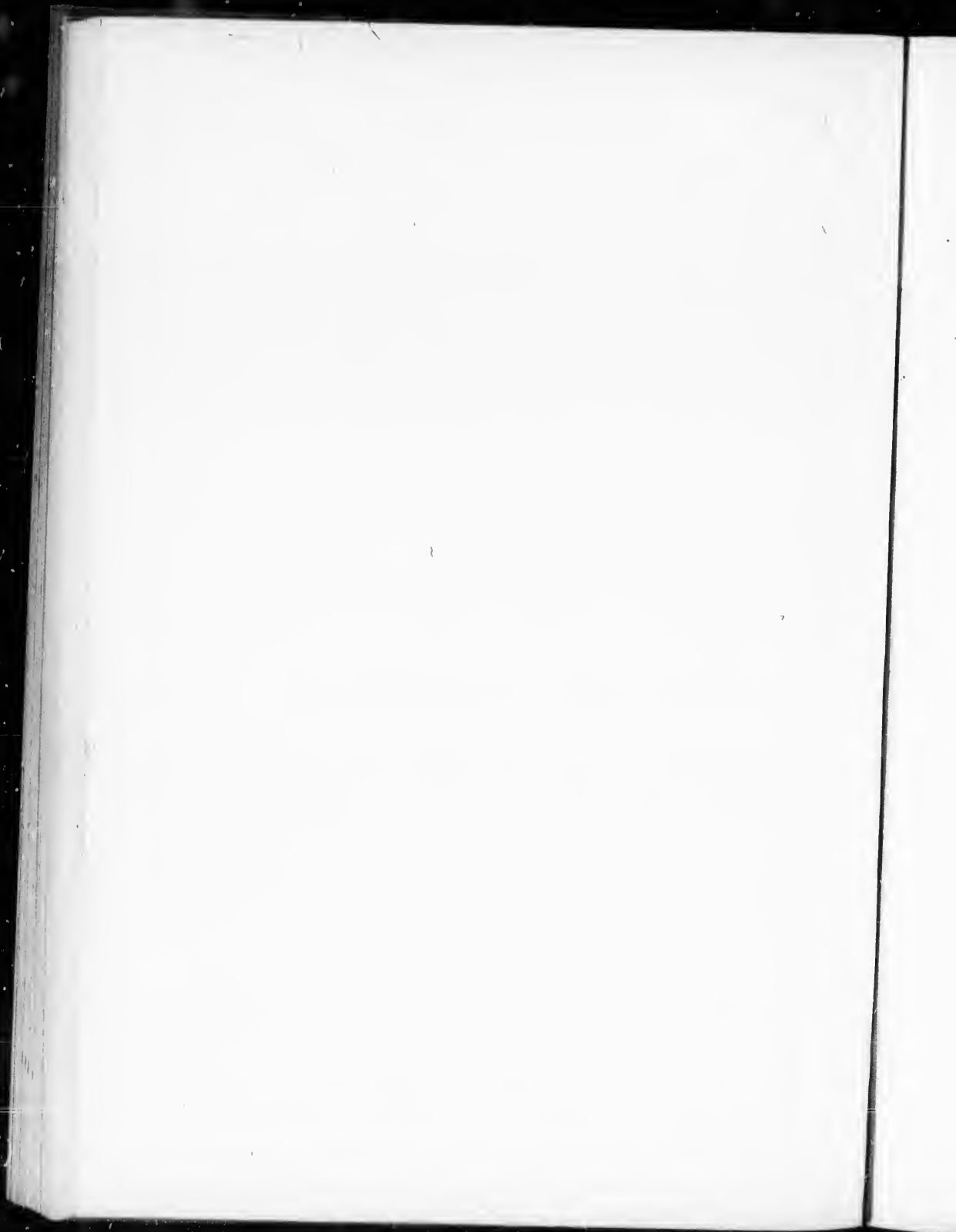
And so, how blest are we that Life bestows
 Hearts that in sweetest sympathy may twine
 And blend with hearts responsive— fondest hopes
 Meet hopes as fond:— we all kneel at one shrine.

To My Amateur Friends.

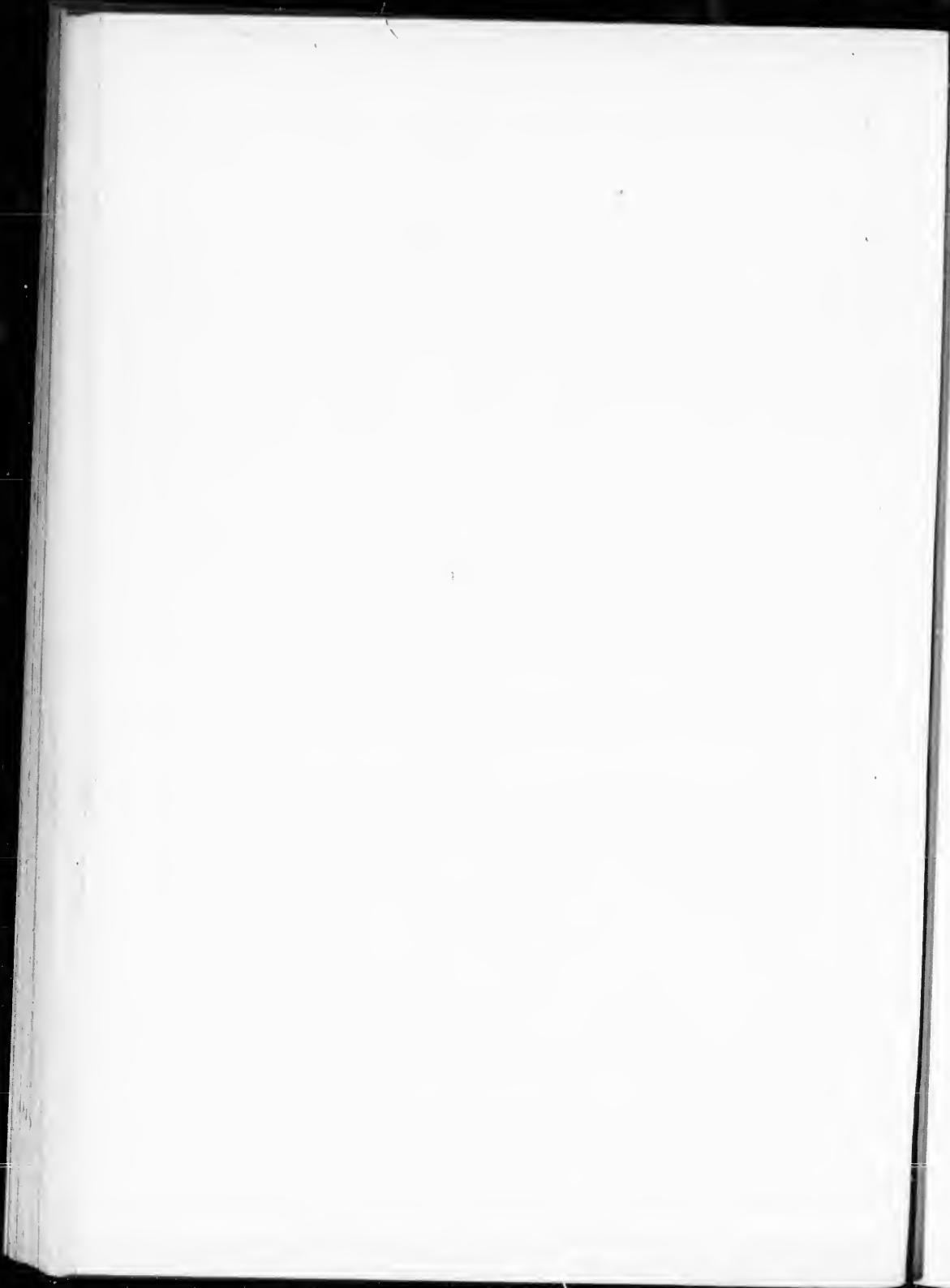
No glances lit with eager, beauteous life,
Can flash to mine o'er yonder distant hill ;
No voices break in greetings sweet or kind,
No touch create a current of glad thrills.

And yet, dear friends : far off, unseen, unknown,
My eager hands bridge o'er the boundless space ;
With fervent greetings, trust, and friendship true,
My simple offering pleads your love and grace.

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SKETCHES.



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LITTLE PAPERS.

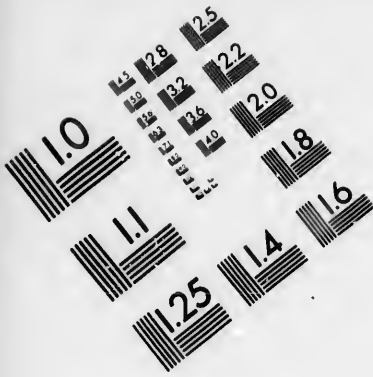
You think it strange, no doubt, but I really love the sight of a little printed sheet of paper bearing some odd, spicy, or suggestive title: for it always brings me back to the day two short years ago, when, sitting in perplexed thought, the mail brought me a letter from Cousin Belle, with a few little papers rolled up together, accompanying it.

I will tell you just how it was; for, like the average American-bred girl, I am not particularly bashful, and inclined to be a little too frank.

