

# TAMAM



Charles Hilton Moore



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**T A M Á M**





# TAMÁM

BY

CHARLES CHILTON MOORE



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To  
**HELEN MOORE COOK**  
*The Living Embodiment*  
of a  
*Memory, Ineffable*



## TAMÁM

There are thoughts which, through words, can find no outlet. The composer attempts the expression of these; and where there is concerned the depicting of a series of events that has led up to a sublime conclusion the form of the symphony is used.

The greater symphonies have comprised five parts. Each of the parts is complete in itself, such that the theme may have reached its climax, and apparently, leave no reason for its continuance. The one requisite is that the same themal motif shall predominate throughout; and though the key may vary in the intermediate parts, after having completed a cycle, howsoever elaborate in construction, it must terminate in the key employed for the introduction of the motif.

Life is a symphony, and we make up the great variety of instruments used in its production. Some of us are the blare of the trumpets; some, the brazen clash of the cymbals; and some, the sullen rumble of the kettle-drums. Some are the squeak of the piccolo; some, the nasal twang of the clarinet; and some, the gentle, plaintive voice of the flute. Some are the soulful tones of the violin; some, the rich and sonorous quivers of the 'cello; and some, just plain "second fiddlers." Many are in the corner of the "utility man," scratching sandpapered blocks, blowing gurgling whistles and jangling triangles.

The symphony is produced once in every generation. It begins at the cradle with an "allegro" movement, and a series of possible soloists soon make themselves heard. Most of the efforts prove to be a "wasted puff," but finally the primary theme is suggested, and from it there can be determined the disguise in which the secondary theme may possibly appear. When it comes, we get the motif, and the other aspirants are relegated to the positions of harmony constructors. The motif dances before us and vanishes with the budding of youth. And so closes Part I. We have seen the flower, and are satisfied without witnessing the stage of fruiting.

Part II of the symphony opens with a graceful "adagio" movement, then perhaps quickly changing to an "allegro, con grazia," and we may have it in "five-four" time, the rhythm in the dance of witches. There is much distraction through this change of time, and we forget the motif. If may be the flower was more attractive than the budding fruit with its dismantled petals. Then we notice the fascinating witch-dance disappears when the motif comes upon the scene. It always appears accompanied by the "adagio," and we resent it until we realize the fruit is taking shape and promises a color of its own. It may be the "allegro, con grazia" was attractive owing to its contrast against the "adagio," and we are glad the motif came again. And though we saw it only in the awkward stage of fruiting, it gave hope of a rich color and fine flavor at the time of ripening. This would tempt us to look for the motif in any succeeding part of the symphony, should one be constructed; or if we have heard the finale, we are satisfied.

When a new part opens with the slow and measured cadence of the "andante," we know the serious part of life has been reached. There is to be no more frivolity,

unless it be hysteria, the laugh that alternates with tears. Life is real now, and must survive or perish. The motif cannot be changed, or made to disappear from the center of the stage. It has acquired too much momentum, and must continue in its gyrations, wild though they be. The fruit has ripened externally, and may have the rich color; but its flavor has not been determined, nor the nature of the larva that may live at its core. We know it may fall at any moment—even while the external appearance is sound—and burst open, displaying its rotten interior. Also, we know a scaly coating may conceal sound flesh. This part of the symphony harrows us too much, and we are relieved when it has closed.

Part IV may possibly be an “*allegro molto vivace*,” but probably a “*largo lamentoso*.” The chance is there will be sadness, and not happiness, in this movement of life’s symphony, for we know death must come with its close. Any “five-four” movement here would be the childishness of infirmities; the ghost-like dance of Death’s shadow. We are prepared to weep, and have the mourning dress ready for use on short notice.

The last part in the life symphony is the remembrance. We may call it the reverberations of the life that has passed. This fifth part is frequently no more than a “coda”—a hasty summing up of the themes by the conspicuous instruments that made up the harmony, once more sounded that its final echoes may die away in the abyss of oblivion.

The composer must exhaust his effort and reach the climax in each part. If he should not be able to continue it into a symphony, then his work would have been finished. It is this ability to rekindle fresh fires, that lets the symphony develop.

Life is made up of distinct parts—youth, manhood, age, death, remembrance. Who knows how many of its intervening parts will be completed? Who would risk saving their climax for a part other than that being constructed? Whatever be your motif, summon all of your resources and divest your soul of its uttermost possibilities, that in each part you may bring forth all the music.



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# TAMÁM

## I

### “FOREST RETREAT”

“O for a lodge in some vast wilderness!”

“FOREST RETREAT” is typical of those homes in the South whose existence dates prior to the civil war, and around which are clustered incidents, stories and sacred spots, which posterity inculcate in their creed of faith in the blood of their ancestors. And the more distant the ancestry the more enchanting the stories, for the more transitions there must have been, until it is difficult to separate fact from fiction. But this only lends to the charm.

Each of such homes has its individual mark of distinction. Some distant master may have been the host of a famous soldier, statesman or author. Or the place may have been the battle-ground of a duel between great politicians with eloquence and argument as weapons, or perhaps even dirks or fire-arms; for at that time the culture of the community was in the country, and the shade of the woodland was often a political arena.

The kaleidoscopic shift of war, the division of estate, and the changes in economic conditions were

not without effect on these great home places. The very contour of the land seems to have changed; and the returning visitor, in after years, may have to search for a mark of identity in order to connect his memory with old associations.

The base line of reminiscent triangulation may have been completely obliterated, but there remains one undisturbed place, even though time may efface all others, and conditions bring about the sale of the home until it will have passed into the hands of the uncouth tobacco-grower, or the purse-inflated magnate who would buy for himself a heritage. For even these men will doff their hats at the gates of the family graveyard in respect to the memories held by those mute historians, the tombstones.

At "Forest Retreat" the graveyard is like that of any other country home of similar pretensions: a small rectangular enclosure with tall aspens and pines, surrounded by its hedge and stone wall. These trees seem appropriate, for the aspens tremble and the pines moan; that is, if you feel that way. But the graveyard is not always sad. The table-shaped tombstones have many times served at a children's impromptu tea-party. This form of gravestone is a stone table made by placing a rectangular slab, approximately the length of a man, on four stone legs, about two feet in height. It must have been designed for more than marking the resting-place of the dead, for it well serves the same purpose for the living. Little girls have played "dolls" and "keep house" under the stone

table, while boys, with goat-like instinct, have jumped from slab to slab. What did they know of the lichen-covered epitaph terminating with a verse from the Bible? When they had tired of their play they scratched out the moss with a nail, and, by a laborious process, read some of the legend. Then their imagination would recall certain occasions when they had heard tender references to the dead one, and straightway an envy was born. How nice it would feel, they thought, to be spoken of in subdued tones, to have one's own name carved in stone, and with it a verse from the Bible: “He is not dead, but sleepeth!” Why not lie down under the slab, shut your eyes, and in your childish fancy see the tearful mother as she repeats your virtues? Nor would it be the first time it had been done. It is only that period in child-life when the glory in posthumous fame is conceived.

As childhood grows into youth we climb the trees to carve names on the topmost branches, not our name, but *hers*. Then youth blends into manhood and again we go to the graveyard. Perhaps this time a young woman, unconsciously, leads the way.

Long ago the features of sadness in “Forest Retreat's” garden of sleep have been eliminated, because no one is ever buried there now. Not in our memory do we recall fresh earth. We have heard, from the darkies, of the morning when “old Mos-ter” died; yes, heard it so long ago that we have told it to our own children. We can even remem-

ber when the singing of "Marsa's in the cold, cold ground" would send that sensation of pent emotion through us, till our faces assumed a preoccupied look, as though we were gazing into the past, just as we remember to have seen those do who in reality remembered the old man. Here, in the far left-hand corner as you enter, he rests, and his wife next in position. Not that they died first, for they had moistened the graves of their own dear ones with tears of anguish; but without prearranged plan the place of their resting had been set aside.

Here the old couple had come many times to talk on things of momentous importance. It may have been for consolation during the critical illness of a child. It may have been to discuss the apportionment of part of the estate as a family wedding neared. It may have been when they made their wills. Here was a spot for meditation, for no one came near if the place was occupied. The most sacred confession ever made was not surrounded by such privacy as one enjoyed within these walls.

Here, it was, a daughter came one day with a tall swarthy one in the bloom of manhood. The next fall they were married, even while the critical strain of 1860 was at its greatest tension. Duty soon called him, and here they came again. In the uniform of a Confederate officer he gave her his parting salutation, mounted his horse, and found his body-servant at the road gate. He was soon on his way to join "Morgan's Men." When she left the graveyard the world was wrapped in the hush of sudden silence,

and no living form was in sight, for the way to her room had been cleared. After this she was jocularly known as a “war widow.”

They were not altogether doleful days in the early part of the struggle. The Confederacy had won victories in some large engagements. Morgan’s daring had stirred the Ohio valley until it was a billowy sea, and the brilliancy of his movements was only equaled by that of his men, for this body comprised the wealth and aristocracy of central Kentucky.

But again to the graveyard! There is a mound of fresh earth; they are bringing the soldier’s body home. In the frosty winds of a winter’s morning they placed him there. Oh, the icy shiver of the aspens, the wail of the pines, the crunching of the snow! The glistening frost has a dazzling effect. The evergreens are studded with diamonds, in carnival dress at the return of a hero.

She stands through the ceremony in a perfunctory way, perhaps seeing herself in stunning black, with a dash of white adroitly placed about her throat and wrists, no longer only a “war widow.” How strange it is, and how merciful, that in our greatest trials Nature will come to the rescue and throw over us a stupor of indifference. Just when we fear the heart cords will be torn, the moment of supreme anguish gives way to an idle vision. To you only, O God, can we ascribe this blessed phenomenon.

But, Graveyard, you will put a tinge of sadness on our romance. This happened so long ago, is it

yet necessary the enthusiasm of our youth should be kept subdued? You possess not only the secrets of our sorrow, but the secrets of our joy which we implore you to keep even more sacredly. And there are your wonderful secrets of mystery, for was there ever a graveyard without these?

It was not our graveyard that had the mystery; that is, for us; though ours doubtless supplied mysteries for others. We found more in the graveyard of our neighbors; which idea originated with the negroes, who, in the spirit of faithfulness to their masters' homes, found certain conditions elsewhere that made their own eminently superior. Just so, we made our moonlight escapades to neighboring farms; laid the scenes of strange and mysterious conditions elsewhere—not at home. Even if we never saw the Smallwood graveyard, we knew all about it. Nothing strange was ever seen there, because no one ever went there to see it; but of course strange things must have been occurring since that Christmas week Miss Smallwood was buried. We have heard the story so often we could repeat it just as our Uncle Jesse used to tell it in the after years, when we were gathered on the front steps for a summer evening's relapse into reminiscences, and somebody was present who was to hear it for the first time.

“The old Smallwood place had passed down through the branches of the family,” Uncle Jesse would explain, “and, in division among the heirs, the sons had received their portion in the shape of



unimproved fields because they were able to build homes. But the old house and its immediate surroundings had gone to the three daughters, it being easily foreseen they would remain maiden ladies indefinitely, and must have the assurance of at least a shelter. The sons, in the hope of doing better in the far West, had sold their farms to the more pretentious landholders around them. This is why the three Smallwood sisters were left alone in the old stone house. The outskirts of the larger adjoining farms seemed to encroach to the very borders of its garden, on the one side, and its orchard, on the other, and of course the sisters grew queer as they grew old; that is, they seemed queer to others. It was always so quiet about the place: no horses, no dogs, and none of the ordinary life about a farm. They did all of their housework, and, except through old Jim Arterpea, who worked their garden, had no communication with the outer world. Old Jim was what the darkies called ‘ Guinea Nigger ’; from which it was understood that he was an original importation from Africa. He had been brought over and sold to a Louisiana rice planter and, after the war, had drifted in slow stages, until here he was in Kentucky, bereft of friends or sympathy because he had no pride in ancestry; no great family had ever owned him. With a heavy growth of kinky beard—he was the only negro in the country who had a beard—an enormous shaggy head, and an impediment in his speech, of course he too was queer. Even if he had not been queer at first, the Smallwood

sisters would have made him so; and if he had been, they would have made him even more so.

“The years went by with no change in the Smallwood sisters. They were old in their youth, but their quiet and unruffled life had preserved them in their age, so a period of several years made practically no change in their appearance; only their queerness increased, and this even to those who had never seen them.

“When, one Christmas morning, old Jim came over to ‘Forest Retreat’ to tell of the death of one of the sisters, of course there was a mystery. ‘Something strange about those people. Never knowed no one to die on Christmas morning before,’ whispered the darkies. I went over because I knew them better than any one else, and some one had to see to the funeral arrangements. Word was sent to the undertaker in town, and he reached the house that afternoon with a modest black wood casket adorned with four heavy metal handles of the usual style. The old sister was properly laid out, and the casket placed in the parlor to await burial next day. I put some extra wood on the fire, also kindled a fire in the adjoining room, and told the two sisters I would return by nightfall, and ‘sit up with the corpse.’

“Those who may have performed such a service know it is not without its compensations. It is uncanny, of course, but there is, connected with it, the idea of a certain heroism, the importance with which you are invested, and the obligation the relatives feel. Then the drinking of strong coffee, which

is generally supplied, excites the mind and stimulates the imagination; and as the vigil is usually taken by pairs, it is neither a bad place nor time to talk. But this time I went alone, and when the two sisters stated their desire to relieve me during the night I assured them I would need no relief before daylight.”

Here Uncle Jesse would pause a moment and study the effect his story was having on the new listener.

“Now I have always had my doubts about the necessity of this sitting-up custom, and had come to believe that primarily it was intended as a courtesy to the corpse. So on this occasion I intended to sit in the adjoining room, and doze throughout the night, with that kind of a feeling that I could be awake beyond suspicion should the two sisters come to insist upon relieving me. Leaving the door between the two rooms partly open, I put extra fuel in the fireplace before me, for the night was very cold. I then turned my lamp high, so it would brighten the room as much as possible, squared myself before the fire, and was enjoying no small degree of comfort.

“What a study the fire is, and its companionship was never more strikingly illustrated than it was that night. I watched the smoke curl up the chimney; then the puff and flicker of a flame on a splinter as it flashed up with a kind of human braggadocio, and, like the human braggart, die out with a pitiful flicker. What a time to think in those channels where the mind wanders at its own ease and free-

dom! Then is when the happiest scenes of life come before you. You feel satisfied with your life, whatever it may have been, because Nature, in her benevolent providence, generally erases from memory the jagged edges, and magnifies the smooth places, until it is probable that at the close of every life the balance is safely on the side of happiness.

“I thought of the old lady whose remains I was watching, not as dead, but wondered what romance in life she had seen. At one time she must have been a country schoolgirl. Though I had not known her, I now saw her, in the fire pictures before me, the bloom of youth on her face, and with the other children out at play. I studied the fire further, but she became lost in their midst.

“At first it was a little hazy, but soon I began seeing decidedly clearer. It was the old schoolhouse, and I was young again. We were giving the ‘Sleeping Beauty’ at the school exhibition on Christmas eve. I was the herald that blows the blast on the bugle as an announcement to the people that the king was about to speak. What an important person, even more so than the king, because I must precede him. How strange it all seemed that I was again blowing that old horn, which had been borrowed from a hunter for the great occasion.

“There is the noise and hubbub of a crowd. All the children’s parents are assembled to witness the exhibition. The time for the performance is indicated by the tinkle of a small bell, and the voices become quiet in eager expectation. The king and

his courtiers are supposed to be approaching, and I must go out first on the improvised stage before the wonderful audience and announce him.

“ My knees shake, but my determination is steady. I have so long looked forward to this great moment, I to be the first one the audience is to see! I go, but don’t get near enough to the center of the stage, so the teacher whispers from the door, ‘Go out farther.’

“ Why did she do that? I was almost steady. I take another step, then put the horn against my lips with difficulty, because my lower lip was in an uncontrollable tremble. But I must not take too much time, so my scarlet cheeks swell out, and I blow with all my force.

“ Oh! guardian angel of little children, why did you forsake me? Why was my heroic blast to become a wasted puff, resembling more the cough of a cow? A long, lean, freckle-faced boy, who stood in a window in the rear, gave a horrible guffaw, and the audience smiled.

“ I rush out the back door—I will run away and come back some day a real rich man, and then they will wish they had not laughed. No, I don’t want to be consoled! I slip through the crowd in the hallway, go out into the back porch, then down toward the barn. It is cold and dark but I am away from them all, and intend to stay, even if I freeze, because then they would be sorry for having made a poor boy freeze to death. The darkness and the cold make me feel clammy, and shivers creep over me. I sit down

on the stile, and lean back, because I am tired and don't know just what to do. My legs begin to feel stiff with cold, so I conclude I will get up and walk over to the——

“The fire has burned out and the room is dark. How can I be in such a strange place as this? Can I arouse myself from a dream, or am I now awake? The clock in the hall strikes two. Yes, I heard that same clock strike eleven and but a few moments since, and then I was sitting up with the corpse. Am I still here?

“In every twenty-four hours there is one period when human vitality reaches its lowest point. It is the daily ebb in the tide of life. Just as the dividing line between calendar days is placed in an isolated part of the Pacific Ocean, where it will cause the least confusion of dates, so the guardian of our destiny has fixed the ebb of vitality to occur during our night's sleep. In your bedside petition ask that you may be guided past the hour of two a. m. If the sick person survives this hour, there is hope until the same time the following night.

“To awaken at this hour means to find your system absolutely relaxed. Your heart action is taking its opportunity to rest, and in consequence the sluggish circulation of your blood brings about an anæmic condition of the brain. You are neither sane nor insane. You have your thoughts, but no control over them. The horrors of nightmare torture you, though awake. Then it is you would again be a child, that you could put your head on your

mother's breast, and sob out the agonizing terror. In all the gamut of human suffering there is nothing that compares with the condition of one when he realizes his faculties are wandering beyond reach; when one lobe of the brain is under control, and endeavors to soothe, while the other is demoniacal, and he must chase through dark cold shadows, and see phantoms of horror in their leaps and bounds to overtake him.

“My fire and lamp had burned out, my legs were stiff from my sitting position, and cold air was rushing down the chimney. I knew the first thing to do was to regain complete control of myself, then re-make my fire and dispel the gloom. I saw the communicating door was partly open, just as I had left it, and could hear the deep breathing of the two tired sisters in the room above.

“If you must awaken yourself at this hour, do it gradually, not with a single spasmodic jerk. After the first sensation of consciousness permit yourself to lapse into semi-consciousness for a while, then rouse and relapse, repeating this as long as necessary. After each lapse you will feel better.

“I had only passed out of the second lapse, when a sound was recorded on the tympanum of my ear. I heard three taps unmistakably clear and distinct. There was no question as to whence they came. Nothing ever made except a coffin could resound like that—hollow, and that awful muffled effect!

“The first tap was terrifyingly distinct, the second but moderately so, and the third so soft it would

not have been noticed except for the warning by the preceding ones. Of course there was cold perspiration on my forehead, and the beating of my heart was such that the old spring-bottom chair in which I was sitting fairly creaked with the vibration. Must I rush out of the house as I did the night of the 'Sleeping Beauty' exhibition? No, I had schooled myself all through life for just this emergency. This time I intended to stand my ground. There should be no more guffaws from any long, lean, freckle-faced boy.

"I was blessed with a mind for psychological investigations, yet did not move from my seat. My first impulse had become dissipated into an intense curiosity to know who would play such a trick at such a time; but even then I did not move my head or cast my eyes upward, though the stars would have afforded ample light to examine the room. Why should I rush into the presence of the old lady's last sleep as though I were storming a fort? I could just as well go in later. I knew I had never been superstitious or believed in spirit rappings. Was I sure of my position now? Certainly, I would analyze the occurrence from where I sat, even before I had made myself warm. Had I really heard such rappings? I was sure of that. I could almost hear the echoes lingering in the house.

"The three raps had occurred at regular intervals, in just about the time we take to say, 'one-two-three,' before the final 'go' in a foot-race.

"As I grew calmer my ingenuity began to work.



Would I win in my mental struggle, or would the shivering mystery regain control of me?

“Cold draughts were coming through the partly open door, for the parlor fire must have burned out some time before mine.

“I inhaled several deep breaths of the fresh air that it might make my brain more active. I was repaid for my effort, for the faint dawn of an explanation seemed drifting into view. It came nearer and I grasped it with all my soul. I would rescue myself from the perils of superstition. I almost leaped from my chair with enthusiasm, and immediately would prove the analysis correct by reproducing the exact sound on that same coffin, and during that very minute. No, I would light the extra lamp which had been left for me, then rekindle the fire. I felt that I would like to prolong the delightful sensation caused by the happy culmination of my reasoning, just as a cat postpones the killing of her prey.

“The rapping was not the trick of any person, but far beyond that of human ingenuity. Had I made a psychological study involving every principle in the law of chance, I would not have found so clever a solution as had unfolded with but a few moments’ effort on my part. Did I feel proud? I guess I did. I strutted around like the last boy in line when he has turned down the whole spelling-class.

“After my fire began to burn, I decided to muse a little longer. No doubt as to the possibility of

the explanation being correct had existed in my mind. I knew myself on this point. The explanation was so simple, yet so complex. I determined to go through the sensation again, magnifying it, because I intended to tell the story; and since it was all mine, why not make it a good one. I went over the premise to touch the story up and make it more vivid. There I was, the only man within two miles, in a strange old house, sitting up with the corpse of a queer old woman, and I had awakened from an unintentional sleep in a sitting position, at the dead hour of night, to find neither fire nor lamp burning. In the oppressive stillness, while I am benumbed with cold, and mentally struggling to overcome the surrounding gloom, I hear rappings on the coffin.

“There was no room for elaboration, the plain cold facts made the climax. Could I then elaborate my explanation, making it appear more miraculous? No; at the first stroke I had hit the nail squarely on the head.

“Opening wide the communicating door, the parlor became abundantly lighted, and I went in. How quiet and subdued everything was! I knew the old lady was peacefully resting, though I had not yet looked at her. Glimmers of light from my rekindled fire reflected from the ebony wood, like the rise and fall of a breast in restful sleep. The heavy metal handles hung limp, as the arms of a man who is sleeping on his back on a narrow couch.

“I went over, looked down into the dead woman’s face, and with a feeling akin to that of reverential

affection, raised a handle by means of my extended forefinger, toyed with it an instant, dropped it, then listened to the tap-tap-tap.

“The spirit of the old woman, somewhere in eternity beyond, must have shrieked with laughter, like a little child who creeps up behind your chair to tickle your ear with a straw. At first you merely brush away the fly, then do so several times in a very demonstrative way, each time increasing the pretended aggravation. For the sake of the child we continue the illusion. If you wait too long the little one will explode with a burst of muffled sounds. So before that point is reached you turn, discover the culprit and fail to catch him, while he splits the ear with his shrieks of laughter. Just such a shriek the old woman’s spirit must have given.”

Uncle Jesse used to pause here. He would cough, and say he had talked himself hoarse and must get a drink of water, then disappear until breakfast next morning.

If you have skilfully performed a bit of legerdemain, after which the person whom you have mystified teases you to do it again, whereupon he discovers the secret, you know how contemptuously he says “pshaw!”

Uncle Jesse dreaded ending his story. He had never told it exactly alike any two times, though always rigidly adhered to the actual framework. He would watch his new listener for any signs of an enviously critical tendency, or the kind of bravado

bearing which, while indicating a recognition that the story was interesting, showed also a determination to do, or die, in the attempt to tell a better one. If he discovered such signs in a listener's face he would branch off at various opportune places, and wander so far, as it were, that sometimes we children could hardly keep awake. But what a commotion there was when he had gone to get his drink! We fairly screamed in our efforts to be the first to explain to the confused auditor how one handle worked stiffly and had remained in its extended position after the coffin had been placed on the rests, until the room became cold and the metal contracted, letting the handle swing down against the side, after which it rebounded two times.

The negroes in the neighborhood knew Uncle Jesse's story and religiously accepted it; that is, they accepted all but the explanation. One of them voiced the darky sentiment when she said, "Marse Jess put on 'bout that han'le business, 'cause he didn't want to 'rouse no 'spicions."

So the Smallwood graveyard was "marked"; for having no proof to the contrary, every negro believed the old woman would rap again if any one approached.

It was the very next summer that old Jim put some poison on a dead hen to kill a skunk. Instead of a skunk, the poison killed a favorite fox-hound belonging to Major Corbin, a neighbor. When told of it, the Major had jokingly remarked, "Jim should have eaten the hen instead of letting the dog have

it.” Such a message had gotten to Jim, as coming from the Major, and probably in a distorted form, as the remark apparently implied a double meaning.

There was a story in the neighborhood how years ago a man had been killed because of some trouble over a sheep-killing dog. Old Jim knew this story, and the more he thought of that message the more firmly he believed the Major intended to kill him. So finally the poor old innocent, friendless negro disappeared.

After Jim left them the Smallwood sisters sold the old place to a Western tobacco-grower and went into a convent. The tobacco-grower did not know the history of the place, there being no one to tell him, because this class of men found no associates in central Kentucky. They were generally known as “my tobacco-grower” by the landowner whose farm they worked “on the shares.” The negroes referred to them as “them poor white trash,” and avoided them as they would a serpent.

The tobacco-grower got the Smallwood farm very cheap, else he could not have bought it at all. It has been said there were but two spots on the place where no tobacco was grown. One was the ground on which the house stood, the other was the graveyard.

After a while the tobacco-grower got the owner of one of the large adjoining farms to let him cultivate a little “strip” on the shares. Each year the size of the strip increased. Each year the outer

fences of the large farm were brought in a little toward the great house. Now the tobacco-grower owns that farm.

Oh! bitter fate, that the scions of a boasted ancestry must give way before their scullions!

We had better go to the graveyard even more frequently than we do, for the old master rests there after a successful journey through life. He conquered difficulties, and made a great home for his posterity.

When the tobacco-grower suggests you let him put in a little "strip" on the shares, go to the graveyard and think—think before you move the fences.

Sometimes the scions outgrow the old place. Even with all its ancestral tendrils the noble son spreads beyond its bounds. He leaves the great farm in charge of the "real estate agent," and becomes "one of the prominent men" in a great city.

Does the scion forsake his family graveyard, leaving his ancestral dead behind? Never; their remains are exhumed and deposited in the mausoleum he builds for himself in his adopted city. And be it to the honor of his successors, though it may be founded on superstition rather than respect, none of these dismantled graveyards are ever further disturbed.

Sometimes, with all their sacred memories and clusters of hallowed charms, these graveyards finally become the resting-place of but a single and obscure occupant. Such an occupant may have been only a

distant acquaintance, or perchance a stranger. The more vague his history, the more certain was he to remain in final possession.

The old Kentucky homes of much pretension were glorious houses with many rooms, for in that time people entertained in the highest sense of the word. A party of young folks on horseback might come by at any time, spend several days, get the young people in the family, and take them on to the next stopping-place, only to repeat the performance. One day, a house full; next day, an exodus.

Two important formalities of to-day were unknown—an invitation to visit, or notice of an intended visit. You went if you felt like going, because you knew you were always welcome.

When old Captain Shelton, the master of “Forest Retreat,” saw an unknown man ride up to his porch he was neither surprised nor disappointed.

“Captain Shelton, I am Major E. C. Nicholson,” the stranger announced, as he dismounted and hitched his horse.

The Captain had no idea under the sun who Major Nicholson was, but he gracefully concealed the fact, and the two old gentlemen sat down in the cool on the great porch.

There is a little secret test you may make use of in case of emergency—get a glimpse of the stranger’s fingernails.

The Major's fingernails passed muster, for in a short while the two were refreshing themselves with the inevitable mint-julep.

The Major had been in the war of 1812, he and the Captain having been in the same fight at the "River Raisin Massacre." So there was no question as to his claim. The fight had been with the Indians whom the British had armed. The Indians were victorious, afterward making their captives run the gantlet. At the end of the gantlet was the block-house in which the prisoners were to stay when they had made the passage between the double line of Indians, armed with sabers, clubs, tomahawks, switches and every conceivable snare to trip the runners. Remarkable as it may seem, some reached the block-house.

After the gantlet race the unsatiated Indians held a council and decided on the killing of more captives.

It is well known an Indian never spares a red-headed man, and the captives in the block-house were busy in their efforts to conceal the few red heads that were there, among which was the Major's.

In the midst of this performance a cloud of dust attracted the attention of all. The terrified captives, peeping between the logs of the house, saw emerge from the cloud an Indian in furious gallop on a harnessed horse. What it meant they did not know, but the Indians did, for they began sneaking away like sheep-killing dogs. Afterward the captives learned it was the great Tecumseh, who, upon hearing of the battle, had mounted a cannon horse,



hastening to prevent the massacre which he knew was sure to follow.

It made no difference if the old gentlemen could not recall each other, the Captain and the Major having been, in reality, privates; no fraud, however well couched, could have stood the series of leading questions these incidents recalled, as the two old men rehearsed the awful experience.

The Major's horse was put in the stable.

“ Will you go to the sale? ” asked the Captain on the third morning of the Major's visit.

The Major's response was to take his seat in the chaise with the Captain.

A sale on a large Kentucky farm meant more than the mere selling out of implements, stock and crops, preparatory to the settling of an estate. It was a decided social function, with its barbecue and general handshaking.

“ Colonel ——, this is Major Nicholson,” said the Captain.

“ How-de-do, Major,” the Colonel heartily responded as they shook hands; “ where is your home? ”

The Captain became all attention. He too would like to know. The Major had not volunteered this information, and, as the host, he could not ask.

“ I live at Captain Shelton's,” the Major replied with gentle dignity.

Again the Captain had to conceal his ignorance of so important a fact.

The Major proved an easy guest. He was always

ready to listen, if the Captain felt loquacious, though the war was the only subject where he supplied more than a nod of approval. He possessed the happy faculty of knowing when and how to leave the family group. Visitors were coming and going all the time and the family table was large, so the Major's seat at the coffee-pot corner made no material change in anything, or anybody's plans. In the course of the years which followed the sale, the only strange thing would have been the Major's absence. He was the acme of neatness, punctuality and propriety.

When the Captain discovered the initials "E. C. N.," freshly cut in one of the great aspen trees in the graveyard, he knew what it meant, and told the Major he could be buried there. And long ago the roots of that same old aspen have sapped the phosphate from the Major's decomposed bones, and translocated it to form the leaves that shiver.

No mark other than the tree upon which he carved his initials has served to indicate the Major's grave. The Captain felt the simple modest nature would not care to have his memory perpetuated in stone, but prefer to pass from their midst into oblivion, from whence he had come.

If you would have for yourself a monument more magnificently intricate in lines than has ever been carved from stone, one that is stateliness and grandeur in the extreme, that lifts you upward as does a figure symbolical in its offering to the mighty sweep of blue canopy above, one on which no lichens obscure the legend, but passers-by can always read

the emblem of tranquil rest; if your life has been such that your deeds are worthy of commemoration in a way beauteous beyond compare, then have your body buried at the foot of a stately tree. Its roots, in an affectionate embrace, will lift you up to form its flower, and in the waft of its perfume you breathe again.

The Buddhists' respect for animals is due to their belief that the souls of their ancestors may have transmigrated into animals.

When you go to the graveyard, don't look down; look up and receive a blessing beneath the arms of your ancestors as the trees sway in sympathetic harmony.

When the graveyard at an old neighboring place owned by the Castletons was dismantled, there was much excitement, it being the first instance of the kind in that immediate neighborhood. Then again, the Castletons were a great people, and it made the neighbors feel somewhat as one does when the family doctor dies.

The scion of the family had become a “ Colonel, U. S. A.,” while the ancestors had only been “ Kentucky Colonels.” The “ Colonel, U. S. A.,” was practically unknown to the neighbors, having been away since entering West Point as a youth. But the “ Kentucky Colonel ” was so intimately associated with the great home he had founded, that it was considered nothing less than a desecration when his re-

mains were removed. Indignation was expressed, even though it was recalled that at the time of the old Colonel's death he was only temporarily placed in his own family graveyard. This was because he had died during the excitement incident to the civil war. His wife, feeling the possibility of a change in the old home, declared she would never leave his remains behind. It was suggested that his grave be walled up, so if she should want to have the body reinterred the grave could be opened by the removal of a layer of earth which covered a stone slab that rested on the top of the side walls.

The old lady's fears proved unfounded, for a few years later she was buried at his side, where they rested peacefully within the sound of the voices of those to whom they had been dear. But their rest was destined to be broken, for the "U. S. A." scion had them all exhumed and the remains deposited in his mausoleum, with their names in fresh gilt letters, on the marble panel that closed their niche, as if they had just died.

What is the use of having a great house if you have no ancestral portraits to cover its walls? What is the use of having a mausoleum if you have no ancestral remains deposited there?

So there remained the old stone wall faithfully protecting the dismantled tombstones, while the aspens and pines waved in exclusive grandeur. The spot was completely isolated, every other vestige of the old home having been erased.

If one is detected in the avoidance of some act,

with which a superstition is associated, he generally declares that it is the only superstition he has. In the same spirit people avoided the old dismantled Castleton graveyard, even though they avoided no other. And perhaps with more excuse, for there were many, including responsible people, who insisted they had seen a dark object moving about at twilight. If you cross-questioned them you found they had seen the object from a distance, then straightway had gone to the stone fence and looked over, to find nothing there. Some believed they had seen it rise out of the ground, while others claimed to have seen it disappear by re-entering the ground.

A group of boys had at one time concealed themselves just outside the walls of the old place to await the coming twilight and the “hant,” as the object was known. They claimed to have heard a noise resembling the “swish of straw,” whereupon their courage gave place to unceremonious flight.

So the neighborhood was divided in opinion, in consequence of which all stayed away; one side because they believed there was something there, the other side because they did not.

One night Major Corbin had some friends out from town for a fox-hunt. The night was dry, which made trailing difficult. The dogs seemed discouraged and the sport was about to lag, when an old mongrel hound, that had joined the pack without invitation, began a glorious and continued bellowing. The dog had struck a “coon” trail, and every

one of the high-bred fox-hounds joined in the chorus and was going it full tilt.

By some remarkable instinct the experienced hunter can tell what kind of a trail his dogs are following. If it is a fox trail the yelps seem to be short and on a high key, as if the dog knows he must save his wind for a long swift chase. If it is a "coon" trail, they seem to enjoy making as much noise as possible, as if they know the coon will take to the nearest tree.

"Let 'em take it," called the Major, for on a fox-hunt the negroes are instructed to call the dogs off "coon" trails.

"They are heading for the old Castleton home-site, and I believe will *tree* him in the graveyard," explained the Major to his friends.

Up the grassy slope went the pack, making the night ring with their yells, leaving behind a cloud of dust and bits of dried grass, which their claws extracted as they clinched the turf in the taking of their wonderful leaps. Straight for the graveyard they headed.

The negroes, who always accompany such hunts, began to show unusual interest. What if those dogs went to that graveyard? Would the Major follow? They would watch developments.

The yelping hounds sprang, as a bunch, over the wall, only to change their triumphant yelps into short sullen screeches, and immediately leaped back, returning to their master with tails drooping between their legs, and casting furtive glances at the graveyard.

The Major knew that his dogs had seen something unusual and distasteful to them. Could it be the “hant”? Here was a case of “graveyard fright,” and in dogs; which can have no superstition.

The Major was in the class who did not believe there was anything there, consequently he had stayed away. Now he did believe something was there, would he stay away? He carried in his cheek a Federal Minie ball; he had faced his enemy in the crucial test. His visitors knew nothing of the superstition connected with the place.

“Gentlemen,” he said calmly, “we will approach the place on the four sides.”

The courage of the negroes was strengthened by the stand so promptly taken, and they followed at a most respectful distance.

“What a strange spot,” remarked one of the visitors, as the party rested on the four walls of the yard, surveying the place.

No doubt they would have heard a noise resembling the “swish of straw,” had they come for that purpose.

The old tombstones were ruthlessly scattered. Some in piles as if they had assembled to hold either indignation or consolation meetings over the loss of their precious charges. Others seemed to have gone stark mad and thrown themselves on their backs, and lay staring at the heavens as if in mute appeal to those spirits whose earthly abode had for a while been left in their keeping. A white dove that had long stood with outstretched wings in representation of the flight of a soul, though now wingless, was still

pathetically beautiful in its watch over a hole in the ground.

Never again would the lichens be scratched out of grooves of the letters with a nail, so the legend could be laboriously read.

Moonlight escaped through the tree tops as the branches swayed in an occasional breeze, momentarily lighting up spots, so that, with patience, they could see over the entire place.

The pine trees were moaning with spasmodic wails, while the aspen trees trembled with a succession of shivers. When there is a wind there are wails and shivers, while in a dead calm there is the ceaseless moan and tremble. But for this they might have heard the noise resembling the "swish of straw."

"I wonder if any one is still buried here?" asked a visitor.

"I don't know," replied a companion, "let us ask. Major Corbin," he called, "is there any one here now?"

The Major interpreted the question as having reference to what had frightened his dogs. "I don't know," he replied, jumping down into the yard, "I will look——"

The Major's sentence was interrupted by a sound that chilled to the marrow. It seemed to come from the very ground beneath him, and was followed by something resembling suppressed guttural sounds and convulsive outbursts, as if from a person of powerful strength terrified in the agonizing throes of death.



The negroes were in precipitate flight, and the visitors also retired, but in decorum.

The Major instinctively felt the Minie ball wince in his cheek as he hastily turned toward the fence.

After a moment for composure, the party, as if with one thought, returned to the walls. With that reserve courage, which in reaction follows fright, they entered the yard. As they stood in silence, not a sound was to be heard save the moan of the pines and the tremble of the aspens. Even the spots of light had vanished, for the moon was nearing the western horizon.

