

The Gentleman from Everywhere

James Henry Foss

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THE GENTLEMAN FROM EVERYWHERE

BY

JAMES HENRY FOSS

ILLUSTRATED

1903

TO

MY BELOVED, ON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN,

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MOST AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

IN THE EARNEST HOPE THAT

BY ITS PERUSAL

Many sailing o'er life's solemn main,
Forlorn and shipwrecked brothers, may take heart again.

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[Illustration: *[cursive]* Your friend, the Author
James H. Foss]

CHAPTER I.

LAUNCHING OF MY LIFE-BOAT.

Wild was the night, yet a wilder night
Hung around o'er the mother's pillow;
In her bosom there waged a fiercer fight
Than the fight on the wrathful billow.

Already there were more children than potatoes in her hut of logs, and yet, another unwelcome guest was coming, to whom fate had ordained that it would have been money in his pocket had he never been born.

A sympathizing neighbor held over the suffering woman an umbrella to shield her from the rain which poured through the dilapidated roof, and when the dreary light of that Sunday morning dawned, my frail bark was launched on the stormy, sullen sea of life.

My father, a good man, but a ne'er-do-well financially, had loaned his best clothes, watch and pocketbook to a friend to enable him to call on his best girl in captivating style, and said friend expressed his gratitude by eloping with the girl and all the borrowed finery.

That same night the boom broke, and allowed all the savings of our family invested in logs, cut by my father and his lumbermen, to float down the river and be lost in the sea.

Thus storm, flood, calamity and sorrow, far in advance heralded the future of myself, the fourth son of a fourth son who, on that Sunday, in the dog-days of 1841, reluctantly came into this world.

The howling of the wolves in the surrounding wild-woods, the screaming of the catamounts in the near-by tree-tops, the sterile dog-star drying up the crops, the marching of my father to fight in the threatened Aroostook war, all conspired for months before this fateful night to awaken a restlessness, discontent, and gloomy forebodings in the lonely mother's heart which prenatal influences impressed upon the mind of the baby yet unborn.

All through that wretched summer, scorching drought alternating with cloud-bursts vied with each other in blasting the hopes of the farmers, and premature frost destroyed the few remaining stalks of corn, so that when the winter snows came, gaunt famine stared our family fiercely in the face.

My father and three brothers faced the withering storms bravely, unpacking their internal stores of sunshine, as the camel in the desert draws refreshment from his inner tank when outward water fails.

We were isolated from human companionship, except when occasionally the doctor came on the tops of the fences and branches of the pine-trees to soothe the pains of my sickly mother. At this time the snow was so deep that a tunnel was cut to the neighboring hovel where shivered our ancient horse and cow.

My father and brothers tramped with snare and gun on snow-shoes through the woods, securing occasionally a partridge or squirrel, and semi-occasionally a deer, or pickerel from the lake. On one of these occasions, two of my brothers and the dog met with an adventure which nearly gave them deliverance from all earthly sorrows. As they faced the terrible cold of a January morning, the wailing of the winds in

the tree-tops, and the few flying snowflakes foreboded a storm which burst upon them in great fury while about two miles from home. Bewildered and benumbed, they dug a hole in the snow down to the earth, and were soon buried many feet deep, thus affording them some relief from the cold; but they nearly famished with hunger and gave themselves up for lost. Suddenly, the dog, who was huddled with them for warmth, jumped away whining and scratching in great excitement. He refused to obey their orders to be still and die in peace, but, digging for some minutes, his claws struck a tree, then, rushing over the boys and back again to the trees repeatedly, he roused them from their lethargy to follow him; but nothing was visible but a hole in a tree through which the dog jumped and barked furiously.

Cutting the hole larger with their axe, they found the interior to be dry punk, which at once suggested the exhilarating thought of a fire, and soon a delightful heat from the burning drywood permeated their snow cave, the smoke being more endurable than the previous cold. All at once they heard a strange snorting and scratching above in the tree with whines which drove the dog wild with excitement, then, with burning embers and suffocating smoke, down came a huge animal, well-nigh breaking the necks of frantic dog and "rubbering" boys.

After this came the tug of war. Teeth, axe, gun, fire, dog, bear, and boys all mixed up in a fight to the finish. Finally, as bruin was not fully recovered from the comatose state of his winter hibernating, after many scratches and thumps, cuts and shots, came the survival of the fittest.

Not even imperial Caesar, with the world at his feet, could have been prouder than were boys and dog when they looked at their prostrate foe, and reflected that this conquest meant the physical salvation of our entire family. Soon the chips flew from the tree, and over a cheerful fire they roasted and devoured bear steaks to repletion.

Digging to the surface, they found that the storm had subsided, and rigging a temporary sled from the boughs of the tree, they dragged home this "meat in due season."

All through the hours of the following night the wolves, attracted by the scent of blood, howled and scratched frantically around the hut, calling for their share in that "chain of destruction," by which the laws of the universe have ordained that all creatures shall subsist. The infant, of course, joined lustily in the chorus until the boys almost wished themselves back in their shroud of snow.

So, with alternate feasting and fasting we passed the long weeks of that Arctic winter until the frogs in the neighboring swamp crying: "Knee deep, knee deep," and "better go round, better go round," proclaimed the season of freshets when the vast plain below us was traversible only in boats. Then the birds returned from the far South, but brought no seed-time or harvest, for that was the ever to be remembered "Year without a summer," and but for the wild ducks and geese shot on the lake, and the wary and uncertain fish caught with the hook, all human lives in that region would have returned to the invisible from whence they came.

It seemed as if chaos and dark night had come back to those wild woods. The migratory fever seized upon us all, and my parents determined to seek some unknown far away, to sail to the beautiful

land of somewhere, for they felt sure that--

Somewhere the sun is shining,
Elsewhere the song-birds dwell;
And they hushed their sad repining
In the faith that somewhere all is well.

Somewhere the load is lifted
Close by an open gate;
Out there the clouds are rifted,
Somewhere the angels wait.

CHAPTER II.

MY FIRST VOYAGE.

My father and brothers constructed a "prairie schooner" from our scanty belongings, and one forlorn morning in early autumn, with the skeleton horse and cow harnessed tandem for motive power, we all set sail for far-off Massachusetts.

We slept beneath our canopy of canvas and blankets; those of our number able to do so worked occasionally for any who would hire, but employers were few, as this was one of the crazy seasons in the history of our Republic when the people voted for semi-free trade, and the mill wheels were nearly all silent for the benefit of the mills of foreign nations. They shot squirrels and partridges when ammunition could be obtained, forded rivers, narrowly escaping drowning in the swift currents, and suffered from chills and fever.

One dark night some gypsies stole our antediluvian horse and cow. The barking of the faithful dog awakened father and brothers who rushed to the rescue, leaving mother half dead with fear; but at length the marauders were overtaken, shots were exchanged, heads were broken, and after a fierce struggle and long wandering, lost in the woods, our fiery steeds were once more chained to our chariot wheels.

The next day we came to a wide river which it was impossible to ford, but mercy, which sometimes "tempers the blast to the shorn lamb," sent us relief in the shape of an antiquated gundalow floating on the tide. Like Noah and family of old, we managed to embark on this ancient ark, and paddled to the further shore.

There we miraculously escaped the scalping knife and tomahawk. While painfully making our way through the primeval forest, we were suddenly saluted by the ferocious war-whoop, and a dozen Indians barred our way, flourishing their primitive implements of warfare. A shot from father's double-barreled gun sent them flying to cover, our steeds rushed forward with a speed hitherto unknown, the prairie schooner rocked like a boat in a cyclone, the mother shrieked, the _enfant terrible_ howled like a bull of Bashan, and just as the "Red devils" were closing in from the rear, the mouth of a cave loomed up in the hillside into which dashed "pegasus and mooly cow" pell-mell.

Our red admirers halted almost at the muzzle of the gun and the blades

of my brothers' axes. Luckily the Indians had neither firearms nor bows and arrows. They made rushes occasionally, but the shotgun wounded several, the axes intimidated, and they seemed about to settle down to a siege when, with a tremendous shouting and singing of "Tippecanoe and Tyler too," a band of picturesquely arrayed white men came marching along the trail. The enemy took to their heels, and we learned that our rescuers had been to a William Henry Harrison parade and barbecue, for this was the time of the famous "hard cider" campaign.

The Indians had been there too and, filling up with "fire water," their former war-path proclivities had returned to their "empty, swept, and garnished" minds, to the extent that they yearned to decorate their belts with our scalps.

Our preservers scattered to their homes, and the would-be scalpers were seen no more, leaving the world to darkness and to us in the woods. The woods, where Adam and Eve lived and loved, where Pan piped, and Satyrs danced, the opera house of birds; the woods, green, imparadisaical, mystic, tranquillizing--to the poet perhaps when all is well--but to us, they seemed haunted by spirits of evil, the yells of the demons seemed to echo and reecho; but an indefinable something seemed to sympathize with the infinite pathos of our lives, and at last sleep, "the brother of death," folded us in his arms, and the curtain fell.

"There is a place called Pillow-land,
Where gales can never sweep
Across the pebbles on the strand
That girds the Sea of Sleep.

'Tis here where grief lets loose the rein,
And age forgets to weep,
For all are children once again,
Who cross the Sea of Sleep.

The gates are ope'd at daylight close,
When weary ones may creep,
Lulled in the arms of sweet repose,
Across the Sea of Sleep.

Oh weary heart, and toil-worn hand,
At eve comes rest to thee,
When ply the boats to Pillow-land,
Across the Sleepy sea.

Thank God for this sweet Pillow-land,
Where weary ones may creep,
And breathe the perfume on the strand
That girds the Sea of Sleep."

It is pleasant in this sunset of life, to recall the testimony of my brothers that through all those troublous scenes, father and mother were soothed and consoled by an unfaltering faith in the ultimate triumph of the good and true, that their faces were often illumined as they repeated to each other those priceless words of the sweet singer,

"Drifting over a sunless sea, cold dreary mists encircling me,
Toiling over a dusty road with foes within and foes abroad,

Weary, I cast my soul on Thee, mighty to save even me,
Jesus Thou Son of God."

At last the "perils by land and perils by sea, and perils from false brethren," this long, long journey ended and we reached the promised land. We halted in old Byfield, in the state of Massachusetts, with worldly goods consisting of a bushel of barberries, threadbare toilets, and the ancient equipage dilapidated as aforesaid.

After much tribulation, father took a farm "on shares," which was found to result in endless toil to us, and the lion's share of the crops going to the owners, who toiled not, neither did they spin, but reaped with gusto where we had sown.

After a few years of this profitless drudgery, my father bought an old run-down farm with dilapidated buildings in the neighboring town of R----, mortgaging all, and our souls and bodies besides, for its payment. We hoped we had rounded the cape of storms which sooner or later looms up before every ship which sails the sea of life, for we had fully realized the truth of the poem--

We may steer our boats by the compass,
Or may follow the northern star;
We may carry a chart on shipboard
As we sail o'er the seas afar;
But, whether by star or by compass
We may guide our boats on our way,
The grim cape of storms is before us,
And we'll see it ahead some day.

How the prow may point is no matter,
Nor of what the cargo may be,
If we sail on the northern ocean,
Or away on the southern sea;
It matters not who is the pilot,
To what guidance our course conforms;
No vessel sails o'er the sea of life
But must pass the cape of storms.

Sometimes we can first sight the headland
On the distant horizon's rim;
We enter the dangerous waters
With our vessels taut and trim;
But often the cape in its grimness
Will before us suddenly rise,
Because of the clouds that have hid it
Or the blinding sun in our eyes.

Our souls will be caught in the waters
That are hurled at the storm cape's face;
Our pleasures and joys, our hopes and fears,
Will join in the maddening race.
Our prayers, desires, our penitent griefs,
Our longings and passionate pain,
Be dashed to spray on the stormy cape
And fly in our faces like rain.

But there's always hope for the sailor,
There is ever a passage through;

No life goes down at the cape of storms,
If the life and the heart lie true.
If in purpose the soul is steadfast,
If faithful in mind and in will,
The boat will glide to the other side,
Where the ocean of life is still.

[Illustration: "It was a Fair Scene of Tranquillity."]

CHAPTER III.

NEAR TO NATURE'S HEART.

It seems but yesterday, although more than a half century ago, that I, a puny boy, stood on the hilltop and looked for the first time upon this, the earliest home of which I have any vivid recollection. It was a fair scene of rustic tranquillity, where a contented mind might delight to spend a lifetime mid hum of bees and low of kine.

Along the eastern horizon's rim loomed the blue sea beyond the sandy dunes of old Plum Island; the lazy river born in babbling brooks and bubbling springs flowing languidly mid wooded islands, and picturesque stacks of salt hay, representing the arduous toil of farmers and dry-as-dust fodder for reluctant cows. Nearer, the two church spires of the little village, striving to lift the sordid minds of the natives from earthly clods to the clouds, and where beckoning hands strove vainly to inspire them with heavenly hopes; around them, glistening in the sunlight, the marble slabs where sleep the rude forefathers of the hamlet, some mute inglorious Miltons who came from England in the early sixties, whose tombstones are pierced by rifle bullets fired at the marauding red skins. These are the cities of the dead, far more populous than the town of the living.

Nearer, the willowy brook that turns the mill; to the south the dense pine woods, peopled in our imaginations, with fairy elves, owls, and hobgoblins--now, alas, owing to the rapacity of the sawmills, naught but a howling wilderness of stumps and underbrush.

Directly below me, stands our half-century old house with its eaves sloping to the ground, down which generations of boys had ruined their pants in hilarious coasting; near by, the ancient well-swipe, and the old oaken bucket which rose from the well; beyond this, of course, as usual, the piggery and hennery to contaminate the water and breed typhoid fever, and in the house cellar, the usual dampness from the hillside to supply us all with rheumatism and chills.

There existed apparently in the early dawn of the nineteenth century, an unwritten law which required the farmers to violate all the laws of sanitation, and then to ascribe all ills the flesh is heir to, to the mysterious will of an inscrutable Providence whose desire it was to make the heart better by the sorrows of the countenance, and to save the soul from hell by the punishment of the body. Vegetables were allowed to rot in the cellars, and to make everybody sick with their noxious odors so that we might not be too much wedded to this transitory existence. Pork, beans, and cabbage must be devoured in

enormous quantities just before going to bed for the purpose of inspiring midnight groans and prayers to be delivered from the pangs of the civil war in the inner man.

This moralizing is inspired by the pessimism of disenchanted age; but on that beautiful morning of the long ago, naught occurred to me save the wedlock of earth and heaven: I was near to nature's heart, listening to the ecstatic songs of the robins, the orioles and sweetest of all the bobolink.

"Oh, winged rapture, feathered soul of spring:
Blithe voice of woods, fields, waters, all in one,
Pipe blown through by the warm, mild breath of June,
Shepherding her white flocks of woolly clouds,
The bobolink has come, and climbs the wind
With rippling wings that quiver not for flight
But only joy, or yielding to its will
Runs down, a brook of laughter through the air."

After the charm of the novelty of the scene had vanished, I descended from my perch to explore this sleepy hollow: the barn door hung suspended on a single hinge, like a bird with but one unbroken wing to soar upon. The swallows twittered their love-songs under the eaves; chipmunks scolded my intrusion and threw nuts at my head from the beams; a lone, lorn hen proclaimed her triumph over a new laid egg, and then, with fiery eyes, assaulted me with profanity as I filled my hat with her choicest treasures. A litter of pigs scampered away, wedging themselves into a hole in the wall, and hung there kicking and squealing, while their indignant mother chased me up a ladder where she hurled at me the vilest imprecations; a solitary Phoebe bird wailed out her plaintive "pee wee, pee wee, pee whi itt," and a newly-married pair of sandpipers chanted their song of the sea on the edge of a mud puddle in the yard.

At last the infuriated sow went to liberate her wedged-in offspring, leaving me to flee to the house where I cooked my eggs and some ancient potatoes in the ashes of a fire smoldering in the wide old fireplace. I have since eaten royal dinners in palatial hotels, but nothing has ever tasted half as good as this extemporized lunch of my boyhood.

Here the rest of the family found me later when they came bringing their household goods; here I might have laid, broad and deep, the foundations of a useful life, had I possessed even a modicum of the stick-to-itiveness so essential to success.

A limited amount of discontent is a powerful stimulus to more strenuous endeavor; but when you have intensity without continuity of mental action, beware of imitating my example of progressing along the lines of the least resistance; for if you do you will never attain to that persistency of effort which can come only from overcoming obstacles.

When my father gave me a moderate task of weeding onions, I soon became tired of crawling on hands and knees under a scorching sun, inundating the earth with perspiration and tears, so I substituted a hoe for fingers, tearing up onions with the weeds that I might the sooner secure unlimited rheumatism by bathing in the brook. Had my father given me what he earnestly desired, and what I richly

deserved,--a sound spanking, and more weeding to do,--I might have developed much needed perseverance, but spanking was never allowed by my fond mother, and I became a shirk.

I was set to picking berries to replenish the family larder; but this soon became monotonous, and I appropriated the old grain-sieve, placing it beside the bushes, and pounding the huckleberries into it with a stick; the result was a heterogeneous conglomeration of worms, leaves, bugs, and crushed berries; but I succeeded in eliminating the refuse by throwing the whole mass into a tub of water, and skimming off the risings. I would then descant to buyers upon the freshness of the berries wet with the dews of heaven, but my ruse was soon discovered, and people refused to purchase such mucilaginous pulp.

Our widowed hired woman was possessed of a baby, and I was assigned the task of rocking the cradle; but I soon sighed for the apple blossoms and songs of birds,--we had no English sparrows then--so I drove a nail into the cradle, tied to it the clothes-line, and went out of doors and began pulling at the cord. Soon agonizing screams were heard, and baby was found on the floor with the cradle pounding on top of him.

I was sent to drive home the cows from pasture, but left the task to the dog, who chased them over the wall into the corn-field where they devastated the crop, and ruined the milk by devouring green apples, while I, skylarking in a neighbor's pasture, was treed by an angry bull, who kept me in the branches until I caught a violent cold and became for weeks a family burden.

I was set to milking the cows, but I tied their tails to the beams, applied a lemon-squeezer to their udders until everybody was aroused by the bellowings of the infuriated beasts, and the milk and myself were found carpeting the dirty floor.

At last all patience was exhausted, and as I was born on Sunday, and was good for nothing else my parents, good, pious church-members, concluded I must become a minister, consequently they sent me to school. School! What memories come back to us over the arid wastes of life at the very mention of this magic word! There is the place where immortal minds are filled with loathing at the very sight of books, or where the torch of learning is kindled, which burns on with ever-increasing brightness forever more, and when I think of some of the teachers of my youth I am reminded of what the wise pastor said to a "stupid lunk-head" who had conceived the preposterous idea that he was called to be a preacher. "What, you be a minister?"

"Yes," said the dunce, "are we not commanded in the holy book to preach the gospel to every critter?"

"Verily," was the reply; "but every critter is not commanded to preach the gospel."

So long as percentages obtained after "cramming" for examinations are the criterions which decide the accepting or rejecting of candidates for teaching positions, we must expect "critters" for the school guides of our children, who, like some of my own tutors, will

"Ram it in, cram it in--
Children's heads are hollow;

Rap it in, tap it in--
Bang it in, slam it in
Ancient archaeology,
Aryan philology,
Prosody, zoology,
Physics, climatology,
Calculus and mathematics,
Rhetoric and hydrostatics.
Stuff the school children, fill up the heads of them,
Send them all lesson-full home to the beds of them;
When they are through with the labor and show of it,
What do they care for it, what do they know of it?"

CHAPTER IV.

JOYS AND SORROWS OF SCHOOL-DAYS.

It was the custom in R----, and is now to quite an extent elsewhere, to elect as school committee those especially noted for their ignorance and unfitness for the duties, perhaps to keep them out of the almshouse, or to educate them by the absorption process while hearing pupils recite. These men were paid two dollars for each call they made at schools, consequently they "called" early and often, especially when the school ma'ams were young and pretty.

Here, as elsewhere, there was always a great fight at town-meetings for these school board positions, especially when the school-book agents became numerous, for these committees could secure from said agents unlimited free books, and get high prices for all their spavined horses, dried up cows, and sick pigs in return for voting for rival text-books.

As the committees were often unequal to the task of making out a course of study, pupils selected what studies they pleased, as suicidal a policy as it would be if, when you were sick and went to the physician for relief, he should point to a lot of different medicines, and tell you to pay your money, and take your choice.

As there was a cramming machine close by called an academy, whose sole object was to push students into Harvard College, of course the common schools must be "crammers" for the academy, and the result was, that we had no educational institutions whatever, and mental dyspepsia was well-nigh universal, a smattering of everything, a knowledge of nothing. As well might we pour food into the mouth by the peck, pound it down with a ramrod, and expect healthful physical growth.

Hundreds of poor parents are working themselves to death to send their children to such schools with a view to elevating them to "higher positions" than they themselves occupy, and soon we will have none to do the honest physical labor of life, but the world will be full of kid-gloved hangers on for soft jobs, who regard working with the hands to be a disgrace.

Well do I remember going to a neighbor, whose farm was mortgaged for all it was worth to buy finery and pay tuition bills in said academy,

and begging for the services of the daughter to help my sick mother. I was refused with insult and scorn. "Do you think," shrieked the irate virago, "that I will allow my daughter who is studying French, Latin, Greek, and German to wash your dirty dishes?" I was driven from the house at the point of the boot. That daughter is to-day shaking and twitching with St. Vitus's dance, a physical and mental wreck from overstudy, causing nervous exhaustion and despair.

Hundreds of girls throughout our country who might have been good housekeepers, are to-day useless invalids, made so by what is called "higher education." Hundreds of boys, who might have become successful farmers and mechanics, are now dissipating in beer shops while waiting in vain for lily-fingered positions as bookkeepers or teachers. In scores of New England towns, one man, employed to fill the heads of a reluctant few with the dead languages, receives more salary than all the other teachers combined.

It seems to require a surgical operation to get the fact through our thick heads, that our school system demands radical reform from top to bottom to the end that hands as well as heads may receive technical bread-and-butter, practical education.

I was a victim of this elective-study craze, and with the usual stupidity displayed by a child when left to decide what he shall do, I chose Latin as my principal study in this common district school, because I fancied it smacked of erudition.

The teacher, knowing no more than myself of the language, set me to committing to memory the whole of Andrews' Latin Grammar. I gained the important information that "_sto, fido, confido, assuesco_, and _premitus_" govern the ablative, and other valuable lore; but when I asked the teacher where the Latin vernacular came in, she replied that that would come to me later--that I must "open my mouth and shut my eyes while she gave me something to make me wise." A solemn awe not unmixed with envy pervaded the schoolroom as I, parrot-like, rattled off this valueless jargon of a people dead for hundreds of years.

As this study possessed no interest for me, I naturally dropped into mischief, and being caught one day with a distorted picture of the teacher on my slate with the following suggestive poem lines beneath it:--"Savage by name and savage by nature, I hope the Lord will take your breath before you lick us all to death,"--I was chased about the room by the angry pedagogues until I leaped through the back window, and the hole made in the bank by my head is pointed out to this day as a warning to recalcitrant pupils.

[Illustration: "Floating 'Neath the Trees of Mill River."]

I refused to return to this temple of wisdom, and digging a hole into the haymow, secreted myself therein, pulling the hole in after me. Here I would remain during school hours, watching through a crevice cut in the side of the barn, my father who made the air resound with threats of what he would do if I did not at once return to my education mill. Here I was often joined by a congenial spirit, and we played cards which were regarded as the emissaries of Satan by my religious parents; then we would sally forth with masked faces and wooden guns, and inspired by dime novels, overthrow the walls of children's playhouses, throw rocks against the schoolhouse, bully the small boys almost into fits, hook the neighbors' eggs, corn, melons

and apples, which we devoured at leisure in a hidden hut in the woods.

When the spirit moved, we would "swipe" a neighbor's skiff and go floating and paddling beneath the overarching trees of Mill River, lazily watching the muskrats sliding down the banks and sporting in the water or building their huts of mud, sticks and leaves; the fish-hawk, plunging beneath the surface and emerging with a struggling victim in his talons which he bore away to a tree-top to tear and eat; then a timid wood duck casting suspicious glances as it glided across a cove, secreting her little ones in the swamp; then a crane standing on one long leg motionless as a statue, watching with half-closed eyes for a mud-eel for its dinner.

Then we would imitate those animal murderers, by catching some fish which we broiled to satisfy our carnivorous appetites. It was delightful to float in that tiny boat, gazing through the green canopy of leaves at the great white clouds sailing over like ships upon the sea, listening to the ecstatic trilling of the orioles, and the flute-like melodies of the mockingbird of the north.

We would watch the delicate traceries of the water gardens through which the mild-eyed stickle-backs sailed serenely, having implicit confidence in the protection of their sharp spinacles, presenting to all enemies an impervious array of bayonets; the shark-like pickerel endeavoring to swallow every living thing; the lazy barbel, everlastingly sucking his sustenance from the animalculae around him; the turtles, snapping at everything in sight with impunity relying upon the impregnable defense of their coats-of-mail.

On one of these occasions we were aroused from our Arcadian dream by a frightful roar, and the destruction of all things seemed at hand. A young cyclone had struck the fire over which we had cooked our fish, fanning it into a furious conflagration. We climbed a tall oak, and soon, as far as the eye could reach, all the hills and woodlands seemed wrapped in flames. Frantic farmers were seen flagellating the excited oxen and horses, who, with tails in air, were dragging the ploughs, making furrows around the houses and barns, which were nearly all located in pastures rendered dry as tinder by that extraordinary summer's heat.

The cause of this disturbance was traced to us, and we barely escaped coats of tar and feathers at the hands of the infuriated neighbors, by the pleadings of our ever-loving mothers who promised we should go every day to the academy and sin no more.

We were thoroughly sobered by our dangers, and commenced our careers at this ancient institution founded by the first Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts. Here reigned supreme a fiery autocrat, a fervent admirer of Greek and Latin, a cordial hater of mathematics--my weakest point--a D.D., LL.D., who was determined to drive everybody into college. He had heard of my escapades, and was fully prepared to lay upon my devoted head all the pranks of a restless fun-loving crowd of students.

On the first day of my initiation, while the professor was invoking the Divine blessing, the sight of a big dinner pail belonging to the fat boy in front of me, proved too much of a temptation, and I hurled it down the aisle, scattering pork, pickles, doughnuts, and so forth in its wake, and ending with a loud bang against the platform. Of

course I was the suspect, and cutting off prayer abruptly, down he rushed, and banged my head till I saw more stars than ever shone in heaven.

My academy "_alma mater_" has graduated but few who have--

"Climbed fame's ladder so high
From the round at the top they have stepped to the sky,"

and it is sad to recall that many of the most gifted, acquired in college secret societies the alcohol habit, and now sleep in drunkards' graves.

Brilliant Charlie, my chum, who mastered languages and sciences as easy as "rolling off a log." I saw him last summer, a wreck--wine and bad women did it. The idolized son of pious parents, whose youth was surrounded at home with the halo of Bible and prayer; but like Esau, he "sold his birthright for a mess of pottage" and afterwards "found no space for repentance, though he sought it earnestly and with many tears."

It seems but yesterday that he and I were enjoying a game of "pickknife," lacerating the top of a new desk, when in rushed the "D.D." with his feet encased in the thinnest of slippers and with which he gave me a kick which broke his toe, then clasping it in his hand, danced on one leg, whooping unconsciously cuss word ejaculations till we shrieked with laughter; then he bumped our heads together until my big brother shook the dominie-pedagogue as a dog would a rat, and threatened that if he ever struck my head again he would drown him in the horsepond.

Dear, good brother, he always was, and is now my guardian angel, although now he comes from heaven to shield me, for I am the last on earth of my father's family.

Alas, how many of those academy classmates, each of whom was then the soul of honor and the heart of truth, drowned their intellects in the flowing bowl. _Eheu, Eheu, fugaces anni labuntur!_ But surely it was only this morning oh, beautiful, star-eyed Harry, that you and I, wearied with the frantic vain attempts of the unmathematical professor to elucidate by appalling triangles and hieroglyphics on the blackboard the perplexities of cube root, ousted each other from the seat, sprawling upon the floor, and were chased by the LL.D. out of doors, never to return until we apologized and promised "to do so no more."

Although I had been as "prone to mischief" as the sparks to fly upward--ringing the academy bell at midnight by means of a string tied to the tongue, bringing the professor in his night shirt from his bed to chase me, covering his chimney with a board till he was well-nigh suffocated with smoke, hitching his horse to a boat in Mill River, pillaging his coop and scattering his hens to the four winds of heaven, crawling under his bed at night and nearly frightening him to death with unearthly groans, catching him by the legs as he jumped out and leaving him kicking on the floor as I leaped through the window amid applauding students--I was appointed assistant teacher at the beginning of my senior year.

Then at once great dignity was assumed by me which, being resented by

my former cronies, I secured order by licking them at recess one by one, though I suffered from many "nasal hemorrhages" while engaged in fistic rough and tumbles to assert my authority; I conquered, but secured many black eyes and bedewed the campus with much "claret" for the good of the order.

At length we were declared sufficiently crammed to enter college, and on graduation day I discoursed in stentorian tones upon "True Heroism," amid the applause of the fair sex, and convulsed the audience with laughter by prancing, in my enthusiastic eloquence, upon the sore toe of one of the reverend trustees on the stage who fairly yelled with pain: "_Sic transit gloria mundi_."

Among the sins of my youth, which I confess with "shame and confusion of face" were the pranks played by me and some fellow-sinners upon our nearest neighbors. These worthies consisted of an old man and what appeared to be his much older daughter, the two most unaccountable cranks that dame nature ever presented to my notice.

The father was possessed of the insane hallucination that he was the greatest poet that ever lived. Often I have seen him drop his hoe in the potato field, and run for the house so that you could hardly see his heels for dust, looking for all the world like an animated pair of tongs. As he expressed it, "an idee had struck him," and all mankind would die of intellectual starvation unless he at once embodied said "idee" in a poem.

His greatest delight was to gather about him of an evening a crowd of young folks and read to us his preposterous "lines." On such occasions, some of us would quietly steal away up into his garret, and roll down over the stairs, with a thunderous uproar, a huge gilded ball which had decorated a post outside a tavern where he formerly dispensed much "fire water," to the impoverishment of his customers and to the enrichment of himself.

Then our host, with much profanity, would rush to the rescue armed with an ancient bayonet and a fish trumpet which, like the bugle-horn of Roderic Dhu, summoned all the neighbors to his assistance; but some sympathizing friend would always upset the table holding the candle so that they could never decide who were the guilty absentees.

At other times while the great poet was singing his sweetest songs, we would seize his ancient roosters by their tails, and while they were making night hideous with their lamentations, the angry couple would bombard the hen-roosts with shovels, hoes and other weapons in the hope of slaughtering the marauders. These pleasantries made much fun for us, and varied the monotony of the lives of our entertainers.

The ancient daughter firmly believed that she possessed the fatal gift of beauty, although her elongated face was of the thickness and color of sole leather, and one eye was hideously closed, while the other was of spotless green. It was wonderful to see her cork-screw curls and languishing smirks when the young men took turns in pretending to court her, while an admiring crowd gazed at their amours through the window.

I can recall but two of the greatest of the poems of this man who delighted in the full belief that Shakespeare could not "hold a candle to him." These I take pleasure in handing down through the ages.

No. 1.

"A youth of parts, a witty blade
To college went and progress made
Sounding round his logick;
The prince of hell wide spread his net,
And caught him by one lucky hit
And dragged him down to tophet."

No. 2.

"In the year 1801
I, Enoch B----, was born
Without any shirt on."

CHAPTER V.

CAREER OF A DOMINIE-PEDAGOGUE.

Dear old fathers and mothers! Of all the people in this world, they look through the rubbish of our imperfections, and see in us the divine ideal of our natures, love in us not perhaps the men we are, but the angels we may be in the evolution of the "sweet by and by," like the mother of St. Augustine, who, even while he was wild and reckless, beheld him standing clothed in white a ministering priest at the right hand of God.

They see through us as Michel Angelo saw through the block of marble, declaring that an angel was imprisoned within it. They are soul artists. They can never acknowledge our faults, only our divine possibilities; so, when I left the academy, my parents, with strong yearning and with tears, entreated me to become a minister. I had not the heart to disappoint them and as one hypnotized, on a Sabbath morning during that summer, the clergyman immersed me in the river, while a wondering crowd watched from the shore. The very waters seemed to protest, for as I gasped for breath at the cold backward plunge, I imbibed copious draughts of the briny deep, and was well-nigh strangled. I survived the ordeal, and that afternoon preached in the church to nearly the entire population of the town on the "Final state of the impenitent dead."

Oh, the terrors of this my first sermon, horrors to preacher as well as to "preachees." As I sat in the pulpit beside our pastor, listening to the tremulous tones of the organ which followed the prayer, and gazing at the sea of upturned faces, they seemed taunting me with all the wild pranks of my boyhood, and crying "Oh fool and hypocrite."

All my schoolmates were there shaking with ill-concealed merriment. Every pore poured forth perspiration, and my hair seemed to stand on end like quills upon the back of the fretful porcupine. I thought of the experience of the first sermon by a theological student which I had recently read in a comic paper, and I trembled lest history was to repeat itself.

This theologian, like many of his cloth, was possessed of the insane impression that he was gifted with the sublime inspiration of eloquence, and being invited to preach on his return to the old home for vacation, he selected the somewhat startling text "and the dumb ass opened his mouth and spake." On this elevating theme he wrote a sensational sermon and committed it to memory in order that he might electrify his audience with eye power as well as by verbal flow of soul. The awful day arrived, but when the young apostle arose to preach, stage fright banished from his mind all but the thrilling text.

"My friends," said he, "we are informed by the holy book that this dumb ass opened his mouth and spake." Then pulling his hair in desperation, he repeated the text several times, when he was interrupted by the disgusted pastor, who jumped to his feet and shouted:

"Well, friends, as the dumb ass has nothing to say, let us pray."

