

MY BIRD AND I.

The day is young and I am young,
The red-bird whistles to his mate.
He sits at the tender leaves a song,
I swing up on the garden gate.
He sings that life is always gay—
A day so fair can never die;
I laugh and cast my flowers away,
We are so happy, he and I.
Deep wading through the yellow wheat,
My sheaves unbound within my hand,
I seek to rest my tired feet,
And a wondrous host broods o'er the land;
The red-bird follows in his song—
We fear the day will never die,
The minutes drag the hours along—
We are so weary, he and I.
I stand alone; my work is done;
The bird lies dying at my feet;
There's promise in the setting sun;
The evening air blows soft and sweet.
My birded sheaves I lay aside;
The day is dead; I too must die.
When stars come out at eventide,
We shall be resting, he and I.

Susie's Gift.

The days were growing dark for George Graham. His studious habits had resulted in an affection of the eyes that threatened to grow serious. This was his last term at school, and if he passed his examination creditably, he was to have a place in Solomon Grant's store, with wages that would not only take care of himself, but greatly help his mother. His mother was a widow, and George's love for her was a sort of passion of devotion. He was very fond of Susie Hale, but Susie was only a nice girl to him—a dear, sweet, good girl, such as any fellow would like; but his mother was the lady to whom was due his love, his care, his uttermost duty. The plans he made in life were all for his mother's sake. What if this growing dizziness about him was to increase until all was dark? What if he must be no help to his mother, but only a burden on her forever? His scholarship had been so fine that his tutor hesitated to reprove his now continual failures; and George said nothing of the increasing darkness around him to his mother, for he felt that it would break her heart; nothing to teacher or schoolmates, for it seemed to him that his grief would be nothing to them. But one afternoon the crisis came. "No one who was present that day—not even the smallest child—will ever forget the look of wild despair that swept over George Graham's face, or the gesture of helpless anguish with which he stretched out his hands, as if to seek among them all some friend, as he cried—
"God help me, I have been going blind, and now I cannot see one figure in my book!"
There was a silence after this, though which came no sound but the audible beating of George Graham's tortured, despairing heart.
Then the master sent away the others, for school hours were nearly over, and tried his best to comfort his stricken pupil. The words of the teacher entered his ears, but they did not reach his heart or kindle his hope.
As soon as he could he went away. He did not go straight home. How could he see his mother and tell her what he must tell her now?
He sat down on a bank a little removed from the road side, a bank which overhung a swift, deep yet narrow stream.
An awful temptation came over him. To be sure to die would be to leave his mother to fight her battle of life alone; but also it should relieve her from the heavy burden heaped upon her to her if he lived. The river rushing down there below invited him with its murmur.
He bent forward over the stream. Then he drew back, for a longing came over him to go home first and see his mother just once more.
"See her? What am I talking about? Do I not know I shall never see her again?"
And a girl's voice, soft and tender, an unexpected voice, answered him—
"Yes, you will see her again. Surely you will see her again!"
The boy turned his face towards the sound.
"How did you come here, Susie Hale?" he asked.
"Don't be angry, George," the gentle voice entreated. "I waited for you. I could not go home till I had told you how sorry I was, and tried to comfort you. You must take heart and try to be cured. I have known people who could not see at all, to be helped, and why not you? At least you must try."
An evil mood was upon George Graham, and he answered, harshly—
"Where is the money to come from, if you please? It has been all mother could do just to live, and she has struggled on in the expectation of my being able soon to help her. She has no money for experiments. There is nothing for it but for me to rest a dead weight upon her hands, or die."
"You believe in God, George Graham, and you will not defy him. If he means you to bear this you will bear it like a man, and not try to get rid of the burden. Just now, it seems to me, you ought to go home. Would you like your mother to hear this from someone else?"
"He rose to go."
"You are right," she said, "and you are a good girl. Good bye, Susie."
She did not try to get with him; she followed him only with her eyes.
His mother met him at the gate.
When she took his hands in hers the poor fellow felt that she knew all. She was very quiet and self-controlled.
"Your tutor has been here," she said, "and he has told me. My darling, why have you sat in the darkness, and shut your mother out from any share in your trouble?"
"Oh, I couldn't tell you, mother," he sobbed. "I couldn't. I thought it would break your heart."
Meanwhile, Susie Hale had gone home full of an absorbing purpose.
Somehow money must and should be raised to try what a skillful oculist could do for George Graham.
Susie was the orphan niece of Solomon Grant.

