

and she is but eighteen and a few months) she shall enter a convent, or do some other terrible thing; and then she peeps through her curls and looks so *piquante* and *petite*, that though she is so wilful, one cannot find it in their heart to scold her very much. She is even wilder and prettier than Cora, although she boasts "two whole years of greater experience in the world."

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CHAPTER XLII.

"Even night hath its songs.—Have you never stood by the seaside at night and heard the pebbles sing, and the waves chant God's glories."  
SPURGEON.

AUGUST 1.

Four years are a long time to look forward to; but a short time to talk over after they are buried in the grave of the past.

Yet four years with their griefs and gladness—their clouds and sunshine—have gone by since that dark dreary night, when the angel of sorrow came to dwell in our hitherto unclouded home.

Four whole years since the "Shadow" from the land of sorrow, swept its mantel athwart our hearth stone, and put out the light which had burned so brightly, so kindly in our midst for years, and yet the world moved on as ever!

How many things have come and gone since then, how many another heart has watched some flower that it loved, pale 'neath the sun's bright rays, and fade into the night of the eternal: shuddered to know the life that made its happiness, was being borne by a flood tide into the great ocean of the "To Be."

And yet we live on calmly, although at first we said it could not be, we learn from frequent lookings into the face of our grief, to gaze with even a sad smile at the last, upon what once made us pray for death.

And a kind of happiness comes to the stricken heart, as

year after year rolls by; perhaps once we would not so have called it, but now—it is not the full rich gladness we knew before the clouds came, it has no joyous bursts of laughter welling ever to the lips, nor the glad light hovering in the eye-beam—nay, eyes once thus gladly bright, have had their light washed out by bitter weepings, the heart once brimming o'er with mirth-notes, has for years cherished one memory, so great, so sad, there is no room for other things within the heart's recesses. Still this something, half-pain, half-pleasure, is happiness after its kind, the widowed lonely heart's happiness. And God is good to me.

This, *my* day, the one day of all the year I claim from those about me, as my very own, is over, passed quietly as usual alone, all day I have wandered on the cliffs, far away from mortal eye, or mortal sounds. I have lain me down in the sight of the great sea, with its voice telling me strange tales, and prayed for patience—for patience to wait—to wait! until—until God's time had come.

But when late in the night the harvest moon rode high and bright in the heavens, and the waves sparkled in the silvery sheen she threw, I came home putting away my grief—ready for work—for work once more.

SEPTEMBER 1.

Oh I must be strangely evil that my Father chasteneth me so oft and so grievously, and yet I try—oh I try so hard to be good and true.

My Father! my Father! what does it mean! why have you stricken me once again, was I learning to love her too well, is my very love a curse to those round whom it clings!

We were so contented, so happy, our sky seemed so radiant with Thy tender love, save that the clouds of memory hovered in the distance, making that part a shadowy sadness there did not

"———One speck of gloom appear  
In our great Heaven of blue."

And now all is overcast, gloom has clustered round us



like a thick pall, and our hearts laid low, cry out for mercy.

Our baby, our treasure, our bright-eyed pet is dead, dead did I say, heaven help me! perhaps even now as I sit here, she on the deep, the mighty deep, beneath the fierce beams of this noon-tide sun may be stretching her little hands out piteously to me for help—help I cannot give.

Oh my baby! my baby! cry to thy father child, thou art gone beyond my ken, he will help thee now my darling.

Endure the pains of life a little while longer my daughter, lie thee down and sob thy little life out gently, for thy father's arms will be about thee, and when thy bright eyes are glazed in death, and thy fair hair is tossed by the cruel winds above thy death-stilled temples, he will guard thy spirit little one, into the realms of bliss. Thy father will bear thee in his loving arms, and present thee, his first offering, before the face of his Father and thy Father, his God and thy God.

And the, "Lamb" who sitteth upon the "Throne," will keep thee tenderly my little lamb, until I come to thee, my flower! my Lillian!

Oh I know not how to write this sorrow down, we were careless of her, and "Tiny" wandered to the beach, and clambered into a boat, which lay high and dry upon the sands: we know this was the way, for once before they found her there, and brought her home, frightened to know the danger she had escaped. Oh we kept strict watch over her wanderings for days after that, but as time went by we grew careless, and this day she has stolen off again, to see the bright gay waves she loved to watch.

And weary with her play she has lain down in the bottom of the boat to sleep—and then—the tide coming in has floated the boat off, and with our treasure the frail bark has drifted out into the broad ocean; and none of the many who loved her, were near to stretch forth a hand and save her, from an awful doom.

