

Literary Department

CONSTANCE IRETON: MY UNCLE'S WARD.

BY MISS SARAH A. BOWEN.

CHAPTER I.

"Why, May Appleton?" exclaimed my sister Laura, one morning, as she opened the door of the library, where I sat studying Euclid, "in the great arm chair, deep in 'The Mysteries of Utopia'?" "I have been haunting all over the house for you; but I might have known you'd be there with your head in a book. Mamma wishes to see you in the breakfast room."

I arose with a sigh, wondering what new subject I was to be lectured upon, and the next instant stood in the august presence of my lady mother.

She sat behind the dining table, where I had left her half an hour before. An open letter lay on the table, and she appeared to be musing over its contents.

I trembled involuntarily, and thought, to myself, "What possible offence can I have committed, that anybody should trouble themselves to report it?"

"May," she said, looking up, "your Uncle Robert has returned from Europe."

"Oh, has he?" "I'm so glad!" and I almost shouted with delight.

My mother sank back with a groan of despair.

"Child, will you ever learn to be more lady-like? You shock me with your rude, hidden ways. You never see any such exhibitions of feeling in your sister. Do try and cultivate a little grace and refinement; if you haven't any naturally."

"But he's been gone two whole years," I said, deprecatingly, "and I do want to see him so much; besides, your news was so unexpected."

"There, that will do," was the cold, hard reply. "You are always ready with excuses, instead of endeavoring to improve, as you ought to. If I thought it would make you remember to exercise more control another time, I would send you away without informing you of the contents of the letter."

I made no response, realizing by bitter experience that I ventured any remonstrance I should be immediately dismissed. At last she said:

"He has written to inform me that he shall be with us this evening, and he wishes you to be ready to return to 'Maple Grove' with him, as he expects his ward there day after tomorrow."

"His ward?" I cried, in dismay.

"Hail!" laughed Laura, with a sneer on her beautiful face. "I thought that you'd be jealous. You may as well lay down your sceptre at once, for depend upon it, this stranger will usurp your place in Uncle Robert's heart, as your reign is over."

"But, mother," I continued, "this is certainly curious news. Did you know anything about it previous to receiving that note?"

"May, how often shall I tell you not to call me mother. It is so old-fashioned. Why don't you follow your sister's example? Mamma is much more elegant and refined."

"Excuse me; I'll endeavor to recollect. But you have not answered my question."

"Well, it is as much of a surprise to me as to you. The story, however, is quite romantic. When your uncle first entered college, he became acquainted with a gentleman by the name of Ernest Ireton; and although there was a great difference in their ages, their friendship was soon proverbial. The other students always spoke of them as Damon and Pythias. Mr. Ireton married young, without his parents' consent, and Robert was his only confidant. A year after, an uncle died, bequeathing him an immense fortune; and now he introduced his wife to his friends. They lived very happily, bound up in each other and their only child, Constance. When the latter was ten years of age, her mother died, and twelve months ago the father departed, leaving his daughter and her fortune in the care of his dear college companion."

"Why, mamma," exclaimed Laura, "isn't it odd that uncle never let you know about it?"

"Oh, brother always was eccentric. He never did confide in me, and I don't suppose he ever will. Alice was his favorite."

"Did you know this girl's parents?" I inquired.

"I met her father once, but never her mother. The latter was said to have been very handsome. I wonder if her daughter resembles her."

"Oh, mamma," said my sister, "perhaps she may marry her guardian yet. It would make quite a sensation, would it not?"

"I never expect to see him enter the bonds of matrimony, my darling. He is a bachelor past caring. Such splendid opportunities as he's had, too, for taking a wife. It has really made me quite provoked sometimes, to see him so indifferent to the charms of the ladies."

"Oh, but you forget what an adorer he is of May. The only one she'll ever have, probably. What a pity it is that she's his niece! To be sure, it doesn't speak well of his taste; but then there is no account for the curious whims some people get into their heads," and Laura laughed maliciously.

My fate decided.

"It is very well for you to cry 'sour grapes,'" I retorted indignantly.

"Oh, you dear little sweet-tempered creature," she rejoined, ironically. "The thought of that ward has ruffled your feathers, hasn't it? If she should happen to marry uncle, then farewell to your hopes of becoming his heiress. Your clinging and fawning will all have been wasted."

"When I stoop to anything of the kind, then I shall deserve to be disappointed," I replied, vehemently.

My mother glanced up, exclaiming:

"May, you are very quarrelsome. I am sure it is a great trouble to you to have such a child. I should think you might have more feeling enough to cease from troubling your sister while she is in the room; as she is now so busy with her studies."

"No! this morning, I promised Alice that I would go with her to the theatre, and I shall not go out of my room until she has returned."