“Gentlemen,” said the Major,—and the Minie ball must have twitched,—“if you can find your way to the house without my assistance, I shall remain here until daylight.”

But they preferred to stay with him. Of course they would. Should they let him take all the glory of such a vigil?

The hours remaining before dawn were easily passed, the excitement having served the purpose of strong coffee, for all wanted to talk. They let the dawn more than break before arising from their improvised bench of tombstones.

By the first faint streaks of light each one, no doubt, had, from where he sat, silently examined the surroundings, and felt even more strongly determined to conquer the mystery. Perhaps they lingered rather than dispel the heroic illusion, for they were enjoying the experience, especially since they had seen enough to see nothing. There were plenty of

foot-prints and down-trodden weeds and grass, but that meant nothing, for they had tramped over the place during the night.

Stone fences, as built in Kentucky, are generally finished by placing the top rows of stones on end, selecting those with ragged edges, so that if an animal reaches over with its head, as it does preparatory to a jump, the sharp points of the stones force it back. When one wishes to climb over such a fence the natural impulse is to push off some of these edge-wise stones.

A disturbed place in the graveyard fence caught the Major's eye and aroused his suspicion. Upon examination he noticed the faint outline of a path which seemed to lead from that place in the fence to the far left-hand corner of the yard. Yes, it led to the empty grave of the old "Kentucky Colonel," and the very corner over which he had climbed when he had first entered the graveyard during the night. Keeping this clue to himself, he evasively went to the place.

Did he pause to toy with the handle of the coffin? No, that is done only in certainty—here was doubt.

He hastened to remove some brush concealing an old door which was resting on the side walls of the pit, apparently to afford shelter. Lifting the door, the pit was seen to contain considerable straw, some of which had been heaped in one corner, probably to conceal some object. This straw he pushed aside with a forked stick, and there, crouched in the

stillness of death, a terrified glassy stare in the eyes, the massive, bushy head thrown back, the mouth wide open, causing the lower jaw to force a heavy growth of disheveled kinky hair against the chest, was all that was mortal of old Jim Arterpea, a friendless fugitive from an innocent jest.

\* \* \* \* \*

Words spoken in jest sometimes pierce like the stiletto, which makes a wound too small to let the blood flow out, but causes an internal bleeding which suffocates the victim.

The ignorant and superstitious many times harbor in silent suffering a firm belief in the infallibility of an idle jest which we have thoughtlessly flung at them, as does a boy cast stones at harmless animals.

We who hold in keeping the higher degrees of intellect prostitute our trust when we make light of the ignorance displayed by those who have not been so blest.

\* \* \* \* \*

As innocent as was Major Corbin's remark about the poisoning of his dog, after old Jim's death, his manner became changed to that of marked sadness.

What days the friendless old negro must have spent in hiding from his imagined foe, who in reality would have been as responsive to his call for help as any man living. The terror of those last moments, when the poor old creature had heard the Major's name called, then heard his voice in response and his jumping down so near the very spot of concealment

—all this had snapped the cords which bound his soul to its humble abode.

However, Major Corbin did the handsome thing, for he arranged with the owner of the estate to have Jim's body buried in the grave where he had lived the last bitter weeks of his pitiful life. And there he rests, alone, in one of the most beautiful spots in the blue-grass pastures of Kentucky. In a place which was selected as the sacred receptacle for the mortal remains of one of the most aristocratic of families, an unknown captive, bound in the shackles of tyranny and superstition, becomes the sole occupant.

What is the nature of destiny? Are we to find that the "tobacco-grower" will trim a little closer each year, until finally we must remove our dear ones from "Forest Retreat," and leave Major Nicholson, the homeless wanderer who came to us out of the great unknown, in solitary possession of our sacred spot? Was this the purpose of the old Major's mission to us?

Graveyard, if such is one of the secrets you hold in store, conceal it from us. We would not know all. We still go to you in the exuberance of youth, even though you harbor the secret ghost that has been seen by our ancestors, and by some of us; that ghost whose memory, when one has passed through its visible presence, he conceals in the most secret archives of his heart. To see this ghost is to break the spell of your charm. Curiosity has never tempted one to inquire if it appeared in the same

form any two times. When one has seen it, an imprint is left upon the countenance and there is a faltering in the foot-steps. How tenderly we would sympathize and calm the throbbing heart, if we only dared!

If you are wise you will not waken the somnambulist, but let him return to his bed and resume normal sleep. Neither will you approach him who has just seen the ghost of “Forest Retreat.” Yearn as you may to offer him comfort, you must let him seek solitude and resume his normal awakening. Our ghost is a secret whose existence is known only to those who have seen it; and they can never warn others.

Oh! graveyard, would that we could betray you by the expression of some slight emotion, when we see the victims at your very portals, rather than slink away as we must!

There was a posthumous daughter of the Confederate officer who had passed the care-free hours of childhood and youth. As an infant she had been carried to the graveyard, as a child she had carried her own dolls there to play “keep house,” and when in the bloom of young womanhood, still she went. And such a bloom! It is said her combination of raven-black hair and blue eyes was never equaled. Her hair was that kind of a mass of ringlets, wavers and whirls that brings over you an almost irresistible impulse to play your fingers through it.

Physical beauty exists where there is a combination of some two or more of the elements of beauty. The foremost of these combinations is hair and eyes. Then comes eyes and mouth, mouth and neck, neck and arms and so on; the one element enhancing the other.

Every person has a distinctive characteristic by which he or she is classified in our memory. This characteristic may be in the appearance, or manner, or both, but at first contact it is revealed. We may have to think just where it belongs, but the longer we think the more we exclaim, inwardly, when we have found its class. So in feminine beauty, we involuntarily analyze to find the elements which lend the charm.

There is but one of woman's long list of beauty elements that can stand alone. Nature in her charity made this elastic, susceptible of culture. A flexible, musical rhythm in enunciation is a charm as beautiful as it is rare.

When the posthumous daughter spoke, her words emanated with the mellow sweetness of minor chords tuned to *mezza timbre*. The sounds did not appear to come from the throat, through the nose or even from the lips, but as if reflected from the entire face. And when she laughed it was like the warble of a playful brook. More than one heart had made sacrifice at this altar, for be it known she was not altogether sincere.

In the twilight of a summer evening she sat on a

myrtle-covered mound in the graveyard. Years before the mound had been made by the excess of dirt from the graves. It was thickly grown over with the vines, and formed a rather inviting seat. At her feet sat a young man.

“Let us make wreaths,” she suggested as she picked the myrtle leaves about her; and the aspens trembled and the pines moaned.

They worked for a short time in silence, apparently concentrating their attention in the inception of designs.

As she stopped to select some extra long stems she spoke.

“I think I will ask you a conundrum. Why are deserters like trees in the spring?”

He was intent on his work, and replied as if without thought, that he did not know.

“Because they leave of their own accord,” she said, laughing while she looked at him, and rolling her head in a chiding way so the black hair was wonderfully effective.

He wished he had tried and given the answer, so as to avoid the first thrust. He would try her, and about the same trees.

“Why is a woman, who loves for ten years and then ceases, like a hollow tree?”

She could not guess, so he felt better as he explained about the *decade* heart.

As the honors were equal, she suggested they continue to ask about trees only, and see how far they could go.

After a pause in which the minds of both were evidently active, she was the one to speak.

“Why is the top of a tree like the settlement of a Western prairie?”

“That sounds easy,” he said. “Let me think. There are branches, and ranches— Am I getting warm?”

“Yes, because they go to *b-ranches*,” she replied without waiting.

“I would have guessed if you had given me time,” he said.

“That is why I did not do so,” she replied, affecting an air of injured feelings.

“Well, it is my turn,” he said, “and I am going to get even for that. Will you tell me why a tree with a broken limb is like a lame duck?”

She made him promise not to tell until she “gave up.”

“All right,” he said, “take as much time as you want.”

She hummed a bit with closed lips, indicating she wanted it understood her mind was not to be disturbed.

Finally she distracted his attention by pretending there was an insect crawling on her neck. He looked thoroughly, and declared there was nothing, whereupon she said it was strange he could not see a thing when it was as large as she knew that creature was, after which remark she suggested they proceed with the work on the wreaths.

“Hold here, while I finish this plait,” she said,



sliding down the mound. Did she do this involuntarily, or was the spirit of the coquette awakening?

At first his fingers appeared unsteady, nervously so, caused by the gliding of hers in and out through his as she tied the knots, but he was sorry when she had finished.

Why could he not ask her to tie some places in his wreath while he held it for her.

“Won’t you help me?” he asked, holding his wreath toward her.

A slight flush came over his face when he found himself in an imploring attitude, with outstretched arms, looking into those wonderful eyes of blue.

Yes, she would help him.

They were using the mound as a kind of back rest, and consequently were side by side. To do the work she had to pass one arm under his, reach over with the other, lowering that elbow, until it, likewise, was between his extended arms. The raven-black hair brushed his cheek as she moved her head in various positions in the examination of the wreath. She could have heard the increased beating of his heart, because her head was inclined well down toward his breast.

Would he fold his arms, enclosing his prey, like a trap closing around the victim it had enticed? He was the soul of honor, and hers was purely an accidental position. There may have been a quiver, but his arms remained extended.

“If I had a piece of thread I could tie this place,” she remarked, as she held two short ends.

"Will a black silken thread do?" he asked, endeavoring to conceal that he had a purpose in view; "if so, I can get one for you."

"Just the thing; but don't let go yet, the wreath will come apart," she replied, wholly unawares.

"Oh, I don't have to let go to get it," and he caught a few strands of her hair in his lips.

There was a toss of the black ringlets and a burst of her marvelous laughter as she affected indignation in her wonderful blue eyes. And the aspens trembled and the pines moaned.

"Now you will have to make your wreath by your lone self," she said, as a kind of retaliation for his wit having caught her off guard; but compromising, she extracted one of the black silken threads and repaired the wreath.

He had proved himself quite skilful, for in constructing his wreath he had woven some branches that were in bloom, so it was dotted with little blue flowers. He kept her from seeing this, because it was evident there was a spirit of rivalry in the making of the wreaths, as well as in their wit.

"Yours is the prettier," she said, "let us exchange. Besides, you ought not to wear flowers. The olive wreaths that are given to conquerors never have flowers in them."

She felt that this display of knowledge was an offset to his skill, and proceeded to take his wreath without awaiting his consent.

"No, no," he protested, "that is not the way to do. I will crown you with mine, then you must

crown me with yours, and we will see who can make the grander coronation speech.”

Here was a challenge, and the chances appeared even, especially as he was to go first. So she accepted.

“What shall the winner get as a prize?” she asked, unable to conceal the fact that she had a bit of repartee ready to let fly when he paused for an answer.

“Let the winner take the loser for better or worse, etc.,” was his quick response, and a gleam of satisfaction shone in his face as he watched her in the struggle to parry.

She asked time, but finally consented to the terms, on condition that she be the judge, inasmuch as he had named the stake.

Here he had to ask time, for he discerned her affected innocence. He studied the premise and the conditions, with her as the sole judge of the contest. Suppose she declared herself the winner; then he must be the loser, and she would have to take him. Suppose she declared him the winner, then she must be the loser, and consequently his prize. It seemed to be as broad as it was long, so he consented. He made the mound into a bloom of lilacs, which he gathered from the screening hedge surrounding the the graveyard, and indicated for her to sit on the top as her position in the coronation ceremony.

But first she must “fix” her hair. It is strange why women with beautiful hair have to “fix” it so often. She drew her chin against her throat, as

one does preparatory to this operation, and lifted her hands to the back of her head. Her loose sleeves fell to the elbows, leaving the white arms in contrast with the raven-black hair, while she played her fingers through the tresses. Her face in this position caused her to cast her eyes upward, after the manner of Raphael's cherubs, as she looked at him, while the rich melody of her laughter filled the stillness of the twilight.

After the hair had been fixed, refixed and fixed again, she seated herself upon the improvised throne, adjusted her skirts in graceful folds, drew herself up to her full sitting height, and, slightly elevating her chin, assumed a pose of magnificent dignity.

In the same spirit he made a low bow, took his position, standing behind her with the bedecked wreath extended above her head, maintaining his dignity as he spoke.

“In the presence of your immortal ancestors through the past three generations, I stand in the performance of the glorious honor which is mine to-day.

“Great as were your fathers in the heroic days of '76, the makers of history in 1812, and none the less true to their convictions in 1860; greater than they was their inspiration—their wives—and their posterity, this daughter, is no less.

“Womanhood! in the unadorned beauty of your presence, we make our obeisance to the majestic sway of your influence.

“Was there ever man unsusceptible to the magnetism of your charms? Was there ever man who did not float in a billow of pride when you smiled countenance to his act? Was there ever a man who did not cower in humiliation when his act had brought to your face the startled flush and tremor of doubt? If so, he is lost.

“The breath of your existence fans into flame the spark of ambition you create in our breast.

“The aroma of your fragrant nature is the anæsthetic to our morose temperament.

“You are the fanciful conception, the coloring, the flower of the animate world.

“As our sweethearts, we bask in the sunshine of your souls. As our wives, you are a sacred halo about our lives. As our mothers, you are the fountain from which springs all that is good within us.

“Queenly daughter, at the threshold of womanhood you have inherited the graces of your mothers; each grace is a charm, each charm is a pearl, while they are countless as the sands of the seas.

“For every leaf in the garland I hold, there is a worshiper at your shrine. Each flower in it is the bloom of ecstasy that opens in the radiance of your love.

“And now, in the happy compliance with my privilege, I crown you the Queen of Hearts.”

“Good!” exclaimed the Queen, clapping her hands and dancing around the mound, as though the strain of imperial dignity must find an outlet.

In the final "fix" of her hair, preparatory to the coronation, she had left it falling loosely down her back.

"I must make my curtsy to your tribute to womanhood," and she gathered her skirts at the sides, lifted them a trifle, placed one foot to the rear and opposite, and slowly sank into a mass of folds.

As she arose she dexterously gave her head a kind of toss, causing the hair to divide and fall over each shoulder, leaving her with the appearance of one wearing an exquisite silken shawl.

And then, as if it were possible that the spirit of the coquette could yet be unsatiated, she took a cluster of lilacs, fixed them in her corsage, and, with that serenity born only in woman, plucked a few violets from the side of her father's grave.

In that momentary lull which always follows excitement, she stood with a far-away look in her eyes as she raised the violets to her lips.

Was there ever such a symphony in color as was made by those lilacs, those violets, those myrtle blooms and those eyes?

She took a deep breath, inhaling the perfume of the flowers.

He saw the enchanting swell in her bosom, and as she exhaled, it suggested a sigh, as if she had found in it the fragrance of an unknown father's love.

An involuntary sound from his lips followed, sufficiently audible in the silence to attract her attention, and it caused her to turn suddenly toward him.

This produced a slight embarrassment on the part of each, for she found him in a kind of hypnotic stare, watching her every movement.

“Oh! I forgot, I have not crowned you,” she said, as the inevitable ripple of laughter escaped.

“I was just wondering if I am to take the prize by default?” he replied in a droll humor, and again the tension was relaxed.

She took the lilacs from the mound, explaining he was not to have any in his coronation, because flowers were associated with feminine weakness and not with heroic conquerors. She must be original, and doubtless had he not made use of them she would have done so, with a reverse in the historical deduction.

He took his seat on the green throne, she standing behind him with the unadorned wreath she had made, swinging on her arm.

“Will you promise to be good and not make me laugh in the midst of my speech?” she asked, taking a few strands of his hair with the tips of her fingers that she might force his consent.

“Yes, I will be solemn,” was his reply, for this was now the easiest thing he could do. His jocular mood was weakening, and his zest for repartee was giving way before the pall of seriousness that was creeping over his spirit.

That sparkling effervescence with which he was naturally endowed had flown, leaving him enthralled in poetic pathos.

The Queen must laugh once more before she har-

nessed her risibles; after which, in a truly regal voice, she began:

“My most respected ancestors, I call upon you to witness the Queen of Hearts in the performance of the crowning glory of her achievements. I stand here to execute the loftiest ideal of woman, the payment of a tribute to the honor of man.

“Manhood! the synonym for bravery, gallantry and chivalry, in your hands we unhesitatingly place our destiny. In you we find nobility embalmed in the steadfastness of purpose. In you we find strength for our weakness, succor for our need. In you we find a vassal in the presence of desire, a protector in the presence of foes, a refuge in the presence of sorrow.

“We concede your superiority, and ask only to be your helpmate.

“If you are moved by our influence, it is because the generosity of your character has sympathy for our wish. If you covet our smile of approval, it is because you ask only what we can give, in the simplicity of our appreciation. If you shrink under our frown of disapproval, it is because your nobler self ever comes to your rescue at the time of inadvertence.

“As we are the embellished creations of fancy, so are you the sombre, solid, indestructible foundations of our being.

“As our suitors, we revel in the attention shown



us. As our husbands, you are trusted pilots on the uncharted seas of life. As our fathers, you are the Nestors of our homes.

“Princely son! Providence has seen fit to clothe you with an inborn character which bespeaks courtesy, thoughtfulness, generosity, justice, honesty and truth. In your countenance is the mark of trust. In the spontaneity of your wit lies the soul of culture.

“Each leaf, in the garland I hold, is my wish. One is for the maintenance of your physical strength; one is that the pathway of your life may conceal no pitfalls; one, that your ability may receive its just recognition; one is that your happiness may increase with your days; one, that your days may continue to the allotted number; one, that your death may be the peaceful passing of a spirit, bathed in the incense of love from those who have been nourished by the fruits of your life. And all the wishes that are left I would have combined in one, that it may be the stronger. This wish is that she whom you honor with the offer of your hand may receive from God the gift of every quality that goes to make woman in the supreme sense, that she may be a fitting helpmate.

“The garland needs no blossoms, for it will rest upon the flower of youth.

“And now, as your august Queen, I assert my royal prerogative, and crown you my Princely Conqueror.”

He did not clap his hands in applause, or even arise from the mound.

The serious coloring which the Queen had put into her voice gave place to laughter which, if possible, had never before been so musical. Her mirth seemed to boil over, for she felt she had held her own in the contest. She dropped on her knees before him, resting her extended arms on the base of the mound, after the manner of one "on all fours." The raven-black hair fell over one shoulder, like a mantle in graceful folds, terminating in delicately twisting ends, which stood out in the soft breeze—truly the floating of zephyr upon zephyr. Again she had to lift her eyes in the same cherubic manner, as she tantalizingly peered up into his face. Then in a burst of chiding laughter she told him he was mean, not to applaud.

When he spoke there was a tremor in his voice, and his breathing showed a tempest in his breast.

"I am saving my applause for the decision of the judge," he said in measured words.

"Oh, yes!" she replied; "the judge declares it a drawn contest, and there will be no prize." With that she sprang to her feet, ran out of the gate, on toward the house, leaving in her wake only ripples of marvelous laughter.

The only move he made was to place his elbows on his knees and rest his chin in his hands.

The twilight was fading into dusk, and with it came the stillness which accompanies this period of the day.

As he gazed at some quivering shadows on a marble slab the only sound to be heard was the tremble of the aspens and the moan of the pines.

The darkness thickened and the shadows united to form larger and more grotesque forms. The calm was broken by a breeze which caused the trees to move, and with this the grotesque forms began to dance and chase, as in childish play. The breeze increased, and the forms became more rude, rushed against each other with leaps and bounds, passed from one slab to another, dashed themselves to pieces on the ground, then sprang back to their first quivering forms, only to repeat the tragedy.

He watched the process of self-annihilation until the forms seemed to tire of their ghost dance. They became sullen, no longer even quivered, but assumed a motionless position in thick black masses. They appeared to feel satisfied they held him in their grasp, as a serpent transfixes its prey through the stare of its eye.

With a sudden motion he caught his breath, partially straightened up, and in the same movement placed the tips of his fingers against his lips, as if to suppress an utterance.

Could it be that the very tombstones were beginning to quiver? Were they going to frolic and chase in playful glee, after which they would work themselves into furious rage, and hurl their ponderous weights, with desperate crash, into each other's granite sides?

The terrific pumping of his heart caused the blood

to rush through his veins and swell his temples until it seemed it would ooze out, like drops of perspiration.

O precious soul! you are fast in the clutches of the mystery of "Forest Retreat's" graveyard. You are in the awful presence of the secret ghost. Afar, and with prayerful aspect, we await you as you struggle through the unequal combat. Henceforth you must unite with us in the silent custody of the mystery.

Still, in mute helplessness, he stared at the picture before him.

The breeze was coming again; he felt its coolness on his brow. The aspens began to shiver, and the moan of the pines was like a siren as it gradually increases the speed of its revolution.

He began to quiver, then to tremble, then to shake in piteous emotion.

The siren in the pines rose to a wail, then a howl, then a screech.

Finally, making a supreme effort, he arose to his feet, staggered over to the large white slab which stood at the head of the soldier's grave, rested his arms on it, and, making a sound that could have been either a sigh or a sob, buried his face in his arms.

This movement caused the myrtle wreath to slip from his head, and it fell squarely on the grave at his feet, as if he had been shorn of his laurels that a real hero should be crowned.

Before raising his head, a sound, audible like the

plaintive murmurs of prayer, came from his lips. Having regained self-control, he straightened up. The wind had passed, and calm reigned once more.

From a movement it appeared he had just become aware of the loss of his wreath. He leaned forward to feel for it, but arrested himself balanced on one foot, the other knee slightly bent, as in the first attitude of stooping. His head remained drooped, while he folded his arms. Through the screen of darkness he saw the last spent rays of a well-faded day as they reflected from the vitreous leaves of the wreath. The reflections changed into winks, and he felt the wreath was looking at him in defiance, while its tiny tendrils already attached themselves to the grass in an effort to resist removal.

After a few pensive moments he appeared to have reached decision. He completed his stooping and turned, lightly feeling over the grass near the grave with his fingers, picked up the little wilted violets she had dropped, and placed them on the grave near the wreath. He hesitated, recalled her words, “Flowers are not associated with heroic conquerors,” then took up the violets and fixed them in the button-hole of his lapel.

He made his way through the gate and followed in the wake of the ripples of laughter. There was an imprint upon his countenance, and a faltering in his footsteps. He had seen the ghost of “Forest Retreat”—the “ghost of a hope” that she might some day crown his life with that crown of happi-

ness in which there would be no jewel more precious than herself.

And the aspens trembled and the pines moaned.

When he retired for sleep that night his was a weary body and a tumultuous brain.

Physical strength is the measure of capability in nervous expenditure, and the fact that he was tired indicates no weakness. That indescribable sensation of the moment of contact between a tired body and a comfortable bed was his.

Throughout the day there seems to be a series of magnetic currents playing between one and the place of his night's rest. In the morning the forces are normally repellent, but by evening they will have reversed, and the force of attraction increases, until we find our bodies merely supply the office of "keeper" to a magnet bed.

Attire yourself for your night's sleep. There is the space between the head and foot poles of the magnet. Connect these points with your body, the "keeper." The burst of pent-up currents that race through you, causing that soothing of your muscles, is the payment Nature makes for a day's toil.

For the moment this soothing was his. The linen cover on his down pillow was a cooling salve to his flushed cheek and throbbing temple. There was complete relaxation, gradually fading into semi-consciousness—the critical point in "going to sleep."

If you wish to drive a flock of sheep through a gate, you will find little trouble in concentrating

them at the opening; but there is the time for caution. The fact that you may have them actually between the gate posts is the very reason they will scramble over each other, and rush back at the risk of their lives, should you attempt to force them. The reassembling of them will prove difficult; they have become suspicious. You may succeed and mass them near the gate a second time. You will have learned something about the animals' natures, so remain at a distance. Again they stand solidly in the gate-way for a moment, when the foremost one may chance to toss its head with a snort. The tossed head strikes the sheep nearest, knocking him slightly backward, and the sound startles him, causing his movement to be increased. Through this means the momentum of the mass, due to the acceleration of fright, will have become such that the last sheep is thrown completely around, and terrified to desperate flight, whereupon the flock will follow.

Had the sheep entered you could have closed them in the fold for the night. As it is, you must keep watch over the scattered flock. They may tax your patience and your strength.

In entering upon your sleep for the night, be careful when you get your sheep to the gate.

The cooling salve of his pillow warmed to the tumult of his brain, making his thoughts rush back to the closing of the day in the graveyard. He had a restless night; he had to watch his scattered sheep.

The blessing of sleep is most apparent when noticed least. If life was the first result of creation, sleep must have been the second.

Who has never spent a night wooing Nature's balm for every anguish of mind and body, and found her affections unrequited? You reason you should go to sleep, then rest on your accustomed side, adjust your covers, embrace your pillow with one arm, take a deep breath and await the mysterious tide to carry you out. The tide does not come, so you try the reverse side with a feeling of suspicion as to a successful launching. A second failure may increase the determination, so you try it on physiological principles: rest on your back with outstretched lower limbs, fold your arms over your head to give your heated blood a better chance for circulation, remove your pillow to place your cheek on the cool spot beneath it. Failure here means desperation, and you clutch at your covers with an outburst of impassioned wrath. You toss until your body feels physical exhaustion, and there is that drawn feeling in your face consequent to unrelaxed muscles. There is yet one resort. It is to bring yourself into a hypnotic state.

When the eye is open, it is impossible to prevent it being focussed on some object; when the brain is awake, it is impossible to prevent it being focussed in some thought. To break this focus will bring about sleep.

Go through the entangled labyrinth of your mind, collect your scattered thoughts, resolve them into one, easing the focus on this one until it gradually fades, and once more you have your scattered sheep at the portals of their fold.



What a panacea sleep is! If it is whispered from the sick room “the patient sleeps,” a sense of relief fills us.

Sleep is an intoxication, rapturous and divine; the mellow of antipathy, the solvent of dilemma, the oil on the waves of tempestuous anguish. It is a psychological phenomenon we class with the myriad of unknowns.

No one can look into the face of a sleeping person and not be pervaded with a sense of awe. There is too much suggestion as to the possible presence of some guarding spirit from the realm of a creative power. When asleep, the expression of servility is not found in the face of the menial, the accustomed smile has vanished from the countenance of the little child, the hauteur of the ostentatious has become dissipated, and the three stand on common ground in the majesty of their dignity, equal communicants at Nature’s fountain of blessings.

When we go to our “garden of sleep,” and grope at the impenetrable veil of mystery separating the living and the dead; when in the embroilment of emotion we stand by the open grave, while one all placid in countenance is lowered into the absorbent folds of Nature’s coverlet, our souls, in their supplicant yearning, indulge us in the poetic conception, “He sleeps.”

When we, in the hush of solitude, stand by the newly formed mound we cannot admit of disturbed sleep. Should the grave of the most inhuman tyrant of history be marked with a slab bearing the legend

*Insomnia*, we would shudder at the thought of such torture.

We know but the one kind of sleep for those in our garden. They never have trouble with their sheep. The soothing currents are always coursing through their bodies. Their pillow of soft earth is ever a cooling salve. Their sleep is one sweet perpetual dream of an unbroken chain of the golden moments of childhood, linked with the boundless enthusiasm of youth, and the satisfaction in a beautifully ripened age.

Our love stimulates our fancy, which in turn predominates our belief. As a cold stern reality, we know nothing. At the grave our minds become nebulous, and we unhesitatingly concede the greatest mystery of life lies in the archives of our graveyard, the mystery of death.

From that night, his was a changed life.

It is always sad to see the first effects of frost in the fall, the first withered leaf to curl its corners and droop in its surrender of the throne of summer. And how much more so to see the first frosts on ambition; the first blight on the enthusiasm of youth.

What is there in life comparable with that period of youth when in the flush of vigor we look down the vista of a fancied career where the perspective has so deceivingly distorted the stumbling places, the jars and the reverses, that it appears one beautiful grassy slope; that period when the amorous emotions are healthy, wholesome and undaunted?

Was his sleepless night a jar, such as to throw him out of the grassy slope into the rut worn by hers in their wanderings through the entanglement reverses? Would he pass through and look back to find the vista only a mirage?

The posthumous daughter fared differently, if judged from her outward appearance the next morning. All of her sleep must have been “beauty sleep.” It was not difficult to imagine that for a pillow she cooled her cheek on a “poultice” of milk and roses. Her sheep were always docile lambs, lovingly obedient to their shepherdess.

## II

### ARLINGTON

“On fame’s eternal camping ground,  
Their silent tents are spread.”

EMOTION is the quintessence of our nervous system, that indefinite part of our organization which through poetic license is styled “the heart.” It is the dormant motive in action, the exuberance from a trepid soul—in the human Leyden jar, the subtle charging fluid.

Emotion expressed is the acme of pity, the weakening, withering discharge, leaving the Leyden jar inert. Emotion retained is rhythmical harmony, the poise, the poetry, the music of life. It is the ferment in our jealousies, the yeast in our pride, the golden silence in our strength, the brazen speech in our weakness.

The creative instinct in art is but emotion. Without it, the song of the poet, the eloquence of the orator, the triumph of the soldier would be innocuous bauble.

It is in our emotional nature where the composer revels, for by him it may be expressed and yet retained. It is he who interprets prosaic words into the divine language of music; he who speaks for us

in tones that set in unison the vibrations of our souls, until in harmony they blend and soar from us. It is he who speaks for us from those innermost recesses, the habitation of the unschooled, untutored, unconventional but pristinely pure and inspired conceptions, the trysting place of the soul with fancy. He speaks for us in language that knows no tongue, that is neither bound in the shackles of words, perforated with the punctilios of accent, nor scarred with the slurs of rhetoric, but clothed in phrase and harmony with limitless license to intermingle the ecstasy of hope and the agony of despair. He tells for us the longing of a heart, the pining of a spirit, the wail of a soul, the martial feeling of patriotism, the pride in victory, and of the soothing incense that rises from the sacrifice of life that others may live.

A not infrequent sight in the streets of the nation's Capital is a military funeral procession. There is the clatter of distant hoofs, the flash of sunlight on polished brass, the swirl of a crowd, a muffled rumble accompanied by the grit and grind of caisson wheels. The clatter distracts our preoccupied self, the flash stimulates us to alertness, the swirl draws us toward its vortex, yet ours is but passing curiosity. The grind of wheels may cause a shiver, and the sight of our nation's flag used as a winding-sheet may cause a momentary convulsion in our breasts; yet we remain master of ourselves, and stand in dignified silence, emotion retained. We feel we are the representatives of strength, action and life, life with all its possibilities. How we rise in comparison with the

closed career before us, terminating in a winding-sheet. Our bosoms swell with secret pride.

Presently there comes a strange sound from the drums. Are the drummers possessed with a spirit of derision, that they should appear so indifferent to the simple principles of rhythm? At first it seems an incongruous rattle, then becomes more subdued, followed by the muffled accompaniment of the alto instruments,—the screeching tenors are silent,—lending a tint of sombre coloring to the brilliancy of the uniforms and the caparisoned horses. A sensation of uneasiness begins to show itself throughout the procession. The cavalry escort unconsciously pull the visors of their caps lower. Though the musicians have played this strain innumerable times, they mechanically tighten their grasp on the instruments, for, to them and to the cavalry, these functions are but routine duties, until the marvelous strain is reached. Here these men who are taught to face danger with stolid indifference; these men whose only faith and creed is based on the law of chance in which their lives are the unit in calculation, here they submissively bend as the icy shiver of emotion, expressed, sends through them a momentary quiver, for the sublime in composition has been reached. It is the immortal Prelude of the Chopin "March Funebre." Our pride-swollen bosoms collapse; and, as the Prelude continues, we scourge ourselves in humiliation.

Without the Prelude there would be many tearless funerals, and with the Prelude many an undeserving

wretch has gone to his grave bathed in the tears of absolution.

If the dirge is not played, it is sometimes refreshing to see a military funeral, so marked is the contrast with that of the civilian, with its long train of creeping carriages, its glistening, silvered, ebony-and-glass carriage, drawn by horses wearing black fly-nets and ear-bobs, and the heavy odor of flowers mingling with silent figures massed in crêpe veiling.

What a relief is that of the soldier, where the caisson horses swing around in a trot, or the artillerymen must hold some restless animal as he rears for his plunge in the start. No black fly-nets and ear-bobs for them, but lathered in the heat of restless motion, they grind their bits and are pacified only by the rumble of wheels behind. No drawn curtains there; no perfume-laden air; no figures encumbered with crêpe veiling, but men uniformed to permit of lighthness and trained for the dispatch of duty. One can see they intend reaching the burial-place on the same day, and that the duty will be performed in good taste and time. These men have not allowed themselves to become instilled with the idea that death is a weakness, a thoughtless act on the part of the demised; they remember their comrade in the activities of his life, and in his death will attend him with the same feeling, alertness and machine-like discipline, emotion retained.

And when the firing squad lines up at the grave, will the sergeant allow a waver in his voice when he gives the command, *fire!* Is there a man in the

squad whose finger will quiver on the trigger, such that the salute will not be as one shot? If so, he is no credit to the dead comrade.

In the Capital it is fittingly said of the soldier: "They pass over the river, and rest in the shade of the trees."

Arlington! when we pass along your silent paths, breathing the redolent exhalations from your bosom, classic in memory and fertile in the life-blood of fellow-men; when there falls upon us the music of your arborescent choir, soft and plaintive, stealing, with an exquisite swell, into the inattentive ear, then rising in a celestial descendo, passing beyond reach, while we strain to catch the echoes of the ravishing chord; when we find ourselves in silent communion with Nature, drinking from the cup of reminiscence and partaking of the bread of future hope, our thoughts, in their musings, become centered on those whom you shelter in your sacred folds, and who, in return for the warmth of your nurture, create in you our historic "City of the Dead."

We find ourselves prone to wander toward those long symmetrical lines of small slabs bearing epitaphs eloquent in their brevity; they who were privates in life, but captains in death, commanders of a nation's respect. Each modest slab marks a spot where the world has been made more verdant, and the grand ensemble leaves us stilled in retrospective meditation. There are other slabs more pretentious, isolated and



exclusive, with legends that can be read afar. They are carved in relief with a portrayal of valor, and the degree of their exaltation from the ranks. Sometimes the massive pedestals appear to overshadow the modest bit of verdure creeping from its base, paled in insignificance. Sometimes it is well the legends can be read afar. These cumbersome piles, though the pride of a boastful posterity, are the abomination of a valiant soldier, for in death all heroes ascend to a common rank.

Sometimes, however, we do stroll among the pedestals. The work of the artisan is wonderful in his olive wreath, the intaglio is impressive, and the granite imperishable. We forget to look for the verdure. There is one pedestal so impressively massive, we instinctively marvel at the power necessary to move it. There is another, and we stop to think. Yes, we recall, fire was his weapon. We sniff for the redolent exhalations, but our nostrils become filled with the smoke from burning fatherless homes, and we remember the jest about the crow that would have to carry his rations.

Another pedestal, and another jest is brought to mind; a bad-tasting simile, "the bull-dog of the Navy." We strain our ears to catch the hymn of the arborescent choir, but can hear only a snarl and the gnash of teeth.

Our emotion rises, and we strive to retain it.

Do we thrive in a spirit of justice, purchased by the sear of a fire-brand?

Do we use in our nation's defense thick-necked, heavy-jawed men, whose mouths droop at the corners, men with an insatiable thirst for gore?

Have they, whom we believed responded to the nation's call through nobleness of purpose, done so through love of conquest, and taken advantage of a nation's weakness to vitalize an innate animal instinct for fight?

When we review our military pageants, marvel at their skill, admire the glistening accoutrements, and give them plaudits as our defenders, do we admit they are chafing through the inactivities of peace?

If these are truths, then the profession of arms is base, it is degradation itself, and they who follow it are fiends incarnate.

But there is another pedestal, and another legend: "Let us have peace." The hymn of the choir drifts toward us, and the breath of this soil is again redolent. We feel a lump in our throat, characteristic of childhood's emotion. Did the great soldier want only peace? Do we have among our defenders men with that for their ambition? Are there among them men who will forego the charms of domestic life, the excitement in the mercantile world, the esteem of scholarship, and hold themselves in ready training to fight like Trojans, and fight for peace? If so, theirs is the heritage of chivalry.

The greatest soldier is he who loves peace most and war least.

We don't know why we should feel hypercritical when among the pedestals, but we like best to go

where the slabs are small, and the spots of verdure have united to form one continuous greensward. For there it is we may listen to the choir. A flow of melody here, a diminuendo there, a crescendo drifting on the swell of harmony, and in the retard diffuse itself and blend its whispers with the breath of flowers to form an incense of consolation as we stand by, tearful in the thought that we live because they died. Again we partake of the bread of hope, and pass along the silent paths.

A decade had passed since the posthumous daughter pondered over the query regarding the relationship of a woman's love and a hollow tree.

His was the heritage of chivalry, and during these years he had held himself in ready training. In an international war the country had struck a fierce blow in its demand for peace. This called him to the scene of action, far from his native shore.

It is in the calm following the tempest when the soldier suffers. Then is when he would turn to the arms of wife, mother or sweetheart. Read the letter written by the light of a camp fire, the night after battle, and you read the most tender sentiments of human expression. Letter writing is the soldier's safety valve on the pressure of emotion.

It is during these calms the soldier's inactive body absorbs the poison of fevers, and that most dreaded of diseases, nostalgia. Then is when you can hear the clink of glasses and the rattle of dice, not in a

spirit of revelry, but in desperation. In one of these calms a letter was written to the posthumous daughter.

“. . . Since that evening my hope has been that duty would absorb my mind, and in this I have been blessed beyond my deserving. . . . May I be pardoned when I say, that could I have had a choice, I would have fallen upon the field of battle rather than now admit the sound of your voice has never left my ears. . . . Rumors of our return bring smiles to the face of all save one. Can I, bowed in the humiliation of child-like weakness, confess that I, too, would like to smile, and indulge myself for one moment in the thought that I was returning to you? . . . On that evening you fanned the spark into flame, and it has long since left my youth a smouldering ember which spits if it be touched by fingers moistened with memories. . . .

