

birth, I know it is, and yet I know not how to chide her for it.

Time will check the wrong in it, I trust, and her own experience will teach her better than I can, how much of this feeling is unworthy, and to be cast away.

Alas! it is the only thing left us of our old estate, and perhaps that is why we love to think of it, however it is a harmless folly, for we work just as faithfully and untiringly, as if we had no name and ancestry to boast. And we fling it in the face of no one, as we cherish our pride among ourselves, and exult over it secretly and quietly, clinging to our family watch word, "espérance."

Marion and I are doing a very elaborate piece of work which will take several weeks to complete.

Our long siege of illness has made sad inroad into our savings—for during all that time none of us could do anything but attend to the sick, and only Ernest was earning anything. Now, too, as it is summer, of course I have no pupils, to teach until the autumn.

Nora and Birdie do some little things for Margery which sell pretty well, but still we have to be very economical to get along.

This is a sorrow, for we had hoped we might be able next year, to let Stuart go to college, for at least half of the year, that is if he passes his examination at the High School, which we are quite sure he will. But now this hope must be given up, there is no prospect!

## CHAPTER XVII.

JULY 23.

LAST night we sat as usual in our little sitting-room, the table drawn into the middle of the room, and on it burning the brightest of astral lamps, which Milly came across, in some out of the way shop, and bought "for a mere song,"—and which she keeps alive in the most marvelous fashion.

"With de skimmings, and odds and ends of ebery ting," but which gives us an abundance of light.

The table spread with books and work—and our German and Latin lessons waiting, until eight o'clock sent the little ones to bed.

In the most comfortable end of the sofa, where the shaded light is brightest, Mrs. Wilbur sat, making a ball of amazing size and variety, for Howard, who still weak from his illness seated beside her gravely discussing the propriety.

"Of making it all blue and orange, or red and green."

Mrs. Wilbur looks still the "madame" a lady of the old regimè. Her rich brown silk, hangs in the same graceful folds, as of old,—her little French cap, with its bright ribbons, sits as jauntily upon the dark hair, where age has as yet, left but few tokens. With her versatile, happy temperament, she is as free from sorrow or care, as though the husband of her youth, the daughter who was at once her pride and joy, and the wealth which has always been her own through life, slumbered not in dreamlessness beneath the dark cruel waters of the Atlantic,—surely it is a blessed thing to be able to make a happiness in other hearts, now those she loved are gone from her forever.

In the larger of our chintz covered arm chairs, sat Ernest with baby in his arms, her pretty head laid ever and anon upon his breast, Birdie says:—

"She is a born flirt, because she always likes the gentlemen so much better than the ladies!"

"No, she is just like all other babies, and loves those best who pet her most," says Marion.

A little back in the shadow, sits Lela with Adèle upon her knee, telling her in a pleasant loving way, some pretty story, or else singing some merry song, for her ear alone.

Marion just through helping Milly, curled up in the other arm chair, and with her head upon the arm, lies deeply en-

grossed in "Queechy," which Stuart has brought her from the "Library."

Gracie and I had been at the piano, trying to master an exercise with just as little noise as possible.

The room looked so pretty and bright that we could but be contented. At the other end of the table sat Mr. Raymond and Stuart deep in a game of chess, while Cora with her elbow upon the shoulder of the latter, intently watched them, her eyes bright with excitement.

How bright and fairy-like she looked, her golden curls in thick profusion lying over her flushed cheeks, Marion's pride these same curls are.

Marion lying in her arm chair seemed no older,—a very little child, her form half buried in the depth of her seat, her brown hair "put up" in a knot at the back, is the only womanly thing about her. She is as neat and nice as possible in her black chintz wrapper, and linen cuffs and collar.

Thus we were sitting, when suddenly the quiet hum of the room was broken, by Coralie's exclamation in a pettish tone,

"There, I expected nothing else, my poor queen! how could you play so stupidly Stuart, I declare you shall give her another chance," and she caught Mr. Raymond's hand between her own. "Uncle Harley you shall not do it, give us another chance," and with but the thought of keeping the piece upon the board, she held on to it with both hands.

"Oh my poor neck and shoulders," sighed Stuart comically, this *petit rencontre* going on over him.

"Why Birdie are you in arms against me, to-night?" said Mr. Raymond, laughingly relinquishing the contested queen.

"Oh I did not think about either of you particularly, only I got in with the reds when I first came," she replied.

"Well, shall we try again with your queen, since Birdie has set her heart upon her, Stuart?" asked Mr. Raymond.

"No, no, I acknowledge a fair beat," answered he.