I bit my lips. Should I never learn that in a war of words I was no match for Laura?

"Robert will have quite a fatherly air, for a person of thirty-two. The young lady is just half his age. Now I think of it, my dear, I am surprised that he does not want you to receive her, instead of May. You could do the honors of his elegant establishment so beautifully; and then you would be a far more suitable companion for her."

"Why, mamma, how absurd for you to think of such a thing. You know he never could treat me decent, and I am sure I should not care if I never saw his face again. I hate him."

"Oh, my darling, you should not speak so. Probably he's altered a great deal since he's been gone. Who knows but what he may make as much of you now as he ever did of May?"

"He is at liberty to do as he pleases," was the response accompanied by a toss of the head. "I'm sure I shan't die with grief, if he doesn't like me," and she commenced humming a tune to show her indifference.

Her parent regarded her with fond pride.

"Well, my love, you have so many admirers that you can afford to lose him. But, I wish you were not quite so antagonistic. It seems Miss Ireton is at school in Woodville."

Laura sprang up with an exclamation.

"What did you say her given name was?"

"Constance."

"Why, what a piece of stupidity I am! It must be the very girl that was at Mrs. Stillman's. I'm sure I don't want anything to do with her. You know, mamma, I wrote to you that I was sick, and I really was—of the school—and I don't mean to go there again. It is not exclusive enough for me."

"That's right, my child; you must be very select. I think I shall send you to Madame Lamotte's to finish. But you have not told me anything about this person. Is she beautiful?"

"Well, I suppose some would call her so, but I should not. She isn't my style. She always acted as if she thought the earth was not good enough for her to walk on, and she carries her head like a queen. You'd think she was descended from the blood royal, to see her. Almost all the girls were perfectly bewitched by her. What attracted them so, I never could understand. I would not pay her homage, so she always treated me with the most supreme indifference. I made some comment upon her one day—not very flattering, you may be sure—and one of her trains was kind enough to report it to her. I was in hopes that would lead me to victory, but she has been delighted to have had an opportunity to humiliate her proud spirit; but she never noticed the remark, evidently considering me beneath her contempt."

My mother was apparently bewildered that anybody could have the audacity to treat her elegant daughter in that way. As for me—wicked creature that I was—the young lady rose in my estimation. At last the former said:

"But, my dear, perhaps you may be mistaken in the person. That Constance Ireton, at Mrs. Stillman's, may not be your uncle's ward."

"Oh, but, mamma, she certainly is. The name, in the first place, is an uncommon one, and then I know that this girl's father died about a year ago, and one of her friends told me that her guardian, a Mr. Lindsay, was travelling in Europe. It did not occur to me then that it was uncle, for I did not suppose he ever thought of such a thing as having any other pet than May. Then again, there is no academy in Woodville except the one that I attended."

"Well, love, you have made out a very clear case, so I suppose you must be right. I am sure I shan't invite her to come here, if she is such a disagreeable creature as you describe. I declare I feel that it is my duty to warn Robert against her. It would be a terrible affair if she should wheedle him into marrying her."

"Oh, mamma! that is n't the word to apply to her. She would never stoop to that; she'd carry the claret by storm, and do you let uncle fight his own battles. He would only laugh at you for your interference."

"He's so headstrong, I suppose he would. There never was a person yet that could do anything with him, without 't was May."

"Ah! now that Constance Ireton has entered the field, her way is over," interrupted Laura. "She will be destroyed at once."

"Don't be so certain in your predictions, for they may prove false," I rejoined, as calmly as possible. She arched her eyebrows.

"Can it be that you mean to contest the prize? Well, that is delightful. Let me see, which shall I bet on? I can't afford to lose though, so I guess I'll stake my money on the ward."

"How long is it since you became an adept in the very lady-like accomplishment of gambling," I said, scornfully.

She clasped her hands exultingly.

"I declare, I do believe that you are writing in the grasp of the green-eyed monster, this very minute. If it was only a younger man that you loved so devotedly, how romantic it would be. As it is, I expect you will be back here in a week, dying of a broken heart, while uncle will be, under the spell of the siren in such a degree, that he'll forget to be present at your funeral."

"It would be very gratifying to me, if you would attend to your own affairs and let me alone," I replied.

"May!" exclaimed my mother, "that is the second exhibition of ill-temper that you have favored us with this morning. Really, it is growing unbearable. I must say that I'm glad you are going away tomorrow. You will have to be a little more amiable there, or even Robert's affection will be tried to the utmost."

"Oh, mamma, she is too apt to over drop her remarks before him. There she will be the very pink of sweetness."

God forgive me! But at that moment I believe I could have struck her dead.