This awful example well nigh converted me into another specimen of this historic animal, but at last the pent up cave of the winds was opened, and a gust of sound came forth which so stunned the listening ears of my hearers that they dazedly mistook it for eloquence.

I painted to them the picture of the incorrigible sinner "on flames of burning brimstone tossed, forever, oh forever lost." I did not intend to be a hypocrite; but drifted with the revival tide.

I discoursed often that summer to audiences that crowded the church to the doors. I was but fifteen years of age, and was called: "The wonderful boy preacher."

One Sunday the village crank came to hear me, honoring the occasion by wearing a new stove-pipe hat of prodigious proportions, which he deposited on the seat as he arose during prayer. When the amen was pronounced, perhaps paralyzed by the fervor, he sat down upon said stove-pipe, crushing it to a pie, then leaped from the wreck uttering a blasphemous yell which convulsed the crowd with laughter, and thus broke up the meeting without the benediction and passing of the contribution-box, much to the delight of all who "steal their preaching" on all possible occasions.

I soon found that however anxious people were to save their souls, they were unwilling to part with their "filthy lucre" to buy through tickets to the celestial city, consequently, that winter being impecunious, I was constrained to accept the offer of my cousin, the "prudential committee," to teach the district school in Barrington, N.H., for the generous stipend of \$14 per month and what board I could secure by going from house to house of my pupils.

On arriving there I was ushered into the imposing presence of the Free-will Baptist minister for examination; then I was made aware that although I had plenty of Greek and Latin, I was woefully uninstructed in the rudiments of our mother tongue, and was saved only by the fact that my cousin was the largest contributor to the dominie's salary.

The reverend superintendent had prepared an appalling array of "posers" in accordance with the laws of the state, but my cousin at my urgent request, assured him that I was an alumnus of one of the

greatest institutions in the world, that I was a clergyman of his own denomination, that it was a waste of time to examine so distinguished a scholar, that dinner was ready, and the hungry dominie was seduced to the table where he partook of so much solid and liquid good cheer, that he quite forgot his official duty, and gave me the required certificate: thus I was saved from utter destruction.

In this isolated country town the coming of the schoolmaster in his tour of boarding around, was the great social event of the year to each family in this Barrington, so called from the numerous children which the mothers bear. The fatted pig was invariably killed in his honor, and he was regaled with fried pork, roast pig, broiled hog, sausages, and doughnuts reeking with swine fat _ad nauseam_, galore. The teacher was thus made bilious, dyspeptic and so ugly, that he tried to get even with his carnivorous tormentors by making it "as hot" as possible for their offspring.

At the opening of the school, this long and lank fifteen year old pedagogue faced sixty pupils from the "a, b, c, tot" to the brawny twenty-one-year-old, spoiling for a fight. When I assayed to take a seat, the half-sawed-off hind legs of the chair gave way, and I fell heels in air upon the dirty floor amid the yells and cat-calls of this tumultuous army; then the stalwart ringleader came forward to throw me into the snow bank, where my predecessor was nearly smothered with his head under the snow and his feet uplifted to heaven.

I quickly pulled a concealed ruler, and with a blow on the head, knocked the young giant sprawling, then utilizing all my athletic training, I tripped and banged his followers till they fled pell-mell to their benches. Finally, I hypnotized my audience with great eloquence, stating that I would give them teaching or clubbing as they might prefer. My sweet sixteen, black-eyed girl cousin gave efficient aid, winning the girls to my side; they secured the alliance of their sweethearts, and the victory was complete.

I soon found that some of the bright country lads and lasses knew more than myself about the "three R's," but by getting a key to the arithmetic, and trimming the midnight candle I managed to keep ahead of the game.

In this strictly agricultural town, I found every type of the genuine unadulterated yankee stock. When I called on Mrs. Jones to furnish her share of the perambulating schoolmaster's provisions, she remarked, "I can eat you, but I can't sleep you, because I have no spare bedroom." With feigned terror, I said that I feared I would not be a very toothsome subject for a cannibal, thereupon she gave me the glad hand, "come right in, my poor thing, and we will fat you up for our Thanksgiving dinner." I entered, and ate my hog and doughnuts with gladness of heart, for she was the most buxom, joyous, and hospitable Betsy imaginable.

It was she who cheered the house and the hearth more than all the Christmas fires, an old-fashioned, thoroughly good woman, entirely happy without the aid of diamonds, finery, or long-tailed gowns to trail through the mud and sweep the streets. It was extremely refreshing to see this really sensible, natural human being, as rare in this age as an oasis in the desert.

Her husband came in smiling, a veritable brother Jonathan, hale and

hearty, though tired, for he had arisen from bed at three o'clock that morning, milked a dozen cows, done chores enough to kill a dozen dapper city clerks, and then tramped beside his oxen through the deep snow, taking a load of wood to sell in Dover nearly twenty miles away.

This load he had labored hard for two days to cut on the mountainside, and it brought him the munificent sum of three dollars, yet he was happier than any multi-millionaire I ever saw. There were stumps he had dug out, and rocks he had picked on his farm, enough to fence his hundred acres almost sky-high; but even then he said he had to shoot his corn and potatoes out of a gun to get them through the stones into the ground.

This family was the life of every husking-bee, where each red ear of corn led to rollicking fun, resounding smacks on rosy cheeks, and of paring-bees when even numbered apple-seeds were the match-makers for bachelors and maids. They often took prizes in my spelling-matches, when the bashful swains were allowed to clasp hands with their sweethearts, which led to many lifelong hand and heart clasps in this good old-fashioned town where there were no despairing old maids nor

lone, lorn, grouty unmated men.

They went every Sunday to whittle sticks, swap jack-knives and horses, and to listen to the white-haired parson who led them by the resistless rhetoric of a blameless life, as well as by his heartfelt prayers and exhortations in those "ways which are ways of pleasantness and those paths which are paths of peace."

"One hot summer's day," the farmer told me, "the elder was preaching to a very drowsy crowd after a hard week's work in the hayfield, when suddenly he stopped and shouted: 'Fire! Fire!' at the top of his lungs. 'Where? where?' cried some ex-snorers jumping to their feet. 'In hell,' cried the indignant parson, 'for those who sleep under the sound of the gospel.'"

This model minister was dear to every heart, for it was he who had blessed them when they first saw the light of day, had baptized them when first his kindly teachings had awakened their aspirations to walk in the straight and narrow way. It was he who married them when they found each the _alter ego_, to whom they could say:

"Thou art all to me love for which my heart did pine
A green isle in the sea love, a fountain and a shrine."

It was he who had lifted their souls on the breath of prayer, when their loved ones had "fallen asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep, from which none ever wake to weep."

They loved him though they gave him from their scanty earnings but \$400 a year, and half the fish he could catch, yet they liberally supplied his larder with their sweetest butter, freshest eggs, and the choicest cuts from their flocks. When a city minister once said to him: "You have a poor salary, brother," he at once replied: "Ah, but I give them mighty poor preaching, you know."

Grand old man, he followed closely in the footsteps of his Master, and accomplished much more good than many famous ones who wander far from the precepts of the lowly Nazarene, and deliver featureless sermons

to unresponsive, gaily-attired Dives under the arches of great cathedrals.

But the trail of the serpent is everywhere found, even in this sequestered spot. There was, in the outskirts of the town, the inevitable rumshop, fed, it was said, by an illicit still in the woods, and there as usual Satan held high carnival among families dead in trespasses and sins. There we assayed to hold temperance prayer-meetings, but they loved darkness rather than light, and we cast our pearls before swine, who turned and rent us.

On one occasion we tried to hold services in the little old deserted schoolhouse, and found it, much to our surprise, packed with the inhabitants of Sodom; a more villainous looking crowd I never saw not even in darkest New York. Beetle-browed, mop-haired men, whose faces, if tapped, would apparently give forth as much fire-water as a rum barrel.

For a short time they listened to the singing: but when the aged minister attempted with earnest words to inspire to a better life it seemed as if all the fiends from heaven that fell, had pealed the banner cry of hell. Then a decayed cabbage struck him full in the face, ancient and unfragrant turnips and potatoes filled the air, our little band crowded around to shield him, but unmercifully assailed, we were obliged to wield the chairs vigorously over their heads to fight our way to the door.

One of our number left to guard the sleigh, luckily had it ready, in we jumped and drove for our lives, pursued by invectives too horrible to mention.

This attack was inspired by the keeper of the den of iniquity as he feared he would be deprived of his evil gains, and that night he rewarded them with unlimited free drinks until they drowned their consciences in a prolonged debauch.

One of my patrons became my implacable enemy because I gave his chip-of-the-old-block son some much merited discipline. This man, Sampson by name, was the most malignant fellow I ever saw. One night when with my pupils I was enjoying a skating party, he appeared with some "sodomites" threatening to chuck me under the ice, and they might have succeeded but for two of my friends who, when the enemy were close upon my heels, suddenly stretched a rope across their path which tripped them up, nearly breaking their heads in the concussion with the ice.

On another occasion, several of us crawled into a long hole to explore a cave in the woods. While laboriously making our way on all fours, carrying torches, we were suddenly horrified by fiendish hisses. Visions of snakes danced before our minds, the girls shrieked, the torches fell in our frantic scramble and we were left in Stygian darkness. A mocking, demoniacal laugh was heard, winged creatures dashed against our faces scratching and lacerating.

After much confusion and terror, we succeeded in relighting our torches, and found ourselves in a wizard-like cave. The bats, for such were our assailants, fled away like lost spirits, grotesque shapes were seen formed from the rocks by dripping waters during long ages, fantastic icicles like the stalactites and stalagmites of the famous

Mammoth Cave hung suspended from the arching roof, but a resistless longing to reach the air of heaven urged us on, and we crawled to the opening through which we entered. I was in the advance, and on reaching the entrance was horrified to find it nearly closed by a large rock, and behind it appeared the malignant face of Sampson, who danced in Satanic glee, laughing and shouting.

"I've got you rats in a hole, and there you'll stay till you die!" he shouted.

We knew our enemy too well to expect any mercy, and painfully made our way backwards to the main cavern. None had ever explored it further. I at last saw a glimmer of light, and drawing nearer I discovered an opening to the upper world through which, with great exertions, we dragged ourselves back to the sweet air of heaven. The delight of the reaction was exquisite like that of escaping from paradise lost to paradise regained.

When the ferocious Sampson heard of our deliverance, he fled, and was never heard of again, yet this demon in human form had a twin brother who was one of the best men in the town.

"From the same cradle's side, from the same mother's knee,
One to long darkness and the frozen tide, and one to the peaceful sea."

CHAPTER VI.

DREAMS OF MY YOUTH.

In the early spring came the close of school term, and teacher, pupils and parents parted with mutual regrets. My pecuniary reward was small; but I shall always remember with pleasure the kind assurances received that I left the intellectual status of that town much higher than I found it. I have visited the place only once since, but my old friends had all passed on to the higher life, and my young ones were scattered to the four winds of heaven in search of that happiness and wealth which is seldom found beneath the stars.

I reached the old home under the hill, delighted to see once more the eyes which looked love to eyes that spoke again, to hear the familiar spring chorus from the river, the first robins and bluebirds rejoicing over the resurrection of nature, to explore each sheltered nook for the early cowslips, violets, pussy-willows, dandelions, and crocuses; to gossip with my old friends the chipmunks, the muskrats, and the woodchucks; to revisit each mossy hollow and sequestered retreat in my much loved pine woods; to whittle again the willow whistles, to caress the opening buds and tiny green growing blades of grass; to float once more in my little boat under the embracing arms of my chums, the oaks, birches, and hemlocks I loved so well; to watch the first flight of Psyche, the butterfly, so emblematic of the soaring of the immortal soul from the body dead. The wood duck seemed to smile upon me as of old as she sailed gracefully into the little coves in my river, the woodpeckers beat their drums in my honor, and the heron, the "Shu-Shugah"--screamed welcome oh, my lover.

The rapture of the returning life to nature thrilled my inmost being. Blue waves are tossing, white wings are crossing, the earth springs forth in the beauty of green, and the soul of the beautiful chanted to all, the sweet refrain:

Come to me, come to me, oh my God, oh, come to me everywhere,
Let the earth mean Thee, and the mountain sod, the ocean and the air,
For Thou art so far that I sometimes fear,
As on every side I stare
Searching within, and looking without, if Thou art anywhere.

My mother brought out all her choicest treasures for her "long lost baby"; my father and brothers "killed the fatted calf" for the "prodigal returned," the wide old fireplace sent forth its cheering warmth, the neighbors gathered round to swap stories, and the apples, walnuts and home-brewed juice of the fruit contributed their inspiration to the hearty good cheer.

Within and without the genial spirit of springtime cheered the heart of man and the heart of nature, and all things animate and inanimate sang the words of the poet.

"Doves on the sunny eaves are cooing,
The chip-bird trills from the apple-tree;
Blossoms are bursting and leaves renewing,
And the crocus darts up the spring to see.
Spring has come with a smile of blessing,
Kissing the earth with her soft warm breath,
Till it blushes in flowers at her gentle caressing,
And wakes from the winter's dream of death."

That summer my services were frequently utilized as substitute preacher by our good pastor, who was much afflicted with what Mrs. Partington calls "brown creeturs." He had harped on one string of his vocal apparatus so long that like Jeshuran of old "it waxed fat and kicked." Exceedingly monotonous and soporific was his voice, and it was necessary to strain every nerve to tell whether he was preaching, praying or reading, the words were much the same in each case.

The long cramming of Hebrew, Greek, Latin and all things dead had driven out all the vim and enthusiasm of his youth; the dry-as-dust drill of the theological institution had filled his mind with arguments for the destruction of all other denominations to the entire exclusion of all common sense. He forcibly reminded me of the Scotch dominie who stopped at the stove to shake off the water one rainy morning, and to rebuke the sexton for not having a fire. "Niver mind, yer Riverince," replied the indignant serving man, "ye'll be dry enough soon as ye begin praiching."

One hot Sunday when our clergyman was droning away as usual, a well-to-do fat brother, who once said he had such entire confidence in our clergyman's orthodoxy that he didn't feel obliged to keep awake to watch him, commenced to snore like a fog horn, nearly drowning the speaker's voice. The reverend stopped, and thinking innocently, that some animal was making the disturbance, said: "Will the sexton please put that dog out." This aroused fatty, who left the church in a rage, and his subscription was lost forever.

Our pious pastor was a fair sample of the "wooden men" turned out by

the educational mills of the day; to an assembly of whom Edwin Booth is reported to have said: "The difference between the theatre and the church is this, you preach the gospel as if it were fiction, while we speak fiction as if it were the gospel truth. When you give less attention to dry theological disquisitions and much more to the graces of elocution, you may expect to do some good in the world."

His pastoral calls were appalling; arm extended like a pump handle to shake hands, one up and down motion, a "how do you do?"--"fine day," then a solemn pause, generally followed by his one story; "The day my wife and I were married it rained, but it cleared off pleasant soon after, and it has been pleasant ever since," then suspended animation, finally, "let us pray," and when the same old prayer with few variations was ended, once more the pump-handle operation and he departed, wearing the same hopeless face. He was not a two-faced man, for had he another face, he would surely have worn it.

This sad-eyed man was much tormented by a brother minister in the pews, who seemed to have a strong desire to secure our pastor's poor little salary for his own private use and behoof. His plan evidently was to throw the stigma of heresy upon the incumbent, and to this end, when our preacher was one day laboring hard to show us exactly where foreordination ends and free moral agency begins, the ex-minister arose, excitedly declaring such talk to be rank Arminianism, and denounced it as misleading sinners to the belief that they could be saved even if they were not so predestinated in the eternal mind of an all-wise, all-loving Jehovah, who had foredoomed some to heaven and others to hell. The regular speaker was dumbfounded. An argumentative duett followed, much to the scandal of the saints and the hilariousness of the sinners, until the pitying organist struck up with great force: "From whence doth this union arise?" when the disgruntled disturber left the church vowing he would never pay another cent for such heretical sermons.

Later, a heated discussion arose among the church members as to whether fermented wine should be used at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and when a vote was taken in favor of the unfermented, the senior deacon withdrew in disgust and joined the "Pedo Baptist" church where he could have alcohol in his.

All this of course made the judicious grieve, and the cause of religion to languish. This was the time, famous in church history, when a great reaction set in against Cotton Mather theology, who proclaimed that the pleasure of the elect would be greatly enhanced by looking down from the sublime heights of heaven upon the non-elect writhing in hell.

Unitarianism grew apace, and Henry Ward Beecher immortalized himself by saying: "Many preachers act like the foolish angler who goes to the trout brook with a big pole, ugly line and naked hook, thrashes the waters into a foam, shouting, bite or be damned, bite or be damned! Result; they are not what their great Master commanded them to be--successful fishers of men."

Our pastor was a good man despite his peculiarities, and led a blameless though colorless life; but his "hard shell" theology, his long years of monkish seclusion in the training schools, engendering gloomy views as to the final misery of the majority of human beings, his poverty and lack of adaptation, banished all cheerfulness from his

demeanor, and when I recall his sad, solemn face, made so largely by his views in regard to the horrors awaiting the most of us in the next world, I find myself repeating the words of Harriet Beecher Stowe in the "Minister's Wooing," when she was thinking of that hell depicted by the old theology; "Oh my wedding day, why did they rejoice? Brides should wear mourning, every family is built over this awful pit of despair, and only one in a thousand escapes."

When I semi-occasionally peruse one of the sermons I preached in those days of my youth, I am strongly inclined to crawl into a den and pull the hole in after me. I can fully believe the orator who said that a stupid speech once saved his life.

"I went back home," he said, "last year to spend Thanksgiving with the old folks. While waiting for the turkey to cook, I went into the woods gunning--it would amuse me, and wouldn't hurt the game, for I couldn't hit the broadside of a barn at ten paces. While promenading, it commenced to rain, and not wishing to wet my best Sunday-go-to-meetings, I crawled into a hollow log for shelter; at last the clouds rolled by and I attempted to pull out, but to my horror, the log had contracted so that I was stuck fast in the hole, and I gave myself up for lost. I remembered all the sins of my youth, and conscience assured me that I richly deserved my fate; finally, I thought of a certain unspeakably asinine speech which I once inflicted upon a suffering audience, and I felt so small that I rattled round in that old log like a white bean in a washtub, and slipped like an eel out of the little pipe-stem end of that old tree. I was saved; but the audience had been ruined for life."

Thus often in this cruel world do the innocent suffer, while the guilty go unscathed to torture a confiding public with what the great apostle calls the "foolishness of preaching."

This summer brought our family few smiles but many tears, and the death-angel passed close to our doors. My eldest brother, while at work in the hayfield, was smitten by the sun, causing a mental aberration which made him a wanderer upon the face of the earth, and finally led him to cut the thread of life with his own hand; my second brother was pulled by his coat entangled in a wheel, beneath a heavy load which crushed his thigh. This left the rest of us to struggle as best we could with multitudinous weeds striving to choke the crops, and the many trials incidental to wresting sustenance from the reluctant bosom of mother earth.

My brother Mark, about this time took upon himself the joys and sorrows of a family and home of his own, while I assumed the care of a family of forty school children in the neighboring town of I----.

I was but "unsweetened sixteen," and lack of tact and strength brought me many trials in my endeavors to "teach the young ideas how to shoot correctly." The usual tacks were placed in my chair, causing the war-dances incidental to such occasions; the customary pranks were resorted to by young America to settle the oft mooted question as to who is master; the inevitable interference of parents followed, who as usual, regarded their children as cherubs whose wings they seemed to think would soon appear were it not for the tyrannical spans of the unworthy teacher.

I survived the fiery ordeal after a fashion, and that winter entered a college in the state of Maine. The same old unrest came to me there,

wearied with the dry-as-dust lectures by the faculty of superannuated ministers, but I graduated after a two weeks' course, and vainly endeavored for three weeks to catch the divine afflatus at the Theological Institution, which was supposed to be necessary to enable me to rescue the perishing as a preacher of the gospel. Then at the suggestion of the president, who quickly discovered my mental deficiencies, I was matriculated as a student at another university founded by the brethren of the same "Hard-shell Persuasion." I was but a dreamer, in the middle of my teens, dazed by conflicting opinions, but anxious to walk "_quo deus vocat_."

"Here I stood with reluctant feet,
Where the brook and the river meet,
Manhood and childhood sweet.

"I saw shadows sailing by,
As the dove, with startled eye,
Sees the falcon downward fly.

"To me, a child of many prayers,
Life had quicksands, and many snares,
Foes, and tempters came unawares.

"Oh, let me bear through wrong and ruth,
In my heart the dew of youth,
On my lips the smile of truth."

With this prayer of the poet upon our lips, many of us entered these "classic halls," hoping to find there in communion with the good and great of the past and the present, that mental and spiritual "manna" from heaven which would inspire us to lead ourselves and others to the sublime heights of heroic endeavor.

CHAPTER VII.

A DISENCHANTED COLLEGIAN-PREACHER.

Previous to my arrival at this ancient seat of learning, founded and endowed for the perpetuation and propagation of the doctrines of our denomination, I had never entertained the faintest shadow of doubt as to the infallibility of our creed; but now all faith in it vanished like the baseless fabric of a dream. Here at the fountain head of wisdom, from which streams were supposed to flow for the healing of the nations, my faith in the beliefs of my ancestors fled, nevermore to return; here, where lived the great high priests of the sect, I had expected to find the whole air roseate with divine love and grace, all souls lifted to sublime heights on the breath of unceasing prayer and praise.

The disenchantment was appalling; my brothers in Christ, the grave and reverend professors, were cold as icebergs, evidently caring nothing for the souls or bodies of their Christian or pagan students; the preacher at the college church was an ecclesiastical icicle, who, in his manner at least, continually cried: "_Procul, procul_, oh, _Profani_!"

The prayer meetings were dead and formal, no enthusiasm; it was like being in a spiritual refrigerator--with perhaps one exception, when, through the cracks in the floor from the room of a frugal freshman who boarded himself, came the overwhelming stench of cooking onions, and a wag brother who was quoting scripture to the Lord in prayer, suddenly opened his eyes, and sniffing the unctuous odors, shouted: "Brethren, let us now sing 'From whence doth this onion (union) arise?'" and roars of laughter would put an end to the solemn farce.

Within the dismal college dormitories were herded a few hundred youths, entirely free from all moral and social restraints, abandoned to all orgies into which many characters in the formative state are most likely to drift. I frequently saw a professing Christian teacher torture with biting sarcasm his brother church-member, who had done his best, though he failed to grasp some intricate mathematical problem, until the poor fellow abandoned the college in despair.

Is it strange that I and many others lost all faith in a religion that brought forth such bitter fruit? When I strayed from the lifeless dulness of the college church into the light and warmth of the "liberal sanctuary," where the old man eloquently discoursed of the ascent instead of the descent of man, and pictured the sublime development of the race by heroic endeavor from the animal to the archangel; when this good man welcomed us warmly as brothers to his hearth and home and loaned me his silken surplice to cover my seedy clothes when I delivered my orations at the class exhibitions, is it strange that I embrace his Darwinian theory instead of the mythological story of the fall of man tempted by a snake in the garden of Eden?

I usually preached on Sundays, during my four years' course, in the pulpits of the surrounding towns, but it was not of the total depravity nor flaming brimstone; far grander themes engrossed my thoughts and speech; the true heroism of keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, the sublime possibilities of our natures if we would walk in the footsteps of the only perfect One ever seen on earth.

By trimming the midnight lamp and ruining my eyes, I won a scholarship which paid my tuition fees and room rent, so that I was released from the necessity of drawing on the hard-earned savings of my father. The usual college pranks were played, tubs of water were poured from upper windows upon the heads of freshmen who insisted upon wearing stove-pipe hats and the forbidden canes; we tore each others' clothes to the verge of nakedness, and broke each others' heads in frantic football rushes; we indulged in ghost-like sheet and pillow-case parades, during which we fought the police and made night hideous with yells and scimmages with the "townies"; we burned unsightly shanties, and thus improved the appearance of the city.

We tripped up unpopular professors with ropes in the night, on the icy, steep sidewalk of college street, sending them bumping down the long hill, hatless and with badly torn pants till they brought up with dull thuds against the barber shop on South Main Street; we of course stole the college bell so there was nothing to call us to prayers or recitations; we howled for hours under their respective windows:

"Here's to old Harkness, for he is an imp of darkness!
Here's to old Cax., for his nose is made of wax!

Here's to old Prex--for he likes his double x!"

until some of us were thrust by the police into the nauseating dens of the stationhouse.

Thus, like pendulums, we swung twixt studies and pranks till the boom of the rebel cannon bombarding Fort Sumpter thundered upon our ears. Suddenly our books were forgotten: the university cadets unanimously tendered their services to the government; were at once accepted, and it was the proudest day of my life when, as an officer in our battalion, I marched with the rest to the drill camp on the historic training ground.

The citizens turned out en masse to do us honor, and frantically cheered us on our way to do or die; every house was gay with old glory; our best girls, inspired with patriotic fervor, applauded while they bedewed the streets with their tears; the air resounded with martial music and the boom of saluting cannon; the young war governor, who went up like a rocket and down like a stick, led the way on a prancing charger; the people vied with each other in tendering hospitalities, and every corner afforded its liquid refreshments. We thought it lemonade, but it "had a stick in it" and, presto!--we were no longer seedy theologues, but young heroes all, resplendent with brilliant uniforms and flashing bayonets, marching to defend our great and glorious republic.

We, unsuspecting, imbibed freely the seductive fluids, and soon our heads were in a whirl. We wildly sang the war songs and gave the college yells. It is but a step from the sublime to the ridiculous. That night, Jupiter Pluvius burst upon our frail tents in all his fury, and I awoke the next morning half covered with water, and in a raging fever. I was taken to the hospital, and as I was a minor my father took me from the service.

For weeks I was a wreck, and all my dreams of martial glory vanished, alas,--like the many which have bloomed in the summer of my heart. Before I regained the little strength I ever had, the war was over, but I had done my best to serve my country, and the rapture of pursuing is the prize the vanquished know. The few remaining students plodded along through the curriculum; but our hearts were far away on the battle-fields, from the glory of which, cruel fate debarred us.

In my senior year I was forced by the necessity for securing lucre to pay the increasing graduation expenses, to teach the high school in Bristol, Conn., and returned to the university to "cram" for the final examinations. For days and nights the merciless grind went on until, as by a miracle, I escaped the lunatic asylum. I knew but little of the higher mathematics, but the "Green" professor was a strong sectarian if not an humble Christian, and when the hour for my private examination arrived, I contrived to waste the most of it telling him about the Bristol Church. It was near his dinner hour, and he yearned for its delights to such an extent, that he did not detect me in copying the "_Pons Asinorum_" onto the blackboard from a paper hidden in my bosom, and as he glanced at the figures on the board, he said: "That's right, I suppose you know the rest," passed me, and hastened to his walnuts and his wine.

The good president, of blessed memory, had another pressing engagement, as I well knew, when I called for his examination, he

asked for but little, was too preoccupied to hear whether my answers were correct, passed me, and my "A.B." was won.

We spoke our pieces on graduation day, rejoiced in the applause of our "mulierculae," took our sheepskins, and went forth from "_alma mater_" conquering and to conquer the unsympathizing world. I had acquired here but a modicum of that learning which was supposed to flow from this "Pierian Spring," but I rejoiced in the fact that I had cast away forever my belief in the "total depravity" of the human race, that in "Adam's fall we sin-ned all, that in Cain's murder, we sin-ned furdur," and could now look hopefully upon my fellow-men in the full assurance that

There lies in the centre of each man's heart
A longing and love for the good and pure,
And if but an atom, or larger part,
I know that this shall forever endure.
After the body has gone to decay--
Yes, after the world has passed away.

The longer I live and the more I see
Of the struggles of souls towards heights above,
The stronger this truth comes home to me,
That the universe rests on the shoulders of love--
A love so limitless, deep and broad
That men have renamed it, and called it God.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN SHADOW LAND.

I had cherished the delusive hope that my university diploma would be the open sesame to any exalted position to which I might aspire; but I found there was a multitude of competitors for every professional emolument, and that a "pull" with the powers that be was essential to secure any prize. My change in religious sentiments debarred me from the pulpit, and I had no friends influential enough to give me a profitable position as a teacher in New England.

After making many applications, and enduring many hopes deferred which make the heart sick, I struck out for New York one dark, rainy night, with only \$10 in my pocket to seek my fortune in that so-called "Modern Sodom and Gomorrah." I knew no one in that great city, and on my arrival before daylight in a dismal drenching storm, I entered the nearest hotel to obtain some much needed sleep.

A villainous looking servitor showed me to a cold barn-like room where I found no way of locking the door, so I barricaded the entrance with the bureau, placing the chair on top as a burglar alarm. The scant bedclothes were so short that one extremity or the other must freeze, so I compromised by protecting the "midway plaisance," and in my cramped quarters, thought with envy of Dr. Root of Byfield, who was said to stretch his long legs out the window to secure plenty of room for himself, and a roost on his pedal extremities for his favorite turkeys.

I was on the point of falling into the arms of Morpheus in the land of Nod, when a stealthy attempt to open the door sent the chair with a crash to the floor. Yelling at the top of my voice, "Get out of that, or I'll put a bullet through you!" I heard a form tumble down the steep stairs, and muffled curses which reminded me of the lines in the Hohenlinden poem: "It is Iser (I sir) rolling rapidly."

At the first dawn of a dismal day I crept down the dirty stairs, and out of the door of what I learned to be one of the most dangerous houses in that sin-cursed city.

The days immediately following while seeking for employment were forlorn and miserable; I was the fifth wheel of a coach which no one wanted. Finally, when I had spent my last cent for a beggarly meal, I saw an advertisement for a teacher in the reform school, and called on a Mr. Atterbury, the trustee. He regarded me with a pitying eye; told me two teachers had recently been driven from the prison by the kicks and cuffs of the toughest boys that ever went unhung; but if I wished to try it, he would pass me to that "den of thieves." I grasped at the chance like a drowning man at a straw, and that very night found myself facing nearly 1,000 hard looking specimens from the slums of all nations. The schoolroom was a huge hall, in which, at a tap of the bell, great doors were rolled on iron tracks to subdivide it into many small class sections, each in charge of a lady assistant. The organ pealed out the notes for the opening song which was given fairly well; but when I attempted to read the Master's beginning of the responsive ritual, a stalwart young giant hurled a book at my head, and bedlam broke loose. I jumped from the platform, seized the ringleader by the hair and collar, and with a strength hitherto undreamed of by me, dragged him before he could collect his thoughts to a closet door, hurled him headlong and turned the key. The boys said afterwards that fire flashed from my eyes, and they thought the devil had come.

I grasped a heavy stick, used for raising the windows, and told them in stentorian tones of a desperate man, that I would break the heads of all who were not instantly in their seats. The schoolma'ams quivered with fear, but the boys slunk to their places and I harangued them to the effect, that they could have peace or war; if peace, they would be treated kindly and be taught to become successful men; if war, they alone would suffer, for I had come there to stay.

I tried to inspire these poor vicious boys, conceived in sin and born in iniquity, with the thought that knowledge is power; that many of the greatest and best of earth had risen from their ranks by persistent endeavor into the light and liberty of the children of God; that they could become happy and successful by being and doing good; that if they would set their faces resolutely towards the better life, I would gladly help to the utmost of my ability.

One by one their eyes kindled with the light that is never seen on sea or shore. One touch of nature makes the whole world kin. They had never been appealed to in that way before, and the spark of goodness lying dormant in even the most depraved natures, responded to the breath of kindly words.

I touched the bell, the great subdividing doors were rolled, and my assistants quietly proceeded to the work of instruction, confident that the war was over.

When I had marched my regiment to their cells that night, and retired to my room, I reflected that every human existence has its moments of fate, when the apples of the Hesperides hang ready upon the bough, but, alas! how few are wise enough to pluck them. The decision of an hour may open to us the gates of the enchanted garden where are flowers and sunshine, or it may condemn us, Tantalus-like, to reach evermore after some far-off and unattainable good. I dreamed that the clock of fate had struck the hour for me, that I had found my mission on earth, and that henceforth the "Peace be still" of the Master would calm life's troubled sea.

In reconnoitring the island the next day, I found much to admire. The great domes of the massive buildings towered aloft above the encircling walls, like aerial sentinels warning us to lift our thoughts to the blessings that come from on high. The great ships went sailing by to lands beyond the sea; in front was a veritable bower of paradise, apple and peach-trees fruited deep, green lawns, rippling waters, fair as the garden of the Lord. Every prospect pleases and naught but man is vile.

The signal was given from the Harlem shore for the institution's boat. I jumped on board, and the strong arms of the uniformed boys of our boat's crew propelled us across the river, where two policemen stood on the pier guarding a girl about eighteen years of age. Quick as a flash she pushed one of them into the water, his head stuck in the mud, his legs kicking in the air; then she shrieked with laughter and ran like a deer up the street. The other policeman and myself jumped into an express wagon, seized the reins from the astonished, protesting black driver, plied the whip to his horse and gave chase.

"What for you dune dar?" cried the darky.

"Shut up!" was the only reply, and away we went, Gilpin-like, with the horse on the run. We headed off the girl, and after a rough-and-tumble scrimmage threw her into the wagon, kicking, screaming, and scratching like a wild-cat. We took her by main force to the girls' wing of the prison and put her into a cell.

Scarcely was I seated at the table when the alarm-bell rang, and, being officer of the day I ran over to inquire the cause, and found the powerful young virago, our prisoner, enjoying herself hugely. When the matron had been handing her some food through a hole in the cell, the girl shot out her arm, grabbed her by the hair and with the other hand was now pulling out the hairs by the roots, sometimes a few at a time, sometimes by the handful, then she would bang the official's nose against the wall, then knockout blows on the face. The matron was in awful agony and faint from loss of blood. Entreaty availed nothing, so I seized a dipper of hot water and dashed it on the girl's naked arm; the matron fell heels over head on one side, and the prisoner executed a somersault in the opposite direction, then jumped to her feet, shook her fist at me and swore like a pirate.

