

I found her place, the ancient oaken stall,
 Where in her childhood I had seen her sit,
 Most saint-like and most tranquil there of all,
 Folding her hands, as if a dreaming fit—
 A heavenly vision had before her strayed
 Of the Eternal Child in lowly manger laid.

I saw her prayer-book laid upon the seat,
 And took it in my hand, and felt more near
 In fancy to her, finding it most sweet
 To think how very oft, low kneeling here,
 In her devout thoughts she had let me share,
 And set my graceless name in her pure prayer.

My eyes were dazzled with delightful tears—
 In sooth they were the last I ever shed;
 For with them fell the cherished dreams of years.
 I looked, and on the wall above my head,
 Over her seat, there was a tablet placed,
 With one word only on the marble traced.—

Ah, well! I would not overstate that woe,
 For I have had some blessings, little care;
 But since the falling of that heavy blow,
 God's earth has never seemed to me so fair;
 Nor any of His creatures so divine,
 Nor sleep so sweet:—the word was—EGLANTINE.

MOTHER SHOWING THE PORTRAIT OF
 HER CHILD.

(F. M. L.)

LIVING Child or pictured cherub
 Ne'er o'ermatched its baby grace;
 And the mother, moving nearer,
 Looked it calmly in the face;

Then with slight and quiet gesture,
 And with lips that scarcely smiled,
 Said, "A portrait of my daughter
 When she was a child."
 Easy thought was hers to fathom,
 Nothing hard her glance to read,
 For it seemed to say, "No praises
 For this little child I need:
 If you see, I see far better,
 And I will not fain to care
 For a stranger's prompt assurance
 That the face is fair."

Softly clasped and half extended,
 She her dimpled hands doth lay;
 So they doubtless placed them, saying,
 "Little one, you must not play."
 And while yet his work was growing,
 This the painter's hand hath shown,
 That the little heart was making
 Pictures of its own.

Is it warm in that green valley,
 Vale of childhood, where you dwell?
 Is it calm in that green valley,
 Round whose bournes such great hills swell?
 Are there giants in the valley—
 Giants leaving footprints yet?
 Are there angels in the valley?
 Tell me—I forget.

Answer, answer, for the lilies,
 Little one, o'ertop you much.
 And the mealy gold within them
 You can scarcely reach to touch;
 O how far their aspect differs,
 Looking up and looking down!

You look up in that green valley—
 Valley of renown.
 Are there voices in the valley,
 Lying near the heavenly gate?
 When it opens, do the harp-strings,
 Touched within, reverberate?
 When, like shooting-stars, the angels
 To your couch at nightfall go,
 Are their swift wings heard to rustle?
 Tell me! for you know.
 Yes, you know; and you are silent,
 Not a word shall asking win;
 Little mouth more sweet than rosebud,
 Fast it locks the secret in.
 Not a glimpse upon your present
 You unfold to glad my view;
 Ah, what secrets of your future
 I could tell to you!
 Sunny present! thus I read it,
 By remembrance of my past:—
 Its to-day and its to-morrow
 Are as lifetimes vague and vast;
 And each face in that green valley
 Takes for you an aspect mild,
 And each voice grows soft in saying—
 “Kiss me, little child!”
 As a boon the kiss is granted:
 Baby mouth, your touch is sweet,
 Takes the love without the trouble
 From those lips that with it meet;
 Gives the love, O pure! O tender!
 Of the valley where it grows.
 But the baby heart receiveth
 MORE THAN IT BESTOWS.

Comes the future to the present—
 “Ah!” she saith, “too blithe of mood;
 Why that smile which seems to whisper—
 ‘I am happy, God is good?’
 God is good: that truth eternal
 Sown for you in happier years,
 I must tend it in my shadow,
 Water it with tears.
 “Ah, sweet present! I must lead thee
 By a daylight more subdued;
 There must teach thee low to whisper—
 ‘I am mournful, God is good!’”
 Peace, thou future! clouds are coming,
 Stooping from the mountain crest,
 But that sunshine floods the valley:
 *Let her—let her rest.
 Comes the future to the present—
 “Child,” she saith, “and wilt thou rest?
 How long, child, before thy footsteps
 Fret to reach yon cloudy crest?
 Ah, the valley!—angels guard it,
 But the heights are brave to see;
 Looking down were long contentment;
 Come up, child, to me.”
 So she speaks, but do not heed her,
 Little maid with wondrous eyes,
 Not afraid, but clear and tender,
 Blue, and filled with prophecies;
 Thou for whom life’s veil unlifted
 Hangs, whom warmest valleys fold,
 Lift the veil, the charm dissolveth—
 Climb, but heights are cold.
 There are buds that fold within them,
 Closed and covered from our sight,
 Many a richly tinted petal.

