

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."

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.

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

crowded with all sorts of people, old and young, grave and gay, in a constant round of enjoyment.

We have among our party a distinguished geologist, who entertains and instructs his listeners at one and the same time; also a couple of celebrities in the way of poets, an authoress with a lackadaisical up-in-the-air appearance, and an artist to whom Clare is kindly affectioned, and Birdie too for that matter, although her love for the "divine art" has fallen off wonderfully this last year.

Then the Livingstones just returned from Europe; Mr. Marstone and the Dutille's are here staying permanently for the summer, beside the gay fashionables who flit in for a week and then fly off to other sweets.

All this coming and going makes Mrs. Lawrence supremely happy, and I sometimes imagine the good lady gifted with ubiquity, for she seems to be everywhere at once, or at least always at the right time.

The children, and we count them by the dozen, are wild with joy. This beautiful place with its broad expanse of water sweeping past, its gay flower gardens, and fresh sweet air coming over fields of new mown hay, is a very pleasant change to these poor little dusty denizens of great cities, and they take the full benefit of the pleasurable freedom.

My poor little Adèle (I call her little, although she has grown a great girl this last year), is so happy, so entirely satisfied with the pleasures of the place, that as I watch the look upon her sweet face, it reconciles me to being here among all this worldliness.

But I feel like a bird, who, having spent all its life in a cage, is suddenly let loose, to wander at will among throngs of gaily plumed warblers, lost! lost! in a maze; and with a strange sense of loneliness I pine for my cage once more.

Coralie is so wild, plays such wicked pranks, I have a hard struggle to keep her within bounds; although she does such daring things without respect to persons, yet all love and pet her. I fear she will be a sadly spoiled fairy before I get her home.

By an especial request, as they were sadly in need of gallants, our four collegians have concluded to spend the rest of their vacation here.

Harley and Ernest have just returned from their excursion, and come down occasionally (or up I believe it is;) and pass

a night or so at the "Hotel" by (courtesy) in the village near at hand, refusing Mrs. Lawrence's pressing invitation to make her house their head-quarters.

Harry and Louise, are finding infinite content in certain moon-light walks. I often think of Lou's wish "that her husband should be her slave," and wonder whether Harry Lester, is the destined personage, and how he will submit to such bondage, if at all.

Mr. Marstone is I believe, my cavalier especial at present, and Mr. Livingstone has taken a desperate fancy to my "Birdie," and insists upon her being his companion upon every excursion, to which arrangement she always gladly assents.

His wife is the same cold heartless woman, her girlhood promised. She deigned much to my regret to remember who I was, had heard my husband was dead, and had often wondered what became of me, until she met Lela in Paris, and expressed great admiration for her beauty and voice.

"If she was not so studious, and Mr. Audley was not so particular of her, she would be the reigning toast, my husband says."

This was told in a cold drawing tone, and in a manner which expressed very plainly that she condescended to talk to me, simply because I was the mother of the "Paris beauty," and for no claims of my own.

She is sadly worn and old looking, although she is at least five years younger than I, and seems to be the subject of the most painful *ennui*.

No wonder she is unhappy, such an unloved and unloving life she leads, for they do not even pretend to endure each other's society.

Sad fate! miserable bondage, it was better I think to have had a short loving life even with such a bitter ending, than this long weary uncared for existence.

The young folks have talked, walked, danced and flirted to their hearts content. Two or three wild young gentlemen from B—— have joined us this week, and with Mr. Livingstone's aid, they have fitted up a couple of boats, and evening after evening they are freighted with gay parties, who wile away the hours, until almost midnight, upon the bosom of the Lake.

Now as I sit by my window, merry shouts of laughter and

gay songs, with a flute or guitar accompaniment, are wafted over the water, and come across the garden of roses, laden with a thousand perfumes even into the quiet of my room.

How happy, how light-hearted they are, God keep them so, or if it is better they should be perfected by suffering, strengthen and sustain them.

Without all is peace, the moon lies softly and lovingly upon as fair a scene as the eye need rest upon; the bright flowers grow pale in the moon-beams, and the trees have a silvery sheen over them, and look as though some tender bridegroom had thrown a bridal veil over his love.