“My life is not what I would have had it, and it is because of my weakness, not your strength. I unwillingly spent that night in thought which left me in no fit condition to decide on so serious a question as a change in my course. If I can have made a sacrifice in my personal happiness, I shall look for my reward only in the steadfastness of purpose. I have imposed upon myself a rigorous discipline, believing that to the best end I must be devoid of sentiment, and allow the thought of no one to be a subterfuge against my duty. . . . The rapid flight of past years leads me to believe I have been very busy, and

I feel conscious of a change in my nature. . . . The strain has been great, and this weakness developed during relaxation. I do myself justice when I say that were I in normal condition I would not now be writing this letter.

“Fever is prevalent, but we hope for the best. Even I, at times, feel the premonitory symptom, a parched tongue.

“P. S.—It is one week later. I am stronger and can enjoy a smile at the possibility of my really mailing this letter. I guess I had some delirium, and thought I was again under the spell of those eyes—that parched sensation in my tongue was another strand of hair, eh?

“I shall place this letter in its envelope, return it to my pocket, and keep it as a tantalizing souvenir of the first time, since I varied my course, that my hand has trembled on the wheel.”

The letter reached its destination bearing the characteristic red ink notification, “Mailed by Hospital, Orderly.”

Is there anything surpassing in freshness the early hours of a summer's morning? When the air has not yet been breathed through the lungs of daily toil, when the vibrations of nature have not been put out of tune by the jar of daily strife! This is when you hear the love-song of the meadow lark from the highest perch in the woodlands. This is when you see the

blush of the new-born rose when its petals are first kissed by the dew.

The posthumous daughter knew these things, and was wont to steal from the house and gather narcissus for the breakfast table. On the morning following her leaving him in the graveyard she did not vary her custom, but arose from the delicious intoxication of wholesome sleep and went into the garden. The perfume of lilac was everywhere, the sparkle of dew was fairy-like, and the violet, her favorite flower, seemed to rise in evidence before her.

Through the abundance of her gathering, if for no other reason, and with a decided nonchalance, she went to place some violets on her father's grave. It was while doing so that she noticed a small pocket note-book which appeared to have fallen the day before. She read the name and address, which were printed in gilt letters on the back, the book evidently being a gift. Down in the corner was the word "Diary." With not more than a moment's hesitation she did just what any other woman would have done under like circumstances—she opened it. Like the diaries of most men, every page in it was as clean as on the day the book was made.

From the manner in which she opened the book there was some disappointment in finding it blank. In the afterthought there was some satisfaction that it was. If she was guilty of a breach of accidental trust, he would yet be innocent of her action, and she could send him the book with no misgivings. Be-

fore her return to the house she had resolved to keep it until he should call again.

Now every woman is firm in her belief that every man who has at one time been within the sphere of her influence, will again return. She will concede time to an indefinite extent, but not one iota of her faith in the eventual outcome.

The ten years had borne lightly on the posthumous daughter. Her blood was an infusion of sturdy ancestry and an out-door life. She was only becoming beautifully ripened. And though she had never breathed his name to a living soul, she felt certain it was ten years nearer the time when he would atone for his silence.

The air of the nation, which had been rife in an international strife, was subsiding, troops were returning, and people were flocking in the Capital to meet them. Some they met, and the greeting was loud and joyous. Some they met and followed in silence as they crossed over the river to the shade of the trees. These silent homecomings continued long after, for the tropical fevers had proven a deadly foe. Some, who had separated, the one bearing the kiss of the other's assurance, came together in the shades of Arlington.

When the letter bearing the red ink stamped notification reached the posthumous daughter, she recognized it instantly. She knew it would come! Of course she was interested in the stamp; but, as we like to do with letters of serious moment, she postponed

the opening until the surroundings were more suitable. She sought the sanctity of her own room, and from the care and composure with which she arranged herself in a chair it was evident she anticipated a reverie of some length. There she opened the letter and read. She fairly tingled with interest, and how the light of satisfaction danced in those eyes! A smile played from the corners of her mouth over the damask of her cheek. She continued to read, and the fire in her eyes, the crimson in her lips, the heaving in her bosom made her the woman magnificent, emotion retained. The silence was broken by the sound of paper crushing in her hand. Had he come only in weakness? Why had he not come in strength? She studied the red ink stamp a moment, then with care smoothed out the rumpled letter. Just what did the red ink stamp mean? It told in plain words, but did it tell all? He had smiled at the possibility of having mailed this letter, then had he mailed it that it might tantalize her, and finally leave her in chagrin?

He had spoken of fever, and admitted some of the premonitory symptoms. He may have gone to the hospital for treatment, and there left the letter on a table, after which the orderly, in the round of his duties, found it. She could almost see him toying with his "tantalizing souvenir," and, in careless indifference, leave it on a public writing-table. She wondered if he would ever miss it.

One thought would assert itself in spite of her resistance. Could it have been taken from his pocket



after his death? Had the red ink stamp really told all, and did she now hear in the echo of his life his real nature rising from beneath the crush of indomitable pride in his steadfastness of purpose?

They were tedious months that followed, and through which she waited in silent fear, lest she might receive an apologetic note in which his new nature was predominant; a note asking perhaps for the return of a stray letter, should it reach her, and—lest she might not. She could but wonder if it were possible any one had followed him, in silence, to “the shades.”

In the aftermath of war there is generally sufficient reason for grand peace carnivals, triumphant processions, memorial arches, and the like. Little does it matter whether the country was victor, there is always excuse for these pageants in a nation's capital, so there the people gathered, which well served the purpose for her to make the journey, ostensibly to participate in the gayeties. Having an ulterior motive, it was not strange she soon sought out the silent paths of Arlington. She came to know them well, and of one thing she felt reasonably sure: she could not have missed his name had it been there. But this afforded no rest of mind, for these were busy times over there in the shade, and new slabs were going up every day. With the determination of a sleuth, she watched for the new mounds, and scanned the temporary boards placed at the head.

The wonderful old tomb of the “Unknown Dead” became possessed with a strange fascination, and

served as an objective point in her wanderings. In the days gone by many are the tears that have fallen at its base, tears from the eyes of those who have wandered long in search of loved ones and at last left their tribute at the old tomb. Divided in life, but united in death, are the twenty-one hundred heroes placed here, for a heart-broken nation indiscriminately gathered her children's mangled remains from the bloodiest battlefield in the history of civil strife. You can safely drop a flower near this shroud of mystery and feel that its fragrance is wasted on no desert air.

Furthermore, the tomb provided a shelter from which she could observe the busy workers and the passing processions, for it stood in the greensward long since fertile in historic memory, and in these times people were not coming that way, but seeking the new ground to consecrate it with the most glorious possession of a nation, the lifeblood of a reunited people.

One morning, from this shelter, the posthumous daughter observed an open grave. Approaching it was a carriage, from which alighted a veiled figure, dressed in black, supported on the arm of a silver-haired man, an army chaplain. At the same time there was heard a trampling of hoofs made by plunging horses, and the grind of a heavy caisson, bearing a casket, moving toward the same open grave.

They were coming together in the shades of Arlington.

The veiled figure awaits him, blessed in the com-

posure of emotion retained, but it is more than human resistance she is called upon to endure.

Though not far, yet humanely softened by distance was the enthrallment of mystic sound. Wails of majestic sorrow resound in musical rhythm, and there is a perceptible tremor in the outline of the black-veiled figure. As if this were not enough, the immortal Prelude resolves into subdued whispers of superhuman expression, and in piteous supplication chants its appeal to mercy, toned from the heart's life-strings. The perceptible tremor merges into convulsive movements, and the silent figure in black clutches the sleeve of the silver-haired chaplain. The appeal of the Prelude, to Mercy, is answered by the interlude in strains of sweetness that cannot be deemed of earth, but more the voice of angels in soft-breathed hope and consolation. The blessing of this strain can only be experienced. It gives her the needed strength, for she releases the clutched sleeve. It enables the artillerymen to steady themselves while they bear the casket to the side of the grave. Not one utterance has been given, for who has voice for speech?

The silver-haired chaplain leaves her side, and advances. The breezes play in the locks of his bared head as he stands with uplifted face, in silence. Will he dare attempt speech? Does he realize the effect a break in his voice will produce?

With the assurance of divine aid his voice rings out in the stillness, and in pure accent, under perfect control, he recites the burial service.

Man of God! you have our gratitude. You preserve us from emotion expressed. When we must speak and yet are choking, you come to our rescue.

As he proceeds he marvels at his own self, but the tremolo in his voice fast increases. His is but human, not infinite strength. There is yet one sentence and he will have concluded. Oh! why was this left to the ebb of his strength?

“Dust thou art, to dust——” he paused, then lowered his upturned face in humiliation at his weakness. There was a spasmodic gasp, and the veiled figure fell in his arms.

When the posthumous daughter saw this she sank to the ground on her knees, swayed forward, and buried her face in that same grass, verdant in its chlorophyl of mystery. She tore from her bosom a handkerchief, which she placed over her mouth in an effort to check a burst of emotion. Withered and weak, she arose, protecting her tear-stained face as best she could, and hurriedly passed out along the silent paths.

Oh! Arlington, with your wealth of classic memories, are you born again, and in a spirit of retaliation, that you bring to us such scenes? Is there concealed in the innocence of your flowers the sting of anguish which you thrust in silent vituperation? Do you seek your justification in the following bit of history not yet lost from memory, though clothed in the mystery of silence?

The blighted hope of posterity born in the breast of the immortal Washington was palliated through the adoption of a soft-natured, flaxen-haired boy, whose tender shoulders were destined to bear up under such weight of importance as would be attached to the name "George Washington Parke Custis." This youth was the grandson of the great patriot's friend and first husband of his—the patriot's—wife. He was successively godson, namesake, grand-stepson, and son by adoption. Everything was his heritage save the blood of his childless father, so he was taken to Mount Vernon that this might become inculcated in his veins by a kind of induction process. It requires no vivid imagination to picture the pompous old General, erect and well-balanced in his saddle, riding out over the great estate with the little G. W. P. C. perched up behind, sticking the heels of his bare feet into the horse's flanks, his arms encircling the waist of his august foster parent in an effort to hold on.

Mount Vernon was the home of aristocracy, the shrine of the revolutionary pilgrim, and the Mecca of statesmen. All of this was brought to bear on the small boy, and many who twined their fingers in his curls thought they were stroking the brow of a future minister to the Court of St. James. But so much parade and that kind of evanescent peacock vanity which seemed to be the old General's halo must have palled on the boy. Or he may have gotten in his mind some idea, from unwritten history, of how the great aristocrat, dressed in the warmth

and resplendence of his wonderful uniforms, used to parade the winter camp at Valley Forge, exacting from the ill-clad and starving men the obeisance of a soldier's attention, they standing in knee-deep snow, shoeless and with frost-swollen feet. Howsoever it may be, the youth seemed to forego the temptation to follow in the paths that lead to greatness, and chose for himself the innocent life of a country gentleman, a choice that gave no little disappointment to the father of his adoption. When of age, he went further up the Potomac, took up the hereditary Arlington estate, which had come down through his ancestors as an original grant from the King, built for himself a mansion of classic Doric architecture, and became the "Squire."

Arlington, we want to come when there are no silent paths, when we can hear the bleat of lambs and the mooing of cows; when there are no concrete roads, but roads in the dust of which we can find the prints of little feet; when the landscape is not marred by the grotesque of geometrically shaped flower beds, but your lilacs, buttercups, and violets seek their own salvation and establish themselves according to the law, "survival of the fittest"; when your shaded woodlands have not retained the echo of the immortal Prelude, but resound in the frolic and laughter of picnic parties, and the screech of fiddles at the brand dance.

The "Squire" was a happy combination: a plebeian by birth, a patrician by environment. He adorned the mansion with treasures from Mount Ver-

non, his "office" with fox-tails and "coon" skin caps of his own catch and make. He could don a white silk vest and preside as the host of a Lafayette, or put on a home-spun shirt and sit cross-legged on his horse while he discussed with a neighbor the quality of wool produced from crossing merino strains with scrub sheep. He knew how to go through the stately minuet, and that in extending his hand to a lady his palm must be up. He knew which tunes from his own fiddle made the darkies' feet light, and also when he had an obstreperous kinky-haired youngster resting face downward on his knee, his palm should be down. It can be said, he was never out of his element, and that he was short, fat, thin-haired and happy.

Arlington had wonderful magnetic properties in those days. The social center had moved up the Potomac after the death of Washington, and left behind its rigid formality. Here the ladies did not smile only behind their fans, and it is said that old General Lafayette used to laugh until he would suffer from the shaking of a gouty foot contracted at Mount Vernon. It is even hinted that the dignified dance of that day at times seems to have been inoculated with a kind of syncopated serum, which in the parlance of to-day is "rag-time." However, this is nothing more than a deduction abstracted from the precious annals of memory, as chronicled in the following incident:

The occasion was not unusual, though the mansion

was filled with light and guests. Ladies with exquisitely small waists, accentuated by the umbrella shape of their skirts: with a bit of court-plaster, shaped like a star, a crescent or even a coach and horses, placed near the left corner of their mouths, contributed the graciousness of their presence. The gallantry of Colonial days was at its height, and the young man did not feel neglected should he be compelled to tiptoe for a glimpse of the notable dignitaries as they moved in the minuet, or the courtly grace with which they escorted the ladies to a seat.

So the prevailing decorum forced the "Squire" to the center of interest, and what came about in consequence was attended by no lack of modesty on his part.

He had been explaining to some friends of his patrician environment that the rythmical cadence in music descends with the ascent of formality, and that he knew no better illustration than a comparison of the dance of that evening with the "jig" of his own slaves. As he said this his plebeian birth was in evidence through an involuntary movement of one foot. This did not pass without observation, and not that the spirit of revelry was subsiding, for it was at its height, but through the wileful pleadings of the ladies and the tantalizing clamor of the men, the "Squire's" consent was forced that he give a practical demonstration of his theory as to this decadence in time, and do the jig. Simultaneously they receded, leaving him alone in the center of the floor: and the musicians, taking their cue, began a



familiar hornpipe, whereupon the ever resourceful "Squire" took up the rhythm with his feet.

The drivers and servants were out back of the house drowsily awaiting the termination of festivities. Like the click of a gun lock to a well-trained dog, so the change of music fell upon their ears; and instantly alert, they made for the house to listen. Here the sound of shuffling feet sent them up a trellis just outside the window, to see.

Round went the "Squire" with all the enthusiasm of his soul. His thin hair fell in strings over his face. His white silk vest began to crawl, showing the waistband of his trousers, and the starch in his linen was rapidly wilting. "Terpsichorean feet" was no undeserved comment, for he was displaying remarkable agility for one short and fat. The din of laughter had subsided into stilled admiration, and there was the hush that precedes genuine spontaneous applause.

One of the negroes perched on a trellis had reached the high-pressure point, and unfortunately let out a gurgling laugh that was heard inside. The "Squire," who was only waiting an opportunity to terminate the dance, sprang to the window and thrust out his head. There was a sudden disturbance of equilibrium, and down went the trellis with a crash. The breathless, overheated "Squire" was struck by a small falling timber, but it was enough. He staggered back and sank into a chair. This precipitated sudden action among the guests, some going to the "Squire's" assistance, others hurrying out

to seek an explanation. In the confusion a light was overturned, setting fire to some window hangings, which, however, were quickly torn down and extinguished. A roughened moulding on the near side of the far window in the north parlor, to-day, bears evidence of the historical accuracy of this narrative.

The sequel to this series of accidents was delivered, the Sunday following, in the form of an unexpected thrust. Most of that evening's assemblage were parishioners at the fashionable Christ Church in Alexandria. Now their venerable rector had many times looked down into the face of Washington, from his lofty pulpit, though, as a matter of history and contrary to the prevailing impression, the General's name was not on the official church list of his parishioners, but was attached to that of Pohick Church, a small log structure about midway between Mount Vernon and Alexandria. Because of this fact the rector doubtless nursed personal jealousies, and it was no secret that he looked askance on the tendency of decorum in the new social center.

On the Sunday in question the pews at Christ Church were occupied by their accustomed holders. This was before the quaint old-fashioned church had become modernized. The backs of the seats had not been cut lower, and a larger pulpit stood nearer the ceiling to enable the rector to see into the pews. This pulpit was reached, though with some difficulty,

by a small winding stair resembling the modern fire-escape. Owing to this, and the insufficiency of other arrangements, it was the rector's custom to ascend prior to the assembling of his parishioners. The size of the pulpit permitted him to work, unseen, when necessary to add the finishing touches of a sermon.

It is assumed the rector had prepared his usual "stock sermon" for that week, but upon hearing of the narrow escape from catastrophe and the "Squire's" assured recovery, felt called upon to select a new and more fitting text.

The pewholders were themselves conscious of an inner feeling of gratitude and, in a subdued state of mind, patiently awaited the beginning of the service, which was at all times irregular.

Patience, like virtue, is supposed to have its reward, and the amount displayed that day bore promise of abundant "food for thought."

One of the "pillars" left his customary seat at the foot of the pulpit stairs to whisper to another "pillar." They looked at the "fire-escape," and evidently decided it was easier to go to the rector's house, for they quietly took up their hats. The parishioners, misinterpreting their motive, arose, filling the silence with the sound of shuffling feet.

The location of the pulpit was not conducive to coolness, and the unusual degree of fervor in the rector that day had resulted in the loosening of his stock, the opening of his shirt front and the combing of his long heavy hair through his fingers. So completely engrossed was he in the finishing touches

of a hurriedly remodeled sermon, that he had become oblivious to the time or the stage of the service. When the sound of the moving audience attracted his attention, he instantly arose, simultaneously reading the text, "I am the rose of Sharon, the lily-of-the-valley, the fairest of ten thousand." After the audience was again seated, he explained this claim was not made in the sense of pride in personal beauty, but that one mission of the Saviour was to afford a living example which the Father chose to manifest in Him; and the lily-of-the-valley meant of the world; that every valley had its lily, and that the illustration could be brought home by looking for the lily of the Potomac valley, which, in his humble belief, was to be found in the life of the great Patriot, not long dead. He pleaded for adherence to those precepts of the Potomac lily, claimed that divine manifestations of disapproval were as possible to-day as at any time in history, and in conclusion asked them to take home the thought given in the one hundred and sixth Psalm, eighteenth verse: "And a fire was kindled in their company."

It is not known if the sermon deterred many from subsequent visits to Arlington, but it is known that during convalescence the "Squire" sat in the doorway of his "office," playing those same tunes which made the darkies' feet light.

Arlington and its master filled the important position of social gateway. If either stratum of the social world felt the need of the other, this was the shortest route.

Though not of importance, it is more than probable the present-day political campaign method can be found to have originated at the "Squire's" home. It was his long-time custom to have the neighbors and their friends come once a year to judge of his stock, with particular reference to the new strains. In the natural course of events he invited them to bring their stock for comparison, which resulted in the offering of premiums by himself. This led to an increase in attendance, which in turn led to the delight of the "Squire."

It is easy to believe the wily political aspirant took advantage of such an opportunity to be present, on the "Squire's" open invitation, and do a little hand-shaking. And if his predilection was volubility, he could doubtless get himself invited to make the awards, which gave opportunity for a "stump" speech; in fact, one that would undoubtedly be followed by the applause of his innocent host.

To-day the great need in every community is an Arlington and its "Squire," for who can neither teach nor learn the lessons of bland innocence of self-aggrandizement and unsophisticated purpose, that are delineated in those we call the "lower strata."

Functions at Arlington were as diversified as the colors in Joseph's coat, and the genius of the "Squire" was a standing guarantee as to their success. Even in "coon"-hunt parties he had been known to have a pet "coon" secretly led around through the woodlands, and then tied up in a tree.

The excited guests would follow the dogs, on its trail, and arrive at the tree, breathless, whereupon the "Squire" would send a negro up, ostensibly to shake it out. Amidst the yelping of dogs and the astonishment of the guests, the man would come down with the "coon" in his arms.

One evening the laugh was on the "Squire," and no one joined in more heartily than himself.

The woodlands of Arlington had long been famous as a roosting-place for crows. The passing of the crow is like unto that of the buffalo, which used to exist in such numbers that they blackened the plains. So the flocks of crows used to be of such proportions that they blackened the sky. One never wearied of sitting in the open, toward the close of day, watching the heavy-winged flight of the tired birds on their way to roost. The line extended far as the eye could see. You would never see the beginning nor the end. There were always crows in the sky, and toward evening they began to move in the same direction, getting thicker as the daylight weakened, being thickest about dusk, and still flying when the light had so faded they were no longer visible. In every direction these lines could be seen bearing toward Arlington.

Crows are indigenous to good soil, and, like the negroes of the "Squire," the Arlington crow was distinguished by his black, sleek, glossy, and well-kept condition.

A favorite pastime of the negroes was to shoot into the roosting-trees. There would follow a tre-

mendous whirr of wings, and as though night itself were in flight, the black cloud would rise from the tree and hover over another before settling, like a thick and smothering blanket.

The "Squire" had taken some guests out to shoot into the roosts. It takes skill to get near a flock of crows, even when they are sleeping.

The "Squire" selected a large, dead-top oak, upon whose branches many black bunches could be seen in outline against the heavens. With much care the party had crawled through wet grass, and were unusually successful in getting under the tree without a single crow having given the alarm. At the "Squire's" command, all blazed away, sending a perfect hail of slugs and shot, and in return received a rain of mistletoe, while never a crow was in the tree.

This period of Arlington's history is but the history of the "Squire," and so on we could trace through the three score and ten years of his life. The plebeian in his blood never disappeared, and when in his declining years he suffered the common fate of all who grow old, finding himself replaced by those of more vigor and youth, he built an extension to his wharf in the form of a dancing platform. When merry picnickers would land to spread their lunch by the side of Arlington's famous spring there would be seen coming down the hill a short, white-haired, red-nosed, lonely man with a fiddle under his arm. If they no longer came to him, he would go to them.

To-day there stands, far down toward the "greensward," an unkept, old-fashioned monument, the existence of which is not even known to those thousands of visitors who pass. If you scratch off the lichens, you can read:

**GEORGE WASHINGTON PARKE CUSTIS**

Born April 30, 1781.

Died Oct. 10, 1857.

On another side is the usual absurdly inappropriate scriptural quotation. There is nothing to show that you stand by the grave of the sweet-natured, unselfish, cultured, simple master of the great home in its halcyon days.

The death of the "Squire" was the dawn of a new day in Arlington's history. His only child, and heir, had some years before become the wife of a brilliant young officer. Around the new master clustered a galaxy of official dignity that must have brought a smile of approval to the spirit of Washington. He was all that is courtly, gracious, and gentle, yet stern and unrelenting. His face, though strongly masculine, was radiantly beautiful, and his soulful expression awoke one's tenderest emotions, yet you were held in awe by the almost cold dignity of his manner. He was all that the most cherished hope of Washington could have realized for his adopted posterity, and we like to think of him as an actual lineal descendant of our first and most aristocratic President. In truth he is the nearest,



even though but the son-in-law of the great patriot's step-grandson, and son by adoption.

In the new day, fox-hunts and syncopated music were relegated to the negroes; not that the new master disapproved such things, but as the delightful, informal, loving freshness of youth must eventually give way to the dignity of maturity, so was Arlington becoming of age.

While the new master had no plebeian blood, neither had he an aversion for it; and the fact that the merinos were now intrusted to the overseer was owing to the master's being a most active officer in his country's service, and spending little time at home. But when he was there the functions were even more notable than in earlier days. If the guests were not met at the carriage by the host, as in the days of yore, they were received in the parlors with superb dignity, and the seriousness in the ever sad face of the host left one imbued with a high sense of their own self-respect.

While the new master, like all men of serious purposes, encouraged no intimacies, yet he cherished the esteem and friendship of all.

Among those numbered as near friends was a certain lieutenant, perhaps so through association, as he had served in a subordinate capacity. This lieutenant had many times accepted of the hospitality at Arlington, and it is believed he is not the only one who, after pacing in solitude the portico of the mansion and looking down upon the natural beauty before him, felt the birth of jealousy in his breast.

Scarce time had the host for indulgence in the thought that he might have folded a serpent to his bosom.

The serious sadness in the new master's face proved to be a reflection of the first sorrowful brewings of a nation's distress. In the line of duty he had been sent to Harper's Ferry to arrest a violent abolitionist movement. This scarcely preceded the secession of seven States and the President's call for volunteers. At the height of this excitement Arlington's master went home to enter upon a struggle with his conscience.

He studied the oath he had taken, as an officer, and his obligation to the Union, which embodied the height of his ambition; but a lurking call in his heart would not be pacified. He was in the Union through the instrumentality of his own State's existence as a unit. It was not his option to take part in the direction of his State's policy. He came out of the struggle, guided by the dictates of a pure conscience, resolved to accept the mandate of his State as paramount.

Virginia had not then seceded, but only through the inborn patriotism of its people had wiser counsel delayed the movement which, to all, was inevitable. In the agony of this suspense Satan took the master upon a high hill and, showing him the beauties below, said, "Bow down before me, and all these things are yours." For President Lincoln unknowingly played the rôle of Satan when he offered the command of the Union armies to Arlington's master.

Almost simultaneously Virginia had cast her lot with the seceding States.

It is idle to speculate as to the inability of one, in calm judgment, to have been able to foretell the outcome of the secession movement, and no one knew this better than the master of Arlington. When the time for action came, he declined the command, accompanying it with his resignation as an officer in the service of the Union. Taking his family, he left Arlington in charge of the overseer, and the new day had closed.

When distress is brewing, action is not far distant, in a people like ours, in whose ancestry was the "spirit of '76." And never in the history of the world was there a people who more unswervingly abided by the dictates of their conscience, and were more justly entitled to the arbitrament of arms, than they who fought in the cause of the North and of the South. So it was not long before they came together on the field of Manassas. This terrible battle resulted in the Union forces falling back and entrenching on the heights of Arlington, and there was the dawn of a new era in Arlington's history.

The master had become the Confederacy's chieftain and the sting of defeat in the opening action festered in the hearts of the defeated. Through this we find a palliative for our own kindred having converted the contents of the mansion, which comprised some of the most precious personal relics of Washington, to their private use through the channels of common loot. The dismantled mansion was again

filled with people, but the rooms resounded with the gruff voices of soldiers.

Arlington became an important base, and later on, a much-needed hospital; for the carnage of war, always fearful, is never more so than when brothers meet.

A certain lieutenant, who in previous years had paced the portico in solitude while the house resounded with wit and laughter, again paced, in solitude, the same portico, though now in the garb of master. He was a Quartermaster-General and in charge of the Arlington camp.

There is a chronicle, though now practically extinct, which was inscribed by the pen of one bearing the delightful Scotch appellation Angus McSween. The authenticity of this chronicle was never questioned. The Chronicler quotes a certain commanding quartermaster, in an impulsive statement addressed to President Lincoln, on the occasion of one of the President's visits to the camp:

“Lee shall never return to Arlington. No matter what the issue of the war may be, the arch rebel shall never again enjoy the possession of these beautiful estates.”

We can picture the sad face of the pure-hearted President. There must have been a smile, not the smile of iniquity, but a timid smile of tender compassion for a man whose heart could harbor such a thought.

The Quartermaster-General found conciliation in

the rapid filling of the national cemeteries, and assumed authority to direct interments at Arlington, the first of which were made under his personal supervision, on the garden terrace in the immediate vicinity of the house. The act was sanctioned, and there goes without question the motive of the trusting President, who believed no man would intentionally wrong another.

In an incredibly short time the beautiful woodlands were fertile with the life-blood of a nation, and the paths were silent.

Arlington, was your bosom consecrated to this high service through the noblest motive in man? Was the scene of laughter and sunshine changed to silence and shades that you might serve to the better end? Born again as you are, and faithful in your trust, is your voice forever stilled in the mystery of your conception?

There were others who came together in the shades of Arlington, long after the posthumous daughter had left the "Unknown Tomb" in her burst of emotion. There were some who came together, elsewhere, and better had it been in the shade, for they brought life only. Depleted physically, by the scourage of fevers through which they had passed, theirs was neither the glory of a soldier's death nor that which goes with an empty sleeve. They were trembling in spirit and flesh, subjects only for tender

sympathies and gentle hands. Later on their cup of sorrow was to overflow when they would be invalidated out of the service.

Many who went with the vigor of health and purpose, winning to their credit deeds of courage and valor, standing fast, from the opening to the closing of hostilities, saw their comrades march home in glory and leave them to withstand, single-handed, the siege of fever. After convalescence they were to struggle in, one by one, with no martial feeling of pride, but a feeling akin to that of strangeness at the sight of their own shadow.

And so came one who had held himself in ready training, whose steadfastness of purpose had developed him into full flower at the time of his country's need.

As the flower of an army is at front in advance and at rear in retreat, so it fell to the lot of such as he to be the last to return after the termination of hostilities. It was during this delay, and the consequent relaxation, that the delirium of fever and its host of allied complications laid a siege which taxed the mettle of his well-rounded constitution. The hospital record shows a desperate encounter, a tenacious resistance and victorious stand for the beleaguered one. The long convalescence brought about a change in his nature. That stern veneering, with which to cover himself he had worked so unrelentingly, disappeared, and he had neither heart nor strength to again undertake the task.

After a placid review of his sacrifice of the golden

years of his life, he went back to take up the thread where he had dropped it, more than ten years before.

The active principle of vitality is something difficult to comprehend. When the broad-chested, full-blooded man succumbs at the prime of life, and the pale-faced, shriveled weakling reaches a ripe old age, we naturally ask, how is it? When we find people who have health and bad habits, and others who have neither, we wish to know wherein lies the virtue of temperance? We know that women of hysterical tendencies have remained composed in the face of disaster, when strong men resort to inhuman desperation. Those most robust can least bear the rack of pain. They who have never known a sorrow are the first to fall when overtaken. When we find such incongruities existing, the best explanation is that which is most abstruse. And that which conveys least to clear up these physiological enigmas involves the use of emotional natures.

The posthumous daughter characterized all that was wholesome and well-balanced. It could be said she was of good poise, which implies control of an abundance of emotion. No sorrow had hovered near her life, and the taste of anguish was unknown. But the sting of Arlington's flower had pierced deep, and when she left the "Unknown" tomb, she husbanded her strength that she might reach the privacy of her own room.

Next morning found her with flushed face and an unusual brilliancy in the eyes. The flush increased,

the breathing quickened, and by night the fever was higher. The physician's remark about too much gayety made her smile, in the thought that her secret was not known. She rallied quickly, but there had been time enough to think.

What priceless hours are those which, in our weakness, we devote to plans for action in our returning strength. Through the time of convalescence we can inspect our inactive mechanism, detect its weakened parts, and many times emerge with a remodeled life.

We can picture her resting in the quiet and softened light of her room. What was her purpose? What was her future? It is the normal intent of every woman to be a wife, though through the peculiar machinations of destiny Nature is at times baffled and some of the highest prizes in the lottery of life are never drawn. It is not to be supposed she dwelt on the thought of spinster loneliness, for Nature has a compensating pendulum, and every spinster believes she became so through a higher motive in her destiny.

She knew, when on that evening she had laughed in his face of seriousness, it was because of her weakness; for at the time she was just as conscious of being in his power as she was of his being in hers. The laugh, like bravado, was an only defense. So, on through these years she had waited his return, some day, she knew not when, nor had she particularly cared. Waiting had been her unconscious purpose in life. Now if she allowed herself to believe



anything regarding him, that purpose had been frustrated through his death. She withstood that thought, and sought assurance from her inability to confirm it, but dared not trust the assurance. She would seek a new and living purpose. It was plain to her he had taken up a new purpose since that evening, and further, that she had been the immediate cause of the change in his course. She felt confident any other affinity in her life could not be a true one. There was some consolation in the thought that if she had displayed weakness by laughter, he displayed the same by petulance, as there had been no true reason for assuming her pretended indifference was genuine. She endeavored to call to mind that in his long absence she had not particularly missed him, that she found about the same in life, during that time, as in the years of his friendship. But an inner whispering hinted this indifference was when she expected his eventual return. So the longer he postponed coming, the more she determined to retaliate by a formal coolness in her welcome, though the stimulus of this thought no longer more than sufficed.

When he had changed his purpose the new one admitted of the most drastic consecration of personality. It left no room in life for the individual self, only an ever readiness for summons to duty, and in which there could be nothing subserving to his ultimate happiness. He had written that he looked for reward in the steadfastness of purpose. Why could not she, herself, look for a similar reward? If a man

can seek one of the most difficult routes on the chart of life, follow it through darkness and storm, in the knowledge that there is no haven at the end, and steering by the one beacon, steadfastness of purpose, cannot a woman do the same?

She recalled the dramatic effect of her response when, upon a certain occasion, having been chided for her espousment of the "Lost Cause," she had replied, "If my father could die for it, I can live for it." So why should she not live for a purpose? By what course should she steer to avoid calms? Where does the tempest of life rage highest? Where is the chart least defined? What is there which calls for woman's every action that offers most in opportunity and least in reward, where rest is found in doing, and hope only in the unselfish adherence to purpose without end?

The world can be said to consist of two classes: those who have purpose and those who have not; and in either class are to be found all conditions of society. There are those continually inert, and those continually active, all equally devoid of purpose. Purpose is dependent neither upon luxuries nor the necessities of life. It is no more accelerated by success than it is retarded by failure. The love and protection we have and provide for our dependents is instinct, and goes with its price, affection. The part we play in upbuilding society is duty, the price we owe. Beyond instinct and duty is the purpose of our creation into the highest order of intellect, and the world advances upon the addition of each recruit

into the ranks of those who seek this purpose. The advance is maintained only by those who remain steadfast.

The posthumous daughter came from her convalescence a remodeled woman. The wonderful light that had dwelt in those blue eyes was more of a soulful mellow tint. The flower, once in the face of her youth, was again flushed to the burst of a full-bloom rose. Her normally vigorous features were shrunken to the proportions of exquisite Dresden china. The melliflence of her speech was colored with the tinge of serious sadness. She seemed happy to the point of ecstasy. She had sought her purpose and the world advanced.

It was through no spirit of defiance to the laws of nature, but from a critical analysis of "the most in opportunity and least in reward," that she entered upon the work of nurse in a charity hospital.

At Arlington the sexton makes an early round, every day, to gather up the wilted flowers that were fresh in life and love when placed there the day before.

The grave is no place for wilted flowers. We want to leave them in their freshness and fragrance, and not find them when we come again, but feel that the timid spirit of our dear one has breathed them in.

What is more indescribably beautiful than a flower in the splendor of its freshness? What is more em-

blematic of pathetic woe than the same flower when wilted?

Nature's teachings are always by contrast. She shows us the most glorious tints and magnificent coloring in her skies, not to be followed by the light of day, but by the darkness of night. She makes the dewdrop sparkle in childish innocence and the sea storm in furious threat, the one but the multiple of the other. We find fairy-like grace, ceaseless animation, gorgeous raiment and the joy of light depicted in the same butterfly whose larva was the passive, homely and slothful worm groveling in the damp and darkness.

And so we trust our heaviest burdens to that carrier most frail in construction. It is when our emotion must speak, and yet there are no words, that we send the message through flowers. It is when our hearts are pining, and the loneliness weighs heavily, that we seek communion through flowers. It is when we would appeal to the guardian spirit of our destiny for consolation of mind, and offer sacrifice that its scent may rise to the heavens in acceptable fragrance, that we offer flowers. It is when we would whisper of our loneliness, seek comfort in the commingling of thought and memory and invoke pity on our desertion, that we place flowers on the graves of those who were dear to us in life. It is through charity that the sexton makes a daily round to remove them. Would that the same charity could be extended to the living!

There are those beautiful in the bloom of youth;

but the cheek will fade, the brow will wrinkle, the hair will frost, and no one comes to remove the withered flowers. There are those fresh in the zenith of pride in success; but calamity smothers the freshness, the friction of reverses wilts the spirit, and who comes to remove the withered flowers? There are those gleaming in the possession of a new born hope, but when spotted by the blight of disappointment and mildewed with the inactivity of a stayed ambition, why are the withered flowers left? There are those clothed in the spotless garment of chastity; though when the triumph of creation is smirched in the mire of degradation, and the delicate flower of personal purity wilts in remorse, why can not the hand of mercy remove the withered flowers?

When the crest of life's wave has rolled by, the buoyant spirit become sodden and the weight of years disturbs the footstep's equilibrium, why will not some one remove the bondage of withering age ere the mortal spirit must take flight from its shattered abode? Why did not Providence, in His munificence, give us a sexton for the living, and let us awake each morning to find the witherings from the flower of a past day's life removed?

If the flowers, even when withered, must remain on life, can not we preserve them, in their freshness, from the fiery rays of strife and the chilling frosts of indifference, so their period of fragrance may be extended? Can not we, each day, freshen the cheek of those dear to us with the aromatic spirit of love, and so make the bloom linger? Can not we remove

the poison from our darts of criticism and blunt the point of our foil, that in the parries of life the wound we give to pride will cause the flower to wither less quickly?

When hope is the remnant of a boundless ambition, when it becomes the food of a hungry soul, when the crest-fallen float on the sea of existence by clinging to it, can we not leave the remnant intact, can we not spare a little from our spice of life to make the food more palatable, can we not breathe a few soft words to inflate the vapid life raft, and so postpone the withering of the flower? If the garment of chastity, though long steeped in the cleansing power of contrition, yet retains a stain and the flower must wilt in isolation beneath the pitiless pelts of censure, can we not let him who is without sin among us cast the first stone?

