

AT THE END.

AMONG my acquaintances at San José, in 1863, was a young Kentuckian who had come down from the mines in bad health. The exposure of mining life had been too severe for him. It took iron constitutions to stand all day in almost ice-cold water up to the waist with a hot sun pouring down its burning rays upon the head and upper part of the body. Many a poor fellow sunk under it at once, and after a few days of fever and delirium was taken to the top of an adjacent hill and laid to rest by the hands of strangers. Others, crippled by rheumatic and neuralgic troubles, drifted into the hospitals of San Francisco, or turned their faces sadly toward the old homes which they had left with buoyant hopes and elastic footsteps. Others still, like this young Kentuckian, came down into the valleys with the hacking cough and hectic flush to make a vain struggle against the destroyer that had fastened upon their vitals, nursing often a vain hope of recovery to the very last. Ah, remorseless flatterer! as I write these lines, the images of your victims crowd before my vision: the strong men that grew weak and pale and thin, but fought to the last inch for life; the noble youths who were blighted just as they began to bloom; the beautiful maidens etherealized into almost more than mortal beauty by the breath of the death angel, as autumn leaves, touched by the breath of winter, blush with the beauty of decay. My young friend indulged no false hopes.

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He knew he was doomed to early death, and did not shrink from the thought. One day, as we were conversing in a store up town, he said: "I know that I have at most but a few months to live, and I want to spend them in making preparation to die. You will oblige me by advising me what books to read. I want to get clear views of what I am to do, and then do it."

It need scarcely be said that I most readily complied with his request, and that first and chiefly I advised him to consult the Bible, as the light to his path and the lamp to his feet. Other books were suggested, and a word with regard to prayerful reading was given, and kindly received.

One day I went over to see my friend. Entering his room, I found him sitting by the fire with a table by his side, on which was lying a Bible. There was an unusual flush in his face, and his eye burned with unusual brightness.

"How are you to-day?" I asked.

"I am annoyed, sir; I am indignant," he said.

"What is the matter?"

"Mr. —, the — preacher, has just left me. He told me that my soul cannot be saved unless I perform two miracles: I must, he said, think of nothing but religion, and be baptized by immersion. I am very weak, and cannot fully control my mental action—my thoughts will wander in spite of myself. As to being put under the water, that would be immediate death; it would bring on a hemorrhage of the lungs, and kill me."

He leaned his head on the table and panted for breath, his thin chest heaving. I answered: "Mr. — is a good man, but narrow. He meant kindly in the foolish words he spoke to you. No man, sick or well, can so control the action of his mind as to force his thoughts wholly into one channel.

I cannot do it; neither can any other man. God requires no such absurdity of you or anybody else. As to being immersed, that seems to be a physical impossibility, and he surely does not demand what is impossible. My friend, it really makes little difference what Mr. — says, or what I say, concerning this matter. What does God say?"

I took up the Bible, and he turned a face upon me expressing the most eager interest. The blessed book seemed to open of itself to the very words that were wanted. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." "He knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust." "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters."

Glancing at him as I read, I was struck with the intensity of his look as he drank in every word. A traveler dying of thirst in the desert could not clutch a cup of cold water more eagerly than he grasped these tender words of the pitying Father in heaven.

I read the words of Jesus: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." "That is what God says to you, and these are the only conditions of acceptance. Nothing is said about anything but the desire of your heart and the purpose of your soul. O my friend, these words are for *you!*"

The great truth flashed upon his mind and flooded it with light. He bent his head and wept. We knelt and prayed together, and when we rose from our knees he said softly, as the tears stole down his face: "It is all right now; I see it clearly; I see it clearly!"

We quietly clasped hands and sat in silent sympathy. There was no need for words from me;

God had spoken, and that was enough. Our hearts were singing together the song without words.

"You have found peace at the cross; let nothing disturb it," I said, as he pressed my hand at the door as we left.

It never was disturbed. The days that had dragged so wearily and anxiously during the long, long months were now full of brightness. A subdued joy shone in his face, and his voice was low and tender as he spoke of the blessed change that had passed upon him. The book whose words had been light and life to him was often in his hand, or lay open on the little table in his room. He had never lost his hold upon the great truth he had grasped, nor abated in the fullness of his joy. I was with him the night he died. He knew the end was at hand, and the thought filled him with solemn joy. His eyes kindled, and his wasted features fairly blazed with rapture as he said, holding my hand with both of his: "I am glad it will all soon be over. My peace has been unbroken since that morning when God sent you to me. I feel a strange, solemn joy at the thought that I shall soon know all."