Within in their pure innocence my two little girls lie sleeping, their loving arms clasped tightly round each other, God keep them thus ever, loving and pure.

And around us I doubt not, though unseen hover two angel watchers, I cannot see them, but my spirit feels their presence near me, and always in this quiet night-watch the joy and peace of my lost ones' company is over me.

A celebrated physician who has been spending some time in this house, to-day made a careful examination of Adèle's eyes, and has given my life a new brightness because of the hope he holds out, that if we are very careful of her for a few years, he thinks there is every reason to believe an operation might be successfully performed upon her eyes, and my darling once more see.

Oh even the thought of such a thing is heart-refreshing, but the child is so happy now, we have not ruffled her sweet content by telling her our hope, she might think too much about it.

"She might dream over it too earnestly, and then be more miserable should it fail of success," says Marion.

Howard is here to-night and sits beside me, my noble boy as I watch the light come and go upon his glorious face, as he bends entranced over "Endimyon;" I lift my heart to God in thankful gratitude for such a precious treasure.

His father's own son, each year something grows upon him which draws him nearer to my heart, because it was his father's once. Oh I should love and prize him tenderly my own son! my only son, at any rate, but can I help it that this love grows more intense, this pride becomes more strong, when I behold him before my face, growing in all things like my precious husband!

"Howard, dear Howard, your mother loves and blesses you dear boy, my noble Esperance."

"Does she not always?—has there ever been one instant in my life when I was not thus blessed?" And roused from his book by my passionate burst, he came and folded his arms about me for a while: my darling son.

SEPTEMBER 1.

It is a wise providence which hides the future from our gaze. Last night, I sat half-dreamily watching the beauties which lay upon earth and sky.—

Yesterday, this house was filled with gay voices, which gushed forth in songs and laughter: now, where so lately joy reigned, nought is seen but grief and dismay, nought heard but bitter weepings.

Last night I said, as the summer air bore to my ears a burden of the gay song,

"By moonlight and love-light,
We bound o'er the billow,"

"I wonder if any ill lies near the heart of any one of that gay throng?" and now some of those very hearts lie stilled in death, their life anthem hushed very near its beginning, their eyes closed upon earth just when its flowers bloomed the brightest. Sweet eyes, which looked but love, never more to smile upon earth.

Even while I sat with my arms wound round my boy, and blessed God for this one of my many blessings, I thought I heard a cry of terror mingling with the laughter, and springing out upon the balcony, I exclaimed:

"What was that, Howard? Did not some one cry for help?" And even as I spoke, came another shriek, so wild and fearful, it sent a chill of terror to my very heart. I

sprang down the stairs almost before it died away, and made my way down to the river-side.

A terrible sight burst upon me. Two of the boats were being rowed quickly into the shore, but the third lay bottom upwards in the very middle of the stream, and clinging to her, were her passengers.

Oh, how my heart ached! Who was amongst them? Could they be saved? And, with strained eyes, I scanned the groups which were landing quickly from the two boats. As I sprang forward to ask, my single voice was drowned by twenty others.

"Are they safe? Are any gone?" and then the congratulations, as dear ones were recognized, among those who had either been borne to shore by a stronger arm, or swam thither themselves.

All had passed in such a moment, that it was not until this instant I discovered Coralie was not among those who stood near me.

"My child! my child!" I cried; but, even as the words burst from me, a voice from the approaching boat replied loudly:

"Safe, safe, Mrs. Percy. She is here, thank God!" It was Mr. Livingstone's voice; and, as he spoke, he lifted her from the bottom of the boat.

"She has fainted. Take care of her quickly!" And some one, (Mr. Marstone, I think,) carried her before me into the house.

Wrapped up in my own selfishness, I did not see two white faces likewise borne along behind us in the moonlight, nor did I know for hours afterwards, that my bright-eyed Louise was dead.

Oh, dear eyes! never to shine again, full of radiant light, whose brightness was shadowless, never more to hear the rippling of those silver-toned notes, laughing chirrupingly at every gladsome thing.

