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Original Story.

WRITTEN FOR THE OLIVE BRANCH.

Uncle Ben's Hunting Story.

Long time ago, when I was a trifle younger and more supple than I am now, I took great delight in hunting. There was one spot in the mountains where a small creek emptied into the Alleghany, which was the greatest place for deer I ever found in all my travels. At that time there were no settlers within a good space round, and no hunter knew of the range; so I had it all to myself.

I took good care of the deer, for I considered them as my own property. I never used to scare them, nor kill more than the occasion required. I always kept a little salt in dry places for them to lick, then I scattered corn and oats where I knew they would find them; and after killing an abominable old panther that used to raise hob with them, and a family of wolves that weren't much better, I had it all my own way, and quite a smart little sum of money I made, by selling venison to the traders on the Ohio; and all this time the stock of deer in the range rather increased than otherwise.

One spring, Captain Simpson hired me to help work a flat-boat to New Orleans. I was always fond of boating, but to take a boat to Orleans in them days was no child's play. However, I went; we got there safe; but a spell of the fever laid me up awhile, then I made a long walk of it through the wilderness, stopped about among different tribes of Indians, "cousining along,"—as the Yankees say,—so that it was a year and a half before I got home. I must say I thought more about seeing my deer, and visiting the old stamping ground, than anything else. How I did want to have a good hunt. I stayed at home one night, and started off bright and early to the woods, to stay a week; but when I got there, not one deer was to be seen.

Something had been beating about among the bushes, that I took to be a pack of wolves. I looked at the signs awhile; thinks I, my jockies you'll pay for this. I followed the creek down to the river, and so round that way home. When I got to the river I saw what was the matter, clear enough. There was about a dozen lumbermen, making a pine raft; they had brought a pack of hounds with them, four were tied up, and by the yelling I concluded there were as many more in the woods. And so, says I to myself, there's where my deer are gone; these nice chaps that never had wit enough to shoot deer by fair means, turn their dogs into the woods, and drive them to the river, and kill them with axes and shovels, or anything they can get hold of. I began to get wrothy, for I took upon it as not only cowardly, but downright, shameful murder, to worry an innocent creature for hours with a pack of dogs, scaring it to death, as it were, then when it takes to the water, as its last chance, for a gang of men to follow it up, and beat it till it is glad to die to get away from them. I say its what a heathen would be ashamed of. Well, as I was saying, the hounds were yelling through the woods at a great rate, and while I stood looking, they came round a point close to me; three great, long-legged dogs after a poor little fawn, that looked as if it hadn't eat anything for a week.

If they hadn't come upon me so quick, I'd have shot one of 'em, as sure as I'm a sinner. The fawn ran to the bank, (it was pretty high there), and jumped some down into the river; the dogs followed; you may be sure, but that wasn't enough; the men were at work close by; six of them got into a couple of skiffs and followed after, hooting and screaming like so many wild Indians. No, not that, neither, Indians have more sense. The wind was blowing hard, and made quite large waves in the water; the sun was shining brightly as it ever did shine, and being exactly before us, it fairly dazzled our eyes to look at the river, but I could see the men and dogs paddling off down stream, after the poor baby deer. It was a disgraceful sight, but I watched them close, for I was determined that whichever killed that fawn, should have a good thrashing when he came ashore, if it cost me a law suit. My temper was boiling with every dash of the oars; and what a railing they kept up; one would have thought they were after the sea-serpent, at least.

It was "Seek him, Gunner!" "Down with him, Vene!" "Now we'll have him!" I was too mad to watch them any longer, so I turned and looked up the river, and good gracious, there he was, that blessed fawn, swimming up stream for dear life, and the men blinded by the sun and wind, were pursuing the deer. The poor hounds had lost sight of the deer in the tumult, and fearing they were going to be

punished, were doing their best to keep out of the way of the skiffs. I could look at them now; I laughed to see them pulling with might and main, to overtake the hound they called Gunner, the fiercest of the pack, and exactly the color of the deer. One of the men stood ready to strike, as soon as they were near enough, too much excited to see that it was their best dog they were going to kill.

Meanwhile the men on shore had discovered the mistake; they called lustily, but the others, too much taken up with their own noise, would not hear. One of the men, however, saw the dog, shook his handkerchief, waved his hat, stamped and swore. "Come back," he yelled, "it's Gunner,—don't you see it's Gunner? you fools, you'll kill the best dog in all Alleghany, stop I say!—stop! don't strike Gunner. Look! he'll be killed!" and he threw himself on the beach in helpless agony.

Now the hero in the skiff stood ready with his death-maul, eager to deal the fatal blow, when behold, instead of the frightened fawn, he saw the upturned, pleading face of the dog he was in the act of striking, but by a timely manoeuvre he managed to avoid the hound's head, and hit the water. I wonder if any of you know what it means to say—"looked sheepish?"—If you don't, I can't tell you any more about those men as they roved back to the shore with their tired dogs, and saw the fawn on the opposite side of the river, as it shook the water from its sides, gazed at them for a moment, then sprang into the green woods where was "shelter and safety."

THE RIVAL PAINTERS.

A TALE OF FLORENCE.

CHAPTER I.

"What! still at work, Giovanni? Tut, man, keep these refinements for your picture! They are waste paper here. Leave your work alone. Many a better sketch has been weakened by over-much handling."
"Do you think that?"
The speaker glanced anxiously at his companion, not without waiting for an answer, threw down his chalks, and retreating from before his easel, leaned, facing it, against the wall. As he stood so in silence, his thin young face began to take a look of pallid weariness.
"If I should not win it, Carlo!" he exclaimed, abruptly.
"Who else should win? Not Ghiberti—not Saffi might have won. His conception was a fine one—a bolder thought than mine. Look, Carlo, there is something feeble there; does it not strike you?"
"Are an eagle's wings full-fledged at his first flight? Do you look to be hailed to-morrow as a Titan or a Tintoret?"
"Nay," smiling, "something less than that would content me."

He stood silent a moment; then suddenly—"Carlo, is not this room terribly hot?" he cried, and he flung back the hair from his brow.