"And while you are at your confessions, own to having played most miserably," said Birdie crossly.

"You shall give me some lessons, my dear," laughed Stuart.

"Indeed I shall do no such thing, I would not be bothered with such an ignoramus for any thing; may I play a game with you Uncle Harley?"

"Not to-night, Cora," interrupted I, "it is time these little folks were in bed, and for us to begin our lessons."

"Well, to-morrow night then," she said, "come 'baby bunting,'"

"Wait a moment," said Ernest pulling her down on the other knee.

"Bertha, when are you going to give this child a name, or have you concluded to let her grow up without that article, on the principle of 'what's in a name?'"—

"I know it is too bad, Marion and I have been having a serious talk about it, and have decided we will bring her forward next Sabbath if Mr. Raymond thinks best, for baptism."

"What will you call her, or have you decided?" asked Mrs. Wilbur.

"Yes, Marion, Lela, and I, have chosen her a name."

"Oh have you mamma, what is it? is it pretty?" cried Adele.

"Yes pet, I think it very pretty, moreover it is a very dear name to us all."

"What is it?" asked Cora eagerly.

"Ernestine Lillian, after two of the dearest friends your father and I ever had."

Mrs. Wilbur burst into tears, and Marion rising went quickly to her.

"Not without you like it, dear 'grand-mamma,' if the second name makes you sad, we will only call her for Uncle Ernest."

"No, no, it is very good of you, too good," she said rising and going out.

Ernest sat during this time with his eyes covered, when suddenly coming toward me, he said,

"Thank you, dear Bertha, this is a kindness I little dreamed of, but my whole life shall show how grateful I am, and I can ask no greater blessing on your child, than that she should grow as fair, and good a woman as my lost Lillian, my precious sister!"

"Nor I, dear Ernest, than that with Lillian's goodness and charms she may always have as true and gentle a guardian, as Lillian ever found in her brother Ernest," then turning to Mr. Raymond I asked, "and will her *other* Uncle, give our little girl a right to her name?"

"I will with pleasure," he answered. But I cannot think why he was so very pale, surely he is more delicate than he will own, for several times in the midst of a conversation I have seen him look thus, but he always seems annoyed when we notice it, so I passed it by this time, though he looked so badly for a while.

"So at last she is to have a name of her own, and baby is baby no more," cried Cora, tossing her little sister into the air.

But what shall we call her? both these names are so long for such a little thing," said practical Gracie.

"Oh Lilly would be beautiful," said Howard.

"But 'Tiny' will be so nice for the very littlest of us all," said Adèle, "will it not mamma?"

"The very thing, Adèle has the very name" said Stuart, and so thought all, and it was decided it should be 'Tiny.'

Then when they were gone, while Ernest finished a letter for the P—, Journal, and Mr. Raymond wrote on his sermon, Stuart and Lela practiced a duett. Then when Marion and Cora came back, and it was half-past eight, we translated, or the learners did, Foqué's Poem of Consolation, it is like a psalm so filled with solemn grandeur,

"For my misdeeds if Jesus pleads,  
Who then condemneth me?"

That is the comfort, though for our evil deeds all men with ruthless harshness may upbraid us—yet before the throne of God stands the Mediator—the man, Christ Jesus, who knowing our weakness—pitieth us, and pardons too.

Though from my inmost soul I pray for strength to bear this newest sorrow, with meekness, yet one look into my helpless child's face, drives away all my striven for endurance. But this I know, even in this rebellion, Jesus pardons, nay, pleads for me. To Him be praise and thanksgiving evermore.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

JULY 24.

To-DAY has been a very important day—this morning Ernest came in, hurriedly saying:

"Bertha I have just been startled out of my seven senses by—"

"Seven senses, Uncle Ernest!" interrupted Cora, "why I thought we only had five, when did you get the other two?"

"An hour ago," said he, paying no heed to her query, "I was called to see a lady in L— St. who was reported to be dangerously ill. As soon as I could get off, I went to see her, and to my utter surprise discovered your old friend, Estelle De Lancy.

"Estelle De Lancy! oh Ernest is it possible! is she very ill, can I not go to her?"

"I have just come post haste to take you, for she is lying at the point of death—alone, and as far as I could ascertain in utter poverty. An old man who seems to have the sole care of her, and who came for me, says, her husband died a month since, in the South, and that she has been very ill almost ever since."

I found her tossing in a high fever, but immediately upon seeing me she laid her head back quietly, saying,

"I knew you would come, Bertha, I have been waiting for you."

Poor Estelle! from her servant's account, and her own ravings, I have learned the most of her sad story since we parted.