There is a little flower appropriately called the Immortelle, owing to its property of retaining shape and color after drying. It shows a delicate framework of rich colors, but has no fragrance. There is another little shrub called the Calycanthus, peculiar in that its flower is more fragrant when wilted.

A woman devoid of the charm of feminine fragrance is very unlike one possessing this characteristic. We like best those who are most reliant, most dependent, most susceptible to neglect, who have least of self-reliance. In the frailness of their structure man's vigor is best reflected.

So we don't care for the Immortelle; its fadeless

nature wears on us; there is no contrast. We much prefer the *Calycanthus* that wilts but continues to pervade us with its fragrance long after.

When the hoary frosts of age are resting on the brow, and they who in the even-tide of life have become matted in the entanglement of accumulated witherings, and the petals are so dry that more than a breath will blow them from the corolla of existence, can we not pause for a moment to look for the colors in their western horizon which are so fast fading into night? Can we not remember that true flowers are not *Immortelles*, and so draw near to detect if there is fragrance in the witherings, and if, like the *Calycanthus*, most fragrant when most wilted?

If we cease in our own desire to be *Immortelles*, and devote more energy toward sexton charity, we may sooner take on the homely hue of the *Calycanthaceæ*, but then we will have their fragrance.

So every morning the faithful old sexton at Arlington makes his early round, and it is tons of withered flowers he carries away each year. The bounty of his harvest comes with our celebration of the National Memorial Day, when his gatherings are the lifeless carriers in the annual offering of our perennial love. On this day the clippings from every shrub and vine throughout the nation go to mingle their fragrance with the memory of our soldier dead. So universally recognized is the custom to gather flowers wherever found, that the dearth of them the day following is a wonderful object-lesson. It shows

us how it looks when the flowers of our homes are suddenly gathered in at the nation's call.

It was on one of these days that a flower committee had clipped its resources to the roots, and there was yet an old-fashioned garden belonging to an old-fashioned woman, a garden which probably never had a pruning knife of any description in its midst. There was a jumble of honeysuckle, a group of glaring red hollyhocks that appeared to be walking about on stilts, and a snarl of wild roses, all combining to form a paradise for spiders and grass snakes. The poor little old widowed woman, who had fought life's battle, single-handed, since early in the sixties, was generally conceded to be the most unreconstructed "rebel," for her size, of the time. So the flower gatherers, ever zealous in their harvest and with a partly filled basket, halted at her gate for consultation. All were willing to brave the spiders and snakes, but who would brave the little old woman to ask consent? They were not certain she even knew of the existence of Memorial Day, but were sure she had never been in any national cemetery. Should they merely ask for the flowers, or should they reveal their true purpose and openly say they were to go on the graves of Federal soldiers? They finally resolved that the memory of heroes should not be clothed in a false garb, and made a clean breast of their intentions to the widow. A twinkle's flash filled the eyes which had more frequently been filled with tears. Could she believe her senses, she who had waited all these years for an opportunity



to avenge the death of her husband and his "Lost Cause"? She must verify that question.

"And you want my flowers to put on Yankee soldiers' graves?"

The committee saw that they had exposed an unprotected flank, and determined to retire under the truce of frankness, so meekly answered, "Yes."

"Well," she said, rising to the height of her weazened little body, and spitting out the words as well as she could from a toothless mouth, "take 'em, and I wish you had ten thousand more Yankee graves out there to decorate." And the next morning the blooms of the widow's garden were among the witherings the sexton gathered up on his early round.

It was while making one of his charity rounds the sexton came to the "Unknown" tomb, a place that generally contributes to his accumulations. While raking up some witherings, he observed a small pocket note-book which seemed to have fallen the day before. He read the name and address which was printed in gilt letters on the cover, the book evidently being a gift. Down in a corner was the word "Diary." With no more than a moment's hesitation he did just what any other man would have done under like circumstances. He put it in his pocket. When he had returned from his round he enclosed the book in an envelope and wrote an address, identical with that in the gilt letters on its cover. Had he not been a man he would have read:

“ It has been a long time since I found you, little book, and through it all I have waited for your owner to come and get you and, incidentally, me. Now I would not say that aloud for worlds, even when no one was within hearing, but it was fun to write it, and since I have adopted you and intend keeping a diary, it has to stay. Anyway, this is not to be a diary; that word sounds commonplace. It is to be a confidence-book, and if I can't tell my confidence-book everything, what is the use of having one?

“ Do you know, little confidence-book, that every night before I go to bed I take you out, and look at the name in gilt letters on your cover, kiss you, then say my prayers, and one thing I always add is—no, I don't have to tell even my confidence-book what I say then. But it is something nice, and I think he is horrid, for he has not so much as written a note to me since he went home the night you were lost. And he did not stay home, either, but went into the army, as if he never wanted to see any one again.

“ Who would say ‘yes’ the first time she was asked anything? And do you know, I never realized what he meant, and what I did, until next morning. He should have said, ‘ Now I am going to say something very important, something that I long ago decided to say at this time, something that I am going to offer ’—and just lots of other somethings. Then I would have looked down and picked at the hem of my handkerchief, and have been silent for a long time, so he would get real anxious and say it again. After he had repeated it, I would have been

silent a little while longer, then slowly raise my eyes and looking straight into his face, say what an honor I consider that to be; how much he offers for so little; what great happiness any one can expect who shares his life, and finally ask him to wait while I strive to become more worthy of his love, and if I could never become so, not to think that our friendship will become lessened.

“But no, he did so differently, and asked me without showing any preliminary symptoms. I can't remember what he said, but I know it was no little speech like they say in stories. And so I had to laugh and run away. That night I felt real happy, and went to sleep thinking that the next time he talked that way I would not laugh.

“It was next morning that I went out and found you. Of course I didn't expect him ever to ask for you, because he did not really want you. Who ever heard of a man keeping a diary? He kept you in his pocket, through a kind of appreciative duty, because you must have been a present, but he never told you a single secret. And when he comes again he will not dare refer to the evening you were lost, so of course you are safely mine. Perhaps some day, a long, long time from now, it may be I can tell him I found his little book and scribbled in it, and then he will want you.

“Little confidence-book, there is so much I can not tell any one except you. You are the only thing I have that he ever gave to me. Doesn't that sound

queer? I am pretending he gave you to me. He could have left you there, well knowing I would find you.

“Do you know what I did with that myrtle wreath he made for me? I hung it in my room and composed a verse to go with it.

“This is a garland of thought entwined  
With moments caught from time, in its flight;  
Not held in the frail withered myrtle's bind,  
But fast in the hold of love, in its might.

Ah! that verse means much to me. The train of thought, that rolls on in the course of life, has been interrupted and a gem stolen. Even Time, which boasts it never waits, had to pause and surrender the moments we spent that evening, and fast I hold them in memory.

“Now I may as well speak my mind, for it brings relief. For a long time I have experienced the sensation of being in love. At first I did not know what it was. It seemed to come in the ordinary course of human events. The evening he was here I was conscious of being in my best humor. I also felt very happy. After he left, everything seemed so different that I began to think he was the cause of my sensations. Day after day I go alone in this secret. Think of having to keep a secret from everybody, even the one who is most concerned! Yes, from all except my confidence-book! I wonder how many people there are who have a secret love, and have to

sham all of the time, while deep down in their hearts are memories of a look or word which, if but the hundredth part of a second's duration, was bliss?

“I am sad to-day and heavy at heart. I have waited so long for a letter from somebody that will in some way, no matter how distant, refer to him. I know that only the mention of his name will cause me to tremble.

“On time goes, and not a syllable comes, so have I not reason to be sad?

“I have been very much interested, of late, and know you won't laugh when I tell you this wonderful amount of interest is centered on what he would say, if, for fun, or for some other reason, he should write a letter to me. Sometimes I can see the headlines in carefully written letters: ‘My dear Miss ——’ I know I should be seized with the creeps, and would first glance through it to know what he said at the end. At other times I can see the first sentence, ‘I crave your pardon,’ and lots of sarcastic references, ending with, ‘Your indulgence in a reply to this is more than can be expected.’ When that kind of letter comes, I want to be where I can say what I think, and not have to think what I say.

“Since I don't get any kind of a letter, I have decided the one that is to come shall be a nice one, which is certainly the more cheerful way to look at it.

“Just what do I want him to say? If I could be a fairy and whisper the thoughts in his ear, what would I whisper? This would be an awful responsibility! Suppose I was that fairy and had to write for him a letter to myself, then be myself again and take the consequences as to how I would feel toward him after reading it. I wish I had not thought of that. Suppose I should make him appear as love-sick as I know I am. I would not like that, because no woman cares for a man who is too deeply in love with her. It is too much like having a pet bird in a cage. Suppose I should have him evade all reference to that evening, and write just a plain, every-day, friendly letter? I would think he was intentionally tantalizing me, and would not like that.

“What if I should make him be real nice and confess that his action was close to rudeness; ask if I should accept his silence as a confession from an erratic temperament and let him rest his load of penance at my feet? I know I would think of him as a weakling; and, try as I might, I could never quite, again, think of him as I do now.

“I realize I must spend some thought before I mould the words that are to commit his fate to my hands.

“I have decided to trust him to my tender mercies. Since I know I can never do him justice, I shall make allowance for any apathetic tendencies that may arise in my real self. So I will have him write to me a valentine.

## " PETITION

" I humbly beg, beseech and pray  
You read, before you throw away,  
This timid, trembling, pleading missive;  
For it to me will bring much bliss, if  
You will sign my pardon.

## " MISSIVE

" St. Valentine did set a day  
When all should be as blithe and gay  
As newly mated birds, which sing  
Their love-lays in the birth of Spring.

" A day when hearts should each be free  
Of care, and spirits filled with glee;  
With sunbeams racing through the soul  
To gain true love, their final goal.

" To-day, a heavy cloud hangs near  
A lonely one, who filled with fear  
Is, lest it should its fury vent  
On him, an humble penitent.

" A heavy heart so fiercely thumps,  
And thuds, and throbs, and pounds and bumps;  
A bosom writhes in agony,  
As does a maddened storm-tossed sea.

" Pray! calm the tempest. If you will,  
Just softly whisper, 'Peace, be still';  
And send to me in plain design  
A pardon for my valentine.

" All of my pains to save him was simply making trouble for myself, as I will now have to plan how I would answer such a communication.

" In valentines one has to interpret their message,

which surely depends on how you feel toward the one who sends it; while with poetic license the wording can be such as to either have much or have no meaning, all dependent upon the point of view you may choose to take.

“I have to admit he has adroitly circumvented every loop-hole from which I can reply.

“How I would like to tell him of my heart’s longing, and, in a breath of soft whisper, be forced to admit my plight! But I can’t do it, for a woman is not supposed to really love, only to yield to the love of others, and oh, dear! how untrue that is.

“I presume I should write to him a note-size reply, so he would understand I did not care to express myself at length. Then the conventionalism of notes lets one write his name, with the prefix ‘Mister’ at the end, together with the date, so you don’t have to bother about the beginning or ending. I would speak of his clever conception in valentines, and incidentally use the ‘we’ form in address, telling him ‘we’ had not entirely forgotten him, even through his long silence, and that ‘we’ always assumed he would take advantage of any opportunity he may have to make us a visit.

“How unsatisfying all this would be. I don’t like it. I want him to make a bold plunge and write one of those letters you can squeeze and see the very drops of life-blood ooze from it. I feel I can trust myself for the consequences, since I am in an exceedingly receptive mood, so I will have him confess in



unsparing terms his love for me. He can leave out all preliminaries and explanations, and just begin:

“ ‘To you,—the one whose countenance is ineffaceable in my memory, the sound of whose voice is in my ears, imperishable to the extent of my heart’s life,—I pour out my soul, in the faith that your generous nature will harken to the call of one who is so intrepid as to nurture the ambition that your life’s happiness may be cast from the mould of his own destiny. Scan not too closely the brazen arrogance that prompts this act. You would find the embodiment of jealous envy. Envy of the very sunshine that kisses your cheek, though:

“ ‘Were I but a sunbeam,  
And on your cheek could play,  
I’d kiss you till it seemed as if  
I’d kiss you all away.

Scan not, else you find one prone to idle dreaming,  
ever seeing the one

“ ‘With eyes of soulful azure blue,  
And summer’s warmth of turquoise hue.

“ ‘You would find one who hears, in the “Voices  
of the Wood,” only yours,

“ ‘Whose voice is soft and gentle,  
Like that of cooing doves,  
Wafted, as a breath of hope,  
To one who your voice loves.

“ ‘The yearning of my life can find relief only

when I venture to allow the pen to move according to the dictates of my heart, and my soul flow in its trail, that it may lay before you the story of its pent-up love, a love that fires to that feverish thirst, unquenchable, save by drinking in the spirit of your presence.

“ ‘The story is one old and simple, though ever new in application. It is only that of longing, hush and straining. Longing for one in person, who is ever near in presence; hushed in preoccupied silence to catch the first utterance of one whose voice ever rings in my ears; straining into the blank of distance for the first outward glimpse of one ever seen when my vision turns inward.

“ ‘Take the story to yourself. It is my life, and,

“ ‘Were it filled with brightest promise,  
Noble purpose, strong and true,  
Though but an offering humble,  
I would make it all, to you.’

“ How hollow even that seems compared with the way I want to be loved. I want to be smothered in his caress, and revived with his tears.

“ When songbirds flit from our paths and sing in the sunshine as though they would burst their throats, we are not satisfied, but go far into the midnight mists and make our way through the shadowed woodland to hear the lonely nightingale.

“ When flowers grow at our doorstep, in a profusion of beauty, we leave them and climb the moun-

tainside to seek that lonely wild rose which grows highest and among sharpest thorns.

“Is it always that we long for what is most difficult to obtain? Can it be that my longing for his love only indicates I shall never really possess it? Is he the wild rose growing over a precipice that I can never climb?

“To-day I gathered a bunch of daisies, and pulled off the petals of every one to the measure:

“‘He loveth me all heartily,  
Disdainfully, distrustfully,  
He loves me not at all.  
In secret, smart; till death us part;  
He loves me, all in all.’

“And do you know not a single one came out right, that is, except when I cheated. I felt very disconsolate until I chanced to think they were only ‘brown-eyed-Susans,’ and those flowers always bring sadness; you can see tear drops coming from their eyes. After that happy thought I gathered an armful of ‘golden-eyes,’ for they bring sunshine and happiness. I picked and picked, a long time, before one came out just as I wanted; but it did.

“So it is, with him, I can wait, if only some day, when I have pulled the last petal from patience, I shall find him waiting for me.

“I would measure all the stars in the heavens to that verse if, at the end, there would be one little gleam of light, even though ever so distant, which

would twinkle back a ray of hope that 'He loves me, all in all.'

"My sweetheart book! why can't I say my sweetheart's book? Would that I could say his sweetheart's book! It is strange how bold one becomes from little ventures; at first I felt I must immediately send you to your owner; then I changed my mind and decided to keep you till he should come. I did this for a good long time, during which I began to fondle you just a little, and each day you seemed more precious. The first time I kissed you I felt guilty of something, I know not what, but I soon became hardened, and it is wonderful how much satisfaction one can get from caressing an inanimate remembrance if it is coupled with a heart's longing. Then it was I fearlessly adopted you and entrusted the very sacred thoughts from my heart of hearts to your keeping. Each entry I made seemed to anchor him more surely in my life, until I did not hesitate to disclose that he pervades my every thought.

"Help me keep my secret from the heartless world and, through pity, keep it from him. I pray not to die of a broken heart from his learning of my love and being filled with contempt that I was so insipid.

"Keep it all, for I keep you in my bosom, nearest my heart. From the first I have tried to keep just one little secret that I did not want to share, even with you. But you wring it from me; and I am no longer mistress of my own intentions. Do you remember when I came near telling you what I say in

my prayers, then lost courage and persuaded myself that I did not have to reveal that? With it you have my life, all in all. It is very precious, for I say it only in prayer, and shall write it in whispers.

“If he should die while yet I sleep,  
I pray the Lord his soul to keep;  
And ere the time I should awake  
My lonely soul He too will take:

“That on their journey through the skies  
Our souls shall in the same cloud rise;  
And when they reach the throne of Grace  
My soul near his may find a place.”

### III

## THE POTTER'S FIELD

“And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.”—Matthew xxvii: 7.

BACK in the days when customs were nearer their antecedents and antecedents nearer their origins, there existed the unmarred beauty of two valleys that come together not far south from Jerusalem.

Valleys are those lines of expression on the face of the earth which signify softness, quiet and rest. Where the valleys of the Gahennan and the Jehosaphat form a juncture is one of those beautiful dimples in the face of Nature.

Here the stilled waters took on animation and laved the grass-covered banks with the tenderness of caressing. The boughs of the olden-day cedars swung far over the banks, making a cooling shade, such that the waters, owing to a lowering of temperature, formed those little whirlpool-like eddies always to be found in the shade.

From the far-up source of each stream the air, laden to saturation with oriental spice from the mountain flower, drifts into mingled fragrance at the juncture of these valleys.

Here it was the weary pilgrim, after a journey

through parching sands, was wont to stop and rest in the shade and bathe his blistered feet in the cooling waters before he entered the city. And while he sat, in restful contemplation, could he have looked into the future he would have seen the very restfulness of the place was, eventually, to bring about the contumely in which it would be held; for the worshipers of idolatry were even then seeking the groves to contaminate their fragrance with the stench of burning flesh in the offering of sacrifice.

It was not strange that, as the juncture of the Gehennan and the Jehosaphat is of all retreats about Jerusalem the most beautiful, it should have been chosen as the common ground for fanatical religious zealots; and it was not long before the grass-clothed banks were drenched in blood, and the air rent with the shrieks of sacrificed children, while the restful shades gave way to the dance of heinous shadows formed by the flames of funeral pyres at the midnight offerings of new-born babes.

And could the same resting pilgrim have looked even further he would have seen the laden air again retain its spice, the waters once more clean and the paths overgrown, but a lingering taint of abhorrent suspicion hovering about, and the place totally deserted, a victim to its own beauty, and destined to be coupled with the most dramatic treachery in history.

“The kiss that betrayeth” was an old story long before the days of Judas. When the desire to err was born in the breast of man, an all-wise Providence coupled with it the seed that gives rise to a disease

known as "remorse of conscience"; and the same spirit of atonement has ever existed as a saving clause in the weakness of human nature.

When Judas accepted the thirty pieces of silver, as payment for the betrayal of Christ, the seed of remorse burst into full flower; and preparatory to terminating the agony of his mental suffering he deposited his wretchedly gotten gain in the church potter, which receptacle was designed for a final disposition of "blood money," when its sear into the conscience of its holder could no longer be borne.

In the use of money found in church potters there was associated the desire to obtain, with it, something akin to the price of the deed it had purchased. And the most that the trivial sum for the betrayal of Christ would purchase was the one-time beautiful grove, and afterward the abandoned "field of blood," at the juncture of the valleys of the Gehennan and Jehosaphat, which is known in history as Aceldama; and though to-day it is clothed in Nature's most beautiful garb, yet it reeks with the superstitions of men. Thus it is we seek the origin for the name of the most mysterious of all graveyards, the "potter's field."

When we who have a well-sodded spot at the foot of an imperishable family monument awaiting us—or more grandly, a niche in some palatial mausoleum—are taken with a sense of pathetic ridicule at the suggestion of a potter's field grave, let us remember such a graveyard was once purchased with the price of Christ's blood, that not charity, but the hospital-



ity of a city's reverence could be shown the stranger who, at the end of his weary pilgrimage, met death within the walls of old Jerusalem.

While one-half of the world has, to some extent, awakened to the fact that it does not know how the other half lives, it is more than strange that even curiosity has in so slight degree aroused an interest in their passing from our midst. Who stops to look in at the charity hospitals, the morgue, or the potter's field? Yet one out of every two of us takes a charity route for eternity. When the rosy hue of life's contentment seems fading, and your spirit becomes filled with a sense of unrest, throw off the monotonous contact with the great upper half and go out to the potter's field for an afternoon's delving into the phases surrounding the passing of the other man who, with you, constituted a couple in the scheme of predestination.

You won't recognize the place if it is a phantasy of marble slabs you are seeking, and not something more nearly resembling a newly ploughed field. Off at one side, in a field of unsymmetrical ridges, you will find a queer old man who responds to your inquiries with an acrid shyness and suspicion. He may tell you he is the grave-digger, if you can first give him satisfactory assurance as to the purpose of your visit. He will seem very queer, perhaps a trifle unbalanced, but you will reason no thoroughly sane man would have taken such work. And then his surroundings have no tendency to produce other than a morbid state of mind. He may not have

spoken to a soul in days, for no life comes his way. You may wonder at the cause of so disheveled a state of the ground, but the mounds are only the graves of the counted countless credited to the city's charity. After having watched an afternoon's proceedings, you will endeavor to estimate the number of regiments the old grave digger may have buried. Your inquiry may bring forth the statement that he has worked there for years, and again you question to know why the place is not filled, and where is room for the long ridges yet to be made? You are beginning to learn, when he tells you he has been over the ground several times. You will then divine that every time he lays the body of a homeless wanderer to rest, another friendless mortal, whose poor body had at last found lodgment, must give way to the newcomer; for no sooner are the long rows completed, than a return over the same lines is begun, modern-day official Charity being generally confined to an undisturbed rest of but one year.

Later on, the grave-digger, who has been awaiting the coming of the "dead wagon," goes out to meet an ordinary-looking vehicle with plain black leather curtains. You may have seen such a wagon but never thought as to what it contained.

You hesitate before deciding if you will really stay. Momentarily, a new interest has been aroused in the grave-digger, and for the time you are forgotten while he eagerly glances under the curtain. His face, ordinarily expressionless, will reveal a look of satisfaction or disappointment, for each crude

box there represents a few cents extra toward the maintenance of his meagre life. You feel you would prefer gradually to accustom yourself, so remain at a distance; for, should your courage fail, you will want to get your attention diverted.

There is an odd exchange of greeting between the grave-digger and the driver, together with a receipt for the load of boxes, each box with its serial number, and placed in line consecutively. This enables the identification of a grave should an interred body be subsequently claimed.

Now, a box containing the body of an adult is no light task for two old men, in its unloading, and only one old man to bury it, so formality gives way to ingenuity, and the boxes, one at a time, are slipped out until an end falls to the ground, the other resting against the wagon. Thus each box very nearly attains an upright position during the brief interval occupied by the driver in moving his wagon forward, whereupon the box falls at the side of its place of interment, whence it can be rolled into its grave.

The thud of each fall jars your nerves, but the calmness of the old half-witted man gives you courage, and serves to brace you for each succeeding fall. That time it was a crash! The box gave way, and before your curiosity let you turn aside you caught sight of something in it. You are glad you remained at a distance, and nervously look for something else to hold your attention while the old man repairs the box.

At first you marveled at the display of self-com-

posure shown in the grave-digger, then it changed to admiration. Now your cowering nerves make you feel you would even cling to him for support, and you are powerless to leave. When you have made sure there is nothing longer visible, you master yourself and go nearer the line of boxes, for the old man is making preparations for the work of burying. When you have seen the absolute indifference with which he sits on a box for a few moments' rest, you are sufficiently encouraged to remain. He is in fine humor, for his day's work will afford sufficient for his needs, and he busies himself accordingly. You stand by in silence; you do not choose to sit.

The old man continues digging, and you feel some sense of relief, until his spade strikes something, sounding as though he had come to a wooden bottom. How did it happen there was a plank there? Then it comes over you: he has struck an old coffin. You feel an inclination to saunter off while he cleans out the grave, but his is a reassuring manner and you remain; you even look into the grave. It looks very much as a pit would appear if it had partly concealed planks in the bottom, and all that remains to be done is to roll the new box in on top of the old one. You can surely witness that. The old man measures the depth with his spade, gives a grunt of satisfaction, and moves forward to make the next shallow opening.

You have been through it now, and, quite proud of your courage, anticipate the calmness with which

you will watch him go through the next task. He digs away, and again strikes wood. It jars you slightly, because you had not expected it so soon. He cleans away the dirt from the top of another old coffin, just as before, then straightens up for a moment's rest. You feel vain in the possession of your own wonderful stamina.

But he does not move to the next place, as you supposed he would, so you wait with your now steady nerves. He makes a stroke with his spade, and before you realize what is to follow, has split open the old box, exposing to view the complete framework of a human body, every bone in its relative position, as if placed there preparatory to the building of an anatomical structure. You are dazed, and wonder what the old man will do next. Surely he did not know he would find so gruesome a sight. In another minute he has rolled the bones into a pile in one corner, and you watch him sift the dirt through his fingers to separate any small bones he may have displaced.

You will probably refrain from a close scrutiny of succeeding openings, and it is well if you do. Occasionally an opened box displays remains not sufficiently well advanced in the stage of decomposition to permit of being raked into a pile in the corner, whereupon the grave-digger will refill that grave, to be left until again he comes down the same long ridge.

Should you feel interested in further experiences

of the old man, and make inquiry to this effect, he may scan some recent interments, for what appears to be a disturbed grave, then make you comprehend he sometimes opens a box from which the head is missing, and you will understand it is an easier matter for those who earn their living through the supplying of anatomical material to steal away with the head or a limb, leaving the mutilated body in its resting-place.

Talk with him further, and you may win his full confidence. This poor old man, ostracised from the animate world, shunned by every human that has a taint of superstition in his nature,—and who has not?—has pride. Let him take you to the place where he buries the children from the foundling asylum. There is a little corner which he retains for this purpose. The small boxes do not take up much room, so he has not found it necessary to disturb them. In the city's administration regarding the potter's field there is a provision to the effect that such graves as are claimed and cared for, to the extent of placing a wooden "tombstone" at the grave, may remain undisturbed. And here in this corner you will find rows of small white painted slabs, elaborated with stenciled letters which say to the pitifully small portion of the world passing that way, that little mites of humanity, even though with but a single name, are sleeping here.

One little mound may be adorned with a heart-shaped figure formed of small shells, another with a broken flower vase which the old man has found

somewhere, and there may even be a bunch of wild flowers on the latest among his sleeping charges. He moves about silently, stepping between the mounds, picking up a piece of trash here and there or pulling out a conspicuous weed.

Read such an epitaph as,

“CHARLOTTE.  
*Age about one year.*”

Can you comprehend the hidden meaning in that? Do you realize she was a creation of soul and body, ushered into existence, perhaps, through the gateway of parental shame, only to be thrown upon the scant mercy of a world whose sympathies have long been overtaxed, then to pass her one year of strange existence in the din of a foundlings' home, after which the little body finds rest from its jostled career in the potter's field, and no one but a half-witted gravedigger to keep watch? If we believed in the reincarnation of souls, what place in the new realm would such a little mite's soul fill? If it returned clothed as a golden-haired princess, could one bear envy toward her? Will our conceptions admit of contemplation as to why the Creator of life brought from eternity those little beings, and let them, moth-like, flit into the flame of human selfishness? unless it was necessary they be given a fleeting material existence, that He may gather them from earth to clothe in the down of baby angels, that they may play through the life and dreams of the self-sacrificing nurses who

gave them a name to adorn their slabs, and of the humble potter's field sexton who buried them and placed shells and bits of colored glass on their little mounds.

You may occasionally pass by wooden slabs indicating that the body resting there has yet one hold upon the memory of some mortal being. When you read "*Father*," with a date and no other identification, you feel inclined to fathom the mystery of such an epitaph. If successful you may learn that "*Father*" was a cast away, and the widowed mother had to ask for his burial in the potter's field; and though she went through the formality of claiming his grave, yet her pride was such she could not have his name stenciled on the wooden slab announcing to the world the wretchedness of her poverty.

You will find epitaphs in words of ridiculously pathetic endearment, but seldom will you find a name or any designation other than that of relationship, or the occasional "*Friend*."

As you pass out over the long unbroken rows marking the exit from mortality of those who came and went without leaving a footprint for identification, you should pause and question if the one who constituted your couple in the scheme of creation has as yet found lodgment in those rows.

While the posthumous daughter was sounding deep in the sea of activity, blessed in the possession of that mental contentment arising when one finds



oneself deep in the concentration of purpose, how different it was with him who had been dashed from the crest of a patriotic wave into the hidden quicksands of broken health, and was now seeking recuperation in the seclusion of country life.

“Broken in health” is a pitiful phrase when applied to a man. To him we proffer abundant sympathy, encouragement and material aid in every way, but he must respond through rapid convalescence, else we desert him; whereupon he becomes nothing more than a piece of complicated machinery, deficient in a vital part, absolutely useless, and a burden in his keeping.

With woman, how different! For her there is always our tenderest sympathy. The ebb in her strength is the flood in our love. In fact, frailness and delicacy of structure are distinct attributes of her charm.

However, the balm of country air and the blue in Southern skies were fast scattering the quicksands, and he was rapidly becoming his old self. He had gone to one of those old home places where the widowed owner, left with few wants and an inherent responsibility, has for let the farm on certain modest conditions; namely, that she retain the house, the garden, pasturage for her horse and cow, while the tenant is to work the garden, milk the cow, hitch up the horse, and do any odd jobs about the place which cannot be foreseen; that no live stock be brought on the place, or lands ploughed, other than necessary to supply the immediate personal needs of the tenant.

After complying with these conditions, there was left for him a small isolated house, but so located as to enable him to comprehend to the fullest the beauties of the woodlands and meadows.

Just how the farm was to repay the generous rental the new tenant did not know, but the purpose sought had been obtained, for he was at peace with himself and the world. That he was more or less an enigma to the widow and her neighbors he knew, and thoroughly enjoyed the novelty of his position. Who he was, whence he came or what was his past, she never had the courage to ask, but trusted to her ingenuity to win his confidence for the gratification of her curiosity at a later time. She did know one thing, having seen it with her own eyes, that he was wonderfully possessed with those qualifications which go to make what is called masculine beauty.

Woman is beautiful through sentiment; man, through character. Though the rose-tinted flush in the face of woman is fragrant, the sombre bronze in the face of man is more lasting. The classic mouth of woman is artistic, but the firm-set lower jaw of man is assuring. The liquid eye of woman entralls us in its languor of love, but the penetrating eye of man fills us with a sense of fear, lest it see us as we, in truth, see ourselves.

He could be described as having that smooth-cut, nearly straight brow indicative of intelligence, rather than the more receding brow indicating the necessity for cultivating the perceptive sense, or the unpleas-

antly strong and overhanging brow filled with plain, dull logic, ever ready to jab a ragged wound in any artful conceit we may devise.

His were not those great floating eyes which seem necessary for an effusion of a jubilant nature, but were a trifle small, though not so small as to give the impression of a hidden meaning in his character, while the distinct gray shade dispelled any suggestion of the ornate, through the weakness of fanciful coloring.

The human nose conveys a world of meaning. If of the thin, pinched type, it restricts the flow of oxygen necessary for the combustion of impurities in the blood, which means an accumulation of impurities in the character. If it is large and with dilated nostrils, it is generally due to an incessant exhalation of diluted thought. When tilted slightly, it implies a certain haughtiness not at all displeasing, though if more than slightly, it is apt to suggest freckles and red hair, while a tilt of greater angle makes it necessary that one avoid looking into the nostrils rather than the eyes of its possessor. If pointed downward, the character must struggle to dispel its associations with a bird of prey. His nose was as none of these.

A critical feature in the human face is the chin. If deficient, how suggestive is the profile to that of a domestic fowl. In woman's face the truly artistic part is that portion below the nose. Her critical line begins with the upper lip and extends to the base of the neck. The nature of this line can

make or mar any abundance of perfection in the rest of her face.

His chin was a continuation of that line from the forehead, which gave it just a faint tendency to prominence, rather than toward the weakness displayed in receding chins; and the line from the point to the throat was nearly horizontal, making almost a sharp angle with the neck, so characteristic of that strength found in the well-balanced, nervous temperament of a sparsely built man.

His head was crowned with a slight wave in the chestnut brown of his hair, and it may be said his general outline was sufficiently in accord with his face. He was a type particularly lovable, self-sacrificing and subservient, yet holding himself in high worth.

He was a joy to the widow's soul, and nothing gave him such pleasure as serving her. Such pride he took in her garden, that nowhere were the tomatoes so red and the peppers so green. Her beans nodded their pods from the tops of poles so high that they could see into the upper window of the barn. So persistently did he hoe and rake the ground that even the dwarf peas grew to the top of the fence along which they were planted. He enjoyed bringing splendid vegetables to show to her at some unearthy hour in the morning, and then chide her for being a late sleeper.

When cooking breakfast, if he chanced to get a corn-meal cake particularly well browned and tempting, he dropped everything and ran with it to the

widow. If she but intimated a sense of fatigue, he would come down early next morning with a breakfast of the sweetest cantaloup, the crispest lettuce, the strongest coffee, the hottest corn bread, and the most appetizingly broiled bacon.

Many times had the widow arranged a meal which she knew was particularly to his liking, then waited patiently until he chanced to come near the house, when she would call to him, saying she was just sitting down and would he join her. Invariably he explained he was in no condition to sit down with a lady, had left his coat, been feeding the horse, must put out the cow, or some excuse equally pertinent.

And strange though it may seem, he never entered her house, but would stand at the door and talk by the hour, and to her suggestion that he "have a seat" would reply he was just going and had only intended to stop a minute. She soon learned that to invite him to be seated was the equivalent of asking him to leave. So many were the evening hours he passed, standing and talking, while she sat in the quiet of her doorway listening to his philosophical rambles on how to cultivate the friendship of setting hens; that a rooster can teach any one lessons in good manners, and such topics so fearfully irrelevant to the theme for which she thirsted, something of his past. She never found opportunity to lead up to this subject. He always came with something to say, said it, then had something else to say, and so on, always standing, ever on the point of leaving.

The widow had doubtless measured the span of

twenty years existing between them, and felt immune to the possibilities of neighborhood comment. But younger women, somehow, became particularly conscious of the friendship they had long entertained for the widow. Though what opportunity offered? Should they go to her house to return some butter, borrow some eggs or get a cake receipt, he always saw them in time to take to the shelter of the pole beans or the sugar corn.

One resourceful young woman suggested that the sewing-circle meet at the widow's; but whoever heard of a man being enticed near such a thing as that? Why not make it a quilting-party, after the old-time custom, where men went through the ludicrous performance of sewing? The widow knew he could not be gotten into the house. Then why not have it out of doors, a kind of picnic "quilting-bee"? That surely was the thing! And while the widow warned them she would not guarantee his attendance, yet she said she would do her best. She knew how to be adroit, and could put it in the light of his helping her prepare for the occasion, then keep him on hand until he could be delivered to the first arrival, who in turn would hold him until reinforced.

So it was agreed, and how busy the neighborhood became! the mothers planning tempting morsels, the daughters frocks, and all a series of questions to be asked in an indeterminable way, such as to avoid suspicion, though when arranged in sequence would throw light upon his mysterious past.

The widow's suggestion that he help her met with

his warmest enthusiasm. He would do all, and make everyone fear to undertake a similar function owing to the high standard she had established. Both fairly swam in the delirium of excitement incident to the great success they would make of it.

How he did work the melons, pinch back the suckers, and prime the new shoots so as to time their ripening for the great day! He put the cow on fresh pasture, picked the burrs from her tail, and even contemplated putting a flynet over her, all of which measures were, in his judgment, particularly conducive to the production of rich cream.

The day set for the great occasion finally came; and before the widow had finished breakfast, he had begun the arrangement of the settees, benches, hammocks, and even the quilting-frame. She stood in her doorway and looked on with a smile, knowing full well his ambition was to carry out his own conception without hindrance or advice from any one. She knew he had marked the positions the shade would have at the appointed hour, and that he courted her comment as to why he had placed the seats for the guests in the glare of the morning sun. Vanity exists in strange fashions in women, and she denied him the pleasure he would have found in his reply.

He spent a busy morning, fixing hooks in the trees for the support of the lemonade buckets, over which an elder-wood "spile" was driven into the tree in imitation of "tapping" for sugar water; designing a pretended camp-fire, over which a pot swung from its "three-stake" support, where the hard-

boiling of the stuffed-egg salads was supposedly done; arranging an isolated sewing-table, where diffident girls could go off to themselves and be happy; collecting horseshoes and a couple of harrow teeth, that diffident men might go off to themselves and be happy. And so the morning passed, leaving to his credit a goodly number of ingenious conceptions. The widow had been equally busy in the preparation of "egg-kisses" and charlotte russe, for which she was locally famous. No one ever dared compete with her in the making of either of these confections; and with the unusually fine cream of that morning the charlotte russe surpassed all previous efforts, while the "egg-kisses" so closely resembled spun-glass, of a creamy color, as to arouse suspicion.

In the early afternoon one very ambitious young woman came, suggesting she might be of some use, but found everything arranged except the stretching of the quilt. This she and the widow proceeded to do.

The procedure at a quilting-party such as this consisted in the guests doing fancy stitching around the edges of the many-colored silk, satin and velvet pieces of irregular pattern combining to make the "crazy-quilt." This stitching concealed the edging, and when done in a variety of styles and colored silk threads formed a wonderfully beautiful piece of handiwork. Such a quilt was not the work of a day, or of an individual, but of a family and its friends, and even a generation. In its development there was often brought into use portions of the grand-



father's silken "stock"; a scrap from the mother's satin wedding gown, aged to a beautiful amber shade; and the ribbon that was tied around the daughter's diploma. The same quilt would serve at more than one party, and many times, before completion, entered upon the purpose of its creation, that of being displayed at the annual county fair. Some pieces would be elaborately embroidered, others covered with initials, with here and there a few disarranged stitches, showing a masculine hand had come in at that particular place; sometimes a spider-web, in silver threads, with a brown spider nearby, perhaps showing two protruding red eyes. Such a party afforded opportunity for skill in work and ingenuity of design; also an excuse for youths and maidens, when working on adjoining pieces, to get their hands together, their heads together, and even their hearts together.