"Well, my dear, favor that if you by dancing, if not by talking, as she will find. Eleven o'clock—it is quite late! I had better go to bed at this hour, and leave you to your own thoughts. I shall not be back until tomorrow morning, and I shall not be back until tomorrow morning."

"No! this morning, I promised Alice that I would go with her to the theatre, and I shall not go out of my room until she has returned."

I would run in and see her. She urged me to go up to her new house. You see she has got an elegant little boudoir, and she intends to let it furnished exquisitely; but she is undecided as to colors, and she desires to have me assist in her selection."

I now slipped from the room, as I did not return to the library to become absorbed in my fascinating book again—oh, no! my heart was too full—but gliding up the broad staircase, I sought my chamber to weep, for I was jealous.

CHAPTER II.

My mother, Agnes Lindsay, had been a great belle in her youth, with many suitors and admirers in her train. She had been educated at the most approved style. The great principle of society—a wealthy marriage—was carefully instilled into her mind.

At twenty she proved that she had thoroughly learned her lesson by bestowing her hand upon Howard Appleton. Not that she loved him more than others—that was absurd—but because he was decidedly the most eligible match of the season. Of this union my sister and myself were the only offspring.

My parents were both passionate admirers of beauty, and Laura promised to realize their fondest anticipations. Her hair and eyes were of the deepest black, contrasting finely with her snow-white skin. Her lips had stolen their hue from the richest carnation, while crimson waves alternately ebbed and flowed on her cheeks. Of the haughty, imperious nature that ever asserted its right to rule, I will not speak.

I have been told that my father and mother were shocked when they first beheld me. I was so very plain. If that were so, they never recovered from it; for I grew lovelier, if that were possible, as I advanced in years. As a consequence, while my beautiful sister was petted and indulged to the utmost, I was left almost entirely to the tender mercy of my brothers.

My mother delighted to exhibit her lovely treasure to visitors, and hear them expatiate upon its charms. Sometimes some compassionate person would express a desire to see me, and when I appeared in the arms of my nurse, my parent always felt that it was an imperative necessity that she should apologize for my looks.

"Oh, is such a perfect fright," she would say, "that I am really ashamed to own her. Who under the sun she resembles, I can't imagine. One thing I know, it isn't the Lindseys or the Appletons. If I lived in ancient times I should think she was a changeling."

So I grew up, early learning a bitter lesson, that I was a source of mortification to my parents. I felt myself neglected and despised. I brooded over the injustice of those about me, until all the dark, evil passions seemed to take up their abode in my heart. I trembled to think what I might have become had it not been for one ray of light that penetrated the black shroud that enveloped my soul.

My sister early asserted her right to play the tyrant. I rebelled sometimes, but my mother's authority was always thrown into the balance in favor of her darling; and then I was forced to yield. Did I by any singular chance possess some little treasure that pleased the capricious fancy of the pampered child, I was forthwith obliged to give it up. But there was some thing of which she could not deprive me, and I gloried in it, although it was a perpetual wonderment to me how I ever became the recipient of so rare a jewel—and that was the love of my uncle Robert. He was my mother's youngest brother, and one day when he suddenly entered the nursery and found me weeping disconsolately over some new injury, he at once proclaimed himself my champion; and to my chilled, dwarfed nature he brought life, light and warmth. Until I grew to almost worship the ground he walked on. It was a new era in my existence. I had dwelt so long amid shadows, that it seemed as though there was no sunshine for me. I had begun to think that beauty was the one great gift to be prized above all others; but he endeavored to eradicate that idea, and have me realize the glorious fact, that I could so cultivate my spirit that people would forget my face, overlook the external in their admiration for the internal; that though I could never compare with the rose, I might still attract hearts to me; for the soul was, after all, the magnet.

Many were the remarks that were elicited in consequence of his devotion to me; but he received them all with careless indifference, unless they pressed him too hard, when he would draw forth the sword of Truth, polished by scorn, and sharpened by irony, parrying their thrusts so effectively that they were glad to withdraw from the contest, and after a time they let me alone. Occasionally a friend would make some inquiries, but was generally answered with a shrug of the shoulders, and "Robert is so odd and eccentric."

Laura, piqued at his neglect of her, tried every artifice to attract him to her side, but without success, and finally I think she really hated him, because where all others bowed before her, he alone stood erect.

Many were the happy months that I had passed at "Maple Grove" with him and his old housekeeper. He first led me to the hills of knowledge, and broke bread for my hungry, thirsting mind, and now my path seemed full of pleasantness and peace. My father, immersed in business cares, and piling the gold into his strong chest, forgot, I think, at times, that he had any child but the beautiful petting darling that thrilled his heart with pride. My mother, moving in a giddy whirlpool of pleasure and excitement, never troubled herself about me so long as I kept out of her sight. Thus all the bright hours, that shone in the dark web of my life were woven by my uncle's hand.