could not dispose even of her slender income. But would he not be persuaded to let her have enough of her own money to accomplish her desire? She asked him, using her utmost power of persuasion to touch his heart, but he refused with peremptory decision. Susie had in the world one treasure, a diamond ring, which had been her mother's, with a stone white and clear as a dewdrop. This must, she knew, be worth hundreds. Was her own? She had meant to keep it all her life for her mother's sake, but surely this great need of George Graham's justified her in parting with it. She had one friend in whose good faith and judicious management she felt implicit confidence, and to him she sent her mother's ring, with the request that he would sell it, and use the proceeds as he saw fit, and remit her the price of it in bank notes, and keep for her the secret that she had disposed of it. It was a week after George Graham had given up hope, when a most unexpected hope came to him. A neighbor, going by from the post office, handed in at the door a letter addressed to him. Mrs. Graham opened it. "George," she cried, after a moment, in an eager, trembling voice, "there are one hundred dollars, and this is the letter that comes with them—
"This money is from a true friend of George Graham's, and is to be applied to taking him to an oculist, in the hope that his sight may be restored. The giver withholds his name, but because he desires no thanks, and because he wishes to make the return of the money impossible."
"It is from Heaven itself," the mother cried. "George, I feel in my soul that you are to be cured."
The next day a mother and her blind son sought rooms at a quiet little house in the city, and the day after that they were among the earliest patients of Doctor Anselmy. The first examination of George's eyes was unpromising enough, and the doctor wanted to see him again. There were weary days and weeks that followed, and it was curious that the mother was always hopeful, and the son always despairing. At last it almost irritated him to hear her speak of hope to him, and one day he turned on her with the first burst of passionate impatience she had ever experienced from him. "Mother," he said, "for the love of Heaven do not talk to me as if it was a sure thing that I am going to see again. I want to think it doubtful, almost impossible. If you should make me expect a cure, and then it shouldn't come, don't you see that I should go mad? I think I should dash my head against the wall. I can only live by expecting nothing."
After that the mother held her peace, but whenever she went out of that darkened room those who saw her marveled at the light of joy in her eyes. At last the time came; and the bandage was removed, and he was told he was cured. "Mother, I see you!" and then George lay at the doctor's feet, swooning in his great joy. It was weeks yet before he went home again, but the good news preceded him. The mother wrote to Solomon Grant, who had agreed still to keep the place open while awaiting the result. I think I should dash my head against the wall. I can only live by expecting nothing. Another letter came afterwards to tell when the widow and her son were to return. It was Susie who walked over early in the afternoon, carrying with her a basket of dainties for the travelers' supper. Susie's black eyes danced, and her heart swelled with joy as she set the table in the little parlor and lighted a fire in the kitchen stove, ready to make a fresh cup of tea whenever the widow and her son should arrive. And at last the travelers came, as at last everything does come, if we wait long enough for it. They had expected to find an empty house; they found instead waiting, and bright, and good cheer, and Susie Hale. Had George Graham grown through his trial into a man's perception of a girl's charms, or had his eyes been hidden before, that he should not see her? I only know that that night, for the first time in his life, it dawned upon him that another woman might some day dispute with his mother the empire of his heart. But it was not until five years afterwards, when Mrs. Grant had taken him into partnership, and Mr. Grant's niece, Susie, had become his wife, that George Graham ever guessed from whose tender hands had come the gift by means of which he had been restored to hope and happiness.

High Art.