When the quilt had been stretched, the widow explained a certain square of smoke-tinted silk had been cut from one of her wedding garments, and that she proposed asking him to work the initials of his name on it, explaining, with a twinkle, that at the same time she would be getting something toward his history. "And I want to work on the square just below that," suggested the young woman. So they continued planning groups with respect to possible congenialities, unconscious as to how patent it was that the smoke-tinted silk received the greatest portion of their thoughts.

The widow had not seen him since the forenoon;

and, busied as she was, the time for the arrival of her guests had come too soon, and after all found her single-handed save for the presence of the ambitious young woman who had come early. Nor could her guests conceal their disappointment when received by her as a lone hostess. Later, when he was seen in the distance calmly strolling about in his shirt sleeves, it dawned upon them all that he had no idea of coming. Immediately the quilting-party was doomed. The smoke-tinted silk lost its charm, and with the exception of a few steady spinsters who constituted the charter members of the "circle," the quilt was deserted.

A second ambitious young woman, together with the first, obtained the widow's permission to carry to him her message that he was wanted. Being completely off his guard he had stopped at the garden fence, and resting his arms on the top rail was absorbed in admiration of his own skill as a gardener. As the young women were coming toward him from the rear they talked in low tones that it might appear they were not endeavoring to approach stealthily, yet they were careful that these tones could be heard at no considerable distance. Believing themselves sufficiently near for the delivery of their message, they raised their tones to attract his attention. When he caught the sound of voices, without so much as a turn of the head he grasped the top rail of the fence, and made a hand-spring, as if he had just decided to do something in the garden. The top rail was too weak and gave way with a crash,

letting him fall in the midst of his famous dwarf peas. The young women, fearing he might be injured, after a momentary pause neared the break in the fence. Up he sprang like a deer, and made for cover among the pole beans. They saw a form swallowed up in the jungle and clash of the once symmetrically placed poles, and by the wake that followed him through the sweet corn, knew he had not stopped there. This furnished sufficient excitement to make the party take on new life, and later, when the guests had surveyed the wreck of the prize garden and enjoyed a laugh at the widow's expense, they departed in good humor.

It is unlikely if any one enjoyed the episode so thoroughly as he who had wrought the devastation. After that he always protested against the widow's having a woman come on the place, giving as his reason it made him break down more corn than would be needed to supply the horse and cow for a month during midwinter.

When the combination of new surroundings, simple living, fresh air, independent occupation and unselfish thought is brought to bear on a depleted constitution of normally healthy construction, the effect produced is but short of marvelous. These remedies were rapidly restoring to him that buoyancy characteristic of youth.

The old sore caused by a one-time unrequited love had healed, and every vein in his body ran with new

blood: a blood that filled him with love and admiration, love for himself, and admiration for his own self-mastery. His was perfect contentment, absolute defiance to that great portion of the world beyond his own horizon. Therefore, when an unusual-appearing letter package reached him, bearing evidence of having taken a circuitous route through the postal channels, it is not strange that he involuntarily resented its trespass-like entrance into the sacred domain of his sequestered life. It is not supposed he waited until he had sought the sanctity of his room, but, more probably, with some appropriate expletive, made one of those jagged tears, as we do when the letter is neither expected nor desired. A small note-book was revealed, bearing his name in gilt letters on the cover. To see our name in print, particularly in gilt letters, is more than apt to touch our sense of vanity. So it was with curiosity, and some pride, he examined the book. Down in the left hand corner was a word that filled him with contempt. Who would send him a "Diary," the school-girl's secret and the old maid's solace? He seemed to recall that years before one had been given him, one similar to this. What had become of it, he knew not—yes, he had lost it, and here was the same old book following him through his various movements. Knowing full well he never had nor ever intended to write in it, he let the leaves fly rapidly from the ball of his thumb, to discover it was written in, from cover to cover, and in a feminine hand. His eye rested on a paragraph, beginning, "I am sad to-day and

heavy at heart;" then another, "I have decided to trust him to my tender mercies——" That was enough. He glanced around to see if he had been observed, then quickly placed the book in his pocket.

The principal difference between woman's curiosity and man's is that a woman's is nearer the surface and asserts itself more readily. It is in man to an equal extent, only not so easily aroused. He dwelt on the strange combination of a woman's diary written between covers bearing his own name, and its reaching him in a way so mysterious as to be unfathomable.

Later, he sought the sanctity of his own room, and from the care and composure with which he arranged himself in a chair, it was evident a reverie of some length was anticipated.

That wonderful sensation, felt just as an intense curiosity is being gratified, was abruptly disturbed when in the opening sentence he read, "And through it all, I have waited for your owner to come——" He closed and lowered the book. For what reason under the blue canopy of heaven had she chosen so strange a way for communicating with him? Why, after the years of suffering such as he had undergone, was his long struggle for peace of mind to be baffled, and he tripped at the very portals of the goal? Deep down in his breast an old sore began to twitch, to throb, to pain, to fester. Was the new blood in his veins to be displaced by the bitter excretions of past memories?

Oh! human nature, with your unpreconceived tendencies, through what reason was there interpolated into your scheme of life the avenging spirit of mortal man?

Again he let the leaves fly from the ball of his thumb, to find a blank space at the end, where he intended to write, "He who laughs last——" It was there his eye rested on the paragraph, "Help me keep my secret from the heartless world, and through pity keep it from him. I pray not to die of a broken heart, from his learning of my love——" Again he instinctively glanced about to see if he was observed while replacing the book in his pocket.

What was he to understand? She certainly had not sent to him what he felt must be her life-secrets. Another must have done that. They had not exchanged communications since that evening in the graveyard more than ten years before. He was conscious of having written one or more letters to her during this interval, but his courage invariably failed before sending them. The suggestion forced itself upon him that this book had been found among her possessions, and bearing his name had been mailed to him, while she at that moment was filling the souls of her angel companions with the melody of her marvelous laughter as she looked down upon him. Who would have sent him the book, knowing that it contained her plea that these secrets be kept? No one, surely, therefore the secrets up to that time must have been safe. His manhood was strong and had never failed him in a crisis.

If her secrets were up to that time safe, they should continue so, and in no keeping more trusted than his own. Meditation made him feel so sure as to the correctness of his deduction that he reserved for himself the doubt one always entertains regarding an unverified belief.

A balm of hallowed memories soothed the old sore, and, pervaded with the spirit of forgiveness, he pictured her in the regal splendor of her beauty, and no sense of anguish filled his breast. He arose and mechanically went through the performance of some routine duties, utterly devoid of his usual zest. Upon retiring that night he soon reached the haven of restful sleep, only to awaken after a few hours and find himself in a flood of thought. He determined to be no sheep-herder; he had done that once before. If sleep did not seek him, he would scorn it. He completely dressed himself, after his usual manner, for the day; and before the eastern horizon had dissolved into the shell-like tints of dawn, he had read the book from cover to cover, nor had he sacrificed one iota of his manhood.

If his movements became varied after this, the widow failed to take notice. She was accustomed to his eccentricities, knowing he cultivated them. Had she been sufficiently well observant she would have learned he had obtained a small pocket note-book; that it bore no name upon its cover, nor the word "diary." She would have learned further that he carried it with him, and at times wrote in it. She did, however, notice a tenderness in his speech, and

once detected a sigh escaping his lips. What was more, she saw, sticking in the lapel of his coat, one of the very earliest spring violets. She feared he was becoming restless, but knew full well there was nothing to be done or said, and she trusted his personality would be able to dispel any depression that might be overshadowing his apparently contented life.

In the very foremost hours of a crisp spring morning, winter, in its dying gasp, had once more exhaled its frosty breath, and everything was covered with white. The air crackled with its overcharge of static ether. Over the frozen ground came rolling along in wonderful clearness the sounds from crowing cocks, miles away. It seemed that nature was supplying a tonic to the enervated life which had weathered her winter.

He, too, was ready to partake of this tonic, and started for a nearby hill to watch the rising of the sun. A faithful old dog left its bed to join in the walk, but soon stopped, wrinkled its nose in embarrassment, wagged itself into the form of the letter "S," by way of apology, then grudgingly put each foot on the frosted grass until it reached the warm straw in the box.

As he walked on, he blew out his breath into the chilled air in little steam-like clouds, sometimes contracting his lips to form a small orifice and giving intermittent escapement noises, as though once again a youthful steam engine; then, with mouth wide open, emitting in puffs and clouds that delicious smoke in



which every boy has indulged in the reveries of his childhood.

The sallow shading of the east was fast being dissipated into the faintly yellow and leaden streaks of the new-born day. On he came, watching the streaks grow shorter and the sky take on its tallow cast as the pale face of the sun rose above the horizon. The grandeur of the rising sun is more a poetic thought than a truth.

His attention was diverted from the sunrise by seeing a man crawl out of a hollow tree, stretch both arms, holding them high above the shoulders, as a bird with lifted wings, and at the same time give a grunt of satisfaction as he exhaled a deep-drawn breath. Neither ceasing in the blowing of his steam clouds, nor changing his pace, he veered his course so as to appear his special mission was to go to that tree. Nearing it, he addressed the surprised man, who stood blinking through embarrassment and sleepiness.

“Why is a sleepy old rooster like you trying to crow this time in the morning? You must have roosted well to be sleeping so late. I didn't know I made my guests spend their nights out in the woods; couldn't you find the latch string, or climb in the window?” After which remark he made the woodland ring with laughter.

The blinking eyes quickened, and the tramp's face wrinkled into a smile as he replied, “The old tree opened its heart to me, let me go into its trunk, stood watch like a dog while I slept, and woke me

with its bark, as you came up"—at the same time picking pieces of trash from beneath his shirt collar. Again the woodland rang with laughter, after which the tramp grinned a reply to an invitation for breakfast.

It is a happy fate that brings two lonely souls together, and a remarkable fate that brought these two, so different and yet so similar. They were counterparts in stature, both in the prime of life, yet a study of the footprints they left on the frosted grass would have revealed their difference in character. One line of prints was clear cut and defined, showing elasticity in movement; in the other, midway between prints, was the gouge mark of a toe, as one makes when shambling.

Incongruous as it may seem, each had chosen to isolate himself from what both would have termed the inconsistencies of their fellow-creatures. One, from an inborn apathy for idleness, the other, from the same apathy for work. In the philosophy of one, the populous world restricted his activities; in that of the other, it restricted his leisure. The two, reasoning from diametrically opposite points of view, had reached the same conclusion. Can any deduction be more logically obtained?

There are few who know the delights of the recluse, few who possess enough individuality to dwell in the realm of their own personality and find themselves sufficiently companionable.

Among the untold forms of worship is a small sect who call themselves "Sitters." They constitute so

infinitesimal a part of the human race they are not reckoned with in the catalogue of religions. The creed of the "Sitter" is self-adoration. In practice they seek retirement, and "sit" each day while the sun is crossing the meridian. During this time they absolve themselves from every thought common to the association of their daily pursuits, and view themselves in magnificent isolation against the great background of creative nature. The consolation to be found in a glance so retrospective, at one's own personality, is known only to those strong in the faith. The "sitter" is not selfish, only human. To him the spark of existence that glows in his being is the one thing in the incomprehensible vastness of the universe that is absolutely indispensable to his happiness, and he worships that spark.

When the men had reached the cabin, each, with due respect to the philosophy of the other, followed the bend of his own inclination. While one sought the nearest resemblance to an easy chair, the other got out the paraphernalia essential for preparing a bachelor's breakfast; one talked loudly, freely, facetiously, incessantly; the other, in subdued chuckling monotones. Each one looked upon the other with unbridled curiosity, each equally gratified in supplying interest to the other; in fact, two affinities, that must have long sought each other, originating at the two extremes of human nature.

Fast was the tantalizing fragrance of frying bacon and the aroma of strong coffee mellowing the ordinate sympathies of each for the other's stomach,

until finally, two more thoroughly congenial spirits never dispensed and partook of the same hospitality.

After breakfast the guest extracted a pipe from the lining of his clothes, while the host began a series of leading personal questions, which were answered without hesitation.

“Yes,” the guest replied, he had worked, and, when he did, could lay brick to the “Queen’s taste.” The habit, though, had been easily overcome. He had eaten of the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table, and had dined in homes where they measured time by the movement of a shadow on the puncheon floor. He was fully awake to the common fancy that men of his profession are imbued with a love for poetry and song; in consequence, could quote “snatches” from Burns. He knew how to explain that “carelessness in sleeping on the weather side of haystacks,” etc., etc. And so the two men passed a morning in the exchange of remarkable experiences, being remarkable in that the exchange was confined entirely to the experiences of the guest.

The host suggested the substitution of one of his own abandoned coats for that worn by his guest, which suggestion, together with the coat, was cheerfully accepted. It was well past the time for doing the daily chores, and the host, extending an invitation to the guest to accompany him, proceeded to lead the way. What could the guest do but follow?

As the chill of the morning diminished, the host removed his coat and hung it on the fence. The guest felt it the part of policy to imitate in this prep-

aration. After a series of various duties, in which the guest appeared not to comprehend what was to be done until the task was nearly completed, the men replaced their coats, and with the profuse acknowledgments of each as to the pleasure the other had afforded, separated.

The guest took up his endless journey, ever consistent with his philosophy, having neither a care for the past nor a thought for the morrow; asking nothing, with nothing to give in return, believing himself a legitimate heir to the fruits of the earth, though with no intention to assert his claim, if disputed; recognizing himself a benefit to humanity, in that he made the number one less in the entries for the great race of human strife where fellow-men sought to crush each other beneath the weight of their own ambitions. He was satisfied to imbibe the morning freshness of a care-free day, and, like the lilies that neither toil nor spin but quench their thirst with the spirit of Nature's bounty, he drank such of the spirit of generosity as he could drain from fellow-creatures through the open frankness of his appeal.

So he passes on through the world of men and things, neither leaving footprints on the sands nor scarring himself against the stern realities of life.

A city of to-day is remarkable in its resemblance to a thing of life; with veins through which the corpuscle-like mass of humanity reach its heart; vast arteries through which they surge to its uttermost

parts when the brain has tired at the close of the day; a nature changeable as the winds, only too humanlike, charitable to excess, then mired in the stagnation of its selfishness; feverish with the excitement of either pageant or panic, or chilled with indifference as to the elements which enter into the constitution of its conglomerate self; for the moment throbbing in the intensity of action, again sleeping with slow and measured pulsation, pulsation even more sensitive than in a creature of life. You can feel the heart-beats through its innumerable arms; its intellectuality through the arm of the press; ostentation, through the arm of its fashion; charity, through the arm of its benefactions; morals, through the arm of its society; health, through the arm of its sanitariums.

Go through the labyrinth of a city's thoroughfares, with its endless throng of humanity making you feel afloat on a human sea, and where is a place more lonely? Where is a place more hushed in the stillness of its own incessant uttering of sounds less familiar to the human heart? If the Babel-like droning of incoherent articulations stupefy and produce dilemma in your brain, you will be jostled and trampled by the giant myriapod with human legs, or crushed by the wheels of impatient traffic. Nor is there charity enough in all that sea for one wave to bear you on its crest from out of the human maelstrom and moisten your temple with a spray of kindness.

In the unconsciousness of your delirium you will lie

as you have fallen, while morbid curiosity compels the craning and elongation of necks for a glance at your nostrils in their muscular contortions, instinctively endeavoring to obtain that precious life-giving oxygen which your fellowmen are stealing, as they crowd around, with never a thought of a helping hand. Some one, in the garb of public benefactor, may notify the health department, and very soon the crowd will give way before the clanging of alarms. There will be no waiting to learn your name or preference regarding your disposition, for you have suddenly become the city's "ward;" and, irrespective of your degree of social elevation or degradation, you will be lifted with that wonderful tenderness acquired through experience, rather than sympathy, to be whirled away to the hospital.

Out from the loneliness of the crowded street with its noise and confusion, and never a responsive look, you are ushered into surroundings where every thought is for your comfort, every face one of sympathy, and every soul your servant.

If you fail to respond, a record is made of your personal appearance, and any belongings are deposited as an aid for your identification. You will then be given a serial number and laid to rest in one of those long, unsymmetrical rows in the potter's field, those long rows the queer old grave-digger makes.

Of modern inventions for the benefit of mankind the hospital stands first, though for it we have a natural antipathy, and its mention sends a shiver

through us. With it we associate the "stretcher," the surgeon's knife, the penetrating odors from antiseptics, and all those dreaded appliances which, even though mercifully designed for the alleviation of human suffering, fill us with mortal fear. But once you have been carried across its threshold, your very prejudices will have made you a convert as to the inestimable value in this branch of a city's public institutions.

Follow the course of those who make their life-work within hospital walls, and there will be revealed to you a phase of character totally inconsistent with the walks of life as you know them. Is it conceivable there are those who deliberately take up the work in a hospital ward, with its manifold responsibilities and countless requirements, to battle with all the idiosyncrasies possessed by human nature, to stand as the strongest ally of a human life in its fight against death, this in full knowledge that victory brings neither reward nor release, and that defeat but calls for a multiplied effort? In whom do we find this remarkable form of human stamina, this ceaseless vitality, this concentration of purpose without end? Not in the boasted strength of man, but in the purported frailness of woman.

The myths of the past come to us as legacies in untold forms, and as their hidden meaning is revealed, we wonder if the genius lies with the originator of the myth or is that of our own self. At any rate, we love myths, if for nothing else, for their subtlety of expression.



Since Pandora opened the box and saw the swarm of evil spirits take flight, and closed the lid in time to stop only one little weak spirit who called herself "Hope," since that time, at some period of its existence, every human life has clutched at the flimsy gauze-like skirts of "Hope." And so often has the mazy garment of cob web-like weave trailed on through stiffened fingers, we are prone to raise the lid for just one more peep, that it may perchance reveal the true guise of the little self-styled spirit.

How easily we recognize the variegated garbs of those who escaped! There is "Disappointment" trailing her long octopus-like streamers, as though she had a hand to grasp from us the goal of every ambition. There is "Age," with her flour-dipped fingers and the deceitful garb of adoration, ever anxious to stroke our heads. There is "Physical-ills," in her myriad of diversified forms, ever flaunting in our faces the incomprehensibility of her technical nomenclature. There is "Sorrow," with the shroud in one hand, while in the other she has a cup of bitter tears to stain our cheek and inflame our eyes until, blinded, we grope in the dark for "Hope," whose slender form is so mysteriously concealed.

The world is as thoroughly familiar with those spirits that Pandora released as it is unfamiliar with the single one held captive, and the midnight oil of reason has long been burned in a vain effort to determine the identity of this little spirit. But some day another Pandora may come; and should she open the lid, for only the least bit of a peep, she will discover

the little spirit has developed a countenance wonderfully serious, responsive though resolute, tolerant though deterrent, and from her presence will emanate an influence seductive of our complete reliance. This little spirit, "Hope," will be found to have clothed herself in a garb of immaculate white, emulating the spotless guise of a nurse.

Is it strange that in the confines of a hospital, a place we enter with trepidation and speculative suspicion, is it strange that "Hope" has taken up her abode there? Where could we need her more? There, where acts of heroism are of such daily occurrence, they are merely entered in a tabulated record; where the daily display of marvelous fortitude brings to us the consciousness of our own weakness, there is where we need the little spirit, and once we have looked into her face we know her.

There is a certain factor in the make-up of life we term "sympathy." Were it necessary to give a definition to this word, it could be defined as that mental condition capable of being communicated between two natures when in a state of mutual equilibrium. There is no word in the language of tongues meaning more, nor one whose meaning has become more distorted. Without sympathy there would be no hope; hope dwells only in the human breast, and without it no breast would be human.

Hope is the richest of treasures. It is only with bated breath we ask, "Has he lost hope?"

Stand by the sick bed of a loved one whose drops of life-blood are ebbing; and though the bitterest of

anguish floods your breast, yet this very anguish serves as a narcotic to hold you in complacent calmness. But let one whisper the single word "hope," and how quickly the bonds break. One scintilla of hope changes your flood of despair into tears of joy, until they stream down your cheek. Despair may be confined to the deadliness of inward bleeding, but the spring of hope in the human breast must find an outlet.

Life in itself is nothing. The very multitudinous forms in which it exists makes it so. It is common to every form in the lexicon of the animal world. It is no more to the bird of beautiful plumage that soars in the blue of the sky, than to the loathsome creature, in its coat of slime, that grovels on the bottom of the sea. Nothing so common can be of value. It is only the little trait of character called "human" that lends a value to life. And this same little "trait," whether it waxens to giant strength or shrivels to a pygmy in size, has, since the creation of man, sought its daily nourishment from the hand of the little spirit that Pandora retained.

"Variety is the spice of life" is a time-worn expression more or less enigmatical in meaning. It is a quotation ever appropriate in justification of the multifarious acts of man, and serves as an apology for every form of debauchery. The world of meaning oftentimes clothed in homely slang is the result of simile that has passed through the transcendent steps of decapitation until the stage of aphorism is reached. For this reason it becomes necessary to

re clothe the thought, that its true sense may be dissociated from its distortion.

Diversification is a cardinal essential in the superior development of human life. Whether it be in the sphere intellectual, or merely in the amplified forms that compose the natural craving of a pent-up spirit, the absence of diversity tends to a morbid condition of mind and body. Rather than the spice, it is the tonic, the restorer of depleted individuality. The form it assumes varies with the inherent proclivities of the individual. Religion is a common form of diversity, and has served to alleviate the hide-bound condition of mankind from its beginning. If it were nothing more than diversity, religion would well serve a purpose. The sentiment in our nature creates a desire for secret communion. Our conscience deserves a recipient for its outpouring; our burdens assume such proportions they must be rested, and to all purposes of human intent it is immaterial whether they be deposited at the feet of a wooden god or a living intermediary, or even diffused through fervent appeals to the mysterious conceptor of our destiny.

A deplorable form of diversification is that wherein it appeals to the baser instincts of human passion. Through this form, the motives of intemperance, immorality and countless dissipations find room for mature growth. Such forms become more properly "the spice" for an inordinate appetite.

An additional form which diversity assumes is through its appeal to the nobler instincts. Here it

is the desire of human nature in its frailness to develop strength through the uplifting of its fellow-creatures; to supply the deficiencies of others from the scantiness of their own; to lend to those depleted in strength the whole of their own inadequate amount.

Diversification is a natural desire, and that at times it leads to paths of self-sacrifice, even though it be to extinguish the secret fire of a smouldering disappointment, it is well for mankind there are those strong in heart, even though clothed in feminine frailness, who take on the garb of immaculate white, and create, in themselves, a habitude for the frail little spirit, "Hope."

In the midst of the activities of a certain charity hospital, where the call for human stamina on the part of the nurses is greatest, there moved the posthumous daughter in her garb of immaculate white.

Just how it comes that a small white cap comprises part of a nurse's uniform is of no consequence. The cap she wore, and the wonderful black hair that laved her temples combined to produce an effect suggesting the possibility, either the cap or the hair had been designed, the one for the other. There was always a faint suggestion she wore the cap for effect. The hair never appeared to have been recently fixed, or to need fixing, but remained at that point where a stray ringlet extricates itself from the combs to steal over the face so she must push it

back while you watch it stealthily slide down again. The softened color in the full flush of her face had been fixed by the mordant time, and neither the strain of activities nor the bleaching atmosphere of deodorants, in which she lived, brought the blanch into her cheek. This in itself appeared as though for effect, for the contrast against her garb of white, as she moved in the midst of colorless faces, was startling.

Was the low form of the unadorned collar of a nurse's uniform designed to display the classic lines of her neck and throat, or was it merely a coincidence?

A child sees its mother first when resting in her arms, is why the moulder of the feminine face fashioned it from that point. As seen from there, the downcast position of the eyes produces that expression in the face for which the artist strives when portraying "motherly adoration." So, was it for effect, that as she stood at the bedside of prostrate patients, administering to their wants, if when she leaned over them she chanced to rest in that position where the beauty of the lines of her throat and neck were most enhanced, and the depths of blue were deepened by the downcasting of her eyes? And was it for effect, when in response to voices coming from irritated throats and swollen tongues whose words seemed to scratch as though they had sharp corners, that she replied in tones wonderfully modulated and of that marvelous quality, such that every ear catching the sound would turn toward her? On

the whole, was it for effect, that from the slough of despond, wherein smouldered the consuming fire of a secret love, she sought diversification where the romance of life is so thoroughly eclipsed by the strangeness of its realities? If so, her conceit of vanity was impelled through motives in which the mental beauty was only equalled by that in her face.

Her life was of the hospital routine, which means the reverse of what it implies; for in a hospital there is no routine; only an endless sequence of changes. If she gave the soul of her sympathy to a strange face, before the face became familiar it would vanish. The requirements of one day involved a cycle of time, rather than the life of a nurse, before repetition. The only routine was in the ceaselessness of the activities, save, perhaps, the "social hour" following tea. Here was the first mark of punctuation in the daily sentence.

Feminine nature demands the exchange of confidences, confidences which are not intended to be kept, but to be passed along as such. This has led to such exchanges, among women, being called gossip. If it is gossip, this is what "spice" the white-garbed incarnations of hope have to flavor the unpalatableness of their daily mental food. One of the prerequisites of a hospital nurse is the ability to throw off the inevitable depression consequent from a day's environment, such as comprises their lives, and for the time being indulge themselves in those frivolous ways which only a woman knows.

It was seldom this exchange of confidences partook

of a serious nature or involved the graver episodes of the day, for of these there would be no end; but the fatal termination of an "unidentified" was a subject always admissible, since feminine nature loves to clothe mystery in romance, if its structure is but strong enough to bear the weight of a garb ever so light.

When the clanging of alarms prefaced the entrance into the hospital of a man who, though in a state of unconsciousness, was fair in face and in the prime of life, even if his personal apparel was wretchedly disheveled and his breath foul with the deadened odor of liquor, there was the usual interest when he had been pronounced "unknown." The information accompanying was to the effect that owing to his state of intoxication he had been run down in the street. Could it be possible he had endeavored to stop a fleeing horse which was threatening every life in the path of its mad rush? There was no harm in letting this speculative covering serve as his shroud, for he never regained consciousness, but passed through the mortal portals of this world and entered upon the unknown journey beyond with no designation other than a serial number. Had he fulfilled no purpose in life, in his death he had served to add a few cents extra to the meagre earnings of the potter's field grave-digger.

While this particular "unidentified" was interesting in his own right, what made him more so was the nature of his personal possessions, among which there was a small pocket note-book bearing no name



though written through. It was this one of the nurses had gotten from the collection of his "Articles for Identification" and was reading aloud to a number of eager listeners, who had gathered for the social hour.

"When I look into the deep of the azured heavens, is it the depths in the blue of your eyes that I see?"

"Is each curling cloud in its phantasmic life a ringlet that plays o'er your brow?"

"And the soft voice of nature, in the hush of the wind and the ripple of the brook, does it come from your lips?"

"Is each life-giving breeze, that kisses my face and deposits the balm of its solace, the breath that went out with your spirit?"

"Is the perfume of flowers and their glory of raiment but the visible fragrance of your scented presence?"

"Is it your call that brings me to the placid calm of solitude, and at this trysting place is it you who entrances me with your smile through the song of birds?"

The reader paused, and the stillness which had gone throughout the room was broken by the unison of released breaths. An incipient flutter of excitement was arrested as the reader lifted her voice in continuing:

"With you, there is no night and its spectre-like

shadows stealing through the gleaming rays of hope; no strife, jealousy, frustration of purpose; no jar, turmoil, din and bewilderment; no burdens of sorrow to crush the frailness of the human breast; no smothering loneliness to stifle the weakness of human existence; but through the folds of that nebulous veil of mystery, you look into the lacerated hearts and wearied breasts of those who are tossed on billows of anguish, and hear the secret cry of earthly creatures as they drain the bitter dregs of desolation from their cup of sorrow, while benign in countenance you smile in the tenderness of compassion."

At the close of this paragraph the stillness was so marked that the reader proceeded in tones scarcely audible.

"Does the passing of an earthly life, such as yours, serve but to prove the eternal fitness of things; that in the uninterpreted purpose of creation you were taken from the cycle of eternity and given an ephemeral existence, that you may bloom into the full flower of womanhood, only to breathe out your life and leave us suffused with the memories of your hallowed presence?"

The auditors, in their eagerness to catch every word, were so rigidly fixed in their stare at the reader, that to look into the face of another was their furthestmost thought. Had this not been, they could not have failed to notice the milk-washed face

of one in their midst. They would have noticed her fingers clutching the arms of her chair in a desperate attempt to conceal a startling sense that seemed to possess her.

“ Nature reveals to us, sooner or later, the purpose of her act. We may impugn her for the cruel and drastic methods sometimes used, but no act ever fails to broaden those most stunned by her blows. She gives us love and death, each equidistant from the horizon of our conception. Love without death would satiate us; death without love would satiate nature.

“ He who knows no sorrow is but a dweller on the world's common level, and, like the shadow of an idle moment, his day closes with the setting of the sun.

“ When the indiscernible hand of Nature tears asunder the intertwined bonds of love and life, and leaves us with outstretched arms and yearning countenance, that same moment we are transplanted into the mighty vastness of her untrammelled expanse.

“ When life and the secret of its earthly passing has been revealed to one near to us, who stands just one irretaceable step away, we can but feel, with a juncture so nearly formed, there will be imparted some of the mysteries which Nature reveals only to those who have relinquished their hold on the trivial life we know.

“ The poorest and most starved of souls, in the narrowest and most cramped of human bodies,

never fails to expand when nature has laden it with sorrow."

After the reading of this passage a sigh of relief escaped the lips of all—save one. In her bosom the turbulence increased, and, in a more determined effort for self-mastery, she lowered her eyes to avoid meeting the glance of others; for all knew there would follow a general search of faces for some expression regarding the mystery of the unidentified. Much to her relief, the reader continued:

"For me, the perplexities of life have resolved themselves into a single disappointment. The life given I shall hold as a sacred gratuity and live it with open frankness, though shadowed as I am with the knowledge that my death will not be the peaceful passing of a spirit bathed in the incense of love from those who have been nourished by the fruits of my life."

The dominant stillness was broken by the plaintive tremolo of a thin, high-pitched note. In repetition, as it became weaker and thinner, all present knew some one had fainted. Skilled hands, long inured to such purpose, but never before ministering with more expedition and sympathetic dexterity, tenderly lifted the posthumous daughter.

Reflections in the mirror of self-consciousness pro-

duce impressions which go to form the lines of facial expression. It is through these lines the secret of one's heart can often be read.

When the posthumous daughter recovered she mustered every resource to prevent the detection of her secret. To this end she attempted to laugh at her own weakness, working herself to a state bordering on the hysterical, which resulted in her relief from duty the morning following. During this leisure she found occasion to enter some notes in the record, at which time she studied the data relating to the recent "unidentified." With his serial number was recorded his height, estimated weight, etc., and in the space for "remarks" were noted "alcoholism," "run down in street," "fatally injured."

If there was a single thought in which she could seek relief, it was that she had been spared seeing him, the incident occurring while she was off duty. The remarkable coincident seemed to fascinate her, for, with lips closed, she knew there would be revealed no evidence that would in any way lead to the strangeness of his passing. Her silence meant his oblivion, while the world moved on without knowledge of his inglorious end.

Could she let his identity remain sealed, knowing full well even this period-like blot at the close of his life would, after a twelve month, be erased and the residue of his once splendid body be raked into a corner of his grave to make room for a bed-fellow? Silence seemed easier, but what if she relented when it had become too late! Should she keep the secret

the incident would long continue a matter of interest, and the very keeping of it demanded she take part in such interest. As to her fainting, strange to say, that had not aroused suspicion. Could she be a hypocrite and join in picturing the romance of his life? She felt tempted to join in the search for the identity of her whose death had inspired in him the appeal to her departed soul, but the thought of this filled her with chagrin. At last she had learned the reason for his silence. Through all these years he had given his heart to another in life, and after her death had given his soul, while his lonely body wandered aimlessly among the pitfalls of the world, finally to stumble at her threshold.

The secret involved no alternative; should she keep it, she must leave the hospital. Should she divulge the mystery, to what would it lead? Not only the story of his life, but hers, and it would appear that she had given it through jealousy. What an accusation! Could she be jealous of an immortal soul because it had not ceased to serve as the object of his worship, him whose life had closed so ignominiously? Yes! She would not trust herself.

With the secret known, she certainly could not remain at the hospital. There was, then, but one conclusion: under no conditions could she remain. Since she must go, would she leave his identity or take it with her? To leave it meant the exhuming of his remains from the potter's field; also the exhuming of her buried heart. To take it with her meant his eternal abandonment to an untimely fate.

Leaving the hospital, as she must, it was equally evident she should do so at once, and with sufficient excuse. This she could find in her temporary illness. Her quandary as to him was weighing heavily, and served to increase the effects of her nervous shock.

When she retired, at the close of a weary day, it was for thought, not sleep. Next morning found her with throbbing temples and blanched face, but strong of heart; she had determined upon procedure.

After an untasted breakfast she went into the streets, and by the shortest route made her way to the shop of a tombstone-maker. Approaching the door, her courage weakened, and she hesitated. The shopman saw this and hastened to open the door; and assuming his professional countenance of mournful dejection, and most deferential manner, he bowed her in. He had often seen heavily burdened hearts falter at his door, and knew it to be the better part of "business" to extend a helping hand.

Trembling, and speechless with embarrassment, she entered. The shopman was accustomed to this in his patrons, and knew he must question her, and with the least amount of information make the greatest number of suggestions.

"These are our latest styles in memorial stones," he began. The professional man never calls them tombstones.

"Is it for a child or an adult?" he asked, in a voice ranging from a high and plaintively pitched

“child” to a low and sympathetically sonorous “adult.”

Scarcely above a whisper, she replied in one word, “Adult.”

“These, in marble, are very beautiful and the lettering shows up well. Some are complete, only awaiting the name and dates. This design is appropriate for a lady, while that, with the wreath, is more for a man. The marble looks better when new, but the granite is more durable. Is it for a lady or gentleman?”

“Man,” she replied without looking up.

“In that case,” said the shopman, “granite would be appropriate. We like to use granite for a man; it seems to represent more strength, resembling the foundation, so to speak—stability and force of character.”

She did not move her eyes, which were fixed in stare at a slab of marble. Noticing this, he continued with no apparent interruption:

“But marble is very nice, and especially appropriate if the other stones nearby are of that material. We can generally aid in selection if we know the nature of the surroundings. If there are slopes and much shrubbery, we endeavor to carry out the same scheme and suggest rustic effects. If to be used near the bottom of a slope, high and slender effects look well, while on a knoll we give more breadth and less height. On level ground, without much shrubbery, smooth stones of medium height are



nice. We would be glad to visit the location and advise with you."

Totally oblivious, as she was, to his every remark, the shopman's suggestion produced no change in her expression, as it surely would had she grasped its meaning. He saw her unconsciously indicate a smooth, unadorned marble of medium height.

"That one is very nice," he said. "The price marked is for the stone, and the lettering costs according to the amount you wish done. Nice letters on that stone would make it very handsome, and there is plenty of room for a quotation. We have a list of standard quotations with those checked that have been used near here. They are arranged for all relatives, as you see here, 'Father,' 'Son,' 'Husband,' 'Brother,' etc."

That "etc.," how important it sounded! She recalled, as a child, listening to an auctioneer who was quoting a large sum of money; and, in doing so, he ran through millions, thousands, and hundreds of dollars in a nasal monotone to dwell in emphasis on the number of cents. She had always remembered the number of cents. And now the shopman's "etc." was clearly impressed on her mind.

"This is our charge per letter," he said, indicating, "and the number of letters times this is added to the cost of the stone, which also includes putting it in place. Just above the center we could cut the word showing what relationship,"—she bit her lips,—"as 'husband,' or 'father,' or whatever the case

calls for. Below is the place for the name and dates. If you like that suggestion, what would go here—I mean how many letters?" he hastened to add.

She hesitated a moment, then replied with a tremble in her voice, "Seven."

"Yes!" replied the shopman after he had mentally counted the letters in "husband," with an air indicating he understood all. "I will make them with an extra half inch in size for the regular price," using a tone of voice to show that his feelings were so affected he would be impelled to give an additional half inch of letter.

"You fill out these blanks for the name and dates, and the instructions where the stone is to be placed. We will attend to the rest." Having made this suggestion, he walked to the further end of the shop, apparently to busy himself.

Left alone, she did not know whether to fly from the shop or force herself to act. She glanced nervously toward the shopman, who pretended to be abstracted in the study of a design before him.

As rapidly as she could, with fingers trembling, and numbed, she placed a sealed envelope on the table, and fingered for the money, which in amount approximated two months' earnings of her busy life in the hospital.

The shopman, through occasional glances, saw her movements, and knowing this meant it was time for him, started toward her. She quickly placed the money near the envelope and staggered out into the street.

The maker of "Memorial Stones," who believed himself familiar with every form of human emotion, found it necessary to increase his list by one after the posthumous daughter had left his shop. Upon reading the instructions contained in the envelope he hurried to the door that he might observe the direction she had taken. Curiosity almost forced him to leave the shop, and, in the capacity of a sleuth, learn something of her. But she had disappeared too quickly, and feeling the shame of his temptation, he resolved to carry out instructions and say nothing. That seemed a better "business" policy, to say the least.

When the posthumous daughter returned to the hospital, the nurses in charge noted she had overtaxed herself in her morning's walk. They saw much evidence of extreme fatigue, and when the languor continued there were whispers as to the advisability of her leaving the hospital for a rest.

The next day finds her companions making their way to her room in soft treads, entering without waiting for a reply to their knock, pressing her hand in silence, hastening out that, unobserved, they may brush away an insistent tear. It is a sick-room reception. The posthumous daughter is leaving, in the wane of her strength. She must hasten before it is too late.