Before daybreak the great mystery was disclosed to him, and as he lay in his coffin next day the smile that lingered on his lips suggested the thought that he had caught a hint of the secret while yet in the body.

Among the casual hearers that now and then dropped in to hear a sermon in Sonora, in the early days of my ministry there, was a man who interested me particularly. He was at that time editing one of the papers of the town, which sparkled with the flashes of his versatile genius. He was a true Bohemian, who had seen many countries, and knew life in almost all its phases.

He had written a book of adventure which found many readers and admirers. An avowed skeptic, he was yet respectful in his allusions to sacred things, and I am sure his editorial notices of the pulpit efforts of a certain young preacher who had much to learn were more than just. He was a brilliant talker, with a vein of enthusiasm that was very delightful. His spirit was generous and frank, and I never heard from his lips an unkind word concerning any human being. Even his partisan editorials were free from the least tinge of asperity—and this is a supreme test of a sweet and courteous nature. In our talks he studiously evaded the one subject most interesting to me. With gentle and delicate skill he parried all my attempts to introduce the subject of religion in our conversation.

“I can't agree with you on that subject, and we will let it pass,” he would say with a smile, and then he would start some other topic, and rattle on delightfully in his easy, rapid way.

He could not stay long at a place, being a confirmed wanderer. He left Sonora, and I lost sight of him. Retaining a very kindly feeling for this gentle-spirited and pleasant adventurer, I was loth thus to lose all trace of him. Meeting a friend one day, on J Street, in the city of Sacramento, he said: “Your old friend D—— is at the Golden Eagle hotel. You ought to go and see him.”

I went at once. Ascending to the third story, I found his room, and, knocking at the door, a feeble voice bade me enter. I was shocked at the spectacle that met my gaze. Propped in an armchair in the middle of the room, wasted to a skeleton, and of a ghastly pallor, sat the unhappy man. His eyes gleamed with an unnatural brightness, and his features wore a look of intense suffering.

“You have come too late, sir,” he said, before I had time to say a word. “You can do me no good now. I have been sitting in this chair three weeks. I could not live a minute in any other position. Hell could not be worse than the tortures I have suffered! I thank you for coming to see me, but you can do me no good—none, none!”

He paused, panting for breath; and then he continued in a soliloquizing way: “I played the fool, making a joke of what was no joking matter. It is too late. I can neither think nor pray, if praying would do any good. I can only suffer, suffer, suffer!”

The painful interview soon ended. To every cheerful or hopeful suggestion which I made he gave but one reply: “Too late!”

The unspeakable anguish of his look, as his eyes followed me to the door, haunted me for many a day, and the echo of his words, “Too late!” lingered sadly upon my ear. When I saw the announcement of his death, a few days afterwards, I asked myself the solemn question whether I had dealt faithfully with this light-hearted, gifted man when he was within my reach. His last look is before me now, as I pencil these lines.

“John A—— is dying over on the Portrero, and his family wants you to go over and see him.”

It was while I was pastor in San Francisco. A—— was a member of my church, and lived on what was called the Portrero, in the southern part of the city, beyond the Long Bridge. It was after night when I reached the little cottage on the slope above the bay.

“He is dying and delirious,” said a member of the family as I entered the room where the sick man lay. His wife, a woman of peculiar traits and great religious fervor, and a large number of

children and grandchildren were gathered in the dying man's chamber and the adjoining rooms. The sick man—a man of large and powerful frame—was restlessly tossing and moving his limbs, muttering incoherent words, with now and then a burst of uncanny laughter. When shaken, he would open his eyes for an instant, make some meaningless ejaculation, and then they would close again. The wife was very anxious that he should have a lucid interval while I was there.

"O I cannot bear to have him die without a word of farewell and comfort!" she said weeping.

The hours wore on, and the dying man's pulse showed that he was sinking steadily. Still he lay unconscious, moaning and gibbering, tossing from side to side as far as his failing strength permitted. His wife would stand and gaze at him a few moments, and then walk the floor in agony.