We were school mates and dear friends for years,—the only child of a gay fashionable man, at her mother's death he gave her into the care of a sister of his wife, with whom she lived until death separated them.

Then, to her after sorrow, she went to live in her father's house, and saw the gayest, most fashionable society of the Continent, until her father deeply embarrassed with gambling debts, compelled her to marry his chief creditor, a noted roué and gambler.

Of her misery and unhappy fate since then, I dare not

speak. Before they left Paris, Ernest heard, Mr. De Lancy had been killed in a duel; and I have often shuddered to think what poor Estelle's fate must be, with even the little protection her father's presence gave her, gone.

Now I learn that Mr. Harrington becoming involved in some gambling debts, fled from his creditors to this country.

Since their arrival here he has wandered from one city to the other in the South and West, gambling, always gambling. Sometimes the winner of thousands, and again so poor as to be obliged to sell her jewelry and his own, to gain sufficient to commence again. But one night he came home fearfully intoxicated, and in his frantic ravings, dashed himself at her feet and with all his sins upon him, died.

Since then she has wandered half crazed from place to place, knowing no one nor caring to. The money she had was nearly gone, and she knew not what was to become of her.

She has written to me, her servant says, over and over again, but of course her letters have never reached me.

Poor desolate, stricken friend of my girlish days. I will watch over her and take her to my humble home, we have plenty of room for her, and enough of the necessaries of life, thank God, for all of us. Mrs. Wilbur says,

"Let me share my little room with this poor stricken one. Poor child, her fate is more sad and desolate than mine, or any of the rest of us. Oh Bertha, we have many hearts left to love us even in our poverty, she has none, or at least but this one faithful servant."

"And so," says Marion, "if dear grandmamma makes that arrangement our poor little three cornered room the last of its race, will still remain vacant. I was just thinking how nicely it would be filled."

"We will keep it until some other desolate body comes along, homeless and needy," says Cora.

"What a housefull of beggared grandees we are, to be sure, poor and proud," Lela declares.

"But such warm hearts, full of love and hope, and contentment," added Marion, "our 'espérance' holds firm as ever."

"Thankful above all for our May flower," Lela replies, tenderly.

JULY 28.

Poor Estelle has no pleasant memories to comfort her, a widow and childless, no hopes for the future. Poor friend, we must cheer her—and strive to fill the desolate places of her heart with our most tender love. For her entire restoration to health, we have great hopes; already she is able to set up: and now relieved from the dread of dying alone, she is making rapid strides towards health and strength.

She has been with us for several days; they brought her in a close carriage one evening, it was a risk to move her while she was so very ill, but Ernest declared:

"The chances are all in her favour, if we get her here, but if she stays in that close damp room, where she now is, I can do nothing for her."

And the experiment has proved he was right, for our quiet healthful home, has been of the greatest benefit in aiding the means taken for her restoration.

Sandy who has been her humble faithful friend, was at first a source of trouble to us, as to where we could bestow him. But Milly full of expedients suited to every emergency, has fixed him up a bed room of the little summer house, how they have made it water-proof, is a mystery known only to themselves. We are very grand forsooth with our servant man. Milly declared from the first.

"I'll make him do the *work*, and earn his salt."

And so she has,—giving him the charge of the offices, and making him man of all works. The garden Sandy has taken under his especial care, he used to be a gardener in the old country, and loves it dearly.

"Th' lot's o' braw likes I'll ha' nicht 'year, for ye a, 'twill joy the' vary heart of ye," he declares.

And he laughs slyly at the "laddies wark," but he need not for this same old garden, tilled by unexperienced hands, has been a staunch supporter to us.

## CHAPTER XIX.

"It cometh not again. Bright visions flown—  
Love's withered roses o'er its pathway strown—  
Hope's cherished idols shattered and decayed—  
Rainbows of promise, given but to fade—  
Harpstrings of friendship broken and unstrung,  
Gone the sweet music which around them hung!  
What bitter anguish, what intensest pain,  
To tell the heart it cometh not again." WALTER.

ONE year ago to-day, since Walter died—one whole year, have I striven to bear the burden of life! oh for rest! I wish it were twenty or thirty years, or whatever time is to bring me to my journey's end. If I could but push this slowly drifting time, with its measured beatings on and on, until Eternity and rest had come!

One year ago I laid my head down upon that breast just stilled in death, and said,

"It is finished; my husband has left me," with a breaking heart.

But he has not: this whole year, though unseen, his spirit has been round about me. They always said I had a very simple faith, and I thank God for it now; for this faith in my husband's guardianship and guidance through all this dark, sad time, has been a blessing, a comfort and a support unto my untried strength.