This young Amazon had been arrested in a vile den kept on a house-boat in the harbor, and long made life a burden for our women officials.

A careful study of the five hundred girls in this reform school as compared with the one thousand boys, proved clearly that women, there as elsewhere, are either the best or the worst of the human race. When

a girl cuts loose from the angel she was intended to be, she usually descends to the lowest possible pit of degradation; as soon as this girl in question found there was nothing to be gained by her fiendish outbursts of fury, she cunningly changed her tactics with her pious teacher, and pretended to "be born again." She ostensibly chose the Bible for her favorite reading, prayed fervently, and became so circumspect in her deportment that she was promoted to the position of assistant cook in the good girls division.

Here she contrived to bake into a cake a letter which she gave to a visitor, who took it to one of her former companions in sin, and one day, while walking with her confiding teacher in the garden, a boat appeared rowed by four men. Into this the young hypocrite jumped, and like a "sow that was washed, returned to wallowing in the mire."

In contrast to her ungrateful depravity, the boy I had chucked into the closet on my first night here became my firm friend, and the stroke oar of my private boat crew.

One day I was taking a boat ride in the harbor with two of my lady assistants and six stalwart boy oarsmen, when a boat shot out at us from Blackwell's Island with four villainous men and two degraded women. Coming alongside, one of the women said to the boys: "Throw that officer overboard, and come with us; we will get you \$400 a piece as bounty, then you can desert from the army, and have a jolly good time." My teachers fainted with fear; my crew rested on their oars, wild with desire to escape; it was a crisis. I looked them steadily in the eyes.

"Boys," I said, quietly, "when sinners entice thee, consent thou not--row."

"We won't hurt you," said my leader; "you have been good to us; let us get into that boat."

"Never," said I. "You shall not go to hell, pull!" The men grabbed at me, my boys pounded them off with their oars, and one of the men fired two shots which whistled close to my head, but the boys pulled vigorously, and we sailed away amid the jeers and curses of our enemies.

"Sherman," said I, to my stroke oarsman, as we landed on our island, "why didn't you throw me overboard?"

"You have been kind to us," he replied, "and we never go back on our friends."

I had the pleasure before I left this school, to secure good positions for all my crew, and they became useful men. I was soon after this promoted to the vice-principalship of the institution, and an ex-minister was appointed my first assistant, a good man, but quite absent-minded. He recalled to my memory the story of a man who came home in a pouring rain, put his wet umbrella into bed with his wife, and stood himself up behind the door where he remained all night.

One day, when I was off duty, I went sailing with two ladies through "Little Hell Gate," which rushes with great fury by our island, to the sea. All at once the alarm bell rang. In my haste to get ashore, I ran the boat onto a partially submerged rock, and it would have been

capsized, had I not jumped out onto the rock and pushed it off. Down I went under the rushing tide. When I came to the surface I saw the white belly of a shark, as he turned to seize me in his jaws. I could almost feel his sharp teeth. My head struck the side of the boat, just as the ladies, with great presence of mind, grabbed me by the hair, and pulled me on board. We landed and I rushed, puffing and dripping like a porpoise, to the wall gate, unlocked it and entered.

A frightful scene was before me. Williams, my assistant, was on the ground, covered with blood, and around him was a crowd of the worst boys in the prison, pounding, kicking, and trying to snatch his keys so as to escape by unlocking the gate. Luckily my bat with which I had played baseball with the boys stood in the corner, and grabbing this I struck out with all my strength, knocking down the boys right and left. Just then the guard came up on the run, the wounded man was carried to the hospital, and his assailants locked up.

Williams, it appeared, had, in his absent-mindedness, unlocked the jail instead of the wall gates, and let out upon him this horde of ruffians who had been put in there for safe-keeping. He finally recovered, but left the island through fear of his life.

The discipline of the school was much benefited by forming a school regiment, and drilling them to the music of a brass band composed of the boys themselves. They were as proud of their uniforms, shoulder straps and accoutrements, as were the old guard of Napoleon, and their ambition was stimulated by merited promotions from the ranks.

For more than a year I thoroughly enjoyed the work of uplifting those waifs on our sea of life; they responded appreciatively to the influence of kindly words and acts, even as the Aeolian harp yields its sweetest music to the caresses of the airs of heaven. It was an inspiration to watch the blossoming of purer thoughts and higher aspirations, and to feel that we were cooperating with the invisible spirits in developing the hidden angels in this youthful army.

All at once the shadows fell, the baneful greed of that organized appetite called "Tammany Hall," reached out its devil-fish tentaculae, which neither fear God, nor have any mercy on men, to seek our blood. Evil looking Shylock-faced trustees began to supplant those noble men who had made this refuge a veritable gate of heaven to so many more sinned against than sinning,—children of the vile. These avaricious, beastly emissaries of "Tammany," soon snarled at us poor teachers that we must divide our small salaries with them or give place to those that would. Not a school book, or a shin-bone for soup, could be bought unless these leeches had a commission from it; they brought enormous baskets and filled them with fruit practically stolen from our children, and carted them home for their own cubs.

Our superintendent and chaplain were strong sectarians, but very weak Christians, and they readily made friends of the "Mammon of unrighteousness." One hot Sunday, when I was in command at chapel, the somnolent tones of the chaplain, who, as usual, was pouring forth a stream of mere words—words almost devoid of thought, lulled a large number of my fifteen hundred boys and girls into the land of dreams.

As soon as the services were over and I had surrendered my flock to the yard master, I was summoned before the superintendent where the pious chaplain accused me of insulting him by not keeping the children

awake. I quietly asked him how this could be done. "Go among them with a rattan," said he. I told him I thought the preacher deserved the rattan much more than the children, that they would listen gladly if he would give them anything worth hearing. From that moment he was my malicious foe.

One day while returning from a row in the harbor, I treated my boat's crew to apples and pears from our orchard; just then the superintendent's whistle sounded, and I was called before the trustees then in session.

"Are you aware," said he, savagely, "that the rules direct that all fruit shall be gathered by the head gardener, and by him alone?"

"Yes," was my reply.

"Well, then, you were stealing, just now."

"I was simply imitating your example, sir; it takes a thief to catch a thief." The trustees roared with laughter. The president of the board then asked if I had seen others stealing the fruit.

"Yes, sir, the chaplain, superintendent, and nearly all the trustees."

"Well," said he, "this is a den of thieves."

"All except the convicts, sir," I replied.

These incidents did not add to my popularity among the sneaks whose petty slings and arrows were so annoying, and so minimized my power for good that I reluctantly resigned, to accept a more lucrative position as teacher in an aristocratic boarding-school located in the romantic county of Berkshire, much nearer, geographically, to the stars.

Among our responsibilities at the reform school, were many "wharf rats"--so called, because having had no homes or visible parents, like Topsy, they had simply "growed," and slept under the wharves of the city, swarming out at intervals to steal or beg for something to assuage the pangs of hunger. They were vicious to a degree, and at first seemed to prefer a raw shin-bone that they had stolen to an abundant meal obtained honestly. They would rather fight than eat, and prized a penny obtained by lies more than dollars secured by telling the truth. Some were stupid as donkeys; but others possessed minds of surprising acuteness. I once asked one of these why he was sent to the reform school.

"Oh," was the reply, "I stole a sawmill, and when I went back after the water dam the copper scooped me in."

Another quizzed his teacher unmercifully, when, in trying to teach him the alphabet, she drew a figure on the board and told him it was A, he called out: "How do you know that is A?"

"Why, when I went to school my teacher told me it was A."

"Well," said the little imp, "how do ye know but what that feller lied?"

At one of our public meetings, the superintendent introduced as a speaker, a man by the name of Holmes, and wishing to impress the boys favorably, he announced him as Professor Holmes. The orator was annoyed at being called professor, and trying to be "funny," commenced by saying: "I am not Professor Holmes, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass--" At this point, quick as a flash, up jumped one of our wharf rats, and shouted: "Well, if you ain't Professor Holmes' ass, whose ass be ye?"

Then the little barbarian, evidently maddened by the sneering pomposity of our eloquent guest, strutted across the floor in perfect imitation of Holmes' affected grandiloquence; then he launched into the coon song:--

"De bigger dat you see de smoke
De less de fire will be,
And de leastest kind ob possum
Climbs de biggest kind ob tree.

"De nigger at de camp-groun'
Dat kin loudest sing an' shout,
Am gwine ter rob some hen-roos'
Befo' de week am out."

Thus, often, from a bud seemingly withered and dead, would unexpectedly blossom out an unknown flower of startling brilliancy and unprecedented attractiveness.

CHAPTER IX.

SUNLIGHT AND DARKNESS IN PALACE AND COTTAGE.

My pupils at the reform school were from the dens and hovels of the Bowery, while those at S---- were from the palaces of Fifth Avenue; but to my utter astonishment, the children of the slums were morally and perhaps intellectually superior to those of the plutocrats. I was occasionally the guest of both the poverty-stricken and the millionaire parents of my scholars, and I verily believe that I saw as much depravity and misery in the abodes of the rich as in those of the poor.

On my arrival in Berkshire County, I found both of my employers were off on a spree, and that I was ordered to do the work of receiving and organizing. One day, a princely equipage with liveried coachman and outrider halted at the schoolroom door, a "bloated bondholder" and his wife, arrayed in purple, fine linen, and diamonds, pulled a flashily appareled, humpbacked boy up to me, every lineament of whose face showed depravity and cunning. "There," said the father, "is my d---- d son, he drinks, swears, and breaks all the commandments every day. Take him, and send the bill to me." He handed me his card and away they went.

This was not an isolated case. I did my best for them; but they were satiated with luxury, hated books, and seemed to care for nothing but debauchery. The very next day several of these scamps obtained

permission to visit the cave in "Bear Mountain," where ice could be found throughout the year. As they did not return on time, I went in search and found them all drunk. They had no appreciation of the sun-kissed mountains, waving forests, or verdure-clad valleys; the grand scenery awakened no responsive smiles, no ennobling aspirations; they were intent upon nothing but drowning their ignoble souls in the noxious fumes of tobacco and alcohol. I tumbled them into the wagon, drove them to their dormitory and put them to bed, lower than the beasts they seemed to be in their depravity; not all to be sure, for there were a few choice spirits like Julian Hawthorn, who followed to some extent the example of his illustrious father, and has won his spurs in literature.

I found to my disgust that bad eggs would ruin the good ones; but that many good ones could not take the rottenness from even one of the bad. It seemed a hopeless task to endeavor to inspire such impoverished souls, and I retired in despair, to accept the principalship of the ancient academy in the village.

Here I met the children of the so-called middle class, the very bone and sinew of the Republic; here I was monarch of all I surveyed, and untrammelled by the cramming regulations of the public schools, I pursued the delightful avocation of a true educator. E and duco is the etymology of the word, to lead out, to develop the latent energies of the mind. I had chemical and philosophical apparatus with which to perform experiments in illustrative teaching of the sciences, and all were intent upon acquiring thorough, practical education.

When I saw their enthusiasm lagging from want of physical exercise, at the tap of the bell, we would all rush out upon the beautiful campus and kick football, or run races until, with glowing faces and invigorated energies, they would follow me back to our studies, sometimes into the cheerful academy hall, sometimes under the shade of the noble oaks, where we would study botany close to nature's heart amid the songs of birds and the sublime chanting of the tree-tops.

We gave musical and dramatic entertainments, securing ample funds to decorate the walls of our hall with works of art; we went on rides together in barges, drank in long draughts of inspiration from the glorious scenery, and studied geology, practically, like, if not equal to Hugh Miller, among the rocks and boulders. I was doing good, and here I should have remained; but the old unrest came back to me, and I unwisely accepted a much larger salary in teaching in my native county of Essex.

As soon as I took command of my two hundred boys and girls in B----, I realized how vast is the contrast between free and unrestricted educating, and the grind of cramming according to the ironclad rule of the public school system.

Many children are so crammed with everything that they really know nothing. In proof of this, read these veritable specimens of definitions, written by public school children that very year in another school of this town.

"Stability is the taking care of a stable."

"A mosquito is the child of black and white parents."

"Monastery is the place for monsters."

"Tocsin is something to do with getting drunk."

"Expostulation is to have the smallpox."

"Cannibal is two brothers who killed each other in the Bible."

"Anatomy is the human body, which consists of three parts, the head, the chest and the stomach. The head contains the eyes and brains, if any; the chest contains the lungs and a piece of the liver. The stomach is devoted to the bowels, of which there are five, a, e, i, o, u, and sometimes w, and y."

Every teacher was rated according to his ability to secure from his pupils a high percentage in examinations for promotion.

I grew restless under the restraints imposed by a committee of incompetents; besides, the minister who was chairman of the Board, considered a Unitarian to be an infidel, demoralizing the religious life of the young. I grew tired of his malicious peccadilloes, and accepted a "louder" call from that quaint town where the historic Lloyd Ireson "with his hord horrt was torrd and futhered und Korrid in a Kort by the wimmun o' Marrble ed."

Here I had one hundred boys in one room, many of whom went fishing in summer to get up muscle to lick the schoolmaster in winter. They had been quite successful in this latter industry for several years in my school, and at once proceeded to try the same tactics with me. On the first morning, I was saluted with a volley of iced snow balls as hard as brickbats, and I at once reciprocated these favors by knocking down the leader, dragging him into the house, and giving him a sound cowhiding, and when the vinegar-faced committee came in later I was busily engaged in teaching their sons to dance to this same useful instrument.

These owl-like worthies sat solemnly on the platform for awhile, saying no more than the ugly fowls they so much resembled, and then stalked out, leaving me to my fate. A young Hercules fisherman at once suggested, that the first business in order was to throw me out the window as they had so many of my predecessors. To this I stoutly objected, and seizing a big hickory stick window-elevator, I swung it fiercely close to their heads. This was more than they had bargained for, and the uproar pro tem subsided.

This was the winter famed in the history of Massachusetts, as producing the severest snowstorm ever known, and for a week I was snow-bound in my boarding-house, where my bright-eyed, sweet-faced cousins were most agreeable substitutes for my plug-ugly pupils.

One day, this same week, the giant ringleader of my assailants who had moved to baptize me by immersion in the icy waters of the harbor, himself, while fishing, fell through a hole in the ice and was drowned. The loss of their mighty general somewhat demoralized his followers, and *_vi et armis_*, I managed to survive the fourteen weeks' term. At the close of the first session of the last day, I threw a football to my enemies, who, not suspecting my trick, rushed off, kicking it down the street, and when they returned in the afternoon to

take vengeance upon me for my unprecedented rule over them, I was in the "hub of the universe." I afterwards learned that my discretion was the better part of valor, for my ferocious pupils had the determination and the necessary force to send me unshriven to Davy Jones' locker.

I had never believed in the doctrine of reincarnation until I met in the city, the veritable Judas Iscariot, ready and anxious to sell anybody and everything for thirty pieces of silver, nickel, copper, or any old thing he could pick up. This Jew pretended to wish to sell one-half interest in his commercial school for \$2,000. I had some negotiations with him, but found out, by careful investigation, that he had already sold several confiding teachers, who ascertained too late to save their money, that this fraud was collector and treasurer of all funds of the company, that he required his partner to do all the drudgery, and that his report always claimed that all collections had been paid out for expenses.

He reminded me of the legend, that when the devil took Christ to the top of a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the earth, and said: "All these things will I give you to fall down and worship me." Suddenly, the face of a Shylock appeared, saying: "Shentlemen, peeshness ish peeshness, and if you can't trade, I will take dat offer."

I mention this little incident hoping it may prove a warning to the unwary who, like myself, may fall among the sharpers of the Modern Athens. Disgusted with this business experience, and wishing to do good and get good, I advertised, offering \$50 for an acceptable position as teacher, and I at once received many responses from thrifty committeemen, and retiring teachers.

I interviewed a clergyman who wanted the reward in advance; but when the time came for him to deliver the goods, he had suddenly decamped in the night to avoid a coat of tar and feathers from indignant parents whose children's morals had been basely ruined by this wolf in sheep's clothing. Others extended itching palms for the money, but failed to secure for me the "_sine qua non_."

At last, an impecunious teacher in W----, who was retiring to accept a "louder" call in Boston, introduced me to his Board as a particular friend whom he had known for many years, (he had never seen me before), and vouched for me as one of the greatest of living instructors.

When the three doctors, constituting the school board, were about to give me a searching examination, which doubtless would have floored me, prearranged calls summoned them to see pretended patients, and on the mercenary pedagogue's assurance that I was a university graduate, they hastily signed my commission and I was saved.

I shall always remember my two years' experience in this beautiful town, with much pleasure and pride. On the opening of the school I found myself looking upon over one hundred of the finest appearing boys and girls I had ever beheld, seated in a noble new hall well equipped with organ and all the apparatus which wealth could procure.

Soon after the opening exercises, the usual trial of the new master commenced, and a stifling, choking odor threw all into convulsions

of coughing, almost to strangulation. Some one had thrown a large quantity of cayenne pepper down the register. I quietly opened the windows, and when the noxious fumes had passed away, the new principal said:

"I feel sure that the pleasant outward appearance of my family here is an expression of the inward goodness and honor of you all, and I am confident that the perpetrator of this disagreeable mischief will take pride in removing suspicion from his companions by rising in his seat and apologizing for his thoughtless rudeness."

A fine, manly looking boy at once arose. "Come up here, my friend, and let us talk it over," I said, and he came and stood by my side. "We are all brothers and sisters here, and I have no doubt you, Arthur, will now express your regrets for what you have done." He did so, the audience applauded, and the incident was closed.

The new master's manner was such a decided contrast to that of his "knock down and drag out" predecessor, that it captivated his proteges at the start, and this was the only unpleasant episode in my delightful intercourse with these charming children.

I established a society called the "Class of Honor," which soon comprised my entire family. Every pupil who had no marks against him or her for failures in scholarship or deportment, was decorated with a blue ribbon, and when he had earned and worn this for one month, he was presented with a handsome diamond shaped pin on which was engraved the words "class of honor." They were prouder of this decoration than ever were the imperial guard of Napoleon of the Cross of the Legion.

If a pupil failed on some point in recitation, he could retrieve himself by reciting it correctly later with extra information on the point, gathered from the reference books, and thus he was saved from humiliation and discouragement, and at the same time, he was stimulated to making independent researches in the school and public libraries. Each class of honor pupil could whisper, go out, or go to the blackboards to draw or cipher without asking permission. The high sense of honor was thus developed which is so essential to a successful career.

We had a system of light gymnastics which, with military drill, gave grace and erectness to the carriage, and every Friday afternoon, the large hall was crowded with the parents to enjoy the singing, declamations, gymnastics, dramatics, and drawing exercises, and all went merry as a marriage bell.

My salary was raised voluntarily every six months; I enjoyed their games with them in our ample playgrounds. We often, on holidays, roamed the woods and seashore together; I often dined with them in their homes, and at picnics; on all public occasions I was one of the principal speakers, and my life was an ideal one in all respects save one. For some cause the air of the valley, too often impregnated with moisture from the sluggish Abajona, kept my throat in an almost chronic state of irritation, and too frequently for days at a time, I could hardly speak above a whisper. Had it not been for this one serious handicap, I think I would gladly have remained there for life.

I kept a saddle horse, and often cantered twenty miles to my father's house, and my boat on the lake furnished many a pleasant sail for

myself and pupils.

One incident shows the appreciation of my pupils and neighbors for my efforts in their behalf. During the first campaign of General Grant for the presidency, many of my pupils and I joined the W--Battalion of uniformed and torch bearing "Tanners." We marched to the city as an escort for speakers at a Republican rally. When the hoodlums smashed our lanterns with rocks, our captain, the son of a distinguished statesman, retreated; but I lost my head and charged the rioters, using my torch handle vigorously; I was cut off from my company of which I was lieutenant, and captured by the Democrats. As soon as my men realized this, they rushed upon my captors *_en masse_*; many heads were broken, but I was rescued and carried to the train on the shoulders of my heroic defenders.

If my foresight had been half so good as my hindsight, I would never have left W---, but the tempter came in the form of an offer of a much larger salary from N---, and I foolishly accepted.

The change from W--to N---, was like that from breezy, sunny green fields, where wild birds sang their free, joyous songs, and where wild flowers bloomed free as air exhaling their sweet perfumes, to the suffocating air of a hothouse where the birds drooped in cages and where the few flowers were forced into existence by steam heat and unsavory fertilizers. In the former the people were social, natural and free from the trammels of tyrannical fashions; in the latter they were cold, distant, and valued you according to the size of your bank account and the number of your horses and servants. In the one the teachers were educators, free to develop superior methods along their own original lines; in the other they were mere machines to carry out the ironclad rules of the opinionated precedent-hunting school board.

In the former all seemed like one great family sympathizing and loving; in the latter the newly-rich set the pace of ignoble luxury and display; while the others aped their ways which led many to bankruptcy, poverty, and misery. In the one you were free from all social ostracism if you worshipped according to the dictates of your own conscience; in the other you were ignored and disliked unless you attended and contributed liberally for the support of the palatial orthodox church.

I was early told that I would fail if I persisted in attending the little Unitarian church; but I preferred failure to hypocrisy, and would not sell my birthright of conscience for a mess of pottage. Two of my ancient, sour-faced assistants were bigoted members of the fashionable church, and at once set me down as a corruptor of youth because I was an advocate of the liberal faith. The venomous spite of one of these forcibly suggested the spirit of the inquisition, and one day she found her blackboard decorated with the following truthful poem, suggested by her spirit and the first syllable of her name:

"Old Aunt Dunk
Is a mean old skunk."

She flew into a furious rage, declared that some Unitarian must have perpetrated this insult, and that I must find the culprit.

She never forgave me because I failed to do so, and at her urgent solicitation the minister, after great exertion, secured a few

signatures to a petition for my discharge on the plea that I chewed tobacco and expectorated on the floor in the presence of my class. As I easily proved that I never chewed tobacco, and as my patrons presented an overwhelming protest, the prayer of the petitioners was unanimously refused by the school board.

It would have been laughable had it not been so serious and pitiful, to see the frantic attempts of the poor in this town to keep up appearances, and counterfeit the style of those who had grown rich by cheating widows and orphans in bucket shops and stock gambling. The little minnows put on all the snobbish airs of the whales who had grown so large by devouring all the small fish in their business seas.

One pillar of the church, who was a cashier, ruined his bank by stealing money to enable him, for a while, to live in an elegant house and support servants, equipages, silks and diamonds galore. For a time he was the idol of the town, while he gave costly dinners and showered his ill-gotten gains to embellish his favorite temple, and to build a tower upon it to look down in contempt upon all the lesser shrines.

He barely escaped the sheriff at night-time, and fled beyond the seas, leaving his showy family to poverty and the ill-concealed derision of those who worshipped them while they were supposed to be rich.

Such as these made life very uncomfortable for me, and at the end of my year, I left in disgust; never again to resume the profession in which I had spent so many years of my somewhat checkered existence. My life seemed a failure; I reflected long upon the question of the Psalmist, "What is man?" and here are the answers which I culled from many thoughtful poets, whose names are appended to their several replies.

In this grand wheel, the world, we're spokes made all;--
(_Brome_.)

He who climbs high, endangers many a fall;--(_Chaucer_.)

A passing gleam called life is o'er us thrown,--(_Story_.)

It glimmers, like a meteor, and is gone.--(_Rogers_.)

To-morrow's sun to thee may never rise--(_Congreve_.)

The flower that smiles to-day, to-morrow dies--(_Shelly_.)

And what do we, by all our bustle gain?--(_Pomfret_.)

A drop of pleasure in a sea of pain.--(_Tupper_.)

Tired of beliefs, we dread to live without;--(_Holmes_.)

Yet who knows most, the more he knows to doubt.--(_Daniel_.)

Princes and lords are but the breath of kings.--(_Burns_.)

And trifles make the sum of human things.--(_More_.)

If troubles overtake thee, do not wail;--(_Herbert_.)

Our thoughts are boundless, though our frames are
frail.--(_Percival_.)

The fiercest agonies have shortest reign;--(_Bryant_.)

Great sorrows have no leisure to complain.--(_Gaffe_.)

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,--(_Shakespeare_.)

For we the same are that our sires have been;--(_Knox_.)

Nor is a true soul ever born for naught,--(_Lowell_.)

Yet millions never think a noble thought.--(_Bailey_.)

Good actions crown themselves with lasting bays,--(_Heath_.)

And God fulfils Himself in many ways.--(_Tennyson_.)

The world's a wood in which all lose their way--(_Buckingham_.)

A fair where thousands meet, but none can stay;--(_Fawkes_.)

To sport their season, and be seen no more,--(_Cowper_.)

Till tired they sleep, and life's poor play is o'er.--(_Pope_.)

CHAPTER X.

ADVENTURES IN MOSQUITO-LAND.

At the close of the school in July, 1870, a friend of mine, Doctor B----, of Boston, and I, attracted by the alluring prospectus of a new town near Plymouth, North Carolina, visited that place via the Merchant's and Miner's steamship line.

I wrote an account of this pleasure excursion, which was widely copied by northern newspapers in which I figured as the professor and he as the doctor, while both of us combined were called the "Shoo-Fly Club." I quote some extracts from the description of this remarkable excursion.

"On the early morning after our arrival in the Southland, doctor and professor, after a brief sojourn in the arms of Morpheus, awoke to a contest which was enough to daunt the stoutest heart.

"Mosquitoes to the right of them, mosquitoes to the left of them, black flies above them, black flies beneath them, buzzed and stabbed with a vengeance. We lay under our netting appalled at the profanity and ferocity of our foes, caught in a trap from which there seemed to be no escape. The breakfast-bell rang and rang, but we dared not venture out among our bloodthirsty foes, for an array of bristling bayonets was thrust through the bars long enough to hang our clothes on, and fierce enough to suck every drop of blood from our trembling limbs, and our only consolation was that our invariable diet of 'hog

and hominy' had so reduced the vital fluid, that our tormentors would starve though we were slain.

"At length a brilliant thought flashed across the mind of the doctor. 'The shoo-fly--the shoo-fly,' said he; 'why didn't we think of that?' and out he went for his carpetbag, pulled out some suspicious looking bottles labeled with the mystic words, and made for the bed, entirely covered with a ferocious cloud of the aforesaid 'skeeters' and flies stabbing him for dear life. We then proceeded to anoint our bodies with this preparation, which the doctor declared to be a panacea for all human ills; then completely clad in our armor, we sallied forth to the crusade. Down came the fiends; they cared not for 'shoo-fly,' cared not for blows, and our visions of fortunes to be realized from our new discovery vanished away, but not so our tormentors.

"Regardless of Mrs. Grundy, regardless of everything save life, the professor fled, down over the stairs he fled, pants and unmentionables flying in the air, to the astonishment of the contraband servant girls, for the bath-house--here at length plunged beneath the flood he found relief. After copious ablutions the professor went back for his friend, but the valiant doctor had retreated behind the bars, resolved there to starve rather than again to face his foes.

"After much parleying the doctor's desire for hog and hominy overcame all his fears, and the club marched to breakfast. Here two servant girls armed with long fans, fought a cloud of the famished varmints, while the club swallowed hoe cake covered with a copious lather of the flies of the season. At length our appetites or rather we ourselves, were conquered, and retired in disgust, leaving our foes to bury their dead and divide the spoils of war.

"Our host, who is a true gentleman from Pennsylvania, then ordered the darkies to harness the span. After the inevitable delays which always attend everything that the fifteenth amendments have undertaken to do, we rode out to view the country; and we now congratulated ourselves that our troubles were at an end, but they had but just commenced. Our host had a lame hand, and the professor volunteered to drive; our friends, the varmints, now confined their kind attentions almost exclusively to the horses, which they butchered unmercifully. Oh, such roads! Boys of New England, if you sigh for 'sunny' North Carolina, go; go by all means, and you will return satisfied that old Massachusetts, with all its east winds is a paradise compared with what we saw in the 'old North State,' or in the 'Old Dominion.'

"But to our journey. The horses floundered through quagmires covered in some places with logs, which toss and tumble you till every bone aches, floundered and swam through streams reeking with scum from the cypress swamps; the roads are about six inches wider than your carriage, and the professor found himself obliged to avoid the sharp corners of fences, on either side the deep ditches on whose very edge ran the wheels; to urge his horses over stumps and fallen trees; to whip them over long snouts of prostrate pigs who refused to budge an inch; to jump them over chasms running dark and deep across his path and to spur them down sharp, perpendicular pitches which threatened to break every bone in his body.

"Here and there we saw a few logs piled up together, flanked by mud and sticks, and dignified by the name of house; the naked piccaninnies rolled in the dust, and the poor-white scowled as he lifted his hat,

while we worried our miserable way along.

"Now, by the departure of our friend to look after his business, the doctor and the professor were thrown upon their own resources for enjoyment. After shooting at the wild pigs for a while, finding there was great danger of their being melted down into their boots, they threw off their clothes, and regardless of moccasins, regardless of spiders and the whole race of poisonous vermin, they plunged to their necks into the ditch by the roadside. For long weary hours we wallowed till the welcome form of our host appeared, and we recommenced the pitching and stumbling of the dangerous return voyage of this, our pleasure trip.

"For miles the tall, slender pine and cypress-trees festooned with moss and enormous Scuppernong grape-vines, were unbroken by a single clearing or a single shanty. The Scuppernong grapes, by the way, are a great luxury; from these are made a wine equal to anything that can be found (we believe) in the world. One vine is found on Roanoke Island, which is two miles in length, covers several acres of land, and was planted by Sir Walter Raleigh's expedition, centuries ago. For miles that afternoon, we wandered up and down the country seeking for water fit to drink and finding none; looking at the droves of rollicking darkies, making collections of souvenirs, gazing at the good-looking crops of corn, cotton, sweet potatoes, and still fighting the aborigines, the flies.

"We have seen some toothsome things in the South, some beautiful scenes, but at this season of the year, at least, the flies and mosquitoes ruined all as thoroughly as the harpies of olden times defiled the feast of the wandering Trojans.

"The great gala-day of Jamesville has dawned, to-day the great Norfolk steamer honors the town with its presence; everybody (and some more) comes down to the wharf to see the wonderful sight. Here are groups of 'F.F.'s' puffing their long pipes and talking the everlasting 'd--n nigger'; there are crowds of 'fifteenth amendments' laughing and frolicking like children, and here, too, the flea-bitten, mosquito-stabbed, black-fly tortured Doctor B. and Professor F., looking northward as the pilgrim to his loved and far-off Mecca. A scream, a hurrah, a waving of handkerchiefs, and away we go out of the howling wilderness, all that is left of us, and but little indeed that is.

"The Astoria, is but a wretched tub, and we crawl along at the rate of four or five miles per hour, halting here and there to avoid the wrecks of the war, panting for breath, longing, 'as the heart panteth for the water-brook,' to see once more the shores of our beloved New England. Never will this excruciating sail be forgotten. All day--all night, for long, long, weary hours, the wretched little steamer groaned and screamed its melancholy way over the yellow, nasty Roanoke.

"Hour after hour we sat gazing at the tall cypress-trees and the long trailing mosses, looking like the pale sickly shrouds enveloping a dead and ruined world. Here and there we saw huge nests of the size and shape of a barrel, and near, on the ruined branch of a lightning-struck tree, perched on its topmost bough, the great bald eagle of the South, keeping his sleepless watch and ward, while the wife-bird tended the household gods below. Deadly moccasins and

huge turtles lay listless in the sun, and hundreds of bushels of blackberries were wasting their sweetness on the desert air. Now and then there came to us like an inspiration from heaven the ecstatic music of the mockingbird, carrying shame and despair to the breasts of all the other warblers of the aerial choir.

"Nothing could be more inspiring than the notes of this charming singer, as we listened to them here amid these melancholy swamps exhaling the sickly miasma beneath this blighting sun, with not a breath of air to lift the blood red banners of the trumpet creepers, or to cool the fevered brow. Melancholy waitings are heard from the swamps, and the waves in parting, look like fields of fire. The winds come to us, but with them no refreshing, for they came over mile after mile of suffocating, reeking lagoons, stifling with the hot breath of the miasma.

"Every now and then the Rip Van Winkle machinery breaks down, and for hours we are motionless, listening per force to the terrific cursing and pounding in the Vulcanic realms below. At length the sun, not like the rosy-fingered Aurora, daughter of the dawn, but like a huge red monster intent on devouring the world, shoots at us his blighting, withering lances of scorching heat. We touch once more at Plymouth, which greets us with its usual entertainment of murderous fleas, death-dealing watermelons and chain-lightning whiskey. Our ten minute touch here lengthened into three horrid sweltering hours owing to the fact, that the intelligent contrabands were paid by the hour for 'toting' the cargo; but off we are at last, thank heaven, and at length we enter the great canal leading to the North River of Norfolk.

"With chat and jest we were worrying away the leaden-winged hours, when suddenly thug, splash, and like a huge turtle we were floundering in the mud. 'No moving,' said the captain, 'till the tide comes up;' and so for three mortal hours we lay stuck in the mud at the edge of the great dismal swamp of Virginia. 'Ah,' said the mate, 'there is the scene of many a horror, there the nigger was torn limb from limb by the bloodhounds, there the runaway slave chose to endure starvation and death amid deadly snakes and miasma rather than comfort in bondage; there I myself saw crowds of black men swinging from limb to limb like monkeys over reeking scums to their fever-haunted dens to escape the lash.'

"Thus was the story of Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe verified by one of Virginia's own sons. All the fearful word paintings of Dred floated again before our mental vision, and we thanked God that the old horror of slavery is passed, and that the old flag now floats indeed 'o'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.'

