

heart, but which pride who keeps the doors forbade an utterance.

"As God is my witness no, but that by the devotion and faith of a man's love, I may show the light esteem to be placed upon a boy's folly. Oh trust me Ada, a heart tried by years is better worthy of a kindly hearing, than the fickle fancy of a silly boy."

"But I have lost the old love, Charlton," she said.

"Oh Ada, learn it over once more," he pleaded.

"I can not, if I would, because——" and she paused.

"Because?—because what?—oh tell me Ada."

"Because I have learned a better love than my girlhood ever dreamed of," he drew his hand quickly away but she caught it in her own and although she blushed deeply, "do not spurn the woman's love dear Charlton, be true to the lone orphan girl who has given you her heart."

"Oh Ada, dearest Ada," and he bent his head over her hand, and I saw a tear-drop lay upon the white wrist, for though he knew it not, I was just behind them, for Ada and I with our bundles and our weary limbs had been together in the city little dreaming what would come of it.

And now after two months time they are married, two more whom I dearly love, have found this resting place on earth, after many trials which now they are over matter not, save to make the present more fair.

CHAPTER LXXX.

—“God's greatness
Flows around our incompleteness.
Round our restlessness His rest.

(E. B. BROWNING.)

AUGUST 1.

My husband, did'st see our boy to-day—did'st listen to his words of grace—oh God was never so near to me—never so

truly my friend as to-day—when for the first time, in his youthful fervor, with his matchless beauty, and love-toned voice, my son, stood up and proclaimed before his fellow-men, the truth as it is in Jesus.

His father's fervid eloquence, and zealous heart have descended upon him like the mantle of Elijah upon Elisha in old times—and the grace of his father's piety, envelops him, my boy my blessed boy.

To-day—by the appointment of those who have had charge of his spiritual progress, he preached his first sermon before the vast congregation of the 'Calvary' Church. Oh how very near he was to his God, appeared in every thought, and many a heart beside my own, invoked a blessing upon the boyish preacher, thus early buckling on the armor, ready for the charge, his banner unfurled, his helmet down.

To-night I wonder if it is much longer needful for me to bide here. I will not ask to go, but these are the things which make me remember to thank God that I can go with few backward glances.

Marion my little friend and comforter, amidst her children, with my own true Stuart guarding her, leads a happy shielded life, no storms come near my May-flower, and if they do, in the future, God is her stay.

Leafore, proudly laid her heart, her name, her all, upon the altar of her love. A happy wife, a happy mother, is my queen. A noble man is Paul Marstone and we prize him well, taking his stand in the first rank, as a scholar and a citizen, he represents his state, at the nation's conference, filling the same place which Walter Percy's name gave grace to, in other years. And though my Lela shines a belle among the proudest of the land, yet she comes back to her village home, with its duties and cares, with a kindly affection for the life so different it presents to her. One bright eyed boy, blesses their home, and she proudly says:

"My Percy has his father's eyes, and noble brow."

"No, no, they are his plebian grandfather's very own," her husband responds, and then Stuart taking up Paul's bantering says with a laugh in his eyes:

"Sister mine how came you a Percy to link your high mightiness with a mechanic's son, I am shocked at such taste!"

"She was badly off for lovers," quoth Lillian, "and she beheld three blooming sisters the last of the train exceeding fair, coming up beside her, she knew she could never stand *such* charms and so took brother Paul, and thank you too," and with a sly nod at him, "upon the whole she has not done so badly, for he makes a very 'gude-mon.'"

How good the grateful look in Lela's eyes told, though her lips did not. But Lilly's merry words have touched a chord in Paul's true heart, for drawing his wife to him tenderly he says:

"Our little sister does not know what need I have to try and be good, for she knows naught of those weary days which were so dark wanting the sunshine of my Leanore's eyes, which I deemed were never more to light my way," then softly he added "my darling, does our fairy say truly, am I a 'gude-mon' to thee?"

The way she, who is chary of many caresses, even before those she loves the best, laid her proud head upon his breast, would tell did not her fervent words how dear, how good she deems him.

