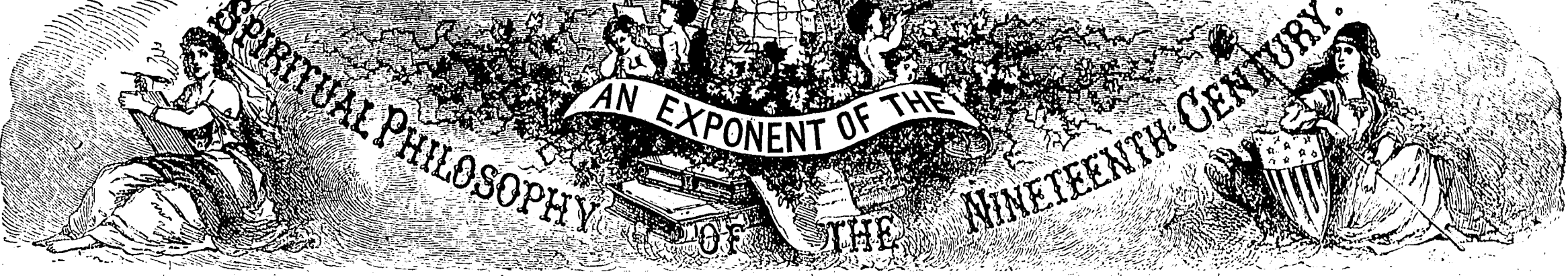


BANNER OF LIGHT.



VOL. XXXIII.

COLBY & RICH,
Publishers and Proprietors.

BOSTON, SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 1873.

\$3.00 Per Annum,
In Advance.

NO. 19.

A LITERARY SENSATION.

"EDWIN DROOD" NO LONGER A MYSTERY.

THE NOVEL COMPLETED BY DICKENS HIMSELF—THE WORK DONE THROUGH A BRATTLEBORO MEDIUM—A MOST EXTRAORDINARY PROCEEDING—EXTRACTS FROM SEVERAL CHAPTERS OF THE FORTHCOMING VOLUME—THE GENIUS OF DICKENS APPARENT IN ALL—A DETAILED HISTORY OF A REMARKABLE AFFAIR—A NEW NOVEL BY DICKENS PROMISED THROUGH THE SAME SOURCE.

BRATTLEBORO, Vt., July 25, 1873.

This picturesque village, nestled at the base of the Green Mountains, with pleasant, shaded avenues, many and well-kept hedges of evergreen, cozy home-like cottages, and strangely variant grades—so that from the level of one street you may walk squarely into the fourth story of a building on the next—this charming village, among the hills of Vermont, is about to wake up and find itself famous. In a small room of a small house, in a retired part of the village, has been gradually accumulating for the last eight months a pile of indistinctly written manuscript, which threatens long to set the literary world agog, and cause a vast amount of comment and discussion on both sides of the Atlantic. This manuscript professes to be nothing more nor less than the second volume of the "Mystery of Edwin Drod," by Charles Dickens himself, who, as all will remember, died when this, his last story, was scarcely half done, leaving the mystery still unsolved, and no memorandum or other clue to his purpose in the development of the plot or completion of the novel. A bold man he, who would undertake to finish what Dickens had left undone; but how well this task has been performed by some one—I will not undertake to say who, the readers of this Union shall have opportunity to judge for themselves.

Dickens being dead, the work has been done by an amanuensis—a medium, if you will, but an unprofessional one, and a person who knew nothing whatever about Spiritualism until this strange experience befell him; who has no theories to advance or proselytes to make, and who cares not a fig apparently whether Spiritualism stand or fall. He is a good-looking man of average height, and not far from thirty years of age. With dark hair and moustache, a round face, fair and sometimes florid complexion, restless eyes of minceless hue, neither blue, gray, black nor brown, but perhaps of a slaty color, and with an indescribable expression, as of one looking at something and not seeing it, yet seeing much more beyond—these characteristics, with an undeniably nervous temperament, describe the man. Meeting him casually, you discover nothing more remarkable about his personal appearance than about that of scores of young men whom one may see any day in any of our New England villages. He is a native of Boston, and in his fourteenth year was apprenticed to learn a mechanical trade, which he has since steadily followed, so that his schooling was finished when he was only thirteen years of age. While he is by no means unintelligent or illiterate, he has had no training whatever for literary work, and has manifested no bent that way, having never written before, even so much as a newspaper paragraph, for publication. This is the man who has taken up the pen of Charles Dickens where he laid it down, and has already nearly completed the "Mystery of Edwin Drod."

Who he is, probably not half a dozen people in Brattleboro know to-day. Rumors that such a work was in progress have crept into the papers, and its authorship has been charged on several young men of supposed literary leanings, but never once upon the right one, and while others have been "suspected" and bored accordingly, he has kept at his task unmolested. The village gossips have indeed settled down to the opinion that nobody knows positively anything about it, and who he is as great a mystery as "Edwin Drod" itself. It is somewhat significant that the young man in question is determined not to be dragged into notoriety, and has resisted all the entreaties of his intimate friends and advisers who wish to allow his name to be published. In the most unassuming manner, he declares that his connection with the work is simply that of an agent of the author; that whatever credit or discredit may attach to it belongs to Dickens and not to him; and that he will not become a party to the appropriation of what is another's, even though it be so intangible an article as a dead man's fame. Reporters from New York, Boston, Springfield, and other "great cities" have been here on purpose to interview Mr. A., but have been unable even to find out who he is; so what has been published heretofore is the merest rumor, and anything but reliable. I have the good fortune to be the first person to whom he has related this strange story, and the only one who has yet examined the manuscript and been permitted to make extracts therefrom.

It came about in this wise: One night, about ten months ago, a young man (who, for convenience of designation, we will call Mr. A.) was solicited by a small party of friends to sit around a table and see what would come of it. Up to this time he had laughed at all "spiritual" performances as so much humbug, and probably no man was more thoroughly skeptical with regard to the whole business than he; while he was, of course, quite unaware that he was the possessor of any mediumistic powers. The circle was no sooner formed than raps began to be heard with

alarming frequency, and the table waltzed exuberantly about the room, and finally tipped over into Mr. A.'s lap, as if to indicate that he was the cause of it. This was enough for him; he had seen all he wanted to see of Spiritualism, and although the others entreated him to continue his "investigations," he would do nothing more that night. The next evening, however, the demonstrations were repeated even more emphatically, and, while they were going on, Mr. A. appeared to become suddenly entranced, and, seizing a pencil, wrote what purported to be a message to a gentleman in the room from a child of his long dead—a child of whose existence Mr. A. knew nothing. Subsequently messages of the usual tenor were written, assuming to come from the other world, and it is said that some tests of an astonishing character were given to prove the identity of the writers. With all that, however, I have nothing to do.