When I was thirteen, important business transactions obliged him to go to Europe, and it was uncertain when he would be able to return. Oh, the sharp, blinding agony that was crowded into the short hour that I bade him farewell!

"My little Maydower," he said, "what shall I bring you from across the Atlantic?"

"Yourself!" it is all I desire," I replied, as I clung to his neck.

"You will," he said, "be home like a person who has just returned from a journey of a hundred years, and want as I please, those about me, taking no more notice of my movements, than if I had been an automaton. I shall, therefore, be obliged to my mother's promise to be located as convenient to you as possible."

relation to some breach of etiquette, until I became so constrained in my manner, that the sight of a stranger fairly tortured me.

Thus for two years my spirit traveled, with bleeding feet, over a thorny path. I did not despond. I tried hard to do my duty; but the only star that appeared in the horizon, was the thought of the traveler's return.

Think of this, ye parents, who have little ones in your homes, thriving and starving for love!

Now as I sat in my room on the morning that his note was received, I thought of all these things. My dear noble uncle! would he love me just as fondly as ever, or would this ward separate us? Had he changed? as my mother so cruelly suggested.

Then I imagined his charge, so proud and stately, as Laura had described her, and my heart sank within me. I arose to get his likeness, and as I passed the mirror, I paused to gaze at myself. Oh how I hated that red hair, and those great grey eyes, swollen with weeping, and the freckled face, that stared back at me from the polished surface.

"Why could not Mr. Ireton have appointed somebody else his daughter's guardian?" I thought; "not go to taking the only friend that I have in the world?"

The summons to dinner passed unheeded. I was too unhappy to think of food. At last the hour arrived that I had looked forward to with such blissful anticipations, and I now welcomed its advent with a heavy sigh.

"Look your prettiest, my dear," I heard my mother whisper to Laura. "I feel convinced that your uncle has changed, and I don't doubt but what you will be his favorite sister."

I smiled bitterly.

But that was all forgotten, when I felt his strong arm around me, and heard his rich voice syllable my name.

"Why, my pet, how tall you have grown!" he exclaimed, as he drew me under the chandelier. "I can scarcely realize that you are the same little girl that sorrowed so at my departure."

"She is not much improved in looks," said my mother, with a significant glance.

"She is just as the Lord made her, so it's no disgrace to her, nor any credit to others who happen to have handsome countenances," he retorted.

"Come, come," said my father, good-humoredly, "why need you and Agnes go to quarrelling the minute that you get into the house? The girl is not worth differing about."

"I know," I rejoined my mother, loftily, "but then Robert never was my mother's favorite. All he cares for is that child. I did hope that—"

"Not a bit of it. May is my property, so I say, hands off. In everything else I am your most obedient servant, meek as Moses, and gentle as a lamb."

Laura elevated her pretty nose with an air of the most perfect disdain, and seated herself at some distance from us, but when the traveler said:

"May, will you bring in my valise?"

She drew near, with an appearance of evident interest.

I ran and brought the article, and, unhooking it, he handed me a package. With trembling fingers I unrolled the wrappers, and when I came to a case containing an elegant little watch, I was speechless with delight.

My sister looked over my shoulder, exclaiming, with a pout:

"Why, I declare, it's a great deal handsomer than the one papa gave me Christmas."

Uncle smiled, and bowing with mock gravity, offered her a parcel. She tore it open impatiently, and when a necklace and bracelets of opals flashed their fires in her face, she gave a shriek of joy.

"Oh, what they splendid!" she cried, holding them up. "I never saw anything half so beautiful. Angie Carr has got some that she's amazing proud of, but they can't begin to compare with these. I am ever so much obliged, uncle. I did not suppose you would bring me anything."

Her enthusiasm was checked in a measure when he informed her that he had another set just like them, which he intended to present to his ward.

In the meantime my mother was rejoicing over a magnificent pin composed of a cluster of diamonds.

After we had examined and admired our kind relative's gifts sufficiently, and made all due acknowledgments, I requested to hear something about the wonderful things that he had seen, and the adventures that he had met with during his long sojourn on the continent.

"Well, Blossom, as it's getting rather late, I guess we had better defer the narration until some other time. I did not have any half-breadth escapes, neither did I lose my heart, nor become knight-errant to any fair damsel"—looking mischievously at his sister—"and on the whole I think you ladies will vote my history as very prosy and commonplace, not half so interesting as the last new novel."