"I do not feel it, but you have got fever in your veins, Giovanni. Come, the sun has set, let us stroll out till dark."

"Nay, not to-night. I must stay here and work. I must get some light, too. Give me a match, Carlo. See there—Rolf has lighted his lamp already"—and he raised his eyes, where, through the high north light, a yellow glimmer shone upon the wall from an opposite window.
"What is it that Rolf does at night?"
"I do not know—he makes a secret of it."
"He is a strange fellow."
"He touched with fire. I would not make a friend of him."

"Who does?"
"The signor favors him."
"He has good cause."
"That I deny! You have more talent in your little finger than Rolf in his whole body."
"Amico"—and Giovanni spoke with a sad, quiet smile—"you are misled because you love me. I would that I had thought like Rolf's."
"You would have ill companions then."
"Nay, not if I had the choice of them"—and the boy's dark eyes fixed as he stood before his unequal youthful picture.
"Giovanni," said his companion, carelessly, "you have given that girl, crouching there, a look of the signorina."

Giovanni started.
"Which one? There is no likeness," he said quickly. "Carlo"—he turned nervously from his cartoon—"away with you. The evening is too fair a one to waste in here with me."
"Put out your lamp then for half an hour, and come with me. Nay, Giovanni, it will do thee good," and the merry, well-conditioned Carlo turned gently to his friend. "It will do thee good, for thou art like a smouldering fire which wasteth daily. I think of thee a year ago when the blood coursed in thy cheek as freely as in mine. Thou workest too hard, dear boy."

"I do not work—I would I did!" These words came bitterly. Then quickly the voice and the look changed. "Well, we will go, Carlo!" he cried cheerfully. "Out with the lamp. We will be idle for an hour."
They went together, leaving the room in dusky solitude, descending a flight of steps across an old dark garden, emerging finally on the open country beyond the gates of Florence. Then they bent their wandering steps westward, between the Arno and the Apennines.

A warm, Italian night, with the bright moon at the full. The old garden was shady, full of close-growing shrubs; the paths winding in serpentine wreaths among them; but one space was clear, before and around the house, and here on this summer evening, delicately watered by her fountains, walked the old painter—Michael Rossi's—daughter.

She walked and did her work, and lingered. She lingered, till at last another step came on a distant path, and grew quickly nearer. She

hastened a little then, but she had not reached the house when a voice behind her spoke.

"Signora," it said, "the earth smells sweet after your labors."

She paused in her work and turned.

"The ground was parched. My flowers were all drooping. The sun beats here so hotly," she said.

She did not move again until Giovanni gained her side; then they slowly paced on together. They reached the house. Before the door there was a small archway. When they came here they paused again. The girl's face turned towards Florence.

"How the stars shine down upon the river! It is a fair night," she said.

"A night to dream of!"

"I sat, a while ago, watching the last flush parting from the mountains. Did you see how the moonlight, as it faded, seized the white snow?"

"I saw it. You were watching them, too, signora?"

He bent a little to her. She stooped and gathered a flower that grew beside the door. She did not answer him until her fingers were plucking off its leaves.

"I am often idle in the evenings," she said at last. "To-night I have waited a long while. But I ought to be ashamed to confess that to you," she said, and she looked up and smiled.

"Why not to me?" he asked. "Do you think I am never idle?"

"Ah, signorina," he exclaimed, "my work is often idleness!"

She bent her head again; she was very busy till the flower was torn to atoms; then she let fall the stalk, and suddenly raised her face.

"It is finished, is it not?" she said.

"That flower, signora?"

She colored quickly.

"Your cartoon. Is it ready?"

"Not yet. I am going back to work at it."

"To-night again?"

"I must work for a few hours."

"Signor, you take no rest; and you are pale and tired," she said.

"Nay, I am not tired now! I am refreshed. I have strength in me for several hours," he cried, and he smiled gladly.

She looked in his face, and caught the brightness of his look. She also smiled.

"Yes. Hope gives us strength," she said. "It is better than rest."

"While it abides, signora; but it abides not always."

"Her voice was low and soft. He did not answer her. She leaned against one column of fallen—golden-haired, white-robed, a motionless picture in the pallid light.

He stood silent for many minutes and looked at her, all his boy's passionate fervor glowing in his face; the wild devotion of his boy's heart deepening in the soft, delicious silence, into irrepressible burning love. He never spoke till she looked up.

"I must go in; the night is growing late," she said.

She turned to go, but she took no steps, for there before her, quivering and lighted with its trembling love, was the boy's face. He stood before her.

"Signora!" suddenly broke his passionate cry. "Light of my life! signora, stay!"

He caught and clasped her hands; she stood motionless. He tried once to fly; she faintly whispered—"Let me go in!"—and then she never moved again.

"Lucia!" he passionately called her.

It was not her voice that answered him, yet he was answered. There was one moment's silence, one breathless pause; then her mild eyes were lifted, and he took her in his arms, with a great cry of bursting joy.

CHAPTER II.

Look at the young face now as it works all night! With that light upon it—with that vigorous, unwearied hand, surely the work will speed. It does speed—by sunrise it will be done; by mid-day, with a fevered, trembling heart, Giovanni has seen his cartoon carried to the studio.

Some months ago, the grand duke had signified a gracious wish to select from Michael Rossi's pupils one worthy to paint a picture for the Pitti Gallery. Giovanni and three others had become the candidates; these cartoons were the sketches of their projected pictures, and to-day had been appointed for their exhibition before the duke.

They went, and days elapsed, but, through the duration of these days, in the light of his new-born joy, Giovanni could feel few pangs of either suspense or doubt. With him almost all life was now fully centered in the nightly stolen meeting in the garden—the day's one hour of passionate happiness—when, with glowing cheeks and brightening eyes, he and Lucia talked and hoped, already lifting exultantly upon their lips the name that both believed was presently to be in all men's mouths: young in years, strong in trust; a very boy and girl.

