

Yet Daisy, my pearl, I will keep ever hopeful, and trust He who has so gently lead me will care for me still.

Sweetest good-night, pray for my Espérance! *my Percy!*  
\* \* \* \* \*

And now to my reader, I should offer some word of apology—dear reader be lenient towards this my first effort—pass with gentle forbearance over the many faults—accept the little good.

My preface should say something of the matter of my book, but what? Reader of this my preface, read the book and you will know what it contains far better than I could hope to tell you here. If I have succeeded in teaching the good I meant to teach, you will find it—if not, the fault is neither in your heart nor mine, but in my blundering.

I think, in my own experience, I have proven that, even in the darkest night God cares for us—that if we trust, with a full assurance, a perfect faith, He will succor and sustain us—thus I do not deem my heroine's trials, and the bearing them unnatural, or the care of a good God over her and her's, overdrawn.

With an earnest prayer, I will look forward to the time, when the present clouds of doubt and uncertainty will be reft by some beams from the sun of popular favor, which falling upon my heart shall warm and gladden it.

PHILADELPHIA, 1860.

## BERTHA PERCY.

### CHAPTER I.

HENRY HOTSPUR.—No Percy thou art dust

And food for—

PRINCE HENRY.—For worms brave Percy, Fare thee well great heart!

*Henry IV., Act 5, Scene 4.*

PERCY'S CLIFFE August 1.

ALONE, all alone—Father have mercy upon me—what is to become of me—Oh! weary heart. Oh! dreary future, hopeless, rayless, forever in the shadow—henceforth to walk alone over the rough and thorny path of life—Alone! No matter how torn my weary feet may be, no gentle, tender hand will be outstretched to smooth the way—no strong sustaining arm will lovingly be clasped round me, to ward away the dangers of my daily life. I must learn to meet and bear henceforth all ills alone!

Walter!—my husband,—my darling, tender husband! how could you leave me—how can I live through all the coming years and you gone. I am very, very helpless, God pity me.

That weary plaint of Marion of the Moated Grange, comes over me with every breath, this livelong day.

“I am aweary!” she sighed, “aweary!

I am aweary! my heart is dreary!

I would that I were dead.”

God pardon me that thus against His will I rebel. I will try not. But alas! it is a weary time, and if I long wickedly to die, to be at rest, it is because heaven seems such a blessing, and the hope of its nearness a joy. Walter is dead! it is not wrong to die, but oh, it is very sad to wait,

to watch, to listen out ever, and yet never be able to catch one glimpse of the death angel, or hear once the waving of his wings as he sweeps past you.

Understand it well—say it over again, and again, Walter is dead. He whom you loved, poor heart, who was as the glad sunlight unto you. Dead! dead! Do you comprehend it in all its length and breadth, that dreadful word? Lay the truth, open, plain, and clear before you. Write it in deep letters, like those which are graved in living, burning characters upon your inmost heart—your weary stricken heart.

God is my Judge, and knowest the secrets of my heart, and seest its sinful mourning and rebellion against his chastening. Yet "Jesus wept" for his friend, therefore for his sake God will not condemn me, poor broken-hearted, if in my sorrow I weep, that I am desolate.

Walter, my husband, am I to live ever alone! Even now as I look upon thy calm, pale face, the shadow comes between.

They tell me to come away, to leave thee here, my darling. I will not! I will not! I will stay by thy side, my noble husband, my glorious one, until they bear thee hence. Thy face looks comfort to me, even now a calm smile rests upon thy pale, cold lips. Oh I have striven in passionate anguish to warm them back to life in vain! in vain!

A peace, a joy, a holiness lies upon thee now, my husband, but it hurts me, to see thee thus, so calm and full of peace, when I am weary even unto death.

Oh I am desolate beyond all earthly things, and weary, oh so weary, I can no longer weep—Alone! Alone!

AUGUST 4.

This day I have consigned my happiness this side of heaven to earth—henceforth I know not joy—only hope! only hope!

All is past, is over. I have looked my last upon my husband's face. Now and ever my duty is very plain, so to live, no matter what comes, through all trials, all griefs, through lonely dreary nights, joyless weary days—that at the last, when God in goodness takes away this burden of life I may meet at the gates of the eternal city, my treasure, who has gone before—"where your treasure is there will your heart be also."

My poor little children are very well, one of my great griefs is, least they should grow up in life with but a passing remembrance of their father. Of all his gentleness and goodness.

It shall be the duty of my life to make them know in some measure, him whom I now mourn. Whom they with childish grief now weep for—knowing some great trouble has come upon us all, a sorrow which the bright beams of a few summer days will chase away, as does the bright sunshine efface from the earth all traces of the last hour's clouds and showers.

Alas! it is such deep, dark gloom, sad thoughts oppress me, my path is sunless, lying so deeply in the shadow, it will take much prayer, much watchfulness, much weary care to get us all home; through the dark rayless night to the glorious brightness beyond. Help me O Lord!

I have just seen my poor little fatherless ones and kissed them good-night. They said their simple evening prayers, with the usual "God bless dear Papa," upon each loving lip.