And the sun faded in the west, and in her sweet slumbers our baby floated slowly but surely out upon the deep dark ocean.

We missed her at dark—oh she had too many care takers—for each had thought her safe with some other one,—we searched for her everywhere, until, a loud cry blanched every

cheek, and Howard sprang into the room and fell senseless, with the words:

"The boat, the boat is gone!"

And it was too true. Our baby, in her innocence, had not learned to fear the treacherous ocean, but had trusted it joyfully.

And thus to-day we mourn for our darling, listening in vain for her childish tones, missing the tinkling of her glancing feet upon the floor, and the clinging clasp of her little hand in ours. Oh, my baby! my baby! Never to look into thy face again! God help us! God help us!

If kindness could have soothed our grief, surely to-day this pain would be subdued; for as soon as the alarm was given, every pleasure-boat, every fishing-smack along the coast, for miles, was manned and launched in search of her, but in vain! The ocean bears no marks of the way-farer; the shining line the frail bark left behind was washed out as it passed; and the sea tells no tales!

— A week after, a boat came to shore about thirty miles south of this point, and Stuart and some gentlemen from the Rock (including Mr. Marston) went down in search of it, and came back bearing it with them. Oh! one look upon it crushed the hopes that she might yet be saved, for on its prow was written "The Joy,"—the name the grave of our Ernestine bore.

Oh, boat! Not joy, but grief henceforth be your name, —a mother's grief.

SEPTEMBER 10.

We are home again. We could not endure to hear the waves' song, to listen to the mournful cadence of the sea, as it broke upon the shore, so drearily, its words spoke unto our hearts.

"Let us go home, away from this sad sea wave, with its ceaseless moan," were the words of all. And so we brought our sad hearts home.

And as if the old words were always to be verified in our case,—that "troubles never come singly," from the day we lost "Tiny," another flower faded from before our face.

Poor little Agnes Gleason, who all her life has known



sufferings, will soon suffer no more, for God has called her. It was because she pined so grievously for the old garden and Sandy, that we hastened our return even more than we otherwise should.

But from the hour we gave up hope of ever having our "Lilly" bloom in our midst again, all love of life seemed to fade from the heart of Agnes.

In vain did Dora strive to win her back to life and hope again. She would only answer, with a sad smile:

"I want 'Tiny,' Dora. If she cannot come to me, please spare me to go to her. I cannot love to live without our baby." Then she would weep quietly, and add, "'Tis a bright home where she has gone. The flowers never fade, pain nor tears never afflict us there. Ask that I may go there soon, sister. Think of a place where I shall never feel this pain in my poor side and back again, but where I may wander untiringly among those bright, unfading flowers, with 'Tiny's' hand in mine."

And even as she has asked, her sister, with some tears, but a calm, trustful heart, has given her up to God; and now we watch hour after hour, waiting for her death—death, did I say? Nay, her new life, when, for the first time almost in her eleven years, she will know rest and ease. This is our consolation, this is why we say, "Take her, Oh Lord, to thyself!"

She lies like a withered flower, waiting for the dew of divine love to be shed upon her, and revive her. With a child's humble, trustful faith, she says, with a sweet smile on her face:

"My Saviour says I may come to him. Oh! I want to go now. I want to be an angel."

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OCTOBER.

And Agnes is an angel, and I doubt not this day with our lost ones, wanders beside the river of life. Oh, we are getting much treasure in the realms of peace. My Walter first, then Mrs. Aldrich, and now within a few short weeks our babe and Agnes.

Oh, each one who is taken, is a new link to bind us to

our home, another stepping stone to the glory beyond the clouds.

And to-night, the stars beam down upon the ocean where our Lillian slumbers, and upon the humble grave, where, upon the bosom of our aged friend, we have lain Agnes, our last born angel.

And sweet stars, while ye keep your vigils over these which are near to us, forget not that far-away grave in a mountain pass upon which a column is raised (by other hands than mine) which recounts the noble deeds of a brave true heart, which sleepeth well; shine tenderly above that grave, and read with your thousand eyes, the gracious name of Walter.

Poor Sandy has grown an old man these last few weeks: his head is whiter and more bowed than of yore; these two children were his darlings, because as they were never set to work, they were always with him in his labors. He had made a little car in which he would lay Agnes, and then with 'Tiny' beside him, would draw them from place to place while he worked.