During the latter part of October, Mr. A. wrote, at a séance, a message addressed to himself, requesting a sitting on the 15th of November, and signed, in a plain, bold hand, "Charles Dickens." Several subsequent communications reminded him of the date, entreated him not to deny the request, and, as the day approached, demanded in the most unequivocal terms that it should be granted. After rising from the table where he had been writing, on one instance, a few evenings before that date, he exclaimed that a face was looking down upon him from one corner of the room, with hands outstretched toward him. Others in the room could see nothing, but he rushed to the spot, and appeared to shake hands with the imaginary being, whoever or whatever it was. On relating the circumstance, the next day, to a gentleman who has been his confidant through the whole affair, his friend stepped to a book-case and took down a Life of Dickens, containing an excellent portrait of that author; and showed it to him. His face instantly became blanched, as he cried, "Good God! that's the man! I saw last night!" The ownership of the face seemed not to have occurred to him before; but since then, as he earnestly avers, and as the few friends in his secret implicitly believe, he has seen him many times.

The result of the sitting on the 15th of November—which took place according to directions, in a dark room, with no one but the medium present—was a long communication, ostensibly from Mr. Dickens, expressing a desire to complete through him the novel left unfinished at his (Dickens's) death. He had long sought for means by which this could be accomplished, but had not before been able to find any which he believed could be employed successfully. He desired that the first sitting should be on Christmas eve—the night of all the year which he loved best when on earth—and asked that the medium would allow as much time to the task as he could without injury to his business and health. After adding the assurance that the undertaking would prove of pecuniary benefit to him, the message closed with Dickens's customary "Faithfully yours."

Here was laid out a greater task than our hero had bargained for; and it must be confessed that he looked forward with anything but pleasure to the occupancy of all his few leisure hours by work of this kind. Neither then, nor for months afterward, had he any faith that this extraordinary sort of authorship would amount to anything. He regarded the time so spent as simply thrown away; and but for the entreaties of the few friends referred to, backed up by alternate entreaties and commands purporting to come from Dickens himself, the irksome job would more than once have been abandoned. As the work progressed, however, it became evident that a master-hand was in it, and Mr. A., for a few months, submitted himself more willingly to the strange fate which has befallen him, having at last a genuine interest in watching for its consummation.

The results of his labors from Christmas eve to the present time—labors entirely outside of the ten hours a day which he has steadily devoted to his business—appear in over twelve hundred pages of manuscript, the pages being those of ordinary Congress letter paper. In other words, he has written enough to make an octavo volume of more than four hundred pages. At first he wrote only three times a week and only three or four pages at a time, but he since came to write twice a day, and twelve, fifteen and sometimes twenty pages at a sitting. The hand-writing is not his own, and shows some of the peculiarities of Dickens's hand, so far as there has been opportunity for comparison: At the beginning of each sitting it is almost as fine as a woman's, but after a page or two it grows very gradually coarser and coarser, until the scrawl on the last page is five or ten times as large as the hand at the start; and the beginning and end of each sitting may be distinctly seen through the whole twelve hundred pages by this peculiarity. On the top of some of the pages are pencil marks in various odd designs, memoranda, perhaps, of some point to be revised; and in one or two cases phonographic signs, of which Mr. A. knows nothing. Sometimes the writing appears to be so hurried that it is by no means easy to make it out.

The *modus operandi* of the sitting is very simple. Provided with two sharpened lead pencils and an abundance of paper torn into half sheets, Mr. A. goes into a room alone. The usual hours of writing are 6 o'clock in the morning and half-past 7 in the evening, hours when, at this time of the year, it is light; but the evening sitting is frequently prolonged till half-past 8, and the writing goes on equally well in darkness or light; indeed, the sittings during the winter months

were wholly in the dark. Putting paper and pencils where they can be conveniently reached, this amanuensis of Dickens places his hands, palms downward, on the table, and unconsciously awaits results. Not quite unconsciously, however, for although it has become a matter of daily routine with him, and long ago lost the flavor of novelty, he confesses that he never sits down there alone, as if invoking the presence of the dead, without a certain feeling of awe creeping over him. He sits—frequently smoking at the time—sometimes one minute, three, five, ten, or half an hour, but usually, if "conditions" are right, but a moment or two. These conditions have reference principally to the weather. On any clear, pleasant day, the machine works without interruption; with him, as with the electric wire, a storm makes trouble, and the worse the storm the more the trouble, so that in any severe weather, no writing is attempted. After sitting at the table the requisite time, whatever it may be, Mr. A., not gradually, but instantly, becomes unconscious, and the writing goes on for half an hour, or an hour, and sometimes even prolonged to an hour and a half. The only remembrance which he has of these trance periods, is that of seeing Dickens sitting beside him, usually with one hand held in meditative manner at the side of his face—a sad, grave face. He utters no word, but sometimes looks appealingly toward Mr. A., "and oh, such eyes!" All this, however, the medium remembers as one remembers a dream when just awaking—real yet intangible. The sign by which Mr. Dickens indicates that the sitting is at an end, is the placing of his hand on the medium's, and the first time that Mr. A. felt this pressure, seemingly as cold and heavy as that of the hand of Death itself, he screamed with fright, and can hardly think of that awful chilling sensation at any time, even now, without a shudder. This touch brings him to his senses, and he usually requires then the assistance of some person to release his hands from the table, to which they seem to be magnetically attached. On coming to himself, he discovers on the floor the work of the sitting, much or little, as the case may be. The pages are strewn about the room, where they appear to have been promiscuously thrown, and are without numbers, which are supplied by Mr. A. afterwards, the sense determining the connection. For a short time after arising from a sitting, Mr. A. suffers from a sharp pain in the chest, but this soon goes off, and is in fact the only unpleasant effect which he experiences. An extreme nervousness which he felt before his mediumistic powers were developed is entirely removed, and he never was in more robust physical health than to-day.

Three or four times a week the dictations, for the book are accompanied by brief notes from the author to the amanuensis, occasionally bearing words of encouragement and good cheer, and at other times treating purely of matters of business. These communications—a thick pile of themselves—have all been preserved, but are regarded as of a confidential and personal nature, and so not for the public eye. We are permitted, however, to extract from one or two of them. When the work had progressed as far as the fifteenth chapter, this word came:

"We are doing finely. I am more than satisfied with the result of this undertaking. You have no idea how much interest this matter is exciting here among the hosts by whom I am surrounded. This is only the beginning of what is to come years hence. When this work is finished, you will continue to be my amanuensis. I shall write more after this. There are others here who have signified their intention of finding some one through whom they can convey their ideas to persons inhabiting the earth who have left behind. I only hope they will find so faithful a worker and one so much after their own hearts. God bless you!"