"He can't last much longer," said a visitor, who felt his pulse and found it almost gone, while his breathing became more labored. We waited in silence. A thought seemed to strike the wife. Without saying a word, she climbed upon the bed, took her dying husband's head upon her lap, and, bending close above his face, began to sing. It was a melody I had never heard before—low and sweet and quaint. The effect was weird and thrilling as the notes fell tremulously from the singer's lips in the hush of that dead hour of the night. Presently the dying man became more quiet, and before the song was finished he opened his eyes as a smile swept over his face, and as his glance fell on me I saw that he knew me. He called my name, and looked up in the face that bent above his own, and kissed it.

"Thank God!" his wife exclaimed, her hot tears falling on his face, that wore a look of strange se-

renity. Then she half whispered to me, her face beaming with a softened light: "That old song was one we used to sing together when we were first married, in Baltimore."

On the stream of music and memory he had floated back to consciousness, called by the love whose instinct is deeper and truer than all the science and philosophy in the world.

At dawn he died, his mind clear, the voice of prayer in his ears, and a look of rapture in his face.

Dan W—, whom I had known in the mines in the early days, had come to San José about the time my pastorate in the place began. He kept a meat market, and was a most genial, accommodating, and good-natured fellow. Everybody liked him, and he seemed to like everybody. His animal spirits were unailing, and his face never revealed the least trace of worry or care. He "took things easy," and never quarreled with his luck. Such men are always popular, and Dan was a general favorite, as the generous and honest fellow deserved to be. Hearing that he was very sick, I went to see him. I found him very low, but he greeted me with a smile.

"How are you to-day, Dan?" I asked, in the offhand way of the old times.

"It is all up with me, I guess," he replied, pausing to get breath between the words; "the doctor says I can't get out of this—I must leave in a day or two." He spoke in a matter-of-fact way, indicating that he intended to take death, as he had taken life, easy.

"How do you feel about changing worlds, my old friend?"

"I have no say in the matter. *I have got to go, and that is all there is of it.*"

That was all I ever got out of him. He told me

he had not been to church for ten years, as it was not in his line. He did not understand matters of that sort, he said, as his business was running a meat market. He intended no disrespect to me or to sacred things—this was his way of putting the matter in his simple-heartedness.

“Shall I kneel here and pray with you?” I asked.

“No; you needn’t take the trouble, parson,” he said gently; “you see I’ve got to go, and that’s all there is of it. I don’t understand that sort of thing; it’s not in my line, you see. I’ve been in the meat business.”

“Excuse me, my old friend, if I ask if you do not, as a dying man, have some thoughts about God and eternity?”

“That’s not in my line, and I couldn’t do much thinking now anyway. It’s all right, parson—I’ve got to go, and Old Master will do right about it.”

Thus he died without a prayer, and without a fear, and his case is left to the theologians who can understand it, and to the “Old Master,” who will do right.

I was called to see a lady who was dying at North Beach, San Francisco. Her history was a singularly sad one, illustrating in a startling manner the ups and downs of California life. From opulence to poverty, and from poverty to sorrow, and from sorrow to death—these were the acts in the drama, and the curtain was about to fall on the last. On a previous visit I had pointed the poor sufferer to the cross of Christ, and prayed at her bedside, leaving her calm and tearful. Her only daughter, a sweet, fresh girl of eighteen, had two years before betrothed herself to a young man from Oregon, who had come to San Francisco to study a profession. The mother had expressed

a desire to see them married before her death, and I had been sent for to perform the ceremony.

“She is unconscious, poor thing!” said a lady who was in attendance, “and she will fail of her dearest wish.”

The dying mother lay with a flushed face, breathing painfully, with closed eyes, and moaning piteously. Suddenly her eyes opened, and she glanced inquiringly around the room. They understood her. The daughter and her betrothed were sent for. The mother’s face brightened as they entered and she turned to me and said, in a faint voice: “Go on with the ceremony, or it will be too late for me. God bless you, darling!” she added as the daughter bent down sobbing and kissed her.

The bridal couple kneeled together by the bed of death, and the assembled friends stood around in solemn silence, while the beautiful formula of the Church was repeated, the dying mother’s eyes resting upon the kneeling daughter with an expression of unutterable tenderness. When the vows were taken that made them one, and their hands were clasped in token of plighted faith, she drew them both to her in a long embrace, and then almost instantly closed her eyes with a look of infinite restfulness, and never opened them again.

