

Autumn Leaves eBook

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Page 1

CHRISTMAS REVIVED.

It was six o'clock in the morning of last Thursday (Christmas morning), when Nathan Stoddard, a young saddler, strode through the vacant streets of one of our New England towns, hastening to begin his work. The town is an old-fashioned one, and although the observance of the ancient church festival is no longer frowned upon, as in years past, yet it has been little regarded, especially in the church of which Nathan is a member. As the saddler mounted the steps of his shop, he felt the blood so rush along his limbs, and tingle in his fingers, that he could not forbear standing without the door for a moment, as if to enjoy the triumph of the warmth within him over the cold morning air. The little stone church which Nathan attends stands in the same square with his shop, and nearly opposite. It was closed, as usual on Christmas day, and a recent snow had heaped the steps and roof, and loaded the windows. Nathan thought that it looked uncommonly beautiful in the softening twilight of the morning.

While Nathan stood musing, with his eyes fixed upon the church, he became suddenly conscious that another figure had entered the square upon the opposite side, and was walking hastily along. He turned his eyes upon it, and was greatly surprised by its appearance. He saw a tall old man, although a good deal stooping, with long, straight, and very white hair falling over his shoulders, which was the more conspicuous from the black velvet cap, as it appeared, that he wore, and the close-fitting suit of pure black in which he was dressed, and which seemed to Nathan almost to glisten and flash as the old man tripped along. He had hardly begun to speculate as to who the stranger could be, when he beheld him turn in between the posts by the path that leads to the church, tread lightly over the snow, and up the steps, and knock hastily and vigorously at the church-door. But half recovered from his wonder, he was just raising his voice to utter a remonstrance, when, to his sevenfold amazement, the door was opened to the knock, and the old man disappeared within.

It was not without a creeping feeling of awe, mingled with his astonishment, that Nathan gazed upon the door through which this silent figure had vanished. But he was not easily to be daunted. He did not care to follow the steps of the stranger into the church; but he remembered a shed so placed against the building, near the farther end, that he had often, when a child, at some peril indeed, climbed upon its top, and looked into the church through a little window at one side of the pulpit. For this he started; but he did not fail to run across the square and leap over the church-gate at the top of his speed, in order to gather warmth and courage for the attempt.

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When Nathan Stoddard climbed upon the old shed and pressed his face against the glass of the little church-window, he had at first only a confused impression of many lamps and many figures in all parts of the church. But as his vision grew more clear, he beheld a sight which could not amaze him less than the apparition that startled Tam o' Shanter as he glared through the darkness into the old Kirk of Alloway. The great chandelier of the church was partly lighted, and there were, besides, many candles and lanterns burning in different parts of the room, and casting their light upon a large party of young men and women, who were dressed in breeches and ruffled shirts, and hooped petticoats and towering head-dresses, such as he had only seen in old pictures. They were mounted upon benches and ladders, and boards laid along the tops of the pews, and were apparently just completing the decoration of the church, which was already dressed with green, with little trees in the corners, and with green letters upon the walls, and great wreaths about the pillars. The whole party appeared full of life and cheerfulness, while the old man whom Nathan had seen enter stood near the door, looking quietly on, with a little girl holding his hand.

It was not until Nathan Stoddard had looked for some little time upon this spectacle that he began to feel that he was witness of any thing more than natural. The whole party had so home-like an air, and appeared so engaged with their pleasant occupation, that, notwithstanding their quaint dress, Nathan only thought how much he should like to share their company. But the more he studied their faces, the more he was filled, for all their appearance of youth and their simple manners, with a strange sort of veneration. The sweet and cheerful faces of the young women seemed to grow awfully calm and beautiful as they brought their task to a close, and their foreheads, with the hair brought back in the old-fashioned way, to become more and more serene and high. There was a strange beauty, too, about the old man's face. He appeared to Nathan as if he felt that the group before him only waited his command to fade away in the morning light that struggled among the candles, but he could not bear to give the word; and so they kept playing with the festoons, and stepping about the pews to please him. Nathan felt a cold thrill, partly from pleasure, and partly from awe, running up his back, and a strong pain across his forehead, seldom known to one of his temperament. Again and again he drew his hand across his brows, until he felt that he was near swooning, and like to fall; and he clung desperately to his hold. When the fit was over, he dared venture no more, but hastened to the ground.

It was no fear of ridicule or of incredulity that led Nathan Stoddard to keep secret what he had witnessed. But it was like some deep and holy experience that would lose its charm if it were spoken of to another. So he went back to his shop, and sat looking upon the church, and watching, almost with dread, the doves that lighted upon its roof, and fluttered about, and beat their wings against its windows.

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The minister of Nathan's parish was a young man by the name of Dudley; and it so happened that he had driven out, before light, on the morning we have spoken of, to visit a sick man at some distance. In returning home, he had to pass along the rather unfrequented street which runs in the rear of his church, and close to it. As he was driving rapidly along, his ear caught what seemed the peal of an organ. He stopped his horse to listen, and a moment convinced him that the sound both of the instrument and of singing voices came from his own church; and it was music of a depth and beauty such as he had never before heard within it. Filled with astonishment, he put his horse upon its fastest trot, and drove round into the square, to the shop of Nathan Stoddard.

"There is music to-day in our church, Nathan!" he cried to the young saddler. "What can it mean?" But Nathan answered not a word. He caught the horse by the head, and fastened him to a post before the door. Then stepping to the side of the sleigh, he said to Mr. Dudley, "Come with me, Sir." Mr. Dudley looked upon the pale face and trembling lips of his parishioner, and followed in silence.

Nathan sprang upon the shed at the side of the church, and scrambled up to the little window. Mr. Dudley followed, and, with Nathan's help, gained the same precarious foothold. "Look in, Sir," said Nathan, not venturing a glance himself. Mr. Dudley looked, and had not Nathan's arm been about his body he would have lost his hold, in sheer amazement. The building was crowded, as he had never known it before; and crowded with people whom his eye, versed in the dress and manners of our forefathers, recognized as the church-goers of a century and a half ago. The singers' gallery was filled by a choir of girls and boys, while his own place in the pulpit was occupied by a white-haired figure, whom he recognized as the original of a portrait which he had purchased and hung in his parlor at home for its singular beauty. It was said to be a portrait of a minister in the town, who lived in the last century, and is still remembered for his virtues. The sight of this old man's face completely stilled the agitation of the young minister. He was leaning over the great Bible, with his hands folded upon it, and his eyes seemingly filled with tears of pleasure and gratitude, and bent upon the choir. Mr. Dudley listened intently, and could catch what seemed the words of some old Christmas carol:

"Thou mak'st my cup of joy run o'er."

And he was so rapt with the sights and the sounds within, that it needed all Nathan's endeavors to uphold him.

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By this time the sound of a gathering crowd below, which he had not heeded at first, was forced more and more upon his notice; and the anxious voice of his oldest deacon calling, "Mr. Dudley! Mr. Dudley!" rose high and loud; while a great thundering at the front door of the church announced that the people below had also caught the sound of the music, and were clamorous for admission. Mr. Dudley hastened round to prevent their causing any disturbance to the congregation within; but he came only in time to see the door burst open, and to be borne in with the crowd. All gazed about in wonder. The congregation, indeed, were gone, and the preacher, and the choir; and the room was cold. But there was a great green cross over the pulpit, and words along the walls, and festoons upon the galleries, and great wreaths, like vast green serpents, coiled about the cold pillars. The church of the Orthodox parish of —— had been fairly dressed for Christmas by spirit hands.

When Mr. Dudley reached his home, after the wonder had in part spent itself, he found that an enormous Christmas pie had been left at his door by a white-haired old man dressed in black, about six in the morning, just after he had gone to visit his sick parishioner. The girl who received it reported the old man as saying, in a tremulous, but very kind voice, "Give your master the Christmas blessing of an old Puritan minister." How the meaning of this message would have been known to Mr. Dudley, had not the events we have told disclosed it, who can say?

Need I add, that my friend, Mr. Dudley, from whose lips I have taken down the above narrative, has directed the decorations to remain in his church during the coming month, and that he avows the intention of observing the Christmas of the following year with public services, unless, indeed, he should be anticipated by his ancient predecessor. It may not be impertinent to observe, that I am invited to dine and spend the day with the Dudleys on that occasion, and I shall not fail to make an accurate report of whatever glimpse I may obtain into the mysterious ceremonies of a Puritan Christmas.

IN THE CHURCHYARD AT CAMBRIDGE.

A legend of lady Lee.

In the village churchyard she lies,
Dust is in her beautiful eyes,
No more she breathes, nor feels, nor stirs;
At her feet and at her head
Lies a slave to attend the dead,
But their dust is white as hers.

Was she, a lady of high degree,
So much in love with the vanity
And foolish pomp of this world of ours?



Or was it Christian charity,
And lowliness and humility,
The richest and rarest of all dowers?

Who shall tell us? No one speaks;
No color shoots into those cheeks,
Either of anger or of pride,
At the rude question we have asked;—
Nor will the mystery be unmasked
By those who are sleeping at her side.

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Hereafter?—And do you think to look
On the terrible pages of that Book
To find her failings, faults, and errors?
Ah, you will then have other cares,
In your own short-comings and despairs,
In your own secret sins and terrors!

H.W.L.

THE LITTLE SOUTH-WIND.

The little south-wind had been shut up for many days, while his cousin from the northeast had been abroad, and the clouds had been heavy and dark; but now all was bright and clear, and the little south-wind was to have a holiday. O, how happy he would be! He sallied forth to amuse himself;—and hear what he did. He came whistling down the chimney, until the nervous old lady was ready to fly with vexation: then away he flew, laughing in triumph,—the naughty south-wind! He played with the maiden's work: away the pieces flew, some here, some there, and away ran the maiden after. What cared *she* for the wind? She tossed back her curls and laughed merrily, and the wind laughed merrily too,—the silly south-wind! Onward he stole, and lifting the curtain, —curious south-wind!—what did he see? On the sofa lay a young man: a heavy book was in his hand. The little south-wind rustled through the leaves, but the young man stirred not; he was asleep; hot and weary, he slept. The wind fanned his brow awhile, lifted his dark locks, and, leaving a kiss behind, stole out at the casement,—the gentle south-wind! Then he met a little child: away he whirled the little boy's hat, away ran the child, but his little feet were tired, and he wept,—poor child! The wind looked back, and felt sad, then hung the hat on a bush, and went on. He had played too hard,—the thoughtless south-wind! A sick child lay tossing to and fro: its hands and face were hot and dry. The mother raised the window. The wind heard her as he was creeping by, and stepping in, he cooled the burning face: then, playing among the flowers until their fragrance filled the room, away he flew,—the kind south-wind! He went out into the highway, and played with the dust; but that was not so pleasant, and onward he sped to the meadow. The dust could not follow on the green grass, and the little south-wind soon outstripped it, and onward and onward he sped, over mountain and valley, dancing among the flowers, and frolicking round, until the trees lifted up their arms and bent their heads and shook their sides with glee,—the happy south-wind! At last he came to a quiet dell, where a little brook lay, just stirring among his white pebbles. The wind said, "Kind brook, will you play with me?" And the brook answered with a sparkling smile, and a gentle murmur. Then the wind rose up, and, sporting among the dark pines, whistled and sung through the lofty branches, while the pretty brook danced along, and warbled songs to the music of its merry companion,—the merry south-wind! But the sun had gone down and the stars were peeping forth, and the day was done. The happy south-wind was still, and the moon looked down on the world below, and watched among the

trees and hills, but all was still: the little south-wind slumbered, and the moon and the stars kept guard,—poor, tired south-wind! Old lady and maiden, young man and child, the dust and the flowers, were forgotten, and he slept,—dear little south-wind!

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LINES

Written at the close of Dr. Holmes's lectures on English poetry.

[Footnote: The Poets are metaphorically introduced as follows. *Rogers, The Beech; Campbell, The Fir; Byron, The Oak; Moore, The Elm; Scott, The Chestnut; Southey, The Holly; Coleridge, The Magnolia; Keats, The Orange; Wordsworth, The Pine; Tennyson, The Palm; FELICIA HEMANS, The Locust; ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING, The Laurel.*]

Farewell! farewell! The hours we've stolen
From scenes of worldly strife and stir,
To live with poets, and with thee,
Their brother and interpreter,

Have brought us wealth;—as thou hast reaped,
We have not followed thee in vain,
But gathered, in one precious sheaf,
The pearly flower and golden grain.

For twelve bright hours, with thee we walked
Within a magic garden's bound,
Where trees, whose birth owned various climes,
Beneath one sky were strangely found.

First in the group, an ancient BEECH
His shapely arms abroad did fling,
Wearing old Autumn's russet crown
Among the lively tints of Spring.

Those pale brown leaves the winds of March
Made vocal 'mid the silent trees,
And spread their faint perfume abroad,
Like sad, yet pleasant memories.

Near it, the vigorous, noble FIR
Arose, with firm yet graceful mien;
Welcome for shelter or for shade,
A pyramid of living green.

And from the tender, vernal spray
The sunny air such fragrance drew,
As breathes from fields of strawberries wild,
All bathed in morning's freshest dew.



The OAK his branches richly green
Broad to the winds did wildly fling;—
The first in beauty and in power,
All bowed before the forest-king.

But ere its brilliant leaves were sere,
Or scattered by the Autumn wind,
Fierce lightnings struck its glories down,
And left a blasted trunk behind.

A youthful ELM its drooping boughs
In graceful beauty bent to earth,
As if to touch, with reverent love,
The kindly soil that gave it birth;—

And round it, in such close embrace,
Sweet honeysuckles did entwine,
We knew not if the south wind caught
Its odorous breath from tree or vine.

The CHESTNUT tall, with shining leaves
And yellow tassels covered o'er,
The sunny Summer's golden pride,
And pledge of Autumn's ruddy store,—

Though grander forms might near it rise,
And sweeter blossoms scent the air,—
Was still a favorite 'mongst the trees
That flourished in that garden fair.

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All brightly clad in glossy green,
And scarlet berries gay to see,
We welcome next a constant friend,
The brilliant, cheerful HOLLY-TREE.

But twilight falls upon the scene;
Rich odors fill the evening air;
And, lighting up the dusky shades,
Gleam the MAGNOLIA'S blossoms fair.

The fire-fly, with its fairy lamp,
Flashes within its soft green bower;
The humming sphinx flits in and out,
To sip the nectar of its flower.

Now the charmed air, more richly fraught,
To steep our senses in delight,
Comes o'er us, as the ORANGE-TREE
In beauty beams upon our sight;

And, glancing through its emerald leaves,
White buds and golden fruits are seen;
Fit flowers to deck the bride's pale brow,
Fit fruit to offer to a queen.

But let me rest beneath the PINE,
And listen to the low, sad tone
Its music breathes, that o'er my soul
Comes like the ocean's solemn moan.

Erect it stands in graceful strength;
Its spire points upward to the sky;
And nestled in its sheltering arms
The birds of heaven securely lie.

And though no gaily painted bells,
Nor odor-bearing urns, are there,
When the west wind sighs through its boughs,
Let me inhale the balmy air!

The stately PALM in conscious pride
Lifts its tall column to the sky,
While round it fragrant air-plants cling,
Deep-stained with every gorgeous dye.



Linger with me a moment, where
The LOCUST trembles in the breeze,
In soft, transparent verdure drest,
Contrasting with the darker trees.

The humming-bird flies in among
Its boughs, with pure white clusters hung,
And honey-bees come murmuring, where
Its perfume on the air is flung.

A noble LAUREL meets our gaze,
Ere yet we leave these alleys green.
'Mongst many stately, fair, and sweet,
The DAPHNE ODORA stands a queen.

May 2, 1853.

AUNT MOLLY.

A REMINISCENCE OF OLD CAMBRIDGE.

In looking back upon my early days, one of the images that rises most vividly to my mind's eye is that of Miss Molly ——, or Aunt Molly, as she was called by some of her little favorites, that is to say, about a dozen girls, and (not complimentary to the *unfair* sex, to be sure) one boy. There was one, who, even to Miss Molly, was not a torment and a plague; and I must confess he was a pleasant specimen of the genus. At the time of which I speak, the great awkward barn of a school-house on the Common, near the Appian Way, had not reared its imposing front. In its place, in the centre of a grass-plot that was one of the very first to look green in spring, and kept its verdure through the heats of July, stood the brown, one-storied cottage which she owned, and in which the aged woman lived, alone. Her garden and clothes-yard behind the house were fenced in; but in front, the visitor to the cottage, unimpeded by gate or fence, turned up the pretty green slope directly from the street to the lowly door.

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As I have started for a walk into the old times, and am not bound by any rule to stick to the point, I will here digress to say that the Episcopal Church (*the Church*, as it was simply called, when all the rest were “meeting-houses”), that tells the traveller what a pure and true taste was once present in Cambridge, and, by the contrast it presents to the architectural blunders that abound in the place, tells also what a want of it there is now,—this beautiful church stood most appropriately and tastefully surrounded by the green turf, unbroken by stiff gravel walks or coach sweep, and undivided from the public walk by a fence. Behind the church, and forming a part of its own grounds, (where now exist the elegances of School Court,) was an unappropriated field; and that spot was considered, by a certain little group of children, of six or seven years old, the most solitary, gloomy, mysterious place in their little world. When the colors of sunset had died out in the west, and the stillness and shadow of twilight were coming on, they used to “snatch a fearful joy” in seeing one of their number (whose mother had kindly omitted the first lesson usually taught to little girls, to be afraid of every thing) perform the feat of going slowly around the church, alone, stopping behind it to count a hundred. Her wonderful courage in actually protecting the whole group from what they called a “flock of cows,” and in staking and patting the “mad dogs” that they were for ever meeting, was nothing to this *going round the church!*

But to return to the cottage, from which the pretty, rural trait of its standing in its unfenced green door-yard led me away to notice the same sort of rustic beauty where the church stood. We did not stop to knock at the outside door,—for Aunt Molly was very deaf, and if we had knocked our little knuckles off she would not have heard us,—but went in, and, passing along the passage, rapped at the door of the “common room,” half sitting-room, half kitchen, and were admitted. Those who saw her for the first time, whether children or grown people, were generally afraid of her; for her voice, unmodulated, of course, by the ear, was naturally harsh, strong, and high-toned; and the sort of half laugh, half growl, that she uttered when pleased, might have suggested to an imaginative child the howl of a wolf. She had very large features, and sharp, penetrating black eyes, shaded by long, gray lashes, and surmounted by thick, bushy, gray eyebrows. I think that when she was scolding the school-boys, with those eyes fiercely “glowering” at them from under the shaggy gray thatch, she must have appeared to those who in their learned page had got as far as the Furies, like a living illustration of classic lore. Her cap and the make of her dress were peculiar, and suggestive of those days before, and at the time of, the Revolution, of which she loved to speak.

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But we, her little favorites, were not afraid of her. To go into her garden in summer, and eat currants, larger and sweeter than any we found at home,—to look up at the enormous old damson-tree, when it was white with blossoms, and the rich honey-comb smell was diffused over the whole garden,—was a pleasant little excursion to us. She took great care and pains to save the plums from the plundering boys, because it was the only real damson there was anywhere in the neighborhood, and she found a ready sale for them, for preserves. She seemed to think that the *real damsons* went out with the *real gentry* of the olden time; and perhaps they did, as damsons, though, for aught I know, they may figure now in our fruit catalogues as “The Duke of Argyle’s New Seedling Acidulated Drop of Damascus,”—which would be something like a translation of Damson into the modern terminology.

But more pleasant still was it to go into Aunt Molly’s “best room.” The walls she had papered herself, with curious stripes and odd pieces, of various shapes and patterns, ornamented with a border of figures of little men and women joining hands, cut from paper of all colors; and they were adorned, besides, with several prints in shining black frames. There was no carpet on the snow-white, unpainted floor, but various mats and rugs, of all the kinds into which ingenuity has transformed woollen rags, were disposed about it. The bed was the pride and glory of the room, however; for on it was spread a silk patchwork quilt, made of pieces of the brocade and damask and elegant silks, of which the ladies belonging to the grand old Tory families had their gowns and cardinals, and other paraphernalia, made. Aunt Molly had been a mantuamaker to the old “quality,” and she could show us a piece of Madam Vassall’s gown on that wonderful and brilliant piece of work, the bed-quilt. “On that hint” she would speak.

“A-haw-awr! They were *real gentle* folks that lived in *them* days. A-haw-awr! I declare, I could e’en-amost kneel down and kiss the very airth they trod on, as they went by my house to church. Polite, *they wor!* Yes, they knew what true politeness was; and to my thinking true politeness is next to saving grace.”