Coralie once gay as a bird, then sad and stricken to the very earth, wounded poor bird by a sharp arrow in the hands of a wicked man.

My fair sweet Coralie we never call her Birdie now—how very dear she always was to us, how we always prized her—she was our sunshine our bit of the old life when clouds were heaviest about us—when the hand of poverty was grasped closely and fiercely down upon us—our bright golden-crowned Birdie laughed, and sang, and danced, out of one gloomy room into another, like sunshine darting from the clouds, she kept alive our hope, she did us a world of good.

And now after much discipline, she lives a quiet hopeful life, it is hopeful yet, alas! for Rolf still lingers in other lands we know not where. Sometimes comes the fear that perhaps 'God has spoken to him,' or else the trial has been too severe, and he has gone back to the old life, others say that, I do not, for I never doubt him, noble Rolf, and Coralie neither doubts or fears, but waits.

"I know he will come back, perchance to-day," and her cheek will glow for an instant, then as if it was not right to hope thus she adds meekly "it may not be to-day, I will not

look for him to-day, but sometime he will come back to me."

Oh Cora my vehement impatient Cora, how changed, what a new beauty this meekness, and self control gives to you.

Day after day, patiently waiting, she teaches her little boy something, which "Your Papa will like to hear you say dear Rolf when he comes home." Amidst a thousand duties for her child, her house, her friends, and above all, for her husband's workmen, the stream of her life glides gently on.

"Never happy until he comes back and pardons me, but full of sweet content, oh my mother!" she says.

Gracie bustling Gracie, is my chief helper, and Mrs. Wilbur's unfailing assistant as well, she is always full of divers important employments which only she can accomplish.

"Old Betty is cross to-day, and I must try to spare an hour to read to her in," or else, when she is wanted for an excursion or pleasure party,

"I cannot go this time, for Cora and I are busy over a basket of clothes, for some poor folks up at the mills, and we must get them through to-night."

And so good little woman, she is always giving up her own pleasure for the benefit of some needy one, never dreaming of there being merit therein.

Adèle, my dreamy Adèle, fair passing fair is she, and Clarence Beaumont loves her, not with his boyish passionate love but with a deep true manly tenderness, with all the strength of his artist soul.

One evening I sat alone in the dim light of the waning day, gazing up to the mountain top which now was bathed in a golden flood, when Clare came in and laying his head upon my shoulder, said:

"I think I shall ask Uncle Audley to let me come out to him auntie."

"Why Clare are you tired of us?"

"Never, you know I could not. Oh no I have been so happy, so happy here."

"Then why leave us?"

"Because—because I am a fool," he said in his old impetuous way.

"Principally shown how?"—I asked smiling.

"Oh every way," he replied shortly.

"Not quite every way my boy, only one way just at present I think."

"One way—what do you mean, what way?"

"In running away from your happiness, instead of going boldly up to it and grasping it."

"What do you mean, oh Aunt Bertha?" was the quick pleading question.

"That my boy's heart is still the open book, it has always been to me Clarence."

"Oh you know then all my fickleness, all my faithlessness, and your great love can pardon even this!"

"I can not pardon what is no fault dear Clare."

"No fault after the way I loved May, to take Adèle to my heart as I do?"

"It would be a grievous fault to love your brother's wife, you do not do that I know my boy,"

"Only as I should my sister, the other love passed away the first time I saw her a wife, and I was glad in her happiness."

"And you love Adèle better than you did May?"

"Oh a thousand times, oh it was not love I had for Mar-
rion if this is love which now entralls me, since that day
in Paris when Lela was married, I have dreamed of nothing
else, nay before we left you for our travels, while she was
yet in her blindness, child though she was, I took her to
my heart, and oftentimes the thought would come how gladly
I would be the guide of her life, and during all our wander-
ings her face in its saint-like beauty was ever before me,—
but she does not love me, and I will not awaken her from
her girlish dreams, I will not startle her quiet heart, by
thrusting my love, tender and entire though it be upon her,"
then he added, "not for her sake alone, but because I could
not endure to have my passionate love thrown back again
to me," and he leaned against the window frame in deep
thought with folded arms, his eyes fixed upon the dim out-
lines of the setting sun.