Full directions have been given as to the manner of procedure to procure a copyright, how the work should be published, etc. Only a few days ago came this direction:

"In regard to English publishers: As soon as the first proof sheet is done, address a letter to Sampson, Low, Son & Messrs. Milnes, London, England. It is very probable that they will be glad to negotiate for advance sheets. Faithfully, Dickens."

It is a fact of significance, or not, as the reader may choose to take it, that the present style of this house is Sampson Low, Messrs. Milnes, Low & Seale; but at the time of Mr. Dickens's death the name of the firm and their address were as stated in the note given above. From this it might be inferred that Mr. Dickens doesn't take the papers, although the inference from what is said in the preface given below, would certainly be that he did.

Having learned so much about the singular manner in which this book has been written, the public may be excused some degree of curiosity as to its contents. Wherein does it rise above mediocrity? What semblance on its pages to any work of Mr. Dickens in his lifetime? Why suppose that Dickens had anything to do with it, and that it is not simply the work of the "amanuensis" himself? Let us see.

All who have read the published volume of "The Mystery of Edwin Drod" will readily remember the frame-work of the novel as we call the roll of its principal actors: Edwin Drod, whose strange disappearance and supposed murder form the tragedy of the story and give it its name; Rosa Bud (Rosebud for short), the blithe, beautiful girl who was Edwin's affianced bride, the match being made by their parents and afterward unmade by themselves; Rev. Septimus Chrisparker, Minor Canon in the old cathedral city of Cloisterham; John Jasper, the choir master, Edwin's uncle, and secretly an admirer of Rosa; Mr. Grewgious, Rosa's guardian, an An-

[Continued on eighth page.]

Literary Department.

THE ARTIST'S HOPE;

OR,

THE INSPIRATION OF A ROSE.

Written expressly for the Banner of Light.

BY MRS. ELIZA M. HICKOK.

CHAPTER III.—CONTINUED.

Three days later Sybillette Gray stood alone in the elegant, tasteful chamber, no longer her own. The new claimant to the wealth she had supposed rightly her own, had arrived, and were already contemplating such changes as would please them.

Her ample wardrobe was carefully packed in trunks. She would need but the plainest portion of it in the new, humble life which awaited her. She had taken a last look at the grand old pictures which for so many years had adorned this family mansion. She had wandered through each lofty, tapestried room, so comfortable and elegant, in the furnishing; and thus she now commined with herself: "It would seem, Sybillette Gray, that you are the plaything of fortune. I can but wonder if the wheel will ever turn again."

"First in my childish recollections comes a pleasant home, with wealth, moderate but sufficient, and dear, loving parents, while life went by a happy dream—then, a lonely orphanage, then Aunt Leonard's care, and a home more humble, but comfortable still. Then, in my chequered life, comes suddenly a brilliant prospect, wealth in abundance, with all its wonderful auxiliaries. A little while this golden, charmed existence: then suddenly again all is taken from me; all wealth, position, care-free hours—summer friends, even my one true friend. And yet I am glad that dear, patient Aunt Alice will not have to go back to care and toil again. It seems well that life immortal should crown her restful existence for the past few years. I am young, and I trust strong to go out and take my part in life's stern conflict. But oh, dear Auntie, and you my darling mother—for I know you both are with me—just a few tears for all that I leave in this rich, dreamy life, before I take up the stern realities of the new. Then you shall see how bravely I will bear the burden." And kneeling upon the soft carpet, fair Sybillette bowed her head upon a rich velvet ottoman before her and wept—not without tears of sorrow and regret, but tears that relieved her full heart, that strengthened and refreshed her.

Yet who could blame the slender young girl, so tenderly cared for, and shielded by a loving heart and hands more than willing to toll for her, if her courage faltered and her heart grew faint at the lonely, cheerless life which seemed opening before her.

But presently she raised her head, and brushed away the dimming tears, to look once more at a large oil painting, which, more than the others, she had admired. The scene was wild but enchanting. An ancient castle, seen by moonlight, a bridge of singular design, with a gay party rowing beneath it, on the silver lake; a winding road and a perfect forest of trees and flowers formed its principal features. How often Sybillette had wished to find such a spot on earth—how her vivid imagination had wove a history for every point of interest there represented!

"And I must leave you too, dear old picture," she said slowly. "Oh, why was I not an artist in power as well as soul, for I deprecate every picture of the living and lovely. To me it seems of all gifts the most valuable and wonderful, this power of transferring a scene or place one loves to remember. But, though I never look upon you again, I will not forget you, nor the grand, ennobling thoughts you have inspired me with. But the time has come for me to take a last farewell—the carriage is at the door, and the new life calls for me. Adieu, the past. Now, Sybillette, be brave and true."

And with cheerful confidence and elastic step, Sybillette Gray ran down the broad stairway, exchanged the formal adieux with those who had taken her place and privileges, (whether rightfully or not, she left with them to decide,) and before another hour was speeding on her way to Boston.

CHAPTER IV.

It was the season of Autumn again. Not the chill, lonely days, with falling leaves and mournful winds which remind one of all sad things—bitter Autumn, rich and glowing with gold, delightful days and glorious sunsets.

Ray Harland, now the popular artist, sought and admired, praised and flattered, with numerous orders, commanding any price he chose, laid aside his busy brush and pencil for a brief rest and visit to his quiet home; and on his return, indeed, his mother to accompany him.

The two weeks of Mrs. Harland's stay in Boston were the happiest days Ray had known for a long time. It was such a pure delight to have his dear, appreciative mother with him; to visit with her the numerous places of beauty and interest; to witness her enjoyment of everything so novel to her; to explain as far as his knowledge went, regarding each principal place of note and treasured memento of scenes in the past. None could fail to see the mother pride and admiration with which she beheld Ray's

paintings, especially his master-piece, though even from his sympathetic mother its meaning, and the hope that inspired it, were withheld. "Not yet," he said to himself. "Sometime I shall tell mother, but not now. He would only sorrow for me."

Ray's chief regret was that his mother's visit must be so brief—there was so much to see and enjoy.