Once a year, or so, Aunt Molly would dress up in her best gown, a black silk, trimmed with real black lace, and a real lace cap, relics of the good old days of Toryism and brocade and the real gentry, and go to make an afternoon visit to one of her neighbors. After the usual salutations, the lady would ask her visitor to take off her bonnet and stay the afternoon, knowing by the “rig” that such was her intention. But she liked to be urged a little, so she would say, “O, I only came out for a little walk, it was so pleasant, and stopped in to see how little Henry did, since his sickness. You know I always call him *my boy*.” (Yes, Aunt Molly, the only boy in the universe that, for you, had any good in him.) After the proper amount of urging, she would lay aside her bonnet and black satin mantle, saying, “Well, I didn’t come here to get my tea, but you are so urgent, I believe I will stay.”

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Aunt Molly's *asides* were often amusing. She was so very deaf that she could not hear her own voice, and often imagined she was whispering, when she could be heard across the room.

On one occasion she saw a gentleman who was a stranger to her, in the parlor, when she went to visit one of the ladies who were kind and attentive to her. She sat a few minutes looking keenly at him, and then whispered, "Who's that?" "Mr. Jay." "Who?" "MR. JAY." "Who?" "MR. JAY." "Oh-o-oh! Mr. Jay. Well, what does he do for a living?" "He's a tutor, Ma'am." "What?" "A TUTOR." "What?" "A TUTOR." "Oh-o-oh! I thought you said a suitor!"

Aunt Molly owned the little brown cottage, where her widowed mother, she said, had lived, and there she died. As soon as she was laid in her grave, it was torn down, and the precious damson-tree was felled. I was rather glad that the school-house was so ugly, that I might have a double reason for hating the usurper. If Nemesis cared for school-boys, she doubtless looks on with a grin, now, to see them scampering at their will round the precincts of the former enemy of their race, and listens with pleasure while they "make *day* hideous" where once the bee and the humming-bird only broke the quiet of the little garden.

Aunt Molly had a vigorous, active mind, and a strong, tenacious memory; and her love of the departed grandeur and Toryism of Court Row, as she called that part of Brattle Street from Ash Street to Mount Auburn, was pleasant and entertaining to those who listened to her tales of other times.

Peace to her memory!

THE SOUNDS OF MORNING IN CAMBRIDGE.

I sing the melodies of early morn.
Hark!—'t is the distant roar of iron wheels,
First sound of busy life, and the shrill neigh
Of vapor-steed, the vale of Brighton threading,
Region of lowing kine and perfumed breeze.
Echoes the shore of blue meandering Charles.
Straightway the chorus of glad chanticleers
Proclaims the dawn. First comes one clarion note,
Loud, clear, and long drawn out; and hark! again
Rises the jocund song, distinct, though distant;
Now faint and far, like plaintive cry for help
Piercing the ear of Sleep. Each knight o' the spur,
Watchful as brave, and emulous in noise,
With mighty pinions beats a glad *reveille*.



All feathered nature wakes. Man's drowsy sense
Heeds not the trilling band, but slumbrous waits
The tardy god of day. Ah! sluggard, wake!
Open thy blind, and rub thy heavy eyes!
For once behold a sunrise. Is there aught
In thy dream-world more splendid, or more fair?
With crimson glory the horizon streams,
And ghostly Dian hides her face ashamed.
Now to the ear of him who lingers long
On downy couch, "falsely luxurious,"
Comes the unwelcome din of college-bell

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Fast tolling.

“T is but the earliest, the warning peal!”

He sleeps again. Happy if bustling chum,
Footsteps along the entry, or perchance,
In the home bower, maternal knock and halloo,
Shall break the treacherous slumber. For behold
The youth collegiate sniff the morning zephyrs,
Breezes of brisk December, frosty and keen,
With nose incarnadine, peering above
Each graceful shepherd’s plaid the chin enfolding.
See how the purple hue of youth and health
Glow in each cheek; how the sharp wind brings pearls
From every eye, brightening those dimmed with study,
And waste of midnight oil, o’er classic page
Long poring. Boreas in merry mood
Plays with each unkempt lock, and vainly strives
To make a football of the Freshman’s beaver,
Or the sage Sophomore’s indented felt.

Behold the foremost, with deliberate stride
And slow, approach the chapel, tree-embowered,
Entering composedly its gaping portal;
Then, as the iron tongue goes on to rouse
The mocking echoes with its call, arrive
Others, with hastier step and heaving chest.
Anon, some bound along divergent paths
Which scar the grassy plain, and, with no pause
For breath, press up the rocky stair. Straightway,
A desperate few, with headlong, frantic speed,
Swifter than arrow-flight or Medford whirlwind,
Sparks flying from iron-shod heels at every footfall,
Over stone causeway and tessellated pavement,—
They come—they come—they leap—they scamper in,
Ere, grating on its hinges, slams the door
Inexorable.

Pauses the sluggard, at Wood and Hall’s just crossing,
The chime melodious dying on his ear.
Embroidered sandals scarce maintain their hold
Upon his feet, shuffling, with heel exposed,
And ’neath his upper garment just appears
A many-colored robe; about his throat



No comfortable scarf, but crumpled *gills*
Shrink from the scanning eye of passenger
The omnibus o'erhauling. List! 't was the last,
Last stroke! it dies away, like murmuring wave.
Bootless he came,—and bootless wends he back,
Gnawing his gloveless thumb, and pacing slow.
Bright eyes might gaze on him, compassionate,
But that yon rosy maiden, early afoot,
Is o'er her shoulder watching, with wild fear,
A horned host that rushes by amain,
Bellowing bassoon-like music. Angry shouts
Of drovers, horrid menace, and dire curse,
Shrill scream of imitative boy, and crack
Of cruel whip, the tread of clumsy feet
Are hurrying on:—but now, with instinct sure,
Madly those doomed ones bolt from the dread road
That leads to Brighton and to death. They charge
Up Brattle Street. Screaming the maiden flies,
Nor heeds the loss of fluttering veil, upborne
On sportive breeze, and sailing far away.

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And now a flock of sheep, bleating, bewildered,
With tiny footprints fret the dusty square,
And huddling strive to elude relentless fate.
And hark! with snuffling grunt, and now and then
A squeak, a squad of long-nosed gentry run
The gutters to explore, with comic jerk
Of the investigating snout, and wink
At passer-by, and saucy, lounging gait,
And independent, lash-defying course.
And now the baker, with his steaming load,
Hums like the humble-bee from door to door,
And thoughts of breakfast rise; and harmonies
Domestic, song of kettle, and hissing urn,
Glad voices, and the sound of hurrying feet,
Clatter of chairs, and din of knife and fork,
Bring to a close the Melodies of Morn.

THE SOUNDS OF EVENING IN CAMBRIDGE.

The Melodies of Morning late I sang.
Recall we now those Melodies of Even
Which charmed our ear, the summer-day o'erpast;
Full of the theme, O Phoebus, hear me sing.
What time thy golden car draws near its goal,—
Mount Auburn's pillared summit,—chorus loud
Of mud-born songsters fills the dewy air.
Hark! in yon shallow pool, what melody
Is poured from swelling throats, liquid and bubbling,
As if the plaintive notes thrilled struggling through
The stagnant waters and the waving reeds.
Monotonous the melancholy strain,
Save when the bull-frog, from some slimy depth
Profound, sends up his deep "Poo-toob!" "Poo-toob!"
Like a staccato note of double bass
Marking the cadence. The unwearied crickets
Fill up the harmony; and the whippoorwill
His mournful solo sings among the willows.
The tree-toad's pleasant trilling croak proclaims
A coming rain; a welcome evil, sure,
When streets are one long ash-heap, and the flowers



Fainting or crisp in sun-baked borders stand.
Mount Auburn's gate is closed. The latest 'bus
Down Brattle Street goes rumbling. Laborers
Hie home, by twos and threes; homeliest phizzes,
Voices high-pitched, and tongues with telltale burr-r-r-r,
The short-stemmed pipe, diffusing odors vile,
Garments of comic and misfitting make,
And steps which tend to Curran's door, (a man
Ignoble, yet quite worthy of the name
Of Fill-pot Curran,) all proclaim the race
Adopted by Columbia, grumblingly,
When their step-mother country casts them off.
Here with a creaking barrow, piled with tools
Keen as the wit that wields them, hurries by
A man of different stamp. His well-trained limbs
Move with a certain grace and readiness,
Skilful intelligence every muscle swaying.
Rapid his tread, yet firm; his scheming brain
Teems with broad plans, and hopes of future wealth,
And time and life move all too slow for him.
Will he industrious gains and home renounce
To grow more quickly rich in lands unblest?

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Hear'st thou that gleeful shout? Who opes the gate,
The neatly painted gate, and runs before
With noisy joy? Now from the trellised door
Toddles another bright-haired boy. And now
Captive they lead the father; strong their grasp;
He cannot break away.

Dreamily quiet

The dewy twilight of a summer eve.
Tired mortals lounge at casement or at door,
While deepening shadows gather round. No lamp
Save in yon shop, whose sable minister
His evening customers attends. Anon,
With squeaking bucket on his arm, emerges
The errand-boy, slow marching to the tune
Of "Uncle Ned" or "Norma," whistled shrill.
Hark! heard you not against the window-pane
The dash of horny skull in mad career,
And a loud buzz of terror? He'll be in,
This horrid beetle; yes,—and in my hair!
Close all the blinds; 't is dismal, but 't is safe.
Listen! Methought I heard delicious music,
Faint and afar. Pray, is the Boat-Club out?
Do the Pierian minstrels meet to-night?
Or chime the bells of Boston, or the Port?
Nearer now, nearer—Ah! bloodthirsty villain,
Is 't you? Too late I closed the blind! Alas!
List! there's another trump!—There, *two* of 'em!—
Two? A quintette at least. Mosquito chorus!
A—ah! my cheek! And oh! again, my eyelid!
I gave myself a stunning cuff on the ear
And all in vain. Flap we our handkerchief;
Flap, flap! (A smash.) Quick, quick, bring in a lamp!
I've switched a flower-vase from the shelf. Ah me!
Splash on my head, and then upon my feet,
The water poured;—I'm drowned! my slipper's full!
My dickey—ah! 't is cruel! Flowers are nonsense!
I'd have them amaranths all, or made of paper.
Here, wring my neckcloth, and rub down my hair!
Now Mr. Brackett, punctual man, is ringing
The curfew bell; 't is nine o'clock already.



'T is early bedtime, yet methinks 't were joy
On mattress cool to stretch supine. At midnight,
Were it winter, I were less fatigued, less sleepy.
Sleep! I invoke thee, "comfortable bird,
That broodest o'er the troubled waves of life,
And hushest them to peace." All hail the man
Who first invented bed! O, wondrous soft
This pillow to my weary head! right soon
My dizzy thoughts shall o'er the brink of sleep
Fall into chaos and be lost. I dream.
Now comes mine enemy, not silently,
But with insulting and defiant warning;
Come, banquet, if thou wilt; I offer thee
My cheek, my arm. Tease me not, hovering high
With that continuous hum; I fain would rest.
Come, do thy worst at once. Bite, scoundrel, bite!
Thou insect vulture, seize thy helpless prey!
No ceremony! (I'd have none with thee,
Could I but find thee.) Fainter now and farther

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The tiny war-whoop; now I hear it not.
A cowardly assassin he; he waits,
Full well aware that I am on the alert,
With murderous intent. Perchance he's gone,
Hawk-eye and nose of hound not serving him
To find me in the dark. With a long sigh,
I beat my pillow, close my useless eyes,
And soon again my thoughts whirl giddily,
Verging towards dreams. Starting, I shake my bed;—
Loud thumps my heart,—rises on end my hair!
A murder-screech, and yells of frantic fury,
Under my very window,—a duet
Of fiendish hatred, battle to the death,—
'T is enough to enrage a man! Missile I seize,
Not caring what, and with a savage "Scat!"
That scrapes my throat, let drive. I would it were
A millstone! Swiftly through the garden beds
And o'er the fence on either side they fly;
I to my couch return, but not to sleep.
Weary I toss, and think 't is almost dawn,
So still the streets; but now the latest train,
Whistling melodiously, comes in; the tramp
Of feet, and hum of voices, echo far
In the still night air. Now with joy I feel
My eyelids droop once more. To sleep and dream
Is bliss unspeakable;—I'm going off;—
What was I thinking last?—slowly I rise
On downy pinions; dreaming, I fly, I soar;—
Through the clouds my way I'm winging,
Angels to their harps are singing,
Strains of unearthly sweetness lull me,
And thrilling harmonies—"Yelp! Bow-wow-wow!"
"Get out!"—"The dog has got me by the leg!"
"Stave him off! Will you? See, he's rent my pants,
My newest plaid!—Kick him!"—"Yow, yow!"—"This house
I'll never serenade again!—A dog
Should know musicians from suspicious chaps,
And gentlemen from rowdies, even at night!"
"Beat him again!" "No, no! Perhaps 't is HERS!
A lady's pet! Methinks the curtain moves!

She's looking out! Let's sing once more! Just once!"
"Not I.—I'll sing no more to-night!" and steps
Limping unequally, and grumbling voice,
Pass round the corner, and are heard no more.

TO THE NEAR-SIGHTED.

Purblind and short-sighted friends! You will listen to me,—*you* will sympathize with me; for you know by painful experience what I mean when I say that we near-sighted people do not receive from our hawk-eyed neighbors that sympathy and consideration to which we are justly entitled. If we were blind, we should be abundantly pitied, but as we are only half-blind, such comments as these are all the consolation we get. "Oh! *near-sighted*, is she? Yes, it is very fashionable now-a-days for young ladies to carry eye-glasses, and call themselves near-sighted!" Or, "Pooh! It's all affectation. She can see as well as any body, if she chooses. She thinks it is pretty to half shut her eyes, and cut her acquaintances."

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I meet my friend A——, some morning, who returns my salutation with cold politeness, and says, “How cleverly you managed to cut me at the concert last night!” “At the concert! I did not see you.” “O no! You could see well enough to bow to pretty Miss B——, and her handsome cousin; but as for seeing your old schoolmate, two seats behind her,—of course you are too near-sighted!” In vain I protest that I could not see her,—that three yards is a great distance to my eyes. She leaves me with an incredulous smile, and that most provoking phrase, “O yes! I *suppose* so!” and distrusts me ever afterwards. Alas! we see just enough to seal our own condemnation.

Who is free from this malady? As I look around in society, I see staring glassy ellipses on every side “in the place where eyes ought to grow,”—and perhaps most of the unfortunate owls get along very comfortably with their artificial eyes. But imagine a bashful youth, awkward and near-sighted, whose friends dissuade him from wearing glasses. Is there in the universe an individual more unlucky, more blundering, more sincerely to be pitied?

See that little boy, who, having put on his father’s spectacles, is enjoying for the first time a clear and distinct view of the evening sky. “Oh! is that pretty little yellow dot a star?” exclaims the delighted child. Poor innocent! a star had always been to him a dim, cloudy spot, a little nebula, which the magic glass has now resolved; and he can hardly believe that this brilliant point is not an optical illusion. But when his mother assures him that the stars always appear so to her, and he turns to look in her face, he says, “Why, mother! how beautiful you look! Please to give me some little spectacles, *all my own!*” She could not resist this entreaty,—(who could?)—and little “Squire Specs” does not mind the shouts of his companions or the high-sounding nicknames they give him, he so rejoices in what seems to him a new sense, a *second sight*.

I was summoned, the other day, to welcome a family of cousins from a distant State, whom I had not seen for a very long time. They were accompanied, I was told, by a Boston lady, a stranger to us. I entered the room with considerable *empressement*, but when my eye detected the dim outline of a circle of bonneted figures, I stopped in despair in the middle of the room, not knowing which was which, or whom I ought to speak to first, and at last made an embarrassed half-bow, half-courtesy, to the company in general. A confused murmur of greetings and introductions followed, and, throwing aside my air of stiff, ceremonious politeness, I rushed, with a smiling face, to the nearest lady, shook hands with her in the most cordial manner, and then, in passing, bowed formally to the next, who I concluded was the stranger. What then was my surprise and utter confusion when she caught me by the hand, and, drawing me towards her, kissed me emphatically

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several times. “How *do* you do, dear? Have you quite forgotten me? Ah! You don’t remember the times when you used to ride a cock-horse, on my knee, to Banbury Cross, to see the old lady get on her white horse!” What could I say? I was petrified. I could not smile, I could not speak. My only feeling was mortification at my most awkward mistake. Yet I ought to have become accustomed to such embarrassments, for they are of very frequent occurrence.

“Why, Julia! what is the matter? How strangely your eyes look!” My sister at this exclamation turns round, and I discover that from the other end of the room I have been gazing at the unexpressive features of her “back hair,” which is twisted in a “pug,” or “bob,”—which is the correct term?—and surmounted by a tortoise-shell comb.

But in the whole course of my numerous mistakes and blunders, whether ludicrous, serious, or embarrassing, I believe I have never mistaken a cow for a human being, as was done by old Dr. E——. It was many years ago, when Boston Common was still used as a pasture, and cows were daily to be met in the crooked streets of the city, that this gentleman, distinguished for the courtesy and old-school politeness of his manner, no less than for his extreme near-sightedness, was walking at a brisk pace, one winter’s day, and saw, just before him, a lady, as he thought, richly dressed in furs. As he was passing her, he thought he perceived that her fur boa or tippet had escaped from her neck, and, carefully lifting the end of it with one hand, he made a low bow, raising his hat with the other, and said in his blandest tone, “Madam, you are losing your tippet!” And what thanks did the worthy Doctor receive, do you think, for this truly kind and polite deed? Why, the lady merely turned her head, gave him a wondering stare with her large eyes, and said, “Moo-o-o-o!”

As an offset to this instance of courtesy and good-breeding lavished on a cow, let me give you, as a parting *bon-bouche*, another cow anecdote, where, as you will see, there was no gentle politeness wasted.

The Rev. Dr. H—— was an eccentric old man, near-sighted of course,—all eccentric people are,—who lived in a small country town in this neighborhood. Numerous are the traditionary accounts of his peculiarities,—of his odd manners and customs,—which I have heard; but it is only of one little incident that I am now going to speak. A favorite employment of this good man was the care of his garden, and he might be seen any pleasant afternoon in summer, rigged out in a hideous yellow calico robe, or blouse, with a dusty old black straw hat stuck on the back of his head, hoeing and digging in that beloved patch of ground. One day as he was thus occupied, his wife emerged from the house, dressed in a dark brown gingham, and bearing in her hand some “muslins,” which she began to spread upon the gooseberry-bushes to whiten. She was very busily engaged, so that she was not aware that her husband was approaching her with a large

stick, until she felt a smart blow across her shoulders, and heard his peculiar, sharp voice shouting in her ears, "Go 'long! old cow! Go 'long! old cow!"

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FLOWERS FROM A STUDENT'S WALKS.

As the animal dies of inanition if fed on but one kind of food, however congenial, yet lives if he has all in succession, so is it with complex man.

Learn retrenchment from the starving oyster, who spends his last energies in a new pearly layer suited to his shrunken form.

As animals which have no organs of special sense know not light or sound as we do, yet shrink from a hand or candle because their whole bodies are dimly conscious, thus we have a glimmering perception of infinite truths and existences which we cannot grasp or fully know because our minds have no special organs for them.

The prick in the butterfly's wing will be in the full-grown insect a great blemish. The speck in thy child's nature, if fondly overlooked now, will become a wide rent traversing all his virtues.

As mineral poisons kill, because by their strong affinity they decompose the blood and form new stony substances, so the soul possessed by too strong an affinity for gold petrifies.

Our principles are central forces, our desires tangential; it requires both to describe the curve of life.

The slightest inclination of a standing body virtually narrows its base; the least departure from integrity lessens our foundation. The pyramid, broad-based, yet heaven-pointed, is the firmest figure. Most characters are inconsistent, unsymmetrical, and have a base wanting extent in some direction.

Be not over-curious in assigning causes or predicting consequences; the same diagonal may be formed by various combining forces.

Through water the musical sound is not transmitted, only the harsh material noise. In air the noise is heard very near, the musical sounds only are transmitted. Be thankful, poets and prophets, when you live in an element such that your uncomely features are known only to your own village.

"Do not sing its fundamental note too loud near a delicate glass, or it will break," whispered my friend to me, as he saw me gazing at this lovely being.