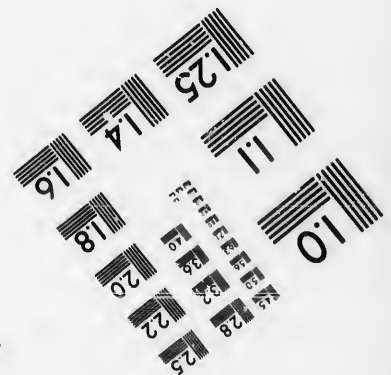
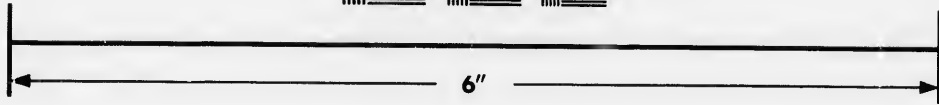
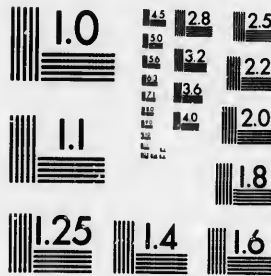
I was going to school in those days, and on this particular Spring morning was thinking ruefully of graduation day, and emphatically saying I would not go to school any more,—though in my secret heart I knew I could never give up my studies then. You want to know my trouble, of course. Well, it was my fourth year in the High School, and although we were not what the girls termed “awful poor,” father told me only the day before, that I could not have a new dress to wear on that all-important day the coming June, which was to end my happy school-days forever. Therefore, like a vain, impulsive girl, I solemnly declared to my confidential chum, that I could not endure the disgrace of appearing in my old clothes among the gaily decked pupils that would be sure to grace the platform; and that I must have a new suit.

I meant it, too; for I had a will of my own, which, thank God, I can subdue far easier to-day than I could then; and





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despite my gentle mother's tears, and the little story she gave me to read, about a good little girl who was very, very poor, and who wore her old dress to school on the last day, and how patient and sweet she was, and a lot more I have forgotten,— I was perplexedly trying to devise some way to earn me a nice new dress for my own self. Of course, mother would laugh at the idea of her daughter, unused to labor, earning even a common cambric dress, let alone one nice enough to wear on such an important occasion. But I was full of hope, and inclined to be stubborn when once fixed on a purpose, so I kept decorously silent, and thought, and thought, and planned.

First, up-stairs in my pretty work-basket lay some fine white linen to make up, for which mother had promised me three dollars when it was all nicely finished, a long time ago. That must surely be done, at a loss of all the long walks and longer talks with my dearest friend, who would perhaps laugh at me; and the thought confronted me that possibly my dear Jennie would get May Gleason for her confidential friend! Well, I stifled back a sigh, and sternly put down in red ink — *three dollars.*

Next — yes, there was Mrs. White, who would like me to paint her an easel to send to her son who was so far away. (I felt guilty when I thought of her, for I had heard her ask mother more than five weeks before, “if she supposed Beth could find time to do her a little work.”) That would be another dollar; and there my resources all failed, and I sat stupidly wondering if something would happen to help me, when — as I guess I told you before — the postman brought some papers and a letter from Belle. I think all girls love to get letters. I did, at any rate; and my troublesome thoughts of a few moments before all fled as I read the dainty bits of gossip about the last party, boating by moonlight, the lovely lace Belle was knitting, and the cunningest baby next door,

until I came to the dearest of all (to Belle), about the style and shade of her new blue silk. Then, of course, I thought of myself once more; but what followed, and was so hastily scanned over, proved to be of no little value to me. She said she had written a little sketch, and sent it to an amateur paper printed there, and "the foolish editor had sent her a bundle of queer little papers," and she had no time to read them, and did not care anything about them, anyway, so would send them to me.

I never thought of those papers again for nearly a whole week; for, after finishing the letter, I ran out to talk with Jennie over the gate, and renew our vows of eternal friendship through leisure and through toil, and those poor little papers lay rolled up under one corner of the sofa in solitude.

I guess the housework was not done very well that week, for, when I went to tidy up the room the next Saturday, the first sweep of the broom brought those papers at my feet, and with natural inquisitiveness, I sat down on the floor and looked them over.

Such grand ideas as they put into my head, and such a revelation from a hitherto unknown world, was perfectly astonishing. I never knew there was such a thing as amateur journalism before, and yet there it lay in those minute sheets, neat and perfect in every detail. First I was all absorbed with the puzzles and editorials, then read miscellaneous, until I saw an article about a prize contest. The prizes offered were for sketches: five, four and three dollars, according to merit of the articles entered.

Of course, I read that over and over again, and it ended in my firmly resolving to write a story that would blight the prospects of all aspiring authors forever. I clasped those precious papers to my bosom, and ran up to my room: took off the little dusting-cap that sat so awry on my head, unbound the

heavy braids of hair (to allow more freedom of thought, I think the idea was), rolled up my sleeves, got lots of foolscap paper and a fine pen, put some glycerine on my lips — which it was my custom to bite most unmerifully when deeply absorbed in anything, — washed my hands, and sat down to write my first story.

I was going to write a lovely romance about a girl being locked in her room, and her lover going up a ladder outside, and rescuing her; but it struck me I never had a real lover, so could not do full justice to the subject, — that I never had been locked in a room (neither had Jennie), and I could not think of one of my school-fellows who would do for a hero: so that subject failed me. Then I thought I would write about a proud young lady who put sour cream on her face to purify her complexion, and her lover, seeing her, became disenchanted. But I found that would make no kind of a story, and so I sat, and thought, and dreamed, and scribbled over sheets of paper, and broke the points of several pens in trying to write as fast as I thought, until after ten o'clock, when the door-bell rang, and I heard the minister's voice.

Come about a poem he wished me to read at the concert, of course; for Jennie had told me about it that very morning. Whatever should I do? Here was my heavy hair all in a tangle that should have been nicely braided, inky fingers, and — oh, my, my! what if mother had not been into that room since I left it!

But I arranged my toilet as speedily as possible, in answer to mother's call from below, and descended. Well, I got out of it somehow, broom and all; but that story was still lying in the hidden reserves of my busy brain, for it surely was not upon any of the numerous sheets of paper, all scrawled over, that lay in silent rebuke upon my table.

Well, I left that then, and went to work earnestly upon the

neglected linen, and soon carried the result of my labor to mother, who gave me a good kiss, three dollars, and some good advice. Then I got my paints, and practiced until I thought I could do pretty well at that once more, and decorated the easel for Mrs. White, who was delighted.

After, when I sat down in my room one evening with four dollars in my hand, and kissed it, and tenderly placed it in a satin-lined box, I read every word in those little papers, and began again to write a story. But this time I think I was humbler than when I first thought of such a thing, and every trial seemed less satisfactory than its predecessor, until I gave up in despair. I then tried poetry, — for one of the other papers offered a prize for some extra good verses. But as fast as I got a nice idea in a beautiful line, the following words contained simply nothing to rhyme; and I actually sat and cried.

I did not try again for several days, and then was so very modest and humble in my opinion of my capabilities, that I think therein lay my success — There! I told you before I intended to, after all; for, honestly and truly, I did get the highest prize offered, and honorable mention from the editor of the paper. No doubt many of you will think me foolish, but when that prize came, I sat down in the serene silence of my room, and, laying my head upon my arms on the table, wept tears of joy.

Mother could hardly credit the faltering recital of my triumph, but when she became convinced of it, and saw me with the money in my hand, she almost cried herself. I knew pretty well that she felt a little proud of me then; and I am sure father did, for he gave me ten dollars on the spot, and said it was for me to do what I liked with: though he could not let me have any more for at least two months, on account of some business troubles.

But my labors were not yet ended, for Belle's mother sent me three dollars, and a beautiful satin ribbon to paint for her daughter's birthday, which was willingly done in my spare time from studies.

I was soon the delighted possessor of an elegant dress; and I question if there was one in the row of smiling faces that graced the stage on graduation day that manifested more satisfaction than mine. I was extremely happy, and although I may give no moral to others from this little act of my life, it was of great benefit to me. It taught me the value of money and the sweets that come from honest toil, even if it be for the gratification of a frivolous desire.

But above all, it placed me on a level with an army of honest, intellectual and sympathetic boys and girls, united through all this land by the same common interests and desires: to a cultivation of their moral and intellectual life, which, please God, shall never cease.

AN UNSEALED LETTER.

My Dear Jennie: Such a strange event has befallen me that I cannot wait your presence — although so soon assured me,—but must write at once, that you may not be taken entirely by surprise upon your arrival here.

Three weeks ago to-night, I had the strangest and most vivid dream of my life.

I stood upon the sands — where we have so often stood together — that are caressed by the waters of Silver Lake. The moon shone in full splendor, and as I stood there in the calm silence and looked across the placid waters, listening to their soft murmuring, I thought the place never seemed half so beautiful; and I turned my head involuntarily, with a hope of seeing you beside me, as in the old, happy twilights when we walked together across the sands. I did not see you, Jennie, but I did see two men — young and handsome, both, yet of the opposite types of beauty — emerge from the shadows of our little grove of oaks.