When the old grave-digger at the potter's field was called upon to locate a certain serial number in one of his long ridges, and saw a real stone slab,

nically carved, he was mystified. Here was an undreamed-of acquisition. The stone cutter helped count back from the end of a ridge to find the grave corresponding to the serial number he had brought, and here they placed the stone in position.

The stone looked so grand that the grave digger smoothed over the mound, and kept things generally straightened up about it. Many hours has he passed transfixed in admiring gaze at the queer epitaph consisting of a single word encircled by a beautifully chiseled wreath.



## IV

### THE SEA

“So she, deep-drenched in a sea of care,  
Holds disputation with each thing she views.”

ONE thousand ocean-going ships!

Let such a fleet pass in review, the vessels four hundred yards apart, even which distance would render maneuvering hazardous, and the line would be one hundred miles in length. Should this line of ships round a point in a smooth sea, it would, at the start, incite a gentle rolling of the water, to be increased by each ship in turn, such that the last ship would be in a sea incredibly furious.

If lashed beam to beam, and bow to stern, such a fleet would make a raft one mile square. To man the fleet, every male adult in one of our largest cities would be required. Should the vessels be for carriers of merchandise, five hundred million tons would be a safe load. Should they be for the transportation of passengers, one million souls could be taken aboard. Yet, every year a fleet of this size goes to the bottom of the sea!

When this fleet shakes its head of entangled rigging, dips its prow and starts for its eternal anchorage on the ocean's bottom, it requires ten thousand

souls to accompany it and stand guard. There in total darkness this vestige of a crew awaits the command to weigh anchor, for no rays of light penetrate the ocean depths. In the icy chill of the saline water their breaths are cold as the winter's blast, for there is the absence of heat. The sentinels have no fear of invasion, for the sea, even with its myriad of life forms, grotesque, fantastical, mammoth, diminutive, contains not one creature which can exist in the tremendous pressure, gloom, desolation and abandon in the untold fathoms of the great depths in the ocean.

In time the millions of tons of iron that go to make this fleet become but a rust stain on the bed of sand. In more time the rust stain has washed out, and the fleet has passed into that conglomerate and molecular mystery we call "The Sea."

Who can comprehend the sea—its vastness, its strangeness, the weird shadows that lie in its depths; the endless series of peripheral waves that lave the shore in affectionate gentleness, though only asking time's aid to cut away adamant; its coalition with the moon to mystify us in that awe-producing intrigue, the ebb and flow of its diurnal tide? Who knows the scheme of those entangling currents, twisting, encircling, swirling, selfishly indifferent, inconstant, inconsistent? Who knows the secret of its allurements; the abode of the Lorelei who breathes out those wonderful winds of exhilarating freshness, while she smiles in the glistening crest of each sun-kissed wave, and sings that wonderful Song of the

Sea, infatuous in the restfulness of its peaceful calm, invidious in the debauchery of its intoxicated rage, ever fascinating, enthralling, irresistible; that Lorelei who entices men through the seductive rise and fall of her bosom, only to embalm them in the chilling briny ink of her depths—who can comprehend the incomprehensible?

The sea gives life, which life, in turn, imparts itself to the sea, lending to form a creature huge beyond conception; one minute docile, gentle, the next, lashing in the fury of madness, then swallowing itself in the petulance of calm, only to belch forth in the nausea of its autophagous nature. So it is, the sea is life, imparts life, imbibes life, imbues life.

Long, long ago, men built a ship, built it away from the water, up on the ways, just as we have continued to do. The ship would not move when they wanted it to start for the water. It had no life, no spirit. They must give it life, give it spirit, invest it with a soul. Accordingly, they dashed out a captive's life against the prow, his blood drenched the bowsprit, and his lifeless form fell to be crushed on the ways. The ship, thus personified, glided down, slashed the water into ribbons of foam and took up the ceaseless motion of the sea. After that they built a figure-head on their ship, let it glide over a captive placed on the ways and christen itself with his spurting blood, while his departing soul entered the figure-head to remain as the guardian spirit of the ship, and bode, in the dreams of the mariner, fair winds and safe harbors.

We have continued to do the same. We give our ships figure-heads, and in emulation of the captive's blood, drench her prow with wine, for the ship must have life, the sea demands it, and, through inherited superstition, we supply it.

The sea is the very embodiment of superstition, and that world of sea-faring folk who dwell in its restless expanse live pervaded with a sense of awe. To them the sea is one profound mystery, revengeful for the revealing of its secret treachery, compassionate to those who blindly surrender to its allurements.

They who live at sea are quick to learn the dejection and smothering gloom which follow contemplation as to the mercilessness with which the hand of fate may use them. To look from an isolated craft into that broad expanse of nothing, the horizon encircling as if a great bell-jar covering was designing to make them drift forever; this alone is enough to send shadows into the strongest hearts. But the sea-faring people do not look; they have learned better. Optimism is their daily strength; the pessimist has no place amongst them. Predestination is their creed, and armed with this they tread the decks with reckless care, or swing in their hammocks with the sublime trust of sleeping infants.

If a companion is lost, he is soon forgotten. They must forget; the bond of sympathy among ship-mates is only for the living. At sea is no place to harbor an inconsolable memory.



Ship crews are criticised for the indifference they display toward a dead comrade; and that they scarcely wait the completion of the crude burial service before pushing out the plank, carrying their mate bound to it with his winding-sheet; but they who criticise do not know. Sea-faring folk know what is to be seen and what is not. Not one of them expects to escape the sea. They will return, of course, from each voyage, but only to take up another, well knowing when their course is run they will take their place with the silent watch on the mighty fleet down in the sea.

Since the first mariner left land astern, the sea has been reckoned with as the graveyard first in mystery. Since the first outbound ship failed to return, the ocean pathways have been crossed and recrossed by the most ghostly spectres to be witnessed, the phantom ships, ships caught under that bell-jar-like cover of the horizon, and destined to sail forever in that lonely expanse upon which the sea-faring folk dare not look. No graveyard ever harbored a ghost so mysterious as are these ghosts of the ocean, the phantom ships.

By a peculiar deflection of the rays of light when traversing a series of atmospheric layers varied in density, the phenomenon of mirage is explained, in which ships are actually seen, though far below the line of vision tangent to the earth's curvature. They appear, disappear, and reappear with the disturbances of the atmospheric layers. Can it be wondered that a theme so realistic, a set-

ting so appropriate as is that of the sea, a people so bred and born in superstition as are they who pass their lives by it, combine to form a mystery so overpowering, so verbally indescribable as is that of the phantom fleet on its endless cruise?

The caprices of the sea, witnessed by those who returned to tell of them, are stranger than the strangest fiction ever invented. It has been seen to rise in twisting columns, reaching to the low-lying clouds, forming a veritable temple of fury. It has been seen to take the concave form of a dish of such depth and proportions that vessels plunged with frightful speed into the depression, as if the earth had opened to swallow a hundred cubic miles of water at one gulp. But how trivial this must be when compared to the spectacles witnessed by those who never return! What may there be photographed on the retina in the eyes of those cruising forever on the phantom fleet! And even more trivial is what they may have seen, when compared with that which came not within the vision of human eyes. In the countless ages before the creation of man, when life existed in forms so huge it crushed under its own weight, if left on shore by the sea, it is more than probable such spectacles as the flood of biblical history may have occurred many times.

The least remarkable thing about this graveyard is that all of its superstitions, phantasies, spectres, myths, mysteries and legends are truths.

The ingenuity of man's conception has long since lost in the race between fact and fiction. The most

fertile imagination is eclipsed by the preponderance of possibilities. Man cannot compete with the sea. Alongside its unbounded range of possibilities he can only lay the diminutive strength of his own creative conception. Against its merciless treachery he can do no more than add a few drops of the oil of fragrant memory, that it may prove miscible with the boundless expanse, and be carried to those resting in its depths.

One day each year there is launched the strangest craft that ever goes to sea. It is a small man-of-war, bristling with silent guns, wasting no powder in salutes, so extensive is its cruise, so great is its mission. It has orders to go around the world, through all the seas ever navigated, setting a course for those reefs most perilous, those currents most hazardous, making for the paths of those gales most fearful, ploughing through those fogs most dense, avoiding only smooth seas and fair winds. It must not put in shore until the cruise is finished, and the cruise is not finished until the ship has touched at every rocky ledge where the waves dash themselves into foam, until it has sounded every hidden sand bed within reach of a ship's keel, until it has determined the bearings of every ship that put to sea and has been seen no more.

The mission is to strew flowers on every spot where human life has found a grave in the turbulent bosom of the ocean. The craft follows no nautical chart, but like every man-of-war, lays a course in direct lines from point to point. It is piloted by the only

hand that knows the course, the pilot of our destiny, the Hand of God.

When the craft puts to sea, so great is its cargo of flowers they cover its decks, hang over the bowsprit, twist among the rigging, twine around the masts and float to the breeze in long streamers. The captain is a lily-of-the-valley of rest, commissioned by those thousands who strain their eyes looking far away into the void of their own lives, ever on their wearisome vigil, waiting, waiting for the return of those who went to sea and are now long overdue.

These crafts are launched each year on the same date, the thirtieth day of May. In building, they follow the same superstitions; they have the figure-head, only it is made after the form of a dove. They christen the ship, just as of old, only instead of the captive's blood they drench her prow with tears. They call her "A floral tribute to those lost at sea," and in the name of the Creator of the land and the waters, cast her off. Only in this way can we scatter flowers through the ocean graveyard.

There is yet another craft we should build, fashion differently, more after the order of the lifeboat, non-capsizable, buoyant and self-bailing; with decks always cleared for action, and hampered with no sentimental cargo, no tinsel streamers, no figure-head, but easily launched and without ceremony. It is for the rescue of those adrift in the sea of dilemma.

How many lives are storm-tossed on this sea, statistics do not tell. How many weigh anchor, spread their full canvas of ambition, mount the bridge in command of their own ship of destiny and stand out for the open sea of life, only to lose their course in battling with the waves of life's quandaries? How many who know not the confusing channels of life's cross-purposes, who become doubtful of the lights in the shore beacons, who lose confidence in the reckoning of their own bearings? How many who pass through life, always at sea, anchoring in shifting bottoms, grappling misapprehensions, following a compass unconscious of the hidden lodestone deflecting the needle from its true position?

The winds that come over the sea are wonderfully narcotic. Saturated as they are with their own soporific balm to the point of drowsiness, is it strange that they who are wearied in mind and body should seek the healing power of the sea? That is why the posthumous daughter went to sit in the sands where the ocean breezes could wash away at the perplexities in her mind; where she could busy herself in the idleness of day dreaming, listening to the whisper of the waves, whispers tempting her to unburden heart secrets to them, the truest of all confidants; where she could write in the sands, write words never to be seen by other eyes, then watch the friendly waves come in and leave the sheet clean,

so clean, no misgivings as to the fate of her thoughts; wondering if a wave would ever wash from her heart the disappointments written there.

Such a place as the sea is for musing! She could look far out to her childhood days, days now seeming to have been lived in another world: how playful the waves were, dashing each other with silver spray, curling, twisting and chasing! She saw her entrance into womanhood: how buoyant the sea became, rolling up in long, graceful waves with a sweep of irresistible force, everything yielding before it! Again, she saw her life of unabated activity, forced to conceal the reading of her heart's disappointments. Here the sea rose and hung in sultry mists, filling everything with gloom.

So it was she watched the tides come and go, each tide bringing a message from out of the vast emptiness, and taking back a response to her sympathetic confidant. What did she tell to the sea, and what did it whisper to her? It could not have been of her later life, for often a smile might have been seen stealing over her face. Did each tide flood her with the memories of those days when she was the unopened bud of a beautifully tinted rose, and the fairyland dreams of sleep were only equalled by the realities of her awakening? And did each tide, in its ebb, carry out some of the bitter secrets in her heart, to be buried in the ocean depths, safe ever more from mortal ears? It must have done so, for the flower in her cheek seemed to freshen, and the soothing breezes that kissed her brow eased the ten-

sion and glistening stare that had been fast fixing in her eyes.

Who knows the daydreams wafted to her in the drowsiness of the ocean air? One may have been of her childhood's environment; how, when the smallest of the little ones, she had grown into her first knowledge of love for a little sweetheart who had been chosen for her, in accordance with a custom of mothers at that time of laying the paths of children to verge toward a common ground of mutual affection; how her path had led into that of a bright-faced little lad, born under a sky of promise, and in the beautiful simplicity of childhood's infatuation they had trod the common path, arm in arm, bestowing upon each other the affection of infantile innocence; how into romping childhood they had grown together, and so generally had their premature mating been recognized, deference was shown them, even by the children, in their games: as in "drop the handkerchief," all knew when it was his turn it would certainly be dropped at her back and, in the chase to follow, just how much he would run, dodge and squirm, then stumble and fall that she might tag him; or if playing "bow to the wittiest, kneel to the prettiest, and kiss the one you love best," how, when it was her turn to come into the room of expectant children, she would look confused, choose with much care the two first, then, as a matter of course, kiss *him*; how on through childhood they had gone together, and in the development of youth, unconsciously, each had grown into

the life of the other. And what else was to be expected than the co-ordination of affinities?

Perchance her dream was of the days when, in the strength of manhood, he had outgrown the childhood training and the results of their youth's propinquity, but in full recognition of the sense of power in the lordship of his own rights, had again found himself at her feet, on the evening she had left him, a myrtle-crowned conqueror so unceremoniously dethroned.

These are the kinds of dreams the ocean winds bring in, silver-lined, down-nested, and mollifying.

Those dreams that did not come from over the sea were of her secret determinations, his indomitable persistency, her disappointment and chagrin, his pitiful end, her secret, and the withering nightmare of his love for another. But the dreams from over the sea prevailed, and each day she was growing stronger, stronger in heart, the strength she needed.

And there she sat, day after day, listening, watching, waiting. For what? She did not know; who does, when they listen, watch and wait? All are sometimes listening, listening to the stillness of their own meditation; some are all times watching, watching against intrusion on the sacredness of their individuality; but all are always waiting, waiting for the wonderful fleet of ships just over the horizon; that fleet, countless in number, heavily laden and with the strangest of cargoes, the fruits of imaginary accomplishments.



Some ships there are among this fleet so water-logged with the greed of gain they are floundering rather than jettison the cargo; others tossing without ballast at the mercy of the waves, loaded from keel to yard-arms with the sponge-like cargo of vain ambitions; others speeding with decks awash, bringing precious perfume and ointments, the perfume of brotherly love for those isolated in their grandeur of personal vanity, the ointment of consolation for those wounded in their spirit of pride; for such is the cargo of the *fleet of hope*, hailing from the port of *good fortune*, each ship bound for some human heart.

Many of the ships in this great fleet are always just below the horizon, stemming adverse currents that unexpectedly set in, but sure to arrive on the turn of the tide; others, having lost their cargo, put back to reload rather than enter port not loaded; while, for some, due allowance is made for delay incident to the caution of the crew. Some few, very few, come in sight but "keep off," waiting for "off-shore" winds that they may land in safety. Many are the delays and difficulties that befall the great fleet; but well for the spirit in mortal breasts, still fewer, if any, are ever hopelessly lost.

Such is the fate of the fleet for which all are waiting. For those flushed in the possession of worldly fortune, as well as they who spend their lives in the passive languor of day dreaming, are always listening, watching, waiting, "waiting for their ship to come in."

Was the posthumous daughter waiting for her ship? In all that fleet was there a crew, sturdy and strong, battling with the storms of indecision, intrepidly laying their course in accordance with the needle that pointed to her heart? Or, had her ship reached port, dismasted, barnacled and listing with wounds in the hull, cargo gone as salvage for the saving of her crew? No; somewhere there must have been sailing, under her flag, a stately ship, folded in clouds of white canvas stretched to the tone of kettle drums by the fair winds on her quarter, her prow cutting the water into fountains that curled over her bowsprit, leaving in her wake long strings of pearly beads, while continuous sunshine formed rainbow-like halos of the silver spray that flew from her. There must have been a princely captain on her bridge, a crew bronzed in the golden wealth of the sea, and a cargo of fragrant spices—spice for a new life, spice for a new world, spice for a new suitor. So much for the healing breaths that come from over the sea.

And there she sat, listening, watching, waiting; each day bringing with it a bit of freshened life, just enough to carry her through its course.

It was a charitable act of Providence that divided time into daily intervals, else what would they do who must sit and wait? The very counting of time's daily pulsations serve to alleviate the mental congestion arising from forced inactivity. Watch the sun emerge from the sea, with a face so shining it seems every sand of the shore must have been used

in the polishing process of its daily ablutions; watch that mighty pendulum lift the last of its periphery from its morning bath, to begin one more swing in the measure of eternity, and you can make one count in the immeasurable number of those pulsations which go to make time, and each count brings renewed interest.

Time is a great wheel of fortune at which we play the game of chance called Life; and so infectious is the game that mankind has become hopelessly addicted and irretrievably lost in the delusion of its fascination. All are delirious with excitement incident to the possibility of defying the arithmetical laws of chance and making a winning play. On the great wheel there are countless failures for each success, and numberless sorrows for each joy. As it turns, we watch the prizes pass to others, and the blanks fall to us; but no matter, who stops in a losing game of chance? Certainly no one in the great game of life. The human heart is, instinctively, too strong for that. There may be some whose stake is small and played with trembling hands, and there may even be some who hold but the single number which they inherit with the right of human existence; but with the dawn of each day every human being scans the prize numbers indicated by the wheel of time. Some there are who play the game in fearless openness, even defiance, staking their all on the number offering the greatest odds, while others play in the meekness of secrecy, carefully searching out the numbers where the ratio is lowest; but

all are possessed with the mania for gambling at the great wheel of time.

Some play their stake for worldly fortunes, and when the blanks fall, beat their breasts as they swallow the bitter draughts of disappointment, strip themselves of the last farthing, after which they sell their souls for just one more stake, ever trusting in their ability to eventually recoup their losses through a winning play. Some, with hearts swollen from the suffering of blighted happiness, play the wheel for renewed life, ever trusting in time as the great healer of all sorrow, confident the future holds in store a prize of healing ointment for the wounded heart; and as the seared blanks of anguish fall, inject into their hearts the antitoxin of despair and search their lives for just one more ray of hope that they may play, again, on the great wheel.

Others, impaired in body, play their stake for health; and as, day after day, they draw the pale blanks of physical pain, while the golden prize of health passes to others, they cease not in the gamble, but prey upon their weakened bodies and, like leeches, sap the final drops of their life's blood, if only they can play the trivial stake at the great wheel once more.

Who are so distantly isolated in the strife for worldly fortune, so heavily laden with their burden of sorrow, so emaciatingly worn by the ravages of pain that they have lost interest in the revolution of the wheel? What will the day bring

forth?—that is the stimulus in the game of life. To lose means indomitable persistency to win; to win means a determination to win once more.

The posthumous daughter was playing at the great wheel and watching the blanks fall. What was her stake, and for what did she play? There was her birthright inherited from a sturdy ancestry. Surely the winds that came in, laden with the life of the sea, were not fickle when they tempted her to play for the prize of health. The softening of the hectic flush in her face was a small winning; would it tempt her to play a stake for happiness? Was there a flickering ray of hope she could stake, that the wheel might some day dislodge one of its hoarded prizes and so break the monotony of the stream of blanks that had long run to her? To search for this hope was but to flood her heart with bitterness. The deadliest essence of feminine frailties is the excretion arising from an unreciprocated love. If the golden years of her life had been spent in waiting for him, he whose life was grafted in her heart, and his return was but to lay at her feet the secret of his wasted life and lonely death, after which the mystery of his silence was to be revealed through the faithfulness of his love for another, and nay, more, had indited to that soul, in the epitome of his life, the climax of the thought she, herself, had expressed when she conceded him to be the myrtle-crowned conqueror of her own heart; if she even dared to play the wheel for the peace of mind so long sought, where could be found a tiny ray of

hope she might use as her stake? What cruel spirit of the sea was concealed in its winds to tempt her look for happiness on the merciless wheel of time.

Time must not trifle with woman. The climax in her life is when maturity is on the meridian and she glows with the effulgence of new-born womanhood. In the post-meridian of feminine life resort must be had to the adroitness of feminine conceit for removing the fingerprints which Time may, in idle indifference, leave upon her face. In the obtaining of the state of coveted feminine felicity, woman does not want the handicap of time. On no brow does it sit more heavily than on hers.

In the language of woman, there is nothing so cruel in meaning as the word "atrophy." This word implies the reverse of growth. The growth of anything abounds with interest, and nowhere can it be observed to better advantage than in the human body. From birth to maturity there is the constant expansion of framework to be later filled in by the formation of tissue, until the whole forms a contour symmetrical and smooth. In the feminine face this development continues and attains its degree of rhythmical proportions with the maturing of the bloom of womanhood. Through this period there is serenity of mind in harmony with the beauty in the thought of growth. But nature knows no state of rest, no line of inviolable conditions; with her all life is more or less in a parabolic curve. Just so soon as the rounding out of the curves in a beautiful face has been completed, she gives us but a

momentary glance before sentencing it to the leprosy-like, lingering death, as implied by the word "atrophy."

In the face is where the results of atrophication are first shown, the most perceptible demarcation being in those lines extending from the sides of the nose, diagonally down, and outward. Sometimes we are compassionate enough to call them lines of expression, and so they may be, expressing, as they do, arrival at the period of life's serious intent. After this, atrophication, in various degrees of activity, begins anywhere until, finally, the face, once so beautifully rounded, has become sunken and angular; while the skin, in conforming to the new conditions, may fill the face with wrinkles, or become so drawn as to distort the features. Age is but the resultant product of time and the enzym-like action of *atrophia humanus*. The *atrophia* finds less resistance in the delicately constructed tissues of woman's face, and there its ravages are most fearful.

It was when the posthumous daughter displayed callous indifference to the blanks from the wheel of time that atrophica stole into her face, and she realized the zenith of her wondrous beauty had passed. She came to feel differently toward the sea, to distrust the sleep-giving winds, to harbor a suspicion of their treachery. They had inveigled her to sit and wait, when she should have been up and doing, while her sun was on the meridian. She had overlooked the possibility that the "Sea of Life" may have its "Davy Jones."

## THE LEGEND OF "DAVY JONES"

That every sailor who disappears beneath the water to be seen no more has "gone to Davy Jones' locker" is a euphemism the world over. This "Jones" can trace his origin to the earliest superstition in the history of the world. While to-day the encyclopedia of "Universal Knowledge" gives his history in the single phrase, "the sailor's bug-a-boo," it is nevertheless true his genealogical sequence can be traced to the days of Jeroboam.

Long, long ago, before the invention of time and its allied complications, there were created three great kings. One, Chamrosh, was to be ruler over everything that lives in the air; another, Behemoth, over all the creatures that inhabit the land; while the third, Leviathan, was king of the waters. As neither Chamrosh nor Behemoth is responsible for the "Jones" in question, no further mention will be made regarding them, their existence being cited merely to illustrate the extreme exclusiveness of Jones' ancestor in the selection of his associates.

Leviathan was the greatest of the three kings, because he had greater territory over which to rule. The lesser kings had to be created of the hugest size conceivable, that they might be commensurate with their duties. This necessitated Leviathan's being so inconceivably large that it was deemed wise not to give him a mate, else the multiplying of his species would overrun and devour the world. Since Leviathan was to have no lineal descendants, he was



clothed with a kind of sub-creative power, in which power we have the origin of Davy Jones.

According to the midrash of Johannon, Leviathan was a mile in length. If angered through hunger or other cause, he could breathe forth a heat so intense as to boil the waters of the deep and throw the sea into a tempest. From his eyes there came a light so strong it can yet be seen in the so-called phosphorescence of the water. The odor from him was so stifling that should he put his head into Paradise it would destroy every living creature, and from him came all the pestilence of the world. He lived in the Mediterranean Sea, and there could flow into his mouth the waters of the Jordan. Leviathan possessed two great horns, on the points of which were balls of violet and green-colored fire. The balls would play about the horns, jumping from one to the other, as St. Elmo's lights of to-day play from mast to mast on ships destined to be visited by calamity.

Contemporary with Leviathan was a fish, Cetos by name. Now, Cetos lived under conditions not conducive to happiness. While himself a princely fish, and a natural successor to the throne of Leviathan, yet Cetos had no comfort of mind, for he was the sworn enemy of Leviathan, who had promised to devour him on sight.

It was during this time there lived a certain man, Ionas by name. Ionas was a lawful prophet during the reign of Jeroboam; and, owing to his hatred for a certain people of the land, refused to go

among them and prophesy their destruction, as he had been ordered, since such an act on his part would give them opportunity to repent from the wickedness of their way, and then possibly escape punishment. To avoid punishment for his own disobedience, Ionas found it necessary to flee, wherefore he took passage on a ship ready to sail for a distant country. While on this voyage a great tempest arose, so frightening the sailors that, in accordance with a custom of that time, they began to cast lots to determine who should be thrown into the sea that the fury of the tempest might be satisfied. While so casting they discovered this same Ionas, who had taken passage with them, had failed to come up, whereupon they made search and found him snoring in the bottom of the ship. This so angered them they cast him into the sea, after which the tempest subsided and the ship went on its way.

Now it was never intended that Ionas should so easily escape the punishment which was to be meted out to him for his disobedience, therefore, when he was cast into the sea, Cetos appeared and swallowed him. Cetos was sufficiently large in throat to permit Ionas to pass into him with ease, and continue to live. Inside of Cetos was suspended a huge pearl that not only lighted up the fish, so that Ionas could see, but the light shone through the body of Cetos, such that the sea was lighted. Cetos informed Ionas that he himself, Cetos, was to be swallowed by Leviathan. Ionas agreed to save both of them from the fury of Leviathan, and also said they would be able

to slay him. For this kindness on the part of Ionas, Cetos took him through all the mysteries of the deep, and by the light from the pearl, Ionas was shown the great abyss that lies beneath the sea, and the stalactitic pillars upon which the earth rests. Here the darkness was so intense it was solid like soot; and the great stalactites, which had been formed by the dripping of the waters through the bed of the sea, extended to such depths that even Cetos had never seen the bottom of them. Here it was Leviathan came, when he felt the need of sleep; and sometimes, when he snored, the earth would tremble and great clouds of darkness would break through the crust of the earth and go up to cover the face of the sun.

Ionas was also taken over the path used by the children of Israel in their march through the Red Sea. It was here they chanced upon Leviathan, who became furious, and boiled the water until Cetos was exhausted and could not escape. It was then Ionas displayed the seal of Abraham, which so astonished Leviathan, he shot away a distance of two days. For this act on the part of Ionas and Cetos, Leviathan made use of the sub-creative power that had been given him, and caused Ionas to prove nauseous in the stomach of Cetos, whereupon Cetos spat Ionas to dry land, a distance of nine hundred and sixty-eight parasangs. When Ionas was thus spat out, his spirit ascended to be judged, after which it immediately returned to the mouth of Cetos. The evil in Ionas' spirit caused the death of Cetos,

and Leviathan made the body shrink into a homely shape, leaving the once symmetrically shaped tail with the unsightly taper of a lizard's. The well-formed back of Cetos became filled with lumps, his scales were made to drip with oily slime, his mouth was so filled with crooked teeth it could not be closed, which gave him the appearance of continuously grinning, while on his head was planted a pair of ill-shaped horns. From his nostrils came a heated smoke laden with pestilence, so foul that all creatures of the sea would seek to avoid him.

The spirit of Ionas was made to dwell in this shrunken and distorted body, and the new creature assigned as chief of all the evils, pestilence and horrors of the sea. In time it became known as "Duffy Ionas"—the ghost of Ionas. The etymological constrictions of latter-day usage give us "Davy Jones."

In the early days of sailing ships, when passages were slow and navigators were not provided with maps and charts, there were long and trying days and weeks spent, sometimes in storms, sometimes in calms. During these occasions sailormen were very apt to become morosely suspicious. Unfamiliar as they were with currents and tides, it was not strange if, after long weeks of calms, they found themselves nearing unknown lands, they attributed their remarkable predicament to hidden influences, and thought that such influences must have a cause, else they would not be provoked to such extremities. This logically led to a search for the cause, until

almost any conceivable condition on board ship, or anything associated with its building, naming, launching and such things, would be ascribed as the reason for any undesirable plight in which they found themselves.

This was the birth of superstition among sea-faring folks, and so lustily has it grown that to-day there is catalogued in the "Encyclopedia of Superstitions" more than one thousand well-recognized omens, good and bad, by which the sailor is guided. So firmly rooted are these superstitions of the sea, that our modern-day customs regarding ships and shipping are to a large extent guided by them.

The penalty of the sailor's violation of his numerous superstitions is the presence of "Davy Jones," who will be seen sitting in the rigging, or in any one of the many ways he may select to manifest his presence.

As forerunner of all the disasters and horrors of the sea, the ocean is universally known as his "locker;" and all who fail to return from the sea are, presumably, in his safe-keeping.

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Of the things ridiculously pathetic, painfully ludicrous and harshly incongruous with the sensitiveness of human nature, there is nothing comparable with that of an elderly woman who has conceived the idea she may be the subject of the amorous thoughts of a man; and yet more painful than this, of a man very decidedly her junior; then goes so far as to

delude herself with the thought that Time has not had that success as a purloiner of feminine charms so notoriously accredited to him.

When a woman is sufficiently well advanced in years to accept the queenly crown of age, and realize that the difference between maidenhood and old age is the difference between the coupled adjectives, "tall and slender" and "short and fat"; but rather than accept the crown graciously, endeavors to defy the power of time by applying to her face the mechanical elixir of life and tightening the lashings in the fish-bone girdle of her rotundity, she suggests an old piece of creamy lace that has been washed, bleached and starched, or a Chippendale table that has had its eagle claws and glass balls replaced with ball-bearing rollers.

It was the old widow who had tripped in her path of dignified complacency, when one morning she looked into the mirror, toyed with the little corkscrew curls that played on her temples, gave a few vicious pinches at the crow's-feet that spread from the outer corners of her eyes, and emptied her lungs while glancing at the space between the finger-ends as she spanned her waist line. She found herself unable to walk in anything less than a quickstep movement, which imparted that swinging motion to her skirts indicative of the vivacity of youth and the sauciness of unconquerable independence. How trivial the cares of housekeeping suddenly became, and how rapidly the duties of the morning vanished before the strength resulting from the stimulating

thought of renewed youth! Like the milkmaid of fable lore, what visions she saw of herself, gowned perhaps in the crinoline stiffness of fresh linen and the renewed importance of her early matron days.

She had a secret if only she could keep it. That strangely interesting tenant of hers was in love, and that is not telling the half. He was not only in love, but in love with her own dear self. It was now plain why he had so persistently avoided the traps that had been set for him. That frantic rush through the pole beans, in evading two jabbering girls, appeared to her in a new light. That vacant stare, and that occasional listless manner which always vanished with a flush in his bronzed face when unexpectedly coming upon her, and the remarkable change to his cheerful drollery and extraordinary gallantry when in her presence—all these things had but one meaning. Now, if she chose, she could answer those gossips as to why he remained so rigidly exclusive. They who thought him unneighborly, and suggested it would be good for him to mingle with people, perhaps younger than his landlady, or spitefully dubbed him an incurably bashful churl, did not know. And, bless her own soul, she had been at sea as much as any of them, innocently unconscious of the fact that, in her, he found the companionship and mental compensation sufficient for his needs. All the unseemly actions charged by her neighbors had been cleared by his confession on the previous evening, made to her, and now with what pride she could exonerate him!

On the evening in question, the widow was sitting in her doorway watching the fading of the day and, with it, the awakening of nocturnal life. That subdivision of the animal world which elects to remain dormant through day and appear with its disappearance, was breaking its silence. The katydids were scratching away at their "dids" and "didn'ts," the tree toads were whistling like an army of small boys who have just discovered the art but are unable to get beyond the stage of "fits and starts," while the crickets meekly chirped in whenever the others stopped for a breathing spell. It was the hum in the quiet of eventide, the change from the "day" to the "night-shift" in the insect world. She always sat in her doorway at this time, and was never startled at the sound of boot-heels on the pavement that led from her door around the corner of the house, so regular had the habits of her tenant become.

On this particular evening she knew he was coming long before the accustomed sound on the pavement. Katydid cease in their scratching when one passes under the tree they are in. With this knowledge she could trace him through the woods, and as the wake-like hush neared the house she knew the moss-rose that grew near the end of the walk would soon brush his boot-tops.

She was aware of a recent and decided change in manner from his ordinary light-heartedness, and, for this reason, refrained from her usual greeting when the swish of the bush was heard, but waited for the



clatter on the pavement. He responded in a voice so low, she quickly craned her neck that she might see if there were any possibility of a mistake in the identity of her visitor. There was none, but this was so quickly followed by an unprecedented occurrence, the widow was at a loss to account for the meaning. For the first time in their acquaintance he had nothing to say or, better expressed, said nothing, and seemed to await a remark from her. She was so accustomed to being the listener, merely crowding in a nod edgewise between his rapidly spoken sentences and disconnected remarks, that to be unexpectedly called upon to open the conversation took her completely by surprise. He stood, rolling the brim of his hat while gripping at it with the tension of nervous embarrassment. The seconds seemed hours, and in her confusion the widow said the one thing she had schooled herself to avoid. And what made it worse, endeavored to check her remark in its midst, which effort always gives emphasis. She had asked him to sit down, then immediately attempted to divert his attention from what she had learned to feel was a very rude remark, when, to her consternation, he sat down on the steps. It was an uneasy position, his back not resting against the upper step, while his feet remained drawn up ready for rising. But there he was, sitting down, the first time she had ever seen him off his feet. The widow was now prepared for anything, and leaned forward, speechless with expectation. He did not look into her face, but, fixing his

glance on the hat he held, continued in the same low tone of his greeting.

“ I thought to-night I would tell you the secret of my life and ask you to join me in its keeping.

“ When I came to live with you I was a fugitive, not from justice, but from the haunts of a disappointed love. I believed I was man enough to create, for myself, a new life. I intended to make it a selfish life, sharing what peace of mind might come to me with no one, live for myself only, and draw on all the unused resources of nature’s world for diversion. I felt, burning in me, the spirit of retaliation; not individual hatred, but a sense of pride in the ability to live within myself. I wished to show my scorn for dependence—not show it to the world, only to myself. All of this I wanted to do in return for a wound received in the heart of my youth. I was fortunate in coming to you, for here I have found that solace and contentment most essential to my needs. The trivial acts of kindness I have done for you were, at first, my pleasures; but now I have come to feel the doing of them is, with me, a necessity, and were the privilege denied me it would be to smother the glow of hope that has kindled in my heart.

“ It is to you only I can unburden myself and tell of the secret fires of love by which I have been consumed. You and I have not been perfect strangers to each other. We found the bond common to those who have suffered some of the many disappointments of life, and the bond has grown strong enough to let

me open my heart and feel I will not be rebuked for insolence. The disparity in our ages is of no consequence; some young hearts are old and some older hearts are young, while an entire life is but a period-like dot without dimensions. All who ever ferreted at the mystery of love can meet on common ground, and talk as man to man.

“Only recently has the spark flared up and shown me the fire has burned continuously.

“Veritably, a voice from Heaven has spoken words which flooded me with such peace as the most longing soul could wish. Since then I have not lived on earth, but have dwelt in the strangeness of an existence hitherto unknown. The bitterness of my life has changed to a spirit of forgiveness, and I want to live, from now on, for a new purpose. I want to repay myself for the injury I have suffered from my own misinterpretations. I have been the frustrater of my own life’s intent. I owe myself a great debt, and have decided to undertake the payment. I will do this by throwing off the old disguise of happiness, which has been nothing more than the froth of affectation, and let the ebullition of my new life bubble over, if it will, and tell, in words of truth, of the contentment that has at last come to me. I tell you this that you may, if you will, share in my joy in the possession of this true peace, while you are sharing, with me, the keeping of its secret.

“I have loved and suffered, and lived to see the gates of Heaven open and show to me there is, really, truth in life. If the future holds for me no other

purpose than that of living to forget the past, I shall be well provided for, and ask only to live in the quiet here.

“She who has my heart and life now looks down on me, and through the twinkling of the stars I see the gleam of light that shines from the window of her soul’s abode.”

He arose with a quick movement, as if seized with a desire to apologize for being seated in her presence. The series of unexpected happenings was not yet terminated. For the fourth time he violated all precedents when, for the first time, he took her hand and looked into her face. In tones which had grown in softness and in the rich vibrant quality of male voices as he progressed in his narrative, he said:

“You have the secret of my life I know I can trust you with its keeping! Good-night!”

Again she traced him through the woods by the insect stillness that followed his way; and when she knew he had reached his door, she went to the upper window and watched for the gleam of light that would come from his cabin. When it appeared, she lighted her lamp and placed it on a table near the window. She watched until his was extinguished, then lowered the curtain in front of her own.

It was the morning following this that she had twisted the little curls on her temples, put back her “scolding locks,” powdered her nose and put on a well-starched dress that had been laid away for many days. Taking up a basket of eggs, she got into her

phaeton with such elasticity of movement that the horse seemed to scent a strangeness in her actions and started off before she had gotten well seated, which had a tendency to jar the widow, to say nothing of the eggs. This furnished sufficient excuse for her to give him a sharp cut with the whip, and away they went. The small boy, whose duty it was to run behind and see her through the gates, felt the spirit of animation take root in him, making him kick the dust into a cloud, until it appeared she was going much faster than in reality. Indeed, so pre-occupied had she become, and invigorated with the idea of putting new life into everything, that she continued, unconsciously, to jerk the reins and use the whip until the horse broke into an ungainly gallop. In checking this she brought him to a sudden stop, which proved to be the "last straw," so far as the eggs were concerned.