Poor mother, poor desolate father, their only one, their bright, golden-haired pet, around whom so many hopes had clustered, struck down ere one wave of sorrow had taugth her heart earth was not all beauty and holiday! Poor little one! God comfort those broken hearts! God pity them!

This was not all. Another had shared a like fate. But, even amongst the terror of that time, I could but note the difference: while upon every lip Louise's dear name was

coupled with a blessing, and each one was telling something of her, how to-day she said some sweet thing, or how beautiful we thought her, a cold expression of regret was all that the other name elicited.

No tears were rained over the pale face of Isadore Livingstone, no lips were pressed to her chill ones, striving to bring warmth back to them. Her husband stood over her, horror-stricken, while efforts were vainly made to resuscitate her, but no tear was shed, no blessing whispered above her.

All night I sat with the poor stricken father and mother of Louise, striving to give them a morsel of comfort; but oh, I felt how vainly! The only words she said were, as she clasped my hand:

"Do not let any one else come near me. You alone understand my woe."

That was the bond between us. Until I knew her in her sorrow, I had never liked Mrs. Dutille, so gay, so thoughtless, so careless of her child's real interests; but now, stricken by my Father's hand, she grew very near to me.

The poor father, with bowed head, sat beside her, moaning ever and ever:

"My child, my darling child!"

Towards morning I stole softly away, while Mrs. Dutille slept, to spend one moment with my rescued child; all night Marion had watched with her, and often had come gently into the room where I sat, bringing word of her well doing.

I found her, though feverish, in a deep sleep, and Ernest and Marion beside her. After watching her a little with a heart of grateful thankfulness, I started to return to my post. On the stairs, pale and haggard, I met Harry Lester, who had been one of the rowers in the ill-fated boat, and who had been rendered incapable of giving any assistance to his fellow-sufferers, by a blow which he received from the capsized boat, and which made him for a time insensible.

As I looked in his face the thought struck me of what his grief must be, laying my hand upon his arm I said gently:

"Harry, dear Harry."

"Oh, Mrs. Percy, God help me!" burst from his white lips in a tone of agony.

"He will, Harry, if you ask aright," and putting my arm around him, I drew him into my own room. After the first burst of grief was over, he told me of his love for this little one, and that only a few hours before they started upon their ill-fated sail, she had promised "when they were old enough" to be his own.

It was a boy and girl's love; but this terrible ending will make it sadden his whole after life, and the sorrow he now endures is none the less poignant because it has come upon him in the spring tide of his life.

Later in the day I met Mr. Livingstone pacing up and down the garden walk, his head bowed down, and in such deep thought that my passing did not disturb him; but as I stood for a moment watching him, my heart smote me that we had left this poor man alone, and above all, that I had not thanked him. Going back, I laid my hand upon his arm:

"How are you to-day, Mr. Livingstone?"

"Well, quite well, I thank you, dear madam," he said, gratefully.

"I may not have another opportunity to thank you, oh so much; for having so nobly rescued my child, they tell me it was only through your efforts she was saved."

"Dear little Birdie," he murmured.

"A mother's loving prayers shall ever be yours, that by God's help you have spared me the agony poor Louise's mother now endures."

"A mother, a mother! I never knew a mother's love or prayers, perhaps if I had I should have been a better man."

"'Tis very sad not to remember a mother's love, sir, mine is such a precious memory to me that I pity you. And oh think of that poor mother in yonder room, who to-day mourns for her only child."

"Isadore was an only child."

"Yes, I know; but her parents are not left to mourn," I replied.

"But her husband is," he said in a cold tone.

"I know, I know, pardon me, poor Isadore, so young to die."

"Nay, not young, old, old, worn out, *blasé* to all sweet affections or kindness, a heart of stone," he said quickly and fiercely.

"Mr. Livingstone! you forget yourself," I said, shocked at his language.

"Excuse me," he replied, a weary look settling down upon his face, "I did forget, you cannot know," and he turned to leave me.

"She is dead now, forgive her, Rolf," I said, laying my hand on his arm, all that he had endured coming over me, and remembering how the gay generous boy I knew years ago, had become a cold, scoffing, cynical man, by the hand of this dead woman.