Beneath the radiant light of the moon, each looked extremely pale, and one put out his hands with a gesture that seemed a mute appeal for love, or for mercy; but the other — the one with gold-colored and pink-tinted cheeks: lovelier than your lovely cheeks they were, Jennie — threw up one shapely white hand with a cold, scornful movement, and in another instant

had placed a revolver into the hand of his companion, and stood examining the gleaming toy in his own with a careless grace that made me shudder. I closed my eyes and tried to forget the look upon that lovely face, it was so cold and cruel; then I looked at his companion. He appeared calm, and held the glittering weapon just as it was put into his hand, and his beautiful dark eyes looked mournfully across the water. He stood motionless for some time, then slowly brushed back the luxuriant hair that lay in dark waves upon his forehead, and gazed long and earnestly up to the starlit heavens,— then looked into his companion's face with such an expression of pride and wounded love, that I gasped and awoke, to find myself weeping bitterly.

I know you will laugh, but I was angry with myself to think how nervous a dream had made me,— your friend who has so often been reproached for her “cold, unsympathetic nature.”

I did not mention my dream to anyone, but it seemed so real that I walked down to the very spot the next morning, and looked around to see if I could find any trace of my visionary visitants. As you may guess, I did not see a sign of footsteps upon the moist, yielding gravel, and I ran home with a new feeling in my heart.

That night I lived again the dream of the previous one, but I did not awaken until the men had begun to pace the ground in opposite directions, and just as they turned and I saw a flash of steel between the white fingers of the duelists, I awoke — awoke with a terrible feeling at my heart. The air stifled me, and I felt as though a murdered body lay beside the rippling waters of our beloved lake.

All the next day I could think of nothing but my dream, but I dared not again visit the now dreaded spot, and night came, only to bring to me with tenfold vividness the scenes of the two previous nights.

This time I saw the flash and heard the reports of the revolvers; but the one in the hand of the dark-eyed stranger pointed to the calm, blue heavens, while the other, with unflinching grasp, was levelled at the breast of the brave, dark-haired hero.

I awoke, but such a nameless fear grasped and smothered all the reasoning with which I strove to quiet myself, that I dressed myself and paced the floor of my room until morning.

After a hearty breakfast and a brisk ride upon Chief, I rode slowly up the front walk, feeling quite natural once more; but I shrieked audibly as I saw father and Tom bearing the body of a man between them. Father looked very much surprised at what was an unusual betrayal of emotion from me, and I dropped my head to hide the pallor that I knew overspread my face.

It was very queer,— but father found the stranger terribly wounded, lying upon the sand near Oak Grove.

That was all I learned for several days. We have done all we could for him. His name is Ray Stuart; and oftentimes when I have been sitting by his bedside, viewing in the still features the perfect counterpart of my beautiful dream-face, I have wondered if it were possible that I had a vision of that which had really been enacted through the long hours of restlessness in which I watched the dawn of day a number of nights before.

It has not yet been explained to *me* how Mr. Stuart became wounded, but with this secret in my heart, that I have divulged to no one but you, I do not care to ask any questions.

Mr. Stuart is convalescent now. He is lying in the hammock your father sent me last summer, which I have had put up across one corner of the south veranda. I am sitting behind the curtains of the library window, where I can watch his noble face. I wish you were beside me, to see the picture he makes; the soft green of the lawn and the deep shadows of the maples form such a beautiful background.

Yes, Jennie, I know you are saying, "Love at first sight." You are wondering if your stately, your proud queen, your dearest Eda, is out of her senses. But oh, Jennie, he loves me! and I am to be his wife: Ah, he is calling; so, Jennie, leaving you to fill in this bit of network from your imagination, I beg of you to come as soon as possible, to

Your supremely happy friend,

EDA MURRAY.

A TREASURE.

I am a flatiron,— and I am a treasure. I hope that half-sneering smile upon your lips will turn to one of grave respect when you have heard my story.

Twenty years ago, a woman, young and girlish looking, took me from her husband's hand with a smile and a low-toned "Thanks, love." I was only a lump of cold iron, but as her warm fingers closed over me, I inwardly vowed to perform my duties faithfully,— and now I proudly assert that I did, through sunshine and through storm.

For five years, with four comrades, I kept dutifully hot or cold in obedience to the wishes of my gentle owner, who pressed me with much firmness or little half-loving dabs across the snowy garments that came weekly from the washerwoman. Then a change came over the quiet home-life, for I saw the giant husband press his wife and babe to his bosom in a last lingering embrace and then stride through the doorway.

I was sitting over a fierce fire, and yet I felt strange ice-thrills waver over me as I saw my dear lady clasp her babe to her bosom, and dropping her pale face upon her hands, tremble violently in a vain endeavor to suppress the sobs that pierced the silence of the tiny cottage.

It was a long time after that before my lady sold my grim companions; and I never even so much as breathed of those days that brought such sadness to that little home, or even

lisped to my most intimate friend, the holder hanging yonder, of the tears that often fell in scalding drops upon the tiny dresses over which I untiringly glided. I felt sorry for my lady when she parted with my comrades, but I felt a little pride as well, to know I was to perform all her work myself, and felt no more pangs of jealousy as the tender hands clasped my once rivals.

I did my best, in order to keep good her faith in me, and I let my baby-friend fondle me all he liked: and it was very seldom that I fell upon his toes, or knocked upon his sweet, happy face, yet I almost liked to see some of his comical surprises at some of my unlucky moves.

But if my looks were to express my feelings for a moment, I have not a doubt as to their wonderful expression. When, after being shut up in solitude for nearly six weeks, I came to light in a far-away place. I sat down in one corner of the little room, and looked around me. There were so few articles there that I could easily count them, had I tried. Baby, now a good little boy, running fearlessly about, snatched me up, and as he carried me with him in his short journey to the door, I had a good look at the grim mountains that towered to the clouds all about us. I saw a man in rough clothes, with a pick-axe over his shoulder, pass near our cabin on his way to a neighboring gulch, and a queer feeling of homesickness overcame me, and I dropped heavily upon the feet of my little friend, who set up a terrible screaming; and as the cries echoed from a distant crag, I, in my youthful ignorance, thought some one mocking the poor boy, and really felt mortified.

After I became accustomed to my daily labor, I learned that the long-absent husband had come to this wild country upon leaving his peaceful home in New England years ago, and my gentle lady had come in her poverty and her heartsickness to toil for herself and boy, with a longing to be nearer the grave

of her lamented husband,—for she had received intelligence of his death a few months previous.

My lady toiled early and late, and I helped her all I could, as she smoothed out the wrinkles in the flannels of the sturdy miners. “Straight John” was my favorite, and I—else the little hand that guided me—was particular about laying every crease straight in his garments. He was gentle in manner, and kind and tender to my baby-friend, and I loved him;—flat-irons *can* love.

It was always so; and quiet in our little cabin, and no one ever used disrespectful language to its gentle owner, and we were quite happy; until one day the door flew rudely open, and a burly fellow filled the small space of dancing sunlight with his misshapen figure. His eyes were bloodshot, and the words rolled about in wild confusion upon his tongue before they fell in horrible shamelessness from the bruised and blackened lips, as he stared savagely upon my tender lady.

She turned from her posture over the ironing-table, still clasping me in one warm, soft hand, and her first look of mild surprise at the unexpected intrusion turned to one of sudden fear, as she gazed at the loathesome object before her. As he saw the change in the fair, expressive face, he grinned fiendishly, and stepped toward her.

I saw my lady glance quickly about for a weapon of defense, and the next instant, with a sudden bound from the desperate hand, I landed fairly upon one temple of the ugly brute, and rolled to the floor, as he staggered forward and fell in a heap beside me.

A little figure shadowed across the warm sunlight that streamed through the open door, and vanished. A few moments later, my kind friend John strode in. He called in the brave little boy, and hurling the destroyer of our peace through the doorway, closed it; and with white lips and brow, turned

to my lady, who leaned upon the table with her troubled face hidden in her hands.

He bent caressingly over the slight figure, and I noted the tremor that passed over it, as, with quivering lips, he whispered long and earnestly in one tiny ear; and a strange and beautiful light overspread his face as one warm hand slipped from its resting place and groped upward to meet his.

We do not work hard any more.

One day last summer, an artist strayed this way, and learning my history, immediately daubed me over with paint and put a border of heart's-ease all about me: so I assure you I am the handsomest flatiron you ever heard of, say nothing of being the treasure of a happy home.

LOVE.

Her mother willed it so, and she was called Love. On the third day of her life, her mother, dying, pressed her to her bosom, and raining kisses and tears in like profusion upon her tiny face, called upon Heaven to bless her darling child; then died with her first-born clasped in her icy arms.

Who her father was, no one knew; for her mother was as much a stranger in that wild western country as was her child to the world in which she was so unceremoniously ushered on that dreary Spring morning; and the woman who took her to bring up, often said, in the same hard voice as when she took her from her dead mother's breast, that she might better have been named Woe.

This morning of which I write, Love had attained her fifteenth year, and she stood leaning against an old lumber-pile, one hand shading the dark eyes that looked so mournfully at the noisy mill beyond, while the other grasped the edge of a huge sketch-book that was making vain endeavors to slip from under the slender arm. Weary of looking, her eyes filled with tears; she dropped her book upon the boards and resting her head upon her arms, lost the control she usually held over the griefs that were embittering her young life, and wept bitterly.

At last, choking back the sobs, and whispering softly, "She gave her life for mine," she arose, and taking up her beloved

book, walked slowly down the road, past the mill, down the track, until she came to old Jim, who was loading the long row of cars with shingles.