When a week had passed away, Michael Rossi and his four pupils were one morning summoned to the palace. They went, and were admitted to the duke's presence; but when their formal reception was concluded—

"I have received five sketches, Signor Rossi," the duke said, "and you bring me four pupils only."

"Five sketches, your highness!"

The old man looked surprised; the four candidates looked in each other's faces.

"Five, certainly. I have their names noted here. Antonio Saffi, Giuseppe Ghiberti, Carlos Mayer, Giovanni Ripardo"—he paused an instant. "Fifthly, a foreigner, Max Rolf."

"Max Rolf!" Rossi could only blankly utter the name.

"Aye. Is he not amongst your pupils?"

"Surely, your highness; but I do not know—I was entirely ignorant that he had become a candidate."

The duke laughed.

"He has stolen a march upon you then, my

friend, for I have his picture. Come with me—you shall see it."

They followed him into another room, on whose walls, side-by-side, were ranged the rival sketches. The four claimed each as his own; but there stood a supernumerary fifth.

"Come, Signor Rossi, and examine it."

Less ambitious in subject than any other there, the picture represented only a single figure—a woman at an empty sepulchre, with her wild lips broken by the hopeless cry—"They

Rossi gazed upon it till his time-worn cheek was flushed.

"Well, my old friend?"

The old man heard the voice, and turned. But he had forgotten state and ceremony—forgotten the audience-chamber and the ducal presence. He stood a moment, and then burst into tears.

"He has become my master!"

CHAPTER III.

They went back from their audience silent and amazed. Giovanni spoke to none of them. When they had passed the city gates, he turned away alone. Bitter against all the world, bitter against Max Rolf, he wandered the whole day solitary—so wildly and so far, that that night Lucia watched for half an hour alone, before, travel-stained at last, and weary, and with his indignant boyish shame, burning still upon his face, he came to their accustomed meeting-place.

She was waiting for him, and she came with her hands held out to welcome him.

"Ah, *ma, bene*, you should have come soon—not late to-night!" was all her reproach to him.

Her voice and her look in a single instant melted him.

"*Anima mia! Mia vita!*" he cried passionately; and, as he bent in his arms, the burden of his disappointment seemed to take wings. She was the same to him—and so all on earth might change! She was the same to him—or, rather, she was more than she had ever been.

In the burning warmth of her Italian nature, she passionately pledged her faith to him that night; and, bound herself to along to him for life and death—a solemn pledge, solemnly spoken beneath the bare arch of heaven, borne witness to by silent, burning stars.

They had met late, and they stayed long together, forgetting the hour and everything but one another. It was almost an hour later than their accustomed time, when they paused at last for their final parting at the familiar porch.

"They stood a moment motionless, and then, with their faces to the open air; when they turned them round, they lifted up their eyes to find that a figure had come between them and the open door. They saw it together. One instant, and a cry had broken from the girl's lips: it was her father!"

"Who are you, stealing in like a thief?—Turn your face round! Ripardo!" the old man cried.

The boy was no coward; he came forward proudly.

"I was not stealing in, signor. I am no thief, he said.

What are you doing at this hour with my daughter?"

He had drawn the girl rudely to his side. Giovanni took one step, and cast his arm about her.

"I love her," he cried, passionately. "I love her, and she is mine! Signor, you shall not part us! she is mine by all that makes oath sacred in the sight of God and man."

There was a flush on Michael Rossi's face, and a keen fire in his eye; but he stood motionless and erect—an old, stern, stately man.

"She is mine, not yours," he slowly answered; "she is my daughter, I say; and Michael Rossi's daughter"—the words rang out trumpet-toned in their keen, pitiless pride—"is no wife for an unknown boy! Lucia!" he cried "let go his hand!"

She let it go; with a proud impulse the boy loosed his embrace. She covered back, and they were parted. Rossi seized her arm and drew her to his side.

Then, standing alone, Giovanni looked at her, till, sudden, swift, stronger than pride, the passionate yearnings for her leapt up in him again. Once more he cried aloud—

"O, stay!" he wildly pleaded; Signor Rossi gave her back to me! I will work for her—I will win a name! I will wait; but I cannot live without her! Lucia!"—he stretched his arms out to her—"come! Lucia, Lucia!" he cried "come!"

The opened arms were towards her. She saw them, she bent, she wavered; she flung away the hands that bound her, and leapt to meet them. Something like a curse burst from the old man's lips. Shuddering as she heard it, she looked back one moment.

"Father, I am coming! wait! she cried.

Then she turned again, and coiled her hands into her lover's hair, and wildly kissed his lips, and passionately cried—

"Be true to me!—trust to me! forever and forever!"

And in one moment more his cry broke desolate upon the air—for she was fled.

"You cross my threshold, and you see my daughter no more, young madman!" Michael Rossi slowly said. "I hold my peace, for reproaches are vain. Go—and forget her!"

Then the door was closed, and the boy was left alone. Alone, with his wild despair, his bitter desolation—hopelessly prostrate upon the ground where the girl's feet had stood.

The morning's sun beheld him on his road from Florence. He set forth without hope or aim, and all day long he wandered. High upon the hills he climbed; all weary though he was, he never rested till the sun was going west.

He had climbed high, and far below him wound the way he came. When he paused at last, he saw its whole length, back to the city, still sparkling in the sunshine of its lifted dunes and spires—still sparkling in the sunshine that, round the walls of Giotto's fair

white tower, kindled their jasper shafts and arches into fire.

He sat and gazed upon that airy height. How it was!—clear, burning vision!—and yet he who had created it, he whose wild-wide name had sent its echo through five centuries, had been a shepherd boy upon these hills!

Giovanni sat till the sun had set; and when he rose, his boy's cheek was on fire.

CHAPTER IV.

man with a spare figure, and a thin, lined face—not beautiful to look upon; sickly, pale, worn, and browbeaten; a solitary man, without kith and kin, wife or child; a stranger, with a few friends. Those thin lips of his had gained a habit of closing fast. What light is in him—what strength of yearning, loving, suffering, have come to show their life only in the occasional flashing of his blue, keen, burning eye. But he is one who in three years has made himself a name in Florence.