Seek the golden mean of life. Like the temperate regions, it has but few thorny plants.



Be doubly careful of those to whom nature has been a niggard. The oak and the palm take their own forms under all circumstances; the fungi seem to owe theirs to outward influences.

It is a poor plant that crisps quickly into wood. It is a meagre character which runs perpetually into prejudices.

As light suffers from no change of medium when it falls perpendicularly, so the consequences of a perfectly upright action, or cause of action, are strictly fortunate. But let it be ever so little oblique, the new medium will exaggerate its obliquity; and the farther it departs from uprightness, the more frightfully it is distorted.

Hoops and coins, which cannot preserve their equilibrium when in rest, keep it when set in motion. Man also in activity finds his safest position.

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As it takes a diamond to cut and shape a diamond, so there are faults so obstinate that they can be worn away only by life-long contact with similar faults in those we love.

Learn the virtue of action. Who inquires whether momentum comes from mass or velocity? But velocity has this advantage; it depends on ourselves.

The grass is green after these October rains, because in the July drought it struck deep roots.

MISERIES.

No. 1.

Did you ever try to eat a peach elegantly and gracefully? Of course you have. Show me a man who has not tried the experiment, when under the restraint of human surveillance, and I shall look upon him as a curiosity. There is no fruit, certainly, which has so fair and alluring an exterior; but few content themselves with feasting their eyes upon it. How fresh and ripe it looks as it lies upon the plate, with its rosy cheek turned temptingly upward! How cool and soft is the downy skin to the touch! And the fragrance, so suggestive of its rich, delicious flavor, who can resist? Ah, unhappy wight! Bitterly you shall repent your rashness. Any other fruit can be eaten with comparative ease and politeness; a peach was evidently intended only to be looked at, or enjoyed beneath your own tree, where no eye may watch and criticize your motions.

I see you, in imagination, at a party, standing in the middle of the room, plate in hand, regarding your peach as if it were some great natural curiosity. A sudden jog of your elbow compels you to a succession of most dexterous balancings as your heavy peach rolls from side to side, knocks down your knife, and threatens to plunge after it when you stoop to regain it. You look distractedly round for a table, but all are occupied. Even the corner of the mantel-shelf holds a plate, and you enviously see the owner thereof leaning carelessly against the chimney, and looking placidly round upon his less fortunate companions. You glance at the different groups to see if any one else is in your most unenviable predicament. Ah, yes! Yonder stands a gentleman worse off yet, for, in addition to your perplexities, he is talking with a young, laughing girl, who is watching his movements, with a merry twinkle in her bright eyes. He evidently wishes to astonish her by his dexterity, and disappoint her roguish expectations. He holds his plate firmly in his left hand, and proceeds, at once, to cut his peach in halves. Deuce take the blunt silver knife! The tough skin resists its pressure. The knife and plate clash loudly together; the peach is bounding and rolling at the very feet of the young lady, who is in an ecstasy of laughter. Ah! she herself has no small resemblance to a peach, fair, beautiful, and attractive without, and, I sadly fear, with a hard heart beneath.

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Are you yet more miserable than before? Turn then to yonder sober-looking gentleman, who certainly seems sufficiently composed to perform the difficult manoeuvre. He has the advantage of a table to be sure; but that is not every thing. He begins right, by deliberately removing the woolly skin. Now he lays the slippery peach in his plate, and makes a plunge at it with his knife. A sharp, prolonged screech across his plate salutes the ears of all the bystanders, and a fine slice of juicy pulp is flung unceremoniously into the face of the gentleman opposite, who certainly does not look very grateful for the unexpected gift.

Every one, of course, has seen the awkward accident. O no! That pretty, animated girl upon the sofa is much too pleasantly engaged, that is evident, to be watching her neighbors. Playing carelessly with her fan, and casting many sparkling glances upward at the two gentlemen who are vying with each other in their gallant attentions, she has enough to do without noticing other people. She is happily unconscious of the mortification which is in store for her, or wilfully shuts her eyes to the peril. Alas! Her hand is resting, even now, upon the destroyer of all her present enjoyment, the beautiful, fragrant, treacherous peach. With a nonchalance really shocking to the anxious beholder, she raises it, and breaks it open, talking the while, and scarcely bestowing a thought upon what she is about. Dexterously done; but—O luckless maiden!—the fruit is ripe, and rich, and juicy, and the running drops fall, not into her plate, but upon the delicate folds of her dress.

The merry repartee dies away upon her lips, as she becomes conscious of the catastrophe. It is with a forced smile that she declares, "It is nothing; O, not of the slightest consequence!" That unlucky peach! How many blunders, how many pauses, how many absent-minded remarks it occasions! She makes the most frenzied attempts to regain her former gayety, but in vain. Her gloves are stained and sticky with the flowing juice, and she is oppressed by the conviction that all her partners for the rest of the evening will hate her most heartily. An expression of real vexation steals over her pretty face, and she gives up her plate to one of the attendant beaux, with not so much as a wish that he will return to her. Where are the arch smiles, the lively tones, the quick and ready responses now? Her spirit is quenched. Her manner has become subdued, depressed,—shall I say it?—yes, even sulky.

Ah! I see your courage will not brave laughter. You steal to the table, half ashamed of yourself as you set down your untasted peach. Your sudden zeal to relieve those ladies of their plates serves as a very good excuse for the relinquishment of your own. You have rescued yourself very well from your dilemma this time. Remember my advice for the future. Never accept a peach in company.

MISERIES.

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No. 2.

A DARK NIGHT.

There are some people who seem to have the faculty which horses and dogs are said to possess,—of seeing in the dark. But I, alas! am blind and blundering as a beetle; I never can find my way about house in the evening, without a lamp to illumine my path. Many smarting remembrances have I of bruised nose and black eyes, the consequences of attempting to run through a partition, under the full conviction that I have arrived at an open door. My most prominent feature has been rudely assailed, also, by doors standing ajar, unexpectedly, which I have embraced with both outstretched arms. Crickets, tables, chairs (especially chairs with very sharp rockers), and other movable articles of furniture, have stationed themselves, as it would seem, with malicious intent to trip me up. Some murderous contusion makes me suddenly conscious of their presence. Then a feeling of complete bewilderment and helplessness and timidity comes over me. I have not the least idea in what part of the room I am. I am oppressed with a sense of chairs, scattered about in improbable places. I long most ardently for a lamp, or only for one gleam from a neighbor's window. It is no rare thing for me to discover, by a thrilling touch upon the cold glass, that I have been feeling my way exactly in the opposite direction from what I imagined. Strange how ideas of direction and distance are lost when the sight is powerless! *Touch* may find out mistakes, but cannot always prevent them. *Touch* may convince me that I have arrived at my bureau, but it is too careless to perceive (what the poor, straining eyes would have discovered at a glance) the open upper drawer that salutes my forehead as I stoop hastily to grasp the handles beneath. *Touch* is clumsy. It only serves to upset valuable plants, inkstands, solar lamps, &c., with an appalling crash, and then leaves me standing aghast, in utter uncertainty as to the extent of the catastrophe. In such emergencies a rush for the stairs is the first impulse. Ah! but those stairs!

I will pass over the startling plunge which begins my descent, the frantic snatch for the banisters, and the strange, momentary doubt as to which foot must move first, like what a child may feel when learning to walk. All this only serves to render me so over-careful, that, when I actually arrive at the foot of the staircase, I cannot believe it, until a loud scuff, and the shock that follows the interruption of my expected descent, assure me beyond a doubt. There is nothing more exasperating than this, unless it may be the corresponding disappointment in running up stairs, when you raise your foot high in air, and bring it down with an emphatic stamp exactly upon a level with the other.

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But these are mere household experiences. Sad though they are, I esteem them as nothing in comparison with my adventures out of doors. In a dark night, and especially in a night both dark and stormy, I feel myself one of the most wretched beings in existence. Imagine a vessel lost in the wide ocean, and without a compass, and you will have some faint idea of my perplexity, discouragement, and loneliness at such a time. I have a strange propensity for shooting off into the gutter, or for shouldering the fences, under the impression that I am pursuing a straight course. I go quite out of my way to trip over chance stones, or to pick out choice bits of slippery ice. I splash recklessly through deep puddles, stumble over unfortunate scrapers, walk unexpectedly into open cellars, and lay my length upon wet stone doorsteps. I start back at visions of posts looming up in the darkness, and whitewashed fences and trees, all of which would be quite unlikely to be standing in the middle of the sidewalk, and which disappear at the first reasonable thought. I run into harmless passengers as if I would knock the breath of life out of them, and tangle our umbrellas together so fearfully that they spin round and round some time after their separation. O that umbrella of mine! Sometimes I hook it in the drooping branches of trees, and, losing my hold in the suddenness of the shock, have the gratification of feeling it tip up, and go down over my shoulder into the mud behind me. Its bone tips tap and scratch at the windows as I go by, and scrape against the tall fences, like fingers trying to catch at something to hold on by, and stop my progress. It hits a low branch, and its varnished handle slips through my woollen gloves, knocking my hat over my eyes, and extinguishing me for the time being. As if the night were not dark enough without!

My friends, I could go on much longer with my complaints, but I feel that I have drawn upon your sympathies sufficiently for the present. You will be as glad to leave me at my own house-door, as I am to find it.

MISERIES.

No. 3.

TWINE.

Under the general head of *string*, I might enumerate a long list of this world's miseries. Shoe-strings alone comprehend an amount of wretchedness, which is but feebly described in the tragical story of Jemmy String. Bonnet-strings and apron-strings, dickey-strings and watch-guards, curtain-cord, bed-cord, and cod-line, each and all have furnished enough discomfort to make out a long grumbling article. But I cannot linger to describe their treacherous desertions when their services are most needed, their unexpected weakness, and their obstinate entanglements when time presses. A certain pudding-bag string is commemorated in one of the beautiful couplets of Mother Goose's Melodies. I am sure you cannot have forgotten it, nor the staring spotted cat that is there represented

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racing away with her booty. That lamented pudding-bag string is but a type of strings in general. They are fleeting possessions, always hiding, always misplaced, never in order. You fit up a string-drawer, perhaps, with a fine assortment, and pride yourself upon its nice arrangement. Go to it a week after, and see if you can find one ball where you left it! Can you lay your hand upon a single piece that you want? No, indeed! Twine is considered common property. If any one has a use for it, he takes it without leave or license, without even inquiring who is the owner, and you may be sure he will never bring any of it back again. O the misery endured for the want of an errant piece of twine, when you are in a nervous hurry to do up a parcel, some one waiting at the door meanwhile! After an immense deal of pains, you have it at last folded to your liking, with every corner squared and even, every wrinkle smoothed. Then, clasping tightly with one hand the stiff wrapper, you search distractedly with the other for a ball of twine, which you distinctly remember tossing into the paper-drawer only the day before. In vain you surround yourself with newspaper and brown paper, and useless rubbish, tumbling your whole drawer into confusion. In vain you relinquish your nicely packed parcel, and see its contents scattered in all directions. In vain you grumble and scold. The ball is not forthcoming. Your little brother has seized it to fly his kite, or your sister is even now tying up her trailing morning-glories, or sweet peas, with the stolen booty. You plunge your hand exploringly into the drawer, and bring up a long roll wound thickly with twine of all kinds and colors. Your eyes sparkle at the prize; but, alas! the first energetic pull leaves in your hand a piece about four inches long, and a quantity of dangling ends and rough knots convince you that you have nothing to hope in that quarter. A second plunge brings up a handful of odds and ends, strong pieces clumsy and rough, coarse red quill-cord, delicate two-colored bits far too short, cotton twine breaking at a touch, fine long pieces hopelessly tangled together, so that not even an end is visible. The more you twitch at the loops, the more desperate is the snarl. Poor mortal! Your pride gives way before the urgency of haste. You send off your nice packet miserably tied together by two kinds of twine.

All the rest of the day you are tormented by a superfluity of the very thing you needed so much. It was impossible to get it when you wanted it; but now it is pertinaciously in your way when you do *not* want it. You almost break your neck tripping over a long, firm cord, which proves to be a pair of reins left hanging on a chair by some careless urchin. The carpet and furniture are strewn with long, straggling pieces of packthread. You find a white end dangling conspicuously from your waistcoat pocket. As you walk the streets you see twine flying from fences, or lying useless on the sidewalk,

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black with dust and age. To crown the whole, a friend comes with a piece of twine extending across two rooms, and asks you to help him twist and double it into a cord. It is a very entertaining process. You amuse yourself with watching one little rough place that whirls swiftly round, stops with a jerk, turns hesitatingly one side and the other, then, yielding to a new impulse, flies round and round again till you are dizzy. You look with great complacency at the tightening twist, now brought *almost* to perfection. You turn it carelessly in your fingers, scarcely noticing its convulsive starts for freedom. Ah! your imprudent friend, without any warning, gives it a final pull to stretch it into shape. The twine slips from your grasp, springs away across the room, curls itself into a succession of snarls and twisted loops, and then lies motionless. Your friend looks thunderstruck. With a hasty apology, you step forward and tightly clasp the recreant end. You are in nervous expectation of dropping it again. Your fingers are benumbed at the tips with their tight compression, and the constant twitching. They give a sudden jerk. You make an involuntary clutch for the cord, but in vain. It is rapidly untwisting at the very feet of your companion, who looks at it in despair. Again you make an attempt with no success at all, the refractory twine eluding your utmost endeavors to hold it. Once more! Your fellow-twister walks off at last, with a wretchedly rough affair, which he good humoredly says "will do very well."

MISERIES.

No. 4.

I believe the world has gone quite crazy on the subject of fresh air. In the next century people will think they must sleep on the house-tops, I suppose, or camp out in tents in primitive style. Nothing is talked about but ventilators, and air-tubes, and chimney-draughts. One would suppose that fire-places were invented expressly for cooling and airing a room, instead of heating it. There was no such fuss when I was young; in those good old times these airy notions had not come into fashion. Where the loose window-sashes rattled at every passing breeze, and the wind chased the smoke down the wide-mouthed chimney, nobody complained of being stifled. There were no furnaces then to spread a summer heat to every corner of the house. No, indeed! We ran shivering through the long, windy entries, all wrapped in shawls, and hugging ourselves to retain the friendly warmth of the fire as long as possible. Far from devising ways of letting *in* the air, we tried hard to keep it *out* by stuffing the cracks with cotton, and closely curtaining the windows and bed. Even then, the ice in the wash-basin, and the electricity which made our hair literally stand on end in the process of combing, and the gradual transformation of fingers into thumbs, showed but too plainly that the wintry air had penetrated our defences. When

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we crowded joyfully round a crackling, sparkling wood-fire, even while our faces glowed with the intense heat, cold shivers were creeping down our backs, and sudden draughts from an opening door set our teeth chattering. I often wished myself on a spit, to revolve slowly before the fire until thoroughly roasted. Not from any want of air, I assure you, we children were always breaking panes of glass on the bitterest days, and the glazier was never known to come under a week to replace them. Why people should wish to revive, and live through again, the miseries of such a frost-nipped childhood, I cannot imagine.

I, for one, love a snug house, even a warm house. I am of a chilly temperament, and subject to rheumatism, horrible colds, &c. Fresh air is my bane. I banish all books on the subject from my table. I studiously avoid all notorious fresh-air lovers, or try in every way to bring over the poor, misguided mortals to my views; but it is of no use. Fresh air is the fashion, and is run to extremes, as all fashions must be. I call in a physician; lo! *fresh air* is recommended as a tonic. I give a party; of course my windows are all thrown open, and foolish young girls, in the thinnest of white muslins, are standing in the draught; and such a whirlwind is raised by the flirting of fans, and the rush of the dancers, that I am blown, like a dry leaf, into a corner, where I stand shivering, and making rueful attempts to appear smiling and hospitable. I go out to pass a social afternoon with a friend, and am set down in a room just above the freezing-point, with a little crack opened in the window, and all the doors flying, to *change the air*. I ride in the omnibus, and am almost choked with my bonnet-strings, such a furious draught meets me in the face, and when, with infinite pains, I have secured the only tolerably warm corner, my next neighbor becomes very faint, and must have the window open. Even the poor babies are not safe from this popular insanity. You may see the little victims any day, taking an airing, with their little red noses and watery eyes peeping forth from under the cap and feathers. The old-fashioned blanket, in which the baby was done up head and all, like a bundle, is thrown aside. The child is not quite so often carried upside down. I suppose, under the new system, but what difference does it make whether the poor thing is smothered or frozen to death?

I never shall forget a long journey I took once with a friend who was raving mad on the subject of fresh air and cold water. Every morning the windows were thrown wide open, and the blinds flung back with an energetic bang, while a stiff wintry wind whirled every thing about the room, and flapped the curtains against the ceiling. And there she stood, declaring herself exhilarated, while her nose and lips turned from red to blue, and the tears ran down her cheeks. I always took to flight. Afterwards the poor auto-martyr went out to walk before breakfast, scornfully

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rejecting all offers of furs and extra wrappings. O dear, no! *She* never thought of muffs, tippets, snow-boots, but as encumbrances fit for extreme old age and infirmity. She always walked fast, and the more the wind blew, the warmer she felt, I might be assured. As soon as she had gone, I established myself in comfort by the side of a glowing grate, happy but for dreading her return. She came in dreadfully fresh and breezy from the outer air, very energetic, very noisy, and fully bent upon stirring me up and making me take exercise. After snapping the door open and slamming it behind her with a clap that greatly disturbed my nerves, she exclaimed in a stentorian voice, "O dear me! I shall *die* in such an oven! My dear child, you have no idea how hot it is!" And the first thing I knew, up would go a window with a crash that made the weights rattle. It might rain or shine; weather made no difference to this inveterate air-seeker. Many a time has she come in all dripping, and tracking the carpet, brushed carelessly against me with her wet garments, and finally enveloped me with the steam arising from them as they hung around my fire. It roused my indignation that she should make herself and every body else so uncomfortable, and then glory in the deed as if it were indubitably and indisputably praiseworthy. She was so good-natured, however, and so happy in her delusion, that I could not find it in my heart to remonstrate very vehemently, except when she would make me listen to her interminable lectures upon the importance, the *necessity*, of fresh air, and the effect of a snug, cosy room upon the blood, the heart, the lungs, the head, and (as I verily believe she hinted) *the temper*. I know I lost all control of *mine* long before she finished; but whether it was the want of fresh air in practice, or too much of it in theory, I leave you to imagine.

My friend always carried a small thermometer in her trunk, which she consulted a dozen times an hour, in order to regulate the temperature of the room. Alas for me if the quicksilver rose above 60! I devoutly hoped she would leave it behind in some of our numerous stopping-places, and with an eye to that possibility, I must confess, I hung it in the most out-of-the-way corners I could find; but it seemed to be on her mind continually. She never forgot it, and always packed it very carefully, too. I asked her two or three times to let me put it in *my* trunk, where I had slyly arranged a nice little place full of hard surfaces and sharp corners, but she always had plenty of room.

I believe my zealous friend is now residing at the sea-shore, freezing in the cold sea-winds, and losing her breath every morning in the briny wave, under the strange illusion that she is improving her health.

FAREWELL.

They tell me my hat is old!
I scarce believe it so;
But since I'm uncivilly told



The dear old thing must go,
I bid thee farewell, old hat,
 Good hat!
Farewell to thee, good old hat!



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I must soon to the city his,
And trudge to some horrid store,
A smart new tile to buy,
With a heart exceedingly sore,
For I cast off a long-trying friend,
A close friend,—
I'm ashamed of a trusty old friend.

Ah, let me remember with tears
The day thou wast first my own,
When I settled thee over my ears,
Then with soap-locks overgrown.
"Hurra for a beaver hat,
A sleek hat!
A cheer for a sleek beaver hat!"

That day is in memory green
Among those that were all of that hue;
Sweet days of my youth! Ah! I've seen
But too many since that were *blue*.
How smooth was our front, my hat,
My first hat!
Unbent were our brows, my first hat!

The first dent,—what a sorrow it was!
Were it only my skull instead!
Indignant I think on the cause,
And pommel my stupid head.
I was new to the care of a hat,
A tall hat,—
Unworthy to wear a tall hat.

The omnibus portal, low-browed,
Had ne'er grazed my humble cap,
But it knocked off my beaver so proud,
Which into a puddle fell slap.
Alas for my dignified hat,
My proud hat!
Woe to my lofty-crowned hat!

It survived, but it had a weak side,
And so had its wearer, perchance,
Since I left it on stairs to abide,
At a house where I went to a dance.



A lady ran into my hat,
My poor hat!
She demolished my invalid hat!