He turned to speak to Love as he came out of a car, and the moment he saw his little pet (it was what the rough, though white-souled, old man always always called her in his heart), he knew there was something wrong with her.

“Well, dear, what is it?” he said, as he placed one hard, bony hand tenderly upon the child’s soft hair.

At his kindly voice the sweet lips quivered noticeably, and the dark eyes sparkled with something very-like tears. At last, falteringly:

“She threatened to burn this, and I took it and came away.”

That was all, but the old man could guess very nearly how much pain and bitterness were expressed in those few words.

He had never read what the book contained. He knew it was a present to Love from some strolling artist, and he knew she was always writing upon old pieces of brown paper, and then copying from them into the book; and he half-divined that it held the sorrowful girl’s best and truest life,— that it was the comfort and happiness of her innocent heart.

He offered no words of consolation, but stooped and gently kissed the girl’s cold forehead, then went on with his work. Silent sympathy oftener touches the heart than the tenderest words of consolation.

Love sat down upon a bundle of shingles, and watched the old man for a long time, but her thoughts were evidently straying; then of a sudden a bright light sprang into her eyes, and a sweet flush glowed and then paled upon her soft cheeks, as she sprang to her feet, and stepping quickly to the old man’s side, gasped eagerly:

“Oh, sir, put *me* in the car, I beg of you! Let me go away from here. Oh, if you only would!”

Jim looked dazed for a moment, and was speechless. Then recovering his senses, and realizing the full import of those pleading words, he muttered, "She'd be better off," and said: "I will, Love; I will."

As for the girl, when she saw the man hunt up a saw and carefully cut a good-sized square place in the bottom of the half-filled car, pile the shingles about on three sides, leaving one bundle alone, for a seat; then walk slowly down the track to the little store in the distance, counting over the money in his purse,— she felt almost frightened.

What would Cass say? Cass was the one she loved, and the one who loved her. He was only a laborer in the mill beyond, but he was an honest, whole-souled fellow, who was striving and waiting patiently for the time when he could take Love to a home of her own — his home.

She must not think of him. She would write him all about it; and in a little time he would come to her, and they would be happy.

She had no time to think further, for Jim was back with a number of packages and a jug of fresh water, which he placed beside the lonely bunch of shingles, and then found a blanket and spread upon the wood, and placed Love in the car.

She felt so bewildered. There was the dull thud of the shingles, as they came heavily together about her, and there was the echo of Jim's husky voice ringing through her brain, as he kissed her farewell: "May God forgive me, if aught comes to harm you."

She leaned back against the rows of scented pine that reached the car-top, and drew a sigh of relief.

She was going to a city in New York,— she had seen a bill of the cars in the office a few days previous, and it all came back to her then. No matter how long must the waiting seem there upon the side track, it would in reality be but a short time, and no one could find her now, even if they tried.

It was quite light, and drawing her pencil from her pocket, she knelt down and wrote with eager haste all over one of the blank leaves of her treasured book; then folding her arms about her head, she prayed long and fervently to her mother's God to forgive her from running away from her only friends, to bless them, and put away from their hearts any anger that might arise through her wilfulness, and to lead her steps aright.

Blessed childhood! The cruel breath of scepticism had never swept across her heart, to scorch her confiding trust or taint her innocent, simple faith.

Two weeks slowly took their flight into the irrevocable past; and Love, worn with anxiety and wearied of her confinement, knelt upon the floor and looked down at the narrow strip of land that lay beneath the car. How much longer would that strange living in awful solitude last? Why did the light of day seem dimmed every time she knelt for a glimpse of it? These and innumerable other questions absorbed her mind until, weeping like a tired child, she fell asleep.

Daylight came, and the car moved slowly on its way. Love sat all the long forenoon with her beloved book spread open upon her lap. There was one page still blank. She did not touch it, but dreamed away the monotonous hours until shrill whistles from the neighboring shops in the town through which they were passing, told her it was the hour of twelve.

She knew then she must eat a few of the remaining crackers in order to keep alive. Yet she knelt once more to catch a glimpse of the blessed sunlight, but it all seemed so changed.

Only a thread of faint yellow streamed across the open space that was wont to gleam like gold, and even that appeared blurred, and then faded entirely.

But that was not all. The daylight seemed lost in heavy shadows. Surely it was noon. What could that sudden darkness mean? A terrible fear crept into her heart. A thrill of unspeakable dread surged over her being.

Turning to her faithful book, she penciled blindly upon the only remaining leaf, kissed it passionately, closed it, and nestling her head upon its stupid-looking cover, faced and resolved to endure patiently the awful burden she was called upon to bear. Peace came at last, and with it sleep, and with sleep, dreaming.

An angel stood beside her and presented her with a cup of gold. It held, concentrated, the peace and happiness of life, and it was called Joy. She took the cup, and walked abroad into the night with the heavenly being. They soon stood upon the shores of a beautiful lake. A full moon swung above its eastern bank, and threw a path of golden light straight to her very feet. They stepped together out upon that gleaming pathway, and walking over the shining bars of light, stood within the glory of the celestial city.

Love saw a familiar form float toward her. In her sudden yearning to be once more clasped to her mother's bosom, she flung aside the golden cup, and sprang forward with outstretched arms. Her cup of Joy fell at her mother's feet.

Love was wide awake, and was staring blindly into the terrible gloom that surrounded her.

Was her dream a warning? Did it tell her she had cast away life's cup of happiness when she so weakly fled from the troubles and indignities of her short life? She knew not. She knelt down and prayed in her pretty faith for courage to face bravely whatever the future might hold in store for her; then folding her hands across her lap, she leaned against the unsympathetic pine, and dreaming and waking, waited for the light.

The car had stopped while Love was carrying in her hand her cup of Joy, and after a few hours she heard a door grate harshly as it slid open, and the shingles were soon being removed from about her.

She felt faint from mingled joy and dread. A bundle had left the pie upon her right; another,—she felt the soft air fanning her face. She heard the breathing of the one who was laboring. She gazed earnestly that way with wide-open eyes, but all was darkness. Then she heard an exclamation.

In another moment Love lay in a death-like swoon in the strong arms that were outstretched to clasp her.

In a fit of remorse, old Jim told Cass the manner of Love's flight, and the half-distracted fellow immediately started for the city whither the cars were billed.

It was none other than Cass himself who carried Love from her strange prison into the broad light of day.

An old couple near by, kindly offered Cass accommodations for his fair burden, and when Love came to herself, she had already found staunch friends.

At the first sound of Cass's voice, Love started perceptibly, and one white hand instinctively sought the face that bent above her, which suddenly grew white as marble.

She touched lightly the clean-shaven lip, and, was it fancy, that she drew a deep sigh of relief? *Her* Cass had worn a moustache.

When she had told her story to the sympathetic old people, they begged her to remain with them always, as their beloved child. So Cass left the house, unrecognized, but happy in the knowledge that his little Love was well cared for,—until he could claim her as his own.

Then the brave fellow went patiently to work, and dreamed of the pleasant home he would soon have; and the occasional glimpses he caught of Love's sweet, pathetic face gave him renewed courage as the days went on.

All that time the little maiden was jealously guarding a secret of her own.

When she had been a few days in her new home, she slipped out one wet, dreary day, and groped down the street with her treasured book under her cloak. Inquiring along the way, and with a little friendly assistance, she reached the door of the room in which sat the proprietor of the largest publishing house in the city.

Gathering courage, and opening the door in answer to a stern "come in," Love stepped inside and closed the door. The gentleman arose, and bowing slightly, offered her a chair, but she made no movement to accept it. Her beautiful dark eyes gazed mutely toward his, and she said softly:

"Sir, I cannot see you."

The frown upon the noble forehead before her fled, as its owner gently took Love by the shoulder and seated her.

Then it was she gave up to a stranger her heart's treasure. In answer to the gentle inquiries, she told, in a few simple words, the story of her life, and said how happy she would be if she might only have a little book of her own in "real printing." The gentleman promised to read the manuscript, and told her when to call again.

When she kept the appointment, she was pleased beyond measure to learn that her wish was to be fulfilled, her desire gratified. But her deepest happiness appeared to live when she learned how much money she would receive. Indeed, the gentleman seemed surprised to see her bow her head upon her clasped hands for a moment, as if in prayer, when he made the announcement.

Then they had a long talk, in the course of which the gentleman asked her to whom her book was to be dedicated.

"My mother."

"But is she living?"

"In heaven, yes, sir."

Surely that was a novel thought for those times. Why not do as the sweet maid wished? And the man who was pro-

nounced cold and haughty by the match-making mammas of that beautiful city, actually found tears lingering on the threshold of his eyes, ready to step out and wander down his handsome features, if not rudely driven back.

After that, Love called at the office several times. She was allowed to dictate as to the arrangement of her little poems, and to say in what shade they should be dressed. And the girl would often touch her eyes lightly and smile, for she believed money would open them once more, and the time was near at hand when she could return to Cass.

The day came at last, on which she held what seemed to her a large sum of money in her hand; and thanking her benefactor over and over, she wept tears of joy that, stupidly enough, splashed all over a copy of her book that lay upon the office table.