He shuddered, turned deadly pale, and after a moment's silence, said in a low tone:

"I do; dead! yes dead! oh, that I knew—oh, that I knew—" and he looked doubtfully at me.

"If I can aid you in any way, you know you have the right to ask me now."

"Thanks, Oh, Mrs. Percy! when Louise, in springing to another seat, overset our boat, and we all sank together, when I arose to the surface, the first two who met my view were Isadore and your Birdie. Both had fainted. I could only save one; and, by all that is holy, the only reason I chose your child, was because the thought came over me, 'so many hearts will mourn if she be lost, but the other—' Oh, Mrs. Percy! believe me, though she was my enemy, though she has blasted my life, withered my happiness, made me a reckless roué, turned me sometimes almost to a fiend, until I have well-nigh cursed her, believe me in this I was unselfish, I only thought of saving many hearts great anguish by rescuing the child.—But it has haunted me ever since that I have murdered my enemy, unintentionally; God knows I did not mean it—but that it was by my neglect, oh, is it so?" and he looked eagerly at me.

"I cannot judge. I dare not. Your loss is my gain. God pardon me, that I cannot wish you had done otherwise."

"I did not mean it. You will bear me witness that I struck out, even when my exhausted state made it madness to do so, and brought her to shore, spite of all danger. Even then, the thought struck me, 'If she is dead, remorse will live with me.'"

He spoke eagerly, telling over his conduct; more, I could see, to endeavor to excuse his actions to himself than for

my sake, striving to find some comfort in thus explaining, for his tortured conscience; but one look into his haggard face told how hopeless was the endeavor.

I have somewhere read of the agony of remorse endured by a man who saw his bitter foe, whom he had hated with a life-long hatred, struck into the foaming billows, and of the awful strife within himself, whether to peril his own life to save the man he had a thousand times wished dead, or let him perish. And while he thought this, and said to himself, "His blood will be upon my soul!" the man sunk, to rise no more. Then he went forth with the curse of Cain upon his brow, a murderer in intent if not in fact, the drowning man's imploring face and outstretched hands ever before him.

While I looked at Mr. Livingstone, this story came to my remembrance, and I shuddered to think perhaps such might be his fate. Something of this was in my face, I suppose, for, with an imploring look, he caught my hand.

"Do not hate me. Think leniently of me, for the deed was unpremeditated. Do not teach little Birdie to despise me, dear, pure-hearted child!"

"She could never hate one to whom she owes her life," I said.

"Thanks! I will remember your words when I am far away."

"Are you going away?"

"Yes, to-night. I shall go to B—— with the ——" and he paused shudderingly,—"with the corpse of my wife. Afterward, I will start for Europe. I cannot stay here now."

"But are you able to undertake a journey, under such circumstances, so soon? You need rest, after the excitement of last night."

"It is no matter. If it kills me, so much the better. I shall be rid of a world of misery!" he replied, bitterly.

"Do not say so. The suffering here is nothing to be compared with an unprepared hereafter. This is a warning, remember. Please take it as such."

A sneer passed for a moment over his face, or, at least, the shadow of one.

"Thank you. We differ in our ideas of such things. Our creeds are different." And I saw no good would result from an argument with him.

"There is only One who can change your views; and I will pray night and day, even though you may not thank me, that, either by sorrow or happiness, He will guide you by His light out of darkness." And I left him.

Of course, this terrible dispensation has effectually put to flight all thought of pleasure; and the gay party here, shocked and dismayed, departed.

Ada Lawrence, upon whose untried heart this loss of her favorite cousin has fallen, with all the poignancy of a nature unused to grief, has never risen from her couch since they laid her there in a fit of insensibility, and requires the whole of her mother's, and Dora's, or Marie's attendance.

In the evening, cold and stern, without one trace of the afternoon's emotion, Mr. Livingstone came to say adieu. Mr. Marstone and Stuart were going with him.

"Give my best love to Birdie," he said. "She has been a very pleasant companion to me this summer, and whiled away many an otherwise dreary hour."