"But these hours of waiting, like all things earthly, at length had their end, and just as the moon gilded the cypress-trees with golden glory, the wheels began to move and we again worried our tortuous way up the North River. 'Ah,' said the melancholy-looking man who had been long gazing in silence at the sad waves below, 'alas, here I am, friendless and alone in this wretched country, peddling beeswax and eggs for hog and hominy, chills and fever; but I was once a schoolmaster with \$1,200 a year, down in Connecticut; wine and women did it. But,' said he, 'I'll be rich yet--I've got it--I've discovered perpetual motion, and the world will honor me yet.'

""Wish you would apply it to this old tub at once,' said the

professor; and the forlorn peddler went his way to cherish visions of coming glory. Just then we were electrified by a cheer from the doctor, as the lights of Norfolk flashed over this splendid harbor, yet to float the commerce of a great city.

"We bade farewell without a single regret to the old tub _Astoria_, and entered the narrow streets, reeking with the horrors of a thousand and one stenches, stumbling over the prostrate forms of sleeping negroes to the hotel, where we indulged once more in the luxury of a bath, which the nasty water of North Carolina had forbidden for many weary days. Suddenly the city was aroused by the roll of drums and the shouts of hundreds, calling to a mass meeting in Court House Square. Thither we followed the crowd, listening for awhile to the blatant Southern orators roaring about the future greatness of the 'Mother of Presidents,' deploring the reign of carpet-baggers and calling for a white man's government amidst the shouts of the great unwashed; while the sons of Ham looked silently and sullenly on.

"We gladly responded to the steamer's shrill call and sailed away to our home in the great and glorious North."

CHAPTER XI.

IN ARCADIE.

I gladly returned, like a tired child, to the kindly faces and hearty greetings of my loving and much loved father, mother, brothers, green fields, and all the beautiful children of summer.

"Born where the night owl hooted to the stars,
Cradled where sunshine crept through leafy bars;
Reared where wild roses bloomed most fair,
And songs of meadow larks made glad the summer air,

"Each dainty zephyr whispers follow me,
Ten thousand leaflets beckon from each tree;
All say, 'why give a life to longings vain?
Leave fame and gold: come home: come home again.'

"I hear the forest murmuring 'he has come'
A feathered chorus' joyous welcome home;
Each flower that nods a greeting seems a part
Of nature's welcome back to nature's heart."

The old home was much changed, and for the better. With much patient toil, the unsightly rocks and stumps had been removed from the fields which sloped gracefully to the little river and were covered with tall, waving, luxuriant grasses, starred with buttercups, clover, and daisies. The dilapidated house and barn had given place to modern buildings; apple, pear, and peach-trees, covered with fragrant blossoms were substituted for their decayed and skeleton prototypes; the narrow, crooked, muddy lane, where horses and wagons had struggled through the knee-deep, and often hub-deep sticky clay, had become a firm and fairly straight highway.

My house in the tree on the hilltop, where I had often rehearsed my orations and sermons in such stentorian tones that the amazed cows lifted their tails on high and took to their heels, welcomed me back embowered in leafy new-grown branches.

My second brother, realizing that as "unto the bow the cord is, as unto the child the mother, so unto man the woman is--useless one without the other," had taken unto himself a good wife, the daughter of the deacon, our next neighbor. My mother thus had a much needed helper, as their farms, like their owners, were joined in wedlock.

[Illustration: I Rehearsed My Orations with Startling Effect.]

The worthy deacon and my deeply religious father alternately led the family devotions, and peace and comfort prevailed. The mowing machine, horse-hoe, corn-planter and power-rake dispensed with the drudgery of the scythe and back-breaking hand tools. A protective tariff had set the mill wheels rolling in the neighboring cities, thus furnishing excellent markets for all the products of the farm. The sky-scraping shoe manufactories, where men, like automatons, delved night and day for a few weeks and then leaving them to semi-starvation for the rest of the year, had not yet arrived.

One of my brothers had, like most of the farmers of that day, his little shop where in winter he coined a few hundred dollars making boots and shoes, and where I earned many precious pennies, blackballing the edges and occasionally pegging by hand, all of which is now done by machinery.

We could now afford occasional holidays, when we all gaily sailed down the river, dug clams, caught lobsters in nets, regaled ourselves with toothsome chowders, broils and stews in the open air, and had many rollicking good times swimming in the breakers, frolicking, old and young, like children. We pitched our tents on old Bar Island, slept on the fragrant hay at night, played ball, and renewed our youth inhaling deep draughts of the salty wind which bloweth in from the sea.

When sailing home one day with a wet sheet, a flowing main, and a breeze following far abaft, we espied a boat submerged to the gunwhale floating out to sea. Throwing our yacht up into the wind, we took the craft in tow to the landing, and were surprised and delighted beyond measure to find it nearly half full of fine large lobsters, held there by a wire netting. For weeks we and all the neighbors held high carnival boiling and eating the luscious crustaceans.

We had much merriment one day on a fishing excursion at the expense of a parsimonious member of our crew. At first he alone pulled in the much prized tomcods and flounders. "Well," said he, "I think we better go in, each one for himself." "All right," was the reply, but soon stingy ceased to catch any, while the rest of us pulled in the fish as fast as we could throw the hooks. Mr. Greedy looked very solemn, and at last, unable to repress his selfishness longer, shouted: "I think we better share all alike!" "Too late," was the chorus, and while he carried home but a beggarly string, the rest rejoiced in our great abundance.

These seem like little incidents, light as airy nothings, but they come back to memory in the twilight of life when other and greater events are all forgotten.

When the crops were all harvested, and the winds and snows of winter shut me out from my woodland, river, and seashore haunts, I grew weary of the monotony of the indoor country life, and once more went to the city of Boston in the endless quest of the unattainable.

Restless as the sea, we are never satisfied this side the stars; but we are all looking forward to that sweet by and by, "as the hart panteth for the water brook."

I shall be satisfied, not here, not here
Not where the sparkling waters fade into mocking
sands as we draw near,
Where in the wilderness each footstep falters,
I shall be satisfied; but, oh, not here.

Not here, where every dream of bliss deceives us,
Where the worn spirit never finds its goal,
But haunted ever by thoughts that grieve us,
Across our souls floods of bitter memories roll.

Satisfied, satisfied, the soul's vague longing,
The aching void, which nothing earthly fills,
Oh, what desires upon my mind are thronging,
As my eyes turn upward to the heavenly hills!

Shall they be satisfied, the spirit's yearning,
For sweet communion with kindred minds?
The silent love that here meets no returning,
The inspiration, which no language finds?

There is a land, where every pulse is thrilling,
With rapture, earth's sojourners may not know,
Where heaven's repose the weary heart is stilling,
And peacefully earth's storm-tossed currents flow.

Far out of sight, while yet the flesh enfolds us,
Lies that fair country, where our hearts abide,
And, of its bliss, naught more wondrous is told us,
Than these few words, I shall be satisfied.

CHAPTER XII.

FROM PHILISTINE TO BENEDICT AND A HONEYMOON.

The fates, who lead the willing-and drive the unwilling, guided me to the old time firm of B. & T. publishers. They were overwhelmed with applications from the great army of the impecunious, and did not wish to pay any more salaries; but "mercy tempers the blast to the shorn lamb," and they persuaded me, by a tender of large profits on their Worcester's Dictionaries, to strike out on my own hook and endeavor to induce a reluctant public to buy these instead of the popular dictionaries written by "Noah Webster who came over in the ark."

The special prices granted by the publishers enabled me to undersell

the wholesalers, and by securing their adoption as regular text-books by school boards, I made more money than ever before in my life, sometimes from \$25 to \$100 per day, consequently the firm finding I was filling the markets and my own pockets so that they had no sales at regular prices, hired me at a liberal salary as representative of all their publications.

In this business I won my "double stars," although the competition was intense. I often found as many as twenty agents at the same time and in the same town, log-rolling with school committees for the adoption of their books, the merits of the publications "cut but little ice." Nearly every school official "had his price," wanting to know what there was in his vote for him, and the agent who best concealed the bribery hook by dining and wining teachers and committeemen, filling their libraries with complimentary books and their pockets with secret commissions, "caught the most fish."

When among Romans, I was, much to my disgust, obliged to do as Romans did. I would often go to cities where my opponent's readers or arithmetics had been adopted the night before, point out the defects of rival publications, give an unabridged dictionary to each official, offer a ten per cent. commission to the "king pin," take the board in a hack to their headquarters, secure a reconsideration, telegraph for my books, and the next day with express wagons and helpers, put our readers into every school in the town.

This was sharp practice, prices were cut, until finally, we gave new books in even exchange for old ones, trusting to future sales to reimburse us, but when they needed another supply, they would swap even with another publisher, so that our bread cast upon the waters never returned.

We often secured "louder calls" for influential teachers and clergymen in reciprocation for their votes, bought anything they had to sell at their own prices until many publishers became bankrupt; the big fish swallowing the little ones, and then came the survival of the longest purse.

One evening, after my day's work in the city of G--was ended, being lonesome in my hotel, I thought of a family residing there who had a summer residence in R---, and concluded to renew my acquaintance with the eldest daughter with whom I had enjoyed many rides and sails, and to whom I had quoted many romantic poems the previous season.

With fear and trembling, for I was always a bashful youth, I rang the door bell, and was ushered into the parlor where I caught my first glimpse of a fair-haired, rosy-cheeked, graceful younger sister to whom, at a glance, I knew I was married in heaven.

Whence came that vital spark blending our souls in one? Had we lived and loved on some fairer shore? Who can tell? Had our spirits been wandering through the universe millions of years seeking each the other, nor finding rest until we met? Only the angels know.

All we knew and all we seemed to care to know was that at last each had found the "alter ego" for which it pined. There were no others on earth--father, mother, sister, brothers, came and went almost unheeded. Strange as it may seem, on this evening of our first meeting, we told each other the old, old story, first told in Eden,

reiterated by millions since, and will continue to be rehearsed until Gabriel through his trumpet sounds the final love song to the world.

With favoring winds, o'er sunlit seas,
We sailed for the Hesperides,
The land where golden apples grow;
But that, ah that was long ago.

How far, since then, the ocean streams
Have swept us from that land of dreams,
That land of fiction and of truth,
The lost Atlantis of our youth.

Ultima Thule, utmost isle,
Here in thy harbors for a while,
We lower our sails; awhile we rest
From the unceasing, endless quest.

For a long time I had divided homes and a divided heart, one at the old home with the old folks, the other in the city by the sea.

In our new-born and first-born enthusiasm, we applied to Mary's parents for an early union of hands as well as hearts; but they wisely insisted upon a year's interim, promising that, if at the end of this trial time our ardor had not cooled, they and the minister would "bless you my children," and our hearts should beat as one forevermore.

The course of true love never did run smooth, and when the claiming day arrived, Mary's mother told me that she had been credibly informed that another girl had a prior claim to my promised hand. I protested in vain, and, as the daughter was invisible, I left the house in a rage.

A week, which seemed like a century, passed by on leaden wings in which I strove to drown my sorrows in the "flowing bowl" of hard work, and foolish declarations that "I didn't care"; then came a kind letter from Alderman B---, gracefully apologizing for his wife's mistaken assertions, stating that "Mary was giving them no peace day or night," and inviting me to call at my earliest convenience.

The very next train took me to the old familiar trysting-place, once more the white-winged dove of peace brooded over the B--mansion, and we all, especially the parents, fully realized that in order to appreciate heaven we must have at least seven days of hell.

Shortly after, at the home of the bride's parents, we twain were made one in the presence of numerous friends and presents; the old shoes and rice were duly showered, and we were off for a month's tour, and a lifelong honeymoon.

During this wedding tour, at the request of my employers, I combined business with pleasure, the firm generously paying all our expenses, and continuing my salary.

We visited many cities, greatly enjoying their varied attractions; but the business part of our journey, which was collecting large sums of money due for books, was not particularly delightful, as the banks had all suspended specie payments as a result of the "green back craze,"

and I was often obliged to resort to legal measures and attachments of property, to secure from reluctant book sellers the sums long overdue.

At one hotel we met with an adventure which well-nigh proved serious. I was awakened at night by the flash from a bull's eye lantern, a sense of suffocation and a scream from my wife. A masked burglar was before me, pressing to my face a handkerchief saturated with chloroform, and endeavoring to take from under the mattress a large sum of money which I had collected the day before.

"No noise," said he, "your money or your life."

"All right," said I quietly, "I'll get it for you." He stepped back a pace, I quickly pulled from under the pillow my self-cocking revolver, and fired in rapid succession.

His pistol exploded at nearly the same time, he dropped to the floor, his light vanished, and for a time all was darkness and suspense. I expected another bullet any moment, and seeing nothing to fire at myself, feared to jump from the bed lest I be seized by invisible hands of the desperate villain. Then came shouts and pounding upon the door by neighbors aroused by the uproar. Encouraged by the reinforcements, I struck a light but the ruffian had escaped through the open window on to a piazza roof, thence by a pillar to the ground.

Then we were besieged by excited inquirers, and the rosy-fingered Aurora, daughter of the dawn, appeared before the calm which succeeded the storm.

Shortly after our return from this journey, a great light went out on earth to shine in heaven. My wife's father suddenly left the body,--he did not die, for

There is no death, what seems so is transition,
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life Elysian,
Whose portal we call death.

Alderman B---- was a gentleman of the old school, a loving father, a very successful business man, managing marine railways, ship-building and repairing, as well as grain mills. We missed him sadly; but were consoled by the reflection that our great loss was his eternal gain.

My eldest brother, and two of my brother Mark's children, at about this time crossed the same bright river and rested under the shade of the celestial trees.

Myself and wife had intended to live in G----, but as her father was gone, and as she had formed a strong mutual attachment for my family, my wife the following summer took much pleasure in building a handsome cottage nearly opposite my father's house, and on a beautiful lot of land given us by my brother. We formed a literary and musical club, which met weekly at our house, making it the social centre of the entire town.

I was elected chairman of the school committee, and proceeded vigorously in a crusade against ignorance; but soon found that the life of a reformer is crowned with more thorns than roses, a thousandfold! I removed incompetent teachers who, by their silly

question and answer methods, were producing parrots--not scholars.

On one occasion, when I substituted a trained normal school graduate for a useless dancing doll who had made herself popular by flattering parents and coddling their children, all pupils were withdrawn from the school. I told the new teacher to ring the bell, take in sewing if she wished, and draw her salary even if she was left alone in her glory; then I notified the parents that unless they at once sent their children to the school, I should have the pupils arrested for truancy, and themselves fined for violating the laws of the state. Moral suasion had failed; but the strong arm of the law prevailed, and they soon acknowledged that the new instruction was the best they had ever had in the district.

Much time had hitherto been worse than wasted by cramming the minds with the jaw-breaking names of unimportant rivers, mountains, descriptions of all the frog ponds in Ethiopia, and other useless trash in the so-called geographies; in memorizing the obsolete rules of duodecimals, compound proportion, etc., in the arithmetic; long-winded, unpractical rules for grammar, etc.

I issued a circular eliminating this trash from the course of study, substituting the practical short cuts of modern business principles, and in this, also, I met with opposition from the "moss-backs," who insisted that what they had learned in the year one was good enough for their children; they wanted no "new-fangled" notions.

They reminded me of the way-back-hard-shell preacher whose hymn book had been stuffed with profane poems by some lewd fellows of the baser sort. He always opened at random and, trusting to divine guidance, read the first hymn that presented itself; he commenced: "We will sing together the one thousand three hundred and forty 'leventh hime."

"All around the cobbler's bench the monkey chased the weasel--"

He was amazed; the congregation was dumbfounded. Taking off his spectacles, wiping them carefully, he put them on his nose again, gazed at the book in consternation: "Well," said he, "I never seed that hime in this yer hime-book before; but the Lord put it in, and we'll sing it whir or no," and proceeded:

"The preacher kissed the cobbler's wife, pop goes the weasel."

As I have said before, it requires a surgical operation to get progressive ideas through our thick heads; but the knife was used freely by me, and I had the satisfaction as well as the odium of infusing much young blood into the worn out educational body during my two years' service as school superintendent in this town.

A few of us wasted our money in building a new church, dedicated to the teaching of the advanced thoughts of the liberal faith; but the people were joined to their idols, and it is now deserted, though the "little leaven has largely leavened the whole lump" of the ancient hell fire theology.

It is very, very hard to endure the slings and arrows of the jealous and envious for whose good you are toiling; to be slandered and reviled by your neighbors whose feeble intellects fail to appreciate

your strenuous efforts to push forward the car of progress in their midst; but the consolations expressed in this poem bring balm to every wounded spirit.

"I know as my life grows older,
And mine eyes have clearer sight,
That under each rank wrong, somewhere,
There lies the root of right.
That each sorrow has its purpose
By the suffering oft unguessed;
But as sure as the sun brings morning,
Whatever is, is best.

"I know that each sinful action,
As sure as the night brings shade,
Is some time, somewhere punished,
Though the hour be long delayed.
I know that the soul is aided
Sometimes, by the heart's unrest,
And to grow, means often to suffer;
But whatever is, is best.

"I know there are no errors
In the great eternal plan,
And all things work together
For the final good of man.
And I know when my soul speeds onward
In the grand eternal quest,
I shall say, as I look earthward,
Whatever is, is best."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE ANGELS OF LIFE AND DEATH.

By and by unwonted silence and anxiety reigned in our house. The family doctor remained all night, then a faint cry was heard, and little baby May came into this world of ours,

"The gates of heaven were left ajar;
With clasping hands and dreamy eyes,
Wandering out of paradise,
She saw this planet, like a star;
We felt we had a link between
This real world and that unseen."

These beautiful lines of one of the sweetest of earth's singers, came to us like a new revelation at the advent of our first-born, as also those other immortal words--

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting,
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.
Not in entire forgetfulness

And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From heaven, which is our home."

Our little vocalist commenced rehearsing for her chosen profession the very minute that she first saw the light, and she certainly continued the development of her lungs with marvelous persistency. Then her numerous grandparents, uncles, and aunts all vied with each other in petting and spoiling the one pet lamb of the several families, and she basked in the sunshine of unlimited affection.

A few bright years sped by, all roseate with love, prosperity and contentment in this happy valley. Then two little cherubs, just alike as "two peas in a pod" came to us at dawn of day, like twin rays from the rising sun, their blue eyes beaming with smiles which have continued ever since.

We named them Ada and Ida: but were obliged to label them to tell "which was which," and said label is essential for distinguishment to this very day, though twenty-four bright summers have passed since the sight of them first gladdened our hearts.

But almost with the sunbeams came the terrible cloud overspreading all our lives. The mother had scarcely welcomed the twin buds of promise, when she faded away like a flower and was

"Gone beyond the darksome river,
Only left us by the way;
Gone beyond the night forever,
Only gone to endless day;

Gone to meet the angel faces,
Where our lovely treasures are;
Gone awhile from our embraces,
Gone within the gates ajar."

There seemed to be no light left on earth; the sun was blotted out forever,

Oh glory of our youth that so suddenly decays!
Oh crimson flush of morning that darkens as we gaze!
Oh breath of summer blossoms that on the restless air
Scatters a moment's sweetness, and flies we know not where!

"A boat at midnight sent alone
To drift upon the moonless sea;
A lute whose leading chord is gone;
A wounded bird that hath but one
Imperfect wing to soar upon,
Are like me
Oh loved one, without thee;"

but the pitiful wailings of the twin girl babies called me back to earth again, and I took up the cares of existence, though they seemed greater than I could bear.

The largest church in the village was filled to overflowing with sincere mourners, for the sweet face of the departed had brought good cheer into many darkened households in our town. All sectarian

barriers were for the time burned away by the flame of sympathy, and wonderful to tell, the Universalist clergyman who married us was allowed to pronounce the eulogy in an orthodox Congregational church.

When the organ pealed the requiem and the choir chanted the ever dear words of the hymn--

"Only waiting till the shadows are a little longer grown,"

and closing with the triumphant expression of a deathless faith; it required but a little imagination to see the light streaming through the open door of heaven, and to hear the responses of the angel choir from the great cathedral on high, and we wended our homeward way thinking not of "dust to dust, ashes to ashes," but of the disembodied spirit to be our guardian angel forevermore.

"Faith sees a star, and listening love hears the rustle of a wing."
Infinitely sad was the passing of our beloved, to those left in the earth-life; but soothingly comes to us the song chanted by the choir invisible whenever a soul escapes the mortal coil:

"Passing out of the shadow,
Into a purer light;
Stepping behind the curtain,
Getting a clearer sight.

"Laying aside a burden,
This weary mortal coil;
Done with the world's vexations--
Done with its tears and toil.

"Tired of all earth's playthings,
Heartsick and ready to sleep--
Ready to bid our friends farewell,
Wondering why they weep.

"Passing out of the shadow
Into eternal day--
Why do we call it dying,
This sweet going away?"

CHAPTER XIV.

TRIBULATIONS OF A WIDOWER.

But we must descend from the sublime to the stern realities of this workaday world. Of all the people on this earth, a lone, lorn widower with three babies on his hands, is the most forlorn and miserable. Take care of them himself he cannot, and if he hires the ordinary woman to do so, she immediately sets her cap for him, and leaves no stone unturned to secure him for a husband, especially if he is possessed of some of this world's goods which she covets with all her mind and soul.

Words are inadequate to describe the annoyances I endured for two

weary years from this class of women, who seemed to be the only ones who would come to a lonely country home to assume such responsibilities and endless labors. The world seemed full of these anxious but not aimless women, who claimed to adore little children; but who really cared for nothing except to capture a "widower with means."

One nurse carelessly slipped on the stairs, and the twins went flying from her arms through the air down the long passageway, apparently to their death; only a miracle saved them. I picked up the little wingless cherubs, scarcely bigger than my fist, and their blue eyes smiled at me, as if they had really enjoyed their aerial flight.

They seemed to have a charmed and charming existence; they were the admiration of all the people far and wide who flocked to our house to see and fondle the really "heavenly twins." My business kept me from home nearly all the time; but my father, mother, brother, and sister-in-law kindly watched my caretakers with argus eyes, and the so-called triplets thrived wonderfully day by day.

Whenever in my absence, my good childless brother and his wife found one of my hired women unworthy, he would tell her to pack her trunk, then he would drive her to the depot, banish her from the town over which he long reigned as chairman of the selectmen and State representative, telegraph me to hunt up another one, and thus the road to the station was nearly worn out, and the railroad receipts were greatly augmented.

One of these women, while I was far away, greatly scandalized the whole town by leaving the "light infantry" to their fate one Sunday, and indulging in the pious delights of shooting wood-chucks. My indignant brother and his father-in-law deacon disarmed the jezebel, made her sleep in the barn that night, sent her off flying the next morning, and personally, tenderly as mothers, watched over the children until I arrived with another nurse.

One woman whipped little May secretly with a stick; but the victim's wonderful lungs aroused my mother who, reinforced by the entire family, overpowered the virago, and sent her off on the next train. It is evident from these thrilling recitals that I was not a good mind-reader of woman character; but they were as sweet as angels when I was at home, and evidently the unwonted self-restraint to thus appear reacted very forcibly when the widower was out of sight.

I vowed in my wrath that I would never again speak to a woman outside my own immediate family. I tried in vain to hire men nurses, and I sympathized with Paolo Orsini, who slipped a cord around the neck of Isabella di Medici, and strangled her; I almost envied Curzon of Simopetra who had never seen a woman. But I soon found that this misanthropy was unjust, that I misjudged the pure depths of life's river by a little dirty froth floating upon the surface.

Women can no more be lumped together in level community than men can be. There is an ample variety of tenacious womanly characters between the extremes marked by Miriam beating her timbrels, and Cleopatra applying the asp; Cornelia, caring for nothing but her Roman jewels; Guyon, rapt in God; Lucrezia Borgia raging with bowl and dagger, and Florence Nightingale sweetening the memory of the Crimean war with philanthropic deeds.

What group of men can be brought together more distinct in individuality, more contrasted in diversity of traits and destiny, than such women as Eve in the garden of Eden, Mary at the foot of the cross, Rebecca by the well, Semiramis on her throne, Ruth among the corn, Jezabel in her chariot, Lais at a banquet, Joan of Arc in battle, Tomyris striding over the field with the head of Cyrus in a bag of blood, Perpetua smiling on the lions in the amphitheatre, Martha cumbered with many cares, Pocahontas under the shadow of the woods, Saint Theresa in the Convent, Madame Roland on the scaffold, Mother Agnes at Port Royal, exiled DeStael wielding her pen as a sceptre, and Mrs. Fry lavishing her existence on outcasts?

CHAPTER XV.

FAITH SEES A STAR.

One day I was introduced by a friend to a very attractive lady school-teacher, who combined with superior domestic training, elocutionary and musical accomplishments. She was so sincere and sympathetic that I found myself almost unconsciously expressing the same sentiments that I had spoken to another long ago in the city by the sea.

The love which I supposed had passed on forever to the other world, seemed to be sent back to me through the opening clouds of evening by my self-sacrificing spirit bride, to give to another who would love and cherish the helpless little ones who so needed a mother's care.

I poured forth all my sorrows, troubles, perplexities and needs to a congenial, sympathetic spirit, and she consented to go to my home and take up the burdens which the ascended mother had been required by the angel-world to lay down.

On the arrival of the new housekeeper, order was evolved out of chaos; the children received the best of care, and the horse a much needed rest after his arduous labors in carting to and from the depot the numerous hired women who had been "weighed in the balance and found wanting." In the following month of roses, Lillian concluded that my "first glance" attachment was reciprocated; we were married in her father's house at Allston; we enjoyed a brief tour of the White Mountains, and then settled down in our cottage to our life work. The peace of God, which always comes, sooner or later to those who strive to do their duty, was ours, and the inspiration of Whittier's sweet poem "My Psalm" brought infinite consolation to our blended lives.

"I mourn no more my vanished years;
Beneath a tender rain,
An April rain of smiles and tears,
My heart is young again.

"All as God wills, who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold,
And knoweth more of all my needs
Than all my prayers have told.

"All the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm,
And all the angles of its strife
Slow rounding into calm.

"And so the shadows fall apart,
And so the sunbeams play;
And all the windows of my heart
I open to the day."

CHAPTER XVI.

ON THE POLITICAL STUMP.

I had always been somewhat prominent in politics, being President of the Republican Club in our town, and that autumn I was hired by Dr. George B. Loring to conduct his campaign for the position of Representative in Congress; this I accomplished so successfully that Judge Thayer, the chairman of the State Committee, hired me to stump the Commonwealth against General Butler and in favor of the Hon. George D. Robinson as candidate for Governor. This campaign will long be remembered as being the most fiercely contested of any in the political history of Massachusetts, and many incidents in my career as a public speaker are much pleasanter in the reminiscence than in the endurance. One will suffice by way of illustration.

Free speech was not tolerated by our frantic greenback opponents, and stale eggs with decayed cabbages hurled at the heads of Republican orators were the strongest arguments used by the General's admirers to combat our appeals for protective tariff and sound money. At a meeting of our state committee in Boston, Judge Thayer announced that General Hall of Maine, one of our most brilliant speakers, could not reach Rockport, where he was billed to hold forth, before ten o'clock that evening, and called for volunteers to hold the audience for two hours. Rockport was almost solid for Butler, and his friends had declared that no Republican should speak there, consequently no one volunteered. At last, the Judge, in despair, said:

"Foss, will you go?"

"I shall obey orders," was my reply, amid cheers of the much-relieved shirkers, and I bolted for the train.

On arriving at my destination, I found the station crowded with a howling mob, and the Republican town committee were frantically shouting: "General Hall, General Hall!" "Here," said I, and only by the vigorous aid of the clubs of the police was I hustled through the embattled hosts to a hack, which took me to the hall where I walked on the shoulders of a friendly uniformed club to the platform, which I finally reached with torn apparel and in a condition of almost physical and mental collapse.

The "hail to the chief," by the band was drowned by the cat-calls: "Put him out!"--"Duck him!"--"Ride him on a rail!" etc., etc., Yells

of the Butlerites who had packed the hall. At last I got my "mad up," and rising, I lighted a cigar, puffed vigorously, and smiled upon my uproarious foes. This astonished the "great unwashed," and a big Irishman jumped on the stage, shouting:

"Shut up, shut up, byes! Let's hear what the cuss has to say; he's a cool un."

There was silence. Taking out my cigar, I laughed long and loud.

"What you laughing at?" howled the mob.

"This reminds me," said I, very slowly, "of a little story."

"Out with it," was the response.

"When I was a teacher in Marblehead," drawled I, "I had occasion to wallop a boy with a cowhide. I made him touch his toes with his fingers and laid on the braid where it would do the most good; the more I whaled him the more he laughed. I laid on Macduff with a 'damned be he who first cries hold, enough,' determination, and yet he laughed. 'What you laughing at?' cried I. 'Oh, ha, ha, ha, you're licking the wrong boy,' giggled the unspeakable scamp. It's just that way here. You gentlemen are licking the wrong boy; I am not General Hall, at all, I am Lieutenant-General Ulysses S. Grant." The crowd roared: "He's a good un, let's hear him--ha, ha, ha, he's a good un," and for two hours I had as good-natured an audience as you ever saw.

"You say you don't want a protective tariff; you don't want sound money. Well, you remind me of the man who killed his father, mother, brothers, sisters, and when condemned to death he begged the judge to have mercy upon a poor orphan. You have killed the tariff twice, and nearly every mill wheel stopped, and you and I had to beg from door to door or live on dry crackers and shin-bones. Do you want that kind of provender again? Butler says, 'give us greenbacks by the ton, and everybody will be rich.' You tried that once and you carried your money to market in a bushel basket, and brought back the dinner you bought with it in a gill dipper. Do you want any more such times?"

"Be Gorrah," cried my big Irish friend, "that's so: I rimimber it well. I'd forgut it; the bye's right, he is."

"Yes," I yelled, "Butler says he'll leave the Republican party out in the cold. It reminds me of the old farmer who rushed outdoors in his bed-shirt, bareheaded and barefooted in winter, grabbed a barking dog who was disturbing his rest, by the ears; his wife came down to hunt him up. 'What on airth, father, you doin'?' she cried, as she saw his knees knocking together, and his teeth chattering with the cold. 'I've gut the cuss,' he shouted, 'and I'll hold him here till he freezes to death.'

"You'll hold your employers out in the cold, will you? Well, who'll freeze to death first if you stop the factories? The owners who have plenty of money, or you who are dependent upon the work they give you for every cent you get? General Butler who lives in a palace, and drives a kingly equipage tries to frighten you by painting the bugaboo; 'the rich growing richer, and the poor growing poorer,' that soon a half-dozen plutocrats will have all the money there is in the world, and then the rest of the people will all starve. It reminds me

of the old farmer who set up such an outrageous looking scarecrow in his field that the crows not only let his present corn alone, but they actually brought back in their terrible fright all the corn they had stolen in the previous ten years. Are we craven crows to be scared by such windy effigies?"

Thus having caught their attention by light weight stories, I gave them broadsides of facts and arguments until I won the greatest political fight of my life. We won a famous victory; the workers, as usual, were soon forgotten; the elected exulted in their brief authority; the defeated at once began log-rolling for the next election, and so the office hunting strife goes on forever. After this I resumed the work of my crusade against ignorance and bad literature, having had my pockets well filled by those who are always eager to trade money for fame.

Our home was three miles from the railroad station, and the wintry winds with deep snows made the frequent journeys to and fro over the bleak, uncomfortable country roads, extremely cold and often hazardous.

I had endured for years these alternate freezing and roasting rides for the pleasure of living near the old folks; but now the numerous colds and coughs resulting from the exposure drove me to move nearer to the depot, and we bought a large three-story house with barn and fourteen acres of land on High Street in the city of N----.

We rejuvenated our old castle with paint, new boiler and paper, letting loose upon our devoted heads numerous fevers and other diseases which generations had stored up on the walls, all eager for new victims. Strange it is, that all bad things are so contagious and so long-lived to punish the innocent for the sins of the guilty.

Upon me, the descendant of a long line of farmers, fell the agricultural fever, and I broke my own back as well as that of the hired man, cultivating that sterile soil where my potatoes cost me about a quarter of a dollar a piece, and each blade of grass, sickness and much hard-earned cash. We made the old place to bud and blossom like the rose, but the game as usual was not worth the candle, and an ulcerated sore throat which some predecessor had breathed upon the paper which we tore off, left me a walking skeleton, when ex-Congressman Loring, then United States Commissioner of Agriculture, came to my relief by appointing me his deputy for Florida at a good salary, to investigate and report upon the developed and undeveloped resources of that State, and its attractions for northern settlers. I gladly accepted this commission to serve my country, for--

Somewhere the sun is shining,
I thought as I toiled along
In the freezing cold of the winter,
Yes, somewhere the sun is shining
Though here I shiver and sigh,
Not a breath of warmth is stirring
Not a beam in the arctic sky.

Somewhere the thing we long for
Exists on earth's wide bound,
Somewhere the heat is cheering
While here winter nips the ground.

Somewhere the flowers are springing,
Somewhere the corn is brown,
And is ready unto the harvest
To feed the hungry town.

Somewhere the twilight gathers,
And weary men lay by
The burdens of the daytime,
And wrapped in slumber lie.

Somewhere the day is breaking,
And gloom and darkness flee;
Though storms our bark are tossing,
There's somewhere a placid sea.

And thus, I thought, 'tis always
In this mysterious life,
There's always gladness somewhere
In spite of its pain and strife;
And somewhere the sin and sorrow
Of earth are known no more;
Somewhere our weary spirits
Shall find a peaceful shore.

CHAPTER XVII.

THAT _EDDYFYING_ CHRISTIAN SCIENCE.

This season there broke out in our community, as elsewhere, what has always appeared to me, to be a distemper, misnamed by its crafty creator, "Christian Science." Unchristian scienceless would be a more appropriate name, as the so-called divine revelation was made to its Eddyfying high priestess about 1800 years after the sublime career of Christ was ended, and its preposterous claims antagonize every principle of modern science.