Then she hurried home to her foster-mother. She gave her the money, and begged of her to get a doctor quick, "to make her eyes well." She sobbed out her story to the kind though surprised woman,—and then poor Love was laid upon a bed of pain and fever.

Cass suffered untold agonies as he learned the secrets of that weary heart, and was forced to listen to the sweet voice imploring for one more breath of the scented pine: calling upon him to forgive her for leaving him: praying God to send back the beautiful angel with her cup of Joy.

The days passed wearily, but the time came at last in which Love recognized her friends, and with a cry that made known the supreme joy of her heart, she nestled in the strong arms of her lover, who clasped her as if he would defy Death itself.

But the passing hours brought no more strength to Love. And still resting peacefully upon the true heart of her noble lover, she took the shining cup of Joy that life had given her, and carried it once more into the glory of her angel-mother's presence.

In a certain office, in a certain town of the east, a gentleman may be found, handsome and proud-appearing still, who, amid the hurry and cares of this wearisome life, finds time to mourn over a little blue-bound book, lettered in gold, that has been blistered in a number of places with something strangely like tears. Upon the fly-leaf is written :

*“A fairer, sweeter thing
Is my life for having known you;
Forever with my sacred kin,
My soul's soul, I shall own you.”*

Not far away is a happy home ; and the father of the lovely children who grace it, still treasures carefully, and handles with reverent touch, a little volume of poems that bears a marked resemblance to the tear-stained one in the grave man's office beyond.

Naught but one short, innocent life, yet in its living may be found a trace of the subtle forces that reach out to us everywhere, breathing the essence of all pure, true being. And though our cup of Joy shall be shattered, even at its brimming, we can ask no more blessed thing than a faith that can hold the delicate fragments in patient waiting for the Master-hand to make it whole.

Only one brief, simple life. Yet who shall say one life is lived in vain?

JAKE WESTON.

“A GUILTY CONSCIENCE NEEDS NO ACCUSER.”

“Shall I go 'long, too, Jakey?”

“No, yer needn't. G'long inter the house. I teli yer the deer b'longs ter me, 'n' I'll 'ave it. 'Fi can't bag that 'ere feller's game for'm 'thout eny help, why th'n—” and the speaker's lips closed together grimly, and an ominous scowl settled over the hard features.

The poor old woman silently shrank back against the doorway, and wrung her thin, wrinkled hands in a fashion that had become habitual with her.

“Better 'ave a roarin' fire 'gin cookin' the animal;” and with a sardonic grin, Jake Weston shouldered his rifle, and started for the neighboring forest.

A number of brisk steps brought him to a point where the road diverged into several foot-paths. Scrutinizing them carefully, Jake took the extreme left, and muttering, “This 'ere cross's t'other further on; we'll see, my fine gentleman, who brings down ther game,” he pushed stealthily through the underbrush, aiming for the track of a noble deer he had sighted the day previous.

It was still early morning. The October sun was rashly throwing from his glittering quiver innumerable golden darts along the eastern horizon. Many of them dipped their gleam-

ing points into the placid waters that rippled before the open doorway of the hut wherein Jake Weston left his aged mother, while others, aimed higher, pierced the rising mists beyond, and touched the fluttering garments of the stately trees, until their robes were radiant with tints of matchless loveliness.

In the path extremely opposite the one taken by Jake Weston, a blithe young sportsman, noting the beautiful sunrise, stopped. All earth to him was glorious. On every breath he drew in, with keen delight, the fresh October air. Involuntarily he bared his head to the kiss of the cool winds, while a favorite melody burst from his lips in a clear, joyous whistle.

The moments sped by. What was there about the scene in that wild northern wood to remind him of a pile of bones he once saw bleaching in the sun, at a mountain resort in far-off New Hampshire? He instinctively shuddered. Perchance his straying thoughts then wandered to his city home, and lingered lovingly about his gentle mother's sweet face. A tender smile lighted the handsome, boyish features, as he replaced his cap.

"Well, well; what sort of a huntsman are you, anyway, Arnon Leigh, that you stand here like a post? How do you know but your fine buck has already been brought down by the fellow that lurked here yesterday?" And the stranger hastened on.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Weston — in her second childhood, poor woman — after finishing the homely duties indoors, tied an old scarf over her white locks, and left the hut, intending to do as she had often done before — startle, or head off, a deer for her son.

She wandered on a long, long way, but no unwonted sound disturbed the loneliness of the woods; she neared the verge of a broad clearing that lay, dry and fragrant, in the happy sunlight; she sat down upon a fallen log, with a faint hope of seeing a deer, and a strange dread of Jake finding her.

The wind sought the frost-touched grasses at her feet, and playfully threw their heads together, making a rustling monotone not unlike music. A partridge cooed softly in the thicket near by. Beautiful leaves, decked in their holiday attire of gold, crimson and marbled tints, fluttered about her like fairy messengers of light. An audacious squirrel ran nimbly up the decayed trunk of a fallen tree at her side, and eyed her knowingly, then skipped off with his cheeks puffed out as though in silent laughter.

Strange thoughts wandered vaguely through the clouded brain, and happy dreams flitted there, not wholly unlike dreams of ours, good neighbor mine. On the evanescent walls of Fancy's castle we lightly trace grand, glorious visions that vanish if sought by a simple worldly touch,— as the fairy scenes with which Jack Frost beautifies the window panes deftly elude the generous sun who smiles benignly down to gild the outlines of their magic tracery.

Jake Weston strode through the woods with every sense on the alert. He had struck the track of a deer, and was nearing a point where there were few trees and nothing but light underbrush for many rods. He stopped suddenly at sight of something away beyond, moving slowly to the southeast. Following with his eyes the direction of the moving object, he sighted upon a rising across the clearing, a noble buck. The dark object was creeping in the shadows of the heavier timber toward the beautiful animal.

Now, my good neighbor, if you and I, from the "sublime heights of our philosophy," see a rival carry off the trophy for which we are striving, we doubtless nourish our spite to vent upon the primary object of our avaricious desires; but Jake Weston was not of our kind.

All the germs of fiendishness that lay dormant in his ignorant, cruel heart, sprang into being as his quick eye noted the

scene, and his quicker sense comprehended the advantage his rival held over him. With hot, bated breath and glaring eyes, Jake Weston aimed at the unsuspecting sportsman, and pulled the trigger of his Winchester. He considered himself an unerring shot; and when he saw the object of his brutal vengeance fall, he waited for no more, but fled back through the warm shadows of the wildwood.

The feeble woman, who sat smiling at the beautiful bird that had poised upon a branch near her resting place, and aroused her from her trance-like dreaming with its sweet carol to the morning sun, was startled by the sound of crackling brush, and surprised into immovable silence by the sight of a strange young man who emerged from the shadows a short distance beyond, and stepped into the path before her.

He noted not the quaint figure, but moved stealthily on. The trunk of a fallen tree impeded his progress; he placed the handle of his rifle upon the ground to aid him in vaulting over. The woman heard a deafening report; she saw the prostrate form of what she had confusedly deemed a charming vision. She heard the dull thud of lead as it struck the tree just above her head. She staggered to her feet. Did a mother's unfailing eyesight discern the dim outlines of a human being fleeing from the radiance of the glad sunlight in the dim distance? A withered hand was unwittingly passed across the bewildered eyes; the trembling footsteps strayed themselves beside the wounded stranger.

The placid face and tearful eyes seemed like the features of an angel to Arnon Leigh, as he slowly recovered from the first bewildering sensations of the terrible shock his system had received. He ascertained his injuries, and arose to his feet; his rifle had discharged the contents of one of its chambers through his right arm. He asked the gentle woman if she could give him temporary accommodations at her home. A

look of terror stole over the wan face as he questioned. The thin worn hands were wrung together; then they seized the stranger's uninjured arm, and the voice trembled with perplexed entreaty:

"No, oh no!" Pointing the opposite direction from the hut: "There's 'elp there." Dubiously: "Jakey ought er 'ad the deer." With eager declaration: "He al'ays hunts 'ere."

With sudden energy the withered lips were pressed to the boy's firm hand, and the old woman turned away and set her troubled face toward her wretched home.

Solemn tears filled the eyes of Arnon Leigh as he watched the awkward figure out of sight; and he took away the remembrance of that uncultured woman's kiss as the memory of a sacred blessing. In the long after years he was spared to his own loved mother, he never wholly forgot Jake Weston's.

* * * * *

The warm, odorous zephyrs that sprang up to usher in the soft October twilight, gently fanned the careworn face of Jake Weston's aged mother, as she sat upon the steps of their rude dwelling, awaiting her son's return. The water rippled in a gentle monotone at her feet, and the beautiful clouds that hung above the western horizon looked like enormous seashells with rose-tinted hearts, floating in a sea of sparkling sherry, that slowly faded into huge white billows floating gently up on an ocean of heavenly blue. But the beauties of nature were powerless to woo the mind of the poor lone woman from its vague, confused wanderings.

The shadows were deepening all about her, as Jake Weston emerged from the darkness. As he neared the steps and caught a glimpse of his mother's ghost-like figure, he started back affrightedly; then recognizing her, with a muttered oath, strode into the hut. The gentle woman, unquestioningly, arose and followed him. He had no game, and flung his rifle

into a dark corner of the room, and sought his couch in sullen silence.