INNOCENT SURPRISES.

I am somewhat inclined to the opinion, that, if positive legislation could be brought to bear upon this subject, making it a criminal offence for one person deliberately to concoct and designedly to spring a surprise upon another, society would derive incalculable benefit from the act. For the ordinary and inevitable surprises of every-day life are sufficiently frequent and startling to content even the most romantic disposition; entirely dispensing with the necessity of those artfully contrived, embarrassing little plots which one's friends occasionally set in motion, greatly to their own diversion and the extreme discomfort of the surprised unfortunate. For he who has ever broken his skull on a treacherous sidewalk, or received from the post a dunning missive when he expected a love-letter, or arrived one minute late at the car-station, or taken a desperately bad bill in exchange for good silver, or been caught in a thunderstorm with white pantaloons and no umbrella, knows that the unavoidable surprises of life are in themselves staggerers of quite frequent occurrence, and require not the aid of human invention. But the surprises which we most dread are not those which *naturally* fall to us as part of the misfortune

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we are born to inherit; not those which result from unforeseen accidental circumstances, from carelessness on our own part or from the folly of others, from revolutions in the elements or in the affairs of nations; these we *can* bear, by using against them the best remedies we possess, or by viewing and enduring them as wisdom and philosophy teach us to do. No; our only prayer, in this connection, is that we may be saved from our friends; not from their carelessness, but from their deliberate schemes against our security.

In order to reconcile this apparent contradiction in terms, take the following instance of a friendly propensity. You walk into your house at dusky twilight, at that particular hour of evening at which your *own brother*, if he be a reasonable being, would not expect you to recognize him; one of your family extends his (or her) head from the parlor, and calls upon you at once to enter, and greet “an old friend.” You obey, and are immediately confronted with an individual whose countenance wears an expression associated with some reminiscences of your youth, but so dim and undefined is it, that you cannot, for the life of you, give it its appropriate name or place. What is to be done? The recollections of early childhood are expected spontaneously to burst forth from under a heap of later and more vivid associations, and the name, residence, business, and whole history of the unwelcome guest are called upon to suggest themselves within a second’s time.

After a long moment of painful hesitation, during which you have in vain tried to *stare* his name out of him, you clutch at a struggling idea, and blurt out the name of one of your former associates. You do this, not by any means because common sense or conviction suggest the course, but simply because something must instantly be done. The result, of course, is, that you hit upon the wrong name; and now your kind friends can do no more for you; even if they rush to the rescue, and formally introduce the stranger, it is of no avail. The deed is done; you are placed in a position of awkward mortification, which both the stranger and yourself will never forget, and never cease to regret.

Why it is that the feeling of shame which follows upon such mishaps attaches itself exclusively to the innocent sufferers, rather than to those who are the cause of the suffering, I never could understand. This kind of diversion betrays a want of humane consideration in the contriver. It is infinitely more cruel and unamiable than Spanish bull-baitings, or the gladiatorial shows of the ancients, inasmuch as a shock to the finest feelings of human nature is harder to bear, and longer in duration, than the momentary pang induced by witnessing a merely physical suffering.

THE OLD SAILOR.

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In my school vacations I used occasionally to visit an old sailor friend, a man of uncommon natural gifts, and that varied experience of life which does so much to supply the want of other means of education. He must have been a handsome man in his youth, and though time and hardship had done their utmost to make a ruin of his bold features, and had made it needful to braid his still jetty black locks together to cover his bald crown, his was a fine, striking head yet, to my boyish fancy. I loved to sit at his feet, and hear him tell the events of sixty years of toil and danger, suffering and well-earned joy, as he leaned with both hands upon his stout staff, his body swaying with the earnestness of his speech. His labors and perils were now ended, and in his age and infirmity he had found a quiet haven. He had built a small house by the side of the home of his childhood, and his son, who followed his father's vocation, lived under the same roof. This son and two daughters were all that remained to him of a large family.

"An easterly bank and a westerly glim are certain signs of a wet skin!" said the fisherman, pointing to the heavy black masses of cloud that hung over the eastern horizon, one morning when I had risen at sunrise for a day's fishing. "'T won't do; don't go out to-day! There's soon such a breeze off shore, as, with the heavy chop, would make you sick enough! Besides, the old dory won't put up with such a storm as is coming. No fishing, my boy, to-day."

His old father said, "Stephen is right. There is a blow brewing." And he came to look, leaning on his cane. "Stay in to-day."

I yielded, and the sky during the morning slowly assumed a dull, leaden hue. The storm came on in the afternoon, heavily pattering, and pouring, and blowing against the windows, and obscuring the little light of an autumn twilight. I wandered through the few small rooms of the cottage, endeavoring to amuse myself, while the light lasted, with two funeral sermons and an old newspaper. Then I sat down at a window, and I well remember the gloomy landscape, seen through the rain, in the dusk:—the marsh, with the creek dividing it, the bare round eminence between the house and the beach, or rather the rocky cliffs, and on either side the wide, lonely sands, with heavy foam-capped breakers rolling in upon the shore, with a sound like a solemn dirge. At a distance on the left, half hidden by the walnut-trees, lay the ruins of a mill, which had always the air of being haunted. A high, rocky hill, very nearly perpendicular on the side next the house, was covered on the sides and top with junipers, pines, and other evergreens. As the darkness thickened, I left the lonely "best room" for the seat in the large chimney-corner, in the kitchen. The old wife tottered round, making preparations for the evening meal, and muttered recollections of shipwrecks which the storm brought to her mind. Now and then she would go to a window, turn back her cap-border from her forehead, put her face close to the glass, shading off the firelight with her hand, and gaze out into the darkness.

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"Asa did not go out either, thank the good Father!" she said. The dog whined piteously. "St! St! Poor Scip! Here, shall have a piece! Good dog! A fearful night indeed it is."

The two men came in from the barn, shook off the wet, and drew near the fire.

"Just such a night, twenty-nine years ago come August, we ran afoul of Hatteras. You remember, old woman, how they frightened ye about me, don't ye?"

Amidst such reminiscences we were called to supper. I remember being solemnly impressed when that old man, bent with hardship and the weight of years, clasped his hands reverently, and in rude terms, but full of meaning, asked a blessing upon their humble board. I remember the flickering light from the logs burning on the hearth, and how it showed, upon the faces of those who sat there, a strong feeling of the words in which rose an added petition in behalf of those on the mighty deep.

Supper being ended, the old man took down the tobacco-board, and, when he had cut enough to fill his pipe, handed it to his son, who, having done the same, restored it to its nail in the chimney-corner. Then they smoked, and talked of dangers braved and overcome, of pirates, and shipwrecks, and escapes, till I involuntarily drew closer into my corner, and looked over my shoulder. Suddenly the dog under the table gave a whining growl.

"I never seed the like o' that dog," exclaimed the fisherman, turning to me. "I thought he was asleep. But if ever a foot comes nigh the house at night, he gives notice. Depend on it, there's some one coming."

The door of the little entry opened, with a rush of the whistling wind, and a man stepped in. The dog half rose, and though he wagged his tail, in token that he knew the step to be that of a friend, he kept up a low whine. A young man, muffled to the eyes, and with the water dripping from his huge pea-jacket, opened the kitchen-door.

"William Crosby, why, what brings you out in such a storm as this? Strip off your coat, and draw up to the fire, can't ye? Where are you bound, then, and the night as dark as a wolf's throat?"

The young fisherman made no answer, unless by a motion of his hand. As he turned back the collar from his face, we saw by the waving light that it was pale as death. The long wet locks already lay upon his cheeks, making them more ghastly as he struggled to speak. "O Stephen Lee, it's no time to be sitting by the fire, when old Asa Osborn is rolling in the waters. A man's drowned; and who's to get the body for the wife and the children—God pity them!—afore the ebb carries it out to sea?"

The old man drew his hand across his forehead, and rose. I looked at him as he drew up his tall figure, and looked the young messenger full in the eye. In a low, deep

whisper, he said, “Who, William, did ye say? You said a man’s drownded,—but tell me the name again.”

“Yes, Gran’sir, I did say it. Old Uncle Ase Flemming, he and the minister went out a fishing in the morning. The minister got his boots off in the water, and after a long time he’s swum ashore. But poor Uncle Ase—. Stephen, come along. His poor wife’s gone down to the beach, now.”

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They left the house, and I shut the door after them, and came back softly to my seat by the old man's knee.

Once before I had seen him, when a heavy sorrow fell upon him. It was on a beautiful summer's day, and the open window let in the cool breeze from the sea. He was sitting by it in his arm-chair, looking out upon the calm water, buried in thought. His favorite daughter had long been very low, and might sink away at any moment. The old dog was at his feet asleep. The clock ticked in the corner, and the sun was shining upon the floor. Some friends sat by in silence, with sorrowful countenances. His little grandchild came to his side, and said, "Mother says, tell Grandpa Aunt Lucy's gone home."

The old man did not alter his position. For some time he sat in deep thought, looking out with unseeing gaze, and winding his thumbs, as before. Of five fair daughters, three had before died by the same disease, consumption. He had seen them slowly fade away, one by one, and had followed his children to the grave in the secluded burying-ground, where the green sod was now to be broken to receive the fourth.

Rising slowly, he walked across the room, and, taking the well-worn family Bible, returned with it to his seat; and, as he turned the leaves, he said in a low tone to himself, "There's only one left now!" Then he sat entirely silent, with his eyes fixed upon the sacred page. He did not utter one word of lamentation, he did not shed a tear, but as he turned his eye on me, in passing, its expression went to my heart. Stealing softly out, I left him to the silent Comforter whose blessing is on the mourner.

Now the scene was changed. One was suddenly taken from his side who had been a companion from boyhood to old age. They had played and worked in company; together they had embarked on their first voyage, and their last; and they had settled down in close neighborhood in the evening of their days. Each had preserved the other's life in some moment of peril, but took small praise to himself for so simple an act of duty. Few words of fondness had ever passed between them. They had gone along the path of life, without perhaps being conscious of any peculiarly strong tie of friendship binding them together, till they were thus torn asunder. The death of a daughter, long and slowly wasting away before his eyes, could be calmly borne. But this blow was wholly unforeseen, and his chest heavily rose and fell, and by the bright firelight I saw tears rolling over his weather-beaten cheeks.

"A child will weep a bramble's smart,
A maid to see her sparrow part,
A stripling for a woman's heart;
Talk not of grief, till thou hast seen
The hard-drawn tears of bearded men."

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The fury of the storm being abated, I resolved to follow Stephen down to the shore. He was not in sight, and I knew not what direction to take. It was a gloomy night, the transient glimpses of the moon between driving masses of clouds only making the scene more wild and appalling. I could see the tops of the tall trees bending under the fury of the blast, ere it came to sweep the beach. The heaving billows were covered with foam, far as the eye could reach, and, rising and tumbling, seemed striving with each other as they rolled on towards the sands. I had seen storms upon the ocean before, but never had it presented so awful and majestic an appearance. As the breakers struck upon the shore, and sent a huge mass of water upon the sands, their sullen roar mingled with the howling and rushing of the wind, and filled me with awe.

There were torches upon the beach, and as I drew near, I saw the fishermen run together to one point. The body had just been washed ashore, and lay stretched upon the sands. The head was bare, and long locks of white hair streamed down upon the shoulders. The heavy pea-jacket was off from one arm, as if he had endeavored to extricate himself from it in the water. The sinewy arms lay powerless and free from tension then, but they told me that, when they first drew him from the surf, both hands were grasping a broken oar with such strength that they were unable to loose his hold, till suddenly the muscles relaxed, and the arms fell upon the ground. They turned the body, and a little water ran from the mouth. Then, gently raising it upon their shoulders, they bore it home.

LAUGHTER.

In some individuals the risibles lie so near the surface that you may tickle them with a feather. In others, they are so deeply imbedded in phlegm, or so protected by the crust of ill-humor, that a strong thrust and a keen weapon are required to reach them.

A laugh is in itself a different thing in different individuals. Some persons laugh inwardly, unsocially, bitterly. It is a pure grimace on your part when you join in their merriment, unless you are superior to the fear of ridicule. On the other hand, there is a laugh of so contagious a nature, that you are irresistibly moved to sympathy while ignorant of the exciting cause, or out of the sphere of its influence. You will laugh loud and long, and afterwards confess that you had not the least gleam of a funny idea, all the while.

You doubt the power of the sympathetic laugh? Come with me into the nursery. Here is a rosy little horror, a year and a half old. Sit down and take him upon your knees. Hold his dimpled hands in yours, and look steadily into his roguish eyes. Repeat a nursery rhyme, no matter what, in a humdrum recitative; he is sober, and very attentive. Suddenly spring a mine upon him with a "Boo!" His "Hicketty-hick!" follows, and his eyes begin to shine. Repeat the experiment.

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“Hicketty-hick!” again, more heartily than at first, with the baby encore, “Adin!” The same process awakens the rapturous little pearls again and again, and you are quite in the spirit of the thing yourself. Now for a more ecstatic burst. You purposely prolong his suspense; he is all a tilt, expecting the delightful surprise. You drawl out each word; you drone the ditty over and over again, till every tiny nerve is tense with expectation. “Boo!” at last, and over he goes, in the complete *abandon* of baby glee; his cherry lips are wide asunder, his head hangs powerless back, and the “Hicketty-hicks” burst tumultuously from his little, beating throat. And *you*, sir; what are *you* doing? Laughing, I declare, in full roar, till the tears run down your cheeks. You catch the boy in your arms, toss him, almost throttle him with kisses, and so enhance the merry spasms, that mamma, who has a philosophical instinct with regard to excited nerves, and dreads the reaction, comes to the rescue.

Let me introduce you to another effective laughter. You shall not hear a sound, yet you cannot choose but laugh, if she does, quiet as she is about it. See how her shoulders shake,—and look at her face! Every feature is instinct with mirth; the color mounts to the roots of the hair; the curls vibrate; the eyes sparkle through tears; the white teeth glisten; the very nose and ears seem to take a part; like Nourmahal, she “laughs all over,” and while you wonder what the joke may be, you are laughing too.

Do you feel dismal, or anxious? You should hear L. tell a story. She is one of the very few who can undertake with impunity to talk and laugh at the same time. Look and listen, while she describes some comic occurrence. There is no unladylike, boisterous noise, but musical peals of laughter come thick and fast; and faster and thicker, preternaturally fast and thick, come the words with them. And yet each word is distinct; you do not lose a syllable. And I should like to see the man who can resist her, if she chooses he should laugh, even at his own expense.

There is an odd sort of power, too, in the gravity with which B. tells a humorous anecdote. He invariably maintains a sober face while every body is in an agony of laughter around him. Just as it begins to subside, the echo of his own wit comes back to him, and, as if he had just caught the idea, he bursts into one little abrupt explosion, so genuine, so full of heartiness, that it sets every body off upon a fresh score.

Nothing so melts away reserve among strangers, nothing so quickly develops the affinities in chance society, as laughter. A person might be ever so polite, and even kind, and talk sentiment a whole day, and it would not draw me so near to him as the mutual enjoyment of one heartfelt laugh. It is a perfect bond of union; for the time being, you have but one soul between you.

TO STEPHEN.

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I saw thee only once, dear boy, and it may be, perchance,
That ne'er again on earth my eyes shall meet thy gentle glance;
Years have gone by since then, and thou no longer art the child,
With earnest eye, and frolic laugh, and look so clear and mild;
For thee, the smiles and tears and sports of infancy are gone,
And youth's bright promise, gliding into manhood, has come on;—
And yet thine image, as a child, will ever stay with me,
As bright as when, so long ago, I met and welcomed thee.

What was the charm that lay enshrined within thy smiling eyes?
What made me all thy childish, winning ways so dearly prize?
It was thy likeness to another,—one whose looks of love,
No longer blessing earth, were met by angel eyes above.
Yet thou hadst not the golden hair, the brow of radiant white,
Nor the blue eyes so soft and deep, like violets dewy bright;
But the smiles that played about thy mouth, the sweetness in thine
eyes,
The dimpling cheek that said, "Within, a sunny spirit lies,"
The true and open brow, the bird-like voice, so free and clear,
The glance that told, "I have not learned the meaning yet of fear,"
And more than all, the trusting heart, so lavish of its treasure,
In simple faith, its earnest love bestowing without measure;
These, more than lines and colors, made a picture, warm and bright,
Of one whose face no more might cheer and bless my earthly sight.

The nature, beautiful and pure, he carried to the skies,
Has been trained by angel teaching, has been watched by seraph eyes.
Dear boy! through this cold world *thy* earth-bound feet have trod;
and now,
Is the loving heart still thine? Hast kept that true and open brow?

THE OLD CHURCH.

There are certain old-fashioned people who find fault with the luxuriousness of our churches, and ascribe to the warmth and comfort, which contrast so strongly with the hardships of early times, the acknowledged sleepiness of modern congregations. For my part, I see no necessary connection between discomfort and devotion. My soul, at least, sympathizes so much with its physical adjunct, that, when the latter is uncomfortable, the former is never quite free and active.

Let me call to remembrance the church my childhood knew, with its capacious square pews, in which half the audience turned their backs upon the minister; the seats made to rise and fall, for the convenience of standing, and which closed every prayer with a clap of thunder; its many aisles, like streets and lanes; the old men's seats, and the



queer but venerable figures that were seen in them,—some with black-silk caps to protect their bald heads from the freezing draughts of air from the porchless doors; the old women's seats, on the opposite side; the elevated row of pews round the sides of the church,

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and the envied position of certain little children who had an extensive prospect through the open pew-top within doors, and a view of the hay-scales and the town-pump through the window besides. Those windows, in a double row, with the gallery between, —how regularly I counted the small panes, always forgetting the number, to make the same weary task necessary every Sunday! The singing-seats, projecting from the central portion of the gallery, furnished me with another hebdomadal study, in large gilt letters of antique awkwardness, which so impressed themselves on my mind that I see them now. This was the golden legend: “BUILT, 1770. ENLARGED, 1795.” I remember hearing a wag propose to add as another remarkable fact, “SCoured, 1818.”

Opposite to the singing-seats towered the pulpit, from which the clergyman looked down upon us like a sparrow upon the house-top. He seemed in perpetual danger of being extinguished by a huge sounding-board. Very earnestly I used to gaze at the slender point by which it hung suspended, and wished, if it *must* come down, that I might make the gilt ornament at the apex, resembling a vase turned upside down, my prize. Under the pulpit was a closet, which some one veraciously assured me was the place where the tithingman imprisoned incautiously playful urchins. The terrors of that dark, mysterious cell had little effect on my conduct, however, as I was not entirely convinced of the existence of any such lynx-eyed functionary.

The largest church in the county, it was, however, well filled, many of the congregation coming five and some even six miles, and remaining there through the noon intermission, which, on their account, was made as short as possible. But in winter the vast airy space had a peculiar and searching chill. No barn could be colder, except that the numerous footstoves made some little change in the air during service. The minister stood upon a heated slab of soap-stone. I used to watch this in its progress up the broad aisle and the pulpit stairs, under the arm of the boy from the parsonage, and the irreverent way in which he made his descent, in view of the assembly, after depositing his burden, was thus rebuked by an old lady who was always droll and quaint. “Why, Matthew, when you come down the pulpit stairs of a Sunday, you throw up your heels like a horse coming out of a stable-door.”

Older grew the church, and colder; and if people then staid at home on Sunday afternoons, they had a better excuse for doing so than their successors can muster. The chorister, even, was frequently among the missing, but was charitably supposed to be subject to the ague. Efforts were made to prevail upon the elderly part of the parish to permit the introduction of stoves with long funnels. They scorned the enervating luxury! Their fathers had worshipped in the cold, and their sons might. But ah! how degenerate were the descendants of the noble old Puritan church-goers!

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The services curtailed to half their proper length, yet finding the patience of the listeners all too short! The degenerate descendants carried the day, however, the most bigoted of their opposers becoming disabled by rheumatism. The old sexton, resignation to inevitable evils being a lesson he had had much opportunity to learn, submitted with a good grace, though very much of opinion that fires in a church were an absurdity and a waste. The stoves were provided, and an uncommonly full attendance the next Sabbath showed the very general interest the matter had excited. How would it seem? Would any one faint?

There was by no means a superabundance of heat; there was something wrong, but the lack of warmth was a hundred-fold made up in smoke. No one could see across the church, and the minister loomed up, as if in a dense fog; all eyes were fountains of tears. At last the old sexton went with a slow and subdued step up to the pulpit, and, wiping his eyes, respectfully inquired, in a whisper, whether there was not a *little* too much smoke. This suggestion being very smilingly assented to, he proceeded to extinguish the fires, and for that day the services were not indebted to artificial warmth to promote their effect.

