

Democratic Watchman

Bellefonte, Pa., July 14, 1893.

THE WAY WE WALKED.

I met a woman on life's way,
A woman fair to see,
Or caught me up with me,
Or caught me up with me.
The way is long when one's alone,
I said, "and dangerous, too;
I'll help you by each stumbling stone,
If I may walk with you."

I saw her hang her head and blush,
And I could plainly see
The fire that caused the fevered flush;
I wish you'd stay with me,
Those art of all the very maid.
A brave heart wants to woo,
And I remember long, I said,
"The way I walk with you."

Then on we went; her laughing eyes
And sunny smiles were sweet;
Above us blue and burnished skies;
And roses neath our feet.
The way is long when we've seen,
I said; "when life is through,
I'll own the best of it has been,
The way I walked with you."

And on we went; we watched the day
Into darkness merge;
My fair companion paused to say,
"Here's where our paths diverge,"
I answered, "you and I have more mile
To travel than I ever saw,
And all the while lit by your smile,
This way I've walked with you."

"Oh, I don't know about that," said
Mr. Cadger, instantly scenting editorial
danger, and as instantly withdrawing
into his shell of editorial caution:
"it altogether depends upon how it is
done." Then he began fingering
among the papers of his desk, and
Stamford saw that it was time to go.

So Stamford went down to West
Newton to see the county fair and to
try his art at realism. The accommoda-
tion train in which he went down to
West Newton, after a great deal of
backing and filling, finally stopped at
the temporary platform at the fair
grounds. Stamford followed the
stream that emptied out of the cars and
poured along the dusty road toward
the great rambling board buildings
fluttering with flags and streamers.
Somewhere a band in the distance
brayed with a far-away voice, and the
swings and merry-go-rounds squeaked
and squealed. There were grotesque
noises coming from the Agricultural
Building, and a universal aro-
ma of damp deal boards, of saw dust,
and of trampled grass pervading the
warm spring day. Stamford made his
way to a little frame shanty labelled,
rather grandiloquently, "Office of the
Superintendent." Within was an at-
mosphere of cigar smoke. A lot of
men were sitting around intently and
seriously idle. They looked at Stamford
with a rather bovine stillness, and
with a good deal of indifference he
introduced himself to them as the cor-
respondent of the Boston *Liberator*. He
had thought that they would have
shown him some attention, but they
did not. Indeed, it seemed to him that
they felt him to be in the way, and
they did not know exactly what to do
with him. They gave him a ticket to
the grand stand to see the races in the
afternoon, and then he was left to take
care of himself. He left the office feel-
ing very lonely and deserted.

In spite of the positiveness and sonor-
ousness of its name, the *Liberator*
was at that time leading a rather pal-
lid existence. But it was new, it was
spending money, and it was very hope-
ful of meeting the impact of solid ex-
perience and of surviving that encoun-
ter without going altogether to pieces.
It was just then what one might
call the "cherry stain" state of exist-
ence, for the panels of the office were
of stained cherry, the office rail was of
stained cherry, the new and shining
desks were of stained, the revolving
bent-wood seat on which the editor sat
was of stained cherry, and the torture-
seats upon which his contributors sat
to hear the fate of their contributions
was also of stained cherry. A paper
with money and great expectations is
very apt to start in this state of exist-
ence.

The *Liberator* was at that time in
the opposition, and was very positive in
its position. It used to advise the
administration and the Upper and
Lower Houses of Congress with an air
of impartiality and restraint that con-
veyed the idea to the reader of a tre-
mendous but suppressed motive power
behind which, if the editor only once
dared to let it go, would smash, at least
seriously cripple, the Executive de-
partment of the United States.

Stanford at that time was a very
young man. He also looked upon the
Liberator through a rosy atmosphere
of hope and of youth. He felt that it
was destined to have a great future,
and that by means of it he himself
might also rise to a great future. So
he used to write his bits and scraps of
literary odds and ends, and a good
many of these were published. He as-
sumed an air of literary experience at
that time, and used to speak of what
he wrote as "stuff." "I ran down
home last Sunday, and staid a couple
of days to write up a lot of stuff for the
Lib," or "I wrote a thousand words of
stuff last night for the *Lib* about Salvi-
ni" (Salvin was just then the rage
in Boston.)