Away along in the night, Jake's mother, with timid anxiety, sought his bedside; as she lightly kissed the feverish temples of her son, a strong arm flung her aside, and wide, horror-stricken eyes stared half-insanely at the prostrate form beside the couch.

* * * * *

Life, that had never been very bright for that poor woman in the back-woods, suddenly grew darker. When another October blessed the earth with its gorgeous splendor, the weary heart, had it been capable of forming reproaches, would have pronounced existence a wretched bane.

The game law had passed, but Jake Weston's rifle lay rusty and neglected; he who had once been the most untiring of huntsmen, sought no more for trophies in the neighboring forest; he sat about the hut a terrible wreck of the strong, vigorous boy that had spent most of his life in outdoor exercise.

But rumors of the well-stocked wilderness floated outward many who were eager for sport. The mild October day was at its dawn when unwonted sounds disturbed the serenity of the solitude in that northern wild.

Jake Weston's mother sought the window, and a soft, pretty glow tinged the wrinkled cheeks, as she saw a party of gay sportsmen nearing the rude dwelling. Half unconsciously she murmured, "Like the other one." The tender smile upon her lips turned to an expression of tremulous fear, as she felt the hot breath of her son upon her neck, and the fierce grip of his hand upon her arm.

She was pulled from the window, instantaneously, and the wild eyes stared into her innocent ones with frightful intensity: "*Like who?*"

The poor woman sank down upon the floor, and buried her

face in her hands. Perhaps she had a faint idea that something, more terrible than she could imagine, would happen to her if she confessed to having conversed with Arnon Leigh.

The sounds of conversation and laughter died away in the distance. Jake Weston drew back from the wretched figure as though a vague comprehension of his brute-like savageness had pierced the rough exterior of his half-maddened brain.

The day wore slowly on. The sound of several rifle-shots pierced the hearing of the inmates of that dismal dwelling; when the tired woman, glancing up from her homely duties, saw her son moving stealthily toward the door, with a bundle in his hand.

"Where goin'?" she inquired; then with a stifled cry of agony, she sprang to his side: "Don't go, Jakey; don't."

Jake Weston looked savagely down upon the inanimate form of his loving mother, and laid down his bundle. Then he got some water and restored her to her senses. He was, unconsciously, resting upon his knees beside her as she opened her troubled eyes, and before he was aware of her intentions, the wasted arms were clasped tightly about his neck, and the feeble lips murmured, half-hysterically:

"Jakey, I couldn't 'elp it; his arm was 'urt. He talked so pretty, and he was so good, Jakey; he went 'way 'thout the deer."

What had happened? Had God sent back the affectionate boy that had blessed her life in years ago?

The warm October twilight enveloped the little hut in the woods, and quietly softened the uncouth proportions until it presented a strangely picturesque appearance. The twilight deepened, and the "lamps of heaven" shone forth in all their splendor. Little Mrs. Weston stood at the uncurtained window of her humble dwelling, and looked wistfully into the calm heavens. Perhaps a faint longing stirred the clouded

soul,— a longing for angel voices to bear the tidings of her wondrous happiness to the companion of her maiden days. She looked long and wistfully at the golden stars that winked shyly at one another while gazing down upon her from the benign, peaceful face of heaven.

What affinity could there possibly exist between her misty longings and calm delight, and the wishes of the fair mortal who stood at her casement and prettily raved about her Romeo being cut into little stars to make the face of heaven so fine?

The moon coyly played hide-and-seek with the great white clouds that floated on and on in majestic grandeur; a fish leaped to the surface of the beautiful water, and sent silver sparkles rippling toward the silent dwelling. The gentle woman turned away at last, and all through the brooding night mused with wondering joy on the unutterable blessedness life had given her.

The moon rose higher and still higher. It peered into the face of Jake Weston, that lay upturned toward the heavens; a half-smile lingered about the lips, and such a look of relief and mute happiness rested upon the features of the happy dreamer, that fair Luna drew back abashed, and left the inmates of that humble dwelling in unwatched, undisturbed peacefulness.

A WINTER MEMORY.

The little boat had been drawn ashore and overturned, several weeks previous, but the sudden return of a mild Autumn day, leaping most charmingly into the lap of snowless December, warming its sluggish blood and fascinating it into undemurring acceptance of the pretty caress, had suggested to our jolly oarsman, just before twilight, the idea of a boat-ride.

The boat was unceremoniously tipped into the water; the oars were carried down the bank, and slipped into the rowlocks; the seats were fitted in; three persons took possession, and were instantaneously gliding over the calm water.

The boat shot swiftly along the western bank, until the perfumed pines, bare roots and grim-looking logs that were so faithfully mirrored in the peaceful waters, seemed to glide past us in their dull, silent grandeur, like the memory of somber, wind-swept storm-clouds. The water looked dark and still beside us, but gradually spread into a clear, radiant light, until the tips of the ripples far beyond gleamed like diamonds.

We were fast approaching the southern verge of the tiny lake, when a glance at the iridescent heavens gave us a key to all that strange, glowing splendor. It seemed that the sun-god, who lurked beyond the western tree-tops, had been audaciously flirting with the fair new moon, who stood high in the cloudless heavens and was returning his vivid blushes with charming effrontery.

We wondered if the magnificent fellow had any idea of leaping back to his fair enchantress; if he had, he probably reflected upon the consternation such a deed would bring to numberless hearts that beat just as warmly as his own fiery one, and blushinglly withdrew from the smiling, steadfast gaze of charming Luna.

The boat sped steadily on, and exclamations of admiration broke the silence of the glowing solitude as we neared the eastern banks; then common words died away upon our lips.

The homes that, far across the water, nestled upon the western banks, were shrouded in deepest gloom; above the impenetrable darkness, clearly defined against the tinted sky, arose a long, unbroken line of somber tree-tops.

A golden light emerged from behind the solemn temporary breastworks of Nature, and flashing into tints of deepest pink, shot boldly into the cloudless heavens; but the radiant hues, soon vanquished by the calm splendor of Night's fair queen, slowly retired, and left her in undisputed possession of the field.

Conversation succeeded silence; and the cool breeze that suddenly sprang up, wafted snatches of familiar melodies across the ruffled waters, until they trembled, and softly murmured with reproaches on being awakened from their peaceful slumber. Voices from the encircling forest flung back in softened sweetness words that soared away from happy lips. The oars dipped, plashed, and arose in vigorous uniformity; a few lights twinkled from the shore that lay in darkness before us as we flitted past the northern banks; a little bayon, running in at our left, hugged a thin layer of ice to its gloomy bosom; the oars cut a transparent coating of the same, and then we sped into deeper water.

The gleaming moon sent showers of silvery sheen over the sleepy earth, and much of it fell toward our little boat as it swiftly neared the western bank once more.

Three merry cheers were gaily given, and we landed. Then the boat was pulled ashore, and our pleasant boat-ride had become a past joy.

Yet, in all the dim, obscure future, naught but death can effectually efface the memory of that winter journey over the glowing face of Lake Michigan's tiny child,—that dimples and smiles and frets and fumes in the midst of the scented pines that toss their bare, gloomy branches in grotesque solemnity on Strawberry Hills.

TRAILING ARBUTUS.

A FRAGMENT.

A tiny, tiny spray, it lies upon the bit of cardboard; a few straggling tendrils, the hue of mother earth, trail from the brighter stems, adown the scrap of paper.

What soul, that intuitively catches the artistic lurking in every leaf and bud and flower and blade of grass, can find one solitary ray of beauty in the first rough production of eager hands that stretch longingly toward the doors of Art's fair temple,— which, alas! open for but a chosen few?

Unconcerned eyes can see nothing of interest in the crude mixture of pink and green and brown; they cannot even tell what the colors have patiently tried to express for long, long years.

And yet, for one, the faint, imperfect reproduction holds a multitude of childish fears, intermingled with pretty gleams of pride and joy. It carries a world-weary heart into a past that clasps upon its withered breast youth's fondest hopes and sweetest aspirations. Floating from the happy world of careless childhood, with no glimpse of the dark, trailing passions that lurked below the fair, blush-tinted surface, swept the fingers that nervously imprinted it upon the tiny, valueless card.

A beautiful bouquet, it lies upon the table. Sweet flowers of Spring! can you recognize your innocent namesake here?

Ah, no! your fair delicate faces shrink aside as you behold the poor, miserable design.

And yet, turn your exquisite features this way, my fresh, my dainty woodland trophies. Think you your lot more blest than that of your wee, unfragrant namesake? Have you, then, clasped for aye the perfume that tremulously wafts its being into the greedy face that bends and kisses?

Fair, guileless flowers! The lips that sip your honey will drain every drop of your perfumed life-blood. Your crushed, death-stricken faces will twine and blend with earth and roots that weigh and drag forever.

Is it, then, more blessed to be for one brief hour the fairest, sweetest life that bursts from the dark bosom of Nature as it draws its first glad breath of springtime? Yet, you still shrink from the poor, defective, valueless sketch.

Miserable, blotted, tiny spray? Crude, worthless? O friend! consider well!

LENA'S POEM.

Lena Ewing was sitting upon the fragrant grass that softly carpeted the wide common in front of Deacon Hammond's house. She had been trying to look the glowing sun straight in the face, and he had rebuked her with such a fiery stare that her sweet blue eyes were filled with unbidden tears.