Of the notable men I met in the mines in the early days, there was one who piqued and puzzled my curiosity. He had the face of a saint with the habits of a debauchee. His pale and studentlike features were of the most classic mold, and their expression singularly winning, save when at times a cynical sneer would suddenly flash over them like a cloud-shadow over a quiet landscape. He was a lawyer, and stood at the head of the bar. He was an orator whose silver voice and magnetic qualities often kindled the largest audiences into

the wildest enthusiasm. Nature had denied him no gift of body or mind requisite to success in life, but there was a fatal weakness in his moral constitution. He was an inveterate gambler, his large professional earnings going into the coffers of the faro and monte dealers. His violations of good morals in other respects were flagrant. He worked hard by day, and gave himself up to his vices at night. Public opinion was not very exacting in those days, and his failings were condoned by a people who respected force and pluck, and made no close inquiries into a man's private life, because it would have been no easy thing to find one who, on the score of innocence, was entitled to cast the first stone. Thus he lived from year to year, increasing his reputation as a lawyer of marked ability and as a politician whose eloquence in every campaign was a tower of strength to his party. His fame spread until it filled the State, and his money still fed his vices. He never drank, and that cool, keen intellect never lost its balance, or failed him in any encounter on the hustings or at the bar. I often met him in public, but he never was known to go inside a church. Once, when in a street conversation I casually made some reference to religion, a look of displeasure passed over his face, and he abruptly left me. I was agreeably surprised when, on more than one occasion, he sent me a substantial token of good will, but I was never able to analyze the motive that prompted him to do so. This remembrance softens the feelings with which these lines are penciled. He went to San Francisco, but there was no change in his life.

"It is the old story," said an acquaintance of whom I made inquiry concerning him: "he has a large and lucrative practice, and the gamblers

get all he makes. He is getting gray, and he is failing a little. He is a strange being."

It happened afterwards that his office and mine were in the same building and on the same floor. As we met on the stairs he would nod to me and pass on. I noticed that he was indeed "failing." He looked weary and sad, and the cold or defiant gleam in his steel-gray eyes was changed into a wistful and painful expression that was very pathetic. I did not dare to invade his reserve with any tender of sympathy. Joyless and hopeless as he might be, I felt instinctively that he would play out his drama alone. Perhaps this was a mistake on my part: he may have been hungry for the word I did not speak. God knows. I was not lacking in proper interest in his well-being, but I have since thought in such cases it is safest to speak.

"What has become of B——?" said my landlord one day as we met in the hall. "I have been here to see him several times, and found his door locked, and his letters and newspapers have not been touched. There is something the matter, I fear."

Instantly I felt somehow that there was a tragedy in the air, and I had a strange feeling of awe as I passed the door of B——'s room.

A policeman was brought, the lock forced, and we went in. A sickening odor of chloroform filled the room. The sight that met our gaze made us shudder. He was lying across the bed, partly dressed, his head thrown back, his eyes staring upward, his limbs hanging loosely over the bedside.

"Is he dead?" was asked in a whisper.

"No," said the officer, with his finger on B——'s wrist; "he is not dead yet, but he will never wake out of this. He has been lying thus two or three days."

A physician was sent for, and all possible efforts made to rouse him, but in vain. About sunset the pulse ceased to beat, and it was only a lump of lifeless clay that lay there so still and stark. This was his death; the mystery of his life went back beyond my knowledge of him, and will only be known at the judgment day.

One of the gayest and brightest of all the young people gathered at a May day picnic, just across the bay from San Francisco, was Ada D——. The only daughter of a wealthy citizen, living in one of the lovely valleys beyond the coast range of mountains, beautiful in person and sunny in temper, she was a favorite in all the circle of her associations. Though a petted child of fortune, she was not spoiled. Envy itself was changed into affection in the presence of a spirit so gentle, unassuming, and loving. Recently graduated from one of the best schools, her graces of character matched the brilliance of her pecuniary fortune.

A few days after the May day festival, as I was sitting in my office, a little before sunset, there was a knock at the door, and before I could answer the messenger entered hastily saying: "I want you to go with me at once to Amador Valley. Ada D—— is dying, and wishes to be baptized. We just have time for the six o'clock boat to take us across the bay, where the carriage and horses are waiting for us. The distance is thirty miles, and we must run a race against death."