This craze seized certain discontented young women who studied "Science and Health" under the tutorage of its author, and they soon became too transcendental to perform the useful duties of life, posing as teachers of the "utterly utter." It monopolized the feeble intellects of some farmers' boys, who at once began to try to get a lazy living by sitting beside sick women with their hands over their eyes, ostensibly engaged in prayer, but really endeavoring to prey upon the weak minded.

Some superstitious people who had been long under the care of a regular physician, and who were just at the turning point of receiving benefit therefrom, took an "Eddy sitting" and jumped to the conclusion that said mummery affected a miraculous cure.

As a drowning man clutching at a straw, I confess that I accepted the offer of treatments, made by a pleasant lady "Christian science" doctor. I found it tolerably agreeable to sit by her side, holding her soft hand while she assumed an attitude of supplication, but my malady was in nowise benefited thereby. This amiable lady finally loaned me a

copy of their sacred book called "Science and Health," expressing the opinion that a careful reading thereof would renew my youth and make me a believer in their modern Eleusinian mysteries forever.

I read this preposterous book with all the earnestness and prayerfulness of which I was capable; but found it to be a heterogeneous conglomeration of words--mere words, a hodge podge of all the exploded philosophical, religious, and scientific heresies of the past ages, so cunningly jumbled that the gullible, unable to find any meaning to it, conclude that it is too profound for their comprehension, and unwilling to acknowledge the fact for fear of being called ignorant, solemnly pronounce it to be great.

One quotation will reveal the utter nothingness of this book, from the sale of which "Pope Eddy" is said to have realized, a half-million dollars. Says this modern goddess: "The word Adam is from the Hebrew Adamah, signifying the red color of the ground, dust, nothingness. Divide the name Adam into two syllables, and it reads a dam or obstruction. This suggests the thought of something fluid, of mortal mind in solution."

Like all the other humbugs of superstition, this new doctrine seems to me to contain but a single drop of truth submerged in an ocean of folly. Mary Baker G. Eddy, the great high priestess, claims to possess the power to heal the sick and raise the dead; yet she has retired with much lucre to her palatial residence, lives like a queen, rolling in luxury, refusing to exercise her pretended healing power upon the thousands writhing in agony and whom she claims to be able to cure. Surely her "Key to the Scriptures" should thunder in her ears the anathema, "To him who knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is a sin."

I, too, claim a great discovery, a new "sacred book," which I have been inspired to write, and if people will give it the implicit faith required to benefit by "Christian Science," I will guarantee to cure all mental ills, and to bring eternal peace on earth. I herewith give my revelation to all, without money and without price, in strong contrast to the mercenary methods of the Eddy healers. My "science and health" is _multum in parvo_. Here it is:

Columbus discovered the new world; but his wife discovered the old world. The name of his wife, of course, was Columba, which in Latin, means a dove. Columba, the dove, flew forth from the ark, and so discovered the Eastern Continent. Columbus sailed from G--noa; but Columba sailed from Noah, and when the gods saw her with the olive-branch, they said "blessed be the dove, for whosoever shall receive her by faith into his heart, the same shall be free from unrest and from war forevermore."

Faith can remove mountains, and faith is all there is to "Christian Science," so far as we have been able to ascertain. We concede to its many devotees an almost unlimited amount of this saving grace; but sincerely claim that our "Columba science" will be equally efficient for good if received in the same spirit which has greeted the new gospel promulgated by Saint Mary Baker G. Eddy. _Selah_.

[Illustration: We Steamed up the Lordly St. John's River of Florida.]

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN THE LAND OF FLOWERS.

After these scientific investigations, my wife and I left New England covered with snow and swept by fierce, freezing winds to find this far-famed peninsular basking in delicious sunshine, the air full of the exquisite perfume of orange blossoms and the songs of rejoicing birds. It was an enchanted land, the balsamic odors from the beautiful evergreen pine forests starred by the fragrant magnolia blossoms of spotless white, exorcised the ulceratic demons from throat and lungs.

We feasted upon the delicious fruits and vegetables fresh from the trees and earth, and the returning healthy appetite was refreshed by tender venison, wild turkeys and quails from the woods, nutritious and abundant fish and ducks from the lakes and rivers. It was a new heaven and a new earth, full of gladness and semi-tropical luxuries.

As soon as the hospitable people learned that I represented our beloved Uncle Sam, I was overwhelmed with free passes and free hotels, anywhere and everywhere.

The Count De Barry, who had amassed a vast fortune as the American representative of "Mum's Extra Dry," and who had received numerous valuable seeds and shrubs from our generous department, took us on his palatial steamer for hundreds of miles up the lordly St. John's River, where we feasted our eyes upon acres of wild ducks, pelicans, cranes and many huge, lazy alligators floating on the waves, rejoicing in the life-giving beams of the sun.

The stately trees along the banks, old when Adam was a baby, were covered with flowering vines of wondrous beauty and fragrance; then vast orange groves appeared covered with blossoms, small and ripe fruit all at the same time; numerous herds of cattle standing knee deep in the water, leisurely browsing upon the river plants both on the surface and under the shallow river.

We would anchor, and throwing a clasp-net which spread out on the bottom and then closed like a purse, we pulled in excellent fish by the hundreds; sitting on the canopied deck we shot ducks which the negroes captured in small boats, and soon served cooked for our delectation; pineapples and berries were brought from the shore, in fact, it was a lotus-eater's dream of paradise, and seemed to be a land and a river "flowing with milk and honey."

The words from Willis' confessional came floating to our minds.

"On ocean many a gladsome night,
When heaved the long and sullen sea,
With only waves and stars in sight,
We stole along by isles of balm;
We furl'd before the coming gale,
We slept amid the breathless calm,
We flew beneath the straining sail.

Oh, softly on these banks of haze

Her rosy face the summer lays,
Becalmed along the azure sky
The argosies of cloudland lie;
The holy silence is God's voice
We look, and listen, and rejoice."

When the night fell, and one by one, in the infinite meadows of heaven, blossomed out the beautiful stars, the forget-me-nots of the angels, they seemed so near that you almost expected to touch them with the hand, and the silver moon arising, set the clouds on fire with gladness and "left upon the level water one long track and trail of splendor, down whose stream we sailed into the purple vapors, to the islands of the blessed, to the kingdom of Ponemah to the land of the hereafter."

While thus we dreamed, the balmy zephyr brings from the forecastle to our delighted hearing, the tinkling music of the banjo and guitar, the melody of the singing voices and dancing feet of our freedmen boat's crew. The lines of Whittier were resurrected in our thoughts.

"Dear, the black man holds his gifts
Of music and of song,
The gold that kindly nature sifts
Among his sands of wrong,
The power to make his toiling days
And poor home comforts please;
The quaint relief of mirth that plays
With sorrow's minor keys."

For they sang among others the identical words of the poet's expressive song,

"Ole massa on he trabbels gone,
He leaf de land behind:
De Lord's breff blow him funder on,
Like corn-shuck in de wind:
We own de hoe, we own de plow,
We own de hans dat hold,
We sell de pig, we sell de cow,
But nebber chile be sold.

De norf wind tell it to de pines,
De wild-duck to de sea,
We tink it when de church-bell ring,
We dream it in de dream,
De rice-bird mean it when he sing,
De eagle when he scream,
De yam will grow, de cotton blow,
We'll hab de rice and corn;
Nebber you fear, if nebber you hear
De driber blow his horn."

And so all too quickly passed that ideal night, without thought of sleep, till the rising sun shot his radiant beams over the great river, when we steamed slowly up to the long pier, and walked under an arch of stately palms to our host's beautiful home, embowered in orange trees and luxuriant trumpet creepers in this summer land of perpetual bloom.

Close by the Count's residence was a lake of sulphur water, gushing from deep down in the earth. Into this we plunged and swam until we seemed to be born again into immortal youth, then on the broad piazza we enjoyed a feast which would have delighted Jupiter and all his gods, every course of which was taken from the adjoining trees, grounds and waters.

We then inspected the great plantation, where was found growing in profusion, everything essential to the wants of the most fastidious of mortals, while the surrounding woods and river teemed with a great variety of fish and game.

I roam as in a waking dream
The garden of the Hesperides,
And see the golden fruitage gleam
Amid the stately orange-trees.

Unfading green is on the hill,
The vales are decked with countless flowers,
While hums the bee, the song birds trill
Sweet music through the sunny hours.

The moss is waving in the gale
From live oak, hickory, and pine,
And draping like a bridal-veil
The beauteous yellow jessamine.

Through countless vistas in the wood
I see the windows of the morn
Ope to the world a glowing flood
Of glory when the day is born.

And when, with robes of Tyrian dye,
The evening comes when day is done,
I see around the radiant sky
A hundred sunsets blent in one.

We parted from our genial entertainer with much reluctance when the superintendent of the railroad claimed us as his guests, and with him, we inspected the famous orange groves along his line, resting on Sunday at a palatial hotel where the St. John's River broadens into the great Lake Munroe.

While at church we were much entertained by the lively, frolicsome manoeuvres of the numerous beautiful chameleons of rapidly changing colors, who greatly distracted the attention of the congregation from the service by their pranks on the walls and decorations.

Directly in front of us was a sleepy, bald-headed man upon whose shining, nodding, snoring pate several flies were resting in quiet enjoyment of the sermon. All at once, this toothsome collection attracted the attention of a very large bright-eyed chameleon admirer who launched himself through the air upon said bald head in pursuit of his dinner. With a yell of fear, the sleeper struck the animal with his huge hand, sending the long tailed frolicsome creature heels over head directly upon the clergyman's manuscript, and the alarmed preacher, in turn, with a smothered imprecation and a sweeping blow, hurled the sprawling legs and elongated tail down upon some frightened children who screamed and tumbled over each other upon the floor in a

struggling heap.

This was too much for the pent-up risibilities of the audience who laughed long and loud, greatly to the disturbance of the solemnity of the occasion. The witty minister remarked that this addition to his flock, like some church members, seemed to care more for the carnal than the spiritual, and proceeded to the thirteenthly division of his discourse.

From here we traveled for hundreds of miles over the flat, monotonous, arid sands of south Florida, where green grass and fresh garden vegetables were unknown, frequently remarking that if we owned these localities and hades, we would give away the former and live in the latter place. But when we retraced our steps, and reached the rich highlands of the northern counties of Marion, Bradford, and Clay, found the earth covered with green grass in winter, the trees beautiful with blossoms and luscious oranges, the air fragrant with rare flowers, and resonant with songs of birds, saw the planters shipping thousands of crates of fruit and vegetables, and finally arrived at the far-famed Silver Springs, it seemed as if we had found Ponce de Leon's fountain of immortal youth.

The crystal clear waters of this wonderful spring, or more properly called lake, gush in immense volumes seemingly from the very centre of the earth, spreading out until wide and deep enough to float a great navy, and are so transparent that multitudes of fishes are seen disporting among marine plants and shells plainly discernible hundreds of feet below.

Here we embarked on a comfortable steamer, and sailed nearly twenty-four hours down the incomparable Ocklawaha River, through scenes that are indescribably picturesque; under arches of gigantic trees covered with sombrely beautiful Spanish mosses and trumpet creeper vines, where all day long are heard the ecstatic songs of mockingbirds, and where flutter the plumages of all the colors of the rainbow.

[Illustration: The Indiscribably Picturesque Ocklawaha River of Florida.]

Swiftly the golden hours fly, as we float over this marvelous river; softly the dusky boatmen chant their love songs, the fires from their "fatwood" cauldron on the upper deck illuminates the stately trees, and the strains of the poet, Butterworth, come plaintively to our mental hearing.

"We have passed funereal glooms,
Cypress caverns, haunted rooms,
Halls of gray moss starred with blooms--
Slowly, slowly, in these straits,
Drifting towards the cypress gates
Of the Ocklawaha.

"In the towers of green o'erhead
Watch the vultures for the dead,
And below the egrets red
Eye the mossy pools like fates,
In the shadowy cypress gates
Of the Ocklawaha.

"Clouds of palm crowns lie behind,
Clouds of gray moss in the wind,
Crumbling oaks with jessamines twined,
Where the ring-doves meet their mates,
Cooing in the cypress gates
Of the Ocklawaha.

"High the silver ibis flies--
Silver wings in silver skies;
In the sun the Saurian lies:
Comes the mockingbird and prates
To the boatman at the gates
Of the Ocklawaha.

"Now the broader waters gleam--
Seems my voyage upon the stream
Like a semblance of a dream,
And the dream my Soul elates;
Life flows through the cypress gates
Of the Ocklawaha.

"Ibis, thou wilt fly again,
Ring-dove, thou wilt sigh again,
Jessamines bloom in golden rain;
And a loving song-bird waits
Me beyond the cypress gates
Of the Ocklawaha."

CHAPTER XIX.

SUNBEAM, THE SEMINOLE.

When I had concluded the recitation of the poem which closes the preceding chapter, a fine-looking gentleman sitting near us arose, and lifting his hat very gracefully, said:

"Pardon me. As a native Floridian, I have much enjoyed hearing you repeat that poem relating to my State."

This led to a pleasant conversation, during which he introduced us to his wife as being one of the aborigines. We expressed much interest in this statement, and finally persuaded him to give us an account of his courtship, which, with some amplifications, was substantially as follows:

It is midnight in the vast everglades of Florida. The mammoth forest trees seem to support the arch of heaven as the pillars uphold the great dome of the nation's capitol. Here and there the century-old orange trees are resplendent with the golden globes of the luscious fruit, and millions of flowering vines beautify even the dead monarchs of the woods.

All these tropical splendors are illumined by the rays of the full hunter's moon, which transforms the trailing streamers of dewy Spanish

moss into long-drawn chains of sparkling silver. From swamp and foliage the voices of the night fill the balmy air with quavering wailings, punctured by the occasional screams of wild-cats and hootings of the melancholy owls. Here in this forest primeval, mid the murmuring pines and star-eyed magnolias, nature rules supreme, uncontaminated by the trammels of civilization.

But what is that? Surely human forms swinging noiselessly from limb to limb over dark pools where the deadly moccasins and ferocious alligators slumber, over stagnant lagoons beautified by great lilies, and densely populated with rainbow colored fishes, and gaily decorated by water-fowl now all motionless in the embrace of sleep, the brother of death.

The moonbeams reveal a band of broad-shouldered, copper-colored aborigines, who once ruled over the whole of this fair peninsular. They are returning, with packs of supplies strapped upon their backs, from a trading journey to the city of Kissimmee, where they have exchanged the fruits of their hunting for many-colored calicos, ammunition, and alas for the once-noble red men! fire-water. They had left their canoes when they could no longer be floated, and are now returning in this, the only possible manner, to their fertile oasis, protected from the white men by many miles of bogs into which all foot travelers would sink to unknown slimy depths and death.

On they come in single file, hand over hand from tree to tree, their long legs dangling in the air, led by Tiger-tail, the chief of the survivors of the most intelligent and powerful of all the Indian tribes. Suddenly the leader stops, gives the low cry of the Ring-dove, which halts his followers, and suspended in air, gazes at the sleeping form of a young white man, reclining, with his rifle beside him, on a hammock which rises dry and grass-covered above the surrounding morasses.

Motioning his band to follow, the chief drops noiselessly beside the sleeper, stealthily seizes the gun, revolver, and bowie-knife of the helpless victim, hands them to others, and shouts "Humph, wake up!" The pale-face reaches for his weapons, and finding them gone, jumps to his feet, gazing without flinching at his stalwart captors.

"Who you be?" grunted the chief. "What for you here?"

"I am Henry Lee of Lawtey," was the calm reply, "and I am hunting."

"Humph, you white man hunt Seminole from earth. You no right here. You my prisoner; follow me, my slave."

As resistance was useless, the youth silently obeys, climbing hour after hour until his arms seemed about to be wrenched from their sockets. At last, just as the rising sun shot his lances of light through the forest's gloom, the chief drops to solid earth, followed by all.

A romantically beautiful scene lies before them. No longer the styx-like waters; the funereal realms of Pluto have vanished, and an elevated plateau appears, partially cleared. Here and there graceful palms, tall, slender cocoanut and orange trees laden with fruit; sparkling springs; abundant harvests of varied crops; picturesque wigwams and huts, fair as the garden of the Lord. A pack of dogs

started to yelp, but at once slunk away at a word from the chieftain, who points to a hut, quietly saying: "Go in there till I call you."

Henry obeyed, and exhausted with his journey, sank quickly to sleep upon the straw-covered floor. At length, when the sun was high in the heavens, he was awakened by a black man, who placed before him some venison and corn bread, then silently withdrew. After satisfying his hunger, he went out to explore.

It was an ideal scene of tropical luxuriance; cattle and sheep were feeding upon the abundant grasses; but they suddenly took to their heels, with uplifted tails and terrified eyes, at the sight of his white face, a spectacle never before seen on this oasis, peopled hitherto exclusively by "Copperheads." Swarms of children were shooting their arrows at deer-skin targets; groups of braves, fantastically attired, lounged under the shade of the wide-spreading umbrella trees, smoking fragrant tobacco in long-stemmed pipes, but they did not deign to give the visitor even an inquiring glance.

Henry interviewed a number of negroes hoeing corn and sweet potatoes, who informed him in broken English that they were the slaves of the Indians; that they had never heard of the civil war, nor of Abraham Lincoln. They claimed to be well treated, and were contented, having plenty to eat and no very severe labor. They cast anxious glances towards the village, and seemed glad when he walked away, saying they had never before seen a white man and thought he must be "big medicine."

The birds were singing gaily, all nature smiled complacently, and he strolled over the flower-bedecked fields into the recesses of the forest, where he seated himself under a blossom-covered magnolia around which twined the fragrant jessamine. He gave himself up to day-dreams. All at once a light, moccasined footfall is heard, and there stepped from the woods an Indian girl, graceful as a fawn, with her head crowned with flowers, and softly singing a strange, sweet song in an unknown tongue. When the stranger was seen she started to flee, but with a smile he beckoned her to stop, which she did, as though hypnotized.

"Oh," she whispered, "you are the pale-face my father has captured; but if Tiger-tail should see me speaking to you, he would kill us both. Such is the law of the Seminoles. No Indian maiden must speak to a white man; but I never saw such as you before."

"But, how happens it," said he, in astonishment, "that you speak my language?"

"My father taught me," was the reply, "he is a scholar; we all speak some American."

"May I know your name?" asked our hero.

"I am Sunbeam, daughter of the Seminole chief."

"And mine is Henry Lee," he replied to her inquiring look. "You are well named," he continued. "I have seen many daughters of the pale-faces; but none so fair and bright as you. Sunbeam, at this my first glance, I love you; can you sometime love me?"

"I do love you now," replied the artless girl; "the Great Spirit tells me to do so; but we must not be seen together; they will kill us, we must part at once."

"Dearest," cried Henry, "when can we meet again?"

"To-morrow at noon," came the impulsive reply. "In my cave there back of that cypress; no one is allowed to enter but me; there I say my prayers, and my father says it is sacred to me alone. Good-bye, Henry," and she sped like a deer into the shades of the forest.

The youth was sincere, for it had flashed upon him like an inspiration when their eyes first met, that she was born for him, and he for her. They were married in heaven, ages ago. It came like a word from the Infinite to these kindred souls. A sudden rent in the veil of darkness which surrounds us manifests things unseen. Such visions sometimes effect a transformation in those whom they visit, converting a poor camel driver into a Mohammed, a peasant girl tending goats, into a Joan of Arc.

This love-flash from the invisible blent these two hitherto widely separated souls into one, even as the positive electricity leaps through the spaces to find the negative, and when met, dissolves the separateness into a harmonious oneness which can never be sundered. The unsophisticated Indian maiden went her way, thrilling with the thought that her heart is in his bosom, and his in hers, useless one without the other.

The white youth was suddenly changed from an idle, wandering, purposeless dreamer, into a fearless lover, ready to face death itself to secure the object of his worship, and he sauntered back to his hut with no flinching from the many dangers which surrounded him.

There a black slave met him, bearing an abundant feast. "Eat," said the negro, "and then go to the lodge of Tiger-tail, the largest in the village, with the skin of a tiger stretched on the door."

As soon as Henry had assuaged his hunger, he hastened to obey the summons. As before, no human being noticed him, and he walked to the wigwam, knocked on the door-post, and answering the "come" from within, entered. To his astonishment, the giant leader was evidently trying to read a newspaper, but took no notice of his entrance for some minutes, when he suddenly said:

"What is this?" pointing to a line of what Henry saw was the message to Congress of the President of the United States. The chief watched closely as his captive slowly read:

"The Seminole Indians have been driven by our troops to their fastnesses in the swamps of the Everglades, and it is for Congress to decide whether they shall be further punished for their outbreak."

The chief slowly rose to his full height, and walked in silence for a long time, when he turned to our hero, and fastened upon him his eagle eyes. "Humph," at length he muttered, "the pale-face rob Seminole of everything else, now he follow us here:--no, the great father must know the truth, you teach me to write him, no white man ever come here and go away to tell, you stay here always; you no speak to any one here but me, you set down, teach me."

For a long time Henry labored hard to show this remarkable savage how to read and write. No teacher ever had a more attentive pupil; but it was very difficult for his untutored mind to master these, to him, puzzling hieroglyphics. At length, Tiger-tail arose, and saying in an exasperated tone:

"Humph! Damn! Me kill something, me mad! You come here every day when I send for you," and seizing his rifle, and pointing the youth to go, he strode savagely away into the woods.

The youth returned to his hut, and wearied with his unusual labors, was soon asleep, dreaming all night of the loved Sunbeam, whom he hoped would soon irradiate the darkness of his life. The hours of the next day dragged away on leaden wings, and the trysting hour drew near; but to his utter disgust, just as he was on the point of going to his beloved, the negro appeared summoning him once more to the chief, and his heart sank with fear that their secret was discovered.

Tiger-tail betrayed no emotion, and for a long time teacher and pupil struggled with their tasks as before, until the Indian, unable to restrain his pent-up restlessness longer, strode away to seek relief in the chase, leaving Henry to wend his way with many watchful glances to the shrine of his worship.

While walking slowly and circuitously to avoid suspicion, and closely scrutinizing the trunks and tops of trees for any spy who might be watching, he noticed a slight movement of the tall grass around a fallen cypress, and rushing to reconnoitre, a warrior leaped to his feet and dashed into the underbrush. Then the youth realized that suspicious eyes were following him, and that he was risking his life to meet the daughter of the chief.

He dared not enter the mouth of the cave; but walked through the thick bushes above it much depressed in spirit, when suddenly he heard his name softly called, and looking downward, saw an opening into the earth large enough to admit his body. "Drop down this way," was whispered, and after assuring himself that no spy was in sight, he obeyed, falling into the arms of the waiting girl.

"Henry," said she, "I was followed; but no one knows of this entrance but myself; close it with this shrub. We are watched, and must never meet here again."

"But, dearest," sobbed the youth, "life is not worth living without you; we must escape together this very night."

"I will go with you to the ends of the earth," was the reply. "I loved you long before you came here; I have the gift of second sight. Months ago I saw you coming to me. I have explored the way to the great river. At midnight, meet me under the great cypress, throw this perfume to the dogs and they will not bark;" she handed him a small vial. "I must go; you follow when you hear the King-dove coo; go to your hut." She embraced him, and was gone.

Soon, he heard the signal, and he cautiously raised himself to the upper air, returned to his wigwam, and was soon enjoying rapturous dreams with his head resting where he knew the rays of the moon would shine into his face to awaken him at the appointed time for flight.

When he peered anxiously through the entrance of his wigwam at a little before midnight, he was appalled at the sight. A multitude of dogs surrounded the hut, ready, evidently by their yelpings, to bring down upon him the whole tribe of Indians, should he try to escape.

"Alas," thought he, "there are battles with fate which can never be won," and for a moment he seemed paralyzed at his doom. Then came to mind a recollection of the perfume given him by his thoughtful Sunbeam, and he resolved to do or die.

Noiselessly as a shadow, he stepped out, hoping to escape the attention of his canine guards; but in a moment, every cur was on his feet and were about to make the welkin ring, when he threw at the leader the contents of his vial. Instantly, all fawned at his feet, and he hastened to his rendezvous.

Not a sound was heard save an occasional snore from some sleeper, and soon he found his faithful sweetheart in the shadow of the century-old cypress. She quickly slung his rifle across his back, fastened about him the revolver and bowie-knife, bound over her own shoulder a bag of provisions; "follow me," she whispered, and away they sped into the vast primeval forest.

For hours they hastened in silence, then the maiden halted at the edge of a dark morass, and whispered: "Here we leave the earth; I know the way," and they launched themselves into the limbs of the trees, clambered hand over hand for a long, long time; when well-nigh exhausted, they dropped down into a little brook, carefully avoiding any contact with the tell-tale earth.

"Quick," said Sunbeam; "we must hasten up this stream which will conceal our footsteps, to the great river, where we can hide and rest in a great hollow tree which I found there," and on they went with their feeble remnant of strength.

At last, just as the rising sun was dispersing the vapors of night, our elopers swung themselves from the brook into the branches of an overarching hollow tree, helped each other to the bottom of this house not made with hands, and soon slept the slumber of utter exhaustion. It was many hours before tired nature's sweet restorer released these two loving children from its embraces, and then it seemed as if all the fiends from heaven that fell had pealed the banner-cry of hell.

The howls of dogs, and the savage war-whoops announced that their enemies were upon them; but undismayed by the terrible dangers, they resolved to die together rather than endure separation.

"My father never loved me," whispered Sunbeam, "because I am a girl, while he hoped for a warrior child; if they find us, kill me; I cannot live without you."

"We will go to the Great Spirit together, beloved," was the calm reply.

Soon they heard the voice of Tiger-tail close to them, talking to his braves. "They no cross river," he said; "all canoes here, dogs no get scent, all back to swamp, we find um there, you, War-Eagle, watch canoes." Again the air resounds with the yells of dogs and warriors, then all was silent.

"War-Eagle hate me," whispered the maiden, "cos I no be his squaw; but we must go before they return." Slowly the lovers pulled themselves upward by the ingrown stumps of limbs, and, concealed in the thick branches, looked around; no one was in sight except the Indian left to guard the canoes, and he was reclining on the bank of the river, evidently exhausted.

Noiselessly they lowered themselves to the ground and approached the recumbent brave, when a loud snore showed that their enemy was in the land of nod. "Take my revolver," said Henry, "and shoot--if we must," then, making a slip-noose of the stout thongs which had bound the provision bag, he deftly slipped it around the arms of the Indian, and with a quick jerk he was firmly bound.

The savage tried to grasp his gun, but, unable, was about to give the whoop of alarm, when the youth clapped his hand over the vast mouth; the red man subsided, was quickly gagged and tied to a tree.

"Now, darling, to our boat," and into it they jumped, and Henry bent to his oars with all his might. On they sped in their light canoe, these two hearts beating as one, towards liberty and the loved ones waiting to welcome them in the white man's home. "Dearest Sunbeam," said Henry, resting for a moment on his oars, "soon you will be the fairest flower in my garden of home."

"Oh, Henry," was the faint reply, "I am but a simple Indian girl, and I know so little."

"But it will be our delight to live and learn together," said Henry, "for--"

"Thou art all to me, love, for which my heart did pine,
A green isle in the sea, love, a fountain and a shrine."

On they glided, out of that paradise of nature, where every prospect pleases, and naught but man is vile. Sunbeam left the place of her nativity without a lingering glance behind, for there she had been nothing but an unwelcome girl.

In a pretty cottage in Lawtey, you may now see Sunbeam, the Seminole, wife of a successful planter, Henry Lee, beloved by all who know her, surrounded by orange groves and fragrant flowers in that land of perpetual bloom.

CHAPTER XX.

A FOUNDER OF TOWNS AND CLUBS.

My ship of life was laden to the water's edge with labors of varying utility. We founded the Apollo Club, a musical and literary organization including in its membership the most prominent men and women of the city; we gave entertainments with our orchestra, singing society, and costumed dramatic stars, which gave us ample funds to pay for numerous delightful steamboat excursions, sleigh-rides and

picnics, while developing our latent talents, and greatly enhancing the social life of our community.

I refer to this with much pleasure, as it led to the formation of similar societies in many surrounding towns, much to the benefit of all concerned. I made an elaborate report of my Florida observations which was printed entire by the United States Department of Agriculture, widely distributed, and stimulated many to benefit their condition by securing comfortable homes in that land of fruits, flowers and delightful climate.

That year the angel world sent us our bright-eyed, smiling little Elizabeth, thus making our trio of sweet singers a quartette to share our joys and lessen our sorrows, coming like the dews from that heaven to which we all return when our mission to refresh and inspire the earth life is ended. It is interesting to note the varying definitions of the word, baby, which have floated down to us in the literature of all nations. Here are some of them which I have culled from various authors:

"A tiny feather from the wing of love, dropped into the sacred lap of motherhood."

"The bachelor's horror, the mother's treasure, and the despotic tyrant of the most republican household."

"A human flower untouched by the finger of care."

"The morning caller, noonday crawler, midnight brawler."

"The magic spell by which the gods transform a house into a home."

"A bursting bud on the tree of life."

"A bold asserter of the rights of free speech."

"A tiny, useless mortal, but without which the world would soon be at a standstill."

"A native of all countries who speaks the language of none."

"A mite of a thing that requires a mighty lot of attention."

"A daylight charmer and a midnight alarmer."

"A wee little specimen of humanity, whose winsome smile makes a good man think of the angels."

"A curious bud of uncertain blossom."

"The most extensive employer of female labor."

"That which increases the mother's toil, decreases the father's cash, and serves as an alarm clock to the neighbors."

"It's a sweet and tiny treasure."

"A torment and a tease,"

"It's an autocrat and anarchist,"

"Two awful things to please."

"It's a rest and peace disturber,"

"With little laughing ways,"

"It's a wailing human night alarm,"

"A terror of your days."

And this final definition which exactly describes each of our quartette,

"The sweetest thing God ever made
And forgot to give wings to."

To crown the honors which this year were thrust upon me, my political party tendered me the nomination for mayor of the city; but when I ascertained the fact that I would be obliged to bribe the 300 roosters on the fence who held the balance of power, and who must be paid two dollars each to persuade them to come off their perch and vote, I preferred the \$600 to the empty honor, and declined.

It is said that dame fortune knocks once at every man's door, but the old woman sent to mine later, her ugly-faced unmarried daughter, mis-fortune. At the request of some of the Boston newspapers, I wrote an account for the press of my Florida journey and observations, which attracted much attention and many callers, among whom were the F---- brothers, of Boston, who painted the attractions of a town of Orange County in such glowing colors, that I was induced to visit said place in summer accompanied by my friend, lawyer S---- of Newburyport.

We found even the summer climate very agreeable the location very attractive, and the general prospects for a northern colony there quite promising. We wandered through the woods far and wide, shooting quail, an occasional wild turkey, caught fish from the numerous beautiful lakes, sleeping sometimes under the pines, then in houses, whose owners were away visiting with no thought of locking their doors in this land where thieving was unknown. We led a real Bohemian life in Arcady, quietly bonding hundreds of acres of land, and having located a hotel and townsite between two charming lakes, leaving a Mr. G---- W---- a friend of the F---- brothers, as superintendent, to secure more lands and to cut avenues, we went home, where we formed a syndicate stock company of which I was elected general manager, with full powers to sell \$50,000 of stock with which to pay for the bonded lands and the building of a hotel.

I sold the stock at \$100 per share, giving one acre of land with each share of said stock. This would have been a very successful enterprise had it not been for the cunning duplicity and greed of our superintendent, who proceeded diligently to "feather his own nest" at our expense. I accomplished my task of raising funds very successfully, and the next winter moved with my family to A----, taking with us a competent engineer, a Mr. H----, to survey and stake the lands.

Here I unearthed the rascality of the superintendent, who, beside

taking our salary and commission for buying lands, had extorted large commissions and bonuses from the sellers, which came out of our funds in increasing the prices for which the lands were charged to our company. In addition to this he had hired a large force of negroes at high wages, on which he drew a secret commission, opened a store, selling so called canned peaches,--which really contained much whiskey and few peaches--to his workmen, and thus getting all their wages.

I at once discharged all the superfluous negroes, built a fine hotel which was soon filled with a superior class of people from the north, set out orange groves for non-resident stockholders, and all would have been well, had it not been for the extraordinary action at the annual meeting of the stockholders.

While I was engrossed with my many duties, the superintendent cunningly went north and secured proxies in his name, and returning, beat me by two votes, secured for himself my position as general manager, and then proceeded to wreck the whole enterprise, much to his own pecuniary benefit, while my friends who had invested on my representations, blamed me for their losses though I was entirely innocent of any wrong whatever.

To cap the climax, this superintendent refused to make an accounting for several thousand dollars with which I had entrusted him to make purchases of lands on my personal account. I secured a warrant for his arrest, chased him half over the county with a sheriff, and brought him to the city for trial. On our way to the hotel, I was set upon by a crowd of roughs who had been dined and wined by said W----, and who threatened to lynch me. I backed up into a corner of the hotel piazza, laid my hand on an imaginary revolver, threatening to shoot, and was defending myself with a whirling chair, when the sheriff's posse rushed to my deliverance in the nick of time, and W---- was forced to hand over my money.

He then made life unbearable by sending negroes at night in my absence to annoy my family, who escaped injury only by the vigorous use of a revolver by my wife who defended the little ones by numerous shots which sent the tormentors flying to the woods. This unscrupulous superintendent secured by his cunning a large amount of our funds; but it was a curse to him for he squandered it in riotous living.

When he married he chartered a large steamer and brass band, took on board a crowd of guests, champagne flowed like water, every luxury was furnished liberally, and the excursion was a prolonged debauch.

To-day this fellow is a fugitive from justice, forsaken by wife and fair weather friends, and thus really, if not literally, is fulfilled the prophecy of the poet,

"Her dark wing shall the raven flap
O'er the false-hearted,
His warm blood the wolf shall lap
E'er life be parted,
Shame and dishonor sit
O'er his grave ever,
Blessing shall hallow it
Never, no never."