How sad are improvements in places to which our childish recollections cling! The gushing fulness of unchilled love is lavished even on inanimate and senseless things, in a happy childhood. How was my heart grieved when the old-fashioned meeting-house was converted into the modern temple! Time and decay had rendered the tall spire unsafe, yet its fall by force and premeditated purpose seemed a sacrilege. I felt affronted for the huge weathercock, reclining sulkily against a fence, no more to point his beak to the east with obstinate preference. I mourned over the broad, old-fashioned dial, on which young eyes could discern the time a mile off. The old sexton lived to see this change, and at the end of half a century of care under that venerable roof he went to his rest. The beloved minister, and many, many who sat with trustful and devoted hearts under his teachings, are gone to their reward. A board from the old pulpit, a piece of the red-damask curtain, and the long wished-for gold vase, are now in my possession.

“SOMETHING THAN BEAUTY DEARER.”

You ask me if her eyes are fair,
And touched with heaven's own blue,
And if I can her cheek compare
To the blush-rose's hue?

Her clear eye sheds a constant gleam
Of truth and purest love,
And wit and reason from it beam,

Like the light of the stars above.
Good-humor, mirth, and fancy throng
The dimples of her cheek,
And to condemn the oppressor's wrong
Her indignant blush doth speak.

You ask me if her form is light
And graceful as the fawn;
You ask me if her tresses bright
Are like the golden dawn?



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Her step is light on an errand of love,
Scarce doth she touch the earth,
And in graceful kindness doth she move
Around her father's hearth;
And when to bless his child he bends,
His comfort and delight,
The silver with her dark hair blends,
Like a crown of holy light.

A TALE

FOUND IN THE REPOSITORIES OF THE ABBOTS OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

Swept from his saddle by a low branch, Count Robert lay stunned upon the ground. The hunting-party swept on, the riderless steed galloping wildly among them. No man turned back; not one loved the Count better than his sport.

There came to the spot a man in a woodman's garb, yet of a knightly and noble aspect. He bent over the fallen man, and bathed his temples, turning back the heavy, clustering locks. The Count, opening his eyes, gazed on him at first without surprise; he thought himself at home, however he came there, so familiar was the face.

Then did the woodman embrace him with tears, crying, "My brother, O my brother! it is I! it is Richard!"

"Thou in England!" cried the Count. "Art thou mad?" And he frowned gloomily.

"Fear not for me," replied the exile, tenderly raising the Count from the ground.

A narrow path wound through the wood to a ruined hermitage. The outlaw here prepared a bed of leaves for the Count, laid him softly thereon, and went to seek some refreshment. His loved brother might revive, and yet smile kindly on the playmate of his youth, though under a ban.

When Richard returned, there followed him like a dog a horse of the North-country breed, shaggy, and in size not much greater than a stag-hound. Robert viewed him with surprise, and it seemed with derision.

"Despise not him who is able to bear thee out of the wood," said Richard. "Thou art faint; here is wine, and of no mean vintage."

Robert drank from the earthen bottle, and his eye grew brighter, yet looked it not the more lovingly on Richard. He ate right gladly of the store of the landless and penniless, —dried venison and oaten bread,—and was refreshed, yet thanked him not. Richard

gave fragments to the neighing steed. He ate no morsel himself, nor tasted the wine. His heart was full to bursting.

"Tell me of home,—of—of our father," he said, at last, with deep, strong sobs.

"On the morrow, on the morrow," said Robert, disposing himself for sleep. "Thou wilt hear soon enough."

But Richard seized him wildly by the shoulder, and bade him tell the worst.

"Nay, then, if thou *wilt* know, he is dead. I, thy younger brother, am now thy superior."

"For that I care not. As well thou, as I, to sit in my father's seat. But oh! left he no blessing for me? Did he not at the last believe me the victim of calumny?—Alas! No word? Not one dying thought of Richard?"

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“He died suddenly.”

Richard wept long and bitterly, and when, with faltering tongue, he asked tidings of his betrothed, his face was covered; he saw not the guilty flush upon his brother’s brow, for that he had spread a lying report of the exile’s death.

“Would Bertha still brave the king’s displeasure? Was she yet true to the unfortunate?”

“Bertha is a very woman. She hath forgotten the absent lover, and chosen another, and a better man.”

“Who, who hath supplanted me?” cried Richard fiercely, and springing upon his feet.

“I tell thee not, lest thou wreak on him thy spite against thy faithless fair.”

“Know that Bertha’s choice, though a traitor, is safe from me, even were I, as I was, a man to meet a knight on equal terms.”

His generous heart could not dream of fraternal treachery. And when his rival saw this, and that he suspected him not as yet, he smiled to himself, turned his face to the wall, and closed his eyes, if so be he might cut off further question. Soon, falling into slumber, he clenched his hands, and ground his teeth. The sleep of a traitor is ever haunted by uneasy dreams, and dark shadows of coming doom fell upon his spirit.

Richard watched till dawn. Sometimes he started up to walk to and fro, beating his bosom, and wringing his hands in agony. Anon he threw himself prostrate in the stupor of despair. At the first carol of birds in the forest, sleep surprised his weary senses, and the peace of the innocent settled upon his features.

Side by side lay the brothers, alike in form, alike even in feature. But in heart they bore no mark of the resemblance of kindred. Envy of the elder-born early possessed the soul of Robert, like a base fiend; first had it driven thence love, and lastly honor.

Does no one seek for the absent lord of the castle, while the weary hunters return to be his guests? Keeps no one anxious vigil, the live-long night? The unloving is not loved. But he hath a king beneath his roof; a king and lords of high degree sit at the morning board, and shall none but vassals be hospitably proud and busy?

Ladies of rank were there, and among them, pale and silent, sat Bertha, looking on the king, it seemed, with an upbraiding eye. An angry gloom sat upon his grimly compressed lips, and sadness was upon his brow; for kingly power was naught, since remorse could not undo a wrong done to one who no longer lived, and vengeance could not reach its absent object. Richard’s innocence had come to light, and Robert, albeit he knew it not, was now the dishonored outlaw.

Ere the clock of the distant minster rung the hour of ten, the royal cavalcade wound from the gates of the castle. At the same hour Count Robert awoke, and saw that the sun was already very high. It shone upon the calm face of Richard, tempered with quivering shadows from the leafy canopy above.

“Up, brother Richard!” cried the Count; “thou wast ever a sluggard.” And Richard, at his bidding, filled his hunting-pouch with provisions for the way, and went before, leading the little Northern nag, which the Count bestrode. He bore himself bravely under the weight of a rider whose feet nearly grazed the turf on each side.

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Slowly they wound through the tangled wood. "Stay, I will lighten thy burden for thee," said Robert, "if thou hast not left the bottle behind. Here's to the fair Bertha. What, thou wilt not drink? Then thou hast resigned her;—she is not worth a thought. Thou wilt not peril thy life to see her again, the false one who careth not for thee. Now depart, and when the king's wrath is overpast, I will beseech him for thee. Leave thy cause in a brother's hands." But Richard went not back, though, when they came to the edge of the wood, they beheld the king's train advancing in the broad highway.

"Fly, Richard; escape while thou mayest!" cried Robert, yet offered he not the horse for the greater speed. "Found on English ground, thou diest a felon's death. Disgrace not thy family. Carest thou not for life?" he cried, pursuing Richard, who stinted not, nor stayed, at the sight of the king, but the rather hasted forward.

"What is life to me?" said Richard. "Let the king do with me as he will." He strode onward proudly, with folded arms, offering himself to the view of Edward, who as yet saw him not, or only as a forester.

"Halt at least that I may spur on and implore for thee," said Robert, for he hoped that he might deliver him a prisoner to some one in attendance, that he should not come to speech of the king.

With this wily purpose, he galloped forward. A shout arose, "The traitor! The traitor!" He was made prisoner by no gentle hands, and, at a nod from the king, found himself led away to the rear, but not far removed.

He looked about for Richard. Could he not yet wave him back? Should the king see that noble face, he must be moved to mercy, at least so far as to give him audience. The brothers know not yet that all is reversed. Robert sees a man in russet clothing kneel at the king's stirrup; he sees the royal hand extended to raise him; he sees many press forward eager to welcome the wanderer. He turns away, sick at the sight.

One look more. Bertha has thrown herself into the arms of his hated brother. He tears his beard; he curses his own natal day, and the stars that presided over his birth and destiny.

Yet must he look once more, though to an envious soul the sight of a brother's happiness is like the torment of purgatorial fire. Richard is standing with his hand extended towards him. He is pleading the cause of the mean and cowardly enemy who betrayed him. He pities and forgives him; he even loves him still, for is he not his brother? As the eyes of the king and of all the surrounding crowd are turned on him, burning shame subdues the warring passions that fill the heart of Robert, and a faint emotion of gratitude brings a tear to fall upon his hot cheek. Something of old, childish love awakes in his bosom, like dew in a dry land.



The king granted Richard's prayer, the more readily because his anger was smothered by contempt. The title and inheritance returned to the heir, who was worthy his ancient name. Robert, to the day of his death, lived on his brother's bounty, harmless, the rather that the king's decree had gone forth that in no case should he be Richard's successor, or inherit aught from him.

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NOTE.—Here ends the tale, but by patient research we have discovered one verse of an ancient ballad, supposed to have the same tradition for its subject. It is preserved in a curious collection of fragmentary poetry, to be found in most private libraries, and, in its more ancient and valuable editions, in the repositories of antiquaries. It stands, in the modern copy which we possess, as follows:—

Richard and Robert were two pretty men;
Both laid abed till the clock struck ten.
Up jumps Robert, and looks at the sky;
“Oho, brother Richard, the sun’s very high!
You go before, with the bottle and bag,
And I’ll come behind, on little Jack nag.”

THE SEA.

“We sent him to school, we set him to learn a trade, we sent him far back into the country; but it was of no use, he must go to sea.”—THE GRANDMOTHER’S STORY.

A child was ever haunted by a thought of mystery,
Of the dark, shoreless, desolate, heaving and moaning sea,
Which round about the cold, still earth goes drifting to and fro,
As a mother, holding her dead child, swayeth herself with woe.
In all the jar and bustle and hurrying of trade,
Through the hoarse, distracting din by rattling pavements made,
There sounded ever in his ear a low and solemn moan,
And his soul grew sick with listening to that deep undertone.
He wandered from the busy streets, he wandered far away,
To where the dim old forest stands, and in its shadows lay,
And listened to the song it sang; but its murmurs seemed to be
The whispered echo of the sad, sweet warbling of the sea.
His soul grew sick with longing, and shadowy and dim
Seemed all the beauty of the land, and all its joys, to him,—
Its mountains vast, its forests old. He only longed to be
Away upon the measureless, unfathomed, restless sea.
Thither he went. The foam-capped waves yet beat upon the strand,
With a low and solemn murmuring that none may understand;
And he lieth drifting to and fro, amid the ocean’s roar,
With the drifting tide he loved to hear, but shall hear never more.



And thus we all are haunted,—there soundeth in our ear,
A low and restless moaning, that we struggle not to hear.
Yet still it soundeth, the faint cry of the dark deeps of the soul,—
Dark, barren, restless, as the sea which doth for ever roll
Hither and thither, bearing still some half-shaped form of good,
The flickering shadow of the moon upon the “moon-led flood.”
And ever, 'mid all the joys and weary cares of life,
Through the dull sleep of sluggishness, and clangor of the strife,
We hear the low, deep murmuring of that Infinity
Which stretcheth round us dim and vast, as wraps the earth the sea.

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And in the twilight dimness, in silence and alone,
The soul is almost startled by the power of its solemn tone.
When we view the fairest works of Nature and of Art,
They ever fill with longings, never satisfy, the heart;
But, like the lines of weed and shells that stretch along the beach,
And show how far the flowing tide and the high waters reach,
They seem like barriers to hold back, like weedy lines, to show
How far into this busy world the waves of beauty flow.
Yet when sweet strains of music rise about us, float, and play,
We almost dream these barriers of sense are broken away,
And that the beauty bound before is floating round us, free
As the bright, glancing waters of the ever-playing sea.
And for a little moment, the spirit seems to stand
With naked, wave-washed feet almost upon the strand.
But when she stoops to reach the wave, the waters glide away,
And whisper in an unknown tongue,—she hears not what they say.

FASHION.

Why is it that the introduction of a really graceful fashion is generally met with ridicule and opposition, while ugly modes are adopted with grave acquiescence and reverent submission?

“Seest thou not what a deformed thief this *Fashion* is?” “I know that Deformed; he goes up and down like a gentleman.” Yes, we all know *Deformed*. When any of his family come to us, from England or France or any foreign country, we recognize the hideous brotherhood, and extend our welcoming hands; but *Graceful* must stay with us a long time to be greeted kindly, and her sisters from foreign parts are coldly looked upon, or dismissed at once.

To begin at the top,—“the very head and front of the offending.” A gentleman goes into a fashionable hatter’s, and the shopman, holding up for admiration a hat with a crown a foot high, of the genuine stove-pipe form, and a brim an inch wide, says, “This is the newest style, Sir.” The gentleman walks home with the ugly thing on his head, but no one stares or laughs. ’Tis a new fashion, but all “take it easy.” A year later, perhaps, the hatter shows him a thing with a brim a half an inch wider, but rolled up at the sides, and a crown of a much greater diameter at the top than where it joins the brim,—a specimen of the bell-crown. This is solemnly donned, and the wearer has the pleasure of knowing that the head-gear of all his friends is as hideous as his own. The inverted cone is worn with a sweet, Malvolio smile. And so “Deformed” has ruled the head of man for as many

years as any of us can number, only ringing the changes, from one year to another, upon the three degrees of comparison of the word *ugly*.

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But a change takes place; a light, graceful, low-crowned hat, with a brim wide enough for shelter or for shade, begins to appear as a fashion;—and how is it received? The clergyman thinks it would be very unclerical for him to wear it, though it may be as black, and is as modest, as the rest of his apparel. The young doctor timidly tries it on, and in his first walk meets the wealthy hypochondriac, his favorite patient, and the one who is trying to introduce him to practice, who seriously advises him, as a friend, not to wear that new-fangled thing,—if the poor hat had only been ugly, there would have been nothing bad in its *new-fangled* quality,—as all his respectable patients will leave him if he dresses so like a fool. The young lawyer gets one, because he heard an old lady speak of “those impudent-looking hats,” and he is in hopes that impudence, which he understands is all-important in his profession, and which he is conscious of not possessing, may come with the hat. A lady goes out with her son, who is just old enough to have gained a coat, and is looking for his first hat. The mother has taste and judgment, and the youth has yet some unperverted affinity with graceful forms left, and so they choose and buy one of these comfortable and elegant chapeaux. Just before they reach home, they meet one of their best friends, a person whom the lady regards most kindly, and the young man admires and respects, and *he* greets him with, “Why, Tom! have *you* got one of those rowdy hats?” And so the stiff, stove-pipe monstrosity keeps its place, and the only pleasant, sensible, graceful, becoming hat that the nineteenth century has known, is called all sorts of bad names, and quiet gentlemen are afraid to wear it.

Has it not been the fate of the shawl, too, the most simple and elegant wrapper, and comfortable withal, that a man can throw around him, to be scouted and flouted?

Yes, Deformed! Come on next winter with a white surtout in your hand that must fit so tightly that your victims can but just screw themselves into it, with a stiff, square collar touching the ears, and seven capes, one over the other, “small by degrees and beautifully less,” and all respectable gentlemen will accept it, and virtuously frown down, as dandies or rowdies, those who will not sacrifice their shawls to the ugly idol.

A GROWL.

I know it is generally considered decidedly boorish to utter complaints against the ladies. But I am for the present a bachelor, and in that capacity claim freedom of speech as my peculiar privilege. In virtue of my unhappy position, then, I proceed to utter the first of a series of savage growls, wishing the ladies to understand me as fully in earnest in this; that when I growl *loud*, I must be supposed to *mean* what I growl.

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For a month past, single gentlemen of every description have suffered in common with other fancy stocks, and have remained hopelessly below par. Those nice, trim, poetical, and polite young beaux, who, when no great undertaking agitates the female mind, are treated with kindness, and sometimes with distinction, by young ladies of discretion, are now, as it were, ruthlessly thrust and bolted out of the pale of feminine society by an awful demon who reigns supreme,—the Genius of Dress-making. The other evening, I pulled sixteen different bell-handles, in a gentlemanly manner, without obtaining admission into any house for the purpose of making a call; and when I succeeded in making an entrance at the seventeenth door by falsely representing myself as the agent of a dry-goods dealer, with a large box of patterns under my arm, I found the ladies in close conference with three dress-makers, studying a fashion-plate with an assiduity worthy of a better cause. A friend of mine, who has hitherto enjoyed the privilege of dining every day with six ladies, and has derived from their society great pleasure and profit, informed me yesterday, with a tear in each eye, that he had left the house for ever, the conversation being always turned upon topics with which he is utterly unacquainted, and conducted in a language which is about as intelligible to him as the most abstruse Japanese or the most classic Law-Latin.

If we are so fortunate as to obtain, by any stratagem, admission to hall or anteroom, in the mansions of our fair friends, our olfactories are regaled with a fragrance which we instinctively associate with tailors' shops, and which, I am informed, does in fact arise from the contact of woollen substances with hot flat-irons. As we advance, our ears are greeted by the resounding clash of scissors. Entering upon the field of action, our eyes are dazzled by a thousand fragments of rich and brilliant hues, and our personal safety endangered by swiftly flying needles and unsuspected pins. Gossip is at an end, for the thread must be continually bitten off. Dancing is child's play, a folly of the past. The piano is converted into a table, or an ironing-board. No games can be suggested but Thread-my-needle, and Thimble-rig. No books are at hand but Harper, with the fashion-plate at the end; the newspapers of the day are cut into uncouth shapes; and conversation (when conducted in English) hangs the unsuccessful Bloomer reform upon the gibbet of ridicule.

Now, if we would prevent utter disunion in society, something like a compromise must be effected, and to the ladies belongs the laboring oar. I use a metaphor which implies that they must do something they are little accustomed to do; they must make some concession. We have done all we could do, and I will make one statement which will convince the world that we bachelors are not obstinate without good reason. I confess (though it is not without some slight degree of shame that I own it), that I have,

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during the last week, consumed the greater part of every day in ineffectual study, trying to perfect myself in the terminology of the science of Fashion. I have listened attentively, and have gathered into a retentive memory sundry technicalities; but in vain have I submitted these terms of a strange dialect to the strictest etymological research. In vain have I conversed upon this subject with the most intelligent dry-goods dealers. In learning the few idiomatic phrases they employ, I have experienced only the satisfaction which young students in Greek literature feel, when they have, with infinite labor, mastered the *alphabet* of that rich and copious language.

But there is hope. Experience tells us, this state of things cannot last for ever. A few weeks, and our sufferings shall be rewarded, our forbearance repaid. Then shall gay streamers, pendent from rejuvenated bonnets, float, as of yore, across our promenades, and on the shoulders of Earth's fairest daughters the variegated mantle be again displayed. The streets, now deserted by the fair, will ere long glitter with the brilliant throng, and our sidewalks be swept once more by the gracefully flowing silk. Taper fingers shall condescendingly be extended to us, the smile of beauty beam on us, and witty speech banish our resentful remembrance of incomprehensible jargon.

TO JENNY LIND,

ON HEARING HER SING THE ARIA "ON MIGHTY PENS," FROM "THE CREATION."

When Haydn first conceived that air divine,
The voice that thrilled his inward ear was thine.
The Lark, that even now to heaven's gate springs,
And near the sky her earth-born carol sings,
Poured on his ear a higher, purer note,
And heavenly rapture seemed to swell her throat.
To him, from groves of Paradise, the Dove
Breathed Eden's innocence and Eden's love;
And seraph-taught seemed the enchanting lay
The Nightingale poured forth at close of day;
For yet nor sin nor sorrow had its birth,
To touch, as now, the sweetest sounds of earth.
Yes! as upon his inner sense was borne
The melody of that primeval morn,
And all his soul was music,—O, to him
The voice of Nature was an angel's hymn!
But was there, *then*, one human voice that brought
Unto his outward ear his own rapt thought,
In tones, interpreting in worthy guise



The varied notes of Eden's melodies?—
O, happier we! for unto us 'tis given
To hear, through thee, the strains he caught from heaven.