Together they visited our beautiful cities of the dead, where the gloom of death and burial is banished by the loveliness of art and nature combined. They listened to the wonderful powers of the Music Hall's massive organ, from thunder tones to strains of bird-like sweetness, as evoked by skillful fingers; and sat enchanted by the thrilling eloquence of more than one talented and progressive speaker. They saw and heard all that was possible in the brief time, until the good lady grew weary from enjoyment.

She often expressed the wish that her husband could have participated in her pleasure, though he might have had some scruples about visiting the "Museum," and would hardly have relished (at that time) some of the ideas of our liberal speakers. And Ray said kindly, "Yes, father, must certainly come with you next time, which will be soon, I hope, for you have seen but half of Boston yet."

Then, with a half-suppressed sigh, he thought, how pleasant to welcome his parents to a home of his own sometime. But would that ever be? He was now twenty-eight, with every prospect and advantage to warrant a home, even elegant; and yet without the slightest inclination to choose a companion from the fair ladies of his acquaintance.

Was he not foolish to dream his bright youth away in visionary hopes? Would he ever behold the fair being of his dreams again? Not one word of her, in all these years, to tell him whether she yet lived, or where?

Had ever an intuitive, mysterious power whispered to her that somewhere an earnest, loving soul was waiting, watching, praying for her coming?

The sense of desolation with which Ray saw his mother depart brought through his reflections to his mind; while Mrs. Harland, in the quiet of her home, so restful after the confusion of the city, wondered what could hinder Ray from being perfectly happy.

Her mother-love had divined that there was some little shadow on his life. Had he been disappointed in his heart's best affection? Could any one have trifled with her handsome, noble-souled boy? She thought he would have told her. But she would not question him. She believed he would do no wrong, and could wait until he freely gave her his confidence.

"Sybillette! Sybillette! are you spell-bound by that picture? I am afraid you will change into a beautiful statue gazing at it," said merry Nellie Clive. "Are you becoming engrossed?" she continued, laughing, and laying a hand upon her companion's arm.

"Oh, Nellie," replied the fair young girl, addressing her, "I believe I could gaze upon that picture forever. It seems to rest me."

"Yes, dear, I know it is very beautiful. Even I can see that; while you, with fine taste, and such a love for paintings, can doubtless discover more about it than I can. But," again resuming her light, jesting tone, "you know we are mortals, Sybillette, and must be fad, to exist here; besides, Mrs. Baker is rather inclined to frown on boarders late at tea."

Sybillette smiled, then sighed softly, and slowly, reluctantly turned away. The new life she led was wearisome, despite her high hopes and noble courage. It was monotonous, discouraging, and often disagreeable to Sybillette's refined, spirited temperament to stand all day behind the counter, subject to the whims and questions of customers of every class—for this had been the first position offered, and she could not then afford to wait for a better.

Nellie Clive was her old-time friend and present room-mate. She loved and admired Sybillette Gray, regarding her as far above the station she was forced to occupy. Her warm friendship seemed to be based, upon the law of attraction between opposites; for she was lively, impulsive and abrupt in speaking, yet with strong, deep feeling and much good sense, which made her friendship valuable to Sybillette.

Now, as they walked on together, she chatted gaily, seeking to draw her companion from her thoughtful, abstracted mood. But Sybillette listened and replied as one whose mind is far away; and her beautiful eyes had that dreamy, wistful expression which practical, unselfish Nellie did not like to see. "It was a cruel, wicked fate," she said to herself, "which reduced dear, gentle Sybillette to a position of daily toil and care, subject to dictation and reproach from those who could never be her superiors in anything but wealth." Ah, Nellie, you did not reflect that

little season of darkness would make the sunshine all the brighter by and by.

For herself, Nellie did not mind it so much. She was more independent, less sensitive, with a merry disposition, inclined to treat every available subject with jest and harmless ridicule, though she could not jest with Sybillette as with others. There was a perfect, innate refinement about her which any one would quickly perceive, but not the slightest affectation. Yet her friend Nellie loved her none the less, and was pained at the shade of sadness which would sometimes linger on the face of Sybillette.

All night the remembrance of that picture haunted her dreams, and in the morning it was with her still. Never, it seemed, had her occupation appeared so distasteful, her mind so wandering from the present. It was a sunless, lonely day, the clouds portending rain since early morning, yet none had fallen, and toward evening the air grew warm and oppressive in the well-filled store, until Sybillette's head ached and throbbled feverishly with her efforts to confine her wandering thoughts to the duties before her.

Kind-hearted Nellie, noting her weariness, insisted upon her going out a little before the usual time, and promising to perform the labors of both, soon gained permission for her to do so. Sybillette's grateful, appreciative look, and gentle "Thank you, Nellie, dear," well repaid the generous girl.

The cool air without fanned Sybillette's heated brow with gentle touch as she walked rapidly on, until she reached the spacious window before which so many pauses each day. Yes, there was the rich, beautiful picture, drawing her to its side again. "I must see that painting again," she said, softly, to herself. "There is no crowd about the window now, and it is probably an exhibition but for a short time; so I must worship at its shrine while I can. Once I might, perhaps, have secured it for my own; now, alas! such beautiful things are not for me, dearly as I love them."

Soon she was absorbed in its contemplation; but as she gazed earnestly, intently, wondering why a painting should so influence her, the fair cheek flushed, then paled, and some dim memory seemed trying to assert its power, as connected with the present. She had discovered the name suddenly, as plainly as if it had been pointed out to her. Yet, in a moment she reflected that, another than herself might bear the name of Sybillette, and doubtless some one known to the artist.

Ah, could Sybillette have looked beyond the picture, beyond the attractive window, to a little alcove at one side, where, secure from outside observation, a young man had been seated, previously busy with a newspaper, but now earnestly scanning her fair, pale face, a strange mingling of hope and fear expressed on his own, she might have guessed the name was indeed hers, nor so quickly banished as valid and presumptuous the thought that the pictured face bore some resemblance to herself. But Ray Harland, for he it was, remained, quietly in his sheltered position, though it cost him an effort to do so, with such conflicting emotions surging his soul.

The polite proprietor was busy with a fashionable customer, looking over some choice engraving and books, and no one had seen Ray's sudden start and change of expression as his eyes rested on the fair, unconscious admirer of his picture. Perhaps she felt his magnetic presence, for she raised her eyes, with one swift, flashing glance, and Ray was almost sure of her identity then. He had never forgotten the soft, dark eyes that once so pityingly looked into his own; but there was a touch of sadness now in their beautiful depths.