"Don't see but what you have returned the same old tale that you went away," said my mother, with a laugh. "Laura, my dear, I think you had better play something to your uncle before we retire. I presume that he has n't heard any music very lately."

"Oh mamma, the piano is all out of tune, and then I am such a wretched performer, I should think you would hate to place me on exhibition."

I looked up in surprise, for she was really an excellent musician. But my uncle smiled, and turning to me, said:

"You will not refuse me, May?"

"It was their turn now to be astonished, for they did not know that I could play. I had had a teacher while I was at 'Maple Grove,' but for the past two years had practiced by myself whenever my mother and sister were away."

I arose now and sat down trembling, before the instrument. I selected an old ballad. It was a touching welcome to the wanderer, and admirably suited to my feelings. I knew that at first my voice faltered; but gradually it gathered strength, and I forgot all else but the person that I was addressing. As I finished, my uncle exclaimed:

"Thank you; that was well done. You have improved very much. I predict that you will yet be quite a performer."

"A dark shadow settled over his face, and he muttered something, I could not distinguish what. At

last I could n't play better than that I'd keep still."

"Probably if she had had your advantages, you could n't begin to compare with her," was the severe reply.

"I am sure, Robert, if I had known that May had any taste that way, I should have provided her with teachers, but she is so very secretive," and my mother sighed.

Her brother glanced at her with a quizzical expression, but made no response.

The next day passed pleasantly, and only when I alighted from the carriage at "Maple Grove" did I remember that the dreaded ward was yet to come.

CHAPTER III.

It was at the close of a bright June day. The sun was throwing long, lingering glances back upon the fair earth, as if loth to quit the scene of so much beauty. The whole West flamed with purple, gold and crimson banners. The air was heavy with the breath of roses and syringes. It seemed as if the hand of the All-wise Father rested in benediction upon the brow of the coming night.

At this hour my uncle and I were pacing the broad avenue that led from the house to the carriage entrance. Constance Ireton had arrived, but was resting, after her journey.

"What do you think of her, May?" inquired my companion.

I laughed. "Here you have been silent this great while, and I was just intending to offer you a penny for your thoughts, when you break out in that manner. Do you think that I possess a magician's wand, and can read your mind? How should I know to whom you refer by that 'her'?"

"Oh, you need n't try to evade the question in that way. You know very well that I mean my ward. I'll wager that that busy brain of yours is warming with thoughts in regard to her."

"Oh! then it is that young lady of whom you are speaking?" I replied, in affected surprise. "Well, to tell the truth, I have not come to any conclusion, as I have scarcely had a look at her."

"Sit down here a minute," he said, drawing me to a seat under a tree. "I want to talk with you. Why is it that whenever I try to converse about this stranger, you invariably endeavor to turn the subject?"

"I was silent. Should I acknowledge my real feelings? I hated boyish and deceit, so I replied: 'Suppose, uncle, that I should confess that I was jealous of this beautiful girl. What then?'"

"Jealous!" he repeated, in a tone of surprise. "Are you sure that you will love me just as well as if you had a rival?"

"Heart is big enough for both of you," I said, "but what I should call a worthless thing; if it wasn't, I don't let that trouble you any longer. I would n't give you up for twenty wards."

I felt the tears quivering to my eyes. How could I ever have doubted him? At last I found voice to say:

"I am so sensible of my own deficiencies that I should not require any reason for your preferring her to me."

"There, there, child; nobody can ever usurp your place, you may be assured of that. Does that satisfy you?" and he bent and kissed my wet cheek. "See how it is, your mother and sister have formed you with that idea, and you have brooded over it until it has occasioned you a great deal of suffering. I was afraid when I first spoke, that you had imbibed some of Laura's foolish prejudices against Constance, but I might have known that you had too much sense for that."

I looked up in his face to see if that last clause was sarcastic, but his expression was very grave. I began to feel a little ashamed that I had been so weak, so I said sadly:

"I fear that you will think me very selfish, but then you know that I have n't any one but you."

"Oh, but you will have yet, and then you'll be forgetting me, and before a great while I shall be left out in the cold."

"Oh, no, uncle. I hope I never shall live to grow as ungrateful as that. What would have ever become of me, if it had n't been for you?"

"I don't know, that's a fact. You were just like a lamb among wolves. I rather think that they would have made a clean meal of you. Talk about the cannibals among the heathen. They can't compare with those that are to be found in fashionable society."

"Ah, uncle, that is a sweeping denunciation. By such remarks as that you have won the reputation of being cynical."

"Why, you little innocent chicken! Don't you know that where people tell disagreeable truths they are apt to have the cold shoulder given them? and when their names are mentioned the 'world' bestows a shrug, or a malediction, both equally harmless, if they are rich."