Lena had been in the quiet New England village but a short time, yet she felt more at home, sitting there in the glowing sunshine, than she ever had in the long years that had been spent in the noise and bustle of a city. It seemed to her that she had found her ideal host in jovial Deacon Hammond, who kept his large, airy house open to "summer boarders;" and she felt very happy, despite the tears she was trying to wink off the long lashes that shaded her eyes.

A volume of poems lay upon her lap, and a sheet of blank paper and a pencil held it open at "The Barefoot Boy." Her quick eyes had noted the beautiful scenes that spread away from her upon every side, and she drew a deep sigh, born of unspeakable happiness, as she looked down at the open pages in her lap, and then across the pretty green into Deacon Hammond's garden, where a boy was busily hoeing.

"Wonder if he is a barefoot boy!" and then a musical laugh broke the stillness about her as she fancied how comical such a well-grown person would look barefooted.

The heat was growing intense, and thinking her sun-bath quite sufficient for the time being, she sought the shade of a

row of maples that skirted the common upon the right. This brought her some nearer the garden, and as the industrious toiler there was the only visible sign of active life, she fell to dreaming over and wondering about the different phases of humanity she had so often studied; wrote a little upon the stray paper in her book, and idled away the happy hours until the dinner-bell awoke her to a sense of her surroundings,— if, indeed, she had lost consciousness of their rare beauties. As she arose to obey its summons, a penciled scrawl stole out of the pretty volume in her hands, and, unnoticed, settled itself where she had been sitting.

Deacon Hammond always had his help at the same table with his summer boarders, and it was at his hospitable board Lena first met Frank Wallace, the lad who had been working in the garden. Being a new comer, she was introduced in a formal way to the inmates of the dining room; as she met the lad's penetrating glance, she thought she had never seen such beautiful deep blue eyes before; Frank bestowed one compassionate thought upon Lena's pale face, and then devoted himself to the tempting viands that were so generously served.

Dinner was over. Frank Wallace had been to the little post office across the common, and was walking back beneath the shade trees, when he came upon a sheet of paper which, at first glance, he supposed to be Lena's handkerchief,— for he remembered having seen her sitting there. He picked it up, and with boyish curiosity, read —

“Life contains much prose, yet every heart one day lives a poem. It may not flash in letters of gold before the gaze of a multitude, nevertheless it is there, palpitating in warm, rich life, beneath a cold or impenetrable exterior. When a child, I wondered, with childish thoughts, why every paper, magazine, and countless books contained poems. Childlike, I dimly supposed when one had written a poem they were done with

poesy forever; that the emotions and the study producing the thoughts that swelled and inflamed my eager heart drained the cup of poetical fervor forever. Later on, I was surprised into changing my mind, for I found that no sooner had I placed one thought upon paper, than innumerable others crowded my brain, clamoring to be placed beside their brother. Then did the truth begin to dawn faintly; then did I vaguely comprehend that one poem, one story, should never satisfy the longing of an awakened soul. These thoughts were confused and dim but a short time ago: now do I feel through all the vigorous striving an hungering spirit that mortal is never satisfied. I look about me and find so many beautiful poems in the happy ignorance of unbeing that —”

The lad felt almost sorry that there was not more to read. He studied the pretty, peculiar chirography, and re-read the crudely written ideas; then he bethought himself of the merry party that was lounging about the front piazza of the house beyond.

He walked quickly across the common, and soon stood beside Lena, who was swaying to and fro in one of the hammocks that were suspended from the maples before the veranda. A vivid blush overspread his face as he proffered the truant penciling; and as he replied to Lena's thanks and turned away, he blushed deeper still at remembrance of her unembarrassed air,— it was so unlike what his sister's would have been had he discovered some of her private thoughts. It did not enter his mind that Lena Ewing was accustomed to the society of gentlemen who would have deemed it dishonorable to do what he had so carelessly done.

When Lena had been in the country nearly three weeks, accustomed herself to the innocent, well-bred familiarity, and understood the equal ground upon which all seemed to rest in that delightful spot, she had become very friendly with Frank Wallace.

He was the son of a neighboring farmer: a careless, obliging and warm-hearted boy, and he took quite a fancy to Lena: if you had questioned why, he would have unhesitatingly replied, "She is such a 'cute little thing," and would have wound up his logic with a whistled bar of "Afton Waters."

Frank was quite boyish about some things, and very manly about others; indeed, his manner plainly showed he was hovering upon the verge of years that would speedily bear him beyond the gilded portals through which all his sex pass so proudly.

He often took Lena for a drive after a slow, ungainly-looking horse, and she always entertained him with serious thoughts and quaint nothings, uttered in her own pretty way; and one time she laughed till the tears rolled down her cheeks, when their spirited animal stopped short to rest at the bottom of a slight hill.

He made sport of her fervent liking for the pretty wild flowers that blossomed all about the country; yet he gathered handfuls of field daisies, countless roses from the sweet-briar bushes, and broke off whole limbs from the apple trees, just for the fun of seeing the little face buried in the fragrant blossoms, and hearing the exclamations of delight that interspersed the deep, long breaths that drew in their delightful perfume.

One morning Frank declared he had seen some very large violets in the wood the day previous, and as Lena was eager to procure some, they started away in high glee to find them. The wood was some distance from Deacon Hammond's, and after arriving there, they gathered a huge cluster, and then they sat down upon a grassy knoll, while Lena artistically arranged her pretty wild-flowers. She pinned a little knot of them upon the deep collar of Frank's coat; and as it was cool and shady in the wood, they sat there a long time; yet their conversation was not just what would naturally be expected by

those who curl their lips in a superior smile over youthful tete-a-tetes. A fragment may suggest a change that was slowly taking place in the deeper feelings of at least one of the unsuspecting dreamers.

"I do not see how you can paint flowers to look just like real ones, Lena."

Lena's eyes sparkled, and she laughed mischievously.

"Why, you foolish boy, I don't. But I mean to be a great artist some day; and when I am, you shall have a life-size picture of the elegant carriage with its accompanying statue of Weariness that—you know?"

[This was before the idea of reproducing the ocean life-size had been originated.]

Frank joined heartily in the merry laugh that ended the unfinished statement. Then his eyes took a strangely intense expression as he questioned hesitatingly:

"Lena, would you like to be a celebrated artist better than—or would you rather write, you know?" and he raised his eyes half deprecatingly;—"to be famous."

Lena did not meet his glance, but she understood. The lad had an intuitive knowledge that she wished to be an author of note when she grew older. Her eyes suddenly lost their striking brilliancy and were looking far away toward a pretty cloud that slowly drifted in the open space between two groups of trees; a strange wistfulness crept into their lovely blue, and she seemed to have forgotten her companion.

There was a long silence, in which Lena dreamed her own girlish dreams of the glory and fame for which she honestly meant to strive all her life; while Frank studied the girl's pale, delicate features, and wondered if he ought to wish for something a little more womanly, something very much more affectionate than the petite mortal beside him. He had seen considerable of the strange earnestness and almost incompre-

hensible longings of the youthfulness that seemed to be unconsciously studying and trying to bear a heavy share of the great world-heart's weary throbbings. He also had his own secret hopes and ambitions, and could sympathize with Lena in her desire to be among the foremost in the world's people,— but he could not understand the brilliant flush that suddenly sprang into her cheeks.

“Lena, what of all things in life can give you—would make you happiest?”

The girl had just reached, alone, the topmost pinnacle of fame, and the praises of the multitude rang in her ears and throbbed through all her being. She started and recollected herself; and after Frank had repeated the question, and she had been silent a few moments, she smiled and said:

“You would laugh at me were I to tell you.”

The lad avowed he would not, and after all that sweet dreaming, Lena's true womanly nature asserted itself in her reply:

“I believe a home with one I loved”—blushing—“would make me happier than all the fame or fortune the whole world could bestow;”—dreamily—“it would be so nice to have pretty children to play with and care for, and—”

An undertone of sadness rippled through the light laugh that abruptly broke the thread of her speech.

Frank drew a deep sigh, but it ended in a smile of satisfaction. His companion did not seem so far away from him after her confession, and he impulsively dragged into close companionship with his habitual thoughts a germ of something that had previously lain far too deep in the inner sanctuary of his heart to be touched by common musings.

A short time after, roaming through the woods, they came out by a meadow that lay at the foot of an elevation of land sloping down from Frank's father's house, and there a little difficulty presented itself,— for Lena, at least.

A fence lay between the wood and meadow, and over the fence there was quite a stretch of moss that, although it looked very bewitching—its beautifully shaded tints beaming up from the shallow pools of water about it—looked also very treacherous. Frank settled all intruding doubts by assisting her to the central rail of the fence, and commanding her to stay there; then he sprang over, and taking her from the fence in his arms, carried her across the yielding moss and placed her upon solid ground.

Lena hardly knew if she were provoked or not, but a sense of the ludicrous situation overcame the little feeling of mortified vanity, and she laughed.

Frank had placed her upon solid ground, but one hand was held detainingly upon her shoulder, and as he hurriedly spoke it was evident some of his characteristic indifference had fled.

“Lena, won't you let me make you happy?—won't you try to love me?—won't you—”

The girl had a vague idea that her position was even more uncomfortable than it had been on the other side of the fence, but she checked the words upon his lips with one look of her speaking eyes. The lad comprehended the girl's unspoken thoughts, and stopped suddenly, and led the way across the meadow to his home, where Lena rested and partook of an inviting lunch, ere returning to Deacon Hammond's.