Could I tell them of the open grave—the coffin resting there! My darling, my husband, my heart is broken, the deep dark grave is ever round me,—it walls me in—it stifles me—I can not breathe for it.—The clods they threw above the heart against which I've lain so trustingly these many years, bright happy peaceful years: fell on my own heart like a leaden weight, and lie there still, oppressing me.

Oh! it is lonely for thee, my love, lying away out in the dim sad moonlight alone—I here—and thou there. So near and yet so far apart,—divided for life—sundered by

worlds. Oh how long will life last? What a weary thing time is. I would it were Eternity now, I cannot wait!—I cannot wait!

My head aches wearily—earth seems so wide—so full of space, so empty. This whole house, nay the world, the very stars seem drearily vacant—naught is filled but heaven, and it is so far off!

I cannot see it—I cannot penetrate this thick cold shadow so like a pall that surrounds me. Come to me my love, no clods, no grave can part us.

---

## CHAPTER II.

This just decree alone I know,  
Man must be disciplined by woe.  
To me whate'er of good or ill  
The future brings—since come it will,  
I'll bow my spirit and be still.—ÆSCHYLUS.

### SEPTEMBER 10.

I HAVE been sick—very sick, even unto death, since my husband's funeral. To-day sitting in my easy chair for the first time, I have assumed what henceforth shall be my life garb.

I am grieved, this sombre dress and all my sufferings have done so little to make me look older.

"Your face is too childish to wear this widow's cap," nurse tells me over and over again.

I wish it was not so; they brought me a mirror to-day, and I sicken of my fair girlish face, looking younger than ever, now they have put back my hair. But how wicked I am, how fretful I must be, when my looks annoy me.

This must comfort me, just as I am Walter Percy loved me. Is not that enough to make me *almost* love myself?

It is a bright, warm autumn morning, just the kind of a day he always prized. The forest leaves all brown and golden and crimson-tipped, sigh softly in the wind. They used to sing a pleasant song, but now their notes are

changed, and they sigh forth a requiem over departed hopes. The voices of the wind are all sad voices now, they float to my casement in the night and the sound of weeping is in their tones.

They have rolled my chair into this deep bay-window, where we have so often sat and watched the sun go down, behind those dark tall mountains, which stand like sentinels about our home, guarding it from the fierce north winds. Oh, we have had many a happy blessed time, filled with long sweet talks within this window's depths—watching the shadows come and go like smiles upon the broad green lawn, and broader river which skirt our home, and lose themselves in the beaming sky.

It is very beautiful here, the same fair scene stretched out before me, the river runs as gladly, the sky glows as brightly, the mountains o'er-topping each other, and covered with foliage of a thousand varied hues stand as stern, and frown as loweringly upon us.

The lawn has scarcely less of fresh bright green, and its border of flowers bloom in brighter, and guadier colors, even than when last we sat at eventide together,—never more! never more!

How can they all look the same, why do they so carelessly wear the same bright garb, how can they thus gleam and laugh one with the other so gaily? They weary me so—it tries me sadly, sitting here and seeing all these happy together, when I am desolate.

They must take me back to bed again, and draw the heavy curtains darkly about me, I can not bear to look upon beauty and brightness now. God forgive me, that I do not prize his gifts sufficiently, in my sorrow I cannot.

---

### SEPTEMBER 12.

A few days have passed, I am better, my baby is not well, she pines for me poor little one. I have not treated her tenderly in my selfish grief, poor birdie, wee baby, Walter's baby, whom Walter never saw,—sad wee thing, never to have seen him, never to have had the light of his eyes shined upon you.

What a desolate little one, how my heart pities you poor

little stranger, because this great happiness, the crowning glory of my life was denied you. But I will tell you always of him pet.

It is a sad world a weary world, my little one in which to dwell—beyond is a home so fair, so peaceful, so full of joy, and but one step would carry us through the dark angry waves of the river of death into the brightness beyond.

Shall we go now daughter, and let papa see his little one for the very first in Paradise? Not yet, we may not go yet, we must wait, some weary years. They will not open the golden gates to us now, if we go, those bright majestic seraphs who guard the way, to the beautiful city, but will turn their faces sadly from us and say,

“You should have waited until our Father called you.”

And then, they will shut us out from glory for ever. No, no we will not go, but we will wait a few sad years, it cannot be so very long. And then when we have grown too weary with much watching, we will close our eyes and the angels will come and carry us gently up to God, and thy father my little one, will be among the throng—the redeemed throng. O Espérance! O Percy!

---

SEPTEMBER 14.

I have been too weak to attend to any kind of business—to do aught but sit and nurse my frightened heart with its load of grief—to try and get used to this strange desolate life which stretches itself out before me.

I have seen none of the many who have called, what could I say to them—how talk to strangers of my sorrow.

I know it is very wrong but even the children distress me, but I must strive against such an unnatural wickedness as this, they are my all, the only things throughout the wide world that claim the same lineage as myself. We used to talk much of it, and congratulate ourselves upon it, that being both of us only children of only children, we had not to our knowledge any kindred near or remote among the living.