One day Stamford went into
the office to inquire the fate of some
one of his manuscripts he found Mr.
Cadger, the editor, in a more expan-
sive mood than usual. The editor be-
gan saying, "I don't believe we are go-
ing to be able to use all this paper of
yours, Mr. Stamford. You've gone
unnecessarily into detail. Maybe if
you'd cut it down to eight or ten hun-
dred words we might be able to do
something with it." He tossed it out
upon the desk as he spoke, and Stan-
ford picked it up, trying to look as
though he did not care. Then Mr.
Cadger resumed and lit the cold and
dead end of a cigar that lay amongst
the papers on his desk; then tiling in
his chair and cocking his feet up on
the desk, he yielded himself to a gen-
eral expansive impulse to talk. "The
fact is," said he, shifting his cigar from
one side of his mouth to the other, and
winking away the smoke that drifted
into his eyes—"the fact is that you make the same mistake that all writers,
particularly novitiates, make. The trouble with you all is
that you go out of your way to try to
find something unusual and uncommon
to write about, something that no-
body knows anything about. Now the
reader as a rule wants to read what he
knows about, and not what he does
not know about. For instance, the
first thing that your reader turns to in
a newspaper is the account of the char-
ity ball which he or she attended the
night before. Your reader wants to
read that because he or she knows all
about it, and such a one will pass over
the account of the volcanic eruption in
the Feejee Islands, such as we pub-
lished last week, and the loss of ten or
fifteen thousand lives, to read the ac-
count of that charity ball. Now here
you have taken all the trouble to write
up this village of half-breed Indians

back of Cape Cod, and they have no
kind of interest to the general reader.
Now if I were a writer like you, Mr.
Stamford, I wouldn't go so far away
from home; I'd just work right here
in Boston at something all the Boston
people know about, and then, if you
didn't hit it off in the right fashion,
you'd find that all the Boston people
would read about it."

So spoke Mr. Cadger, with a most
oracular air. He had never made a
success of himself; he had always
stumbled over his own theories, and
cracked his shins against the hard facts
of life. Stamford knew that this was
the case, and could not help thinking
of it, but he listened to the other very
respectfully, for he was an editor, and
it was to be good to editors. "Yes,
I think I see what you mean," said he:

"I don't know but that there's a great
deal of truth in it." And then, as a
sudden idea struck him, he said, "I
tell you what I'm going to do, Mr.
Cadger: I'm going down to West Newton.
There's going to be a county fair down
there, and I'll go down and write it up.
That's something everybody knows about.
Do you think you could use any such stuff in the *Liberator*?"

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Mr. Cadger, instantly scenting editorial
danger, and as instantly withdrawing
into his shell of editorial caution:
"it altogether depends upon how it is
done." Then he began fingering
among the papers of his desk, and
Stamford saw that it was time to go.

Miss Estee certainly had a fine voice.
The Biglow girls took charge of her,
and one day they took her into town.
She sang before that eminent musician
Dr. Mortimer, with all the poise and
assurance of inexperience and ignorance.
Dr. Mortimer liked her voice
very much indeed. He was an ex-
tremely quiet man and did not say
much, but what he did say was of the
best and most encouraging.

During Miss Estee's stay in Boston,
Stamford saw a great deal of her. The
Biglow girls, who had her in charge,
were both interested in her and amused
with her. When she asked for a little
more "chickening" at dinner, Miss Clara
almost winked at Stamford. But it was
only occasionally that Miss Estee
made such lapses in Stamford's pres-
ence. She was very bright and quick-
witted, and she did not often betray
herself before him. She was very well
known that she bristled with localisms
and idioms, and whenever a stranger
was present she hedged herself around
with a silence that was almost resentful,
and from which she looked out
sharply and keenly whenever she sus-
pected herself of having erred in some-
thing she had said or done. She must
have talked with the Biglow girls more
freely and unrereservedly as she got
better acquainted with them. Miss
Clara used to repeat scraps of her con-
versation with a precision and accuracy
that made Stamford laugh in spite of
himself. "It's a shame," said he,
helplessly, "to make such fun of a poor
girl; she can't help her peculiarities."
"Dear me," said Clara Biglow, "I
don't mean to make any naughty fun of
her. I like her very much; indeed
I do; but I can't help being amused
when she 'wants to know' or when
she says to me 'do tell!'"