Then, noting her plain attire and ample water-proof, he concluded that she was obliged to go out to some daily task. "Is it indeed my fairy Sybillette?" he said to himself. "It must be, or my own heart strangely deceives me. And she, oh, my love! my darling! toiling for her own support! Can it be that she is left alone, dependent? With a thrill of joy at the remembrance that it was in his power to surround her with comfort and luxury. "And I could take her to my heart this moment as life's dearest treasure. But how shall I make my presence known? how learn her present residence?"

As if in answer to his mental question, Nellie Clive at that moment appeared beside the object of his thoughts, and said pleasantly, in her clear, distinct voice, "Why, Sybillette Gray, have you been here all the time? How is your headache, dear? I suppose that wonderful picture has charmed it all away."

"I believe it all, Nellie," replied Sybillette, turning to her friend with one of her old radiant smiles.

"Well, I am very glad, but suppose we ought to proceed homeward, for I am a little late. I shall have to tell Mrs. Baker what keeps you every night. Strange, Sybillette, how that picture fascinates you. It is more than ordinarily beautiful. I know, but you must have seen many fine paintings before."

"But none ever effected me as this does," said Sybillette thoughtfully, slowly turning away from the window, now being thronged with admirers of the beauty within; and to herself she added, "It seems to hold me steadily, and I think of nothing else, and yet with such a restful, happy influence that all care and loneliness are banished, and I seem to be dreaming of some new, sweet existence. What does it mean?"

Ray Harland cared no more for the faces, plain or fair, which glanced in at passing. His ready pencil had noted down the welcome information so opportunely gleaned, and which he quickly decided how to make use of, as he proceeded to his room.

When Ray, by the aid of his directory and some inquiries, had discovered Sybillette's boarding place, he called and sent up to her a penciled card with the words, "Does Sybillette remember giving a white rose to a discouraged young man one bright Sabbath morning years ago? If so, please grant a brief interview to Ray Harland." And while he waited in the parlor below, now fortunately deserted, for the first time came the thought that Sybillette might refuse to see him, or might never return his devoted love. But it was soon banished by this reflection, "I have loved her too long, unknown, to despair now unless she tells me she can never return it. She will not deem it very strange that I should seek to tell her how those kind words gave me new courage, and were the starting point to my present position." Yet Ray's heart beat wildly as the door opened, and again he stood in the presence of Sybillette.

Beautiful as his remembrance of her in bright girlhood—beautiful as all his after dreams of her: The touch of sadness on her sweet face and about her plain dark robes gave her a spiritual

look, which, to his fine, poetic temperament, seemed only more lovely. His whole soul worshipped her with its holiest affection. She was his matchless ideal, almost too sacred for him to aspire to call his own.

Yes, Sybillette had recalled that incident of giving the rose, indeed, had often thought of it since, but never with the expectation of seeing him again. He would have apologized for his absence of formality in addressing her as Sybillette; but she frankly gave him her hand in token of remembrance. He was not quite a stranger, and there was that in his noble, truthful countenance which banished all distrust. "Her own purity is her perfect shield," thought Ray, his heart swelling with gratitude as she observed her ready confidence in him. He was thankful and happy to know that he was worthy of it; that his life had been pure, his soul unstained—for well had he remembered his mother's oft-repeated counsel, to "shun every appearance of evil." This had been his safeguard.

Oh, that every young mind would make this firm resolve in life's morning. Do not venture, thinking it easy to retrace your way at any time. The first step is the dangerous one; the first evil thought the one to be quickly banished, lest it gain a control which may sway your whole future. This power to restrain the evil and cultivate the good lies with yourselves.

Has any creed or form of edict of the church such power to guide and restrain weak mortals, in the dark hours of temptation and sin, as the inner voice of conscience and the silent but recognized teachings of the unseen ones who constantly bid us "come up higher"? Oh, listen to the quiet mentor, who will not lead astray; reach out and upward to the holy influences ready to assist; play each better impulse, and banish quickly those unworthy, and away with church laws and binding rules that only make men hypocrites.

We need not recall all that was said this first brief but pleasant interview, or the subsequent quiet, twilight walks, nor recount the visits to various places of amusement and instruction, to which Nellie was always kindly included in the invitation—though by and by, as Nellie concluded that they would hardly miss her presence, and often found excuses for remaining at home—until these two hearts came to a most perfect understanding of each other, a harmonious blending of thought and sympathies creating a new and blissful existence.

One evening, as Ray and Sybillette were passing down the familiar street, he remarked, "Now, Sybillette, I think it time you should visit me. I would have invited you before, only I had a fancy of my own about it, for I have something to tell you to-night, Sybillette, which I do not wish to say elsewhere. Your confidence in me has been so perfect that you have never questioned aught regarding my history or occupation. But your forbearance shall be rewarded."

In truth, Sybillette had been too much interested in Ray and the themes of their conversation, to give much thought to his position in life. He might be one of the humblest laborers, yet she could admire, ay, love him, whispered her heart, none the less.

Most certainly she had no idea that he was the painter of that strangely attractive picture, which had now disappeared from public view. She never connected the modest initials, R. H., occupying a corner of it, with his name. Of all who admired his paintings, but few knew the artist personally.

Many would have deemed Nature lavish of her gifts to him, for talent and personal beauty are rarely so happily combined. Therefore Sybillette was wholly unprepared for the scene presented, when Ray threw open the door of his ample and richly furnished studio, and smiling, bade her welcome to his home.

This was his reception room, where visitors came and went daily, while beyond a large screen his easel and various artist's materials were conveniently arranged. In the gathering twilight of that lovely room, it seemed to Sybillette as though all holy and peaceful influences were surrounding her, and Ray's watchful eyes marked how her deep enjoyment of every scene and sketch to which he called her attention, dispelled the weariness from her fair, intellectual face.

"Oh, what an enchanted world the artist can make for himself," she said softly, as if speaking to herself, as Ray lighted a jet of gas to illuminate a large landscape painting, which represented Nature so peaceful, so quiet and restful, that gazing at it, one would wish to be transported there.

But there was a gem of a room beyond this, with its numerous sketches and adornments, to which visitors had never been admitted; and Sybillette's surprise was not complete, until Ray unlocked a door leading to this, and again she saw the picture which had so magnetically attracted her attention. She understood all now. It was the mystic power of love which had so wrought upon her life—a power she fully realized for the first time—and her dark eyes glistened with happy tears, as she turned to meet Ray's earnest, steadfast gaze, all his strong, irrepressible love plainly written on his noble countenance.

She only said "Ray!" in her low, sweet voice, but that one word expressed all that his waiting heart craved to know. He extended his hands, saying with a rare tenderness in look and tone, "Come, my Sybillette."