We started at once: no minister of Jesus Christ hesitates to obey a summons like that. We reached the boat while the last taps of the last bell were being given, and were soon at the landing on the opposite side of the bay. Springing ashore, we entered the vehicle which was in readiness. Grasping the reins, my companion touched up the spir-

ited team, and we struck across the valley. My driver was an old Californian, skilled in all horse craft and road craft. He spoke no word, putting his soul and body into his work, determined, as he had said, to make the thirty miles by nine o'clock. There was no abatement of speed after we struck the hills: what was lost in going up was regained in going down. The mettle of those California-bred horses was wonderful; the quick beating of their hoofs upon the graveled roads was as regular as the motion of machinery, steam-driven. It was an exciting ride, and there was a weirdness in the sound of the night breeze floating by us, and ghostly shapes seemed looking at us from above and below, as we wound our way through the hills, while the bright stars shone like funeral tapers over a world of death. Death! how vivid and awful was its reality to me as I looked up at those shining worlds on high, and then upon the earth wrapped in darkness below! Death! his sable coursers are swift, and we may be too late! The driver shared my thoughts, and lashed the panting horses to yet greater speed. My pulses beat rapidly as I counted the moments.

"Here we are!" he exclaimed, as we dashed down the hill and brought up at the gate. "It is eight minutes to nine," he added, glancing at his watch by the lamplight shining through a window.

"She is alive, but speechless, and going fast," said the father in a broken voice, as I entered the house.

He led me to the chamber of the dying girl. The seal of death was upon her. I bent above her, and a look of recognition came into her eyes. Not a moment was to be lost.

"If you know me, my child, and can enter into the meaning of what I say, indicate the fact."

There was a faint smile and a slight but significant inclination of the fair head as it lay enveloped with its wealth of chestnut curls. With her hands folded on her breast, and her eyes turned upward, the dying girl lay in a listening attitude, while in a few words I explained the meaning of the sacred rite and pointed her to the Lamb of God as the one sacrifice for sin. The family stood round the bed in awed and tearful silence. As the crystal sacramental drops fell upon her brow a smile flashed quickly over the pale face, there was a slight movement of the head—and she was gone! The upward look continued, and the smile never left the fair, sweet face. We fell upon our knees, and the prayer that followed was not for her, but for the bleeding hearts around the couch where she lay smiling in death.

Dave Douglass was one of that circle of Tennesseans who took prominent parts in the early history of California. He belonged to the Sumner County Douglasses, of Tennessee, and had the family warmth of heart, impulsiveness, and courage that nothing could daunt. In all the political contests of the early days he took an active part, and was regarded as an unflinching and unselfish partisan by his own party, and as an open-hearted and generous antagonist by the other. He was elected Secretary of State, and served the people with fidelity and efficiency. He was a man of powerful physical frame, deep-chested, ruddy-faced, blue-eyed, with just enough shagginess of eyebrows and heaviness of the under jaw to indicate the indomitable pluck which was so strong an element in his character. He was a true Douglass, as brave and true as any of the name that ever wore the kilt or swung a claymore in the land of Bruce. His was a famous Methodist family in

Tennessee; and though he knew more of politics than piety, he was a good friend to the Church, and had regular preaching in the schoolhouse near his farm on the Calaveras River. All the itinerants that traveled that circuit knew "Douglass's Schoolhouse" as an appointment, and shared liberally in the hospitality and purse of the General. (That was his title.)

"Never give up the fight!" he said to me, with flashing eye, the last time I met him in Stockton, pressing my hand with a warm clasp. It was while I was engaged in the effort to build a church in that place, and I had been telling him of the difficulties I had met in the work. That word and hand clasp helped me.

He was taken sick soon after. The disease had taken too strong a grasp upon him to be broken. He fought bravely a losing battle for several days. Sunday morning came, a bright, balmy day. It was in the early summer. The cloudless sky was deep blue, the sunbeams sparkled on the bosom of the Calaveras, the birds were singing in the trees, and the perfume of the flowers filled the air and floated in through the open window to where the strong man lay dying. He had been affected with the delirium of fever during most of his sickness; but that was past, and he was facing death with an unclouded mind.

"I think I am dying," he said, half inquiringly.

"Yes; is there anything we can do for you?"

His eyes closed for a few moments, and his lips moved as if in prayer. Opening his eyes, he said: "Sing one of those old camp meeting songs."