"Will you not say good-bye to her yourself?" asked Marie. "She is very desirous of seeing you, and will grieve if you go, without her thanking you."

"I should like very much to see her, but thought perhaps she was not able."

"Oh, she is quite well: only a little weak from her fright."

When we entered the room where Birdie lay, she started from the sofa.

"Oh, would he not come?" she said, seeing only me. "I wanted to see him so badly. Oh, Mr. Livingstone, you might have come!"

"Birdie, dear little Birdie! did you want to see me so much?"

She sprang into his arms, and while he held her closely, she said:

"Oh, I am so glad! I thought you had gone, and I should never see you!"

With his arms clasped round her, this cold, proud, cynical man of the world bowed his eyes upon her curls and wept. She stroked his hand gently, and wiping the tears he strove to hide, murmured:

"I will always remember you saved my life,—saved me from the cold, cold river!" Then, as the thought of that

scene—the pale, dead face of her cherished friend and play-fellow—came upon her, she flung herself upon the floor at his feet.

“ Louise, my Louise dead ! dead ! ” she cried frantically.

It was now his turn to comfort, and lifting her up, he sat for a half hour, with her upon his knee, soothing and cheering her.

I let them be, for I thought, perchance when this man is far away, the thought of his talk with the child will comfort him, and do him good.

When they came to tell him he must go, he laid her gently upon the sofa, and kneeling beside her pressed kiss after kiss upon her cheek.

“ Birdie my little friend you will not forget me, you promised me pet ? ”

“ Never, never, indeed I could not ; I love you so dearly. ”

“ Kiss me good bye, for I must go now. ”

With a shy, but exquisitely graceful action, she laid her head a moment upon his breast.

“ Will you never come again sir ? ”

“ Yes perhaps, if you want me to, shall I *mignonne* ? ”

“ Please, please do, I want you to so very much. ”

“ Then I will come next year ; ” then he added, “ but I must go now, give me my kiss dear child. ”

“ I will give it to you then, ” she said.

“ When ? ” he asked with a look of surprise, “ when do you mean ? ”

“ The time you come again, ” she said, “ next year sir. ”

“ But why not now too ? you have let me kiss you ever so many times to-day ? ”

“ Yes but that is different, ” she said with a pretty conscious dignity.

“ Well my little lassie has more art than I dreamed after all, ” he said smilingly “ I will come a long way for my kiss. ”

“ No not for that, you would come anyhow. ”

“ How do you know that, Birdie ? ”

“ Because you promised sir, that you would. ”

“ But I might change my mind. ”

“ No you will not, I believe in you, I trust your word. ”

“ Thank you dear child, I will come, ” and pressing a kiss upon her brow he went away. Birdie wept a heart-full of tears for him. The rest of us pity him, so much of good, and yet so sadly marred by evil.

CHAPTER XLVI.

MAY.

THIS whole winter has been so busy, and yet so utterly empty of incident, that I have not felt it requisite to keep a record of each week as hitherto.

When we came home last summer, Marion and Dora did not come with us ; but because of the urgency of Mrs. Dutille's prayers, went with her to pass the long gloomy winter she so much dreaded, at her home upon the blue waters of the Potomac, and they are still there.

Of course this sad bereavement, the loss of our little Louise, which had been so sudden and awful, precluded the possibility of the Lawrences' going this year into gay society, and Ada has been permitted to come back to us.

Cora had a long spell of illness caused by the shock of her accident and the sad fate of Louise ; but with the return of spring, her strength and spirits, which have been sadly depressed for the first time in her whole life, are reviving, and we think her almost well.

Mary Lea, in a letter sent with the return of her sister Laura to school in the autumn, wrote me sad news, because it was the sundering of another of those ties, which for the past three or four years have wound round my own and the hearts of all the others, weaving us together in a close and loving fellowship, and the snapping asunder of these cords of love which bind us thus tenderly, sends a pang to each heart, she writes :—

“ With many a heartache, and a few hearty weepings, I have decided not to return this year to school, if indeed ever again. Oh, Mrs. Percy ! can I say it, can I much less adhere to such a course after I have said it ; and yet I