He was standing idly in front of a large picture, his last unfinished work—the fruit of his latest strength. He was standing, sadly enough, looking at it, wearily leaning both hands upon a staff, when the door of his room was opened, and on the threshold—straight, firm, clear-eyed as ever—stood Michael Rossi.

Then Max rose quickly.

"It was growing late, signor," he said, "I thought you had forgotten your promise."

"Nay, Rolf, I was not likely to forget. Rolf, is it finished! Is this the picture?"

"Aye, it is done. Come and see."

It was a large painting for the altar of a church; its subject that scene, where, wherever the gospel shall be preached through the whole world, shall be told—so it stands written—for a memorial.

The two men stood before it, side by side—Max leaning on his staff again, his quiet, somewhat sorrowful face changing no jot of its expression as he waited patiently till the old man spoke.

But for many minutes Rossi did not speak, and his words, when they came at last, were low and few.

"Thou hast made mine age honored. The blessings of an old man rest upon thee!" was all he said.

Then Rolf's sunk cheek flushed up. He lifted himself erect; his emotionless voice grew suddenly soft and rich.

"Master, give me my wages now! I have toiled!" he cried.

The old man turned and looked for a moment into the kindled face; then slowly and

quietly through the shady garden, quietly through the old arched porch, went Max Rolf about his wooing. He came to Lucia every day, and would sit and watch her as she worked—sometimes venturing to lift her open book and read to her, sometimes, when he was bold, daring to talk to her, subduing both look and voice before he into a strange, touching, softened harmony. Day by day he came about her, basking in the light of her silent presence, making her breath his life, wasting the whole strength of his soul upon her; daring scarcely to look one day before him, lest the insecure trembling bliss should vanish, and fling him again into the night of his old loneliness. He lived thus for a long month, warmed by the pale rays of his arctic sunshine as another might have been by tropic heat.

He came one day at last, and found her manner changed. She had always hitherto been very composed and calm; but this day when she met him her cheek was flushed. They spoke a few words together, and then they sank into silence. She sat at work; he took his station near her, nervously turning over the leaves of a book; they had neither of them uttered a word for many minutes, when at last she abruptly laid her sewing down and spoke.

"Signor, it is very hard for me—but I am forced to speak to you," she said.

Her voice was trembling pitifully; her face, white when she turned it to him, had flushed all scarlet.

He read its expression with one moment's glance. Reading it there came no change upon him. He only said, in a low voice—

"Speak to me."

"I have learnt from my father why you come here," she said. "I had begun to fear it. Her hands were tightly pressed together. 'You must not come again.'

One blank mute instant he looked into her face; then out of his great heart a low wild cry leapt up.

"Signora, my life is here!"

"Oh no—no—no!" she answered passionately; "your life is not with me! go from me! O, go at once! I cannot comfort you!" she faintly cried.

His hands were clenched upon the table at his side, and the veins stood swollen upon his brow, but he struggled bravely with his great emotion, and it was conquered before he spoke. Loud and low his next words came to her.

"Will you hear me before you send me from you?" he said. "Listen to me—let me speak. Do you remember when I first came to Florence? The day that I first entered this house you were standing with your father in the porch. Lucia—golden-haired child—do you remember?"

He looked into her face—then with one instant's passionate struggle, his cry broke out—"O, my child—my star—my life! I have loved you from that hour through seven years!"

She sat with her locked hands before her, and with her white face growing pitifully wild. She only murmured faintly when he ceased to speak—

"I cannot help it!" Then, "O, what shall I do?" she cried.

Again his voice broke the blank silence.

"I have lived alone," he pleaded; "I have had neither kith nor friend; I have lived solitary—a stranger in the land; but my life, through all its loneliness, has had one hope! O, do not take it from me! Sun of my heart, for thee I have toiled—for thee I have won a

name! Is it so much to ask in return one grain of hope, one ray of something that shall be only not despair?"

She raised her head; suddenly her tortured heart broke loose.

"Yes, it is much!" she cried; "it is what you have no right to ask, and no manliness to press me for!" And then she saw his face, and burst into a passionate choking sob. "O! pardon me! Have pity on me!" she wildly moaned. "My heart is breaking. O, I cannot

poor"—she cried, and burst into tears.

No sound disturbed her sobbing—no pleading, no passionate appeal now. In silence her wild weeping rose and fell. But long after it had ceased, when she sat again mute and still, he came and knelt down at her feet.

"I would have lived to love you," he said, in almost his old calm voice, "let me serve you now. Lucia, trust me. Tell me all."

She trusted him. All subdued, weeping passionately before him, as he knelt, she told the whole history of their love—to him who loved her more than his own self.

The day was ended—the sun long set—when Max Rolf regained his own studio. He came into the room and closed the door.

"The glory has departed. Ichabod!" he said; and it was the sole dirge that his lips ever uttered.

A few days afterwards, a traveler went quietly out by the east gate of Florence; and in Max Rolf's empty rooms the floors were swept.

CHAPTER V.

"Nay, I will make no bargain at that price! My money is good gold, Signor Ripardo, hard to come at, and not to be lightly spent. The drawings are fair pictures enough; but, by the saints, I have scores better. Come, I will give what I said."

"I take it, then; give me the money?"

"Now, look you, Signor Ripardo, I am no harder than my neighbors. We will say another gold piece. By the saints, it goes to my heart to see a young face look pale. Come, signor, *Speranza!* The world is always shifting."

"You will have more pictures?"

"Nay, I do not promise! Time

"Dear boy, dost thou not understand," he said, "that a day will come when we shall run no longer together, but thou wilt pass me in the race."

"Nay, Max—" "Hush—it is so. Still I may lead thee a little way," he said, and his smile grew brighter. "Thou must not go to her till thou art full fledged. So come—thou shalt be my pupil. It will be but a few steps behind—and then a few together—and then—" He broke off suddenly.

"My brother," Giovanni cried.

CHAPTER VI.

It was a spring day in Florence, with the old sunshine on her spires. At the posts of an open door, a little group of persons stood knotted together in busy talk.