A preacher present struck up the hymn, "Show pity, Lord, O Lord forgive."

The dying man, composed to rest, lay with folded hands and listened with shortening breath

and a rapt face, and thus he died, the words and the melody that had touched his boyish heart among the far-off hills of Tennessee being the last sounds that fell upon his dying ear. We may hope that on that old camp meeting song was wafted the prayer and trust of a penitent soul receiving the kingdom of heaven as a little child.

During my pastorate at Santa Rosa one of my occasional hearers was John I—. He was deputy sheriff of Sonoma County, and was noted for his quiet and determined courage. He was a man of few words, but the most reckless desperado knew that he could not be trifled with. When there was an arrest to be made that involved special peril, this reticent, low-voiced man was usually intrusted with the undertaking. He was of the good old Primitive Baptist stock from Caswell County, N. C., and had a lingering fondness for the peculiar views of that people. He had a weakness for strong drink that gave him trouble at times, but nobody doubted his integrity any more than they doubted his courage. His wife was an earnest Methodist, one of a family of sisters remarkable for their excellent sense and strong religious character. Meeting him one day, just before my return to San Francisco, he said: "I am sorry you are going to leave Santa Rosa. You understand me; and if anybody can do me any good, you are the man." There was a tremor in his voice as he spoke, and he held my hand in a lingering grasp.

Yes, I knew him. I had seen him at church on more than one occasion with compressed lips struggling to conceal the strong emotion he felt, sometimes hastily wiping away an unbidden tear. The preacher, when his own soul is aglow and his sympathies all awakened and drawn out toward his

hearers, is almost clairvoyant at times in his perception of their inner thoughts. I understood this man, though no disclosure had been made to me in words. I read his eye, and marked the wistful and anxious look that came over his face when his conscience was touched and his heart moved. Yes, I knew him, for my sympathy had made me responsive; and his words, spoken sadly, thrilled me and rolled upon my spirit the burden of a soul. His health, which had been broken by hardships and careless living, began to decline more rapidly. I heard that he had expressed a desire to see me, and made no delay in going to see him. I found him in bed and much wasted.

"I am glad you have come. I have been wanting to see you," he said, taking my hand. "I have been thinking of my duty to God for a good while, and have felt more than anybody has suspected. I want to do what I can and ought to do. You have made this matter a study, and you ought to understand it. I want you to help me."

We had many interviews, and I did what I could to guide a penitent sinner to the sinner's Friend. He was indeed a penitent sinner—shut out from the world and shut in with God, the merciful Father was speaking to his soul, and all its depths were stirred. The patient, praying wife had a wistful look in her eyes as I came out of his room, and I knew her thought. God was leading him, and he was receptive of the truth that saves. He had one difficulty.

"I hate meanness, or anything that looks like it. It does look mean for me to turn to religion now that I am sick, after being so neglectful and wicked when I was well."

"That thought is natural to a manly soul, but there is a snare in it. You are thinking what oth-

ers may say, and your pride is touched. You are dealing with God only. Ask only what will please Him. The time for a man to do his duty is when he sees it and feels the obligation. Let the past go; you cannot undo it, but it may be forgiven. The present and an eternal future are yours, my friend. Do what will please God, and all will be right."

The still waters were reached, and his soul lay at rest in the arms of God. O sweet, sweet rest! infinitely sweet to the spirit long tossed upon the stormy sea of sin and remorse. O peace of God, the inflow into a human heart of the very life of the Lord! It is the hidden mystery of love divine whispered to the listening ear of faith. It had come to him by its own law when he was ready to receive it. The great change had come; it looked out from his eyes and beamed from his face.

He was baptized at night. The family had gathered in the room. In the solemn hush of the occasion the whispers of the night breeze could be heard among the vines and flowers outside, and the rippling of the sparkling waters of Santa Rosa Creek was audible. The sick man's face was luminous with the light that was from within. The solemn rite was finished, a tender and holy awe filled the room; it was the house of God and the gate of heaven. The wife, who was sitting near a window, rose, and noiselessly stepped to the bed, and without a word printed a kiss on her husband's forehead, while the joy that flushed her features told that the prayer of thirty years had been answered. We sang a hymn and parted with tears of silent joy. In a little while he crossed the river, where we may mingle our voices again by and by.