Upon reaching the gate of the home she intended to visit, she was greeted by two young women, who, having seen her hurried approach, were excited as to the possibility of some one at her place having been injured, and the widow's mission being to solicit aid in the care of that person.

"I came over to bring you the eggs you wished," said the widow, when it became necessary she should explain her mission.

The young women looked at the powder on her nose, at the lisle-thread "half-handers" which she was wearing, and glanced at each other.

"We intended coming over for them," replied one,

in an injured tone which clearly expressed her disappointment.

“I thought I could save you that trouble,” the widow replied, with an effort to conceal her exultance in having so cleverly avoided the intrusion, as she now felt their presence would have been. “And, besides,” she continued, “I wanted to ask you for the pattern of your new dress.”

What on earth does she mean? thought one young woman, almost loud enough to be heard.

“Do you mean mamma’s pattern?” queried the other young woman.

“Oh, no!” replied the widow, “I am going to dress differently from heretofore. My clothes are much beyond those for a woman of my age, and as I am going out of mourning, I think I ought to be more careful in the selection of my styles—and then, there are other reasons;” and she tossed her head in a very knowing manner.

The two young women were so completely routed, they could think of nothing to say; whereupon one suggested she would get the pattern.

When this was handed her, the widow remarked, “I will bring it back when I have finished;” after which she started on her return.

The young women pushed back their sun-bonnets and looked into each other’s face for the meaning of all this.

“Did you take in the eggs?” asked the one who had gone for the pattern.

“No,” replied the other, “she forgot to leave

them. Did you *take in* that powder rag she had tucked in the corner of the seat, and that white linen skirt she was wearing?"

Approaching home, the widow spied her tenant, and timed her speed that she might reach the house just as he chanced to pass, knowing he would stop and greet her.

When within calling distance he addressed her with the remark, chiding in tone, that the neighborhood was aroused as to her action, and had made inquiry if her fast driving indicated trouble of any kind?

Her reply was to the effect that she had merely gone to take some eggs, so "those girls" would not be coming over for them, with which remark she gathered her skirts preparatory to leaving the phaeton.

It was then she recalled her failure to leave the eggs, and immediately released the folds, allowing her skirt to cover the basket, and settled back as if she had concluded to drive elsewhere.

"I must do another errand," she explained, at the same time taking up the fallen reins and hastening to turn around before he should discover the egg basket.

"Going to take eggs again?" he called out. "Better go slower, it might be safer for the eggs. And if any one inquires about your hurry I will tell them you are 'renewing your youth,'" and he laughed with the spirit of one who is truly at peace with himself.

The widow felt cut to the quick. Had he seen the eggs, and was it a jibe of cruel sarcasm?

She urged the horse, as she felt the tears start down her face; and knowing they would soon mix with the powder, took off the lisle-thread half-handers, which he had not even seen, and rubbed her face with them to be sure there would be no powder left.

The taunt he had given stung her until she felt the vehemence of feminine hatred fill her breast.

“How dare he talk to me in such a manner, and the first time since his confession of love for me last night!”

But ah! those words of last night were such that even now they were a balm to her wounded heart, and perchance he did not intend his jibe should be so cruel as it seemed. Her heart lightened, and she felt for the powder rag, resolving to take his remark as a familiarity due to their new relation. Once more her face wreathed in smiles, and wrinkled in powder. She turned, hoping to reach home unexpectedly while he was away from the house. Arriving, she hurried out of the phaeton, taking with her the basket from which trickled yellow strings of broken eggs.

But he had seen her turn back, and accordingly retraced his steps, making the house as she disappeared through the doorway. In the same laughing spirit, he asked her, “Did you forget the eggs?”

She pretended not to hear, and remained inside, watching him through the partly open door.

Picking up two articles left on the phaeton seat,



he called to her, saying she had forgotten more than the eggs. Innocently, he examined the pattern and the powder rag as he carried them to the door.

She hurried to her room, and did what women do when they must give vent to the same harnessed feelings a man releases when he swears.

His words of the evening before continued to ring in her ears, and the balm in them had not ceased to be effective, even now. She soon emerged, arrayed in the freshness of her dream of youth, and the same well-starched skirt, thoroughly imbued with the sweet spirit of forgiveness. But some kind of an ill wind seemed blowing for her that day.

While bringing in the articles left behind he had observed the trail of eggs from the phaeton to the door, and upon her reappearance he broke into a fit of laughter.

Rather than laughter, she had expected a compliment, and feeling the blood in her veins grow hot with indignation, she cast her eyes downward and discovered the horrible streaks of yellow on her white skirt just as he, having the phaeton in mind, said, "I noticed you brought some of the eggs home with you."

What could she do? She had gone in before, had had her cry, and forgiven him. What else can a woman do? She decided quickly, and it was she would now do neither. How dare he tamper with her feelings! Henceforth they would be strangers.

A diet of nectar, fed by the hands of Hebe and Ganymede, would prove satiating, if continued with-

out interruption, and how much more so is it with eggs.

It was smears of egg the widow now saw over everything. There sprung in her heart a wish that she might never again so much as hear the cackle of a hen.

Composing herself to the uttermost, she replied by the venomous hiss of silence, and went into the house, leaving him thoroughly mystified.

Her beautiful dream of love had proved a nightmare, and all caused by too much egg.

She felt thoroughly tired from the day's happenings, and after discarding the egg-stained skirt, resorted to that rest derived from meditation. Unintentionally she fell asleep in her chair, and it may be her dream was of the Elysian days of youth, when nature painted her cheek with a pomade of hollyhock scarlet and the cream of buttercup. Whatever it may have been, she was awakened by the clatter of heels on the pavement, to see two young women standing at her door-step.

Her greeting was perfunctory, and coupled with it she extended the borrowed pattern, explaining she had concluded, after all, the style would not suit her.

"We came for the eggs you forgot to leave," was all they could say in reply.

The "breaking of home ties" is a theme that has long appealed to imaginative and constructive tem-

peraments. It is a theme dealing with the future, and future means promise. It glitters with incentives and the possibilities for toning.

There is another theme, cold, unpopular and avoided. It relates to the plain realities of the past. Here the speculative is dimmed, and conceptions are confronted with facts. Facts are devoid of plasticity, no fit material for moulding purposes.

The return to the old home of one shorn of promise of the future, and burdened with the facts of the past, is a theme difficult of illumination.

The posthumous daughter was again at "Forest Retreat." She had essayed in the glare of pride in determination, only to return in the silence of the vanquished. The restful quiet of the place seemed but to accentuate the hum of foreign sounds that lingered in her ears, and she suffered the tortures of those who are thrown from a life of activity into the sluggish calm of idleness. This, coupled with the resultant despondency due to apparent failure, which in turn was coupled with the burning secret of its cause, seemed likely to bring about the undoing of the hidden force that had buoyed her through the sea of doubt she had so long known. It seemed her cup of sorrow must be full; and as the most bitter draughts, under continued administration, diminish in their nauseous effects, was it possible she had suffered all? There is consolation in the belief that the acme, even in despair, has been reached, for this brings with it the promise of immunity from future suffering.

These thoughts were dwelling in her mind when, as though a bit of the nebulae in the skies had agglutinated and fallen in her path, a garland of roses reached "Forest Retreat," bearing his name as the sender.

Were the cold marble of a Pygmalion to actually fill with the warmth of life, the apparition would in itself prove stupefying to our comprehension, and produce a reflex action of the brain, such that it would appear to us as a foreseen possibility. In the same sense, a voice actually coming from the grave would not disturb our state of normal composure. So it was, the garland spoke to her as a matter of course, a voice always expected and impatiently awaited.

She accepted it as a salutation from a long-absent one, and lapsed into that dazed state one does when confronted with the inability to disentangle one's own mental confusion. She acknowledged the receipt of the garland in a matter-of-fact way, which had brought about the immediate announcement that he would visit "Forest Retreat."

And in the calmness of relief obtained, when the cause of the bewilderment is no longer sought, she awaited him.

One of the many artful devices of Nature is to disassociate growth from things that may have at some time formed the subject of our mental impressions. When we meet the stern face of one not seen since childhood, we feel a sense of resentment that the laughing child we knew should deceive us by wearing

a mask streaked with the lines of age and the seriousness of purpose.

The posthumous daughter knew him only as the one she had left myrtle-crowned in the graveyard years before. When he came, it was as the meeting of perfect strangers who have one common thought—they have known the same two people who knew each other, years before.

“How did you know I was here?” she asked in the tone of one who feels their acts have been observed in secrecy.

“Have you not always been here?” he replied.

She felt chagrined that her life had been of so trivial consequence to him, and remained silent, wondering what it all meant. She thought it appropriate to ask why he had sent the flowers, and did so, making it clearly evident, through the inflection of her sentence, as to the state of her feelings.

Of the thoughts that ran through his mind, of the words he might have spoken, of the peace each had so long sought and which might come with the kindling of a single ray of warmth in his eye, it seemed not one of these could be tuned to the harmony of strangeness that had invaded their relations.

Why had he sent the garland? The question assumed a spectre-like form and appeared to stand before him demanding satisfaction. He waited, wondering if the spectre could be satisfied by his suggestion as to a fitting use for it. He thought of a happy life, known long, long ago, before the morbid

pallor of disappointment spread over his countenance. A life long since but a faint and lingering spark that could not be smothered, either by the plunging of himself into new environment teeming with changed conditions, or from the starving of it through philosophical abstinence in meditation. How persistently the spark had held on, finally to flare up in what had proved to be the consuming of false hope as a fuel. The new hope was, after all, but the death-throes of that life, the muscular contraction that follows the long stillness and immediately precedes dissolution. That life had now been consumed, and could not the flowers be placed on its grave? Or, could he admit the interpretation he had made from the sending to him of that strange diary, and frankly say the flowers had been intended for her grave? The spleen of retaliation almost forced him to suggest them as a tribute to the memory of the life he had once known in her. A flood of thought filled him, but the silence remained unbroken. He knew he must answer the direct question she had put. His reply was prefaced by pointing to a large aspen tree, not many feet away, that had never ceased to tremble in its watch over the sleep of those resting in its shade.

“Near that tree there once sat a little girl with uplifted face, and in pleading tones begged a small boy, who was climbing it, not to go so high. But on he went, until the height was reached where the branches became slender and swayed with the winds. The little girl’s uneasiness increased with the height

of his climb, but he was strong-hearted, and her tears were an inspiration to him. Out on one of the branches he went, and as it bent and swayed, he rocked on the sea of pride that rolled about him, while the little girl buried her face and moaned in piteous fear for his safety. Finally he came down, and in reply to such scolding as she could give between her sobs, pointed out the initials of her name carved on the very topmost branch. That little girl and that little boy live no more. In the graveyard of childhood the breath of the poppy gives them sleep, while they dream of the things that happen only in the world of little people. We knew them. Let us place the flowers on their graves."

"And I have been dead to you since then?" she asked immediately.

He searched his heart, and replied, with that inflection which indicates perfect assurance as to the truth of a statement, "Yes, for a time."

When she spoke the white imprint of teeth in her feverishly crimsoned lips gave evidence as to the torrent of emotion that filled her.

"Likewise, I have placed flowers on your grave," and a smile, nearly akin to that of perfidy, played in her face as she thought how true were the words she had spoken, and how his ignorance of her meaning would make them sting as his had stung her.

"Then we have been dead to each other," he suggested, implying his was in a symbolical sense, as had been his interpretation of her allusion.

“Yes,” was her response, being equally drenched in the same sea of dilemma.

Would that the life-boat, strong and sure, so needed on the treacherous seas of misconstruction, could be launched and the hand of fate prove timely for the rescue of these two souls, fast sinking and grappling each other with the clutch of drowning men, as the crest of each wave breaks and smothers them in the foam of its fury!

“It remained for you to taunt the living flesh of the dead spirit,” she began; “and though the sole right to break silence was yours, yet your first shaft came from ambush. It reached home, and poisoned with sarcasm though it was, faith in the strength of my own self proved an antidote to its virulence.”

With the delivery of this reproach, she handed him the letter once rumped in a fit of anger, and whose creases had been smoothed in the compassion of her after-thought. She waited, in the same triumphant spirit of the days gone by when in their passages of wit she had scored.

His reply was in tones submissively measured, as if each thought were being carefully considered.

“I wrote this, but I did not send it. I could not have sent it, and wrote it to prove this to myself. It was done in an idle moment, and but the unburdening to myself of what was in my heart. It could not have been intended for other eyes than mine, which thought developed in me a hatred of myself, and, to be candid, of you. In idleness, I attempted



to reconcile myself. I believed the letter was destroyed."

It was a confession in which he had shown no mercy for himself, and left him with the advantage of one who outwits his opponent by pleading guilty.

"May I ask," he continued, "why you sent this to me?" and he handed to her the mysterious messenger that had played between them, the pocket diary.

As soon as she could get the four words formed into a sentence, she asked:

"Have you read it?"

The inaudibility of his reply made it known to her that he had.

It may be she would have had him answer as he did. No heart ever bleeds that would always have its lacerations concealed. Every entry made in the secret journal of the heart's longings is instilled with an inborn faith in the transmission of mental impressions, and a fugitive hope that fate may decree the discovery of the entries at the crucial moment, and under the desired conditions of psychological importance.

She was transported back to the days that followed his leaving, when she had lived strong in the faith of his eventual return. Her reply was in tones showing self-composure of remarkable force.

"I did not send it. I could not send it. It was not the thought of an idle moment but the deliberate unburdening of my heart, under calmest reflection.

It could have been for no eyes other than mine, though I would have had you read it after mine had been closed forever that you might know I had suffered. It was written with my life blood, and every thought was a truth. I longed for words to express their real depths. The book was lost. I prayed it might never be seen by human eyes, and that in my eternal sleep I should dream the message was carried to you."

He felt himself fill with pride in having so thoroughly acted in accord with what she had just said, when on that night he had read what he believed to have been intended for no other eyes than hers. He realized she had again outwitted him. While his confession had been more nearly a compromise, hers was a clean breast of sincerity. His thoughts reverted to the evening in the graveyard, the laughing indifference she had shown, all since explained through the mysterious messenger. And she, too, had suffered, like himself, and had borne her suffering without harboring the hatred that had come with his. He wished he had spoken the full truth, and told her the message had come to him as a voice from Heaven; but then he would have found himself in the position of standing before one with flowers in hand to lay on one's grave. He remained silent, pondering heavily.

Silence is not always golden, and it was during his that her mind dwelt on the thought he had bequeathed his soul to one now abiding in the peace of Heaven. She felt he meditated on his declaration to

that soul, the knowledge of which had been revealed to her in a manner so strange she dare not let the thought linger in her mind. That he had loved another was in itself enough to stifle her sense of comprehension, and she did not care to rehearse the ordeals attendant upon its revelation.

Feeling she was in possession of the situation, she continued, "I have not been here always. I went to search among those who live only in the memory of a grateful nation—to find you," and her words trembled. "I found you, but not there."

He waited to catch her first utterance in explanation.

She felt he was considering the most compassionate way of breaking to her the information she possessed in secret.

"I have not told you," he began—

Could she let him speak the cruel words and watch her writhe like a singed worm? No, it was better that she tell him, and as if his words had gone unnoticed, she continued:

"I knew that your heart and life were given to another. You have read the sacred pages of my life," and she glanced at the diary, whose leaves she was fingering. She said something further, but he did not hear it. The sentence, "I knew your heart and life were given to another," echoed in his ears. There flashed through his mind how ridiculous was the situation in which the widow could have placed him, and the possibility of some malicious distortion having preceded him to "Forest Retreat." The

absurdity of the widow's egg episode completely occupied his thought.

It may have been the psychological moment of importance in the unheard narrative, or the crucial interval of silence that followed, but at her pause he prefaced the continuation of his interrupted words with a smile.

As though a poignard had been thrust in her heart, she buried her face, and the long-trying lashings that had weathered so many tempests on her sea of life broke.

Her released emotion assumed a hysterical form, and between the convulsions produced by the burst of bitter anguish she pleaded, in the voice of a suppliant for mercy, that he leave her. What to do he did not know. His words fell as though on one bereft of the sense of hearing, and he lingered in speech and step.

Feeling he had left her presence, she rose, and, finding him yet waiting in mute astonishment, she commanded all the reserve strength in her body. She faced him in silence, raised one arm, not with the upturned palm of pleading, but hand closed with the intensity of determination, save the index finger, which was extended. Like one of the "Furiæ" she stood, defiantly immovable. For a moment he waited, looking at her, magnificent in her wrath.

The wondrous depths of blue in her eyes changed from the azure warmth of summer skies to the soulless cast of winter. The raven black hair, still like a weighty fold of silken turban, hung about her fore-

head, but now entwined with threads of pure silver, far more artistically intricate than any save the hand of Nature could produce. Her chiseled features had the blanch of marble, and were it not for the rise and fall of her breast, which came with her labored breathing intermingled with a partially successful effort to control the convulsive sobs that filled her, she would have been a statue wonderfully perfect, and classic in the interpretation of "Marshaled Reserve Force." Her voice, still limpid in inflection and liquid in tone, was hushed to his ears, while the pointing hand spoke volumes. He obeyed and turned away. Had he looked back he would have witnessed the transformation of "Defiance" into "Grief," with the same pose, but the extended arm turned backward to bury the face.

When he had returned from "Forest Retreat" the "sea of dilemma" had lost none of its turbulence. The widow was fairly strangling in the drenching of its fury, so unaccountable had his actions become. Just as she was regaining prestige in the matter of his confidence, after her heroic and successful effort to return to the even tenor of her way and bide the time when he would again broach that very tender subject, love, his movements became more mysterious than ever. She had of course noted his absence. She noted everything, and nothing could be more conspicuous than his being away from home.

A characteristic of some people is their ability

to ingratiate themselves into the existence of dumb animals. They who possess this power are able to exercise much of control over the animals' habits and dispositions, particularly domestic animals. The widow's tenant was endowed with this property. If information were obtainable through no other source, the disturbance in the life of that small portion of the animal kingdom comprising her possessions would have made known to the most casual observer the absence of some one.

It was with intense interest she had awaited his return. When the horse ceased in his grazing with head toward the gate, and the dogs awoke from their stupor of indifference, she knew he was at home, though she had not seen him.

Suspicious as he had become regarding the widow, and the possibility of her having betrayed his confidence, he could not arouse in himself the courage to face her immediately upon his return. To the widow this was ample verification of her belief that his absence could be attributed to remorse of conscience, consequent to his treatment of her. She pictured another twilight and its fall of softened shadows, the sweep of insect stillness through the woodland and the mystic charm of the gloaming. These were the conditions before, and she remembered this period of the day had always been conducive to loquaciousness in him.

But this was a time of strange happenings; and when he approached her while the day was in the full vigor of its life, though himself filled with lassitude,

she knew he had spent a sleepless night. That he had something of importance to say was evident; furthermore, it was plain there would be no repetition of the embarrassing silence that had occurred on a previous occasion. He told her, in very few words, that he had decided to leave. The widow was not surprised. She would not have been had he thrown his arms about her neck and kissed her. Nothing could surprise her longer; she had lost all bearings in the "sea of life." At the least, she was relieved in mind by knowing one thing definitely, even if it was that he no longer cared for her.

While she could not be properly characterized as stolid, yet the very absurdity of her own interpretations designated her as belonging to the class of medium intelligence. In consequence, the fires that had been so readily kindled in her heart were as easily extinguished; and with slight effort she was able to take up the thread of life where she had dropped it, the day he had presented himself as an applicant for tenantry. That she regained her buxomness and ability to carry eggs in safety, and will continue through happy years in the performance of this simple pleasure, is a safe speculation.

There was no such strong hand as had been reached out to the widow to lift him from the seething waters, and the buffeting of life's waves had made him insufferably sore. After a decade of storm-tossed existence his first anchorage—the widow's farm place and her simple companionship—

had been over a false bottom. He would never again pin his faith to mortal being.

Memories are the flavor of life's fruits. And like the fruits of the earth, the fruits of life are characterized by their flavor. Fruits in themselves are nothing, the earth is covered with them; some are prolific in yield, though devoid of flavor; some gorgeously colored, bitter and astringent-like; some homely in hue, scanty in yield, but filled with nectar, palatable and gratifying. So are the fruits of life: some gross and characterless; some nauseous with the bitterness of disappointment; some deliciously sweet and wholesome.

It was after an inventory of his storehouse that the nature of his harvest was revealed. He had never thirsted for the huge yields of a characterless life, any more than he had expected the golden deciduous fruits that abound in youth to become perennials. He had trusted to be able to fill the modest coffers of his wants with fruits of a flavor that would make them an appetizing diet for the winter of life. But some unseen larva had always secreted itself, to later gnaw at the heart of his purpose and thwart his honest intent, until the granary contained only a scant supply, and of homely hue, with a weevil safely ensconced in every kernel.

Like St. Paul, he might say, "I have fought a good fight." But could he view himself, in the perfectness of manhood, filled with the strength that matures with the prime of life when youth has been cultured with moral purity; could he look at the un-



blemished graciousness that God had lavished in the making of his body, and say, "My course is run?"

That tenacity of purpose which had served as king-pin for the craft in which he had braved the "sea of life" had weakened to the point of rupture, and the rigging on his ship of destiny was an entanglement of frayed cordage. Henceforth he would navigate in stilled, unfrequented waters, not as a regular vessel listed in the registers of social recognition, but a "tramp ship."

Since the morning that his tramp guest, that diametrically opposed counterpart of his own personality, had passed through the gateway and become absorbed in the foliage that grew by the roadsides, he had inwardly mistrusted the strength of his own philosophy. What if the tramp was right in his theory that the inconsistencies of life could be avoided by merely declining to face them.

A picture was fresh in his mind of the departing tramp with visage wreathed in smiles and body wrapped in the warmth of a coat that had been his own. The happy vagabond was right, and he would find him that he might tell him. He would seek him, out in the vastness of Nature's freedom; search among the sweet-scented blossoms where the tireless bee is the only worker, and the "lily that toils not" reigns supreme; follow along the course of the idle rambles of brooks and rills whose waters reflect the gleams of sunlight that penetrate, like fire-tipped darts, the sheltering foliage of the swaying trees; look on some grassy slope, where the eye could feast

on the symmetry of Nature in the rise of her hills and the slope of her valleys, where the soul could be satisfied through the music of birds that blend their song with the voice of Nature, where thirst could be quenched by the drinking of perfume vapors distilled from the richness of Nature's fragrance by the warmth of her sunshine. At some of these places he would be found, selfishly isolated, nursing the wisdom of his philosophy.

Little do we know of the true perspective in our mental pictures. Who could have discerned that this hapless wanderer had unknowingly been the bearer of a fateful message to the posthumous daughter, delivered with his life, and whose mutilated body now rested in the potter's field, shielded from further disturbance by a tombstone bearing an epitaph of one word encircled by an olive wreath?

Parting with the widow and her farm place was nothing; simply one laugh, perhaps, though, a hysterical laugh of derision, or a Mephisto jeer!

Through the same gateway he went; and as he saw in the distance where the foliage appeared to form a solid mass across the roadway, he hastened that he might reach it and become absorbed. From the treacherous channels of life he sought harbor in the peaceful folds of oblivion.

Shall we go through the foliage for just one glimpse of him while in the fullest enjoyment of that peace of mind to which he is so justly entitled; to hear his laugh echoed in the laugh of the brooks and rills he had sought? Will he grudge us this jot of

satisfaction, or is he selfishly isolated in the nursing of his new-born philosophy?

The kingfisher, that flies, arrow-like, up and down the winding course of the rill, and the Indian hen, that wades in the shallow water along its edges, flew up with a scream. This caused the air to become filled with the whirr of wild fowl that lived in harmonious relationship by the waters that reflected the flight of the fire-tipped darts.

There had been a pistol shot, followed by a splash and the subsequent gurgling of water as the bubbles of air carried into it escaped.

Not many days later the body of a man, in the prime of life, swollen and discolored, too far advanced in the stages of decomposition to admit of identification, had floated away from the quiet of the rill into a more frequented vicinity. When it was dragged ashore, all traces of the self-inflicted wound were obliterated. Men, each with one hand serving to muffle his nose, rolled it into a crude box and hurried away to the ridges where the counted countless sleep.

The kingfisher and the Indian hen have since returned to their sentinel duties and the wild fowl are quiet, sleepily watching the fire-tipped darts that penetrate the foliage.

\* \* \* \* \*

“Forest Retreat,” are the sons who have fed on the fruits of your rich soil, those sons whose birth-right was the heritage of that spirit which enabled the old master to snatch you from the hand of the

red man, and, out of your pristine ignorance and wildness, evolve a seat of culture; are those sons shirking? Is this why the shrewd "tobacco-grower" has been able to obtain so many little "strips" "on the shares," until it became necessary to bring in the outer fences? Can there be a secret larva gnawing at their hearts? Or is there retrogression in the one-time great community of conditions that made your atmosphere teem with thrift?

The odors from "curing" tobacco that hung in the great new barns and overflowed to every outhouse on the place were in no sense gratifying to the undaunted spirit though weakened flesh of the posthumous daughter. And doubtless the great aspens that stood in the graveyard shivered many times at the thought of old Major Nicholson being left in sole possession of that sacred spot, when some purse-inflated magnate would have bought for himself a heritage.

Once more the posthumous daughter made her way to the graveyard. No young man followed her: only a faithful family servant, who carried a chair, that the daughter could rest at frequent intervals. The servant halted at the gate, then wandered down toward the great fields of tobacco so threateningly near. The posthumous daughter did not go to the mound, for she had no surplus strength, but cautiously moved through the entanglement of myrtle vines that matted over the ground, until she reached her father's grave. There she sank down midst the folds of her sombre-colored skirts, rested her fore-

arms on the pedestal of the headstone and buried her face between her hands.

Again the stillness of the graveyard was broken, though by faint muffled tones that escaped between her arms as she spoke.

“Father! look down upon your child: she whom you have never seen, save through the starry eyes of Heaven! Tell me what I have done, that I must suffer the smothering of a bleeding heart!

“I came into this world, half orphan, deprived of the precious influence of your love, the shielding protection of your arm; born only to kiss away the tears from a widowed mother’s eyes. To be the living embodiment of the cause for which you died, I have endeavored with all my strength. Like you, why could I not have died on the firing-line where my life-blood would have leaped forth in the glory of some earnest purpose, or some simple cause, or even just some poor little trivial act of insignificance, if nothing better? Why am I humiliated in life, without hope in death? You, having seen all, know the truth.

“Open your arms to your own fatherless daughter! Fold me to your bosom! Tell me the mysteries of life!”

And then the faithful servant supported the daughter as she passed with faltering footsteps along the path that led through the garden.

The trail of the country doctor’s buggy never fails to arouse interest. Men in the fields stop with

uplifted tools; mothers with screaming infants in arms crane their necks through partly open doorways; children in the roadside school-houses cease in the droning of their studies to peer over the tops of their books, all to watch the course of the doctor's buggy. They note the speed of his horse, the duration of his visit, and watch again for his return that they may catch a glimpse of his face.

When the doctor's buggy turned in between the stone gate-posts that marked the entrance to "Forest Retreat," and remained until after nightfall, the neighbors did not have to search the doctor's countenance to learn as to the gravity of the case. And when the curtains remained drawn one morning they knew the doctor had made his last visit to that patient.

As the light of a summer's day softly fades into the calm of night; as the dew of night noiselessly lifts from the petals of the rose; as the breath of the rose passes into the ethereal blue of the skies, so passed the life of the posthumous daughter; an euthanasia, gently lifted into the arms of her father, rescued from the "Sea of Doubt."

God had noted the scream of the kingfisher and answered her prayer:

"If he should die while yet I sleep,  
I pray the Lord his soul to keep,  
And ere the time I should awake,  
My lonely soul He, too, will take."

## V

### OBLIVION

“Oblivion, may thy languid wing  
Wave gently o'er my dying bed.”

WERE the moon inhabited, and should those inhabitants train a telescope of sufficient power to enable them to scrutinize life and its resultant creations on earth, and the observer could sweep northward and southward while the earth revolved on its axis, thus presenting the earth in its entirety, he would probably train his instrument on the small town of El-Geezeh as presenting a structural work of greatest interest. From this place, for a distance of fifty miles along the western border of the Nile, is the necropolis of the dead past in the world's history. Herodotus, the first chronicler of human events, even five centuries before the birth of Christ, was no nearer the solution of the mysteries hidden in this graveyard than are we.

Through thousands of years have the tombstones in that graveyard kept step with the march of time; and when the cycle of civilization's advancement will have been completed, and the earth encircled with its trail, the pyramids of Egypt will continue to stand as the mightiest work of man.

El-Geezeh is the promontory of this strange burying-ground, containing nine of the thirty-nine structures constituting a barricade against which the world's material and contemporary history of the phases of human accomplishments can make no advance. Among these nine there stands one which is not only the largest but probably the oldest. Cheops lays claim as the first of the existing works of human hands; not through tradition, for it had been silent three thousand years before the birth of tradition; but through a study of Egypt's topography, Cheops is seen to stand as the focal point of the empire, equidistant from its shores, and a harbor light for the great Sahara on whose border it is placed.

Stand at the base of Cheops and marvel. Moses stood there; so did Cleopatra and Napoleon. How trivial seems the name of Napoleon in this connection,—the comparison of mushrooms to mountains,—yet, a Human Pyramid of the Living Present would more nearly describe Napoleon. Our might hurled against that impenetrable breastwork of the past is but the pelting of granite with snow-flakes.

The actual seeing of these structures invariably proves a disappointment to those who previously formed mental pictures. Nor is this surprising: for the mind has greater capacity for insight than has the eye for material comprehension, since the eye merely possesses the property of comparison, and nowhere on earth is there anything comparable with the pyramids.



The form of these structures, their mammoth proportions, and the relative proximity of their locations suggest the true point of perspective is miles from them. And standing as they do, outlined against the terrible blankness of the desert, they appear to take on the vibrant nature of its atmosphere, until one sees them as the most weird of spectres, silently wending their way on their mission from the unknown past to the equally unknown future, contemptuously oblivious of the present.

Nothing so quickly lends a prosaic color to poetic conceptions as does the suggestion of dimensions. Yet, in this age of degenerate temperaments, facts serve as the foremost agent in the marshaling of our appreciation. The builders of Cheops displayed marked ingenuity in their efforts to dispel any tendency to associate mensuration with their work. This is seen in their chosen design, for in no style of architecture is there less opportunity for display than in the pyramid.

Let those of an artisan turn of mind consider. The base of Cheops covers thirteen acres, its apex being nearly five hundred feet above. The same material arranged in the equally simple form of a cube would have been many times more conspicuous, and correspondingly less durable than is the pyramidal form, which form of architecture possesses the greatest resistant qualities to the weathering effects of climatic agents. Here is the suggestion of an attempt to withstand time, rather than produce an overpowering presence.

Preparatory to the erection of the structure a mountain of stone was hewn down to the form of a base, and the hewings removed. Stones, some of which are eight yards in length and three yards square in section, were presumably brought from the Arabian mountains, five hundred miles distant, for use in its building.

What historians say regarding the pyramids is of no consequence, for no one can know; but what they do say is, that it has been more than four thousand years since Surid, afterward known as Chufa, and later, Cheops, came to rule over Egypt; that he was a despicable monarch and a great oppressor of the people, making them labor for him, to the number of one hundred thousand, for sixty years in the construction of the three great pyramids; and when the work was completed he issued this proclamation:

“I, Surid the King, have built these pyramids and have finished them in sixty-one years. Let him who comes after me, and imagines himself a king, attempt to destroy them in six hundred. It is easier to destroy than to build. I clothed them with silk, let him try to cover them with mats.”

It has been said the pyramids are the riddle of the ages. Who built them, and for what purpose, are questions that may have been asked by Abraham, who doubtless gazed upon them in all their glory.

The first part of the riddle will never be answered. The second was answered a thousand years since, when it was discovered that some time in the past a poor, selfishly human soul had hurled defiance at Time and attempted to throttle its shrouding of his

earthly existence in the folds of oblivion. But Time was victor and robbed him of the very marrow of his conceit, using the great mausoleum to serve as a mile post in its trail.

To-day, Cheops, Chufa and Surid are but imaginative echoes lingering in the corridors of time, while the mightiest work of man has proved but a pinnacle for Oblivion, where she sits, enfolding in her garments the mystery of his dead past.

The builders of the pyramids made a heroic struggle. Will our era, in the cycle of history, reveal one of equal courage? one who will set up a second mile-post in the trail of time?

To comprehend something of the term "Oblivion," consider a human being—the combination of inert substances made into form, evolving heat, developing power of movement, possessing psychic qualities, queer beyond conception. Then conceive of the importance of that human being, if looked at with its own eyes in the head of another. Bear in mind, it is improbable if any two human beings were ever cast in the same mould; if any two minds ever recorded the same impression; if any two pathways, from the cradle to the grave, have ever coincided. Is it then not true that every human being is a world within himself? And it is three hundred billions of these separate and distinct creations that Oblivion has absorbed, nor is her hunger satisfied. Some day we will have served our purpose in having aided toward the appeasing of her craving. Our material self will have been metamorphosed into

those inert substances of which we are constructed, and the fact of our having existed will have vanished.

Contrasted against Oblivion, death is the restful sleep in life from which there will be a happy awakening. That we will die is a natural consequence of our having lived. We are born with the stipulation, the expectation, the right to have death come to our relief. We are but temporal and shall die; but must we be forgotten?

Earthly existence is primarily the birth of that life we live after death; an opportunity for us to fix ourselves in the memory of others that we may live again. So long as we are remembered, we live; we could be called Thanatosians: they who live in death. The life of the Thanatosian may be fleeting, or more than temporal, possibly perpetual within the sense of human comprehension. The Thanatosian, being possessed with life, becomes subject to death. His existence is absolutely at the mercy of his creator. We who create him must maintain him. His death is his passing into oblivion to join the three hundred billion.

Of the great world of oblivion we know nothing; but of Thanatosia we are qualified to speak. That land, with its galaxy of characters obtained through the gruelling process of selection employed by time and its ally, death, constitutes, in fact, the only world with which we are familiar. And a strange galaxy it is: patriarchs who have come down to us through ages until their lives appear more symbolical than real, illustrious beyond our conceiving that

they ever lived in human bodies ; steadily illuminating that world, after others who have flashed with meteoric incandescence across the heavens, faded to the modest light of a glow-worm. These, and they who left our own arms, robed in our promise of perpetual remembrance, make up the concourse.

Under strange conditions, strange wherein every wrong has been righted ; where the past and the future is the present ; where time has no flight, there dwells this heterogeneous body of Thanatosians. Among them are little children who never grow up, but live in the wonderful child-world through which we have passed. There are youths in the freshness of life, full of flowers and the promise of fruiting, though never dropping a petal of their bloom. There are maidens in the rose-bud stage of life, with cheeks immune to atrophy. There is the strength of maturity, remaining at the flood-tide of life, static in equilibrium. There is the age of Wisdom, the pinnacle of life, with its soft diffusion of retrospective light that is not becoming dimmer. And finally, those who have passed through all that life afforded ; whose sun has set and left them resting in the peaceful twilight before a night that never comes. These compose the heterogeneous body that inhabit Thanatosia, the immutable land. And there our loved ones dwell, and exercise an influence over our lives so long as they live in our memory.

It is manifestly a human impossibility to retain for any length of time true mental pictures even of those who were nearest and dearest to us. After a

while they become symbolical: beautiful visions that unconsciously guide us: a light that brightens as time increases the focal distance of the picture. They are disseminated into an influence that surrounds us until we scarce believe they could have been on earth, but were the teachings of some inspiration.

Is it bold to suggest that some of the creations in fiction may have reached the lofty height of living embodiment until they too are disseminated into an influence? If they are given life, death must await them. Then must they pass into oblivion? Can there not be one grand assemblage, comprising the great creations of man, living in our memory just as do they that were of flesh and blood?

In Thanatosia many are the days that have been spent in the exchange of reminiscences between Captian Shelton and the courtly old Major, who came to him from out of oblivion. Each is ever a ready listener to the other, each knowing the other knew he exaggerated every time the story was told, but neither caring. In how many daring acts they may have participated with imaginary Indians; how many hair-breadth escapes against fearful odds; how miraculous were the conditions that saved their scalp-locks from dangling at the belts of some treacherous red-skin, they only know, and care to tell no other. For who could prove so responsive a listener, so capable of giving those sympathetic nods

of approval, while the narrator glowed in the excitement of his story, as they, each the one for the other?

And long since, with what feeling has the fearless Major Corbin explained to the friendless Jim, who is no longer friendless, but a devoted servant of the Major, and filled with pride in the ancestry of his adopted master—hearing no more of the despised cognomen, “Guinea nigger”! And with Jim safely protected against the piercing of innocent jests, the Major continues to follow his blooded fox-hounds, whose noble tails have not again curled between their legs, but stand straight out in the excitement of the chase.

The Smallwood sister has never ceased in her enjoyment of the joke she perpetrated on the sleeping keeper of the vigil with her lifeless body; while the long, lean, lank, freckle-faced boy continues to gloat in the notoriety achieved by him in being the first among that great audience to note the absurdity in the heroic blast of the king’s herald.

The forgiving spirit of George Washington Parke Custis has arisen from his forgotten grave, and marveled at the number of strange bed-fellows partaking of his hospitality. Upon their awakening he will doubtless ask them to visit his mansion in the skies, where his “Doric” columns will again make shadows in the moonlight to screen those couples who steal away from the glare of innumerable candelabra, that there may be an exchange of whisperings, and who knows what else! With the

“Squire,” these stranger sleepers may gather in his graveless woodlands to view the merinos, now developed until their coats are clouds of fleece with a lustre of pearl. And so long as his spirit may live in our memory he will no more contract those infirmities of age that compelled him to go in search of companionship.