Then his loving arms enfolded her, his true heart pillowed her beautiful head, and to each, the perfect bliss of that moment seemed too exalted to be of earth. Holy influences gathered about them, peaceful benedictions descended like baptismal blessings from a purer sphere, in that golden silence, before either spoke; and heaven indeed was blending with their mortal lives.

Presently Ray said, caressing her shining curls, "And you have come to me at last, my darling. How long I have prayed and waited for this hour, when no language can express the deep, sacred emotion of each heart. And yet the simple words, 'I love you,' are sweet to hear and speak. Look in my eyes, Sybillette, and tell me, can you say the same?"

And calmly she raised her eyes, and softly spoke, "I love you, Ray."

"Now my life is fully blest. Oh, Sybillette—my own forever—that must have been some higher guiding power which bade me paint a picture, whose every stroke was fraught with love and hope for you. No wonder that it drew you, darling, by the subtle magnetism which imbued it. That was my only hope of finding you. It was here that I painted it, and this room has been sacred to you, Sybillette. Here pure and lofty influences seemed to gather about me as they do to-night."

Sybillette's gaze was fixed on the painting again. "I shall always love that picture, Ray,"

she said musingly. "It must have been my darling, watchful mother who guided and impressed me, for I could not possibly have remained in New York after dear Aunt Leonard left me. Yes, it was your deep love, and her gentle influence, which drew me so strongly back to Boston. Do you remember, Ray, my childish faith in my spirit-mother?"

"I remember every word of yours, dear. And now, I have learned to accept that sublime faith for myself. It has already brightened many a lonely hour, and given me courage to wait and hope for your coming. Now, it will be doubly blessed, since you share it with me."

But we linger too long, perhaps. It is unnecessary to transcribe all a lover's conversation. The story, old, yet ever new, has been often told in rhyme and prose, and by dear mortal lips, now forever sealed.

And Ray will soon accompany Sybillette to her boarding-place, where her friend is awaiting her return. But Nellie will miss her gentle companion very soon, for Ray cannot allow Sybillette any more days of toil and care, now that he is assured of her love.

Once more we turn to the quiet home of Deacon Harland, just preceding an arrival there which will create an unusual excitement about the placid homestead. We should recognize the good couple anywhere, for the years have passed lightly over them. The evening mail has just arrived, and awaits attention on a small table before the genial, open fire.

The worthy Deacon, carefully adjusting his glasses, selects a paper and prepares to read; but his wife more eagerly secures a letter, which is in the well-known writing of her absent boy, and with very little delay opens the ample envelope. A *carte de visite*, neatly covered with the finest tissue, dropped therefrom unheeded.

"Letter from Ray, mother?" queried the Deacon pleasantly, with a look which bespoke his own interest in that direction.

"Yes, it is, and written to both of us. I'll just glance down the first page, and then read it aloud." But, the next moment, she exclaimed, in sudden amazement, "Well, here is news, Josiah! What do you think? Raymond is married!" And they are coming home next week—be here at Thanksgiving."

"Well, well! that is news unexpected," replied the husband. "Why did not the boy speak of it before, I wonder?"

"He says he will explain all when he comes; but I will read the letter."

It was affectionately worded, and its calmly joyous tone bespoke how happy Ray was.

"And that, I suppose, is her picture," said the Deacon, when his wife paused in her reading.

"I am anxious to see it, Mary."

Then the covering was quickly removed, and together they scanned the sweet, smiling face of Sybillette. Mrs. Harland was the first to speak:

"Is not she beautiful, Josiah? Ray hopes we will take her to our hearts as our own daughter. I guess we will, if she is as lovely as here represented. We could not help it. She looks, to me, more like an angel than a mortal."

"Likely enough the picture flatters some," cautioned her husband, still regarding it with considerable admiration.

"But the expression is what most pleases me," said Mrs. Harland. "I am sure she is good and loving. Ray must have chosen well, after waiting so long. I think, 'I can love her already, from Ray's description and this picture' and the dear mother wiped away a few tears of heartfelt emotion."

Then swiftly sped the busy days, until the hour of Ray's coming was at hand. The old house was all cheerful brightness, the clean, cool cellar well filled with specimens of Mrs. Harland's excellent cookery, and everything about the place seemed smiling a welcome to the young couple. But best of all was the warm cordiality with which both father and mother welcomed home their children; and sweetly touching the mother-love with which good Mrs. Harland took the fair stranger to her heart at once. And as Deacon Harland learned to love Sybillette even as his own child, and marked how perfect was her devotion to Ray, how exalted her ideas of this life, how clear her happy faith in the future, his old-time belief in the utter depravity of the human heart grew strangely dim and hard to realize.

Already his sternness and prejudice have wonderfully lessened; and he can view humanity in the light of a broader, more charitable faith than that which dwarfed and restrained his naturally benevolent disposition years ago.

And, indeed, he is now proud of his artist son, and with his wife, can freely rejoice in the rare happiness which blesses two pure and truly wedded souls, while he readily acknowledges his own error in attempting to restrict his son's youthful aspirations.

When next autumn's harvesting is done, the worthy couple will be gladly welcomed to Ray Harland's beautiful city home. Then they will have opportunities of listening to our talented speakers, whose ideas are rich with truth and glowing with inspiration.

May the influence be blessed, and the gently declining hillside of each life be cheered and lighted by the radiance of a faith all-powerful in life, all-glorious and conquering in death.

Matters in Connecticut.

Just previous to my starting for the Harwich Camp-Meeting I take my pen to call the attention of the Spiritualists of Connecticut to the notice of our Annual Picnic at Compounce Pond, Aug. 13th, and would also state that another meeting of the Executive Board of the State Association of Spiritualists is called to meet at that place on that day at three o'clock p. m., as there is much important business yet to be transacted upon matters which I, as the President of that body, cannot act upon without an expression of the Executive Board.

We are trying to get matters into shape for effective missionary work in the State this coming fall, and in response to my letter of appeal recently published in your columns I have to acknowledge the receipt of \$10 from T. M. Allen, Hartford, \$10 from James Wilson, Bridgeport, and \$2 from Mrs. Churchill, Forestville. This is a ready and gratifying response, and I trust the friends everywhere will let their donations flow in upon us to that extent that we shall have no doubts about being sustained.

I wish also to say that a second edition of my lecture, "Whether are we Drifting?" given from the steps of the residence of Mr. George N. Wilcox, Madison, Conn., on the occasion of the hall being closed against me, is soon to be reissued, the first one, numbering one thousand, being nearly exhausted before I had time to arrange for advertising it. Orders can be addressed to me at West Winsted, Conn., P. O. Box 323, or to G. N. Wilcox, Madison, Conn. Single copies, 10 cents, and one cent stamp to prepay postage.