"But are there no exceptions?"

"Yes, child. There is gold and tin, wheat and chaff, virtue and vice. Sometimes we are so careless as to throw away a diamond imbedded in rough ore because we are not possessed of sufficient discernment to look beneath the surface. But now I guess we will travel back to our first subject; we have strayed some distance from it. I hope that you and Constance will be great friends."

"Oh, I don't expect she will fancy me at all, if she didn't like Laura."

"Nonsense! Don't I love you? and am I so very partial to your sister?"

"Ah, but you are different from everybody else. Nobody but you ever have thought of noticing such a scarecrow as I am."

"How often have I told you that handsome is that handsome does? You are morbid in that respect."

"You forget," I bitterly rejoined, "that ever since you went away I have been taught daily, by precept and example, that beauty, adorned with gold, is the magic key that unlocks all hearts. If that be so, I may as well make up my mind at once to live a loveless life."

A dark shadow settled over his face, and he muttered something, I could not distinguish what. At

length he came and, looking into my eyes, looked into my eyes.

"So, May, you were afraid that I might be afraid and careless to the rest, and forget you?"

"I reasoned beneath his searching gaze."

"Who told you so?"

"It does not need much penetration to comprehend you. Just now, when you were speaking, I had a glimpse of your heart."

"You must have beheld a scene of considerable confusion," I said, forcing a laugh.

"A sad picture was presented, truly. I understand, now, why you were jealous of my word."

"Can you blame me?" I passionately replied, "if I struggle against the fate that would deprive me of my only friend? Those things possess a brimning joy of joy that I shrink from having my one drop of sweet alloyed with bitterness; but that does not alter my suffering."

"My little Mayflower, do you really believe that there are any that are perfectly happy? Do you not realize that the overflowing goblet may contain dregs of gall?"

"It may be, yet I have seen those that appeared entirely satisfied with their lot."

"Ah, child, you have yet to learn that a smiling face oft masks an aching heart. There are some souls so covered with dross, that they are obliged to pass through the furnace many times ere they become purified. Then there are others, with mines of wealth in their own beings, who from dissipation, or a love of ease, neglect to delir their, until some volcano or earthquake arouses their dormant souls."

"Ah, uncle, but there are those formed of common clay, who have every desire and wish of their hearts, gratified; who live forever in the sunshine, and they care not, in their mad pursuit of pleasure, how many thousands they trample beneath their feet. Is this justice?"

"My dear, the Great Searcher of hearts knoweth our sorrows. I believe you used the word pursuit. That refutes your previous statement. They cannot be content if they are striving for that which they have not. We know not the agony of their death-throes when they are being crushed in the mill of their own selfishness. Ah, darling, it is a happy belief to me that we must each work our own salvation, not in fear and trembling, but joyfully, confidently. Good will ever blossom from the seeds of suffering, bringing us nearer and nearer to the light Divine."

"Why, uncle! I heard mother tell a lady, the other day, that you were an infidel—but that does not sound like it."

He laughed.

"I am unfaithful to his church and creed, but I worship—our Father! In his beautiful temple not made with hands; and my religion is summed up in these words: 'To visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and to keep one's self unspotted from the world.'"

I thought, "He practices his articles of faith every day of his life, while my mother only remembers hers upon the Sabbath."

Then I fell to musing upon various things that often puzzle older heads, for our conversation had led me into deep water. At last my companion broke in upon my reverie.

"May, had we not better return to the verandah? Miss Ireton may come down and not know where to find us."

"Certainly. I am very forgetful."

Slowly we retraced our steps, and finding that the young lady had not yet descended, we sat down in the moonlight to await her coming.

"Blossom, if Constance is anything like her father, you will gain a friend instead of losing one. Would you be inconsolable if I should die?"

"Oh, don't speak of such a thing!" I exclaimed as I nestled closer to him. "The very thought is too terrible for discussion."

"Well, May, just as fondly as I love you did this orphan girl's parents love her. I have been told that she has been loved by the chords of affection. It was like severing her heart-strings. Now you pity her, do you not?"

"Oh, yes, very much. Poor thing. How she must have suffered."

"There, now, my brave little niece has come out from the cloud. I know that your sympathetic nature could not resist that appeal."

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catch the melody in the fallow and beauty, and when you may take the veil away and let it be what you will; it has the melody in the soul, and needs the veil no longer. Again, and again God darkens the way, that we may learn some great melody, and when it is learned, taken it away, for there is no purpose in darkening the way after that.

So the American nation, in this darkness, and struggle, and pain, will be led about by it until she has learned the great song of human justice. If she has made the cage dark, that we may learn the melody.

WHAT HAS SPIRITUALISM DONE?