"They say the man is a Florentine," said one. "A strange caprice if it should be so."

"A strange piece of folly, I say! What right has an honest man to conceal his name?"

"Nay, friend—his name is his own property. But never fear that it will not be known ere long. That is too noble a picture to go ownerless."

"You think the picture is a fine one, then?"

"Per Bacco! I know no one in Florence who could paint the like. The Duke is to have it for his gallery."

"Ay?"

"They say he has sent a message to bespeak it."

"What—to the empty air?"

"Nay, laughing at the idea, I suppose stands proxy for the painter. But, let that be as it may—" He broke off suddenly. "Ha, Signor Rossi!" he exclaimed, "you have come here, too, like the rest of us?"

"Michael Rossi stood a step or two from the door—a very old man now."

"I have come to see this picture that they talk about," he said. "Have you been up stairs, Signor Cecina? Is it worth the pain of mounting?"

"Ay, a score of times! Lean on my arm, I will go with you, signor."

They mounted the stairs together, and entered a long room, in whose centre, large and solitary, stood the canvas of the nameless painter.

They went up and stood before it. It was a canvas richly laid with solemn colors; the picture of a cross, bearing its Burden—that Face averted whose divinity painter never drew; that moment seized when the struggle and the long sorrow were all but ended—after the last agony of the Eloi cry; when the repose that was not death—the full before the final cry, when the earth should be rent, and the graves give forth their dead—lay breathless over Calvary.

Michael Rossi stood before it, and never spoke a word. As though in sympathy with the spirit of the sacred scene, the room as he remained grew slowly silent. Voices and steps were still, and, ere long, before the solemn shadow of that Presence the old man sat alone.

He never moved or spoke until a hand was quietly laid upon his shoulder; he never moved, even then, until the hand pressed heavily, with a strange familiarity in its touch that roused him. Then at last he turned.

Who was this standing by his side?

"Max Rolf?" he suddenly cried.

Yes, Max—with the pale, thin face and blue, deep eyes of old. The old man's cheek was flushing red. They had grasped each other's hands—they looked into each other's faces: then Michael's voice leapt up.

"It is time!" he cried, triumphantly. "My son—my son!"

Don't read this, my dear friend.

"Nay, master, it is not mine; I never laid brush upon it," he said. "But turn these round. Thou hast more sons than one."

He turned him round, but he spoke not a word more. It was Giovanni who went to his side and took his passive hand; it was Giovanni's voice that broke the pause which Rolf's words had left.

"Master, I have come back, he said, "not nameless now."

There was no answer yet.

"I served for her seven years," Rolf said, in his low, quiet tones, "and at the end of them she gave me my wages. It was a fair game, and fairly lost."

"And thou?" the old man suddenly asked.

Giovanni's cheek flushed up.

"I have lived upon her memory," he cried, "in toil and poverty, in loneliness and sickness, through sorrow and through exile!"

Ereast the old man stood, his clear eye flashing bright.

"Thus, too, they did of old!" he said.

"They loved—their toiled—"

"And in the end?" Giovanni cried.

"They won!"

Michael Rossi went his way home alone; they did not go with him. But in the evening, when the moon was bright in the garden and upon the porch, there was once again a passionate meeting under the shadow of its arches. Quiet and white, with her sweet face and her calm step, Lucia came from the house, and met Giovanni there. He was changed—his radiant boyhood vanished, his young strength was broken; but in the raising of a glance she knew him.

He called—"Lucia!"

One cry went ringing on the night—they had met.

WRITTEN FOR THE OLIVE BRANCH.

A WORD TO THE WISE.

BY W—E WARE.

There are many laborers in the field of literature, and every day is adding to the number. There are many, too, who occupy places to which they have little right. There are others occupying lowlier positions who should be wreathed. Genius is apt to be neglected.

There are many Editors of current literature, who, if a good article is offered them, at a reasonable price, will refuse it, and publish in its place a story from the pen of some silly, simpering person, who courts literary fame, and is anxious to give articles away. It is by such persons that the field of literature is usurped.

Our country is flooded with papers that publish "blood and thunder trash," and come out with a flashy title, and "Written expressly for _____," by _____, who writes for no other paper." Such a state of things cannot last long. The literary poison thus administered, will sicken its victims ere long, for they cannot long continue to relish such stuff. If their minds, and hearts, and tastes, are not wholly ruined, they will seek purer and better papers to read. I am glad that the *Olive Branch* is so pure in its character, is so salutary in its influence, and yet so sprightly and entertaining. As thousands are now turning away in disgust from vile papers, and their circulation is rapidly decreasing, let them take the *Branch*, and they will become intelligent and refined through its influence.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

LIFE SKETCHES.

A LEAF FROM A LIFE.

BY M. A. DENISON.

The glorious country!

It seems like a dream to me now, sitting here as I do in this splendor, and I cannot realize that only five years ago, I was a simple country girl, satisfied with a flower twisted in my hair, happy with asparagus buds strung around my neck, more than pleased at the oak-leaf trimming with which I adorned my gingham frocks. But so it was, I, Nellie Bradshaw, lived in Warrington, in an old, red farm-house on the banks of a river. From my earliest childhood it was a pleasure to stand on the green moss of a sunny morning and count the snow-white sails as they passed along that beautiful stream. The clouds were always glorious studies to me; the flowers I loved with a passion that has not died out yet, the breeze, with its soft pat upon my cheek, made my heart beat with a feeling of delicious joy, and I knew none of the corruptions of city life, except from hearing my father read sometimes from the papers, descriptions of murders and revolting things that made me only too glad that we were safe from such influences.

I grew up to the age of seventeen in Warrington. My teacher had imparted to me all the knowledge that he was master of, and I yet devoted every moment I could get to maternal studies. Dear, simple Mr. Langley! he was a good man, and had been encouraged me to do more than that. Indeed, I had long suspected that the dear soul loved me; but I could not return his affections. I often wished I could, for he grew pale and moody, and finally, under pretence that he needed change of climate, left the sweet village and the school, and we never heard of him again. I hope he found a wife worthy of his noble heart. I hope she is happier than I am.