December 1, 1851.

MY HERBARIUM.

Poor, dry, musty flowers! Who would believe you ever danced in the wind, drank in the evening dews, and spread sweet fragrance on the air? A touch now breaks your brittle leaves. Your odors are like attic herbs, or green tea, or mouldy books. Your forms are bent and flattened into every ugly and distorted shape. Your lovely colors are faded,—white changed to black, yellow to dirty white, gorgeous scarlet to brick color, purple to muddy brown. Poor things! Who drew you from your native woods and brooks, to press you flat, and dry your moisture up, and paste you down helplessly upon your backs, such mocking shadows of your former grace and beauty?

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Ah! sorrowfully do I confess it! It was I. In my early years I searched the woods and meadows, scaled rocks, forded bogs, and scrutinized each shady thicket, with murderous intent. I bore my drooping victims home, and sacrificed them relentlessly to science. With my own hand I turned the screw that crushed out all that was lovely and graceful and delicate about them. How I wearied myself over that flower-press! How anxiously I watched over the stiff stalks and shrivelled leaves,—all that was left! How perseveringly I changed and dried the papers, jammed my fingers between the heavy boards, and blistered my hands with that obstinate screw! And how cordially I hated it all! I liked the fun of gathering the flowers, the triumph of finding new specimens, and the excitement of hazardous scrambles; but as for the rest it was drudgery, which I went through only from a stern sense of duty. Now, thanks to the busy little fingers that passed over these leaves, I have a fund of amusement laid up for me; for every page has its story, and each mutilated flower is the centre of a beautiful picture. Here the ludicrous and the pathetic are so exquisitely blended, that I laugh with a regretful feeling at my heart, and sigh even when smiles are on my face. The first few pages are light and joyous, full of a child's warm impulses and ready zeal, and enlivened here and there by some roguish caprice. That was the time when, in my simplicity, I loved dandelions and buttercups, and could see beauty even in the common white-weed of the fields. Ah! here they are, arranged in whimsical positions,—Clover and Sorrel, Violets and Blue-eyed Grass, Peppergrass and Dock (O, how hard that was to press!), Mouse-Ear and Yarrow, Shepherd's Purse, Buttercups, and full-blown Dandelion, Succory, and Chickweed, and Gill-run-over-the-ground,—with their homeliest names written in sprawling characters, all down hill, beneath them. I did not aspire to botanical names in those days. I thought nothing was unfit for my new Herbarium. Such was my zeal, that I believe I should have filled it entirely in a few days, if I had not been counselled to make a judicious selection. I had a faculty for bringing home plants impossible to press, and insisting upon making the experiment. I slept for a week with my bed-post tilted up on a huge book, wherein reposed a water-lily, obstinately refusing to lie flat. All kinds of woody plants, too, were my delight, though they invariably came out of the press as they went in, except that the leaves were in every variety of unnatural position. I never grew weary, either, of gathering stately and graceful green ferns, and finding them all “cockled up,” as the phrase went, when I got home. I believe I made some experiments on a horsechestnut blossom once; but as it is not to be found in my Herbarium, I am inclined to think they were unsuccessful. How happy children are with any new possession! I thought there never was any thing quite equal to my

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new book. All the girls had them, with neat marbled covers, and white paper within, and each one was determined to make hers the best of the whole. When pasting day came, there was an intense excitement. We all daubed our little fingers to our heart's content, and our faces too, as to that. I remember perfectly the sensation of smiling, after the paste stiffened. We spattered our desks, and pasted the wrong side of the flowers, and stuck the leaves together, and got every thing a little one-sided, and, in short, became so worried and heated and vexed, that we did not hunt for any more flowers for a long time after the first pasting day.

In the mean while my ideas had undergone a change. I had become much more ambitious. A new page brings flowers of a higher order, and, beneath them, besides the common name, appears a sounding botanical title; ay, still more, the class and order are written in full. Poor things! How many of your species must have been pulled to pieces by inexperienced hands, to ascertain the exact number of stamens, and their relative positions! I feel, now, a tenderness for the shrinking, delicate wild flowers, that makes me hesitate even to pick them from their shady retreats; but *then*, such was my ardor for investigation, the more I loved them, and the more beautiful they seemed, the more eagerly I tore them to fragments. Let the ingenious student analyze bits of brass wire, and reduce to its simple elements as much gunpowder as he pleases, but I raise my voice against this wanton destruction of rare and beautiful flowers. No chemical process can ever restore *them*.

As I glance over this new page, I see a merry troop of little girls, crowding around their kind teacher, trying to restrain their superabundant spirits, and restless activity, till they may give them free scope in the woods. Passing up the street, they are joined by fresh recruits, who come dancing out of the houses, with baskets, and trowels, and tin boxes, and delightfully mysterious suppers packed away nicely, to be eaten in the most romantic place that can be found,—provided there is no danger of snakes, or ivy. Where they are going I should find it impossible to say, until I have consulted the new leaf just turned over. Here, side by side, are the wild Columbine and the cheerful little Bethlehem Star. They grew, I remember, upon Powder-House Hill, so named from the massive granite building upon its summit, which we never dared to go near, for fear of an explosion. The hill was rough, rocky, barren, and in some places quite steep. In the clefts of the rocks, generally far above our reach, the bright red columbines stood in groups, drooping their graceful heads. Some of the rocks were worn to a perfect polish by the feet of daring sliders. It was a dangerous pastime even to the most experienced. A loss of balance, a slight deviation from the beaten track, a trip in a hollow, or a momentary entanglement in your dress,—and you are lost! I

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declined joining in the diversion ever after the first attempt, which was nothing but a headlong plunge from top to bottom. But though I heroically stood aloof while the girls were enjoying the sport, and making the air ring with their laughter, I was sure, afterwards, to come upon the slippery places unintentionally, and take a slide whether I would or not. I had, I remember, a most unfortunate propensity for climbing and scrambling, choosing the worst paths, and daring the others to follow my lead on precarious footholds. It was unfortunate, because I seldom came forth from these trials unscathed. I was always tearing my dresses in clambering over fences, or bumping my head in creeping under. Where others cleared brooks with a light spring, I landed in the middle. I was sure to pick out spongy, oozy, slippery grass to stand upon, in marshy land, or was yet more likely to slump through over shoes in black mud. Banks always caved in beneath my feet, unexpectedly. Brambles seemed to enter into a conspiracy to lay violent hands on me, and hidden boughs lay in wait to trip me up. Moss and bark scaled off the trunks of fallen trees, bearing me with it when I was least on my guard, or the trunks themselves, solid enough to all appearance, crushed to powder beneath my unwary tread. Even the stone walls deserted me. I made use of one as a bridge, one day, to reach a golden cowslip that grew temptingly in a swamp; but a treacherous stone rolled off with me, and a perfect avalanche of huge rocks followed, splashing the muddy water all over me as I sat, helplessly, buoyed up by the tall grass. I regret to say, I forgot the cowslip.

THE OSTRICH.

Of the wild and wayward Ostrich, say, have ye never heard?
Of the poor, distracted, lonely, outcast, and wandering bird?
Which is not a bird of heaven, nor yet a beast of earth,
But ever roveth, homeless,—a creature of strange birth.
Wings hath it, but it flies not. And yet within its breast
Are strange and sleepless drivings, so that it may not rest;
Half-formed, half-conscious impulses, with its half-formed pinions
 given,
Too strong for rest on earth, too weak to bear to heaven;—
And madly it beats its wings, but vainly, against its side,
For the light wind rusheth through them, mocking them in its pride.
Then, distraught, it hurries onward, the gates of heaven shut,
Flying from what it knows not,—seeking it knows not what.
While in the parching desert, amid the stones and sand,
Its stone-like eggs are lying, here and there, on every hand,
It wanders on, unheeding; and, with funereal gloom,
Trembles in every breeze each torn, dishevelled plume.
And when, with startled terror, it sees its foes around,

It strives to rise above them, but clingeth to the ground.
Then on it madly rusheth, with idly fluttering

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wings;

The stones in showers behind it convulsively it flings;
Onward, and ever onward,—the fleetest horses tire,—
But its strength grows less and less, their tramping ever nigher.
The poor distracted thing! it feels its lonely birth;
It may not rise to heaven, so it cometh to the earth;
To the earth, as to a mother, since to the earth it must,—
Its head in her bosom nestled, its eye veiled with her dust.
But she will not receive it. From earth and heaven outcast,
The Ostrich dies, as it lived, unfriended to the last.

Of the wild and wayward Ostrich, say, have ye never heard?
Of the poor, distracted, lonely, outcast, and wandering bird?

But not alone it wandereth. My spirit stirs in me,
With a sort of half-fraternal and drawing sympathy;
This lonely, restless spirit, that would rise from the heavy ground
To the sky of light and love that stretcheth all around.
But, with all its restless longings, it too must earth-bound stay,
And, with wings half formed for soaring, here hold its weary way,
Hungering for food of heaven, feeding on dust and stone,
While about it lie unheeded, as it hasteth on alone,
Its deeds of good or evil, a fruitful mystery;
But it presseth on, nor recketh what their event may be.
And when doubt and fear assail it, it may not rise above
To the glorious, peaceful height of fear-outcasting love;
But something draws it downward, breathes of its lower birth,
Prompts it to seek a refuge in the blindness of the earth.
And it hides its head in earthliness; at least it will not see
The blow it cannot ward off; and the foe it may not flee.
But something softly whispers that these wings shall grow to soar—
Heaven grant!—in the cloudless depths of love for evermore.
It whispers that again these blinded eyes shall see;
Heaven grant in their yearning gaze the long-sought home may be!
It whispers each word and act shall to fruition spring;
Heaven grant they may joy to man, and peace to the spirit bring!

Of the wild and wandering Ostrich, say, have ye never heard?
The type of the restless soul of man, the weary, wingless bird.

COWS.



I admire cows in their proper places. They are undoubtedly useful animals; some may think them handsome and graceful: this is, as yet, an unsettled question. They certainly figure pretty extensively in all sketches of rural scenery, and may, therefore, be considered as picturesque objects; but I think that on canvas they take to themselves beauties which they do not possess in actual life. I do not object to see them at a distance, quietly grazing in a meadow by the brink of a winding stream, and all that sort of thing, provided the distance is very great, and a strong fence intervenes. For I would have you know, that I am a delicate young lady of nervous temperament

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and keen sensibilities, and have a mortal dread of cows. I am not used to the customs of country life, which place this animal on a level with domestic pets, and when my brother asked me to pat the side of one of these great, coarse brutes, I screamed at the mere idea. For I should be extremely unwilling to provoke one of them, because I have been told that, when heated with passion, as these beasts often are, it sometimes happens that the powder-horns on top of their heads explode, and spread ruin and desolation around. People here bestow a vast deal too much consideration on these unpleasant animals, for they are often seen—that is, those of them that are troubled with weak eyes—walking along the streets with boards over their faces, as a protection from the rays of the sun. I don't believe that is the real reason of the thing, though my brother assures me that it is. I think, myself, that it is intended as a keen satire upon those young ladies who wear veils in the streets; but I never will yield my point. I *will* wear my veil, so long as I have a complexion worth protecting, and so long as there are gentlemen worth cutting. The Brighton Bridge Battery is a delightful promenade on a warm summer's day, it is so shady; but it is closed, I may say, every Wednesday and Thursday, to accommodate these detestable pets of the public. It seems, as my brother informs me, that the drovers, from humane considerations, are in the habit of driving their cattle over to Brighton, (when the weather is pleasant,) and back again on the next day, in order that their health may be improved by the sea-air which blows up Charles River. Now I think that when the cow takes precedence of the lady, and usurps, to the utter exclusion of the latter, the most delightful promenade in Cambridge, it is time the city authorities should look to it; and so I told my brother. He considered for a moment, and then advised me not to bear it any longer, but to go upon Brighton Bridge, *in spite* of the cows, and assert my independence. I followed his advice, as I always do, and, on one fine afternoon, took advantage of the pleasant weather to indulge in a solitary walk in that direction. As I was sauntering along on the wooden sidewalk, gazing at the noble ships which lay moored by their gaff-topsails to the abutments of the bridge, and viewing the honest sailors as they promenaded up and down the string-ladders at the command of their captains, my fears were aroused by a distant commotion. I hastily turned and looked over the railing into the street. A whole drove of infuriated cows, urged on by two fiendish boys and a savage dog, was rapidly approaching me from the Cambridge side. What should I do? I was too much fatigued to run, and I had never learned to swim. My plans were hastily formed. Flinging my red silk visite and sky-blue parasolette into the water, lest the gay colors should still more enrage the wild animals, I jumped over the outside railing towards the river, and hung by one arm over the angry flood during a moment of speechless agony! On they came, with lightning speed, in a whirlwind of dust. A rapid succession of earthquakes—bellowings—groans,—and all was over. I was safe. On inspection of the footmarks, I felt quite sure that some of them must have approached within ten yards of me, and only two railings had intervened between me and their fury.



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An honest tar from one of the men-of-war employed in unloading coal at Willard's Wharf took the captain's gig, and made for my parasol and visite as they floated away, and returned them with the very unintelligible remark, that I'd "better not clear the wreck next time unless it blew more of a breeze."

THE HOME-BEACON.

By Elkton wood, where gurgling flood
Impels the foamy mill,
Where quarries loom, in solemn gloom,
A mansion crowns the hill.

A pharos true, light ever new
Streams through its friendly pane,
To guide and greet benighted feet
Which thread the winding lane.

Lofty and lone, that light has shone,
Alike o'er green or snow,
Since first a pair their nest built there,
Two hundred years ago.

Now, as we walk, with pleasant talk
To cheer the dismal way,
That light shall tell of marriage-bell,
Of moon and merry sleigh.

The ancient home to which we come
These scenes revealed one night;
As the beacon true, so old, yet new,
Flung wide its cheery light.

Go back threescore long years, or more:
Old Time the latch shall lift,
And, from his urn, once more return
The home of love and thrift.

A noble sire, with nerves of wire,
Warm heart, and open hand,—
A worthy dame, nor shrewd, nor tame,—
Lead forth the phantom band;

Three girls, three boys, with fun and noise,
Next gather round the hearth;



Reenter, then, dear friends, again
All full of life and mirth.

“My pretty nuns, 't is late! My sons,
Bring out the 'Sliding Car.'
For one fair bride, you all must ride
The snows both fast and far.”

First darts away the bridegroom gay,
Nor waits the well-aimed jest:
To shed and stall they follow, all,
To speed their sire's behest.

In full array, the spacious sleigh
Glides through the pillared gate:
Each prancing steed, straining to lead,
Draws no unwilling mate.

Full moon and bright loops up the night
Above the starry sky.
Runner and heel, well shod with steel,
Cut sharply as they fly.

Along they go, o'er sparkling snow,
Shrill bells to song oft ringing;
By oak and birch, to Gladstone church
A bridal party bringing.

On time-worn walls the moonbeam falls,
And silvers o'er the spire,
While diamond-pane and giddy vane
Repeat the heavenly fire.

From lofty tower to maiden's bower,
And wide o'er hill and dell,
Of earthly heaven, to mortals given,
Sweet chimes the marriage-bell.

With open book, and solemn look,
All robed in priestly lawn,
The Rector stands,—but counts the sands,
Right willing to be gone!



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(The evening mail and nut-brown ale,
His pipe and rocking-chair,
Are waiting long, while the bridal throng
Still lingers unaware.)

An ancient gloom fills all the room,
And dims the lamps above,
Though wall and aisle in verdure smile,
Through wreath and Christmas grove.

By branching pines and graceful vines,
Slow glides the youthful pair
To the altar green, with brow serene,
And kneel together there.

Soft breathes the vow, responsive now,
In calm but earnest tone.
The wedding-ring, strange, mystic thing!
Fast binds the twain in one.

The solemn word no longer heard,
With chastened steps and slow,
And heart in heart, no more to part,
To "Home, sweet Home," they go.

Fresh now, again, o'er snowy main,
The winged steeds return:
On roughening rock, with shriek and shock,
The flashing runners burn.

O'er cradling drift, secure though swift,—
Now smooth, now rough, the track,—
The furious sleigh devours the way,
As lash and harness crack.

Through furs and wool, the air, so cool,
Is felt or feared no more;
Though gay the steeds with icy beads,
And their flanks are frosted o'er.

A fitful light, scarce yet in sight,
Gleams through the opening wood:
Ah! now they come to their hill-side home,
In merry, merry mood.



Four lovely girls, a string of pearls,
Are found in place of three:
Four daughters fair are gathered there
Around the Christmas-tree.

As roars the fire, their loving sire
A warmer welcome deals;
And, stooping low, on one fair brow
His heart's adoption seals.

A dearer bliss, a mother's kiss,
Awaits the blushing bride:
One look above! then smiles of love
Express her joy and pride.

Once more good cheer removes the tear,
Returns the joyous smile;
Soon laughter, poured around the board,
Rings through the spacious pile.

While dance and song employ them long,
Steals in the cold, gray dawn!
Back to your urn, ye phantoms, turn,
And vanish o'er the lawn.

Stern, though in tears, with Fatal shears,
Time scattered all those pearls!
They fell, unstrung, old graves among;
O'er all the snow-wreath curls!

Yet shines that light from lattice bright,
Wide o'er the grass, or snow;
Still all the room its rays illumine,
As when, so long ago,

Its arrowy star recalled the car
Then winding round the wood,
And lime-rock gray threw back the ray
Across the rapid flood.

Though cold each form, their love, still warm,
From hearth and lattice glows:
Hearts kind and dear yet linger here,
And bid us to repose.

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The skies are dark! No moonbeams mark
Or wall, or traveller's way:
O'er rock and wood thick storm-clouds brood,
And doubts our steps delay.

No beacon-light yet cheers the night:
How gloomy grows the hour!
Ah! there it shines, in lance-like lines,
Sharp through the misty shower.

Shine on, fair star, through storms, afar!
Still bless the nightly way!
Always the same, a vestal flame,
Love shall maintain thy ray.

THE FOURTH OF JULY.

It was the anniversary of our Glorious Fourth. The evil genius who specially presides over the destinies of unoffending college boys put it into the heads of five of us to celebrate the day by an excursion by water to Nahant Beach. The morning was delightful,—the cool summer air just freshening into a steady and favoring breeze, the sun tempered in his ferocity by an occasional cloud above us, the sea calm and pleasant—and all that sort of thing, you know—just what you want on such occasions,—and we set sail from Braman's, resolved to have “a jolly good time.” I can't describe our passage down. It was altogether too full of fun to be written on one sheet. Suffice it to say, we laughed, and sang, and joked, and ate, and drank ('t was when we were young), and so on, all the way, and in fact I felt rather disappointed at arriving so soon as we did at our destined port. Here new pleasures awaited us, in the shape of acquaintances unexpected and unexpecting, rides on the beach, bowling, and loafing in general,—much too rich to be described here and now. But there is an end to all sport, and ours came quite too soon. The shadows had begun to lengthen considerably before we thought of starting on our return, and certain ominous indications in the heavens above us warned us, that, as our passage homewards was not by land, further delay was inadvisable.

Dolefully we set our sail, and made for Boston Harbor. We began to feel the reaction which always follows a season of extreme joviality, and our spirits were down. Our chief wit, Tom B——, who had before kept us in a perpetual roar all the way, sat moody and desponding, and answered gruffly every question put to him; speaking only when spoken to, and then in monosyllables rarely used in polite circles. Our *other* joker, second only to Tom, the above named, having amused us during the whole day by long yarns spun out from a varied experience and a rich imagination, betook himself to slumber, and tried to dream that he was safe home again. The rest of us performed our duties about the boat in gloomy silence, looking occasionally with some anxiety at the

clouds gathering slowly over our heads, but keeping our opinions within our own breasts. I had no apprehension of danger, for nothing indicated a gale; in fact, the breeze was gradually deserting us. All that was to be feared was a calm, steady rain, which, visiting us at a distance of several miles from home, and late at night, promised any thing but an agreeable conclusion to our day's excursion. At last it came. First, a heavy drop, then a few more, and then a regular, straight, old-fashioned pour.

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Our sail hung motionless, and we seemed to stand still and take it. Our companions were soon roused from their abstraction by the very unpleasant circumstances, and we hastily took counsel together.

“Unship the mast,” says Tom, “and over with your oars.”

We obeyed our captain sulkily, and soon were moving on again. We pulled away for an hour or so, drenched with the rain, which seemed to come down faster than ever, and were about as miserable and down-cast a pack of wretches as ever lived; for there is nothing like a good ducking (to use the common expression) to take the life and spirit out of a man, not to mention the other discomforts that attended our situation.