Hour after hour these children were his companions, Agnes assorted his seeds, and knew as much of the theory of gardening as Sandy himself.

And now the old man weeps for his darlings, and says:

"I wat no why, I, an sich an I, cumber the airth when th' Lord sees fit to cut down sich bright bonnie flowers, fra amangst us."

"Did you not say the other day, uncle Harley," said Adèle, who was standing with them, "did you not say Lilly and Agnes had learned a new song?"

"Yes, Adèle, they sing it now I doubt not."

"Then Sandy," she said, laying her hand upon the bowed head of the old man, "then, may it not be because you have not tried to learn that new song that they are taken and you left? Can you say 'Thy will be done,' Sandy?"

"Noa! noa! Miss Adèle; but I will learn, please God, I wi' learn that song."

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NOVEMBER.

Clarence has gone back to college, entirely recovered from his illness, and Stuart writes me to-day:

"There is only one thing to fear now, and that is, that in



his efforts to atone for the past, he will ruin his health by over much study. His conduct is in every respect exemplary. But there is one thing which grieves me, since his return to school, he has packed everything in the shape of a painting implement away. I cannot persuade him to touch them, and when I ask him why, his face turns crimson, and he says humbly but firmly:

"I do not deserve to, it is more pleasure than I have any right to."

"So you see, dear aunt, how thorough his repentance is, and how like a slave-master he punishes himself, forbidding himself this thing which is dearer to him than all other pleasures together.

"And I learned inadvertently the other day, that he has been giving almost the whole of his income to young Grey, who is in very bad health, to enable him to continue his studies."

Dear boy, his troubles have purified him truly; but this must not be, I know the agony of this self-denial, and I will end it, although not openly, for then he would plead to be allowed to expiate his offence his own way.

But I will write to him to paint me a portrait, first of Stuart for myself, and then of Howard for Marion. If it is to please us, and not himself, for our sakes and not his own, he will go about it less remorsefully.

But a strange thing has come into the midst of our grief and mourning. I wonder if such a thing ever did occur before of a suit in chancery being settled. I was inclined to take a Dickensish view of such matters and believe them all, Jarndyce vs. Jarndyce, with a "Bleak House" at the end of them: a whirlpool which once caught in, the unhappy victim was whirled round and round in a never-ceasing resistless vortex.

But all rules have their exceptions, and this is one of them: Dora has been declared sole heiress of the Gleason claim, and has been invested with the remains of an estate which has fed an army of hungry lawyers for a score of years.

It was once an immense estate, but so many professional mice have nibbled at it, such a vast number of parchment-makers have been fed off of it, so many skilful lawgivers have cut a slice, one here and another there, that the best

part has vanished, and the mercy is that the dissecting and dividing process had not gone on until nothing remained.

As it is, there is enough to keep our Dora a lady of leisure the rest of her days. We cast a few vain regrets towards Agnes, but we still them with the thought, "a more enduring inheritance above."

And Dora is our landlady at last, and we say "our home" now, with a sure hope of its ever being such.

Stuart and Howard's letters give me a better account of Clare than before. "There is the dawning of the old light in his eye, now he has his beloved 'Art' to comfort him."

The picture he painted a year ago of Ernestine, which charmed us so much, and which the baby loved so well, hung for a long while in the "Gallery;" but after we lost our darling, we learned to our dismay we could not purchase it, because a gentleman from Europe had already done so, and taken it abroad with him.

Oh, I grieve for this. It would have been such a comfort to have had it, we had made up our minds that, no matter what the price would be, we would deny ourselves every other thing, that we might possess this beautiful semblance of our lost one, and now we find we cannot. Doubtless it is best, but it is a new sorrow.

Baby Lillian, fairy Lillian, we miss thee each day; but, God helping us, we will strive to say, as Adèle does, "He doeth all things well."

Poor Nora, afar off, mourns alone. Poor Nora! It is sad to be alone, without the others about you, who knew our baby's winning ways and merry tricks. I wist how sadly your grief bears you down; but bear it, sweet daughter, as from a Father's hand.

Remember your watchword "Espérance." Do not be proud of it, and cherish it only in sunshine; but, 'midst clouds and darkness, bind it as a shield over your heart. Hope, and remember God is good.



## CHAPTER XLIII.

### JANUARY.

WE have passed our Christmas and New Year's quietly and sadly. They were to have been joyful days, because of the home-coming of the boys. They brought back with them two very welcome visitors,—Lester and Carrol, and the pleasant intercourse of last summer was renewed; for it has been a pleasant time, although not merry, for I would not have the grief which encompassed us, weigh heavily upon those other hearts who had it only by sympathy, with the few of us who had been bereaved.