CHAPTER XXI.

A MILLION DOLLAR BUSINESS WITH A ONE DOLLAR CAPITAL.

Soon after my encounter at S---- with the unspeakable W----, I met Major St. A----, who gave a cordial invitation to myself and family to become his guests in his new town of T----, with a view to securing our cooperation in the development of his multitudinous schemes. This invitation we accepted, and very early one beautiful morning in March, my wife, four children and myself, with driver and guide, embarked on a "prairie schooner," drawn by three horses, for the promised land.

It was an ideal drive through many miles of fragrant, towering pine trees, fording beautiful lakes, catching fish, shooting game, camping for refreshment on the banks of crystal clear brooks. The oldest girls would ride on the horses' backs, chase quails, pluck the wayside flowers, occasionally watching the flight of paroquettes flashing like diamonds through the air, listening to the mockingbirds filling the woods with their exquisite songs, and inhaling as it were the ether of the immortal Gods, the matchless, perfumed, life-giving Florida air.

All at once, with little warning, as is usual in semi-tropical lands, the night fell, and our learned guide suddenly found that he had lost the trail. The owls hooted, the wild-cats screamed, likewise the "kids," with overpowering fear. We plunged ahead at random, when we suddenly found the water pouring through the bottom of our "schooner." The horses reared and plunged, snorting in terror probably at the near approach of some water snake or alligator.

We might have been all drowned, had we not discovered a lantern hung in a tree by our expectant friends, towards which we steered our course to dry land. By the aid of the light we found the trail, and at length reached the Major's hotel, hungry and tired. Here we found our embarrassed host haggling and swearing with a bearer of provisions who refused to leave the goods until he received his payment therefor.

Our landlord appeared to be "dead broke," but finally persuaded the reluctant provision-dealer to go away with his pockets filled with "I.O.U.'s" instead of cash, and about midnight on the verge of starvation we fully appreciated an abundant feast. We soon found that our, enthusiastic friend was trying to do a million dollar business on a one dollar capital. He was building two railroads, running a steamboat line, a hotel, a sawmill, building a town and a fifty thousand dollar opera house for a one hundred population town, with not a dollar in his pocket.

[Illustration: Flight of the Governor and Staff.]

The next day we sailed on his steamer to meet the governor of the state, and his staff who were invited to attend a ball in his honor. The crew was mutinous on account of receiving no pay, the antiquated machinery broke down every few minutes, and the Major had a fierce quarrel with a negro minister who had paid first-class fare and refused to take second-class quarters, to which all colored folks were forced at the muzzle of the revolver, and a bloody race battle was only avoided by the fact that the negroes were entirely unarmed.

At length, loading the deck with wild ducks, and fish that fairly jumped into the little boat to avoid their enemies, the ferocious gar-fish, we took the governor and staff on board, and floundered back at a snail's pace to T----. At the landing, we boarded a dilapidated street car drawn by mules, for the hotel.

Soon--crash! bang, a rail gave way, sending the dignified governor,--stove-pipe hat flying in the air, coat-tails covering his head,--into a ditch, his long legs kicking frantically to extricate his head from the mud. We rescued him and staff with difficulty from the filth, looking like a bedraggled pack of half-drowned rats.

Finally we reached the hotel, when the colored orchestra from Jacksonville rushed upon our host demanding their pay in advance, with furious oaths and unclassical imprecations. In some way, the embarrassed diplomat silenced their clamors; then the colored waiters struck for their pay, and "razors were flying in the air." The furious landlord at last quieted their clamor with a shotgun, and at about midnight the grand march was sounded, and a nearly famished crowd made desperate efforts to look cheerful and "trip the light fantastic toe." All earthly horrors have an end, and in the wee small hours a starving multitude was treated to a barbacue by our half-crazed host.

Almost every white man in this town sold chain-lightning whiskey, and in our short walk from dance hall to hotel we were obliged to jump over the prostrate forms of drunken darkies.

As in the lowlands, bordering upon large bodies of water, in all tropical and semi-tropical countries, we found, to our horror and dismay, the mosquitoes in ferocious, bloodthirsty swarms which rendered life not worth the living; so, as soon as we could, without seriously offending our host, we took our flight, at least what little there was left of us, to the delightful highlands of Marion County.

Here, free from the horrors of mosquitoes, we recruited our attenuated bodies at the elegant Ocala House, thence by rail to Jacksonville where we took the steamer for home. Off Hatteras we encountered a wild storm which sent our great boat well-nigh to the stars, then with an almost perpendicular plunge, almost to Davy Jones' locker, until, with the nauseating sea-sickness, we were afraid, first that we should die and later we only feared lest we should not die.

At last the young cyclone subsided, and we sailed over a tranquil sea into Boston harbor, thence by rail to our Bay state home. At Jacksonville, by the way, we had an experience quite characteristic of those ante-free-delivery days of old. I went to the post-office for our mail, having but a few minutes to spare before the departure of the north-bound train. To my disgust, I found a line of negroes nearly half a mile in length waiting their turns for calling for letters. One would step to the window and in an exasperatingly in-no-hurry way, say: "Anything for Andrew Jackson, sah?" After a long delay--"no!"

"Do yer 'spect dere may be soon, sah?"

"Did you expect any?" came the reply.

"No sah, but sumbudy might write, sah."

"Gwan, next!" Then some white man in a hurry would step up to next--"here's a quarter for your place, git aout!" The darky would pocket his money with a broad grin, and but for his ears, the top of his head would be an island.

I could not wait, and would not bribe, so went to the door of the office, and kicked and banged furiously. "G'way fum de doo! What de hell you do on de doo'?" came from the inside.

"I'm a government officer from Washington," I shouted. "Open the door or I'll knock it down." Out popped the "cullud pusson" profuse in apologies. I grabbed my mail and rushed for the train in the very nick of time.

CHAPTER XXII.

PENDULUM 'TWINX SMILES AND TEARS.

In many particulars this year of our Lord, 1883, was a sad one for us all. The pecuniary loss, resultant upon the town-building disaster, was severe; but the revelation which came to me of the innate meanness of human nature in matters of money, was the more depressing by far.

It was amazing to hear wealthy people, who had bought of me a few hundred dollars' worth of stock, and who really felt the loss of it much less than they would suffer from a fly bite, whine as if this had reduced them to the direst poverty, and insinuate that I, who had lost manifold more than they, should refund, though the loss was entirely the result of their own stupidity in failing to send me the proxies I had asked for by mail.

We consoled ourselves, as usual, with the knowledge that we had acted honestly and conscientiously towards all, and that the miseries of this short life are "not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us in the near future of the life eternal."

The blue arch above us, ever changing like the sea, has always possessed a peculiar fascination for me, and I never let slip a convenient opportunity to feast my eyes upon it. I was pursuing this favorite occupation one day this year, when an unusually beautiful cloud attracted my attention, and as I watched its rapidly changing forms, there was slowly evolved from it the kindly loving face of my mother. It was no fancy, no distorted figment of a dream. The dear face smiled upon me with angelic sweetness, glanced upward, and was gone; then I knew that I had another guardian angel in heaven.

In a short time, news came from R---- that she who had gladly devoted her life to self-sacrifice for her children, had been relieved from the always weak and suffering body.

Dear, good mother! Her highest and only ambition was to do good; not a selfish thought ever even flitted across her horizon. Frank as the day, constant as the sun, pure as the dew; like our Lord himself, she sacrificed herself for the good of others. Her sons, Richard and Mark, welcomed her at the gates ajar, and she was at rest.

What is death but a journey home?
A perfect rest when the work is done,
A gentle sleep for earth-weary eyes,
And the soul ascends to the azure skies.

We in the earth life went on as best we could. My only brother Joshua sold the old homestead with its burdens, too heavy for him to bear alone, bought our former home for one-half it had cost us, which was much more than any other would pay for it; while we sold our castle and farm which had become a mountain on our shoulders, and went to live with my wife's parents in Boston, where I continued my work of introducing the school text-books which had been sold, and myself with them, to a New York publishing firm.

When the winter winds and snows began to blow, I longed for the balmy zephyrs of fair Florida, and like the summer birds, I once more journeyed southward; there, after a long search for the best throughout the land of flowers, journeying in steam yachts, row-boats, on horseback, and sometimes hand over hand on the branches of trees, over tracks inaccessible in any other manner, I formed another stock company consisting of several financiers who had spent all their lives in Florida, and secured many thousands of acres of excellent lands in the highlands of Marion County, hoping to do good and get good by inducing the surplus population of our cities to go back to the bosom of Mother Earth, where a moderate amount of labor will give them an independent livelihood free from the snow and cold which infest the wintry north, free from the heart-breaking demoralization of begging for work in our overcrowded cities where scores of the poverty-stricken are tumbling over each other in the frantic grabbing for every job of work and every crumb of charity.

Were a mere modicum of the vast sums now worse than wasted in pauperizing the unemployed; a tithe of the money squandered on building palaces for our numberless, ever-begging colleges, devoted to settling the poor upon the unimproved lands in Florida, the dangerous flood of ever-increasing crime, and physical and mental suffering which now threatens the very existence of our republic, would soon vanish from our cities, and thousands of the dangerous classes would become self-supporting, self-respecting, independent men and women.

Were a tithe of the vast sums lavished by our millionaires upon the pictured walls, gorgeously embellished ceilings, overcrowded book shelves of our numerous libraries, and upon the unchristlike towers of unfrequented cathedrals, be even loaned to those who would gladly cultivate the thousands of acres of untilled soil in fair Florida, all the suffering hangers-on for jobs would become successful agriculturists, owning their own farms, buying their own books, and sufficiently educating their own children.

If the money spent every winter in pauperizing the unemployed by giving them free soup, could be devoted to settling colonies upon our uncultivated lands, the vexing problems and contests between labor and capital would be easily solved and obliterated; the unskilled poor would be at once enabled to respond to the call of the poet--

"Come back to your mother, ye children, for shame,
Who have wandered like truants for riches or fame!
With a smile on her face, and a sprig in her cap,

She calls you to feast from her beautiful lap.

Come out from your alleys, your courts and your lanes,
And breathe like your eagles, the air of our plains!
Take a whiff from our fields, and your excellent wives
Will declare it all nonsense insuring your lives."

CHAPTER XXIII.

MONARCH OF ALL HE SURVEYED: THEN DEPOSED.

Here on elevated lands around a pretty clearwater lake, directly on the Florida Central and Peninsula Railroad, and near a famous grotto extending deep into the earth, at the bottom of which, like a well, was an abundance of water containing peculiar fish, near the noted Eichelburger cave, and vast forests of gigantic trees with sloping hills around, we founded the town of B----.

I was elected general manager, and went north to sell the \$100,000 of capital stock, convertible at the option of the holder into our lands at schedule price, leaving a Mr. B---- as superintendent to cut avenues, build a hotel, and conduct the general affairs in my absence.

For several years I devoted all my energies very successfully to selling the stock and organizing colonies of settlers. I paid ten per cent. dividend on the stock while I was manager, besides furnishing thousands of dollars to defray expenses of building a handsome railway station, a fine commodious schoolhouse and town hall, a good hotel, and providing good roads.

I went to Tallahassee, and log rolled through the state legislature a bill enabling us to form a city government, and statutory prohibition of all liquor selling in our new town by incorporating said prohibition into all our deeds. After securing these funds and many settlers, also Ex-Governor Chamberlain of Maine as president of our board of directors, I moved to the new town with my family, there to reside permanently.

Here our duties were in many respects agreeable, because useful, for quite a long time. My wife was mother of the town, going from house to house ministering to the wants of the newcomers who had become sick by their carelessness in exposing themselves by night and day while intoxicated with the delights of this incomparable climate. She formed a union church, sang in the choir, and sometimes played the organ. I was the father of the town in many senses of the word, being the only person having any legal authority, and was expected to settle all disputes whether between man and man or between man and wife.

Our town was overrun by hungry clergymen of many denominations and from nearly every state, all clamoring for the lucre to be obtained by preaching in our union church. I might have obtained the friendship of one by appointing him as pastor; but I made malicious enemies of all by insisting upon each one officiating in turn and taking therefor the contents of the contribution box on his day.

The air resounded with the prayer-meeting shouts of these ecclesiastics who all secretly worked against me, because I would not allow them to found as many churches as there were inhabitants.

Many of the impecunious newcomers schemed against me because I could not furnish them all with light work and heavy pay. Some would persist in drinking surface water, ignoring all sanitary laws, became unwell and then cursed the climate and my so-called misrepresentations; others would ignore all instructions as to the agricultural methods essential to success in this climate, and then denounce me on the sly because their crops were not satisfactory.

Many wished to act as real estate agents on commission, and when one succeeded, the rest, fired with jealousy, would accuse me of favoritism because their own incompetency did not secure for them these prizes. Our house was besieged by day and night, so that we had to cut a hole in the outside door to talk with them when we were seeking a little sleep.

We formed a temperance, literary and musical club which every one in the town attended, and at this, at least, we spent many pleasant and useful hours. I was president of this club, and performed all the drudgery necessary to its success. I established a general store at which goods were sold at about cost, but many complained because they could not have unlimited credit.

One oasis in this fault-finding desert, was the outside colony of freedmen. I employed many of them to do the heavy work of clearing avenues, and the air resounded with their cheerful songs, and I had the pleasure, with much labor, to save from the rapacious white robbers, the farms which these colored men had received from generous

Uncle Sam. One case will illustrate the many instances in which I appeared as umpire.

Uncle and Aunty Peter Gooden owned a fertile farm, and made a good living and more by diligent labor thereon. A white "cracker" coveted this property, and told the ignorant aunty that he would let her have \$300 on mortgage at two per cent. per week, so that she could buy a new yellow wagon, silver-mounted harness and prancing mules, a gorgeous red silk dress with much finery, with which she could outshine all her neighbors. These unsophisticated, honest "coons," thinking it meant that they would have to pay only two cents per week, accepted the offer, affixed their X marks to his unknown papers, and not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed like this simple couple.

In a short time they came to me broken-hearted, sobbing, and wailing, telling me that the "cracker shylock" had foreclosed, ordering them out of their house and home. I at once notified the avaricious shark that he was guilty of violating the laws of the state by defrauding and by false pretenses, tendered him the principal with legal interest, and threatened punishment by law if he did not accept. He said, like the fabled raccoon in the tree, "Don't shoot, I'll come down." I paid the money for which, in due time, Uncle Peter reimbursed me.

I secured the hatred of the "crackers," but the undying gratitude of the negroes, who vied with each other in bringing us game in profusion, the first fruits of their crops, and shedding tears if

we offered payment therefor, begging to be allowed to show their thankfulness by these free gifts. If one of them heard a threat against us he would guard our house all night with a shotgun, and would shadow me as I went about in the night, ready to spring upon any of my assailants.

[Illustration: Ups and Downs in the Wild Woods.]

I provided a school and church for these loving, dusky children, and it was pathetic and cheering to see them all, from the tiny pickaninnies to the tottering gray heads, going regularly with their primers and Bibles, trying to learn to read and write.

Many pleasant evenings in midwinter we sat on our vine-clad piazza, enjoying the balmy breezes, perfumed with the delicious orange blossoms, looking at the stately pines glorified by moonlight and starlight; listening to the songs of these dark-faced but white-souled serenaders, the whites of whose eyes and perfect teeth could be seen beaming upon us through the dusky shades of the forest.

On the evening of the day when news arrived of the first election of Grover Cleveland to the Presidency, we were sitting as usual on our piazza, when, suddenly, I saw a flash of fire in the woods, followed by the report of a rifle, then others in quick succession. Rushing to the scene I found a few Southern whites armed with repeating rifles, facing a large band of negroes carrying a motley array of pitchforks, scythes, razors, clubs, and a few ancient shotguns. Yelling: "Hold up!" I sprang between the embattled hosts, and demanded to know what was the row.

"Get out of the way, you damned Yankee," shrieked the crackers, "or we'll riddle you with bullets." Then they gave the far-reaching, fiendish, rebel yell.

"Shoot," I replied, "if you want to be hung."

--"Boys," I said, turning to the darkies, "what's the matter?"

"Oh, boss, massa Linkum's dead, de Dimikrat am Presidunt, und we poo' niggers be slabes agin. We fight, we die, but we won't be slabes agin, neber."

Again came the roar of rifles behind me and the minnie balls went shrieking over our heads. "Boys," I shouted, "you are mistaken. A million Northern soldiers will march down here if necessary to prevent that; go at once to your homes; I will take care of you." Slowly the colored men, who trusted me implicitly, melted away in the darkness. Again the rebel yell, again the rifle shots high in the air. "Gentlemen," said I, to the menacing whites, "come with me to the Hall, I want to talk with you."

"To hell with you!" they yelled, but followed me into the building.

When they had sullenly taken seats, with guns threateningly at the ready, they glared at me like tigers ready to spring. Soon a man, I had, on my way, sent to the store, arrived with a box of good Florida cigars, and I quietly passed them around to my "lions couchant," took a seat on the platform facing them, lit up, and commenced the enjoyment of a silent smoke, they following suit.

The tender of a cigar in the South is a recognition of comradeship which is a most potent mollifier. At last they brought their guns to the ground arms, parade rest, and the leader, an ex-Confederate officer, drawled out, "Wall, Yank, what do you want of we uns?"

"Just as you please, gentlemen, peace or war?"

"We are smoking the pipe, or cigar, of peace, Yank."

"So mote it be, brothers," said I, knowing that they were all members of the mystic tie. "We meet on the level, let us part on the square."

"So mote it be," was the response in a regular lodge room chorus.

A few quick signs were exchanged between chair and settees, the ice was broken, the "lodge was opened in due form;" there was no longer any restraint, for we were all members of the most ancient fraternal order on earth, of which the wisest man who ever lived was founder. They had not known this before. The white dove descended, and they promised on the sacred oath which makes all men brothers, to molest the negroes no more. We had a jolly good time, gave each other the Grand Masonic grip and departed to our homes.

As I walked, I saw several dark figures dodging from tree to tree, and all that night my dusky-hued friends kept vigilant watch and ward about our cottage. The next morning many valiant war-men in time of peace, but peace-men in time of war, told me what brave fighting they would have done for my protection had I but called upon them to do so.

I stocked the lake with excellent food fish obtained from the National Fish Commissioner, built good sidewalks, arched by beautiful shade trees; and many prominent men bought lands in our town. We passed an ordinance forbidding the use of our public thoroughfares to cattle and hogs, and for a while the air quivered with the squealings of infuriated razor backs.

Our valiant city marshal would pounce upon each one of these long-snouted swine; then came the tug-of-war, amid clouds of dust; down went marshal and razor-back, the nose as long and sharp as a ploughshare cleaving the earth near the sidewalks lined with laughing people. Our great Floridian always triumphed, and his pig-ship was incarcerated in the town "pound" until owner paid charges and penned his property outside city limits.

Once I saw a terrific contest between one of these long-legged, long-nosed porkers and the lone, pet alligator of our lake. His pig-ship was enjoying a drink when Mr. 'Gator seized him by the snout, the porcine braced and yelled; the 'gator let go in amazement; the pig turned to run; 'gator seized him by the leg, then Greek met Greek, teeth met teeth, till' the saurian struck him with his mighty tail, and all was over; the alligator and the porker lay down in peace together with the pig inside the 'gator.

One day, one of our fishermen brought in a string of trout which far overshadowed the miraculous draught of fishes in the Sea of Galilee. On being questioned as to how he did it, he said he got one bite and pulled for three hours. The fish kept catching hold of each others' tails in their eagerness to be caught, until he had landed four

barrels of the toothsome fat trout.

Our champion brought from a few hours' hunt, enough quail for the entire town; and when asked how he did it, he replied: "Oh, I saw three thousand quail roosting on the limb of a tree. I had only my rifle with one ball; I shot at the limb, cracked it, their legs fell through the crack which closed when the bullet went through, and chained them all hard and fast. All I had to do was to cut off the limb with my jack-knife and bag the whole lot."

One day this mighty Nimrod brought home three bears and four deer. "How did you do it?" asked the envious multitude. "I was asleep in my wigwam, was waked up by a rumpus outside, rushed out with my gun, and chased the crowd around the hut till I was dead beat, then I bent my rifle across my knee into the exact circumference shape of my house, and fired. The bullet whistled by me for half an hour, chasing the varmints who were chasing each other; bum by, the bullet caught up, went through the whole crowd, and by gum; that 'ere bullet is chasing round that wigwam naouw."

On another occasion, this same man brought in a lot of wild turkeys all ready for the table. As usual we expressed our wonderment. "Wall, by gum," said he, "'twas the beatemest thing you ever heered on. I was waked up by these critters squawkin' over my haouse; I fired up chimbly, and daown tumbled the whole gang; the fire burnt off the feathers and roasted um up braown afore I could get at um."

"But how about the stuffing?"

"Oh, that's nothin'; they'd stuffed themselves afore I shot um."

We had often congratulated ourselves upon our immunity from snakes, never having seen even one in our Bailiwick; but our sweet dreams of peace were rudely disturbed by this Baron Munchausen who horrified our ladies one day, by saying that he went into our church to make some repairs, and there met a rattle-snake which swallowed him whole at one full swoop; at once he recalled the Sunday-school lesson of Jonah in the whale's belly, took courage, struck a match, made a bonfire of his hat, and by its light cut his way out with his hatchet, ran to his house, got his gun and shot the snake, which was so large that he had not noticed the man's cutting, nor his escape, but was vastly enjoying his after dinner nap. This man long bore the honors of being the champion liar and champion hunter of the universe.

Thus, rapidly, sped away our days replete with alternating smiles and tears until arrived the time for our annual stockholders' election. On our way to Ocala to attend this important event, I conversed at length with the Rev. W----, upon whom I had conferred many and profitable favors. This ostentatiously pious individual expressed much gratitude for my kindness to him, assured me that my administration of affairs had been a grand success, that I had gained the merited respect and confidence of all the people in the town and that he would urge my reelection as general manager, with all his strength.

The conference progressed very harmoniously for awhile, when I was called out to see a man on some important business, and on reentering the room, I noticed some excitement among the members, when General Chamberlain, the president, called me to his chair and frankly told me, in the hearing of all, that the Rev. W---- had, as soon as I left,

denounced me fiercely as a fraud and a liar, stating that I had the respect of no one in B----; that the town would be ruined were I reelected; that he himself would take my position without any salary, relying solely upon commission from land sales, as compensation, and that he made this statement at the unanimous request of the citizens of the town.

All eyes were turned to me for an explanation. I looked for awhile at the hypocritical clergyman very steadily, until he cringed like a viper, and turned pale as a ghost. I then narrated the statements made to me scarcely an hour before, called upon him for some proof of his accusations, and closed by saying that I would not accept a reelection unless it came to me unanimously. The craven reverend left the room without a word; I was reelected without a dissenting vote, and thus closed one of the most revolting revelations of depravity that I ever witnessed.

This "wolf in sheep's clothing," after an extraordinary career in endeavoring to "fleece" others, finally lost every dollar of his property, fled from the town with his family, and I have never been able to hear from him since. I wish for the sake of faith in human nature that this had been the only case of "fall from grace," but alas, there were others!

But let the curtain fall. Moral--have no confidence in the man who wears his religion on his coat sleeve or necktie; but try the spirits whether they are of Christ.

At this time, a party of prominent people arrived at B----, from the North, to consider the feasibility of investing quite largely somewhere in Florida. As they wished to visit the southern part of the state before deciding, I procured free passes for all, and escorted them via steamer, down the entire Gulf coast, touching at all attractive points, exploring coral islands where myriads of sea birds nested, encircling us with wild screams till the clouds of them well-nigh shut out the sun; then we collected rare shells and flotsam and jetsam from far away lands; one hour, floating over the calm Gulf of Mexico, as smooth as a mirror, then tossed by a sudden tempest far towards the stars, and tumbling down to Davy Jones' locker; now enjoying the lotos-eaters' paradise, then, as we reached the lowlands, well-nigh devoured by millions of mosquitoes and sand flies.

Then we crossed the peninsular, traveling under hammock-woods and century-old wild-orange trees, whose "twilight dim hallowed the noonday," regaled with unlimited fish and game to the far-famed Indian River,--delightful recreation-spots for a few weeks in winter, but too hot, damp, and mosquitoey for colonies. Then we were guests of the millionaires' club at Cape Canaveral, where were acres of wild ducks, droves of screaming catamounts, and huge-billed, fish-devouring pelicans. We drove over many miles of hard, firm sea-beaches--delightful brief winter homes for the rich, then back to our fertile piny woods highlands, convinced that the "backbone" of the peninsular was the only desirable locality for permanent settlers who must get a living from the bosom of mother earth.

Soon after, leaving Mr. B----, the superintendent, in charge of the company's interests in our new town, which now contained over one hundred houses, and had elected a Mayor and Alderman, I returned with my family to Boston, devoting my time to lecturing on Florida in

general, and B---- in particular, in nearly all the cities of New England, distributing illustrated books which I had prepared, and which were approved as true, by many prominent people who had lived for many years among the scenes which were therein described.

My labors were very successful, and a great success for our enterprise seemed assured, when I received a letter from our directors, stating that a Dr. K---- had offered to accept my position as general manager, without salary; pay his own expenses, relying on his commissions on land sales, and that as I had declined to serve on this basis they had felt compelled to accept his services. As I was obliged to have a regular income for the support of my family, I acquiesced in the directors' decision, and soon, under the new incompetent management, the company failed; so another of my business enterprises, on the very verge of a grand success, became a defeat, and again the innocent were blamed for the acts of the guilty. I converted my stock in the M.L.&I. Co., into lands of the company at a great loss to me, as I took the lands at company's schedule values instead of at the cost prices, while the stock cost me--the full price of \$100 per share. Blessed is he who expecteth nothing, for he alone shall not be disappointed.

Our varying days pass on and on,
Our hopes fade unfulfilled away,
And things which seem the life of life
Are taken from us day by day.

Our little dramas all may fail,
And naught may issue as we planned,
Our costliest ships refuse to sail,
Our firmest castles fall to sand.

But God lives on, and with our woe
Weaves golden threads of joy and peace,
And somewhere we will surely know
From sorrow and pain the glad release.

CHAPTER XXIV.

FOREGLEAMS OF IMMORTALITY.

This year of our Lord, 1886, brought an infinitely greater sorrow than the mere financial losses which pressed so hardly upon us in connection with our Florida endeavors. On Christmas morning, while alone in my room, I distinctly heard my father's voice whisper: "James, James, good-bye," and an hour later the telegraph flashed the news that he passed away at the exact time when I heard him bidding me farewell.

My father was an honest man, the noblest work of God; he had gained none of what the world calls the great prizes of life, but he had what was better far, a conscience void of offense towards God and man. In the words of Thoreau--"If a man does not keep pace with his fellows, perhaps it is because he hears a different drum beat; he should step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away." This my father always did, though the music of his life-march came not from

earth, but from the sky, and without a shadow of fear, sustained by a deathless faith, he passed within the gateway of eternal life.

The winter at last retreated sullenly and reluctantly to his arctic home, and when the first harbingers of spring appeared, singing the memorial songs of the Resurrection, the old country fever, inherited from many generations of farmer ancestors, seized me, and we bought a small plantation for \$4,200, in N----, Mass., to which we moved April 28, 1887. Here, as usual, much money was expended on improvements and for horse, carriages, cow, pigs, hens, also for scanty harvests of vegetables, and our only returns therefor consisted of large crops of backaches, nasal hemorrhages, and rheumatism incurred in frantic attempts to coax from the reluctant soil, some slight compensation for excessive labor.

Here, as usual, I was busied with many cares, lecturing in various places on the subject of Florida and selling our private lands in that state. Like Mr. Pickwick, I was founder of many societies, notably the N---- club, which, with a fine orchestra and much dramatic talent soon became the social and literary attraction of the town; also the Republican club, which conducted a vigorous campaign for protective tariff and sound money, attracting large audiences by political debates. I was president of both these flourishing organizations, was chairman of the parish committee of the Unitarian Church, leading to its enlargement and extended usefulness, was a member of the congressional committee of the district which wrested a congressman from the Democrats, electing, after a desperate struggle, John W. Candler, to the National Legislature in place of Russell, "the sheepless Shepherd."

On the 16th of June of this year, Rebecca, the wife of my only surviving brother, left her body, and was welcomed to the evergreen shores of the summer-land, by her father, mother, our father, mother, my spirit-bride and her father, mother, and my two brothers who had long gone before. She was a good, honest woman, a veritable help-meet to my brother, and we all gratefully cherish the memory, which is the best attained by any life, that she left the world better than she found it.

One by one, we miss the voices which we loved so well to hear,
One by one their kindly faces in the darkness disappear.

On the evening of the 16th of August in this year, an experience came into our lives which changed the whole current of our religious thought, and forever banished from our minds all fear of the so-called death, and all doubt as to the eternal continuity of existence.

My brother, my wife, four children and myself were recreating for a week in the woods and waters of Onset Bay, and while walking in the gloaming through the grove, listening to the music of the band, we saw a notice posted on a tree stating that the B---- sisters would give a materializing seance in their cottage at this hour. We were all skeptics of the most pronounced type, having seen much of the contemptible trickery and fraud of so-called mediums; but we yielded to the temptation to enter the seance room through mere curiosity. Here we found in the "dim religious light," about a score of intelligent looking ladies and gentlemen intently watching white-robed figures which occasionally glided from a cabinet on a slightly elevated stage and embraced people from the audience who were called

to meet them.

This ghostly procession interested us but slightly, until a form whose features seemed strangely familiar, advanced to the edge of the platform and beckoned my wife to come to her. On responding to the invitation, she was at once encircled by the arms of the visitor, kisses were exchanged, she was called distinctly "my dear sister," informed that the lady in white was Mary, my spirit-wife, who in loving tones expressed her thanks for the kindly care that Lillian had exercised over her three children, saying that she was always with her to help. Suddenly, the form called for me, and I went to her as one dazed.

"James," she said, "I am Mary, your wife." She embraced me with many kisses as in the long ago, and continued: "I am so glad to see you and Lillian, who has so lovingly taken my place; bless her for her goodness to our children; my time here is so short." Then turning; "Jot," she whispered to my brother, "come here;" she kissed him, said: "Rebecca, father and mother are here in the cabinet, but too weak to come out. We give you all our love and blessing; good-bye," and disappeared through the floor at our feet.

There was no possible shadow of doubt about this visitation from the unseen world. We had "felt the touch of the vanished hand, we had heard the sound of the voice that is still," and henceforth we knew that we walked hand in hand with angels. We realized unmistakably the truth of the words of the poet Longfellow:

"The forms of the departed enter at the open door,
The beloved, the true hearted come to visit us once more,
And with them the being beauteous, who unto my youth was given
More than all things else to love me, and is now a saint in Heaven.
Oh, though oft depressed and lonely, all my fears are laid aside,
If I but remember only such as these have lived and died."

The pages of the Bible, the testimony of all the sweet singers of all the ages, confirm indisputably our certain knowledge of spirit return, and we know the truth of what the saints and sages of all time have dreamed, and by faith have believed, all religions have taught, it is now demonstrated beyond all doubt and we can say most joyfully--

"Oh land, oh land
For all the broken-hearted,
The mildest herald by our fate allotted
Beckons, and with inverted torch doth stand
To lead us with a gentle hand
Into the land of the great departed,
Into the silent land."

We turned to our duties, inspired by the knowledge that we were guided and assisted by the loved ones gone before. After living on the flat-as-pan-cake plain of N---- for three years, again was I disenchanted; all the poetic illusions of farm life vanished, all the oxygen seemed to be exhausted from the air, the romance of raising potatoes at a cost of five dollars a peck disappeared, the old farm hung like a millstone round my neck, we sold it and hired a pretty cottage in the lucre-worshipping town of B----, on the 29th of March, 1890, where we led uneventful lives for one year, until my fickle fancy was captivated by a fine new house on the hilltop overlooking

the sea, in the town of W----, Mass. This we bought and entered on the 14th of May, 1891.

Here at last we thought we had found the Mecca towards which, all our lives we had been drifting. Once more came the passion for beautifying our own, and we made our lawns to bud and blossom like the roses; worshipping at the shrine of the majestic ocean,

"Its waves were kneeling on the strand,
As kneels the human knee,
Their white locks bowing to the sand
The priesthood of the sea."

Here we passed four very pleasant and useful years; consciously near to us, though unseen, were all our loved ones of the spirit world. Almost every night our angel friends communicated with us unmistakably through the ouija, and planchette; they would draw caricature pictures of us all, and give us conundrums and jokes that we had never known before. One evening in particular, Mary wrote us to give her children the best possible musical instruction, stating that May would become a great singer and flute player, and that Ada would be a fine organist and pianist, as well as singer; that Ida would do well with violin and voice.

We were incredulous, as they had inherited no musical talent, neither had they manifested any inclination in these directions; but Mary was so persistent and strenuous in her appeals, that we heeded the advice, gave the girls good teachers along these lines, and soon, their spirit-mother's predictions were fulfilled to the very letter, and the so-called "Foss triplets" became a veritable inspiration to thousands of delighted listeners to their rendition of instrumental and vocal strains of music.

The dew of heaven descend upon all the flowers of the field, some open their petals, welcome the refreshment and are blessed thereby; while others close their buds, refusing the blessing, and as a result, wither and die. Even so come to all souls the spirits of the departed, and they inspire or fail in their mission of love according to whether we open or close to them the doors of our inner sanctuaries.

The departed, the departed,
They visit us in dreams,
They glide above our memories
Like sunlight over streams.

The melody of summer waves,
The thrilling notes of birds
Can never be so dear to me
As their softly-whispered words.

CHAPTER XXV.

A PRACTICAL SOCIALIST AND COLONIZER.