During the time that Miss Estee was
in Boston before she went abroad she
sang repeatedly at St. Michael's. At
the conclusion of the first service at
which she sang a number of the more
prominent people of the rich and more
than respectable congregation came up
to thank her for her lovely voice.
Stamford stood near her, holding her
wraps; he felt almost an air of pro-
prietorship that was very delightful.
The girl received her ovation with an
air of reserve and coldness under which
the enthusiasm waned, in spite of its
initial warmth.

In the beginning of December Miss
Estee went to Europe with a friend of
the Biglows, and letters of introduction
from Dr. Mortimer to some of the
leading musical lights in London, and
a check for a good round sum from
Mr. Biglow.

For a time the Biglows heard every
little while from Miss Estee. The
letters they received were written in a
precise, almost school-girlish hand, and
her sentences were joined together with a
great many "and's" and "so's." Clara
used to read them to Stamford of
a Sunday with a nasal intonation and
a slurring of the "r's" into "ah's," very
much like Miss Estee's own style of
talking. So for little while the
acquaintance and the correspondence
were kept up. Then the letters became
more intermittent. Then came another
letter saying that Miss Estee would
have no more need of Uncle Elihu's
monetary assistance, and that she had
a position that would easily pay for her
support and her tuition. Then came
another letter; then a long interval of
silence. Then came another letter, enclosing
a check, returning the money that
Mr. Elihu Biglow had advanced
her; then a silence that was not again
broken.

But Stamford heard of her once or
twice, more or less indirectly. A friend of the Biglows, a Mrs. Walker, had
met her in London. The young lady had
been asked to sing at an evening company; Mrs. Walker had
talked with her afterwards, and the
girl had said that she was about going
to the Continent. "She is very success-
ful," said Mrs. Walker, "and she is
very different from what I remember
her here. So much more—what shall I
say?—fine. Yes, fine—and polished."
That was about the last time that
Stamford heard of his protege. Then
she drifted out of his life altogether,
and became only a remembrance.

Eight or nine years passed, and
Stamford grew from his green unripe
state to the mellowness of manhood.
The *Liberator* faded out from its
cherry-stain state of existence into that
of painted deal and rough-east plaster,
and thence faded out and was gone from
the world of letters. Stamford succeeded
in his profession, and became the
assistant editor upon the *New Era*, and
it was a part of the whirling of
fate that Mr. Cadger should now bring
contributions to him. "Ah, Mr.
Stamford," said the ex-editor, "I knew
you had the talent when you used to
write for me in the *Liberator*, and I
used to say that boy is bound to succeed."
And Stamford laughed and was kind to him.

It was about this time that a singer
developed very suddenly somewhere
abroad. The first that the American
world knew of her was that she was
singing in London, and that all the
world was talking about her. Her
name was Marie d'Esti, and some fam-
iliarity in the sound made Stamford
think of his own soprano, and laugh at
his old ambitions, and wonder what
became of her. Then D'Esti's manager
brought her over to this country in
a revival of Italian opera, and she was
presented in New York with phenom-
enal success. One Saturday afternoon
a lot of exchanges was brought into
the office of the *New Era*, among
others some illustrated weeklies.
Stamford was passing by the table
where they lay, when the front-page
illustration of one of the papers caught
his eye, and he stopped to look at it.
It was an engraving, a portrait of
Marie d'Esti, painted by Jasper.
There was something very familiar
about the face that struck Stamford at
once, and he looked at it for a long
time, with his head first on one side
and then on the other. Suddenly
recognition came almost like a flash.
"By George!" said he, fairly speaking
aloud; "by George! It is! Yes, it

must be. By Jove!" Then he folded
up the paper and stuck it in his pocket.
He still kept up his practice of tak-
ing his Sunday dinner at his uncle
Elihu's, and the next day when he
went out to Woolbridge he carried the
illustrated newspaper with him.
"Look here, girls," said he, after they
had come home from church together,
and he took the newspaper out of his
overcoat pocket and opened it.
"Here's a picture of Marie d'Esti. Do
you recognize it?"

They did recognize her very quickly.

Miss Clara emphasized the recognition
with an almost breathless "Well, I
never!" She looked very long and
steadily at the newspaper portrait.
"I never thought of it being her," said
she. "Why, of course, that's just ex-
actly who it is!" and then she said
again after a while, "Well, I never!"

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