I watched him for awhile thinking of all his young heart
had endured in by-gone days, how nobly he had passed
through the trials and temptations of his youth: and was
this love to be cast back to him, to be scorned and repress-
ed? I could not bear to think so.

Then I thought of a thousand things unnoted at the time
which bade me hope Adèle loved him. I remembered a
flower in her journal with a paper wound round the stem,
bearing the initials C. to A.—and then she always sang
such and such a song, "because Clare loves it best."

I had deemed this but the love of a sister for a broth-
er, but now I hoped it might be a deeper, stronger love.
Oh it might be that she had given him her heart, my
good true hearted boy.

Suddenly Clare started and burying his face in his hands
said with a groan,

"It is gone! gone!"

"What is gone dear Clare?" I asked in alarm.

"My hope, and that cloud, something in your face, gave
me a strange hope for an instant, as we stood I saw a cloud
rise slowly, and covered with the lustre of the fading sun,
float swiftly through the sky, and I said, "if it remains and
gathers strength in its upward flight until the sun goes down,
I will hope that even so, in the lapse of years, Adèle may
gather from the clouds of life a love for me—but as I
watched, with my heart hopes freighted in the cloud it flowed
into nothingness, and was gone leaving me desolate! deso-
late in heart and life!"

"But I am not a cloud, Clare," said a voice beside him, and
Adèle stepped from the shadow of a neighboring window. "I
am not a cloud," she repeated while her crimson cheeks
made her look very like the sky beyond her.

"What then Adèle? what then?" Clare gasped, catch-
ing her hand, and watching her face, his own white with
intense feeling.

"Your *Espérance* if you will have me, Clare," laying
both her tiny hands in his.

"My precious star, my hope," I heard him murmur as he
drew her to him. What other words were said I know not,
for I stole to my own room.

"Second in two other hearts Bertha Percy," I said, "that
much nearer the end of your labors, that much nearer your
home."

And now to-night I sit thrice blessed, a glory shining
about me, accepting in humble gratitude the grace that God
has seen fit to bestow on his hand-maiden. I am a chosen
woman, a mother in Israel, and yet how undeserving, of the

gracious gift of such a son, when I used from his babyhood to watch the quiet gravity of my little Howard, I pined and complained because though good and gentle he was not as other boys. Oh I did not discern that he was growing towards heaven, but now it seems to me, he is a chosen vessel ordained from the first for the master's service.

God love thee Howard, the pure in heart, an humble fervent servant of the great Master. The widow's only son, her *Espérance* !

CHAPTER LXXXI.

"Thou glorious spirit land ! Oh that I could behold thee as thou art,—the region of life and light and love, and the dwelling-place of those beloved ones whose being has flowed onward, like a silver clear stream, into the solemn sounding main, into the ocean of Eternity.

HYPERION.

AUGUST 1.

I HAVE grown too old a woman to keep as I have done for years, a record of all the events of our lives, when it was full of sorrow I could better perform the duty for it rested me to come in the silent night time alone and talk over all that had passed through the busy day, but now, the sluggishness of ease, and the growing weight of years, make me care less to tell all the doings of our lives unto these faithful leaves.

But now when the shadow of another year lays upon my life, I like to look over the deeds of those about me, and say all has been well.

A little while after I wrote the pages which go before this, the angel of death came with his sickle, and cut down one amongst us, whose days were fully ripe, one who had passed over the mountain top, and was far down towards the valley,—in the early part of this winter our dear old friend Mrs. Wilbur died.

And but a little while after, just as Clare and Adèle were preparing quietly, because of our recent bereavement to consummate their promised vows—the word came across the water from Estelle.