We found in this town of W----, a moribund Unitarian Church, with

scarcely a handful of attendants, listening once a week to a lifeless minister and an asthmatic harmonium accompanied by a few feeble, inharmonious voices.

Our sympathies were aroused for this expiring infant, and we resolved to rescue it if possible from its open grave. My wife and I, accompanied by the "Triplets," on the front seat of our carriage as drivers, canvassed the entire town, asking all we met to lay up treasures in heaven by "rescuing the perishing," and we soon secured money to buy a fine toned organ and to hire a wideawake pastor. Ada played the new organ; May formed a quartette with herself as soprano, Ida often accompanying with her violin; my wife teaching in the Sunday-school, myself serving as chairman of the Parish Committee, and soon our church was filled with attentive and much edified listeners and helpers. I organized the Channing Club, which soon included in its membership all the leading musical and dramatic talent of the town. We met weekly in the church vestry which was soon decorated by handsome pictures, scenery and bric-a-brac, the gifts of our members, making a very spacious and attractive resort.

This club over which I presided, developed to a remarkable degree the latent talents of many who had never before thought themselves capable of entertaining and instructing the public. We had an orchestra of stringed and brass instruments, in which May played the flute, Ada the piano and organ, Ida second violin, while all our four girls sang solos, duets, trios, and quartettes. Many elderly people paid generous fees for honorary membership, while the large, active membership, responded regularly when called upon with musical, literary, or dramatic renditions individually or in combination as they might prefer. It was a delightful and instructive symposium which ought to be found in every town.

The Channing Club soon became famous, and gave first-class entertainments to very large audiences at high admission fees in our own and surrounding towns as well as in Boston, thus replenishing the church treasury and greatly promoting sociability and friendship by regular dances and suppers which made hundreds seem like one large family, bound together by many friendly ties, each one readily responding to the call of the president to render his or her full share of entertainment and good cheer for the good of all.

It was an ideal socialistic order, and we truly "sat together in heavenly places." All gladly contributed to the needs of the poor or the sick; we chartered steamers and went on picnic excursions to attractive island resorts in our beautiful harbor; class distinctions were banished, envy and jealousy disappeared like snow before the sun, and good fellowship reigned supreme. Our rich and poor met together as brothers and sisters.

Such an organization in churches would soon banish class hatreds, and do much to make this world a paradise like to that above.

The winter of 1892 was a red-letter season in the history of us all. We rented our house in W---, to a friend, and lived in Florida, our four girls attending Rollins College at Winter Park, where they enjoyed life immensely in the incomparable climate which, with their studies in this excellent school, was of great benefit to them, physically and mentally. I was favored with free passes all over the state, and devoted my time to a careful examination of large tracts

of land in various counties, but found none to my liking until on our return trip, we spent several weeks at Lawtey, in the county of Bradford.

Florida, within its vast area, contains a great variety of land and climates, and the person who has traversed only the beaten track of the tourist knows nothing of the fertile tracts and delightful temperatures of these green-grassed and Piny-woods Highlands. Here, as nowhere else in the world, nature has provided all the essentials to agricultural success; there was but one mortgaged homestead in the entire township; it is the greatest strawberry mart in the world; the abundance of nutritious wild grasses render cattle and sheep raising throughout the year a source of great revenue, and the maximum of crop returns is secured with a minimum of labor.

At last, after years of search throughout the state, we found our ideal location for a colony, and I bonded over 6,000 acres of fertile, well-wooded lands, returned home, formed a syndicate, and paid for our tract, to which we gave the appropriate suggestive name of "Woodlawn." I successfully pursued my avocation of advertising and selling our lands, having an office in Boston and cooperating agents in several states.

On June 11th, 1894, my brother Joshua, the last of my father's family except myself, was suddenly called to join our many loved ones in the spirit world. All our lives we had been as David and Jonathan, and not a cloud had swept across the azure of our sky of mutual affection, until the advent of his second wife. He was one of the best men that ever lived, and nearly everyone in his town had been benefited by his well-known generosity and self-sacrifice, and he found awaiting him, many treasures in the grand bank of heaven.

"I cannot say, and I will not say
That he is dead--he is just away,
With a cheery smile, and a wave of the hand,
He has wandered into an unknown land,
And left us dreaming how very fair
It needs must be, since he lingers there;
We think of him faring on, as dear
In the love of there as the love of here,
Think of him still as the same, I say,
He is not dead--he is just away."

Soon after the departure of my brother to the better land, our spirit-band informed us very plainly through "Ouija," that it was our duty to remove to Boston in order that our children might have better educational facilities, and be admitted to the "musical swim" of the "Hub of the Universe." We obeyed their mandate, and the predictions of our angel friends were fully verified. In our new home the older girls met those to whom they were married in Heaven, and to whom they gave their hands and hearts. I now look back over a half century of existence on this earth, and my muse inspires me to record that:

I have ships that went to sea
More than fifty years ago.
None have yet come back to me,
But keep sailing to and fro,
Plunging through the shoreless deep,
With tattered sails and battered hulls

While around them scream the gulls.

I have wondered why they stayed
From me, sailing round the world
And I've said, "I'm half afraid
That their sails will ne'er be furled."
Great the treasures that they hold,
Silks, and plumes, and bars of gold,
While the spices which they bear
Fill with fragrance all the air.

I have waited on the piers
Gazing for them down the bay,
Days and nights, for many years,
Till I turned heart-sick away.
But the pilots, when they land,
Kindly take me by the hand,
Saying, "Surely they will come to thee,
Thy proud vessels from the sea."

So I never quite despair,
Nor let hope or courage fail,
And some day, when skies are fair,
Up the bay my ships will sail.

CHAPTER XXVI.

HAND IN HAND WITH ANGELS.

In our Boston home, there came to us one of the most wonderful and inspiring experiences ever vouchsafed to mortals beneath the stars; an experience which solved forever for us the problem of immortality, which all the religious teachings of all the ages had been powerless to accomplish. It confirmed beyond a shadow of doubt, our knowledge of the future life obtained previously at Onset Bay, as the following named events transpired in our own house in the presence of witnesses under test circumstances which precluded all possibility of deception.

Mrs. B----, of Boston, came to our house alone, gratuitously, on her own volition, sat within a few feet of our entire family and two of our neighbors, having no cabinet or any paraphernalia which are always required by those charlatans who have associated the fair name of spiritualism with fraud and chicanery. In about one hour there appeared in our parlor, in full view of us all, more than thirty forms; some tall as were ever seen on earth, others little children, the forms of our offspring who were "still born"; my brother Joshua, who had been in spirit life a little over one year came fully materialized and was clearly recognized by my entire family.

He gave me, while I was standing within two feet of the medium, the firm grip of a Master Mason; his hand was like that of a living human being; he whispered a few intelligible words, saying that we should have no fear if trouble came, that all would turn out for our ultimate good, and disappeared at my feet; then a tall, finely-formed young man with dark moustache came, beating his breast with his hand. "You see,

I am all here," he said; "I am John Mansfield, formerly of New Jersey. I was attracted to your house by the music. I am guardian of your girls; I am going to try to help in your father and mother." He vanished; then returned, trying to bring the half-materialized but recognizable forms as he had promised; but they were weak, and seen but dimly.

Then came the clearly defined form of the children's aunt, and the girls, who were somewhat timid, recognized her at once. She kissed each one several times in rapid succession just as she used to do when she met them in the long ago; called them and my wife by name, and disappeared, apparently through the floor. Then appeared Mary, my spirit-wife, and many others whom we could not recognize.

Little Blue Bell, one of the medium's cabinet spirits, then came, pointing to the door, saying: "See that little fat snoozer?" we looked around and saw the wondering eyes of our Bessie, who we supposed was "snoozing" in bed; she had come down in her night-dress. Finally, Nellie, our hired girl, who, being a Catholic, had been warned by the priest never to countenance spiritualism, and had locked herself in her room, came into the parlor, wild-eyed and with her hair streaming over her shoulders, saying she was compelled to come in. At once the form of a young Irish girl clad in peasant costume, with hair to her waist, appeared, and clasped Nellie in her arms; they talked a few minutes, and the form vanished in air. Nellie told us that it was a schoolmate of hers who died in Ireland fifteen years before, that they had been great friends, and vied with each other in growing the longer hair.

These facts may seem incredible to those who have never received visitations from the other world; but we know that we saw and felt the forms of our spirit friends on that occasion, as surely as we know that we ever saw them when they were with us daily in the body on earth.

When alone that night, I "dropped into poetry," and here is what my spirit-guided hand wrote, February 4th, 1895.

Out of the darkness cometh a light,
Out of the silence cometh a voice,
The pathway of life grows suddenly bright,
And as never before we all rejoice.

The dearly beloved who have gone before
Come back to bless from the beautiful shore;
They speak to us words of lofty cheer,
That banish the clouds of darksome fear.

How sweet to _know_ that there is no death,
That the soul outlives the fleeting breath;
That guardian angels surround us ever
With a deathless love no power can sever.

We mourn no more the vanished youth,
We are nearing the heaven of eternal truth;
We lament no more the earthly ills,
For their power will cease on the heavenly hills.

We grieve no more for the wrinkled brow,

Nor for withering locks as white as snow,
For soon will we greet what is unseen now,
Soon to the sunlit heights will we go.

For many years doubt's saddening shade
On our hearts its pall has laid:
But a gleam comes from the bright forever,
And gloom and fear shall haunt us never.

We have felt the touch of the vanished hand,
We have heard the sound of the voice that is still;
They have come to us from the better land,
Their cheering words our spirits thrill.

"We will know the loved who have gone before,
And joyfully sweet will the meeting be
When over the river, the beautiful river,
The angel of death shall carry me."

CHAPTER XXVII.

AMONG THE LAW-SHARKS.

It seems to be an unwritten law of human life that every great joy shall be quickly followed by a great sorrow. The materialized forms of our spirit loved-ones had scarcely vanished from sight, when the trouble of which my brother had forewarned us fell like a thunderbolt from a cloudless sky.

We had, without a thought of deception, and at prices which then prevailed, sold to many persons, lands in Florida, some for settlement, some as investments. Phosphate had been discovered in the immediate vicinity of some of our tracts, and this fact had led speculators to buy our lands, hoping that these deposits might greatly enhance values; but the usual competition to sell this valuable fertilizer had for the time reduced prices to a non-paying basis; then, too, an unprecedented freeze, which once in about a hundred years visits all semi-tropical countries, had destroyed many orange groves in the State, and so frightened short-sighted, timid people, that Florida lands were at a great discount, and, as when a panic sweeps over Wall Street, many frantically hastened to sell, and there were but few buyers.

This led several of my customers to conspire to frighten me into paying them large sums as hush money, pretending that I had secured their purchases under false pretenses; but the Yankee spirit of our fathers, "millions for defense, but not one cent for tribute," prompted me to defy their infamous demands.

Under the lead of a fiendishly "smart" lawyer, they declared that I told them their lands were full of phosphate, and within city limits, although my published circulars and maps stated nothing of the kind. They denounced me as a fraud in the newspapers, brought lawsuits against me, attached property, and proceeded in a most brutal manner to compel payment of their unjust claims.

My word for half a century had everywhere been as good as my bond, and my bond as good as gold. I had never before had a lawsuit or any trouble with any one, and so in my inexperience I employed a lawyer friend, who was no match for my enemies' human tiger. They testified unfairly in court, and after many crushing annoyances from the law's delays, my lawyer, putting in no defense, in order, as he said, to save his ammunition for use in the Superior Court, to which he appealed, they secured judgment.

All these slanders broke my never firm health; I was soon on the verge of nervous prostration, and was ordered by my physician to at once secure a change of climate to save my life. My innocent lawyer supposed that a court of justice would postpone my trial until my return; but we have now some "courts of injustice."

Some lawyers are worse than highway robbers; they make the laws as legislators to suit their own iniquitous, selfish purposes, so worded that they are susceptible of almost any interpretation, thus leading to endless litigations by which these cannibal devourers of reputations are robbing the public of their possessions. They employ spies to stir up strife, and some lawyers and judges seem to be banded together to fleece the confiding lambs of the public. The judge not only refused to postpone the trial until I was able to attend, but refused to have the jury informed that I was absent on account of serious sickness.

We are bound hand and foot, the slaves of these law-sharks, and it seems as if nothing but revolution and the banishing of these tyrants, will ever deliver the public from the worse than African slavery to which some lawyers subject us. We have seen innocent, modest lady witnesses subjected to bull-dozing and abuse by barbarous lawyers, until they suffered tortures to which those of the Spanish Inquisition were merciful.

As I was obliged to go or die, I accepted the offer of my wife's brother, a member of the publishing firm of Webster's Dictionaries, and went to California to fight their battles against the new Standard Dictionary which was rapidly driving the Webster books out of the markets of the entire Pacific slope.

The trial took place during my enforced absence; my enemies' crafty attorney told the jury that my failure to appear was a sure evidence of guilt; my doctor's affidavit that he sent me away to save my life was not allowed to be presented in court; each plaintiff claimed to have heard the statements imputed to have been made by me to the others, one of them making love to, and afterwards marrying one of my most important witnesses, and so the verdict was against me.

But curses often "come home to roost," and my enemies were ultimately not benefited at all, as the lawyer-sharks devoured all they received from me.

In the meanwhile, during their worrying and falsifying, I was speeding away in a palace-car, confident that my spirit brother's declaration would prove true that truth is mighty and will prevail, if not in the brief here, yet surely in the eternal hereafter. It is very saddening to see how many, who claim to be your friends while you are prosperous, are the first to assail with poisoned arrows when you are

attacked in the courts or in the public prints; but my conscience is clear, and

Serene, I fold my hands and wait,
Nor care for wind, or tide or sea.
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
For soon my own shall come to me.

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark astray,
Nor change the tide of destiny.

The stars come nightly to the sky;
The tidal wave into the sea;
Nor time, nor space, nor deep, nor high,
Can keep my own away from me.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

CAMPAIGNING IN WONDERLAND.

This delightful journey was a wonderful revelation of the greatness, power, and grandeur of this glorious republic in which we live. I gazed with amazement for many hours as we flew over the marvelously fertile and beautiful prairies of Kansas; here miles upon miles of wheat, corn, and alfalfa waving like vast seas, irrigated by means of numberless windmills; there, herds of cattle, numerous as the leaves of autumn; here, long lines of steam plows breaking thousands of acres of virgin soil; there mammoth steam reapers devouring vast areas of gold mines of grain; the food of the nations pouring into bags at one end, while the stalks were bound midway ready for the fattening of cattle. The chaff flew in clouds, and quickly, from these machines, millions of bushels of wheat were soon on their way to the markets of the world. What wonder that our country now has in Washington over five hundred millions of gold dollars; the richest treasury ever known on earth?

Now we catch glimpses of vast mines of coal and salt; then of great cities which have sprung up as by magic; and soon my eyes were greeted with a vision of heavenly splendor in Colorado. Three hundred miles of the Rocky Mountains, Pike's Peak towering 14,000 feet towards the stars; great clouds of snow blowing from the summit into the valleys; there cascades of mighty rivers flowing to irrigate lovely valleys; here the great city of Denver, having 125,000 population, and one mile higher up in the air than Boston.

In this city I met my former college professor, now the multi-millionaire United States senator, burdened with many crushing cares, knowing about as much peace and quietness as a toad under a two-forty-gait harrow.

Then on went the mighty train; here a glimpse at Manitou of the "Garden of the Gods," with cathedral spires of old red sandstone towering hundreds of feet towards the clouds which capped their

summits with halos; on through the grand canyon of the Arkansas River, in places two miles nearer heaven than Boston; here we see gigantic natural castles with battlements, bastions and fortresses whose leveled cannon you almost instinctively dodge to escape their imaginary bomb-shells. Now we climb almost perpendicular heights, thousands of feet; now we slide down into chasms barely escaping the rushing waters; then we shoot through a tunnel two miles long under 1,500 feet of solid rock; now we rush over vast plateaus 10,000 feet above the sea; then we catch glimpses of herds of cattle, now of great caves, lone trees with not a bit of earth visible about their roots; now we rush into Leadville, a mining camp of 10,000 people. At midnight a huge stone rolled down the mountainside onto the track, delaying us for two hours. Had it fallen a minute later we would have been crushed into nothingness.

In the morning I awoke in Utah, rode all the forenoon over arid plains; gaunt, hungry wolves scud away, cayotes ran yelping, and jack rabbits hopped out of sight for dear life; then we arrive at Salt Lake City, which the Mormons have transformed from a howling wilderness into a fine city, with a surrounding country budding and blossoming with bounteous harvests. The peak towers aloft where the United States Regulars halted after their terrible march over the mountains, near where the famous Nauvoo Legion of the Mormons surrendered, after their rebellion to make Brigham Young their king, though he said that by a wave of his hand he could hurl back the balls of the national cannon to annihilate the soldiers of the republic.

I drank in with delight the music of the grand organ and the four hundred trained singers of the Mormon choir in the vast tabernacle.

Then on thundered the train by the great Salt Lake, one hundred miles long and forty miles wide, so salt that it buoys you up on its surface like a feather; then on over the sage-brush desert to Reno, Nevada, where is the world-renowned Comstock mine, from which over one hundred millions of dollars' worth of silver has already been taken.

Then we climbed the Sierra Nevada Mountains, around and around in a circle, shot through a snow shed forty miles long; then lumber chutes appear many miles in length, through which enormous logs are shot down by water power from the mountain lake. Four billion feet of lumber are cut here in a year.

Then on we go past Lake Tahoe, twenty-two miles long, surrounded by mountains two miles in height; then past Cape Horn, along precipices down which I threw a stone which fell 2,500 feet into the American River.

We slide down the mountains to Auburn, California, and find fruit trees in blossom, grass green, and crops several inches high. A sudden change in a few minutes from deep snow and severe cold to blossoms and roses. On we go to Sacramento, surrounded by great ranches with vast herds of cattle and sheep feeding on the wild grasses; then on to San Francisco, the Golden Gate, and the unpacified Pacific.

The principal occupation of the street cars in 'Frisco, is climbing almost perpendicular heights, and then sliding down hill. All very pleasant except when the cogs in the cable slip, and you become part and parcel of a promiscuous mix-up, all passengers tumbling over and on to each other into the front end of the car, and if you are at the

bottom of the struggling heap, with your nose banged against the door, and suffocating fat parties wedged on top of you, this rapid transit slide is not quite so delightful as when you ride on the top of the crowd.

Here you can get a good meal with a bottle of wine thrown in for "two bits" (twenty-five cents), you can buy three different kinds of newspapers for the same price as one, as they have no coins smaller than a nickel. For a nickel you can ride for miles to the Cliff House which is at the Golden Gate, where are acres of giant flowers of every conceivable variety, all beautiful, but odorless; you watch the sea lions nearly the size of oxen, and who roar and fight on the boulders. Then we enter a bath-house, acres in extent, covered with glass, where you can swim in sea water warmed by steam-pipes, listen to the band, examine the multitude of wild animals and curiosities collected from all parts of the world.

[Illustration: The Golden Gate of the Unpacified Pacific.]

Then we visit the city park of twelve hundred acres, once nothing but flying sand. At first they planted on these dunes, grass roots from South America; these fastened themselves to the sand and formed a little soil; then were planted shrubs to stop the sand storms, then trees, and now the real estate is not all in the air.

This little nickel will take you to a mountaintop overlooking city and ocean, where you can sit under the Eucalyptus trees which shed their bark instead of their leaves, and enjoy the music and the not overmodest dramas, without extra charge.

The saloons, stores and theatres are open seven days and nights in the week, and multitudes of all nationalities, clad in their peculiar costumes, hobnob with each other in the most free and easy manner imaginable, without waiting for introductions, in this the most cosmopolitan city on earth.

Sometimes you will see the harbor literally covered with the most delicious fruits and vegetables, dumped into the water, because the transportation charges to market would more than eat up the proceeds of their sale. I visited at San Jose, the large flourishing fruit orchard of a college classmate who had spent years of hard labor and the earnings of a lifetime, to bring his trees into bearing; but I found he had deserted his ranch because he could not make a living thereon, and had gone to preach for a little church far away, at five hundred dollars per annum.

I saw at Riverside large crops of oranges frozen upon the trees; but the real estate sharks never allow these facts to be published, because they fatten on the profits made by selling lands to the gullible "tender feet" from the east, who, when they have bought these farms at enormous prices, find to their utter discouragement, that they must also buy water for irrigation from monopolists, at ruinous rates, else the soil is worthless. Here as nowhere else is illustrated the truth of the Scriptural adage: "To him that hath shall be given, but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath."

When you go to a place scarcely thirty miles distant, which, in New England, you would reach in an hour, you are obliged to travel all

night, as you must climb cloud-touching mountains, going many miles to cover what would be only one mile in a straight line; now you glide along close to the long, lazy waves of the great Pacific Ocean, where the grass kisses the salt lips of the sea; now from the tops of the Santa Cruz mountains, you survey the world at your feet; now you rush through the red-wood primeval forests, giants touching the clouds with their tops, while in the hollow trunk of one of these trees a family of twelve can live quite comfortably; then on to Los Angeles,--"City of the angels," they call it--a beautiful city for those possessed of means or who are dispossessed of bodies which must be clothed and fed.

[Illustration: The Dome of Mount Shasta Gleams like "the Great White Throne."]

Some have "struck oil" here, and the stench and grime from the spouting wells have ruined the houses of hundreds who have reaped no profit from the petroleum, because they did not own the adjoining lots where it was found; then on we go to lovely Pasadena on a table-land surrounded by snow-capped mountains; but the winds from the cold summits come suddenly when you are melting with the heat, bringing plenty of catarrh for all; then on to San Diego on the hill by the sea, where the fog is sometimes so thick you can cut it into blocks with an axe; then on to the far-famed Coronado Hotel, close by the sea.

In the boom-time, this was claimed to be the veritable "Garden of Eden," and soil was considered worth its weight in gold, but now my guide offered me six house lots which cost him three thousand dollars, for two hundred dollars; the bubble had burst, a few had become rich, while hundreds of speculators had lost their all.

I swam in the spacious warmed-water sea-baths, communed with the wild ducks, cormorants and pelicans, looked with amazement at the giant ostriches, and sympathized with their seeming wonderment as to why we were all sent into this sad, bewildering maze of life.

At National City the reflux wave of the boom had left many of the houses and business blocks dilapidated and unoccupied save by bats, spiders and flies. You could occupy free of rent many buildings with none to molest or make you afraid.

Thence on dashes the train to the celebrated Hotel Delmonte, at Monterey, the show place of the Southern Pacific Railroad, which, by its extortionate transportation charges, has ruined many struggling fruit raisers in this state where monopoly holds such mighty sway.

There are many hotels in Florida which far surpass this as far as the buildings are concerned; but the grounds are extensive and very beautiful, and the wide piazzas are embowered in a profusion of all kinds of climbing vines covered with the loveliest blossoms. Stretching away until earth and sky meet, is an imperial domain, covered with noble trees which were giants when Adam was a baby, many festooned with English ivy and flowering trumpet creepers almost to the stars. Then we walked under long Gothic arches, cool and fragrant.

Here is every arrangement conceivable for entertainment; on one side the Pacific ocean; on the other the Coast Range Mountains, a very pleasant resort for the very rich; but we found there at this time more servants than guests.

The town of Monterey is interesting only for its ruins of ancient monasteries and convents, where a few lazy half-breeds alone remain to tell the tale of multitudes over whom the Catholic priests reigned supreme, reducing their dupes to beggary by their extortions. Once these mountains were covered with vast flocks of sheep, but the foolish reduction of the tariff on wool by the Wilson bill, destroyed all profits, and the flocks disappeared into the hungry mouths of the people.

Thence the iron horse took us back to 'Frisco, and we sailed all day and all night to Sacramento. The scenery was grand, but the cold weather chilled us to the very bones. Islands of old red sandstone loom like sentinels along the coast, covered with lighthouses to warn the mariners. The twin peaks of Montepueblo covered with perpetual snow, seemed to support the heavens as do the pillars the dome of the capitol.

Swarms of screaming sea gulls fill the air, some of which, benumbed by cold alighted on the steamer's deck. Lonely ranches are seen, hemmed in by the everlasting hills.

Our great, lazy boat, propelled by a stern wheel as big as a barn, paddled slowly over the muddy waters of the great Sacramento River, made yellow by the turbid waters sent to it from scores of hydraulic mines on the mountains. On one island is an immense smelting furnace, the tall chimneys of which send forth volumes of poisonous smoke, dangerous to breathe, and covering everything with a coating black as soot. Inhaling this, some of the operators die of lead poisoning. Many islands are here scarcely above the water's edge, having little houses built on stilts occupied by the salmon fishers who are seen pulling their nets, and around whose heads whirl and scream flocks of fish hawks, ravenous for their prey.

After a successful book fight at the capital city, I went to Red Bluff where I was broiled and roasted in a day and night temperature of a hundred and twelve degrees in the shade. I survived only by keeping my head wrapped in ice water; I could neither eat nor sleep, and like Dickens, I longed to "take off my flesh, and sit in my bones." It was a veritable hell on earth.

The county superintendent of schools here, told me he sold his prune crop that year for five thousand dollars, and went away leaving the purchaser to pick the fruit. On his return, he found that the red spiders had anticipated the pickers, and destroyed the entire crop, so that his work of years came to naught, as the buyers of course refused to pay to feed the spiders.

Thence I went to San Luis Obispo, and on the way we struck the Coast Range Mountains. The tortuous upclimbing and downsliding of the train disclosed scenery imposing and grand. You looked down the precipitous rock-ribbed sides thousands of feet to the narrow, beautiful valleys, made productive by the irrigation from many foaming waterfalls. We circle the mountains many times before reaching the valleys, traveling many hours to gain a straight-line mile.

These valleys are lovely to look down upon; but the fogs much of the time hang over them like a pall, and catarrh and rheumatism render life one of misery to many of the people.

[Illustration: Above the Clouds.]

CHAPTER XXIX.

AMONG THE CLOUDS.

In the following May, 1896, I took a sky-scraping journey to the great states of Washington and Oregon. The climbing of Mt. Shasta and the Siskyou range by train presented sublime views that no language can even feebly describe. At the summits we were at least two miles in the air higher than the dome of the Massachusetts State House. As we climbed, I could see from the window of the palace car, the two engines of our train puffing for all they were worth around the curves, far ahead.

We looked down from the narrow rim of the railroad, thousands of feet perpendicular upon foaming rivers dashing themselves into rainbows and cataracts against the everlasting boulders in their courses. Here cascades, miles in length, came rushing down the mountainsides, shooting hundreds of feet into the air as they struck the giant rocks, and at one place we stopped for half an hour to drink from the soda springs pure, delicious soda water, huge geysers of it effervescing, scintillating, silvery in the sunbeams, caught in a rocky basin from which it is sent all over the world.

Above, the mighty Sacramento River has its source in a little spring, almost touching the stars--so emblematical of our human life, which begins in the infinite on high; is enveloped in a dust of earth; expands in its evolution into the angel back into the eternity from whence it came; for science reveals that the springs come from the clouds as dew and rain, run their courses, and by evaporation are taken back into their first home in the vapors of the heavens.

There are enormous log-shoots seeming like Jacob's ladder to reach from earth to heaven, and in which, the giants of the vast mountain forests are carried by water with almost lightning speed to the mills on the river; there the splendid snow-covered dome of Shasta gleams above the clouds like the great white throne described by St. John in Revelation.

Now come glimpses of little green valleys; here and there, a few small houses and flocks of sheep show that these cases are peopled "far from the maddening crowd's ignoble strife."

These vast solitudes of forests are very impressive and solemn as the day of judgment; giant fir-trees, pines and spruces, beautifully clothed in perpetual green even to the lower dead limbs which nature has covered with a verdure of moss--like our dead hopes, blasted by the fires of adversity but made radiant by the fore-gleams of immortality. There the bright mistletoe is suspended from dead tree-tops, like beauteous crowns adorning the heads of those who have died rather than surrender to the low and base; there deep canyons, brilliant with the diamonds made by the sun from the scintillating drops from dashing torrents--so from the unseen heights come the dews

of heaven to refresh those who walk by faith and not by sight "looking not at the things seen which are temporal, but at the things not seen which are eternal."

Here comes a dense white cloud of snow through the air, covering our train with a pearly shroud, through the rifts of which, far below, we have glimpses of lovely vales and white ranch-houses, smiling up at us, above the clouds.

Dearly beloved--all seems to say it becometh us, not to sorrow for the dead hopes, broken promises, and bitter disappointments of this mortal life, remembering that this is not our home, that we tarry here for a few fleeting days, that our true home is with the good beyond the infinite azure of the heavens, where dear ones are Waiting to welcome us to the endless rest and peace awaiting all who fight the good fight, and who keep themselves unspotted from the world.

At times, while the train was dashing along over the seemingly interminable plains, green and productive during the rainy season, but now parched and arid by the terrible heat, we were almost suffocated by the dense dust clouds, and well-nigh withered by the winds which seem to come from the very jaws of Dante's Inferno; then the shifting young cyclone would suddenly envelop us with chilling snows from Shasta, and so we oscillated like pendulums 'twixt torrid heats and arctic colds.

At last, almost dazed by the unspeakable, lightning-like, climatic transformations, the great iron steeds brought us to Portland, the metropolis of the great state of Oregon. Here, as in many places on the Pacific coast, people should be web-footed during the rainy season to escape the drowning, and iron clad during the dry season to escape the merciless peltings of the clouds of shot-like dust. The dampness in this valley, hemmed in by the now dripping, then brook covered mountains, is far from pleasant, and covers many of the buildings with unsightly mosses. In Washington and Oregon those who survive the climatic trials are a strong, energetic race, rapidly building up powerful empires in the great aggregation of states of our grandest nation the world has ever known.

The broad-minded, generous-hearted people of this great far west, make no distinctions as to sex in apportioning their salaries for school work, and this, coupled with their numerous co-educational universities and normal schools, has given them an army of lady teachers and superintendents unequaled elsewhere in the world.

The county superintendents of schools are elected by the popular vote, and the women take to the stump-speaking and the usual kissing of voters' babies as naturally as ducks take to the water. Result,--the ladies secure the political plums, and the men are rapidly being driven to manual labor, their natural sphere of action, though not without vigorous kicking against the inevitable. These ex-men-superintendents buttonhole you at every turn, reciting the outrages perpetrated upon them by their successful women competitors.

At an election in a California town, one of these men sufferers, mistaking me for a voter, took me by a button of my coat, and poured forth a tale of woe so long that, unable to endure it longer, I cut off the button and fled. He did not notice my departure, and two hours later, there he was holding on to the button, all alone, gesticulating

frantically, and beseeching me to vote for him to save his wife and ten children from starvation. For aught I know, he has not missed me to this day; but is still sounding forth his wild appeals.

Should I describe fully all the wonderful scenes beheld by me in this wonderland, I should exhaust time and trench upon eternity. Suffice it to state that I returned to 'Frisco, fought a successful dictionary battle there, formed the acquaintance of many distinguished men, among them the great Irving Scott, who built the famous battleship Oregon. He was president of the city school-board, head of the vast Union Iron Works, and besides performing many herculean labors, was stumping the state nightly in favor of the election of William McKinley to the presidency of the United States.

I was fairly driven from this city by the ferocious fleas, which seemed to render life almost unendurable in hovel and palace. I could get no rest day or night in many parts of the state, on account of the savage attacks of these unspeakable, insatiate biters, more terrible than an army with Gatling guns.

Crossing the beautiful bay in the floating palace ferry-boat, I was for a time enchanted with Highland Park, Oakland. In front, through a vista of Eucalyptus, oak and elm trees, appear the glistening waters of the famed inland sea; on the right are seen the domes and spires of Oakland, Alameda, and San Francisco; across the valley loom the mountains, in the rainy season green to their summits, on which rest the serene blue of the heavens, except when, the frequent fogs bury everything from sight. On one side of the house, at the same time, the trade winds from the Pacific chill you to your very bones, on the other side the burning heat is unbearable. Afar off the humble home of Joaquin Miller, poet of the Sierras, clearly appears.

There are many beautiful homes on this lofty hilltop, but they were all for sale at bargains, for their occupants have grown weary of the cloud bursts of the long dreary rainy season, then of the parching heats of the equally dreary dry season, when a pickaxe and crowbar are required to dig a potato unless you keep water running from the hose day and night. These people long to return to their old homes in New England where the varying seasons are not so monotonous.

I was invited to accompany a religious society on a week's camp in a romantic canyon; but I was glad I did not when they returned in a couple of days, narrating an adventure which daunted the stoutest hearts. On the second night of their camping, the men were aroused from sleep by the frightful screams from the women's tent; rushing out, they saw in the light of the great fire kept burning to frighten the wild-cats and mountain lions, a circle of venomous rattle-snakes, hissing like fiends and coiled for springing. The men fought desperately all night with shotguns and clubs. Life is scarcely worth the living with these demons, and their natural attendants, the horrible tarantulas.

CHAPTER XXX.

DISENCHANTED.--HOME AGAIN.

I had secured the adoption of our dictionaries in every county visited by me, and now the publishers desired me to remain on the Pacific coast permanently, without salary, relying on commissions on sales of their books made by me and my sub-agents by canvassing, from house to house. This financial proposition was far from being alluring, for the laws enacted by a national democratic rule of four years had ruined many of the principal industries of this section, and the larger cities required a license fee of twenty dollars per week from all canvassing agents. Many houses displayed large signs, "No book agents allowed here," and they kept ferocious dogs to enforce the rule. The majority of the people were poor; the rich were already supplied with dictionaries; and the schools would have no funds available with which to buy reference books for nearly a year. Competing agents had visited every house before my arrival on the coast, and I therefore resigned my worthless position, and took the Eastern agency for a Tonic Port which had, by its wonderful efficacy, delivered many from the horrors of nervous prostration, anaemia, and kindred diseases which afflict so many of the human race.