Silently we rowed, and not a sound was heard above the plashing of the rain upon the surface of the sea, and the regular stroke of the oars.

“It’s very strange that we don’t reach old Point Shirley,” says Tom, who had been on the look out for this landmark during the last half-hour.

“Very strange,” said we, and pulled away as before.

Thus passed another half-hour in silent, ceaseless occupation, when, from the mere force of habit, I dipped my hand over the boat’s gunwale, with the hope of cooling my blistered palm in the salt water. Judge of my surprise, when I found my hand immersed in *thick black mud*.

“By Jove, fellows,” cried I, “we’re floored!”

There was no mistaking the fact; we were aground. At that instant the moon burst out from between the drifting clouds, and, as if in derision, threw a streak of light over our melancholy position. There we were, high and dry on a bank of mud, a scooped furrow on each side of us attesting the frantic efforts of our oarsmen to get a headway, and a long wake, ten feet in extent, marking our distance from the sea behind us. Such was our position as the moon revealed it to us. We looked dolefully in one another’s faces for three minutes; then a grim smile gradually stole over Tom’s expressive countenance, as he slowly ejaculated, “Point Shirley it is!” when the ludicrous side of the matter seemed to occur to each of us simultaneously, and we indulged ourselves with a roar of laughter,—the first since we had left Nahant.

Of course, nothing could be done under the circumstances; but we must wait patiently for the rising of the tide to float us off. So we sat there in our wet garments until the dead of night, when our boat gradually lifted herself off and we started again, and finally arrived at Braman’s early in the morning.

The moral of this tale may be summed up in a single word,—TEMPERANCE.

FROM THE PAPERS OF REGINALD RATCLIFFE, ESQ.

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In college I was the “Illustrious Lazy.” In my professional studies and avocations, I have been so hard driven, in order to make up for four idle years, that I am wasted almost to a shadow, and fears are entertained that I shall wholly vanish into thin air. My physician talks gravely about my having exhausted my nervous energy, and sends me to Ratborough, as the place of all others the most favorable for entire intellectual repose. I am living with an old aunt, Tabitha Flint, who was wont to rock me, and trot me, and wash my face, in my helpless infancy, and can hardly yet be convinced that I have outgrown such endearing assiduities in the twenty-five years that have intervened. I let her pet me, so far as I find it convenient, and, indeed, farther, because I feel grateful for the kind feelings of which I am the object.

There is another personage in the household, who probably thinks that in the exuberant kindness of my aunt I have a full average of civility, without the least interest on her part. Do not for a moment imagine that I am piqued at her insulting indifference of manner towards a young man who (I beg you to believe) is not wholly without claim to a glance of approbation now and then from a lady’s eye. You must not suppose I care at all about the matter. But as I have not even a book allowed me to take up my thoughts, my curiosity fixes itself strangely upon this silent, sulky, meditative little person, who takes about as much notice of me as of the figure of Father Time over the clock.

What can such a body have to think about the livelong day that is so absorbing that all one’s bright thoughts, and one’s most whimsical sallies, pass without notice? Should I see her once move a muscle of her very plain, doggedly inexpressive, provokingly composed phiz, I should jump up and cry, “Bo!” with surprise.

She vanishes several hours at a time, and I hear her humming to herself, sometimes in one room, sometimes in another. I wish I knew how she amuses herself, for I find self-amusement the hardest drudgery I ever tried. I could stamp, I am so impatient of doing nothing but lounge about; I am as snappish as a chained cur, as cross as a caged bear. And while I gnaw my nails, and stretch, and yawn, I hear that contented, bee-like murmur, and now and then a light, rapid step on the stairs, or about rooms which I do not frequent. What can she find to be so busy about, the absurd little person? how can she be so happy in this dull house alone?

There is a piano, but as silent as she is. I do not see her wince, though I drum upon the keys with most ingenious discords, and sing false on purpose as loud as I can bellow. I will not ask her if she can play; she can have no ear at all, or she would box mine in self-defence.

There is somebody, by name Flora, who is looked for daily by stage-coach. “Flory,” says my aunt, “sings like a canary-bird, and plays a sight,”—and *at sight* too, it seems. This Miss Flora will be found to possess a tongue, I hope, and the disposition to give it exercise. I do not know certainly that Miss Etty—By the way, what is her real name? I won’t condescend to ask any question about her. But really, I wish I knew whether it is

Mehitable. Perhaps Henrietta. No, no, that is too pretty a name; I shall call her *Little Ugly*.

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Hark! I have two or three times heard a very musical laugh in the direction of the kitchen. Heigh-ho! How can any mortal laugh in Ratborough! Having nothing better to do, I will go and see who this very merry personage may be. I will inquire into this gay outbreak, in a land of stupidity. Hark, again!—how refreshing! I must and will know what caused such a gush of mirth. Irish humor, perhaps, for Norah is laughing, after her guttural fashion, too.—

As I popped my head into the kitchen, Little Ugly was just vanishing at the opposite door. I could not make Norah tell me what Miss Etty put under her arm, as she looked over her shoulder at me, and darted out of sight. O my noisy boots! I might as well wear a bell round my neck.

Stage-wheels are rattling up the road. Now they run upon the grass before the door. I rush in undignified haste to the window. Shall I—will I—go and help this long-expected Miss Flora to alight? No,—for I see forty boxes on the coach-top. A very handsome girl, really! I will get out a blameless dickey,—if such there be. First impressions are important. I wish my hair was cut!

I hear my aunt coming to inform me of Flora's arrival. I shall be hugely surprised! Humph!—will it be worth while to trouble myself about the lop-eared dickey? Little Ugly will be amused, if I do. She *can* laugh, it seems. I had thought there was no fun in her mental composition. Yet I have imagined a glimmer or so in her eyes, when she thought I was not looking at them, and the shadow of a dimple in her cheek now and then.

Instead of Adonizing, I will set my long locks on end, and don my slipshod slippers. "Yes, Aunt; I hear, good lady! I will presently arrive, to make my bow to *Little Handsome*."

* * * * *

Journal, Sept. 23d. Truly, the presence of Miss Flora Cooper makes Willow Valley a new place. At least six hours are taken from the length of the days, though I have given up my afternoon slumber, and play chess and backgammon instead of drumming on the table or piano. Now am I relieved from that tedious companion, my own self. I never liked him very well; I had rather do any thing than have a sober talk with a serious personage, who always takes me to do for not making more of him. He scolds me, just as a stay-at-home wife lectures a gay husband, who never returns to his better half when he finds any thing to amuse him abroad. Good-by, old fellow; I have found better company than your remembering or hopings; to wit, Miss Flora Cooper, alias Little Handsome, alias Aunt Tabby's Canary.

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The first day or two after her arrival, Miss Flora pouted at me. I was exceedingly well amused, making all the saucy speeches I could think of, in the pure spirit of mischief, and taking no notice of her tossing her pretty head, and turning her back upon me. Finding that her displeasure was not producing any particular effect upon the object of it, I imagine the indignant beauty begins to plot a different revenge on me. “Ha, ha! Miss Flora! It is not because you like me better than you did, that you are all smiles, and grace, and sunshine. I shall not flatter you the more, I am determined. I am on my guard. You shall never boast of me on your list of obsequious admirers. No, no, Little Handsome! I am no lady’s man, and never was flirted withal in my life. I defy your smiles, as stoutly as your frowns. I like your pretty face; yes, it is exceedingly beautiful, as far as form and coloring go to make up the beauty of a face. And the play of the features,—yes, very lively and pretty, only too much of it. You should not smile so often; and I am tired of your pretty surprise, your playful upbraidings, and the raps of your fan. I want more repose of feature, Little Handsome. Now, what a contrast you and sedate Miss Etty present! Ah, very good! I am glad you have given up following Little Ugly out of the room the moment we rise from table. You sit down to your tiny basket, and demurely take out something that passes for work. I don’t see you do much at it, however. I give you warning that I never hold skeins to be wound, not I. I will not read aloud; so you need not offer me that ‘Sonnet to Flora,’ in manuscript, nor your pet poet in print. We will talk; it is a comfort to have my wit appreciated, after wasting so much on my aunt, who cannot, and Miss Etty, who will not understand. I am glad to have a chance to speak, and to hear a human voice in answer. I like especially to rattle on when any nonsense will do. Chat is truly agreeable when one’s brains are not severely taxed to keep it going.”

Sept. 24th. Charming little Canary! I have spent the forenoon with her at the piano. I like her playing when she does not attempt my favorite tunes. It must be confessed she is apt to vary somewhat, and not for the better always. Her singing,—Aunt Tabitha well describes it as that of a canary; sweet and liquid, and clear, and sustained, but all alike. Her throat is a fine instrument; I shall teach her to use it with more expression and feeling. We will have another lesson to-morrow.

I thought, though, there was a shadow over her face when I called it *practising*. Etty’s eyes met mine at the moment, a rare occurrence. What was her thought? One cannot read in her immovable face.

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Evening. I am booked for a horseback ride with Little Handsome to-morrow morning. How did she make me offer? I did not mean to. All country girls ride, I believe. I often see Miss Etty cantering through the shady lanes all by herself. I saw the bars down, at the end of the track through the wood, one day. I immediately concluded that Little Ugly had paced off that way, that I need not see her from my window. I put the bars up again, and lay in wait behind the bushes. Soon I heard her approaching. I come forward as she comes near, on that rat-like pony of hers, who holds his head down as if searching for something lost in the road. I stand in doubt whether to laugh at her predicament, or advance in a gentlemanly manner to remove the obstacle I had put in her way. When lo! the absurd little nag clears it at a bound, and skims away over the green track like a swallow, till he vanishes under the leafy arch. I am left in a very foolish attitude, with mouth and eyes wide open.

Now this independent young lady shall be at liberty to take care of herself, with no officious interference of mine; I will not invite her to join us to-morrow morning, as I intended. I wonder if any horses are to be procured that are not rats. I hope Miss Flora knows enough to mount her pony, for I am sure I do not know how to help her. Whew! I hope we shall meet with no disasters! I feel certain Little Handsome would scream like a sea-gull, pull the wrong rein, tangle her foot in the stirrup or riding-skirt, faint, fall, break her neck—O horrors! Will not the dear old Aunt Tabitha forbid her going?

What a well-proportioned and ladylike figure it was, now I think of it! How gracefully she sat upon her flying Dobbin!

Sept. 25th. Rainy. Glad of it. Breakfast late. Miss Etty did not appear, having been up some hours, I imagine. What for, I wonder? What can she be about? One thing pleases me in her. If Aunt Tabitha wants any little attention, a needle threaded, or a dropped stitch taken up, Miss Etty quietly comes to her aid. It is so entirely a matter of course, the old lady only smiles, but any service from Flora calls forth an acknowledgment; it being a particular effort of good nature, and generally the fruit of a direct appeal. Miss Etty talks more than she did, too. While I am talking nonsense with Little Handsome, I hear her amusing my good aunty, and I catch a few words, her utterance having a peculiar distinctness, and the lowest tones being fine and clear, like those of a good singer on a pianissimo strain. It is a peculiarly ladylike articulation; was she born and bred in Ratborough, I wonder? She never speaks while we are singing. Does she like music, then? I asked her once, but what sort of answer is "Yes!" to such a question? And that is all I elicited.

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Music again, the forenoon occupation. Miss Flora does not like being criticized, I find. One must not presume to set her right in the smallest particular. Singers are proverbially irritable! I am not certain I could belong to a glee-club, and never get cross or unreasonable. I hate to be corrected; but I hate more to be incorrect. I could give Canary a hint or two now and then that would be serviceable, if she would permit it. I have no right, however, to take it upon me to instruct her, and it puts her in a pet. She laughed it off, but I saw the mounting color and the flashing glance. I am an impudent fellow, I suppose. Honest, to boot. I think she need not take offence at what was intended as a friendly help. I am no flatterer, at least. Really, I am hurt that I might not take so trifling a liberty in behalf of my favorite song. I'll walk off as often as she sings it. Can her temper be perfectly good? And yet, one could not expect—I ought not to be surprised. Yet I can't help thinking, suppose—just suppose I *had* a right to find fault,—suppose I were a near friend,—would she bear it then? Supposing she were my companion for life—Humph! that startles one,—was I near thinking of it in earnest? She is beautiful; I should be proud of her abroad. But at home,—at home, where there should be confidence, would there not be constraint? Must no improvement ever be suggested, because it implies imperfection? I hope none of my friends will ever be on such terms with me; if I am touchy like a nettle, may they grasp me hard, and fear me not.

Sept. 26th. This little sheet of water in front of the house has the greatest variety of aspects; its face is like a human face, full of varying expressions. A slight haze made it so beautiful just before sunset, I took my chair, and put it out of the window upon the grass, then followed it, and sat with it tipped back against the house, close by the window of one of those mysterious rooms where Miss Etty immures herself. I heard the Canary say in a scolding tone, "I should think you might oblige me; it is such a trifle to do, it is not worth refusing. Why should you care for him!"

No answer, though I confess my ears were erected to the sharpest attitude of listening. I was wholly oblivious of *myself*, or I should have taken myself away, as in honor bound.

"Won't you now, Etty? I'll only ask for one of our old duets, just one."

"No, Flora," said Little Ugly, coldly enough.

"Why not?" No answer.

"To be sure, *he* might hear. He would find out that you are musical. What of that? Where is the use of being *able* to sing, to sing only when there's nobody to listen?"

"I sing only to friends. I cannot sing, I have never sung, to persons in whom I have no confidence."

"Afraid! What a little goose!"

“Not afraid, exactly.”

“I don’t comprehend, I am sure.”

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"I do not expect you should."

"I never did understand you."

"You never will." Silence again.

Flora tuned up, and, of all tunes, she must needs hum *my* song. I was on my feet in a moment to depart, when I heard the clear tones of Etty's voice again, and stood still, with one foot advanced.

"Flora, you should sharp that third note in the last line."

Flora murdered it again, with the most atrocious, cold-blooded cruelty. I almost mocked the sound aloud in my passion.

"I do not tell you to vex you, only I saw that Mr. Ratcliffe—"

"You need not trouble yourself about *his* opinion."

"I knew you would not like it, if I told you of a mistake. But I supposed you would rectify it, and I should have done you a kindness, even against your will."

"And I to hate you for it, eh?"

"If you can."

"Indeed I cannot, Etty, for you are my very best friend. But you are a horrid, truth-telling, formidable body. Why not let me sing on, my own way? I don't thank you a bit. I had rather sing it wrong, than be corrected. It hurts my pride. I think people should take my music as they find it. If it does not please them, they are not obliged to ask me to sing. One note wrong can surely be put up with, if the rest is worth hearing. I shall continue to sing it as I have done, I think."

"No,—please don't!"

"If I will mend it when I think of it, will you sing a duet?"

"Yes, though it will cost me more than you know."

"Poh!" And Flora sang the song, without accompaniment. The desired sharp rung upon my ears, and set my nerves at rest.

"Bravo! Encore!" I cried, beneath the window, and was pelted with peach-stones.

I wonder when this duet is to come off.



Sept. 27th. Have not stirred from the house. But I have not heard any voice but Flora's. She has been uncommonly amiable and fascinating, and I—am I not rather bewitched? I cannot keep my resolution of not being flirted with. I cannot be wise, and reserved, and indifferent. Am I trifling? Or am I in earnest? Indeed I don't know. I only know I am constantly at the side of Little Handsome, without knowing how I came there. She makes me sing with her, ride with her, walk with her, at her will, and as if that was not enough for one day, to test her power over me, to-night she made me dance with her. And now I feel like a fool as I think of Etty playing a waltz for us, at Flora's request, and giving me a long, serious look as I approached the piano to compliment her playing. I could not utter a word. I answered her gaze with one as sober, and more sad, and came away to my room, to have some talk with my real self. Now for it.

Says I to Myself, "A truce to your upbraidings, you old scold; tell me at once how you find yourself affected towards this charming little Flora."

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Says Myself, "There are no tastes in common between her and me."

Says I, quickly, "Music!" and triumphed a moment or two.

But the snarling old fellow asked whether I liked her singing, or her flattery? For his part, he thought we both liked to hear our own voices, and agreed in nothing else. Taste, indeed! when I would not let her sing a song I cared a fillip for.

In short, my self-communion ended in some very sage resolutions. I feared the beautiful head with the shining curls was somewhat vacant. And the heart,—was that empty likewise? Or was that hidden cell the home of all the loveliest affections, the firmest and purest faith and motive, every thing that should be there to rule the life—and—my picture on the wall? A question this.—Does she love me? "O yes!" answered vanity. "O no!" said good sense, "not at all. If your picture is in her heart, it is one of a whole gallery. Don't be a fop. It is not your character. Don't let Flora make a fool of you."

And I resolved—

Sept. 27th. A very dull day. "You are as sober as a judge," said Flora at breakfast. I caught Etty's eye,—but it said nothing. Aunt Tabitha, who yesterday evidently thought me in desperate case, and once inquired about my income very significantly, now suspected a quarrel between Flora and me. I was embarrassed, and overturned the cream. "No great loss," said Etty, seeing that I was chagrined. "As easy made up as a lovers' quarrel," said Aunt Tabitha. Silly old woman! No, silly young fellow! Flora has revenged herself on me as she meant to do, for defying her power. She has turned my head; made me act like a simpleton. But "Richard's himself again," and wiser than he was.

P.M. I endeavored to talk more with Miss Etty, that the change in my manner might be less observed. It was all natural that I should be as grave as a judge when I addressed myself to so quiet a member of society. She seemed to divine my object, and sustained the dialogue; I never knew her to do it before. It is not diffidence, it seems, that has been the cause of this reserve; I was the more diffident of the two, failing to express my thoughts well, from a hurry and uncertainty of mind which I am not often troubled with. It was partly astonishment, in truth, that confused me. Little Ugly and I actually exchanging ideas! I shall call her Little Ugly still, however, for I could not make her look at me as she spoke, nor answer my wit by a change of countenance.

Sept. 28th. Little Handsome cannot be convinced that the flirtation is over,—absolutely at an end. She alternately rails at my capricious solemnity, and pretends to be grieved at it. I can see that nothing but my avoidance of a *tete-a-tete* is my safety. Should the sentimental tone prevail, and tears come into those beautiful eyes, I am a gone man. At my earnest request, (I have grown humble or *bold* enough to ask a favor,) Miss Etty has

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brought, or rather dragged, her work-basket into the parlor. A great basket it is, so great, that I imagine in her own apartment she gets into the middle of it bodily. I sat down to watch the motions of her adroit little digits in darning stockings, and mending homely garments. I imagined, rather than saw, a humorous gleam in her eye, as I did so, and there was certainly a slight contraction of her mouth in length, as if to counteract an inclination of the muscles to move in the opposite direction.

Flora fluttered about the room like a bright-hued butterfly, pausing a moment at a window or a bookcase, or resting awhile to play a few capricious notes on the piano, and sometimes coming to view Miss Etty's employment, as if it were a branch of industry she was unacquainted with, and curious about.

The maples are turning red already. The setting sun threw a glorious light through their tinted foliage, and the still bosom of the lake reflected it in a softened, changeable hue of mingled crimson and silver. Flora was standing at the door. I somehow found myself there also; but I talked over my shoulder to Aunt Tabitha about potatoes.

"I have a fancy for a walk round the pond," said Flora. After a pause, she looked at me, as much as to say, "Don't you see, you monster, it is too late for me to go alone?"

"Miss Flora, I will second your wish, if you can drum up a third party," said I, point-blank.

Flora blushed, and pouted for a moment, then beckoned to Little Ugly, who disobligingly suggested that the grass would be wet. It so happened there was no dew, and Flora convinced her of the fact by running in the grass, and then presenting the sole of her shoe for her inspection. Miss Etty, her ill-chosen objection being vanquished, went for her bonnet, and we set forth, Miss Flora's arm in mine as a matter of course, and Miss Etty's in hers, save where the exigencies of the woodland path gave her an excuse to drop behind. A little boat tied to a stump, suggested to Flora a new whim. Instead of going round the pond, which I now began to like doing, I must weary myself with rowing her across. I was ready enough to do it, however, had not Miss Etty quietly observed that the pond was muddy, and the boat unseaworthy. Flora would not have yielded to twenty feet of water,—but mud! She sighed, and resumed my arm. I, offering the other to Miss Etty in so determined a way, that she could not waive accepting it, marched forward with spirits rising into high glee and loquacity. Presently, feeling a sudden irritation at the feather-like lightness with which Little Ugly's fingers just touched my elbow, as if she disdained any support from me, I caught her hand and drew it through my arm, and when I relinquished it, pressed her arm to my side with mine, thinking she would snatch it away, and walk alone in offended dignity. Whether she was too really dignified for that, or took my rebuke as it was intended, I know not, but she leaned on my arm with somewhat greater confidence during the remainder of our walk, and now and then even volunteered a remark. Before we finished the circumambulation of the

pond, she had quite forgotten her sulky reserve, and talked with much earnestness and animation, Flora subsiding into a listener, with a willing interest which raised her in my estimation considerably.