This question, often put, by scientific men, is just about as reasonable as it would be to ask what has substance done? They who are ignorant of the silent and beautiful operations of light and heat, in the realm of Nature, may perhaps conclude that oppressive heat, languishing disease and pestilence are the chief results which flow from the influence of the glorious old King of Day. So these scientific men who ignore all mental and psychological influences, and seek to find all of man and of God, too, in the hush of materiality, the outward shell of creation, are merely on the surface of things.

Spiritualism has done about as much for these men as the tropical sun has done for the underground inhabitants of Lapland, and if either of these were to come under its bright glare and heat at once, the effect would be similar. A spirit-friend who stands by my side more often than the returning morning and evening, says, Now let me give you a vision to illustrate this: Before me I see spread out a garden-plot, and as I approach it I perceive that it is laid out in straight lines, in perfect order; and as I come nearer, I see that it is planted all over with straight rows of onions. The ground is perfectly clear of everything else—not a weed, not a blade of grass is there. It is beautiful, but it is onions, and only onions.

This vision passed away, and another came. This garden was planted with potatoes, and they were very fine—the best I had ever seen—but they were only potatoes. And then I saw another with cabbages in it, and many others with other kinds of vegetables, each having its own peculiar kind, and nothing else.

And after these I saw another garden, and it, too, was laid out in beautiful and regular order. There was a small portion appropriated to each of the different kinds of vegetables adapted for food and raiment for man, and these were arranged in their proper places, and among them I saw various beautiful flowers, which not only added to the interest of the scene, but by their fragrance rendered it a delightful place. The fruits and grains were all there in proper proportions, and with all these were flowers.

Said my friend, The first garden represents the minds of men of science, who have selected a single branch, or a few branches, and who devote, with untiring energy, all their powers and capacities to unfold these, and though they may raise more onions in this way than in any other, still, when they are to be gathered, they may have occasion to remember the saying of the old Roman—

"If you have trees, prepare to shed them now."

This single line of development always tends to produce angularity. The last picture is one that represents the garden that we desire to see all mankind cultivate in their minds. All that is good, all that is useful, should be there, but the flowers and the beautiful are the things which especially interest the angel world. We have passed on beyond the necessity for the use of those articles of food that man requires, but still we feed upon the aroma of flowers, and drink in the emanations from the beautiful. And our mission to earth is to plant flowers in the minds of men, and to water those that are already planted there. So that there shall be not only a supply of substantial and necessary food for the practical wants of the body, but also some of that spiritual food which makes this life a foretaste of that which is to be enjoyed in the spheres of the hereafter.

There are those who know at least something of what Spiritualism has done; for as they have traveled along life's dusty road and talked up the steep and rugged hills, they have felt themselves often refreshed, as with a cup of cold water from angel hands, and fanned by the gentle breeze of love from angel hearts.

Many of us have known that flowers have been planted in our gardens, whose fragrance has been as balm to the weary spirit, and from time to time the gentle dew have fallen upon these, so that the flowers have bloomed and the fruits have ripened.

Though we may thus speak of some of the things that Spiritualism has done, still every one who has been favored to drink from this fountain, feels that in the deep inner temple of the soul, the holy of holies, there is a place sacred to the angels, where they come with noiseless step, and breathe in flowers of beauty, breathe a fragrance of love over our feelings that no language can ever describe. They who realize this, belong to the brotherhood of Spiritualists, and while they are thus fed with heavenly manna, they feel no disposition to cast aside or turn away from their brethren who have not realized this; but the language is, Come, taste and see of the good things that are not afar off, but at your very doors. If you will only open unto them and let them come in.

Yours for progress and happiness,
HENRY T. CHILD, M. D.
634 Race street, Philadelphia, May, 1893.

Sentimentalism.
The earth is a unit, and all that is on and in it are but parts of one vast whole. Humanity is but a single body; so war is only the effort of one part of this body to destroy the other part of itself.

Clemency and mercy may be made the gravitating powers of all human government; but remorse and sorrow shall ever be the fruits of tyranny.

Leave the evils of the world uncorrected, and new seeds of evil will never spring up from where they fall.

Goodness makes no history of evil deeds—it leaves evil by the wayside of life to moulder in oblivion. It neither justifies nor condemns evil—it neither plants nor propagates it.

History runs the flames of war.

Machievian deeds are reproduced by their penalties.

When courageous men cease to war with evil and throw all in the direction of clemency and mercy, goodness will come forth abundantly.

Let the government of men be the genial atmosphere of universal forgiveness. Instead of the cruel rod of hatred and revenge, and the government of the world shall be under the unmeasured power of abiding love.

Every one is good. The bad man only wants culture to make his goodness show.