I acquired, in a humble way, the reputation of a belle. The knowledge that I was handsome, came upon me suddenly. I had seldom thought of my looks, as my parents had never flattered me, nor allowed others to do so—and yet, kind hearts, it was by hearing their unkind praises, unawares, that the fatal spell was thrown over me. I had come home from a walk and stood in our humble cottage door enjoying the soft luster of the twilight heavens. My father and mother sat together in the little sitting-room to the right, and their murmuring voices stole pleasantly towards me.

"Yes," I heard my mother say in reply to a question, "I have noticed that our young Elder comes here more frequently than he did; he doubtless looketh after our Nellie."

"He is a younger man than Mr. Langley, and very much finer looking; indeed, our Elder would be accounted a handsome man almost anywhere," said my father.

My cheeks burned then, and I cast a retrospective glance backwards. Young Elder Ware had certainly shown me more marked attention than any other girl of the village. I remembered that he had once or twice, on lecture evenings, lately, walked home with us, ostensibly with my parents, but in reality talking to me, through them.

"Nellie is a pretty girl," said my mother, with a shade of triumph in her voice as I still listened.

"Nellie is a beauty," echoed my father; "and the best of it is, she does not seem to know it."

Alas! Nellie knew it then. Her cheek blazed with a richer color as she stepped out of the humble porch and gathered a rose-bud for her curls. Her heart beat with a quicker, stronger throb; a feeling of pride arose in her soul and kindled her eyes with the fatal fire of vanity. Nellie knew that she was beautiful, and the latent feeling of ambition, so easily kept down before, grew into form, and serpent-like, coiled about all her better impulses, only at last to crush them.

I had hardly finished twining the beautiful rose-bud, when a deep, rich voice exclaimed, "Good evening, Miss Bradshaw." I looked up hastily and felt my face flushing as I encountered the face of Elder Ware. He wore a straw hat that warm June evening, and as he lifted it, and threw back the clustering locks, I thought I had never seen a finer face. Not one man in a thousand looks as did that noble young shepherd of souls. Not that his features were very exquisite, I am not certain that they were even good, but there was a living, poet-beauty that cannot be described—a radiance of expression that seemed to me, when his inspired moments came, while preaching the Word, positively angelic.

He was going past, he said, and seeing Miss Jennie, had ventured to speak. Was it not a glorious evening? perhaps I would walk with him to the hill.

Of course I would; Miss Jennie had just found out that she was a beauty; that she could conquer hearts, and here was a fine field for the trial of her skill.

I went in and blushing told my mother that I was going to walk with the Elder if she would not object. She smilingly consented, and I, no longer the simple, gentle country girl, but the beauty, went out to try the power of my charms upon the handsome young minister. Too well I succeeded. That very night in low tones he told me of his love. Standing on that beautiful hill overlooking the blue river now fast changing to grey, the stars coming forth dimly one by one, the crowned summits in the distance bathed in purple and gold, and one by my side who acknowledged my right to reign queen of his heart, it is any wonder that yielding to the romance of the hour, I did not turn away from his passionate pleading? Months passed and we were engaged. It was known in the little village who was to be the minister's wife, and every body seemed satisfied. My retiring manners had made me a great favorite with the more settled inhabitants, while, as I had never had occasion to presume or put on airs, I was in general liked and copied by those of my own age.

I am certain that I once loved Ernest Ware. His voice was music to me, his smile sweeter than the sunshine! I would do much to gain an approving word from him. Yet there were times when I grew restless and thought my sphere contracted; I wished to be more widely known and admired; I wanted to reign as I had heard of some women reigning, the worshiped and followed of a mighty train of admirers. These feelings were quickened and strengthened by a rumor that a rich uncle of mine was very ill. I had no love for him; I had never seen him; but I had gathered in some way that possibly he might leave much of his wealth to our family. I had heard also that he lived in splendid style, kept servants in livery, and though immensely rich, hoarded and saved still, and was yet immersed in business.

Again there came news of his death, and once more that he had left me seventy-five thousand dollars. The intelligence was over-

whelming. Suddenly an enchanted land was thrown open to me in which I might reign queen. All was tumult and confusion with me for months after; I was trying to realize what it was to be independently rich. Time passed on and Ernest Ware began to feel that I was no longer Nellie Bradshaw, the simple, country belle, but Miss Bradshaw, the heiress. If I noticed the sad look that began to be habitual with him, at first, I did not allow it to influence me. The plain wooden church, with its quaint steeple and high pews, the village houses, homely and uncarpeted, appeared lovely in my eyes, and I was not sorry when I received an invitation from an aunt to spend the winter with her in the city.

Ernest Ware scarcely spoke when I told him I was going. He was naturally a proud man and felt keenly that I was changed. I rallied him once upon his strange manner.

"Ah, Nellie," he said gently, "you are very rich now, and I am only a poor, country minister; I cannot expect—" he turned away, for his voice faltered.

"I hope you have not lost faith in me," I said almost angrily; "I hope you do not think I would prove fickle merely because I am richer than I was."

"O no, Nellie—no—I trust you are still my noble, betrothed wife; that gold has not taken the place of your Saviour, and that you still feel that the noblest office God has vouchsafed to mankind is that of saving souls."

I made some caustic reply which must have wounded him, for I had grown arrogant and petulant.

Another week and I was in the city, full of proud, fond anticipations, glorying in my wealth, in my youth and beauty.

My aunt, a vain, worldly creature, quite young, and recently married, took me under her own protection. In her house was a succession of dazzling splendors. The furnishing, the company, everything was gorgeous. She went with me and chose me beautiful dresses; she chaperoned me to places of amusement, and instructed me in fashionable arts, till my head was turned. She praised my beauty, and not she alone. I never shall forget the sensation that thrilled me when I stood before the long mirror and surveyed myself, after dressing for my debut into fashionable life. How regally the crimson satin fell in wide folds about my figure; the heavy, curling locks crowned with a tiara of pearls, the round, white arms adorned with bracelets of the same, the rich lace shading the full bust! I thought myself a queen. They called me that night the queen of the ball-room.