We have had many blessings—and yet one overwhelming sorrow, but the Hand which sent the blow has sent a sweet comfort, even with it, for last night Marion said to me.

"Mamma, Adèle has told me something to-day, which I want her to tell you, but she fears it is a wrong way for her to feel, surely it is not."

"What is it, little daughter?" I asked.

"Only that I do not mind being a blind girl so very much, mamma, I have so many more to care for me, and show their love for me, they scarcely let me miss my eyes."

"Dear child," I said with my arms clasping her closely,—"it is not such a dreary world to my little Adèle?"

"Not at all, every body is so good to me," but her face lost

its brightness, "I only feel very bad when I hear mamma's tears and know she is grieving for my poor eyes."

"Then my darling shall hear them no more, can she hear me smile now?"

"Yes, but it is a sad smile, mamma, and not at all like Cora's or Arty's." This talk is why I say God has tempered even this sorrow to us.

With the kind thoughtfulness, which is ever in the hearts of all for me, I have been left entirely to myself to-day;—nothing has jarred upon me, no sound has reached my ear to torture me; all is as silent and solemn as though death itself were in the house instead of one sad memory;—as if our dead lay shrouded in another room, instead of in a far away grave yard mouldering.

Oh! that this night I might, for one single hour, lie and weep upon that grave, with no eye save the One, to gaze upon me, in the dim twilight.—But the relentless hand of an iron fate cries, "nay," to my wild wish.

AUGUST 4.

This is the Sabbath day. One year since, upon this day, at sunset, they heaped the heavy earth over my husband's form. It seemed a fitting time in which to present our little one to the Lord—It must make us more zealously watchful of her—we must see to it that the vows we have taken this day for her, be performed.—

She is a bright happy child—and we will hope her future may lie through a peaceful shaded pathway,—and that her heart like her name may be earnest and pure. "Ernestine Lillian," earnestness—purity—that is its type, a fitting name for our little one.

Our days vary so little, there is scarcely anything to write.—Our garden, old and grey though it be, has been a staunch old helper to us, and has done a world of service in eking out our small means. We almost live upon the fruit from its trees, and now we begin to have an overwhelming quantity of grapes, of the most delicious kinds.

And all this in the heart of a great city; we are strangely favored, God cares for us. We are all enjoying this holiday very much, although it does not pay well, except in

laying in a stock of strength, upon which to work when working time comes.

Next month we hope to be busy once more,—I have a large number of pupils to instruct, at an advanced price too—and we still work for Margery, at least Marion and Nora do. Ernest has had a steadily increasing practice all through the summer. Stuart takes no rest, but has spent his holiday in posting books, and such employment as he could procure to bring money.—So altogether we are prosperous, and content.

August 10.

Estelle sits before me, very pale and feeble still: but nearly well and so happy, so grateful to be with us.

We have told each other, our sad stories, and with many tears have agreed henceforth to dwell together, to help and comfort one another.

She is an interesting and agreeable companion; her troubles have not been heart-troubles, or at least not those which leave an ever present shadow over her life: for while she has suffered much, she can hope still.

For her husband, a debauched infidel gambler, whom she married by compulsion, she could have but a moiety of regard.

Her father, she never knew in childhood, when her heart might have gone out in love to him, spite of his sinfulness: and in later years, he was always her enemy, sacrificing her happiness, for his own advancement, and therefore though the awful deaths of both, must cause her horror, she has no need to grieve—she has no shadow on her face, but already, with returning health, come back the merry smile and playful ways, for which I loved her in the days of yore.

Then too she is a neat and rapid sewer, so ready and apt at everything, that she will be a wonderful assistance. She has no musical talent, but as the nuns at the Convent where we were educated, used to say:

“Madmoiselle Estelle can do any thing with her pencil, that any one else, can think.”

She has a marvelous taste for painting—and Cora, whose desires all lie in the hope of being some day an artist, is half wild with joy to have some one to teach her.

We are constantly employed from half-past four in the morning until ten at night.—Practising, embroidering, studying, fill up every moment of the entire day.

Last evening we were surprised by a visit from an old gentleman, one of Mr. Raymond's members—whose visit was of so much moment to us, that I must note it down amongst the rest of my dotting.

The will of a wealthy member of the congregation lately deceased, has just been opened, and Mr. Ostend came to inform Mr. Raymond of its contents. First, a sum bequeathed to the church for the purchase of an organ, together with a stated salary to maintain a good choir.

“And further” said the kind hearted bearer of pleasant news, “a clause to which I trust Mr. Raymond, you will in nowise object, the sum of one hundred dollars to be added yearly to your salary.”