Time is necessary for the free of humanity to bear the fruit of charity and love.

Patience shall behold the perfect work of Nature.

Answer envy, hatred and slander only by deeds of cold virtue and noble charity, and the poisonous weeds of society will wither and die.

Good example is better for the direction of others than reprimand.

Good manners are always full of kindness. Penitence is never kind.

Kindness effects greater goodness than penalties.

Let kindness be a living, perpetual rule of action, and penalties will be useless.

Kindness is the foundation of a man's earthly well-being. On this foundation rests the justice, rectitude and virtue of the world.

And after all, the day is never written on the scroll of the universe, but it is written by the hand of darkness on the garments of the soul must change.

This Paper is issued every Monday for the week ending on June 6, 1893.

Banner of Light

BOSTON, SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 1893.

OFFICE, 158 WASHINGTON STREET.

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WILLIAM WHITE & CO.,

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FOR TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION SEE EIGHTH PAGE.

LUTHER COLBY, EDITOR.

I cannot believe that civilization is its journey with the sun will not lead us to the light to gratify the ambition of the leaders of this revolt, who are the cause of the world's trouble.

Wade through slaughter to a throne

And shut the gates of mercy on mankind!

Out I have a far other and far brighter vision before my gaze. It may be but a vision, but I still cherish it. I see one vast

Confederation stretching from the frozen north in one unbroken line to the glowing south, and from the wild billows of the Atlantic westward to the calm waters of the Pacific; and I see one people, and one law, and one language, and one faith, and over all that vast Continent, the home of freedom and refuge for the oppressed of every race and of every clime.

—Extract from Dr. Briggs' Speech at American Affairs, delivered at Birmingham, England.

Too Fast.

Mr. Editor—It seems to me that no progressive

man or woman, with brains one degree cooler than a bedlamite's, has failed to observe, with pain, with horror, with disgust too often, the intolerance of many

who claim to stand in the ranks of Reformers and Progressives. They point to the ten thousand evils that afflict and retard our age, and when they are not abated on demand, straightway fall on their knees in prayer, imploring, gibing and cursing, thus repelling those who would otherwise be attracted to the cause they profess to love. They want to-day what no logical mind knows for short of a century; I think we shall do well, very well, if we answer their demands in ten centuries.

The columns of the BANNER often furnish peculiar illustrations of this class, among whom the editor comes very near ranking. Can you not have patience? Know you not that the true and tried armor of the Progressives is patience and courage? And now Jackson Davis tells us that the world's race is only in its teens, allowing it to be called already forty thousand years. If we are to become just right in a day—and we must, or endure the reproaches of these immaculates—what are we going to have to do the rest of the time before we are finally "gathered up"? Gracious! how long this life would be if in every one you meet you met a perfect human being. I mean, it would seem so just now; but sixty thousand years hence—(yes, in the fact, and of course, in the future)—and of our years being only a portion of it—what should we have to do, to meet angels among the children of men, will be as common as it is now to meet their opposites. I, for one, am fully and firmly persuaded we shall not get there in a hurry, and do who starts with team half harnessed and wheels too wide, will stand a very fair chance of being passed by the "luggards to the fair."

And then just imagine the feelings of those who have trusted in his promises, of being there—before the fun begins! "I curse him who leaves him in disgust, and jumps into the first apology for what it ought to be come along."

I was led to these reflections—I am led to them too often—by your article in the BANNER of May 6th, "Criminal Delicacy."

I do not purpose now going into a lengthy discussion of the subject treated; but I assert my ability to prove, by the most indubitable facts—facts long proven and deprecated by well known and consistent Reformers and Progressives—that the main proposition advanced by you in that article is false in fact, and of course, in the future, the latter, those tendencies being as I have already very plainly intimated, not purposely so—I do not believe there is any institution, or desire, among men purposefully so—but logically so. I quote a sample from you:

"With anything but a desire to make the inquiry personal to the 'Baptist,' we would ask how many are the sickly, discontented, unhappy, pining wives of ministers, scattered all over the land, who are worn down with the overworking and over-remitted labor of material, who know too well how profoundly unhappy they are, yet cannot tell what is the cause of it—who give their very lives as a silent sacrifice to the support of an outside party on the part of their husbands, merely living, when they might be living, through their days."

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"With anything but a desire to make the inquiry personal to the 'Baptist,' we would ask how many are the sickly, discontented, unhappy, pining wives of ministers, scattered all over the land, who are worn down with the overworking and over-remitted labor of material, who know too well how profoundly unhappy they are, yet cannot tell what is the cause of it—who give their very lives as a silent sacrifice to the support of an outside party on the part of their husbands, merely living, when they might be living, through their days."

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