We have sent Lela a box of pretty "nothings," which every one of her home friends had a hand in making up. I know how kindly my darling will take these tokens of our many thoughts for her.

Mr. Audley cannot speak words sufficiently strong in her praise. In his last letter he writes:

"The Ladye Lela's voice and exceeding beauty are the wonder of Paris. 'La belle Américaine,' would be the belle, par excellence, did I permit her to take more than an occasional peep into the gay world of fashion. She goes to court occasionally, under the chaperonage of the wealthy Mrs. Livingstone, whom she knew slightly before she came abroad, and who sought her out, and insists upon taking her with her occasionally. Lela is not fond of her, and I think rather rejoices that she will be free from her patronage soon, as they intend returning to America the ensuing spring, she tells us.——"

Just ere they went back to college, Clare came to me, and, with a word of love, put into my hand a package to be opened after they were gone, and I was entirely alone.

"Only kiss me for it now, dear auntie," he said.

The gift and the manner of it was most touching,—the delicacy which would not permit him to look upon the burst of grief which he knew his gift would cause. Dear boy, I thank him!

It was a miniature of my lost child, upon ivory, most exquisite as a work of art, and precious beyond all price or words to my heart,—to the heart of all who had loved our little one. May says:

"Our Lily blooms in heaven, but her semblance is on earth."

### FEBRUARY.

To our great sorrow we have been called to part with our dear Ada, her mother has decided it was time she had made her *entrée* into the gay world.

In vain, though so many pleasures wooed her, did she plead to be left one little year more in peace.

"I cannot live without Marion, mamma," she declared.

These goings forth of those who have made up our happy family so long, leave a sad blank, and we do not care to fill their places with strange faces, but will henceforth make our day-school the only place for change: that is so large, it is not needful we should fill the places of the home birds who have taken their flight.

We have a sadly reduced number, first Clara, then Jennie, began the flitting, and Lela with them, these were the earthly losses, then our Father called from amongst us Ernestine and Agnes, taking them home.

Now Ada has gone, and we miss her sadly, Marion says:

"None of the ancient company remain but Mary, Dora, Louise, and we two sisters, the four belles of our circle gone."

I have a letter from Ada every week, in which she gives me a faithful record of the way in which her time is passed.

"Such a never ceasing going and getting ready to go somewhere I do not want to go at all, but must because mamma says it is the fashion. Oh for the old quiet, the bright cheerful light of the old sitting-room, or when one was wearied of the merry strife of tongues, to stand upon the stair-case and watch the sunset fade from the sky, or the fair moon rise, and then with May's arm round my waist to wander out in the dim old garden, and watch the shadows of the trees flit over our path; or else to lay my head upon your knee, and tell you every foolish wish and aspiration which had crept into my brain, and hear you tell me what was right to do, or warn me in your holy way of what was



harmful. Oh Mrs. Percy! dear Mrs. Percy! this noise and turmoil wearies me."

Dear child I wish I had her back again out of the way of that great tiresome world, she complains of, before it taints her pure heart.

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APRIL.

For a month or more Marion has been with Ada "making her happy."

"Dressing, seeing sights, and people, until we are almost blind!" they write me word.

Mrs. Lawrence is a very gay woman,—and a leader of a certain set, so that her house is a *rendezvous* for the fashionable of her circle.

Much to her chargin Ada has already rejected two of the best offers of the season, without any reason too, except:

"That they do not suit me, and I am too completely in love with myself and May, to dream of loving any one else," she declares.

This was provoking enough, but when Marion for whom Mrs. Lawrence has conceived a great admiration, actually refused "a splendid offer," over which the good lady had expended a world of thought and planning to bring about, her patience utterly left her and she had no words sufficiently severe.

"It was all very well for Ada who was an heiress, and could always bait some one with a golden hook, but that May who had nothing, should decline the hand of one of the first men in the city was past belief."

"Oh mamma," laughed Ada, "there are as good fish in the sea, for us both, as ever was caught."

Mrs. Lawrence writes to me in high dudgeon but of course as the affair in both cases was decided, I could only condole; poor lady, I am afraid she has two of the worst possible subjects upon whom to expend her match-making propensities.

I have just received the portrait I asked for of Stuart, it is as excellent as the subject himself; I know no greater praise.