"I am alone Bertha, alone though thousands surround me ; last night with the waning day, my husband, my kind true husband died, Oh Bertha my heart is broken.—When he knew there was no hope for his recovery, he told me among other things, to write at once to you, to tell you to send Clarence to settle his affairs, and to bring me home,—'write them word,' he said, 'that all must go on just as has been arranged, it is my especial request that the children do not delay their marriage one day, it is never best to postpone a wedding, so many things come to pass, that we can in nowise foresee,—it will only be this difference—they will have a more quiet wedding, and a sadder journey,'—so dear friend you will send them together, even as he willed it. They will live at Ingleside—but I will take my old place by your hearth side, my good true Bertha."—

Much more there was of her grief and solitude, but this is sufficient. And as soon as we could, Clare and his young wife went for her, and now Estelle Audley, lives a treasured sister, within my home once more.

Kind good Mr. Audley, beloved not alone for his own sake, but for that other sake which hallows all things unto us, peace to thy soul ! though the wish to die within your boyhood's home was denied you, yet loving hands have brought your ashes across the way, and loving hearts watch over their resting place—Walter's childhood's protector, and manhood's friend, farewell !

Ernest grieves for his mother more than men are wont to grieve.

"She was a good true mother, we have seen many changes together, and now I am alone, so far as kindred are concerned, and but for the love of you and yours a friendless man," he says sadly.

"But while one of us is left you can never be that dear uncle," says Gracie weeping bitterly over his sadness.

"No, dear, I know, but then you leave me one by one," he said half playfully, "and I must make up my mind to have only a little corner in many hearts, instead of one whole loving one to be all my own."

Then let me not forget that Rolf is home again, good Rolf, humble fervent christian, and he does not wait for his reward, but has it even now, and when I see him seated evening after evening with his wife upon his knee, and listen

to the gentle goodness of his words, I wonder not to see how the old light has come back to my daughter's face, nor is it strange when we hear her merry laugh as she counts the white hairs which have crept stealthily amidst the dark curls upon her husband's temples, that unthinkingly we should say.

"*Birdie* has a happy heart."

And oh she has, a happy christian heart, and blessings cluster round her, the olden beauty is upon her, and the olden love-names suit her well.

Howard with the zeal of a Paul, stood up among his fellow men, and day and night plead with them to be saved—for a little while, a few short months, his burning eloquence seemed as though an angel spoke through him—but now just when the work is spreading broad-cast before him—when hundreds are being startled by his earnest pleadings, God has called him—oh I know he has—they say it is only the necessary reaction—that nature overworked refuses to act, and that in a little while he will be strong again, even Ernest is deceived, and will not see that the death-stroke is upon my boy—but I am not—I know this last year's labor, by night and by day has worn him out, and God ever good—has gently said to him "come home to me," oh my boy I will not mourn, I will only try to be glad that I am spared to watch beside you in the time of your trial.

"Death loves a shining mark," it seems strange, that the Master should call home one who was working so faithfully in the vineyard of desolation, but doubtless it is best, perhaps in coming days the praise of men might have become a snare—or he would have grown weary in the battle, and God who knoweth the end from the beginning can so order all things, that even in death he may work a good work.

I take this calmly, so calmly that even I am surprised at myself, but I think it is no new thing, I know now, what I did not before, that I have always been expecting just this event; from his earliest days Howard has been so frail, so grave, so different from other children, a frail, gentle boy, with no boyish tricks, always looking above, loving the good, ever above the evil things of life, I can realize now, that I should have been startled years ago as little as now, if death had cut him off.

Oh Howard Percy, perchance the words you said long ago, are true, "the sins of the parents are visited," and now by your early christian death you are taken hence, to pay the last tittle of that law.

None of the others, not even Marion, will believe their brother's days are numbered, but come and sit beside him, and go away with light hearts.

"He will soon be well," such are their words, "he has no pain, his eyes are bright, and the color on his cheeks is warm and glowing as Lilly's own, Howard will soon be well."

But when they are all gone he says with a sweet smile,

"You know better my mother, you know I am nearly home; it does not grieve you, dearest, to have me leave you a little while, I am so glad to go, so very glad that the Lord Jesus calls me home."

Yes I am glad—though in him I behold the extinction of a name I have loved perhaps too well, though with his passing away my only son shall have left me, but I know through my Saviour's mercy, I shall some day go to him,—and to Walter, oh blessed *Esperance*!