"Well!" I cried eagerly. "You make that picture?" "I did!" I exclaimed triumphantly. "Henceforth the wife of your bosom devotes her life to the divine art. Is it not fine?" "Very—very fine; but could you not have found a pleasanter subject than a battle field? Although that group of Indians to the right there—
"Yes, in the corner. Very natural to be sure, but—
"Indians? There are no Indians. That is a group of trees just tinted with the touch of Autumn's finger."
"O, yes! to be sure! I see. Surely, I am growing nearsighted. A graveyard scene. Very touching. And whose monument is that in the centre?" "Monument? Graveyard scene?" "Yes. But it is not rather unusual to see camels grazing in a country churchyard?" "Camels? Where do you see camels?" "Why, here. I would not have believed you could have got them so natural. And those five graves all in a row. Quite a family shuffled off the mortal coil. But you are excited. This painting has been too much for you."
"It is too much for me. That beautiful rustic is a monument! And camels! You will kill me! They are cows! Don't you see they are cows? And those graves as you call them, are moss-covered rocks. Such ignorance!" "I beg your pardon, it is my poor eyes, and I see aright this time. That windmill is just the thing, but don't you think it should be nearer the mill? It's just a suggestion, you know. I may be wrong."
"You will make me desperate? A windmill! That lovely elm tree a windmill! Have you no touch of the divine genius in your soul? Have I encouraged this divine talent but to meet scorn and sarcasm?" "My dear Absintine, draw it mild. I don't know much about the divine art, but you have done—yes, I will say it—better than myself should ever like circus stunts. It really is a marvel, but knowing so little about it, it isn't strange if I mistook your effort for a battle or even a graveyard scene. It is a Swiss scene—the Alps. Those glaciers are grand. But no; I must be wrong again, for surely you wouldn't put trees and cows on icebergs. No, my dear, it's all very pretty, but I give it up. What is it?" "Oh, you miserable wretch! I've a great mind not to tell you. It's a beautiful New England farm scene. Any one could see it. I'll never paint another picture! There!" And one stroke of the brush round my painting forever, and I marched Aminabad grimly from the room, slamming the door. What is my own talent?

One can't excel in Everything.

Ideals of excellences, if not excellences themselves, are so graduated as to fit the different orders of mind in which they take their rise. Greatness is not a positive quality; it is simply a relative attribute. The man who has never succeeded in enacting a single "speckle beauty" from some "fortunate stream" may truthfully boast of his eminent success in catching scalps. The man who cannot sing may yet have a voice peculiarly adapted to crying claims, oranges or charcoal. He who is no dancer may be good at hitch-and-kick or shimmy. The man who was not born to command, to set a squadron in the field, may surpass all his acquaintances in the untiring devotion he evinces in the coloring of his meerschaum. The boy who is ever at the foot of his class may still be an expert in the formation and analysis of epiphyllous plants. The lad who is not a pronounced success at arithmetic may be simply excellent at mumble-peg and tap. The woman who cannot make a loaf of bread may excel in the making of frills and furberies. She who cannot play the simplest air on the washboard may excel the most difficult exercises upon the pianoforte. She who cannot draw a stocking may be the envy of her circle for her skill and taste in worsted work, in marrying sky-blue dyes to pink backgrounds. The mother who cannot command the respect of her children may yet be favored upon by half a score of malepeds without being able to do a thing for them. The son who never does a stroke of work at home may be superlatively active in the bowling alley or billiard room. The daughter who is too feeble to wash the dishes may dance till the small hours of the night after having been shopping all day. The girl who cannot sew may chew gum with tireless jaw. A great singer may not be able to smoke the mildest of cigars without turning pale. A general who has led armies on to victory may be surpassed in profanity by the raggard street-boy in the city. The hand that has penned the divinest poetry may be clownishly awkward with the billiard cue. The man who is capable of organizing and carrying forward gigantic business enterprises may be easily outdone at caucus management by the shabbiest politician of his ward. The artist who gives birth to such exquisite creations may not be able to tie his neck-cloth nearly so well as Augustus, who in his turn can do nothing else. Teaching at West Point. A West Point recitation, by the way, is something unique. When a visitor makes his appearance every cadet rises and "fronts," and you feel as you did when you entered your first freshman school, where the walls were lined with senior initiators. This severe military carriage is relaxed at a sign from the instructor, and the recitation goes on. The teaching is undoubtedly the most thorough in the country if not in the world. The reason will probably be found in the fact that not only are the cadets held to a strict accountability for the work they do, but in addition to that the assistant instructors are also held responsible to the professors in charge of their department. Thus a professor of mathematics will have one hour's instruction with his class during the forenoon, and the remainder of the time he devotes to inspecting the work of his assistants, professors who are instructing other sections in the same subject. As there are only nine men in a section, it will be readily seen that no one can escape. The fact that a professor is known to make the rounds of the section rooms is a guaranty to the cadet that no injustice will be done him by a young instructor who for any reason may betray partiality. The professor is sure to know much in justice is done by a few callow instructors who have perhaps forty men to hear at a time, who have each man perhaps every other day, and must determine his stand by the two or three minutes he is on his feet. There are so many opportunities for the dishonest student to impose on the tutor, and the tutor is so quick to suspect of dishonesty the man who is too honest to "snoozy" or "hand in 'sick excuses," and, moreover, the divisions are so large and the examinations so infrequent, that the marking system, in my judgment, is fruitful of evil. No educational institution in this country has probably so large a teaching force in proportion to the number of students as West Point, and the proportion is about 1 to 10; at the Military Academy it is 1 to 5. At Yale a professor has sometimes 60 men in a recitation-room; hence has time. Here the student must learn; there he may. Here he must learn a little less than so much, but may leave a great deal more.