Another disenchantment,--another Eden becomes a Sahara. I had reached the Pacific coast just when the departing rainy season had left all nature fair as a poet's dream of love, and, vainly dreaming that this was perpetual, it seemed as if I would sigh for no other heaven. But the scorching heat and Siroccoes from the Mohave Desert followed close upon the rear-guard of the retreating, life-giving rain-clouds, and soon the lovely flowers died; the enchanting green grass withered; the soul of the beautiful vanished, and the suffocating dust storms buried the earth in a ghostly shroud, save where wealth was sufficient to bring the mountain streams for irrigation.

I had for a time reveled in the dreams which fleetingly haunt all mortals, that there I had found the lost Arcadia, where balmy zephyrs fan the brow into ecstasy forever; but, alas! After a brief respite I had, in that land which the real estate sharks called "Paradise," suffered more from alternating chilling winds and withering heat than ever before; one day sweltering in the thinnest of seersuckers, and perhaps the very next shivering in all the woolens I could command.

Without a shadow of regret or even a backward look, I bade farewell to the Pacific and returned to the Atlantic of my youth, until the day dawns and the shadows flee away.

I sojourned for some months in the cities of Richmond, Baltimore, Providence, and Philadelphia, endeavoring to impress upon the minds of the physicians the importance of prescribing my remedy, but with no glittering financial success, lingering for weeks in the last named city, on the very verge of the grave to which I was brought by the filthy water of that grotesquely misnamed "City of Brotherly Love."

I had been, in former years, the champion school-book agent of New England, and publishers had often told me that if I ever returned to this vocation, they would gladly employ me. I applied to one of these for a position, requesting a man who owed his success in business entirely to my friendly aid and instructions, to speak a good word for me, but he at once showed his gratitude by securing the appointment for himself, being aided and abetted by an influential bald-headed man who hated me, simply because I had sent to him a friend who represented a hair restorer. Said bald-headed man had many reasons

to, and had often claimed to be, a friend of mine; but was foolishly sensitive about his lack of hirsute adornment, and said I insulted him by referring to his billiard-ball caput. Truly, gratitude is a lost art, and some friends immediately become enemies when they can secure from you no more plunder.

It is exceedingly difficult for a man who has passed the "death line" of the half century, to find a place where he can do good and get good; the hustling crowd of younger and stronger competitors push him to the wall or trample him beneath their feet, in the terrific scramble for the bare necessities of life. He drifts into the depressing occupation of book or life insurance agency, and at once every so-called friend, who pretended to worship him when he was prosperous, gives him the cold shoulder, and "poor devil" is the most complimentary epithet with which he is greeted.

Analogous with that wonderful Gulf Stream, once a myth, still a mystery, the strange current of human existence bears each and all of us with a strong, steady sweep from the tropic lands of sunny childhood, enameled with verdure and gaudy with bloom, through the temperate regions of manhood and womanhood, fruitful or fruitless as the case may be; on to the often frigid, lonely shores of old age, snow-crowned and ice-veined; and individual destinies seem to resemble the tangled drift on those broad gulf billows, strewn on barren beaches, stranded upon icebergs, some to be scorched under equatorial heats, some to perish by polar perils; a few to take root and flourish, building imperishable landmarks; and many to stagnate in the long inglorious rest of the Sargasso Sea.

But really to the faithful soul nothing is lost; though the great prizes of earth are denied us, every heroic endeavor, every struggle to benefit the world sends treasures on high to our credit in the grand bank of heaven.

There are the thoughts that one by one died 'ere we gave them birth,
The songs we tried in vain to sing, too sweet, too beautiful for earth.
 No endeavor is in vain;
 Its reward is in the doing,
 And the rapture of pursuing,
 Is the prize the vanquished gain.

We are all conscious of these songs we have tried in vain to sing, and we are confident we will yet sing them when the bodily impediments are swept away, and, as the earthly shadows lengthen, as the chill winds of old age strengthen, we more and more appreciate the wonderful expression of this thought, in that sweetest of all poems of the minor key, called "The voiceless."

"We count the broken lyres that rest
 Where the sweet wailing singers slumber;
But o'er the silent brother's breast,
 The wild flowers who will stoop to number.

"A few can touch the magic string,
 And noisy fame is proud to win them;
Alas for those who never sing,
 But die with all their music in them.

"Not where Leucadian breezes sweep

O'er Sappho's memory-haunted billow;
But where the glistening night dew weeps
O'er nameless sorrow's churchyard pillow.

"If singing breath or echoing chord
To every hidden pang were given,
What endless melodies were poured,
As sad as earth, as sweet as heaven."

We have done our best according to the light that has been given; we will continue to do so until the end, and we are soothed and sustained by the inspiring thought so sweetly expressed by one of our greatest poets.

"I know not where God's islands lift
Their fronded palms in air,
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond His love and care.

"And so beside the silent sea,
I wait the muffled oar:
No harm from Him can come to me
On ocean or on shore."

Only waiting till the angels
Open wide the mystic gate,
At whose feet I long have lingered,
Weary, sad, and desolate;
Even now I hear their footsteps,
And their voices far away--
When they call me, I am waiting,
Only waiting to obey.

AFTERMATH

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE FLORIDA CRACKERS.

When the previous thirty chapters were in press, the conviction was forced upon me that any book which touched upon Florida without a description of its poor whites called "Crackers," would be like the play of "Hamlet" with the Prince of Denmark left out, and I gladly pay this tribute of grateful remembrance to the most unique, and the only truly contented people that I have ever met on earth.

So far forth as history enlightens us, the ancestors of these peculiar specimens of the human race were never born anywhere in particular, but like Topsy, they "simply grewed."

Why these usually long, lean, lank, saffron-hued, erst-while clay-eaters have received such an unromantic name has been variously

accounted for. Some say the name was suggested by the fact that when not otherwise employed, they are constantly cracking the lice which swarm in their never-combed hair; others ascribe it to the frequent cracking of their rifles and long whip-lashes as they pursue their game or drive their cattle. An ex-slave of one of them tells me that they are called "Crackers," because they are all "cracked as to their cocoanuts."

Although the faces of many of these children of nature are usually as expressionless as a cast-iron cook-stove, they are far from being as stupid as they look; for even General Jackson, "the man of blood and iron," would have won but few, if any, laurels in his campaigns against the Seminoles, had it not been for his advanced guard of the warlike "Crackers."

"Out there in history" we see him and his army, while recklessly rushing the redskins, become lost and bewildered in the vast primeval forest. Day after day, they marched, but always in a circle; and each nightfall found them near where they broke camp in the morning. Provisions failed, and hunger and thirst drove the soldiers frantic. Every night they were pelted by bullets from unseen foes; stabbed and stung by innumerable insects; death for all stared them in the face; myriads of buzzards whirled above them, anxious for their prey.

While Jackson and his men, prostrated by heat, fruitless marching and discouragement, were praying for succor, suddenly the air seemed to be filled with human forms, which to their dazed minds appeared to be angels sent in answer to their fervent petitions. Grotesque looking angels were these, swinging from limb to limb of the forest trees; but heavenly in their beneficence were the solemn-faced "Crackers," as hundreds of them dropped to the ground and fed the exhausted warriors with "hog, hominy," and water from packs strapped with their rifles to their dirty, sturdy shoulders--"nough sight better work for angels to do than loafin' around the throne." While the feasting was in full swing, suddenly the haggard and careworn face of "Old Hickory" appeared in their midst. "Boys," said he, in his quick, incisive tones, "don't eat any more, 'twill make you sick, stow it away in your haversacks." Then, turning to the Floridians, he quietly remarked, "Gentlemen, you saved our lives; many thanks! Now we will do as much for you. Where are the Injuns?" All the tree-climbers arose respectfully, saluted, and a tall, cadaverous-looking, long-haired, coon-skin-capped leader advanced, took the general by the hand, and slowly drawled,--

"Ginrul, the red niggers air skulkin' yender to the river, waitin' to chaw up you uns tonight.

"Colonel Tompkins," came the quick command, "_climb_ your forces to the river, pour a volley into the red-skins at sundown, yell for all you're worth, we'll do the rest."

"All right, Ginrul, we uns will be thar," and away went the "flying Crackers," facing unspeakable dangers as calmly as a child looks into the loving eyes of its mother.

Sometimes they glided noiselessly as the autumn leaves cleave the air over the pine-needle carpet of the forest, and when this was impossible on account of the bogs and morasses, which would swallow them down to unknown depths, they swung through the tops of the

sighing pines until they had flanked their unsuspecting foes; then, just as the sun was setting, they struck terror to the hearts of the Seminoles by an unexpected volley from their rifles and by frightful yells,

"As if all the fiends from heaven that fell,
Had pealed the banner-cry of hell."

The red-men fled in panic along the narrow isthmus between the swamps and river straight upon the ambushed army of Jackson, who mowed them down with bullets as falls the grass before the scythes. The spirits of the Indians were crushed, and the remnant of a once powerful tribe fled into the vast, to the whites, inaccessible everglades, where their descendants now live on their fertile oasis, which is cultivated by their negro slaves, who never heard of Abraham Lincoln, or his proclamation of emancipation. "Old Hickory" and his gallant soldiers have all the glory; but their heroic allies returned quietly to their huts, their "hog and hominy," as unconcernedly as if they had done nothing more important than catching a trout or shooting a quail.

The stolidity and patience of the "Cracker" is equalled only by that of "their cousins, the Indians"; I have seen one of them sit for twelve hours continuously in one place fishing without being encouraged by even a little nibble; his face was as placid as that of a mummy which he closely resembles; then suddenly he would pull in scores of trout, but with the same imperturbable composure as before.

Although almost invariably poor so far as money is concerned, owing to their love of ease, these children of nature are proverbially hospitable, and you are welcome as his guest until you eat his last bit of food unless you offer him compensation therefor; if you do that his wrath knows no bounds, as I once found to my sorrow.

I had been wandering with three other horseback riders for a day and night lost in the woods; we were hungry and tired to the verge of collapse, when suddenly up went the heads and tails of our quadruped friends, who neighed with delight, and dashed pell mell toward a huge building or rather connected aggregation of buildings which loomed up on a hill in the pines. We made the welkin ring with our saluting shouts, but there was no response, the settlement was deserted; we stabled and fed our horses in the near-by barn, and led by a Floridian friend entered the largest house. Had manna fallen to us from heaven our surprise could not have been greater; a huge table was before us covered with enormous quantities of roasted meats,—venison, quail, wild turkey, hoe-cakes and fruits galore. We fell upon the provisions like famished wolves, and when at last our "aching voids" were filled, we were appalled at the havoc we had wrought; still no hosts appeared to welcome or rebuke.

On the wide mantel was a quantity of homemade cigars from which those of us who were "slaves to the filthy weed" made selections, and on the broad piazza were illustrating the wise man's definition of a cigar, "a roll of nausea with fire on one end and a fool on the other," when the air resounded with loud reports like pistol-shots and shouts of "whoa, whe, gee," rebel yells and barking of dogs; then a multitude of cattle dashed into view urged on by a cavalcade of men, women and children. The drivers gave us only casual glances until the round-up was completed and the enclosing gates shut, when the rollicking crowd came trooping toward us, and our guilty consciences made us fearful

of dire punishment for our peculations. Then a tall, long-haired patriarch saluted us with "Howdy, strangers, howdy," shook hands with us heartily, and with a wave of his hand, "my wife and children, gents," glanced at the impoverished table, when he shouted "glad you had good appetites, strangers, mother, guess you'll have to tune up some more cooking."

The whole crowd gave us a marching salute, and made the water fly in a big tub where they performed much-needed ablutions, and soon, hoe-cakes were smoking, pork and sausages sizzling, doughnuts swelling, manipulated by the many willing hands: then the whole army "fell to" the abundant feast. It was wonderful and laughable to see that crowd of sons, daughters, grand-sons, grand-daughters--fifty in number--all one family, "stow away the prog."

Each one reminded you of the Irishman's pig who was said to devour a half-bushel of boiled potatoes, and when he was outside of all that, he, himself, would not fill a two quart measure. What a clatter of dishes as the buxom girls helped mother "clear up"! Then we had fun at the milking; it required a dozen strong men to hold one kicking cow while a woman, squeezed out a little milk from the reluctant udders, though she gave down freely later when the ravenous calf took hold. If the men relaxed for a minute, up goes the irate cow's heels, away goes the pail "dowsing" the maid with the foaming milk from head to foot, anon the wild-eyed brute would down horns and charge, the milkeress takes to her heels, then a flight of lassos, over goes the frantic animal onto her back, the ropes tighten until she was conquered and forced to "give down some of her juice." One dose of this medicine was usually sufficient for any wild cow, and forever after she would "stand and deliver in peace."

Shall we ever forget the feeding of the pigs? Oh, the wild charge they made when they saw the feed troughs filled! "Everyone for himself, and the devil take the hindmost;" one huge razor-back stretches himself at full length on the "dough" in his generous attempt to prevent the rest from "making hogs of themselves"; an indignant young Cracker lassos the hind legs, and by a dextrous pull sends his swine-ship whirling and rending high heaven with his lamentations.

At last all are stuffed as full as our "grandmother's sassingers," and then reclining in the sun, they express by their contented grunts and snores, ecstatic rapture as they pile on flesh for the stuffing of their carnivorous owners. Then we watched a giant Crackeress feeding what she called her "feathered hogs." With frenzied eyes, whirring wings and waring beaks, all rushed to cheat the others and to secure the whole earth, each for himself, very like many "two-legged hogs without feathers"; a hen seizes a hoe-cake of her own size and frantically rushes away in the vain hope of devouring it in peace in some sequestered nook; but argus, envious eyes are watching, and her uncles and her aunts pursue, striking with beaks and claws to rob her of her big all. It was a miniature Wall Street and stock-exchange, where human hogs and foul birds of prey fight to the death to plunder their own brothers.

And now gently the night stole o'er us--

"Night, so holy and so calm,
That the moonbeams hushed the spirit,
Like the voice of prayer or psalm"

and until the "wee sma hours," while three generations listened intently, we swapped stories with our generous "Crackers."

Our patriarch host had been a captain in the rebel army until he had his "belly full of fight," as he quaintly termed it. His wife had blest him with an even score of boys and girls, all now living in this delightful climate, where he said, "no one ever died; they simply dried up and blowed away into the happy hunting-grounds beyond the stars." When a baby was born or a child married, this chief of the tribe "hitched on" another house, until now the one-story dwellings covered an acre of his vast lands.

He and his tribe raised on his great farm here in Bradford County everything he needed to eat, drink, or to wear: his wife and daughters spun and wove their clothing from the cotton grown and ginned on his own fields; the delicious syrup and sugar which adorned and sweetened the mountains of rye pancakes and floods of home-raised coffee, was made from the cane which was grown, and ground on his own soil. He grew his own tobacco, tea, peanuts, oranges, figs, pineapples, bananas; he fattened his cattle and hogs on his own cassava and the abundant wild grasses; his flocks of sheep "cut their own fodder," and the wool and mutton was all clear profit. This "Cracker" family was the happiest and most independent I ever saw on earth.

All around this plantation are millions of uncultivated acres where the wretches of our city slums could be equally happy if our Carnegies and Rockefellers would only loan the funds to colonize them there. The millions of dollars, now worse than wasted by our selfish millionaires? could thus soon make this earth a paradise like to that above. After enjoying this free delightful life for several days, and we were on the point of departing, I said to our host, "Captain, we have enjoyed your hospitality immensely, and I hope you will allow me to reciprocate," holding toward him a bank-note.

Instantly his eyes flashed angry fire, he shot out his fist to strike me, when a neighbor said, "Don't hit him Cap, he don't know no better, he's a Yank." "Wall Yank," drawled this six feet of fighting man, "seein' ye don't know no better, I'll let ye off this time; but I don't keep no tarvern, and when me and my family come yure way, we'll all stop with yew, that'll even it up." As I looked at the fifty yawning caverns of chewing mouths, and reflected upon the cost of feeding them in Boston for even one day, I thanked God that I had not given him my card, and we rode away amid ear-splitting cheers and waving of hands, each one of which resembled in size the tail-board of a coal-cart.

On another occasion while scouring the Florida country for lands for colonizing purposes in company with a native, the night caught us in the dense forest; our horses stumbled over immense fallen trees, the owls hooted, the wild cats screamed, the thunder roared, occasionally a pine fell splintered by the lightning, the rain fell in torrents, and we seemed destined to shiver all the long black hours supperless and comfortless, when our eyes were greeted by the cheerful light shining through the open door of a log hut; a dozen curs gave tongue and went for our legs till a sharp yell from within sent them yelping away. A genuine Cracker appeared, and seeing our dripping forms in the electric flash, he quietly said, "Lite strangers, lite, jest in time, plenty of hog and hominy." He led our tired steeds into the leanto,

fed them, and ushered us into his one-room shanty, where his lank wife and a dozen children silently made room for us around a rough board table. "Mother," said the master, "more hoe-cake, more bacon," and the obedient woman "slapped" a lot of corn dough on to the blade of a common hoe which a girl held over the "fat-wood" fire until it browned; another tossed some smoked hog into an suspicious looking skillet, and soon, in spite of the slovenly cooking, we "fell to" in a desperate attempt to smother the gnawing pangs of a long-suffering appetite. Then we told all the stories we could recall or invent to satisfy the starving intellects of these lonesome denizens of the wild wood. "Come, chilluns, to bed," said our host, and they were all stacked one over the other on the one corn-shuck couch where a chorus of snores proved they were in the land of dreams.

Our host relapsed into silence and seemed to be pondering some profound problem in his mind; but suddenly blurted out, "Strangers, reckon ye haint gut any of the rale critter, have ye? no corn juice pison nor nuthin'? reckon I was born dry!" My guide in reply produced a long flat bottle of about his own size, and passed it with "try that Kunnel." There was a sound of mighty gurgling long drawn out, but finally the huge demijohn was reluctantly withdrawn from his cavernlike mouth with a joyous "Ah, that's the rale stuff, have some mother? The woman removed the snuff rag from her gums long enough to drain the dregs, and presto! they beamed upon us like twin suns.

"Strangers," ejaculated this typical Cracker, "this is the dog-gondest place ter git er drink yer ever seed. Aour caounty went dry last 'lection, and tother day er went to the spensary ter git sum fire-water er thinkin we mought be sick er sunthin, ther wouldn't let me hev it 'thout Doc's 'scripshun--went to Doc, wouldn't give me 'scripshun 'thout snake-bite er sunthin--went ter only snake er knowed on fer a bite, und the dog-goned critter sed all his bites wuz spoke for three weeks ahed. Dunno what ud er dun if you uns hedn't cum erlong. Naouw, strangers, you take aour bed, we sleep on floo."

Then he took the "kids" one by one, and set them up with their backs to the side of the shanty, and we, not daring to beard the lion in his den by declining, obeyed. The next morning we found ourselves set up alongside the children on the floor, while the old man and his wife were snoring on the bed. Verily, "For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain, the heathen 'Cracker' is peculiar."

CHAPTER XXXII.

LOOKING FORWARD.

When I was writing the last words of the preceding chapter of this book, and was about to

"Heed my tired pen's entreaty,
And say, oh, friends, _valet_,"

I seemed to be trying to awake from a trance in which I had been the unwilling instrument, compelled by an intelligence extraneous to myself to expose to an incredulous public the most sacred scenes and

thoughts of a lifetime.

I had decided to relieve the patience of my readers with the thirty-first chapter; but when the retrospective kaleidoscope closed, a vision rose before me so vivid, so real, that I am constrained to describe it in the hope that the warning may prevent the tragic part of the dream from becoming a reality.

It is Christmas day in the year of our Lord, 1910; the thunder-cloud, which for many years had been increasing in blackness, now surcharged with pent-up lightnings, and overspreading our entire national horizon, bursts with the fury of a cyclone.

The great masses of the people had for a long time watched with ever-increasing rage the seeming conspiracy of the employing and professional classes to bind to their chariot-wheels those who labored with their hands. Gigantic trusts had "cornered" all the necessities of life, and a few lily-fingered plutocrats in their marble palaces dictated to the horny-handed sons of toil the amount of their beggarly wages, and the prices they must pay for every needed article, until every job of work and every bone of charity was fought for by multitudes who mercilessly stabbed each other in their mad fury to assuage the pangs of hunger.

When the people rallied at the polls, and elected to the high offices members of their own unions, the millionaires bribed these officials to obey their every command, and these mercenary law-makers, as often as chosen, joined the ever-growing ranks of the oppressors.

Even the almost innumerable colleges throughout the Republic, whose treasuries had absorbed countless millions of dollars, had proved a measureless curse, as they had become mere cramming machines and nurseries of lawlessness and brutality. The great universities had long idolized plug-ugly football kickers and baseball sluggers to the utter ignoring of scholarship, until the hordes of eleemosinary prize-fighters among the so-called students created a reign of terror where they were located, and far surpassed in ferocity even the gladiators of ancient Rome. The annual "athletic contest" between the two greatest universities was fought out with almost inconceivable fury on "Soldiers' Field."

Irresistible bodies met the immovable, cheered on by yelling legions, each phalanx would conquer or die, and die they did by scores; they kicked and slugged like maniacs until separated by the combined police-forces of the surrounding cities, and more were killed and wounded than in the entire Spanish War. When night fell, thousands of collegians invaded the capitol of the State, and with savage yells and wedge-rushes drove all citizens from the streets; they closed every theatre, pelting the actors with whiskey bottles stolen from the saloons in which they had smashed thousands of dollars' worth of costly furniture; they stole every sign from stores, which caught their fancy; no woman was respected, until their orgies were stopped by the bayonets of the national guard.

Such "scholars" as these had for many years been ground through these educational mills by thousands, crowding the ranks of the professional classes to suffocation. Legions of unscrupulous lawyers, more heartless than pirates or brigands in Bulgaria, infested every city and town, busy as demons stirring up strife, drilling witnesses to

perjury, bull-doing the innocent even unto death with the full connivance of the plunder-sharing judges, until the jails were crowded with victims who could not pay their outrageous fees.

These lawyer-sharks packed caucuses, stuffed ballot-boxes, and thereby elected themselves to legislatures where they enacted unjust laws to subserve their own iniquitous depredations.

But this nefarious pillaging was not confined to the courts alone: armies of patientless doctors must be fed at the expense of the long-suffering public, and as all the people were not naturally sick all the time for the benefit of the quacks, these so-called doctors prevailed upon their legislative college-chums to pass laws compelling all to be inoculated with virus, ostensibly to render them immune to various contagions, but really to furnish unlimited plunder to their "family physicians."

Even the women caught the craze for "higher education" to fit themselves for "kid-glove" professional emoluments; they, too, tore each other's hair, scratched each other's faces in frantic football rushes, tumbling over each other in the wild scrimmage for fees, leaving the kitchens to the ignorant foreigners, who ruined digestions with preposterous cookery, which would have killed a nation of ostriches.

The great Republic might have survived even such horrors as these had it not been for the out-breaking of another craze more terrible far than an army with gattling guns, I refer to the most destructive of all scourges, the mania for stock-gambling. The crafty, unscrupulous managers of bucket-shops, stock-exchanges, and brokerages filled the columns of the press with manufactured accounts of vast fortunes made in an hour by imaginary investors of small sums, and at once multitudes of farmers, mechanics, and even teachers abandoned their honest pursuits to squander their hard earnings in the vain attempts to "buck the tiger," and "beard the lion in his den."

The inevitable result followed: the lion and the lamb lay down together, with the lamb inside the lion, thousands of formerly well-to-do people were pauperized. Thousands of farms were abandoned, hundreds of factories were deserted, while the fiendish, cheating boss-gambler sharks were gorged to repletion with their infamous plunder; then followed a frenzy of hatred on the part of the masses against the classes: city treasuries were depleted to feed the starving with free soup, the cities were crowded with the desperate, hungry multitudes who had lost their all, and bloody riots capped the climax of a hell on earth.

From the cupola of the State House in Boston, a little group of citizens gazed upon a scene which would daunt the stoutest heart; these five men standing motionless and speechless under the gilded dome are of widely differing stations in life, as far apart as the poles in culture, education, and creed, but their faces wore the same expressions of profound sadness mingled with stern determination.

The tall man on the right is the Governor of the State of Massachusetts, a millionaire, a classic face showing his aristocratic lineage in every feature, a scholarly, furrowed brow, dressed with scrupulous care, and looking at the frightful scenes with the dauntless eye of an eagle. He is the chosen leader of the Republican

party which for many years has controlled the destinies of the "Old Bay State." Next stands a man in every way in strong contrast to his refined companion, a short, stout, ruddy-faced son of Ireland, but now Mayor of the city of Boston, a Democrat of Democrats, carelessly dressed, a political boss, who under ordinary circumstances would never have affiliated with his lordly neighbor.

Next in the line is a smooth-faced portly man, clad in fine broadcloth, unmistakably a Catholic Priest; next is a man of soldierly bearing whose uniform and shoulder-straps proclaim him to be the commander of the national guard of the State; close beside the guardsman is the stalwart superintendent of the city police. For a few minutes only, these men were spell-bound by the terrible scenes before them. A mob of ragged wild-eyed men and women are straggling along the street, some wearing the red caps of Anarchy, firing revolvers at the windows of the houses and at every well-dressed person in sight, some waved strange banners labelled "Bread or blood," "Down with the rich," "Shoot the soldiers"; many blood-red flags are waved with demoniacal yells.

Directly in front of this howling mob is massed the First Corps of Cadets, and the 9th Regiment of Irish militia; soldiers are seen falling in the ranks, and blood crimsoned the snow, alarm bells are clanging, flames are bursting from the elegant buildings, tremendous explosions are heard which seemed to shake the foundations of the city. Ferocious men and women are seen looting the stores, drinking plundered liquors; the off-scouring of all nations are pillaging, burning, murdering; the spirit of hell seems in full control on this natal day of the Prince of Peace. Still the national guard did not fire.

"Father," cried the Governor, "will the 9th Regiment kill their own brothers if ordered to shoot?"

"My children will obey orders, sir," quietly replied the priest.

"Then in heaven's name, General, Marconi the order; if we wait longer everything is ruined."

The Mayor's eyes flashed fire; he seemed about to countermand--the priest lifted his hand, "Brother, we must," he said--the Mayor hesitated; he saw many of his own constituents among the rioters; his face was like that of a corpse, then, "Order," he gasped.

The General touched the keys before him, the Colonel of the 9th flinched as if struck by a bullet, then a quick command, the clear notes of the bugle sounded, the Irish soldiers hesitated, glanced at the cupola; the priest with outstretched arms confirmed the mandate; the repeating rifles were levelled, and crash upon crash went the volleys of bullets into the bosoms of the mob. Again pealed the bugle note, and quick as a flash forward rushed the dandy Cadets and the Irish soldiers, shoulder to shoulder in a wild bayonet charge.

Screams, groans and curses rend the air, scores of the rioters are weltering in their gore, the rest broke, fled, leaving the streets strewn with the dead and wounded.

"Marconi the hospitals," said the Governor; and in a trice the ambulances are bearing away the sufferers to be tenderly cared for, as

if they were the best, instead of the worst of the human race.

"Brothers," said the Governor, "shall we order the troops and police in every city to fire? It will be merciful to end this horrible suspense." "Amen," came the response from the bowed heads of his companions; instantly the command was Marconied to every place which was in a state of anarchy.

Suddenly came the crash of musketry from many parts of the city, accompanied by the grumbling bass of the gattling guns, then the defiant yells ceased, and all was quiet.

"Your Excellency," calmly spoke the General, "here are Marconis from every city that the fight is over, the mobs have dispersed.

"Thank God," came the chorus from each in this remarkable quintette who had co-operated in the carefully-considered plans which had so quickly brought peace to the distracted city and State.

"Brothers," said the Governor, "we must feed the hungry, and give work to the people of our overcrowded cities: there is but one way to accomplish this, we must colonize the unemployed upon the Southern and Western lands, the people must go back to the bosom of mother earth where they can have independent homes of their own; there are no public funds for this purpose, and the rich must furnish the necessary money for transportation, or the Republic is dead. I will personally guarantee the funds necessary to furnish homes for all who will go from Massachusetts to cultivate the unimproved lands in Florida and Colorado, which, with others, I purchased years ago to provide for this crisis which many prophesied was sure to come. I will at once telegraph to secure the co-operation of the Governors of all the States in our Union; the evening papers will announce our plans to the world."

In a few minutes the lightnings were flashing full accounts of this, the most important meeting ever held, throughout the length and breadth of the nation; the responses were the most enthusiastic and thrilling ever known in the history of mankind. Money in vast sums was wired by the rich to every Governor, for the purpose of transforming the poverty-stricken of the slums into self-supporting self-respecting farmers; railroad presidents tendered free transportation; one touch of nature made the whole world kin.

In an uncompleted tunnel under the harbor of Boston was gathered a vast crowd of wild-eyed Anarchists, and desperate hungry wretches from the vilest dens, who had just sworn with unspeakable oaths to burn and plunder the city that very night, to murder all the rich, to commit outrages no fiend had ever dared to dream before. When they were about to rush out and let loose the dogs of carnage and unspeakable horrors, suddenly in the glare of their torches appeared the priest who an hour before, had played such an important part in the State House cupola conference. A hush fell upon the rabble as they recognized their spiritual adviser; with a voice of almost super-human power, he shouted,

"Brothers, there is no excuse for murder, no cause for lawlessness, money is flowing in like water to furnish homes for us all away from these stifling factories out in God's pure air of the prairies and fields of the great West and the sunny South. For the sake of your

wives and children do no violence; assemble all to-morrow morning in the amphitheatre, where you will find food in abundance, until we are located upon our own portion of God's green earth."

The effect of these sympathetic words was wonderful; malice and frenzy were driven from the minds of these children of the slums, even as the devils were exorcised from the Magdalen of old, and inspired with new hopes and holier aspirations they vanished into the shades of evening.

All night long the Salvation Army, the Volunteers of America, hundreds of every nationality and creed, labored strenuously in making preparations to feed the hungry, clothe the shivering, and care for the sick. When the morning dawned fair and balmy beyond all precedent for this season of the year, the scene in the vast amphitheatre baffled description, over which the heavenly host rejoiced as never before. The united bands of the city discoursed sweet music from the balcony, from steaming cauldrons the multitudes were fed to repletion with nourishing delicious food; the sick, the weak, the women and children were abundantly supplied in their homes, all seemed like one great family, the rich and the poor clasped hands like brothers, and the spirit of peace on earth good will toward men reigned supreme. When all had been refreshed, while the bands played "Hail to the Chief," the Governor, with a great number of the most prominent in church, state, and philanthropy, filed in upon the rostrum, welcomed by enthusiastic cheers. As the applause died away His Excellency said,

"In the city hives are clustered far too many human bees, we must swarm out into the country where there is honey enough and to spare,

"Go back to your mother, ye children, for shame,
Who have wandered like truants, for riches and fame!
With a smile on her face, and a sprig in her cap,
She calls you to feast from her bountiful lap.

Come out from your alleys, your courts, and your lanes,
And breathe, like your eagles, the air of our plains;
Take a whiff from our fields, and your excellent wives
Will declare it all nonsense insuring your lives.'

"You, who are strong, and who delight in buffetting the cold and snows, should go to the deserted New England farms or to the broad prairies of the West, the graneries of the world; but you who shrivel in the wintry blasts, and who are subject to rheumatism and coughs, should go to the sunny southlands where you can work and rejoice in a climate of perpetual summer.

"We have funds in abundance to secure lands for all, build houses, furnish essentials for tilling the soil, and provisions, until crops can be raised; this money you can repay in easy installments to be used to equip future applicants. All wishing to secure these homes without money and without price can apply at the State House to-morrow."

A glad shout which reached the stars and gladdened the angelic hosts was the immediate response to these tidings, and poverty was banished forever from the Great Republic.

The scene changes--from stygian darkness, desolation and gloom of dingy, malodorous factories and streets, where ragged, hopeless

beggars-for-work delve and curse, to the glorious sunlight and balmy air of the "Land of Flowers." Here we see pretty vine-clad cottages embowered in orange groves, and surrounded by luxuriant harvests of everything to make life worth the living. Here we see the murderous villains of the Boston Christmas-day mobs, no longer blood-thirsty, but smiling and happy as they listen to the songs of birds, the bleating of their own flocks, the laughter of their delighted children, while the prosperous fathers "tickle the bosom of their own mother earth with the hoe to make it laugh with abundant crops for man and beast." The grateful citizens have named their towns in honor of their generous benefactors, thus establishing for Carneiges, Morgans and Rockefellers monuments to their memories which will endure forever.

Thus was removed for all time the antagonism between labor and capital; thus were envy and class hatreds banished from society, and thus was our glorious Republic secured upon firm foundations, which will endure "until the final day breaks and all earthly shadows flee away."

Thus at last the prophetic vision of the poet seemed to be realized in "the land of the free and the home of the brave."

"One dream through all the ages
Has led the world along:
The wise words of the sages,
The poet in his song,
The prophet in his vision,--
All these have caught the gleam,
Have caught the light elysian,
Have told the haunting dream.

This dream is that the story
The ages have unrolled
Shall blossom in the glory
Of one long age of gold;
That every man and woman
Shall find life glad and free,
That in whate'er is human
Is hid Divinity.

The rod of old oppression
One day shall broken be;
Those held in night's possession
The light of hope shall see;
For tears there shall be laughing,
And peace shall be for strife,
And thirsty lips be quaffing
The wine of glorious life.

The rage and noise of battle
Shall sink, and fall to peace,
The lowing of the cattle,
The fruit and corn increase;
No more the wide sky under
The rattle of the drum,
No more the cannon's thunder,--
God's kingdom shall have come.

Some day, dearest, where skies are bright,
We'll dwell in the beauty of love and light;
And sorrow will seem
Like a far-off dream,
And life shall be morning, that knows no night!

Some day, dearest--that perfect day
For which we knelt in the dark to pray
We'll reap the rest
That God deems best--
In the beautiful vales of the far-away!"

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