One day Ernest came to me, as I sat by Howard's side and said,

"Bertha, I am astonished that you, who are so keenly alive to the joys and sorrows of your children, should be so unmindful of the sadness of one of them."

"Why Ernest, what have I done amiss? which one have I neglected?"

"Lillian, do you not see how unhappy she is, how she mopes alone, when she is here? how restless she is, unless she can get away to Ingleside? has this escaped you?"

"Entirely," I replied with a smile, "I suppose she wearies of our quietude, after her gay winter in Washington. I am afraid it was wrong in Lela to take her into the world so early, she was too young."

"She is seventeen," he said quickly then, added sadly, "yet that is very young, she is such a child, yes I think it was wrong to have taken her, for though you do not see it, because you have been so engrossed with Howard, I have discovered that our poor child has gained a life experience by her winter's dissipation."

"In what way? if you mean in any love affair, I am quite sure you are mistaken, for you know her two offers

were indignantly refused, and she gave her word, that she loved no one better than those two disconsolate swains who followed her hither."

"No I do not imagine she learned her love song at Washington, but these offers awakened her child's heart to a knowledge of itself, and showed her an old tenderness which none suspected, but myself, who have watched and guided her so long. Like all the rest of you, she only loves a childhood's friend."

"And who pray? not little Rolf, I trust, he is four years younger."

"Nonsense, can you not see, how her every thought is bound up in Harry Lester, how she waits and pines for him, when he is not here, and how happy she is when he comes?"

"Oh Uncle Ernest, how very plain it is you"—and Howard, paused with a smile beaming over his face, "ring the bell for Tiny, mamma please."

"Nay Howard my boy," Ernest said quickly, "do not make her confess it, for I have just come from questioning her, and with a true woman's nature she will not confide even in me, who thus far have known every thought of her heart."

"Not quite uncle mine, I think I know some which even you do not dream of, but here she comes," he added as she sprang into the room.

"Why what is the matter Lilly-bell?" he asked as she drew back with a pout.

"I would not have come, if I had known Uncle Ernest was here, so I would not.

"Why my daughter?"

"Because he is unkind," and the lip lost its fullness and trembled while tears sprang to her eyes, "he is not good to me."

"Why Lillian what have I done?" he asked, "only trying to make you happier, my poor child."

"I do not want to be happier, I only want to be your good child, and mamma's baby, and Howard and every body's pet," she said with a wilful smile, "I am happy enough if I have these."

"But Uncle Ernest thinks you would be happier, if you were sure Harry Lester loved you above all the world," said Howard, "he thinks you and Harry are made for one another."

She blushed a little at his words and quizzical smile, but said with a demure air, and a wilful little shrug,

"I'm o'er young to marry yet, do'nt take me from my mamma yet."

"Then you will marry him sometime sister mine?"

"When Laura Lea departs this life perhaps, but as she has written me word she is to be married this winter, and having been informed by Harry over and over again for the last six months, of his utter devotion to the 'little lady,' as he calls her, I will think over the matter for a long while, before I decide to marry him."

"Oh Lilly do you not love him after all?" and Ernest's face turned pale as death. "Oh my little child why did you not tell me this, I have been so unhappy about it, deeming he was breaking your young heart by his careless attention, why did you not tell me?"

"Because sir," she said pettishly, "you had no right to Hal's secrets, and still less to presume I would love where I was not loved in return, how dare you think I would give my love unasked," and she stamped her little foot down fiercely.

"Oh Lilly, Lilly, we can not always help ourselves, child! child! you little know what you say," and with a quick fierce movement he caught her in his arms, "my little lamb they have not won thee away from me yet, oh Lilly be always a child and stay a light within our home."

"What all my life, indeed then the very first eligible man that comes along and wants me, shall have me," she said with a laugh, springing away from him towards the door, when Howard's voice arrested her.

"Come here Lilly—can you be serious for one moment?"