“No objection, I assure you,” was the cordial reply, “I shall bear the burden with the utmost equanimity.”

“One other thing brought me here to-night, my dear Madam,” said Mr. Ostend turning to me, “I am left sole executor of this will, and I know of no one to whom I would so gladly trust the leading of our praises as yourself, and knowing you to be a teacher of music, I thought I might induce you to become our organist.”

“Thank you kindly, for the thought, dear sir.”

“Thank you yes, or thank you no?” he asked pleasantly.

“O yes, with all my heart!” I replied, answering his smile.

“Well, then it is settled—and can you not form the rest of the choir from your own family? I hear you have some fine performers among you?—What do you think?”

“Easily, if you are not fearful of trusting our inexperienced corps. I think all would be willing to try,” I said,

“Well, taking that for granted, where would you begin?” asked Ernest,

“Well, for the organist, to commence at the foundation, Lela could fill that post,”

“Why Bertha, ridiculous!” cried Ernest, “who will sing then?”

“You pay the rest of us a poor compliment *mon ami*. Birdie, young as she is, sings as well as the generality of church singers; but I will not tax her young lungs, I will

be the soprano, although you question my ability, and May and Birdie shall assist me, and sing contralto, then Dr. Wilbur will be our basso, and Stuart the tenor, there, is not that "a very grand quartette?"

"Excellent! especially the basso," laughingly rejoined Ernest.

"What a pity there is no having Uncle Harley to sing with us: we will scarcely know how to get along without him now," said Marion.

"Thank you dear, I prefer the other end of the church."

"And I prefer having you there, sir, as you cannot be in both ends at the same time," she replied with a smile.

"But, mamma, it will be hard work for Nora, to set there Sunday after Sunday, and never sing," broke in Cora—

"I hope not—but she shall sing sometimes to keep her in heart, but Lela's voice is our greatest treasure, therefore we must be very tender of it."

"That is quite right, Mrs. Percy, do not let her strain it," said Mr. Ostend. "I have no doubt these little ladies will do charmingly."

Then at his request, we allowed him to hear many songs from our family party, both singly and collectively, and the tears in his eyes told better even than his hearty thanks, we had given him pleasure.

When he was gone, we talked a long while over our good fortune, and were as proud over the prospect of earning three hundred dollars among us, as if we had chanced upon a gold mine.

This morning, Mr. Raymond (who, by the way, in our home-conclave, has in the most natural of manners, slipped into Uncle Harley—as the result of our daily intercourse,) told me the organ will be put up this week, so by Sabbath after next, we will be ready to assume our new duties, as we are to have the freedom of the church at all hours of the day, for practising—oh! will it not be a treat, to touch the keys of an organ once more? I could fancy myself at home!

Milly or Sandy will perform upon the bellows, so we will have quite a family affair of it! This shows us a hope for Stuart and college, in a couple more years, if we do not touch this church money until then.

## CHAPTER XX.

OCTOBER 1.

"No more German or pleasant evenings, for me for the next two months," said Stuart coming in one day this week, and giving his strap-full of books a toss into his room.

"Why, what is the matter now?"

"I have entered for the prizes, and shall have to work like a slave this next quarter, if I mean to come out ahead."

"What will you have to do? you must not attempt too much at once, your lessons are very difficult already," I said anxiously.

"Oh! it is not so very bad, only I shall have to keep pretty steady, I am to write the lives of Euripedes, Pericles, Demosthenes, Cicero, Quintillian, Socrates, and any six of the modern poets and orators I please. Then I am to compare them, write a treatise upon the style of each, and after that—the most troublesome thing of all—to construe one hundred lines of each, in whatever two other languages I will, only one must be ancient, and the other modern, and the more variety one has in the latter, the higher the prize will be,—if I only knew some Italian!"

"And do you think it possible to do all this without giving up your other lessons?" I asked in dismay.

"I hope it is, I need only work a little harder and later, and I am pretty well grounded in languages, ancient and modern; thanks to my kind home teachers."

"And you own untiring industry my fine fellow," said Ernest. "What are the prizes to be? Worth trying for?"

"The honor of winning them, would be that. The lowest is a set of books, to the amount of twenty-five dollars; the second, fifty dollars worth of books, to be chosen by the gainers of the prizes. The third and highest is, the freedom of the professor's library, for a year, fifty dollars worth of books, and a silver medal of good scholarship, and besides all this, should the good behavior and scholarship continue an opportunity to graduate next year. Is not that worth trying for?"

"It is indeed, and you are determined to try?"

"With might and main, and win too," he said, emphatically.