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And now that I am alone in my room, and journalizing, it behooves me to gather up and record some of those words, precious from their rarity. Flora and I, in our merry nonsense, had a mock dispute, and referred the matter to Miss Etty for arbitration.

“Etty, mind you side with me,” said Flora.

“Be an impartial umpire, Miss Etty,” said I, “and you will be on my side.”

Little Ugly was obliged to confess that she had not heard a word of the matter, her thoughts being elsewhere, intently engaged.

“I must request you to excuse my inattention,” she said, “and to repeat what you were saying.”

“The latter request I scorn to grant,” said I, “and the former we will consider about when we have heard what thoughts have been preferred to our most edifying conversation.”

“You shall tell us,” said Flora. “Yes, or we till go off and leave you to your meditations, here in the dark woods, with the owls and the tree-toads, whom you probably prefer for company.”

Miss Etty condescended to confess she should be frightened without my manful protection.—Quite a triumph!

“I must thank you,” she said, “for the novelty of an evening walk in the woods. I enjoy it, I confess, very highly. Look at those dark, mysterious vistas, and those deepening shadows blending the bank with its mirror; how different from the trite daylight truth! It took strong hold of my imagination.”

“Go on. And so you were thinking—”

“I was hardly doing so much as thinking. I was seeing it to remember.”

“Etty draws like an artist,” said Flora, in a whisper.

“I was taking a mental daguerreotype of my companions, by twilight, and of all the scene round, too, in the same grey tint, just to look at some ten or fifteen years hence, when—”

“Let us all three agree,” said I, “on the 28th of September, 18—, to remember this evening. I am certain I shall look back to it with pleasure.”

“O horrid!” shrieked Flora; “how can you talk so! By that time you will be a shocking, middle-aged sort of person! I always wonder how people can be resigned to live, when they have lost youth, and with it all that makes life bearable! Fifteen years! Dismal

thought! I shall have outlived every thing I care about in life!" So moaned Little Handsome.

"But you may have found new sources of interest," suggested I, perhaps a little too tenderly, for I had some sympathy with her dread of that particular phase of existence, middle-agedness. "Perhaps as the mistress of a household—"

"Worse and worse!" screamed Flora. "A miserable comforter you are! As if it were not enough merely to grow old, but one must be a slave and a martyr, never doing any thing one would prefer to do, nor going anywhere that one wants to go,—bound for ever to one spot, and one perpetual companion—"

"Planning dinners every day for cooks hardly less ignorant than yourself," added I, laughing at her selfish horror of matronly bondage, yet provoked at it. "Miss Etty, would *you*, if you could, stand still instead of going forward?"

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"My happiness is altogether different from Flora's," she replied, "though we were brought up side by side. What has taught me to be independent of the world and its notice was my being continually compared with her, and assured, with compassionate regret, that I had none of those qualifications which could give me success in general society."

"Which was a libel—" I began.

"Without the last syllable," said Flora, catching up the word.

"At any rate, I knew I was plain and shy, and made friends slowly. So I chose such pleasures as should be under my own control, and could never fail me. They make my life so much happier and more precious than it was ten years ago, that I feel certain I shall have a wider and fuller enjoyment of the same ten years hence."

What they are, I partly guess, and partly drew from her, in her uncommonly frank mood. I begin to perceive that I, as well as Flora, have been cherishing most mistaken and unsatisfactory aims. My surly old inner self has often hinted as much, but I would not hear him. Etty may have *her* mistaken views too, but she has set me thinking.

Well, you crusty old curmudgeon, what has been my course since the awe of the schoolmaster ceased to be a sort of external conscience?

"You told me study was none of my business," says Conscience, "and a pretty piece of work you have made of it without me. Idle in college, and, when you began to perceive the connection between study and what people call success in life, overworking yourself, here you are, and just beginning to bethink yourself that I might have furnished just the right degree of stimulus, if you had but allowed it."—

Hark! hark! It is the duet! That silvery second is Etty's. I will steal down stairs, and when they have ended, pop in, and it shall go hard but I will have another song.

Parlor dark and empty. I fancied I heard Flora giggling somewhere, but I might be mistaken. Yet the voices sounded as if they came from that quarter—and—and I am sure I heard one note on the piano to give the pitch. Hark! I hear the parlor door softly shut, and now the stairs creak, and betray them stealing up, as they probably betrayed me stealing down. They only blew out the lights and kept perfectly still.—Witches!—Donkey!

Etty, your voice is still with me, clear, sweet, and penetrating, as it was when you talked so eloquently to-night, in our dreamy ramble.— What if I had early adopted her idea, that with every conscious power is bound up both the duty and the pleasure of developing it? Might I not now have reached higher ground, with health of body and

mind? Ambition is an unhealthy stimulus. A wretchedly uneasy guest too, in the breast of an invalid. I would fain have a purer motive, which shall dismiss or control it.

Etty,—what are the uses to be made of *her* talents, while she lives thus withdrawn into a world of her own? Certainly, she is wrong; I shall convince her of it, when our friendship, now fairly planted, I trust, shall have taken root. Now we shall be the best friends in the world, and I will confide to her my—my—O, I am nodding over my paper, and that click says the old clock at the stair-head is making ready to announce midnight.

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Sept. 29th. Capricious are the ways of womankind! Little Ugly is more thoroughly self-occupied and undemonstrative than ever. I am chagrined,—I think I am an ill-used man. I am downright angry and have half a mind to flirt with Little Handsome, out of spite. Only Miss Etty is too indifferent to care. I did but leave my old aunt to Flora, and step back to remark that it was a pleasant Sunday, that the sermon was homely and dull, and that the singing was discordant. Miss Etty assented, but very coldly, and presently she bolted into an old red house, and left me to go home by myself. When we started for church again, she was among the missing, and we found her in the pew, on our arrival. Thus pointedly to avoid me!—It might be accident, however, for she did not refuse to sing from the same hymn-book with me, and pointed to a verse on the other page, quaint, but excellent. After all, old Watts has written the best hymns in the language.

Evening. Without choice, I found myself walking round the pond again. It was as smooth as glass, and the leaves scarcely trembled on the trees and bushes round it. And in my heart reigned a similar calm. A strange quiet has fallen on my usually restless and anxious mind. I thought that in future I could be content not to look beyond the present duty, and, having done my best in all circumstances, that I could leave the results to follow as God wills. At that moment I could sincerely say, “Let him set me high or low, wherever he has work for me to perform.” If I can remain thus quiet in mind, my health will soon return, I feel assured.

“*If!*” A well-founded distrust, I fear. This peace must be only a mood, to pass away when my natural spirits return. The fever of covetousness, of rivalry, of envy, and ambitious earthly aspirations, will come back. Like waves upon the lake, these uneasy feelings will chase each other over my soul. I picked up a little linen wristband at this moment, which I recognized. “She does not deserve to have it again, sulky Little Ugly!” said I. “I will put it in my pocket-book, and keep it as a remembrancer, for—I am glad to perceive—this is the very spot where we stood when we agreed to remember it and each other fifteen years hence. We will see what I shall be then, and I shall have some aid from this funny little talisman; it will speak to me quite as intelligibly and distinctly as its owner in a *silent* mood, at any rate.”—

Heigh-ho! How lonely I feel to-night! Every human soul is—must be—a hermit, yet there might be something nearer companionship than I have found for mine as yet. No one knows me. My real self—Ha! old fellow, I like you better than I did; let us be good friends.

Sept. 30th. A golden sunrise. How much one loses under a false idea of its being a luxury to sleep in the morning! Reclining under Farmer Puddingstone’s elm, and looking upon the glassy pond, in which the glowing sky mirrored itself, my soul was fired with poetic inspiration. On the blank page of a letter, I wrote:

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"How holy the calm, in the stillness of morn,—

and threw down my paper, being suddenly quenched by self-ridicule, as I was debating whether to write "To Ethelind" over the top. Returning that way after my ramble, I found the following conclusion pinned to the tree by a jackknife:—

"How holy the calm, in the stillness of morn,—
When to call 'em to breakfast Josh toots on the horn,
The ducks gives a quack, and the caow gives a moo,
And the children chimes in with their plaintive boo-hoo.

"How holy the calm, in the stillness of neune,
When the pot is a singin its silvery teune,—
Its soft, woolly teune, jest like Aribi's Darter,
While the tea-kettle plays up the simperny arter.

"How holy the calm, in the stillness of night,
When the moon, like a punkin, looks yaller and bright;
While the aowls an' the katydids, screeching like time,
Jest brings me up close to the eend o' my rhyme."

And underneath was added, as if in scorn of my fruitless endeavor:—

"I wrote that are right off, as fast as you could shell corn. S.P."

I suppose it is by way of thanks for my having driven the pigs from the garden, that I find a great bunch of dahlias adorning my mantelpiece. A brown earthen pitcher! And in the middle of the dahlias, a magnificent sunflower! It must be my aunt's doing, and its very homeliness pleases me, just as I love her homely sincerity of affection. Who arranges the glasses in the parlor? Etty, I would not fear to affirm, from the asters and golden-rod, cheek by jole with petunias and carnations. I wonder if she would not like some of the clematis I saw twining about a dead tree by the pond. It is more beautiful in its present state than when it was in flower. Etty loves wild flowers because she is one herself, and loves to hide here in her native nook, where no eye (I might except my own) gives her more than a casual glance.—

Noon. "I shall think it quite uncivil of Little Ugly if she does not volunteer to arrange my share of the booty I am bringing, now that I have almost broken my neck, and quite my cane, to obtain it." This I said to myself, as I came into the house by the kitchen entrance, and proceeded to deposit my trailing treasures on Norah's table, by the side of a yellow squash.

"Do go with me to Captain Black's," said Etty's voice at the side door. "The old folks have not seen you since your return."

"I can't!" said Flora with a drawl.

"Yes, do! Be coaxable, for once!"

"It only makes me obstinate to coax. Why not go without me, I beg?"

"I am no novelty. I was in twice only yesterday. Old people like attention from such as you, because—"

"Because it is unreasonable to expect it."

"The old man is failing."

"I can't do him any good. It is dusty, and my gown is long."

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"It would please him to see you. I went to sit with him yesterday, but Timothy Digfort came in, with the same intent. So I went to church, having walked in the graveyard till the bell rang."

"Owl that you are! I don't envy you the lively meditations you must have had. Why don't you go? It's of no use waiting for me."

"What! Will you let me carry both these baskets?"

"There, put the little one on the top of the other. I don't think three or four peaches and a few flowers can add much to the weight. It is tiresome enough to do what I don't want to do, when it is really necessary."

And Little Handsome danced into the parlor, without perceiving me. I laid a detaining hand on Etty's basket as she put herself in motion, on which she turned round with a look of unfeigned astonishment.

"May I not be a substitute for Flora?" I inquired.

"I do not require any aid," said Miss Etty shyly. "It is not on that account I was urging Flora. Please to let me have the basket.—Indeed, it is quite unnecessary you should trouble yourself," she insisted, as I persevered in carrying off my load.

"It is the old red house, is it not?" said I, "with the roof sloping almost to the ground. And shall I say that *you* sent this? A view of my strange phiz will not refresh the old people like the sight of Flora's fresh young face, but I shall go in, and make the agreeable as well as I can."

"Are you really in earnest?" asked Etty, looking full in my face, with a smile of wonder that made her radiantly beautiful. She turned away blushing at my surprised and eager gaze, and, taking up her little basket, joined me, without a word of answer on my part. It was some time before I quite recovered from a strange flurry of spirits, which made my heart bump very much as it does when I hear any unexpected good news. And then I dashed away upon the subject of old age, and any thing else that came uppermost, in the hope of drawing the soul-lighted eyes to mine again, with that transfiguring smile playing upon the lips.

But I was like an unskilful magician; I had lost the spell; I could not again discover the spring I had touched. In vain I said to myself, "I'll make her do it again!" Little Ugly would'nt!

She answered my incoherent sallies in her usual sedate manner, and I believe it was only in my imagination that her cheek dimpled a little, with a heightened color, now and then, when I was particularly eloquent.

Introduced by Miss Etty, I was cordially welcomed. I am always affected by the sight of an aged woman who at all reminds me of the grandmother so indulgent to my prankful boyhood. The old man, too, interested me; he has seen much of the world, in his seafaring life, and related his adventures in a most unhackneyed style. I'll go and see them every day. One of the Captain's anecdotes was very good. "An old salt," he said, "once—once—" Bah, what was it? How very lovely Etty looked, sitting on a cricket at the old woman's feet, and, with a half smile on her face, submitting her polished little head to be stroked by her trembling hands! This I saw out of the corner of my eye.

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Hark! Aunt Tabitha's call to dinner. I am glad of it. I was scribbling *such* nonsense, when I have so much to write better worth while.

12 o'clock. The night is beautiful, and it is a piece of self-denial to close the shutter, light my lamp, and write in my journal. Peace of mind came yesterday, positive happiness to-day, neither of which I can analyze. I only know I have not been so thoroughly content since the acquisition of my first jackknife; nor so proud since the day when I first sported a shining beaver. I have conquered Etty's distrust; she has actually promised me her friendship. I am rather surprised that I am so enchanted at this triumph over a prejudice. I am hugely delighted. Not because it is a triumph, however;—vanity has nothing to do with it. It is a worthier feeling, one in which humility mingles with a more cordial self-respect than I have hitherto been conscious of. I can, and I will, deserve Etty's good opinion. She is an uncompromising judge, but I will surprise her by going beyond what she believes me capable of. I never had a sister; I shall adopt Etty, and when I go home, we will write every week, if not every day.

But how came it all about? By what blessed sunbeams can the ice have been softened, till now, as I hope, it is broken up for ever? People under the same roof cannot long mistake each other, it seems, else Etty and I should never have become friends.

As we left the door of Captain Black's house, and turned into the field path to avoid the dust, Etty said, "I do not know whether you care much about it, but you have given pleasure to these good old people, who have but little variety in their daily routine, being poor, and infirm, and lonely. It is really a duty to cheer them up, if we can." I felt that it warmed my heart to have shared that duty with her, and I said so. I thought she looked doubtful and surprised. It was a good opening for egotism, and I improved it. I saw that she was no uninterested listener, but all along rather suspicious and incredulous, as if what I was claiming for myself was inconsistent with her previous notions of my disposition. I believe I had made some little impression Saturday night, but her old distrust had come back by Sunday morning. Now she was again shaken.

At last, looking up with the air of one who has taken a mighty resolve, she said, "I presume such a keen observer as yourself must have noticed that the most reserved people are, on some occasions, the most frank and direct. I am going to tell you that I feel some apology due to you, if my first impressions of your character are really incorrect. I am puzzled what to think."

"I am to suppose that your first impressions were not as favorable as those of Mrs. Black, whom I heard remark that I was an amiable youth, with an uncommonly pleasant smile."

"Just the opposite, in fact,—pardon me! To my eye, you had a mocking, ironical cast of countenance. I felt sure at once you were the sort of person I never could make a

friend of, and acquaintances I leave to Flora, who wants to know every body. I thought the less I had to do with you the better.”

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I felt hurt, and almost insulted. I had not been mistaken, then; she had disliked me, and perhaps disliked me yet.

"It was not that I stood in fear of your satire," she continued; "I am indifferent to ridicule or censure in general; no one but a *friend* has power to wound me."

A flattering emphasis, truly! I felt my temper a little stirred by Miss Etty's frankness. I was sulkily silent.

"I had no claim to any forbearance, any consideration for peculiarities of any sort. I am perfectly resigned to being the theme of your wit in any circle, if you can find aught in my country-bred ways to amuse you."

Zounds! I must speak.

"My conduct to Flora must have confirmed the charming impression produced by my unlucky phiz, I imagine. But don't bear malice against me in *her* behalf; you must have seen that she was perfectly able to revenge herself."

Etty's light-hearted laugh rung out, and reminded me of my once baffled curiosity when it reached my ear from Norah's domain. But though this unsuppressed mirth of hers revealed the prettiest row of teeth in the world, and made the whole face decidedly beautiful, somehow or other it gave me no pleasure, but rather a feeling of depression. My joining in it was pure pretence.

Presently the brightness faded, and I found myself gazing at the cold countenance of Little Ugly again.

"No, I did not refer to Flora," said she. "As you say, she can avenge her own quarrel, and we both were quite as ready to laugh at you, as you could be to laugh at us, I assure you."

"No doubt of it," said I, with some pique.

"But what I cannot forgive you, cannot think of with any toleration, is—"

"What?" cried I, astonished. "How have I offended?"

"A man of any right feeling at all could not make game of an aged woman, his own relative, at the same time that he was receiving her hearty and affectionate hospitality."

"Neither have I done so," cried I, in a towering passion. "You do me a great wrong in accusing me of it. I would knock any man down who should treat my aunt with any disrespect. And if I have sometimes allowed Flora to do it unrebuked, you well know that she might once have pulled my hair, or cuffed my ears, and I should have thought it



a becoming thing for a young lady to do. I have played the fool under your eye, and submit that you should entertain no high opinion of my wisdom. But you have no right to judge so unfavorably of my heart. If I have spoken to my aunt with boyish petulance when she vexed me, at least it was to her face, and regretted and atoned for to her satisfaction. I am incapable of deceiving her, much less of ridiculing her either behind her back or before her face. I respond to her love for me with sincere gratitude, and the sister of my grandmother shall never want any attention that an own grandson could render while I live. I shall find it hard to forgive you this accusation, Miss Etty," I said, haughtily, and shut my mouth as if I would never speak to her again.

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She made no answer, but looked up into my face with one of those wondrous smiles. It went as straight to my heart as a pistol bullet could do, my high indignation proving no defence against it. I was instantly vanquished, and as I heartily shook the hand she held out to me, I was just able to refrain from pressing it to my lips, which, now I think of it, would have been a most absurd thing for me to do. I wonder what could have made me think of doing it!

After Dinner. I hear Flora's musical laugh in the mysterious boudoir, and a low, congratulatory little murmur of good humor on Etty's part. I believe she is afraid to laugh loud, lest I should hear her do it, and rush to the spot. The door is ajar; I'll storm the castle.

Flora admitted me with a shout of welcome, the instant I tapped. Etty pushed a rocking-chair toward me, but said nothing. The little room was almost lined with books. Drawings, paintings, shells, corals, and, in the sunny window, plants, met my exploring gaze, but the great basket was nowhere to be seen. It was got up for the nonce, I imagine. Etty a rogue!

"This is the pleasantest nook in the house. It is a shame you have not been let in before," said Flora, zealously. "You shall see Etty's drawings." Neither of us opened the portfolio she seized, however, but watched Etty's eyes. They were cast down with a diffident blush which gave me pain; I was indeed an intruder. She gave us the permission we waited for, however. There were many good copies of lessons: those I did not dwell upon. But the sketches, spirited though imperfect, I studied as if they had been those of an Allston. Etty was evidently in a fidget at this preference of the smallest line of original talent over the corrected performances which are like those of every body else. I drew out a full-length figure done in black chalk on brown paper. It chained Flora's wondering attention as quite new. It was a young man with his chair tipped back; his feet rested on a table, with a slipper perched on each toe. His hands were clasped upon the back of his head. The face—really, I was angry at the diabolical expression given it by eyes looking askance, and lips pressed into an arch by a contemptuous smile. It was a corner of this very brown sheet that I saw under her arm, when she vanished from the kitchen as I entered; the vociferous mirth which attracted me was at my expense. Before Flora could recognize my portrait, Little Ugly pounced upon it; it fell in a crumpled lump into the bright little wood fire, and ceased to exist.

"I had totally forgotten it," said she, with a blush which avenged my wounded self-love. Ironical pleasure at having been the subject of her pencil I could not indulge myself in expressing, as I did not care to enlighten Little Handsome. Any lurking pique was banished when Etty showed me, with a smile, the twilight view by the pond.

"Do you draw?" she asked; and Flora cried, "He makes caricatures of his friends with pen and ink; let him deny it if he can!"

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I was silent.