Never looked on by the light;
Fain to see their shrouded faces,
Sun and dew are long at strife.
Till at length the sweet buds open —
Such a bud is life.

When the rose of thine own being
Shall reveal its central fold,
Thou shalt look within and marvel,
Fearing what thine eyes behold;
What it shows and what it teaches
Are not things wherewith to part;
Thorny rose! that always costeth
Beatings at the heart.

Look in fear, for there is dimness;
Ills unshapen float anigh.
Look in awe: for this same nature
Once the Godhead deigned to die.
Look in love, for He doth love it,
And its tale is best of lore:
Still humanity grows dearer,
Being learned the more.

Learn, but not the less bethink thee
How that all can mingle tears;
But his joy can none discover,
Save to them that are his peers;
And that they whose lips do utter
Language such as bards have sung —
Lo! their speech shall be to many
As an unknown tongue.

Learn, that if to thee the meaning
Of all other eyes be shown,
Fewer eyes can ever front thee,
That are skilled to read thine own;

And that if thy love's deep current
Many another's far outflows,
Then thy heart must take forever,
LESS THAN IT BESTOWS.

STRIFE AND PEACE.

[Written for THE PORTFOLIO SOCIETY, October, 1861.]

THE yellow poplar leaves come down
And like a carpet lay,
No waftings were in the sunny air
To flutter them away;
And he stepped on blithe and debonair
That warm October day.

“The boy,” said he, “hath got his own,
But sore has been the fight,
For ere his life began the strife
That ceased but yesternight;
For the will,” he said, “the kinsfolk read,
And read it not aright.

“His cause was argued in the court
Before his christening day;
And counsel was heard, and judge demurred,
And bitter waxed the fray;
Brother with brother spake no word
When they met in the way.

“Against each one did each contend,
And all against the heir.
I would not bend, for I knew the end —
I have it for my share,
And nought repent, though my first friend
From henceforth I must spare.

“Moor and moor and farm and wold
 Their greed begrudged him sore,
 And parchments old with passionate hold
 They guarded heretofore ;
 And they carped at signature and seal,
 But they may carp no more.

“An old affront will stir the heart
 Through years of rankling pain ;
 And I feel the fret that urged me yet
 That warfare to maintain ;
 For an enemy's loss may well be set
 Above an infant's gain.

“An enemy's loss I go to prove ;
 Laugh out, thou little heir !
 Laugh in his face who vowed to chase
 Thee from thy birthright fair ;
 For I come to set thee in thy place :
 Laugh out, and do not spare.”

A man of strife, in wrathful mood
 He neared the nurse's door ;
 With poplar leaves the roof and eaves
 Were thickly scattered o'er,
 And yellow as they a sunbeam lay
 Along the cottage floor.

“Sleep on, thou pretty, pretty lamb,”
 He hears the fond nurse say ;
 “And if angels stand at thy right hand,
 As now belike they may,
 And if angels meet at thy bed's feet,
 I fear them not this day.

“Come wealth, come want to thee, dear heart,
 It was all one to me,
 For thy pretty tongue far sweeter rung
 Than coinèd gold and fee ;

And ever the while thy waking smile
 It was right fair to see.

“Sleep, pretty bairn, and never know
 Who grudged and who transgressed ;
 Thee to retain I was full fain,
 But God, He knoweth best !
 And His peace upon thy brow lies plain
 As the sunshine on thy breast !”

The man of strife, he enters in,
 Looks, and his pride doth cease ;
 Anger and sorrow shall be to-morrow
 Trouble, and no release ;
 But the babe whose life awoke the strife
 Hath entered into peace.

STORY OF DOOM,

AND OTHER POEMS.