That evening, Lena wrapped herself in one of the inviting hammocks, and lay there a long time, looking into the calm blue above in thoughtful silence.

A strange, undefined restlessness filled her unawakened heart as she recalled the look in the frank blue eyes of her summer friend. She questioned if the lad really loved her, but the question seemed absurd when she recollected that he was but nineteen, and no older than herself. The girl held an ideal hero in the shrine of shrines within her untouched heart,

and she quite unconsciously drew a more impenetrable veil than ever about the hallowed spot where the visionary being dwelt; yet, after all, the cool night breezes straying across the swaying hammocks in front of Deacon Hammond's house, kissed lips and cheeks far warmer than usual, as Lena Ewing recalled again and again the new and strange expression in Frank's lustrous eyes.

Frank Wallace retired early that night, and lay awake until near morning, trying to solve the problem life had suddenly placed within his heart. Why, he questioned, need Lena have looked at him with a whole volume of reproaches in her mild blue eyes? What had he said so very offending? What if he could not woo in the language of novel-heroes? Of what moment could it be to her that their sunny, frank acquaintance-ship were disturbed for a brief time, if it darkened a whole life-time for him? And yet he really loved Lena better after all those mute reproaches and hours of self-communing.

Perhaps a careless observer would have marked no difference in the conduct of Frank and Lena while together; indeed, the change was an indescribable one to those who were most unhappily concerned. Lena strove to appear just as kindly in her manner toward Frank, and he tried to forget his unwarrantable mistake, yet, despite all, a very embarrassing restraint underlay all their struggles, and they slowly drifted farther and farther apart.

When Lena was about to leave the quiet village, Frank took both her hands in his for a moment, and asked if she would ever spend a vacation there again. She looked up into the eyes that beamed so sadly upon her, and answered falteringly that she had promised good Deacon Hammond to return the following summer, if possible.

A brief, tiny pressure of the hand, an unexpected "God bless you!" as Frank's lips lightly touched the veiled fore-

head, and Lena had said farewell to her summer friend, and stepped into the carriage that bore her to the station several miles away.

* * * * *

The reluctant year had ushered six precious keepsakes through the shadowy portals of its mysterious storehouse, and was preparing to yield up the seventh when Lena Ewing sat once more beneath the refreshing shade of Deacon Hammond's maples. The sun shone just as brightly as upon the first day she sat there; the birds sang just as sweetly, and the warm, odorous sunshine was just as full of subtle joy and beauty.

Lena was just as happy, even if a shade more thoughtful than of old, and very glad to be near her country friends once more.

A clear whistle pierced the brooding silence, and "Afton Waters" rippled through the summer air. A warm blood-tint faintly fluttered in Lena's face, as Frank Wallace crossed the common, and clasped the hand in friendly greeting.

Frank appeared much more dignified, yet as carelessly happy as the lad who nodded to her across Deacon Hammond's dinner-table a year previous.

Perhaps Lena felt just a little bit disappointed to see her once ardent wooer seemingly forgetful of their latter days of restrained courtesy, as well as the cause of them; yet it seemed very pleasant to renew their old, careless companionship. They played croquet together; rode, walked, read and talked; and Lena took great pride in noting the quiet manliness of her cordial friend, and set down all his characteristics and witty sayings in her memorandum. She secretly intended having Frank in a book one day.

Lena often questioned herself if Frank had forgotten that he once loved her, and when she had been near him a month, came to the conclusion he had, most decidedly.

The very day she settled the question for herself, Frank, walking up the garden path to his home, overtook his little brother, and immediately hoisting him upon his shoulder, continued his way to the door. The child held a bunch of crumpled violets in his dirty little fist; and as he clasped his tiny arms about his brother's neck, Frank inhaled their delicious perfume. He was a noble, strong-minded lad, and not apt to give way to sentiment, yet he immediately set the innocent child upon its feet, and sat down on the doorstep.

Perhaps, as he sat there, he recalled the past, and chided himself for having been so rash and boyish upon the day he wore Lena's violets, months before; but if those were some of his thoughts, there were others to keep them company. He would not try to win one whom he could not make happy. If Lena considered herself above accepting the love that ennobled his every-day life,—if the woman of his choice could not bestow as much love and respect as she gained,—then he preferred to live alone.

When Frank arose and sauntered around the house toward the well, one would conclude that he had been cultivating the acquaintance of his sister's library, had they heard him repeat:

*"And what are words? How little these the silence of the soul express!
Mere froth,—the foam and flower of seas whose hungering waters heave and press
Against the planets and the sides of night,—mute, yearning, mystic tides!"*

Fortunately for Frank, his sister, who was carefully clipping from her pansy-bed as he turned the second corner, heard only the last word,—and even that was suddenly lost in a bar of "Afton Waters."

It was nearly September, and it was nearly noon. Lena walked slowly across the common, and was about to pass up the steps, when Frank appeared around one end of the bow-window upon her right. It was quite apparent he was after

one of the "August sweetings" she carried in a basket on her arm. She caught the mischievous smile on his face, and started to run. There were three steps, the wide piazza floor and another step. Three steps,—Frank's hand grasped her flowing skirt—a bound over the floor, a light leap for the hall, a springing motion,—a cry of pain, mingled with a burst of laughter, and Lena, a little bundle of smiles and tears surrounded by apples, lost consciousness. Frank took her in his arms and carried her into the cool front room, and when he placed her in the wide easy chair, she opened her eyes. He quickly unfastened the tiny boot, but it would not yield, and his knife hurriedly cut it from the swollen ankle.

Perhaps we all know what it is to suffer with a sprained ankle; but if we do not, we certainly do not wish to.

Lena had ample time, the two weeks following her mishap, to lay the plot for a most beautiful and startling romance; she even had many paragraphs carefully written and revised in her busy brain:—they clashed sometimes with the glorious pictures that lay outlined upon the canvas of the mind, waiting upon dim, shadowy backgrounds for life and beauty in the world of art,—but she tried to keep them distinctly by themselves.

She also found many opportunities to study Frank. The result seemed highly satisfactory, judging from the frequent memorandums made of his speeches. She often thought what a queer figure he would cut in her romance: always singing, or whistling, or humming "Afton Waters." She often tried to tease him about his favorite melody, but it did no good; if he commenced "Shoo Fly," it ended in—

"Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream."

But all those days of inactive idleness served to convince Frank that his little friend was quietly soaring away from his

prosaic sphere. She appeared to be living in a little world of her own, and he could have wept many and many a time as he noted the flush upon her cheeks as she dreamed her pretty, ambitious dreams; he questioned if any one would ever touch her heart and awaken her to a remembrance of the by-gone years' innocent confession, and hopelessly believed that her over-weening ambition had displaced all thoughts of the common lot of her sex.

It was twilight in Deacon Hammond's parlor. Lena lay upon the wide couch in one corner of the room. She had been thinking of the past and present, and had looked very wistfully toward the strange, expressionless face of the unsealed future. Very few would have deemed it possible that the slight figure reclining there, held a spirit striving to rise above manifold grievances. Perhaps the uncomplaining soul itself, fettered within a circle of inaudible sighs and haunted by a shadow of vague restlessness, declared itself peaceful and happy.

Life is not what we planned it in our blithesome youth, and to but few is given, in the idol of their wiser hearts, the beautiful ideal of their youthful days.

The twilight softly deepened. Frank, happening around, ran in to inquire if his little friend was better. He was assured she would walk again very soon; and then silence again brooded in the shadowy parlor.

Perhaps the tender gloaming, odorous with perfume from flowers in the garden near by,—perhaps the thought of Lena's near departure, perhaps the long-repressed emotion that fiercely sprang into unbidden life in his heart, made Frank unusually sad.

"A penny for your thoughts, Frank." The lad stood by the open casement; he turned his face toward hers and then turned slowly back again.

"Lena, do you remember what you wrote out there on the

common?" She had written so much and so often, she could not recollect what he referred to, but waited patiently.

"Your whole life is a poem, Lena,—I wish I could find any rhyme in mine."

"But 'Afton Waters,'" she suggested. He heeded not, but continued—

"All prose, and dull reading at that. Life seems all wrong,—so strange and sad."

She could not distinguish the expression upon Frank's face, but his words seemed startlingly like thoughts that had strayed through the musings which the lad interrupted by his presence. It came floating dimly back, like a delusive vision that figured in some long-forgotten, faint-recurring dream.

"You must not think like that, Fra—"

He interrupted her: "I have not forgotten, Lena; but since it cannot be—" He laughed—a proud, scornful laugh—as he moved toward the door.

A voice stopped him: "Frank! forgive me! I forgot myself. I do not wish to trouble you."

There are moments in life that contain the concentrated power of whole hours of earnest thought. Lena lived one of those moments. She trembled; her soul fluttered away from its long anchorage beside the seething waters of alluring fame, and settled with unutterable happiness within the shrine of imperishable love.

"But, Frank, suppose—suppose—what if one were sorry for the past? what if—"

The voice, more than the words, was a revelation to Frank. A moment later he knelt by Lena's side, and his heart was throbbing in raptured unison with the long, beautiful poem that commenced its never-ceasing, rhythmic measures in the happy heart of his little love.