"Howard," Clare writes me, "is growing so tall you

would be amazed, and the fellow cares for nothing but books and May and your dear letters."

Gracie and Adèle inform us about twice every hour, "that they are ten years old, this month."

"Oh I beg of you Gracie, do not try to make us believe such a little dumpty mouse as you are, is the same age as this tall slender ladye in the corner. I guess you mean Adèle is ten and you eight; is not that the way of it?" says Birdie, to tease her.

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JULY.

I am almost alone again; Harley and Ernest have gone on what they call:

"A gunning, exploring, fishing, foraging, and everything-in-general excursion."

Stuart and Clare have accepted a long-standing invitation, and gone with Harry Lester to Carrol's Southern home.

Mrs. Lawrence has taken a country seat on the banks of the H—, a few miles out of town, and surrounded by the villas of her fashionable friends is "happy, providing her own house can be kept filled with agreeable company all the season."

She has first written, and then come herself, to insist upon our breaking up for the summer, and instead of seeking other quarters, coming *en masse* to her, she knows of course we could never seek the cliffs of Rock Point again.

Her kind invitation was refused; but Ada grew so unhappy, and her mother in proportion so importunate, that we at length decided as soon as all the others were gone, a part of us should visit her at a time.

Mary Lea and her sister have gone to Vermont, to spend the summer with some relatives. The two Chalton girls are with their aunt, upon a farm a few miles away.

So there was only Dora left, who is entirely one of our own, therefore she, Estelle, and Marion, started a couple of weeks since, taking Gracie with them, and write me very pleasant accounts of the way their time is passed.

Birdie went with Louise for a while, and then is to go with her to her aunt Lawrence's. Howard has gone with his brothers.

And Mrs. Wilbur, Adèle, and I stay at home, and think



we have a very pleasant time, although it is nothing new. Thus we are arranged for the summer holidays. Every month brings me a package of letters from my beautiful Leanore, besides all the host of others which come every day. Adèle declares:

"We have the letters, if they have the journeys, and I like them by far the best."

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#### CHAPTER XLIV.

"To weary hearts, to mourning homes,  
God's meekest angel gently comes;  
No power has he to vanish pain,  
Or give us back our lost again.  
And yet, in tenderest love, our dear  
And heavenly Father sends him here."

THE ANGEL OF PATIENCE.

(A free paraphrase from the German.)

AUGUST 1.

ANOTHER year dawns on me; this year a new grief bears heavily upon us, and yet I will not write down bitter complainings because my Father has taken my baby from this travel-worn, sin-stained earth, this home of tears and clouds, to the brightness beyond, taken her earthly trammels away, unloosed the bonds of clay, and made an angel of my darling, my lost one.

Sweet daughter, was it not blessed as I used oftentimes to tell you, to know papa the very first in Paradise! to hear him say "my daughter" there the very first!

This is the fifth year since Walter's grave was made. With his loss, seemed to come every trial which earth held, crushing and overpowering me; but God has overruled all for our good.

How certain a thing it is "we would always choose for ourselves the very thing which in the end would harm us most."

Had I been the planner of my own destiny, would I have

chosen poverty and toil, could I have said "give me to work unceasingly for my bread and that of my children? Yet this very need of systematic exertion has been best for me. I see it now, looking back and remembering what I was when Walter left me. I know I should have sunk into a state of apathy and sullen misery, had not some shock terrible and unforeseen aroused me, and compelled me to go forth forgetting self.

God is my Father, and has cared for me all this time, although He has a few times sorely afflicted me.

Walter, my husband, I used to say so sadly at the first, alas another long year is gone, and I am parted farther from my old happy life; now I have learned another tone, and it comes over me like a glad song, "so much nearer the end, a whole year nearer home," and I take the hope to my heart, that it is another stepping stone of the ladder of Time, gone by.

This year leaves the record of another earthly sorrow, another heavenly joy, and draws me nearer to the Rock of my refuge.

This five year stone upon which my feet are fast grounded, is nearer the light, is rising me farther from earth, closer to heaven, thanks without measure to my God for all his mercies.

Oh! my true Espérance, even clouds of sorrow cannot hide you utterly.

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#### CHAPTER XLV.

AUGUST 31.

ESTELLE returned in the early part of this month, after a delightful visit to Mrs. Lawrence, bearing an urgent request that I should come immediately.

I found there was nothing left but to go, so with a feeling akin to that one feels in getting into a dentist's chair, I came, and have been here nearly two weeks. The house is