"I will try for your sake, and I think I will be as grave as a judge, for double that time," she said saucily.—

"Does my sister love me very much——"

"Oh Howard, dear Howard," and she threw herself beside him, all her levity gone, and laid her lips upon his hand.

"There pet I know you do, and you love mamma, even better than you do me, yes I know you do, but do not devour her, for I must have her all now, while I stay," he said, a sweet smile resting upon his face, "and yet with all

this my little sister is not happy, but pines for something more, a something, which these foolish Washington suitors taught her the want of. Now listen, sister mine, and let me test your heart, let me see if you love yourself best, or another's happiness. Uncle Ernest has seen much sorrow in his younger days he told me himself he loved once unwisely, and it has cast a shadow over his whole life, his urgency upon your behalf has been for fear your childish heart should thus early be learning the lesson which had made him once, weary of life. As I have lain here with no care, and little thought of the outer world to distract me, I have discovered by a thousand signs the want of both your hearts. My sister Tiny, do not look so frightened—Uncle Ernest do not shrink away as if I had done you a wrong, I am too near the confines of another world, to cause you terror by any act of mine,—sit where you are sir,—dear little sister, do not weep but go now like a true woman and here with only mamma and I to hear you, tell Uncle Ernest how he can make you happy."

She turned white, but as if she dared not disobey the solemn voice of her brother, she stood up and turning to Ernest tried to speak but in vain, the blood came in torrents to her face and neck, and she stood with downcast eyes before him, and he as if powerless sat gazing at her in a dazed sort of way, until Howard rising from his couch the first time for many days, took his sister's hand, and with a gentle force led her forward.

"Oh Uncle Ernest have more faith, be true to yourself, pity the poor child's embarrassment, and tell her you love her."

"I do, God knows I do," and he sprang up, "but I am too old, too worn in the world's service, to hope to win her fresh child's heart. I have bidden my unwise love back, and sought only her happiness in seeking to wed her to one whose years were nearer her own. Oh child, I would never have told you this, but that Howard with his keen insight has discovered my folly, which I meant to carry with me to the grave," and he buried his face in his hands.

"I was only cruel to be kind,—now Lilly it is your turn," and he turned a smile upon her, "let us know your will."

"I have no will—no love—no hope, but what he gives me," and she sprang to his side and knelt down. "Oh my kind

true master, all that I am save my unworthiness I owe to you, take me—I have waited your time so long,—but I knew you would learn to love your poor child at last, even as she loves you."

"Take her away now," said Howard, as Ernest raised her with a passionate embrace from the ground, "mamma and I like well enough to know the matter has reached a denouement at last, but we cannot endure the sillinesses of lovers, who esteem themselves the only blessed beings upon earth," and he turned his face wearily to the wall.

And indeed the excitement of this scene which was a surprise to me, as well as to both the principal actors, had been too much for him, and a feverish day and night was the result.

Dear Ernest, it is another brightness in my life to know you are happy at last, though I did you a wrong innocently, God knows, years ago, a wrong which—nay I am not naming it rightly—it was no wrong, but I wounded your true heart and made you a grave cold man—but now after year upon year has gone by, you have found a joy at last, and with my bright glad child you are at peace.

Lillian, I thank you daughter that you have made a recompense to your father's friend and mine, for all he has endured. Oh how he loves you child, with what a storm of intensity—do not even in sport cast a cloud over the tried true heart, which gives you its all.

He is older, much older, than my child, nearly as old as her father would have been, and yet I can only see beauty and sacredness in that, for to my mind there is something holy in this binding together, of a man over whom the storms of life have beaten, with a bright untried life, she is like the dew of his early life to him,—over his weary doubtings of all things, of faith, of truth, of honesty, of goodness, comes her pure fresh belief in all,—she brings back the fresh glad cheerfulness with which he started in the race of life. Her smiles are sunshine to his tired heart, her voice music which draws him heavenward.

Lilly, is a gay light hearted child—she will plague him often I know, if only for the sake of testing the love he lavishes upon her, but she is a good child too, and if, her own true heart did not teach her not to go too far, the thought "Howard gave me to him," will suffice even, when he is gone.