Up Popocatepetl.

When a stranger goes to Mexico, everybody who has ever been there asks, "Are you going to climb Popocatepetl?" and the stranger almost invariably replies, "Certainly." He almost invariably changes his mind. Popocatepetl is private property, owned by a resident of the Mexican capital. In our own country where there are plenty of things to get, nobody would take a volcano for a gift, but in Mexico, where there are so few things to own, they snap up volcanoes as we would gold mines and brag of owning them. There is something not only unique but impressive in owning a volcano. I was going down stairs in the Turbide hotel in Mexico one day with a native when the native pointed out a gentleman coming up stairs, and said he was the owner of the volcano Popocatepetl. I rather expected to see fire breching out of his mouth and brimstone oozing out of his ears. But there was nothing of the kind. His name was General Ochoa, and the guide-book says "he is a perfect gentleman," so it must be so. If he is, I should think he would start up his old worn out volcano when a lot of strangers go down to pass ye along as a poor blind woman guide back to gaze on her husband's grave!"

A Race with Thumbs on their Feet.

Mr. Trenlett, the British Consul at Salgon, in his report this year, mentions as a remarkable peculiarity of the natives of the country, that they have the great toe of each foot separated from the others, like the thumb of the hand, and it can be used in much the same manner, though not to the same extent. This distinctive mark of an Annamite is, however, usually seen in the vicinity of Salgon, but is now confined to the inhabitants of the more northern section of the empire, where the race has remained more distinct. This peculiarity is the meaning of the native name for the Annamite race; and that the name and peculiarity are of great antiquity is shown by the mention in Chinese annals 2,300 B. C., of a tribe that then formed the boundaries of the Chinese empire.

Fairy Stories of the Rhine Outrivaled.

The Courier of Timenez, Algeria, describes an interesting discovery recently made at the cascades near that place. Some miners had blasted an enormous rock near the cascades, and on the removal of the debris, found it had covered a large opening into a cave, the floor of which was covered with water. Constructing a rude raft, and providing the principal part of the workmen sailed along this underground river, which, at a distance of sixty meters, was found to merge into a large lake of limpid water. The roof of the cavern was very high and covered with stalactites, the brilliant colors of which sparkled in the light of the candles. Continuing their course, the workmen had at certain places to navigate their craft between the stalactites, which, meeting salmagitons from the bed of the lake, formed massive columns which looked as if they had been made expressly to sustain the enormous arches. Thus they reached the extremity of the lake, where they noticed a large channel extending southward. This is supposed to be a large fissure, which has hitherto explored, although it is supposed to connect the cascades with that locality, and thus with the mysterious sources of the Tefna. It is possible that here they have found an immense natural basin, supplied by powerful sources, and sending a part of its waters toward the lake, while the rest goes to the sea. The workmen estimated the distance underground traversed by them at three kilometers, and the breadth of the lake at two. They brought out with them a quantity of fishes, which swarmed round the raft, and which were found to be blind.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