Young, unused to homage, my judgment unformed, and ardently alive to pleasure, I received the homage accorded me as if it were my right. Men of genius and of wealth, followed and flattered me. Gradually my dreams of Ernest Ware grew less and less distinct. The quaint little church faded out of my thought; I gave my feverish fancy the reign, and chose another lord of my heart. Ernest all this time never reproached me for my silence and unkindness, but his letters grew less frequent, and so did his allusions to our engagement. I had been flattered into liking one who had been my shadow ever since I made my appearance in the city. He was rich, distinguished, and a connoisseur. My conscience smote me when I listened to his passionate language, and I knew the vows of betrothal were upon me; but I was blinded by the god of this world.

Ernest released me from my engagement and I was married. My wedding-night was one of furious storm. The thunder rolled and the lightning blazed even as I was pronouncing the dread words that were to bind me to a reckless, dissipated man.

I heard not long after that Ernest Ware was sick; then that he had recovered and grown strangely eloquent. Sorrow had drawn him nearer to his Master, and it was not long before all men were sounding his praises. Soon he was invited to a larger field, and to another; and finally to the largest church in this city of my residence. He does not come near me now, neither would I have it so. They say he is soon to be married to a lovely creature, a poor, but gentle girl, whereas he might choose from among the wealthiest. I wonder not at his choice.

It is now past one. A dim light swings in the centre of the room, around stands where I am writing. White statues gleam out, mirrors, pictures; but there is a gloom over all, and a deeper gloom in my soul.

I will turn this leaf; sometime I may make record on another.

WRITTEN FOR THE OLIVE BRANCH.

A GOOD WORD THAT REACHED ME TO-DAY.

BY KATE CARROLL.

It is pleasant to hear, amid all the complaining and misery of the times, one voice breathing good cheer, hope, and faith in the goodness of God. And why do not more of these cheerful sounds reach us? Is there nothing left to be thankful for? If more fortunes tower up to the skies, shouldn't they tumble to the ground like children's card houses? If people live in a style that honestly blushes to think of, the day of retribution ought to visit them, and the sooner the better; not only for them, but for the sake of teaching their servile imitators of lesser note in fashion's scales, the righteous gain, the perfect unsubstantiality of ill-gotten gains, mushroom notoriety, and utter rottenness of seeming to be, rather than being what is seeming. Embarrassments of various kinds come to us—stern teachers of many a forgotten duty. I was thinking of this, as I was walking on one of our principal streets today. Before me were two men, in coarse clothing, and whose air and style assured me they were less used to the lordly hall, than the cottage floor. I drew nearer and heard one with moody brow ask—

"Have you any work, Smith?" in a manner expressive of deep conviction that a negative would be the form of reply.

"Not much; a little jobbing about home, and so," said Smith with a smile that was positively infectious to me, for I felt it beaming all over my face.

"Dreadful times; I never knew such! What we shall do in winter is more than I can see," And Jones gave a dismal groan, thrust his hand, red hands further down his pockets, dropped his head, and curved his shoulders—a very picture of gloom, distrust and despondency.

"Ah, there now, Jones! cheer up! Who ever saw the right way to move, if he didn't look ahead?"

"O, dear!" sighed Jones.

"I think times will improve."

"Never. There's nothing for us but the almshouse, and that is crowded now," interrupted the other.

"So much the better for us, then; the crowd will keep us out, if our pride won't," laughed Smith.

"How can you laugh? Haven't you a large family, a blind brother, and infirm parents to

maintain?" demanded Jones in tones of mingled anger and astonishment.

"Yes, God be thanked! How can I laugh?"

"How, man! Because I have them—because my wife is spared to be my help and comfort; because my little children's smiles and gambols open my heart to a sense of happiness poverty cannot deprive me of; because my poor, blind brother still sits in his old chair in the corner, so serene that my out-door storms are chased away as soon as I enter his presence; because my aged parent's eyes gladden upon me, and their blessings murmur amid the world's strife, and float around me in my dreams! That is why I smile, when many others, to their shame, moan and rebel! And if the worst comes, if I am left alone,—and that is the most dreadful trial I can imagine,—I will still smile through my tears, for the finger of faith will be pointing to where my darlings await me!"

I paused here reverently, and wondered if my faith were strong as this laborer's. His voice was silent; his companion had no comment to make; but, as their heavy footsteps died along on the pavements until I could hear them no longer, I felt that Smith was a true disciple of Him, whose though poor, homeless, and weary, went about doing good.

And do not his words come to us as a lesson? If there be any among us still hopeful, though sore distressed, let us not drag him down by the weight of our own woes; if, through this night of trouble, one faith-lamp burns dimly, let us gather around it, and look the way it points!

Salem, Mass.

The Boston Olive Branch.

JOHN H. SLEEPER & COMPANY, PROPRIETORS.
To whom all letters should be addressed.

Boston, Saturday, November 21, 1857.

NOTICES.

ORADIAN WHITTIER is authorized to collect subscriptions for the Olive Branch in the State of New York. 46—4w

MR. HARRISON WALLACE, our authorized Agent for the Olive Branch is now in Washington County, Maine, and vicinity. We hope our subscribers will have the useful in readiness to meet their bills.

MR. W. H. DALK, who has been engaged as travelling Agent for this paper, is now in Middlesex Co., and vicinity. We hope our subscribers will have the useful in readiness to meet their bills.

MR. MELVIN WIGGERS, of Proctorville, Vermont, is the authorized Agent of the Olive Branch for Vermont State. MR. HORACE ROSS, our travelling Agent in Essex County, is authorized to collect bills and receipt for money, in our behalf.

MR. WILLIAM KELLY, our Agent for the Olive Branch, is now in Plymouth County, and vicinity. We hope our patrons will be in readiness for a call from him, with money in hand.

YOUNG COUNTY, MAINE.—Our subscribers in York County will please be in readiness for a visit from our Agent, MR. ELISHA B. CLARK.