We said it was an especial Providence which brought him to my far island home, in the blue waters of the Mediterranean, and that in the beginning of our lives it must have

been ordered, we should make each other's lives. And we rejoiced to have no other love come in to share our own most perfect whole. Save only those gifts God sent us and which each loved more dearly for the other's sake.

But now I fear me much it was a selfish living from the world, and glorying in our own infinite content. We should have known some cloud would come. I feel now some kinsman, some one who was a part of me, would be most precious.

I am very young and inexperienced in the business affairs of life, to be left with so many children looking to me for guidance, and all this great property to manage right for them. I almost wish some one had been associated with me in their guardianship, it is such an awful responsibility, but my husband knew best what was good for us all.

In his short suffering illness, when death came quickly, with scarce five hours warning, he had only time to say just at the last, when life was ebbing away, and his breath came short and suffocatingly, with fearful struggles:

“I have made no will, I leave all to you my wife, for our children—my darling bring them up as you know I meant to do—as we have talked and planned—a thousand times—”

After a brief space he turned to Mr. Marstone and with a great effort said.

“All is right sir, do just as Mrs. Percy desires, be her friend as you have been mine, most true and faithful—all my life—I leave you darling to his charge.”

And then what followed left me a widow, stricken, smitten of God. Next week is my birth-day, that day which has always been a bright glad festival, the anniversary of my wedding-day as well.

How can I drag out my weary life and meet these days, which will now only be mile-stones cold and bare, which chronicle how long since we were parted. It seems a sad but fearful dream. I am a widow!

Seventeen years ago, I was a bride, a happy child, but still a bride. Now I am upon my thirty-third birth day, a widow with a housefull of young children looking to me for guidance.

Do not people die of broken hearts?—No I feel they do not, else would I not have this strong redundancy of life, wildly surging within me now.

It takes a long, long time, I have heard it said to die of a broken heart, we look and wonder to see it, yet God orders it thus, let me be patient.

We can endure whatsoever God sends. We need never sink 'neath the crosses, and burdens of life, which his hand lays upon us. We learn through much suffering to grapple with our fate, to live with it ever about us—this deep dark mail of woe, pressing close and tight upon our inmost hearts, and yet we live and endure even unto the end.

---

SEPTEMBER 15.

There is a comfort for me even in my affliction. Last night after I had lain me down to rest, not to sleep; my brain tumultuous with a thousand sad memories, and dreary lookings forward into the dark unfathomable future, I heard my door open and ere I could unclasp my fingers from over my burning eyes, two soft arms were flung about my neck, and a pleading sobbing voice said.

"Let me stay with you oh mamma, I cannot bear it alone—do not send me away, please do not. Let me be your comfort now, and you mine. Oh it is a weary time, has God forgotten us mamma? And left us alone, poor sick mamma, poor fatherless children!"

My Marion, my sweet one, my first-born child, very near my heart lie ever, ever. Even as your loving arms clung round me henceforth be my nearest friend, my aid and helper.

Even as your sweet mournful voice plead with me in my night of doubt, and sorrowed with me in my sorrow, will we two bear together—never again apart—our great life grief.

We two, better than any others, know each other's heart-thoughts, and appreciate as none others can, what we have lost. Upon us its weight falls more heavily and with a more crushing force than on any of the rest.

And my frail dove-eyed Marion, is as a new found treasure unto me. Her thirteen years are scarcely flown, a

child in form, she has already found in sorrow her woman's heart. And henceforth I am no longer quite alone in this wide world.

I have had many kind and thoughtful messages—not only from our immediate circle of friends, but from the best and noblest men this country produces. Men who for years have been my husband's associates, and round whose names will be entwined as there is now about his own, unfading wreaths of fame. The grateful offerings of the people of this land, to the true and tried, who amidst strife and outrage, through evil and good report, have kept unwaveringly their country's good and safety ever before them. A wreath of ever-living flowers to the true and brave.

The Legislature of which Walter was a bright and shining light! send me a notice of their adjournment, upon the day his death was announced to them, also a paper containing a tribute to his memory, "his great worth which they once prized and honoured, and of which they now mourn the loss."

Beautiful, heartfelt words they are, welling up from the pure lofty hearts of these his compeers, noble men, whom he loved, whose friendship was ever a precious thing to him.

The members of the Bar also send me their condolence for "my irreparable loss and theirs."

I have also many obituary notices, some by unknown hands, and others whose breathings of love and sorrow, I recognize with gratitude.

All of these I will keep very sacredly, an heir-loom for my children. Through these they may learn in part, the reason they have to glory in the name they bear. And my young son, whom God in his infinite goodness and mercy guide and protect, as I with all my watchfulness and care may not hope to do, my glad merry boy, may have ever before him the honored name of Walter Percy, a name which Howard Percy must strive with heart and will to emulate. A beacon light to guide him on to do and dare all things for the right. A goal only to be won through much striving, desperate battles with the thorns and briars, which hang over and smother up the pathway of life making the good and right way rough and tedious.