Words are to actions only the shadow of the club of Hercules. Never affect to be witty or jest so as to hurt the feelings of another. Making one's fortune in political life is gambling upon a series of ifs. I don't wonder that debt makes men crinians. It hardens the heart. People must discuss something—it is the great preventative of insanity. When one's heart is full, one is not apt to drop a plummet line into it. Great souls hold firmly to heaven and let the earth roll on beneath them. Low as the grave is, only faith can climb high enough to see beyond it. Never think worse of another on account of his differing from you in politics and religious subjects. Never ridicule sacred things or what others may esteem as such however absurd they may appear to you. Boldly enjoyment depends upon good health, and health depends upon temperance. The man who studies to be revenged only manages to keep his own wounds green. No evil is insupportable but that which is accompanied with consciousness of wrong. When people's feelings have got a deadly wound they can't be cured by favors. Knowledge will always predominate over ignorance, as man governs the other animals. There are few doors through which liberality, joined with good humor, cannot find its way. She that has no one to love or trust, has but little to hope. She wastes the radical principle of happiness. Have you known how to take repose? You have done more than he who has taken cities and empires. This is the present reward of virtuous conduct—that no unlucky consequence can oblige us to regret it. Integrity without knowledge is weak and useless, and knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful. Of the uncertainties of our present state, the most dreadful and alarming is the uncertain continuance of reason. That man who knows the world will never be bashful, and that man who knows himself will never be impudent. Let there be in necessary things unity, in everything charity, and then there need not be in everything uniformity. Never resent a supposed injury until you know the views and motives of the author of it. And on no occasion relate it. Always take the part of an absent person who is censured in company, so far as the truth and propriety will allow. A man should live with his superiors as he does with his inferiors—not too near lest he burn; not too far off, lest he freeze. It is not enough to believe what you maintain; you must maintain what you believe, and maintain it because you believe it. There is in Christianity light enough for those who sincerely wish to see it, and darkness enough to confound those of an opposite disposition. Only they who carry sincerity to the highest point, in whom there remains not a single hair's breadth of hypocrisy, can see the hidden springs of things. It requires a great deal of boldness and a great deal of caution to make a great fortune, and when you have got it, it requires ten times as much wit to keep it. We mind sinks under prosperity as well as under adversity. A storm moon has two highest tides—when the moon is at the full and when there is no moon. It is much easier to meet with error than to find truth. Error is on the surface, and truth is hidden in great depths, and the way to seek it does not appear to all the world. A superior capacity for business, and a more extensive knowledge, are steps by which a new man often mounts to favor and outshines the rest of his contemporaries. The mind is nourished at a cheap rate. Neither cold nor heat nor age itself can interrupt this exercise. Give, therefore, all you can to a possession which ameliorates even in its old age. Whatever comes out of despair cannot bear the title of valor, which should be lifted up to such a height that, holding all things under itself, it should be able to maintain its greatness even in the midst of miseries. The life of every man is as the well-spring of a stream, whose small beginnings are indeed plain to all, but whose course and destination, as it winds through the expanses of infinite years, only the Omnipotent can discern. Faith without works is like a bird without wings; though she may hop with her companions on earth, yet she will never fly with them to heaven; but she will be joined together, then doth the soul mount up to eternal rest. The harp holds in its wires the possibilities of noblest chords; yet, if they be not struck, they must hang dull and useless. So the mind is vested with a hundred powers, that must be smitten by a heavy hand to prove themselves the offspring of divinity. When you speak evil of another you must be prepared to have others speak evil of you. There is an old Buddhist proverb which says, "He who indulges in enmity is like one who throws ashes to windward, which comes back to the same place and covers him all over." They who can catch at happiness on the bright surface of things imagine they can secure it, such as it is, with less risk and more certainty; they who dive for it in the waters of deeper feeling, if they succeed, bring up pearls and diamonds, but if they sink, they are gone forever. In the decline of life, shame and grief are of short duration; whether it be that we bear easily what we have borne long, or that finding ourselves in age less regarded, we less regard others; or that we look with slight regard upon afflictions, to which we know that the hand of death is about to put an end.