E. ANNE HINMAN.

Madison, July 28th, 1873.

Banner Correspondence.

California.

SAN JOSE.—Don Alberto writes July 17th, as follows: "Wishing to let the world know how Spiritualism is progressing in this place, I thought to drop a line to the Banner. We have been favored with Sunday meetings for some time, where free thought has full expression. We are a growing people, and the gospel of the angels is being popularized by every means in our power. Dr. E. W. Stevens, of Wisconsin, has given us morning lectures since the first of June. Since the coming to our coast of this remarkable man, great good has been accomplished. As a clairvoyant, psychometrist and lecturer, he is profound and successful. His 'readings at a distance' and accurate discovery of otherwise invisible facts, have aroused not only wonder, but forced glooms of conviction home to the unbelieving. As a lecturer he has no superior on this coast. Keeping aloof from all side issues, he deals in pure philosophy and scientific Spiritualism. His great ability to do good is proved by his growing popularity. Engaging to the Society of San Francisco for May, he spoke through June and thus far into July on Sunday evenings to eager crowds, who catch inspiration from his eloquence, and knowledge from his apt illustrations. Though others will succeed him, yet we regret his coming departure from among us, yet we rejoice that other fields of labor are to be the gainers."

"Oh my mortal friends and brothers, we are each and all brothers. And the heart that gives most freely From its treasure both the more, Would you have power, you find it, And in giving love you find it. Like an angel of safety, To your souls we are more."

Let me say, the dear old Banner floats proudly on the Pacific Slope, and long may it radiate the rays of spiritual light and truth.

GILROY.—B. H. Carter writes, July 15th: "We were favored with two interesting lectures, July 5th and 6th, by Mrs. E. W. Stephens of Sacramento. Many beautiful tests were received by parties, in the form of description of spirit friends. A gentleman, having the care of a departed sister's children—a skeptic—called on Mrs. Stephens, who, after describing many of his spirit kindred correctly, said to him, 'Parties are making efforts to deprive those children of property belonging to them; you must attend to it immediately.' The gentleman investigated the matter immediately, and found it as Mrs. Stephens had stated, and made the parties pay him some coin, and give security for the balance."

Mrs. Stephens spent about four days in my family, during which time we had many pleasant interviews with our friends on the other side, which, together with her social kindly manner, endeared her to us with such ties as none but experienced Spiritualists can comprehend and appreciate. With the reliable mediumistic powers she possesses, the angel world will be enabled to remove the clouds which shut the progressive light from many on this side."

Michigan.

GRAND RAPIDS.—W. F. Jamieson writes, July 20th, as follows: "Bro. Cephas B. Lynn and myself came to this city two weeks ago, and on last Sunday succeeded in arousing by our lectures a good interest. The indignation of some Christians was, however, vented against us while we were addressing the people at the Fulton Street Park, a public resort, occupied by a brass band on Thursday evenings; by the Y. M. C. A. on Sunday at 4 o'clock p. m. The Baptist Society, at 7 p. m., and the Y. M. C. A. at 8 p. m., while the band plays Thursday evenings."

On the return of Bro. Lynn and myself to this city yesterday we were informed that the excitement produced by our lectures was very great. One of the papers came out against us in a fiery editorial, and a mob was threatened if we attempted to speak again in the park. Bro. Lynn and myself called upon the Chief of Police this morning and stated the case to him. He referred us to the Mayor for formal permission to use the park. Dr. E. W. Woodruff accompanied me to the Mayor's office, and introduced me to his Honor. I made formal request for the use of the park. He referred me to the Common Council. Mayor Pierce told me he had no objection to us using the park. The Council being in session this evening, I called upon that body and presented our request."

The Council, although having granted the Y. M. C. A. permission to use it, refused it to us. The eyes and ears were called; one gentleman said "I did not approve of the sentiments advocated last Sunday." (Clergy a Source of Danger to the American Republic.) "Lord's Prayer," "Free Speech," "Water Works in preference to Churches," were our live subjects; another gentleman said he was opposed to granting us the use of the park because we were "exciting and stirring up the people."

We have now announced that we will speak in this street to-morrow. "This is our brother, is the war for freedom of speech inaugurated."

Favors granted to the Y. M. C. A. by this city government, but denied to us, Spiritualists, who have carefully avoided infringing upon any man's rights."

New York.

MORAVIA.—Submit C. Loomis writes, July 24th, from the "Casade House" as follows: "We made a visit recently to this delightful retreat, and the health-fraught zephyrs and whispering cascade seemed like angel voices falling on the ear, filled with the musical rhythm of health and harmony, lifting us above the conflicting influences and incidents of this material world, to commune with beautiful Nature on her own harmonious plane. The silvery lake, spreading over the green hills and rising cascades, a living mirror for the romantic scenery surrounding it, bears gently upon her pearl-fraught bosom tiny gondolas, filled with happy hearts and smiling faces. The spirits have chosen a fitting retreat for most wonderful manifestations. Mrs. Andrews, the great medium for materialization, has just recovered from a recent sickness; and spirits are materialized so that all can see them, and they talk audibly to their friends, and often prescribe what course will insure health or success. A success is held every morning at eight, and when conditions will permit, the same time in the evening."

AUBURN.—J. M. Harter writes thus: "Dear Banner, I'll tell you some of your correspondents give light in regard to the duty of Spiritualists to organization? Should they come out from existing sects and churches and organize on spiritual foundations, or remain, attract others, and work inside of these organizations, till the whole lump is leavened? In traveling about I find many Spiritualists who are heavy pew holders in different churches, and I also find ministers who visit Spiritualists and urge them to attend their church, as they believe and preach Spiritualism. It is a fact that ministers are doing all in their power to increase the number of paying attendants, caring little or nothing what is believed or done, if only the money is freely paid into the church."

Washington Territory.

SEATTLE.—L. S. Smith writes, July 7th: "Our lecture is steadily increasing in numbers. The children are very prompt in attendance, and manifest considerable interest. The following is a list of officers for the ensuing year: W. R. Andrews, Conductor; Mrs. A. D. Wiggins, Guardian; L. S. Smith, Secretary and Musical Director; D. M. Crane, Treasurer; Anna Furnside, Organist. Quite an interest is manifested among the churches to put us down, but we won't 'down' worth a cent. Prof. W. H. Cheney has been lecturing before our Society a past month. He has taught his way through a past month, and has finally gained the respect of almost the entire community. He delivered the oration here on the Fourth of July, which was so well received that he has been solicited to write it out for publication. His labors have been productive of much good."