And of the new master! He has walked with Washington. They have talked regarding the conditions that created a contention between brothers, that grew to the seriousness of strangeness between them, that led to the fierceness of war, that made empty sleeves and filled breasts with anguish, that made fatherless homes and homeless mothers and children, that laid waste the fields and burdened the nation with debt. They have weighed the cause of the brothers and righted the wrong of each with the forgiveness of the other.

The Lieutenant guest who one time paced the portico in silence has rectified his error and been absolved. And the immortal Prelude is heard no more at the grave, but the intoning of its supplication, by the arborescent choir, is for those in the world of flesh and blood, they who are undergoing the sentence of mortal anguish and know nothing of the ineffable life beyond the grave.

The sexton must have given up his former vocation, for the flowers no longer wither. It may be he is kept busy by the encroachment of the patriotic golden rod, or the blazoned dandelion, or of the stealthy creeping of the guileless honey-suckle. He



is certainly neither denied admission to the grounds nor permitted to construct geometrical flower-beds.

The potter's field grave-digger, too, has seen his foundlings romp in their child games, and they have sympathized with him in his loneliness. He has heard from the lips of the same tramp he buried that one's surprise in finding his own grave so zealously guarded by that solitary tombstone with its monomial epitaph.

For of such are the ways in Thanatosia, where mysteries are revealed and enigmas become transparent; where the instigating motive of every act committed in the world of flesh and blood has been able to establish its justification; where the promise of absolution we should look for in death is fulfilled. We know so trivial a part of the nature of things in real life; of the reason for throwing about us conditions so markedly varied; of the giving to us of intellects apparently so unjustly distributed; of the clothing of two souls, one in the well-moulded body of a man, the other in the shrunken and distorted form of a dwarf. We know so little of these things, we are compelled to resort to imagination.

Of life, we know but one thing: we know we live, which condition necessitates a cause. The cause of our existence can only be attributed to a creator, which term, whether used in the abstract, poetic or sacred sense, is the same. We have some, though little, conception of the three hundred billions that have gone before us. We know our approximate duration in this life, and

that against time it is infinitesimal, incalculable. We are entitled to the belief that no higher form of development exists than ours. Can we jumble our great ignorance with our small intelligence, our lack of comprehension with our knowledge of limitations, our poetic fancies with our cold facts, and deduce from this a logical sequence that there is, or, is *not*, a life beyond the grave? Our abstract, poetic or sacred creator must have given consideration to this question, and has either made us, like May-flies, born to flutter in the sunshine of a single day, or our earthly life is an inconceivably small interval in the cycle of existence.

When one makes the startling announcement, he *knows* there is eternal life, he profligates the very intelligence with which he is invested. Should the entire world unite in believing there is life beyond the grave it would no more establish a fact than could the transmutation of metals be effected by the concentration of thought as the agent.

When one states his *belief* in a future life, he has emphatically advanced his hope: nothing more. And this hope of the future has ever been the food of the present. The mind of man is adorned with a speculative faculty, and since he can neither speculate on the past nor the present, the future is the only thing remaining. The birth of this hope in a future life is an armament against the throes of anguish to which our mortal existence is subject.

When we train the little child to kneel and pray in his innocence of our own ignorance, we do so in

the spirit of arming him against the day when he will have arrived at the milestone in life from which the figures have been erased, and some vandal has inscribed the word "doubt."

Prayer is the sublime of conditions attainable by the mind. It is the introspective review we make of our secret motives as they file by, in the solemnity of isolation; for judgment at the hands of the good instincts that lie within us. It is primarily a confession: the recognition of our inferiority: an acknowledgment of ignorance: the confiding of hope. The postures of upturned face, bowed head or kneeling are admissions of helplessness, and serve to augment the attitude of the mind. That prayer is helpful, wholesome and natural, is the testimony of the Christian era. So we should teach the child to pray: to kneel and pray; and in so doing we instill into his life the value of communing with his own conceptions. And all of this will be to him the slow unfolding of the existence of a mystery hopelessly unfathomable.

The most exalted of human thought is, not that we shall live again, but that they whom we love will continue to live after passing from our midst. The question as to our own future life should be of no concern to us: it has to do with others. A hero throws himself in the path of danger to accomplish the rescue of some one imperiled. He gives no thought to himself, thinks only of the one imperiled.

If it were desirable to formulate a universal creed of faith, a creed coincident with the loftiest hope in

the human breast, it would be our belief that they, who in life so endeared themselves to us, will have become immortalized and continue to live and influence us so long as they live in our memory. Their perpetuity is of no importance whatsoever, when we have forgotten them.

Our right to existence beyond the grave may then become conditioned absolutely on the mercy of those we leave behind. Then what a realm that unknown land becomes and what a power it makes of us! To those we love we give life throughout the eternity of human conception; while with a spirit of vengeance we hurl others into the yawning abyss of oblivion.

We arrive now at the purpose of mortal life; the opportunity to win for ourselves life beyond the grave, and enter upon the real purpose of our creation. And how appropriately does this conform to the regulations which we, as the body politic, have formulated, when we refrain from inscribing the name of a living person on our roll of honor. We infer that no one can be unquestionably great while yet alive. In the test of resilience applied to a piece of steel it is not how far will it bend, but how truly will it return to normal after flexion. So we prefer to await the completion of the life-test of our illustrious ones, when the strain of flexion may be recorded. As in the steel, so in life the condition of molecular disruption cannot be determined until the strain is completely removed. Death then becomes a thing to live for, and life an opportunity to rehearse for the great drama.

Things that are universal are natural. Things that are natural are for our good. Death is universal. The assuming by it of such varied forms confronts us with an enigma of serious moment. We have seen the passing of beautiful lives, while their mortal bodies were undergoing muscular contortions of agonizing horror; and we have seen the life of a worthless wretch pass with the smile of innocence playing about his mouth. We do not know why this is. If on earth things were as they should be, we should have nothing upon which to speculate; therefore, nothing for which to live. Among the probabilities, one is that, physiologically, in all its forms, death entails no personal suffering, being nothing more than the carrying out of the stipulation given with our birth.

The three words most expressive in the dictionary of human thought are, life, death, and forgotten. Of the two first we can give no definition. Of the third, we know all. It means everything. And the conclusion of the whole matter is, live to die, and die to live.

The attainment of Nirvana is a conception of Buddha, defined as the entering of the soul into a condition of perfect equilibrium. Buddha's conception, however, admitted of this attainment only after death. Is there no human possibility of Nirvana during life? Is it beyond our power to live in a state of equilibrium; where every passion is counterpoised with moral courage; where every selfish thought is, in the ultimate, a generous motive;

where every ambition is appeased with an earnest effort?

Nirvana in life, and, in death, life in the memory of those we leave, would be a rounding out of the most elevated thought to which the heart can aspire.

Buddha was selfish. So is every one who chooses to live again in himself, rather than in the memory of those whom he leaves in the bondage of earthly life.

It was in the strange land we are calling Thanatosia where gathered, one day, the most remarkable assemblage within the mind's conception.

There were old people beautified by the halo of time, and young people glowing with perpetual youth. There were sages hand in hand with the golden curls of childhood's wiseacres, the dogmas of one answered in the nursery lore of the other.

There were heroes of great wars—wars for humanity's sake—whose faces beamed as they watched platoons of small boys in paper cocked-hats, under the leadership of shrill-voiced captains. And these shrill-voiced captains beamed, in turn, on still smaller boys who commanded squadrons of tin soldiers.

There were heavy-browed, serious-minded philosophers who had learned to smile, and light hearted, frivolous jokers whose faces were not always devoid of dignity, but were able to command the recognition that, with them, existence was not one flippant jest. The jokers could discuss the

philosophers' creeds, and the philosophers took cognizance of the unquestionable logic in the punster's play upon words.

There were classic poets and doggerel rhymsters vying in their ability to quote, each, the other's verse; just as two kindred spirits of great composers can improvise in duo, where one weaves in a theme of the other's composition, while that one struggles to obtain some cadenza effect, after which he will throw his contemporary into juxtaposition by substituting a theme of his opponent's construction for that of his own.

There were great masters of painting, grouped among worshipful students, conceding the importance of these same students' criticisms; and master artisans who saw in their ambitious apprentices the embryo of future rivals.

And, to think of this! There were immortal authors accompanied by the equally immortal characters of their own creation. Some of the characters jibing their creators for having made them so fearfully absurd, others imploring to be clothed in less dignity; some in the grotesque garb of their creator's construction, absolutely refusing to lay it aside; some explaining and apologizing to their created companions, always pointing to their creator as the excuse. Picture Bunyan and Christian coming to this gathering! And against this contrast of author and character was the character who had overshadowed his creator; and lastly, that creation so great as to have become vague in the matter of

his origin, until we know not if he ever had the breath of life, or was a sublime conception of man.

There were children nudging among the characters they had learned to love in the nursery rhymes, like the "Soap-fat Man" and the "Dish that ran away with the Spoon." Little girls carried sawdust dolls that wriggled and squealed, and little boys rode on hobby horses that were supple and glossy, and pranced and shied and pricked their ears, always fearfully wild though thoroughly under control of their excellent riders.

There were orphan children and childless parents, each so filling the void in the other that no little feet wandered aimlessly about the strange land, and no mother languished in the thought of her children left on earth.

There were entire families happily reunited, and these were aiding separated ones to bear in patience until the harmony of their soul music would be completed.

These, and all of those any of us know and love and keep alive in our memory, were gathered to celebrate the meeting of a father who had never seen his own child, with a daughter who had never known the meaning of the word "father." And when the posthumous daughter ceased to be fatherless, and the father was no longer childless, all the people of that strange land were weeping tears of joy. What a feast there must have been as these two souls let their long pent-up love pour out! When he felt her safely in his arms, after the soft shadows had closed



around her earthly life, and she had looked into the face she had waited so long to see, there must have been those same golden moments of silence we have on earth, when love has no words but stands transfixed in speechless adoration.

What a story he had to tell her! How, when the bullet had pierced his breast and he realized there was to be no recoil from the shock, and while awaiting the passing of the few fleeting moments that remained of his mortal life, how his thoughts had centered on the unborn child, and his prayer for its safe delivery, that the mother and the child might go through life each a bearer of the other's burdens, a refuge for the other's sorrow, a fountain of the other's joy.

And he could have told her how, through the gates of heaven, he had seen the widowed mate of his life go alone down into the valley of shadows and pass between the lurking places of death, and when, through fear for her safety, he turned away until the voices of watching angels had fallen on his ear, shouting in one grand chorus, "A child is born!"

And he must have told her how the mother had brought the babe to the grave of his mortal body, and there, beneath the shade of the aspens, bedecked the little one in the gorgeous splendor of fresh flowers, that as the little Princess of Fragrance she could be lifted up by the winds, that he might have a glimpse of their child.

He may have told her of the lullabies the mother

sang, telling the little one of the father who awaited them, and how each time, when the angels of sleep had stolen her away, the mother would search the face for any lines of expression resembling his.

He could have told how the mother concealed her sorrow from the child, as it merged from babyhood into the age of curls and fluffles, that the sky of the child's life should not be overcast with the mist of tears.

And only think of the things she must have told him! First, of the mother teaching her the child's prayer, "Bless father and mother," and how mechanically she said it until father became a common word in her daily vocabulary, a word of the queerest meaning, sometimes being one of the men who roll the thunderbolts and flash the lightning; and how laughingly she must have told him that, at other times, her childish conceit made him a drug-store man who sold tears, in funny little bottles, for people to put in their eyes to make them glisten and look pretty.

Then she would have told him of the dolls with which she played, they too having only a mother; but that she always taught them to pray, "Bless father," just as she had been taught. And of the jolly tea-parties had at his grave, where the dolls had such times sipping tea out of "butter-cups," while they nursed their precious pussy-willow babies, or rocked them in their burr furniture cradles, which the grandmothers had made, in addition to chairs, sofas and tables, all that the mother-dolls might play

“keep house.” And what a quiet, motherly time they would have, each mother and her family of dolls living at some grave for a house, until a group of Indian warrior boys, stained into grimacing demons with the juice of the pokeberry, would climb over the wall, making the party break up in confusion as the mothers caught up their children to flee for their lives; and finally, after amicable relations were once more established, how the stained-face warriors would sit around his grave, because his tombstone had a sword and a row of stars on it; while the captive mothers would bring them sweetened water in the cups from their dolls’ china closet.

What peals of laughter there must have been as the father listened to the story of the happy days of her life when his grave had entered into their play, and himself a component part of the child-world in which she lived.

With what sympathy he must have listened to her recital of the difficulty she had found, in mature life, in picturing him as her father; how hard it was for her mind to grasp any conception of what his love would be, and that only the ceaseless and silent adoration her mother had for his memory served to help her grow into the realization that his had been an actual existence, and not always a disseminated influence.

And these two! How they must have united in their praise of the mother who had so successfully fostered in an unborn child the growth of love for

its father, since the grim reaper Death had harvested this father even before the embryonic stage was past; and only through her constant dwelling in the thought had this love been developed in the prenatal life of the child.

And if we care to believe it, all of this happiness was theirs, and the joy that came to these two was worth many times the cost of all her suffering in life. Every misconception, every disappointment, and even the birth of atrophía in her face, had been compensated. And when that soldier father fell on the firing-line, and his lifeless body had impeded the onrush of his fellow-comrades, so maddened in the fury of internecine strife they scarce avoided trampling him; and as the numbness of his extremities extended toward his heart, and the knowledge of death's nearness sent through him those prostrating shudders, even while the agony of dying thirst seized him, with never a hand to moisten his lips, though his glazed eyes still caught fleeting glimpses of the fury surrounding him; and the swelling of his tongue until the air passages to his lungs had been stopped—all of his suffering had been reconciled through a single glance into the face of her whom he had at last folded in his arms as his child.

Could each one of them again start from the cradle, is there one event in the lives of either they would have erased? Would they for any reason disturb the sequence of conditions that had been thrown around them? Would they avoid the paths

they had taken, and risk themselves over the pitfalls in any other? Would they question the reason for the existence of any link in the chain that had been forged from their lives? Had not every moment of suffering lent to the joy that was now theirs? Would they care to risk curtailing it in the slightest?

Can we not interpret something from the suffering with which life is entailed? Is it not idle to presume that we are created after the manner of individual preferences; and that the pleasures of the world are to be borne by a select few while the vast majority shoulder its burdens? Will the few nondescript inanities who encumber the earth inherit what we call "the kingdom of God?" We do not *know*, but we can *believe* whatsoever we wish. In the strange land where live those whom we, their earthly creators, keep in life, we can adjust all differences within the scope of human perception; and as for the rest, what matters it? There is the name Surid living with us, but it means nothing.

For those we love we can believe in conceptions beautiful to the very depths of our soul's conceits; and it is these conceptions that react in our lives and make us what we are. What better tool could be given us for the carving of our own destiny?

When the kingfisher screamed his note of warning, was the character we had known to pass into oblivion? When the finny scavengers of the rill

that had darted away as, with shattered brain, he pitched into their midst, and had returned to nibble at his flesh and, like mourners, follow his body in its drifting that they might drink of the putrid water in its trail, was he to become no longer deserving of our thought? In this act of suicide had he displayed unpardonable cowardice? Did it mean that, after all, he was a weak-kneed, faint-hearted creature, unworthy of the designation "man"?

Self-destruction is not, necessarily, the result of an unbalanced mind. It is not given to us to know the nature of such dire extremity in which one finds one's self, when resort is had to this means of relief. Were we acquainted with this we too would be suicides. Suicide is death while life yet lingers in the body. From the moment of determination to destroy one's self there must be the consciousness of suffering the spirit to remain in a domicile obnoxious to it; or the reverse, the consciousness of a broken heart mortifying in a serviceable body. The predominating instinct is to sever all relation between the abstruse thing called spirit, and the concrete body. As soon as this dwelling together becomes inharmonious, it must develop every agony to which mortal existence is heir.

As to the train of conditions that lets one determine on self-destruction, it must be inevitable, else it would not exist. It could be no matter of choice. But, confronted with a state of *persona non grata* to one's own self, there is no alternative. Hence, self-destruction being a relief, any desire for

relief is natural, and whatever is natural is for our good.

Then have we the moral right to yield to what is nothing more than a selfish motive? No man ever took his life that it might advance the happiness of another. Any provision that may have been intended to ameliorate the suffering of those left behind is made in the incipient stages of unrest, and not after the victim of self-hatred has arrived at his determination. When this crisis is reached, he is virtually a sufferer of whatever death means in all of its interpretations.

Anything so absorbing of thought as is death means that during the final moments a state of supreme isolation is probably reached. A traveler waiting at the gateway of an unknown future, into which he is about to journey and from whence he will never return, would be so absorbed that recognition of those he is leaving would be a triviality.

Death is neither less nor more to the mortal who, in life, has sunk into oblivion, than to the one who is stricken while on the pinnacle of success. If all men are born equal, it is consistent to assume they die equal.

There is no gainsaying it requires courage to commit the act of suicide. It may be a courage surpassing any we know. Among our instincts one is to hold our own life at all hazards. Should this be followed, there would be no heroes, no martyrs, no suicides. The hero yields his life at some hazard, the martyr at every hazard, and the suicide at none.

The hero's life goes for a risk, the martyr's for a cause, and the suicide's, for naught. It must require courage to give something for nothing.

To be the premeditated agent of self-destruction is reserving to one's self the extreme in service, man has ever requested of his truest friend. Socrates took the cup of hemlock from the hand of the man who loved him most. But Socrates reserved for himself the act of placing the cup to his own lips, that with him the words "death" and "courage" should be synonymous.

This granting condemned persons the privilege of administering their own death cup was a test applied with the purpose of humiliating the one who lacked in courage to accept the offer. A similar distinction is found in the unwritten law prevailing in certain nations wherein a defeated commander is expected to terminate his existence with his own hand; that through such an act he can dispel any possible assumption as to a lack of courage. Such a death, supposedly, re-establishes him in the eyes of his followers. On one of less courage the death penalty is frequently inflicted.

If life be shorn of its poetry, there remains the unvarnished fact that he who possesses it can in no way impart it in the least degree to another. We must recognize in it an asset of such decided individuality that it cannot be entailed. And should an asset of such a restricted ownership prove valueless to its possessor, he could believe himself justified in the disposing of it. A life that is worth nothing



to its holder can be worth little more to any one else. Far better that it be not a thorn festering in the flesh.

When the kingfisher screamed, it was a strong heart that had ceased in its pulsation. No other could have turned from a previous determination to give full play to life in all its freedom and fancies. The life was his to have and to hold. He had put its qualities to the test. The train of conditions that led to his state of mind had not been his choice. Life was too serious to make of it a toy. He would yield it up to the all-consuming thirst of Oblivion. The body, the world, was out of harmony with his spirit, his existence.

Had he the courage to commune with his own gloomy thoughts in the shaded seclusion of the rill where there was no hand to stay his action? When he looked at the levity in Nature's face, her laughing waters, her dancing sunbeams, and then turned his face toward the yawning abyss Oblivion, did it require courage for him to choose? When he looked into the clear and placid water of the rill, filled with light and the shimmer of life, did it require courage to ruffle its surface and fill it with the murkiness of blood and the shudder of death? When he looked up into the blue of the sky with its maze of shell-tinted fleeces, parading in pomp and splendor like a grand spectacular flotilla in an ambient sea, and then looked down into the muzzle of a pistol, did it require courage to send the verdigris-stained bullet into his brain?

Was the termination of his life a fitting climax to the succession of failures that had composed it? Or was it the crucial test in a life that had been the very portrayal of courage? Was his courage and success? or was it cowardice and failure?

What may be the meaning of these words courage and success? We know courage to be an attribute of the mind. It is the balance-wheel, so to speak, of our nervous system. It is the faculty sufficiently strong to retain its presence of mind, when the rest of our senses are in a state of panic. Courage holds the martyr at the stake. It is that force which enables one to carry to a successful conclusion, irrespective of consequences, whatever may constitute his determination.

When he had determined upon self-destruction the one indispensable requisite for his putting it into effect was courage.

Then what is success? The word has so strong a ring of mercenary timbre that we see nothing but a countenance wrinkled into lines after the form of a dollar-mark. He who gives little for much is successful; but not he who gives much for little, as the world views this word. Ethically, a success exists where one has not failed in an undertaking.

If his undertaking had been to follow the dictates of an unbiassed conscience; to dwarf the instinct of selfishness by the giving unto others more than he would have them give unto him; to live in a spirit of humanity for humanity's sake, and love his neighbor as he loved himself, then the king-

fisher's scream marked the close of a successful life, full of courage to the last.

It is not what a man was, so much as what in our memory he is. If a life has been so silhouetted against our sky-line that it leaves an impression of countenance palatable to our memory and disposes in us the adaptation to our lives of any trait of character, ennobling, or even the love of one; if it suggests to us a higher appreciation of the delicate tints of personality with which the sombre coloring of life may be illumined; if it leaves with us the reverberations from a single chord played in the symphony of life, such that it behooves us sound our own souls as to the depth of melody there; if, in short, it stimulates us to one act of self-betterment, that life has been a success.

If the three hundred billions that have gone before had each bequeathed one elevating thought to posterity, we would be fairly scintillating in our wealth of gems.

Few of us could be cajoled into the belief that our imperfections do not constitute a majority. It is charity that magnifies our small minority of good points. They who love us forget our weaknesses.

Can we forget the petulances, the idiosyncrasies, the impassioned stoicisms distributed through the life that terminated on the banks of the rill? Can we blot from memory the picture we saw through the vista made in the foliage?—we should not have followed him. Can we dismiss the thought of blood gushing out, and water gushing in, at the mouth,

and look for the smile in his silhouette? Cannot the weakness of human judgment have made him a martyr to his cause of pertinacity and unswerving adherence to conviction? If so, can the creator of these weaknesses ask for him a lowly place among those who live in the memory of all who accept the tenet of faith in life, "To err is human; to forgive, divine," that he may ascend to the realm where all wrongs are righted?

When he and she met, let us believe there was no gathering of the people to witness, no idle curiosity-seekers standing round the corners that, unnoticed, they may watch these two come together. We would have the time when every one else was preoccupied, the place where no one else was present. We can dwell in thought, for a moment, on the flush of startled surprise that would be in her face; on the light in her eyes, dissolving from a ray of searching quality to a gleam of softened warmth. We can see his sudden stop, poised in thought, and the lowering of his eyes as his glance of recognition was confirmed. She too has stopped. The pause is short but it means worlds. The sound of a timidly advanced footstep falls on his ear, he lifts his eyes to meet hers, and the nebulous veil of the heavens falls around them.

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There are graveyards in Thanatosia, though they serve but one of the purposes for which they are

used on earth: their higher purposes. And equally proper, it is, that these graveyards have ghosts. The ghost is as indispensable to the graveyard as to the play of Hamlet.

Thanatosia is no fictitious place of alabaster piles and glittering streets, crowded with people wearing shrouds and sanctimonious expressions. It is a simple world of shaded nooks and sunlit expanses, verdant slopes and flowering glens, fragrant breezes and restful stillness. We may, if we choose, dot the landscape with gatherings of intermingling spirits, and have always just what we know and like, the environment we would throw around our dear ones, that they would not be living in strange conditions, foreign to our conception.

Explanations are not in order in Thanatosia; they go without saying. When they met, these two had nothing to rehearse. Everything was as it should have been, and once more they are sitting in the shade of the trembling aspens at "Forest Retreat." But the aspens are now trembling with the responsibility of their sentinel duties—they watch over the living now, no more over the dead. The pines moan, but theirs is a warning of the shudder they will send through the soul that would intrude upon the occupancy of these two; and the screening hedge of lilacs is so dense with bloom that no disturbing influence can penetrate. The tombstones are all there, though why no one knows, unless for the sake of the children who in life had played about. There is the mound, but its existence is explained in

a way similar to that of the tombstones. And the myrtle with its tiny blue flower, and the modest violet, all for a purpose, though it is hardly probable they were made into wreaths. We make wreaths when it is necessary to keep our hands occupied, that it may hold our thought from wandering. These two needed no occupation. Not even was it necessary for her to pick at the hem of her handkerchief, or for him to finger the little blue flowers that grew about them. She probably rested against the mound, and he may have partially reclined before her, his head resting in his hand, his forearm, with elbow on the ground, forming a support.

There are many things he could say, but it is probable the spoken words were few. Speech is only the froth of thought, the dross of idea, and a wretchedly poor carrier for the conveyance of feeling. Making love with words, like building castles of air, is using material that is too cheap. The heart has far more use for the eyes than the mouth. It thickens the tongue against speech, while sending a tremor of feverish tinge to the lips that tell much. It pumps the blood from the extremities, to send it coursing in scarlet waves of meaning across the cheek, revealing its impulses in no unmistakable way. When love is in its glow, it knows but the one word: silence.

As he must have looked up under the partly lowered lashes of her eyes, when she would have lifted them for the moment that her glance might meet his, she would know he had said, "You have my heart, will you give me yours?" And when a series of scarlet

expressions played over her cheek, and her lips trembled with embarrassment as a quickened breath escaped between them, he would know she had said, "You have it now." And love would laugh at words.

She probably was the first to speak—being a woman.

"There is but one thing I would have you explain to me."

He would immediately display intense interest and summon everything in his memory to be in readiness.

Did there rush into his mind the scene of their parting on earth, when she had refused him that single sentence in explanation, the one clause which Destiny held in her rapacious grasp that would have meant so much to both? Or was it the thought that he would be able to tell her of the little book he too had carried, and whose pages contained the outpouring of his soul, his frantic effort to commune with her in her heavenly abode; and how, when this little book had disappeared in a way so mysterious as to have remained unsolved by him, he had prayed it might never be seen by human eyes, though when he had learned of his mistake he would have had her see it, when his eyes had been closed in eternal sleep.

And as she looked into his all-serious face, she would have felt the sense of feminine timidity come over her, and perhaps qualify her question by a preliminary pleading that he would not laugh but answer, that it might put a stop to the curiosity that had so long burned in her. Of all the mysteries

that had wrapped their impenetrable folds around her life, there was but one that had continued unsolved, and this she would now ask. And while she was asking the question she would have lowered her eyes and fingered with the hem of her handkerchief, and a smile would have drawn her mouth and chin into such dimples as never before so tortured the thirst of man, and the graveyard would not have been filled with the melody of her voice, but there would emanate a series of hesitating words, so hushed and inarticulately delivered that the tombstones would have held their breath as she spoke.

“ You once asked me why was a tree with a broken limb like a lame duck, and I made you promise not to tell me the answer until I ‘gave up.’ I now ‘give up.’ ”

The aspens must have shaken and the pines must have groaned, the tombstones must have fallen down and rolled over, and he must have buried his face in the myrtle carpet upon which he lay, and the screening hedge and stone wall must have echoed, back and forth, the peals of laughter in his reply:

“ I’ll be blest if I ever knew.”

And what an amber tint to the honeyed sweetness there must have been in the moments Time was recording as these two sat there; these two, born in the virgin thoughts of their mothers to satisfy the craving in Nature’s poetic love; these two, entwined in the innocence of infantile love, when scarce out of their swaddling clothes; these two, who had mingled



a fragrance from their bloom of youth, most acceptable of any incense ever made, in offering to the god of love; these two, who had driven each other down the most tortuous of routes to the graves of their earthly lives; and now, these two, in whom embittered love has sprung in recoil with multiplied force to its natural path, and carried with it the rapture known only in reconciliation!

As to the intensity of the happiness which was theirs, all who have ever staked their lives in the game of love will care not for the use of words to express it. They who have never known what love means would only find in the words the mockery of emptiness.

And while they sat there the twilight fell. Love waxes strong when with its culture there is used the life-giving warmth of decaying day.

It was the same kind of twilight that had fallen around him once before when he had sat there alone. The same diffused rays of light that had enhanced the spectre-like pallor of the tombstones when they had begun that awful ghost-dance again filled the graveyard, and could it be the tantalizing demon of memory was to take possession of him, to make his frame quiver with the mournful echoes of that night?

He lifted his face from out of the verdant carpet that he might learn the effect his answer had produced in her expression. He found her face fixed in its stare at some object in the direction of the tombstone that was adorned with a sword and some

stars. Could she have seen a quiver in the tombstones? He did not take his eyes from her face until he had seated himself beside her, and then, to fix them squarely on the tombstone adorned with a sword. He would defy it to move the distance of a single hair's breadth.

From out of the dead silence there came the slightest sound of rustling, and he knew her hand had, spasmodically, moved toward his. In the shortest of time's intervals his had met hers, and her fingers were enclosed in his palm, while for never an instant did the eyes of either leave the tombstone adorned with a sword and stars.

The latent capacity in the sense of touch is second only to that of sight. In the finger tips there is a highly organized system of nerve centers which serve as the faithful transmitters of impression, not alone to the brain, but to the heart.

As they sat in the stillness of the twilight, in the sacred seclusion of the graveyard, he with her fingers in his palm, were the transmitters of impressions that served in their finger tips ever more active? How swiftly must have flown the magnetic impulses, impulses long closeted in hearts that now threw open their doors and let them, like fleeting spirits unleashed for the chase, bound away with mad-like swiftness. How surely must every pulsation of his heart have sent waves of power into his hand until his pressing of her fingers let her find excuse to move

them also, and send back to him those ecstatic thrills, those jewels in the divine sense of touch. And this in the silence, with the eyes of both riveted on the tombstone adorned with a sword.

The twilight thickened, and as the eyes of day grew heavy with sleep a firefly lifted its wings and left in its trail a golden thread. Another of the little insects saw it and tried the effectiveness of its glow on the screen of dusk. Then another and another and another, until there hung in the air a cobweb of golden threads; and through it these two saw the reflection of its sheen on the ashen pallor of the tombstone adorned with a sword.

Off to one side a shadow moved. He was alert for any emergency, and turned suddenly. Dare a tombstone budge? She felt his startled movement and nestled a trifle nearer him. And through the sense of touch each knew the other had noted the stealthy shadow.

The cobweb lifted a moment as some hungry bat darted through it, and this disturbed their attention, their eyes following the swirl in the folds of golden thread. When again they were turned toward the adorned tomb, they noticed the surrounding tombstones seemed to be undergoing some stage of transformation: to be shrinking in size; to be assuming forms fantastical, though not grotesque. And no sense of uneasiness filled him.

While they watched, a little figure, as though it may have left the grave of a child, appeared to be pirouetting over the myrtle carpet. This was fol-

lowed by another, just as the fireflies had come. Apparently every tombstone in the yard was coming forth for the same purpose. To the rhythmic sway of the lilacs they kept time, now going through the intricate steps of the caprice, now slow like the stately minuet, now cavorting about in the "cutting" of the pigeon-wing. Again she nestled nearer him, though no sense of uneasiness filled her.

The phantasy of the ballet of tombstones had so absorbed their attention they had failed to notice the transformation taken place in the adorned tombstone, and as of one thought turned to it, now evolved from the stage of cloud-like folds to the well-defined form of a man in faultless marble. Rapidly was the marble losing its pallid cast, and the glow of life filled the cheeks as these two looked on. The pirouetting figures seemed to form in line on the two sides of the way as the transformed marble passed between. And her father stood before them.

The two arose from the mound, and she, having withdrawn her fingers, started forward. The father took her hand and reached for that of the one who had remained at the mound. In this hand he placed hers. The golden cobweb descended, and settling on her head, trailed like a veil down her back, while the glint of gold in her raven-black hair was fairy-like.

And what is the use of fairies if they cannot bring all of the creatures of that strange land into the phantasy? So straightway the air was filled with the tiny tinkle of bluebells, while from a corner of

the yard there came a Jack-in-the-pulpit, clad in robes of splendor second only to those of the lily that toils not.

The little minister looked away up into the bridal blushes that filled her face, and called out, in his shrill, piping voice, "Who giveth this woman in marriage?" The father came forward, and with eyes swimming in tears—tears of joy—stood as sponsor for his daughter. To the questions, would she take him for her wedded husband, to love and to cherish? and would he take her for his wedded wife? there had been replies in the affirmative, he holding her fingers in his palm. And how the pirouetting figures that played about them did laugh and hug each other for joy! Then the shrill voice of the minister piped out in the most stentorian tones he could command, "If any one knows why these two should not be joined forever, let him speak now, or forever after hold his peace."

The pirouetting figures became motionless, the bluebells ceased in their tinkling, and every cricket within reach of the minister's voice hushed. Not a sound came from the pines, and for the first time ever known the aspen leaves were still. Silence reigned supreme, and the hush that wrapped the place seemed as though it would linger through an interminable time. And through all of this her fingers were held in his palm.

The minister again turned toward the two, and lifted up his face to speak, but paused as a far-away sound fell upon the reigning silence. It resembled

that of approaching wind; at first very faint murmurs, then increasing to a distinct roar. Soon there could be heard the rustle of nearby trees, and upon this the aspens took up their tremble and the pines began their moan. All were in breathless suspense, when there came scurrying through the lilac hedge a rift of dried leaves in their frantic effort to escape. The pirouetting figures scampered to their respective stations in the graveyard, threw off their fantastical forms and resumed their solemn duties. The golden cobweb was caught up by an air current and for a moment swung out like a wild streamer with one end fastened to her hair. The frail streamer broke from its fastening and went into a myriad of pieces, appearing as a cloud of dust with each particle heated to incandescence from the friction of the air.

Four strong arms were sheltering the daughter from flying dust and twigs as a mass of folds bounded over the hedge and stood before them. When the rush of wind into the created vortex had ceased all was quiet.

“I am Oblivion,” spoke the mass of folds, “and I come to learn on whose authority you are to be joined forever. The three of you will some day surely be mine. I know this, because in my abyss there are three hundred billion who once breathed this same life you now enjoy. Know you not, that in Thanatosia life is the one ephemeral flower? Who are you that believe yourselves exempt from service in my domain? It is true my folds are not absorb-

ent so long as even the lowliest of earthly humans may give you a thought; but nothing is more fickle than human nature, and the easiest of all things is to forget.

“There are very few living here for whom I have made no preparation. Some others struggle for a while, but I sleep not, that I may catch off guard the unwary mortal who keeps them alive; and when I do, how fondly I embrace the poor struggling things! And mark you this, many pass to me with the close of the final chapter in their lives.

“There is no resurrection for those put to sleep by my hypnotic power. Not one of the three hundred billion has ever moved from the position in which I placed them. There is no source conceivable through which their sleep can be disturbed by a living creature. I am all-powerful over the forgotten. In my domain is the only place where the meaning of the word ‘ forever ’ is known. There the past and the future are the same; for I have those who represent to you the past, while with them you have not yet come into existence. This makes eternity move in a circle; but understand I am the one that has been able to conceive of the end of this circle. It is through supremacy in comprehension that I hold in my keeping the past and the future.

“I care naught for the present, because there is no such thing. Should it ever assume existence my power will cease, and the three hundred billion escape me. But think not I fear of losing my realm. I have prepared for untold millions yet to be born and

forgotten by all save me; and not one of these will I overlook. When man is forsaken, deserted, dead and forgotten, I come to the rescue; I, the only one who never forgets.

“This is my authority for coming here on learning of the minister’s pronunciamiento, ‘If any one has reason why these two should not be joined forever, let him speak now, or ever after hold his peace.’ What hope have any of you for life? I may even have you with the close of this day, and its twilight cannot live much longer.”

The three stood in silence, with lowered faces and released hands.

“I have hope,” spoke one, “in her whom I left on earth to give birth to my child. Through long years has she kept me living in her memory, and no one can rob her of it.”

“Did you say ‘no one’?” asked Oblivion. “Have you forgotten the power of Death? If she is your only hope then I shall take you the instant Death claims her. You will be sleeping in my abyss when her spirit reaches here.

“To keep you in life here your memory must be handed down as a trust; as an inheritance to be cherished, preserved and passed on to posterity; a memory-chain in which every one who has been told of you must obligate himself to tell another. These memory-chains are the only things with which I have to contend. Some of them have gone into many branches, but not one of these branches is ever overlooked by me. Just let one cease to grow, and how



fast Death aids! In this way I get back to the main part of the chain, and after that I do not have long to wait."

The daughter clutched her father's arm, and trembled as he again spoke.

"I fought and gave my life for a cause, and are there not thousands who remember it?"

"Yes," replied Oblivion, "so you did; but your cause was lost, and no lost cause has ever lived, even though it may have been ever so righteous. They say on earth 'might makes right'; therefore your cause was wrong. All who are remembering your cause are doing it in silence, and silent memory-chains are like plants that are trying to live without sunlight."

"Then," spoke a second one of the three, "I fought for a cause that was not lost; and a glorious cause it was—Humanity's cause! The world applauded, and will not forget it."

The daughter's fingers found their way into his hand.

"But," replied Oblivion, "they will not remember you. You did not give your life in the accomplishing of it. What matter it how valiantly one fights for and wins a cause most just, the world only uses his memory like a sentimentality. They live for themselves so much in the cause, that they scarce have time to think of those who died to win it for them. You were forgotten even while you lived among them. You have not so much as a slab in the long symmetrical rows they decorate once a

year. How came Death to you that this has been overlooked?"

He released her fingers, and hung his head in silence.

Then spoke the daughter. "I tried to do for the world what I thought was the greatest service a woman can render. It was to give my life in aid to those who suffer. And though I failed in my effort, yet there are some who will remember me for the attempt."

"Ah! but you failed," replied Oblivion. "My abyss has in it millions who did everything but succeed. The one word for me is failure."

The three remained in silence, while Oblivion waited.

The daughter looked far back into her memory. There she saw the sea of faces in the busy world below. Some of these had known her; had laughed with her in her joys; had gone with her through life's disappointments; had sorrowed with her in her sorrows. Is there among them one in whose memory she dare covet a place?

"There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember."