EDITORIAL.

THE CURRENT OF EVENTS.

We have a right to expect that matters both at home and abroad will soon assume a brighter aspect. The general effect of the accounts in Europe received from this country by no means produced so discouraging an aspect as was anticipated.

The suspension of specie payment by the New York and Boston banks was the most satisfactory announcement.

The fall of Delhi, seems now to be made certain. It appears the British assaulted the place on the 14th of September, and after six days' obstinate resistance, gained the entire city. A considerable number of the natives escaped, including the king of Delhi, and his two sons.

The exultation caused by the receipt of the intelligence of the fall of Delhi, says the English journals, occurred at just the right time to offset any depression that might have resulted from the financial advices received at about the same time from this country. The British loss up to the 16th is reported as 600, including 50 officers.

The grape-growers at the West are receiving large accessions to their numbers from Europe. This is with a view to the production of wine.

There is now in this port nearly 250 ships, barks and brigs, with slender prospects for immediate employment. The storehouses and bonded warehouses, are crowded with goods, for which there is no demand for home consumption, and the shippers are obliged to ship abroad, to raise funds to meet their exchange falling due in England.

The exports last week amounted to \$700,000, and for several weeks past have been very heavy.

The late imports of fruit have resulted in great losses, and bunch raisins are selling for 85 cts. per lb., or \$2 per box.

Jobbers' sales in October in all branches of business, were the smallest for many years.

Active preparations are making to lay the Atlantic Telegraph cable next June. Four hundred additional miles of cable have been ordered, and if the effort to recover the 340 miles now submerged, should not be successful, that amount will also be added, so that the length of the cable will be nearly three thousand miles.

A circular from the Children's Aid Society proposes to organize a plan by which young women in the Eastern cities can be forwarded West where there is a great demand for them for useful labor.

Many of our large wholesale stores are selling off at retail at greatly reduced prices, thereby affording bargains to small purchasers. The Siamese Twins are now exhibiting themselves again. They are 49 years of age, have each a wife and seven children. They are out West.

An appropriation of \$250,000 has been made the subject of discussion in New York to enable the unemployed to find work.

Hundreds of girls have been sent out West from the Children's Aid Society, where employment awaits them. It was a moving spectacle to see them reduced to such straits.

Sixty colonies of bees were taken to California by the last steamer.

The record of marriages this fall shows a deficiency compared with the past—the effect of hard times.

The U. S. Marshall in New York sold a lot of diamonds recently which previous to the financial crisis, were valued at \$27,000. They were now sold at panic rates, in lots of ten carats, and brought from \$25 to \$30 per carat.

There has been a tremendous freshet on the Susquehanna River overflowing the Erie Railroad, and it is feared will do much damage.

There is a pressing want for teachers in the adult evening schools in this city. Male teachers are especially wanted.

There arrived one day from Prince Edwards Island 2200 bushels of potatoes.

In Wisconsin and Illinois, corn standing in the field is offered on an average at 10 cents per bushel.

A fine ship, one of the line of Boston and

Liverpool packets, was entirely destroyed by fire on the fourth day after sailing. It was struck by lightning but no lives were lost.

The last arrival from Europe brought \$1,000,000 in specie from England and \$100,000 from Havre.

Cotton and breadstuffs are lower.

There is little activity in the stock market, but it is predicted money will soon be plenty and rates easy.

OUR ANNUAL THANKSGIVING.

As doubtless our readers are aware, Thanksgiving Day occurs in Massachusetts and also in twenty-two other States of our Union, on Thursday, the 26th inst. This time-honored, hallowed and festive occasion is one which will draw together the separated members of many once large family circles, and again unite them in cheerful greetings around the old familiar fireside for a short season, at least. It is pleasant to contemplate the delightful reunions which will enliven the board, and the amount of sunny happiness in store both for the young and the aged. We are grateful to our Heavenly Father when we think how many smiling faces, will, on Thanksgiving Day, aid in chasing away the gloom which has surrounded us on account of dull business, and financial troubles. It is true, that we have all been embarrassed to some extent, in the commercial distress, which has spread, more or less, over every part of our land; but, we are to remember, we needed affliction. As a people we were going too far and too fast, and One who knows infinitely better than we do how to govern a nation, has seen fit to impose his kind, but chastising hand, and we trust that we shall not fail of learning the lesson and improving for the future.

Let us, however, be thankful that we have not been dealt with in greater severity, and let us gratefully appreciate the multitude of blessings constantly bestowed upon us. We have many kind and sympathizing friends; perhaps death has not entered our circle; there may be no vacant chair at this year's Thanksgiving festivity, our reason has been continued to us; our health has not failed; our dwelling has been preserved from flames; we have our home, food, raiment, sleep, strength, all things necessary to our comfort and well being. We have reason then to rejoice, ay, and we will rejoice and be glad, and we will praise the name of the Lord, the Father of mercies, Who giveth liberally and upbraideth not.

We wish all the kind patrons of the *Olive Branch*,—not only in this State, but in every State where Thanksgiving Day is observed,—the choicest and most gratifying enjoyment in the reunited family gathering; and as they assemble around their tables loaded with the temporal comforts of a beneficent Providence, may they remember those, who, never once in their lives, sat down to such a feast, and while in the language of the Prophet Nehemiah, "They eat the fat and drink the sweet, send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared."

Of course, new obligations are not largely contracted, and if there be a liquidation of old ones, by exchange of commodities, have we not reached one of the great troubles which now alarm us? Again, we ought to work earnestly now, while our rivers are flowing, and an unimpeded navigation can transport to us the harvest we really own, if we will but take efficient means to secure it. We fear our views of political economy have not been sound, or while Great Britain was predicting for us a long time ago what has now actually happened, we should have shaped our course so as to have averted the present mismanagement.

As every one upon whom financial calamity falls, must lend a helping hand to redress the evil, let us all seek by individual effort in relieving ourselves, to do that which so largely contributes to our national prosperity by frugally using and widely dispensing all the resources which fall to our own share of distribution.

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