The Spiritualists of this place, together with

the host of friends elsewhere, sincerely sympathize with you in the loss of your senior partner, Wm. White. In the death of Bro. White, humanity has lost a friend and brother. Let us hope that his spirit of usefulness may expand until his highest ideas may be fully realized.

Oregon.

PARROTTS' LANDING, July 12th. The Spiritualists of Clackamas County, Oregon, had a very successful little grove meeting at the above-named place, lasting two days. We had some excellent speaking by Rev. Mr. E. W. Shortridge, Miss Ebberhardt, Mr. L. Briggs, Mr. Graybell and others. On account of bad weather, the meeting was adjourned to Mr. J. Parrott's house, and there continued. The spirit-power was very strongly manifested. It was moved and seconded that a committee of five be appointed to select a piece of ground for a permanent camp ground, consisting of Mr. Johns, Mr. R. Andrews, Mr. Beals, Mr. Buckman, and Mr. J. Parrott. The next grove meeting will be held Sept. 5th, at Mr. J. C. Cowman's place, situated two and one-half miles below Butteville, and a half mile from Graham's ferry on the west side of the Yamhill River, Clackamas County. On motion, a committee of three was appointed by the Chair to procure a speaker for the next meeting, consisting of Mr. Short, Mr. J. Kuse, Mr. F. Gair. A vote of thanks was tendered to Bro. Parrott's family and our worthy President, E. Cooley. Adjourned sine die.

CHAS. K. HANSEN, Sec.

Poems.

By Gertrude Minburn Hazard and Anna-Praeger Hazard, daughters of Hon. Thos. R. Hazard, of South Portsmouth, R. I.

This volume, which contains twenty-six metrical compositions, embodied in some ninety pages, is printed in a high style of art by Collins, 705 Jayne street, Philadelphia, Pa., for private circulation. A few copies may be had at this office.

The work is redolent of that chastened spirit which sees good in all; which clings to the purity and truth of the past, making them the indices of grander things to come. The inner longings of the soul for higher attainments, the joy when error falls before the right, the strain of consolation for the early part, the rain-drops of April showers, the perfume of May blossoms, and an intuitively introspective view of the autumn time of life, fill the pages. Those privileged to read the book will appreciate its many beautiful thoughts. The following poems, "Our Childhood," and "Joy in Sorrow"—the first by Anna, the second by Gertrude—will serve to give an idea of the poetic talent evinced:

OUR CHILDHOOD.

Do you remember, children, in the Springtime,
How glad we were to find beneath the snow
The trusting snowdrop and the fearless crocus,
Blooming where nothing else had dared to grow?
And how we crept along beside the hedges
And held our breath, when on the sheltered bank
We found the little modest, blue-eyed violet
Hiding in last year's grasses rose and rank?
And I remember that we always gathered
The soft green moss beneath the old pine-tree,
And crawled on hands and knees into the thickets,
To pick the sweet pink-checked anemone.
How proud we were to carry them to mother,
And cluster round her knee with sparkling eyes
And glowing cheeks to tell the wondrous story—
How pleased to watch her look of feigned surprise.

How eagerly we watched the garden borders
When the young daffodils were coming up;
How jealously we guarded the onion-muster
Which, when it bloomed, displayed the single cup.
What gold into our eyes was half-so precious
As its pure symbol on the shining head,
Dear Daffodil, among thy green-robed courtiers,
I crown thee Queen of every garden-bed.

Will ever orchards look so white and rosy
As those which charmed our raptur'd childhood gaze?
Will ever song of birds sound half so sweetly
As Robin Redbreast's in the olden days?
And how the brook talked, and the tall trees
Nodded.

And whispered to each other in the breeze;
And how we laughed to see the fire-flies glisten
And light the birds to bed among the trees.
So, drawn close to the kindly heart of Nature,
And loving her so well in every mood,
We grew to know through her the great Creator,
To praise and love Him for His works of good.

And in the evening, when the sun was setting,
And the long shadows gilded the soft sward,
We walked in happy talk with one who left us
Long since to tread the shining hills of God.

And hand in hand we wandered in the meadows,
And sat beside the bridge and on the shore;
Now the dear hand has loosed its clasp forever,
The gentle voice will cheer us here no more.

But where the Father's loving garden
Where He has called our well-beloved to dwell,
We may walk hand in hand again forever,
And lose all echo of the word "Farewell!"

Think, when the heart grows weary of Life's trouble,
Of this most happy time, and let it be,
Dear Father, who hath granted this great blessing,
A talisman to draw us nearer Thee.

Perhaps the visions which our youth so gladdened
Before us in a fairer world may rise;
It may be, flowers we loved on earth so dearly
Will bloom for us forever in the skies.

Take not away the memory of our childhood;
Let it as we grow old grow brighter still;
And when we are again as little children,
And lean confidently upon Thy will.

Grant that the holiday so early ended
By Life's hard tasks to us again be given,
And last forever in the fair green pastures,
Amid the never-fading flowers of heaven.

JOY IN SORROW.

Fasten your souls so high, that constantly
The smile of your heroic cheer may float
—As if all life were but a passing dream,
Participation being the joy of pain.

—E. B. BROOKING.

O Thou who art our Father and our Mother,
We bow with reverent love unto the power
Which, not in wrath, but tenderly and wisely
Hath led our trembling footsteps to this hour.

With souls that thrill to the deep bliss of being,
As keenly as they quiver at life's pain,
And eyes that look beyond this mortal seeing,
We know we call not on Thy name in vain.

We thank Thee, more than for earth's fleeting pleasures,
For all our withered hopes, for grief and sin,
Which opened to our elope pride-blinded vision
A hidden well-spring of pure joy within.

We lift to Thee our hands, bereft of treasure,
Standing 'mid broken idols, round us strown;
O not in gifts alone, but in bereavements
Thy love is fully and completely shown.

We mourn no more our fairest dreams departed;
No tears fall fast above our vanished youth;
The spirit knows no age, kept vibrant ever
By streams unfailing from Thy Fount of Truth.

Eyes wet with Sorrow's tears have clearer vision;
Hearts wounded flow, O Healer, unto Thine;
And with the sacred joy of grief, Great Spirit,
We bless Thee, kneeling at the inner shrine.

That Life bit shadow is of Death, the real,
Whose touch diviner breaks the bonds of clay,
And forth, to joyful sounds of angel singing,
Leads the glad spirit on its homeward way.

GENERAL COURT—Waiting on half a dozen girls at the same time.

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