

Ah! Who Can Tell?

Ah! who can tell what waits us when the veil
That hides that other life is rolled away?
Beyond its bounds mysterious, what dreams
Assail?
What lies within its shadows, who can say?
What waits us there
Beyond our sight?
Hope or despair,
Or day or night?
Whence flies the soul when it casts off the clay?
Ah! who can tell?
Our loved ones die; through mists of blind-
ing tears
In deepest gloom despairingly we grope;
Forebodingly we see the lonely years
Unlighted by their love, uncheered by hope.
Ah! who can tell?
Where are our dead?
Will all be well
When life is fled?
Guard they our path o'er life's descending
slope?
Ah! who can tell?
We see the ceremonial winding-sheet,
The toll of solemn funeral bell we hear;
The last sad rites are paid, and grief com-
plete
Fills all the heart with desolation drear.
The somber pall,
The lonely hearth,
Can this be all
There is of earth?
Kneels life with coffin, shroud and funeral bier?
Ah! who can tell?
E'en while we weep, the tears that ease the
heart
In rays prismatic paint th' o'erhanging
skies,
And a new hope, of our great grief a part,
In faith prophetic to the doubt repies:
"Bodies must die—
Death is their goal,
Lowly they lie—
Not so the soul;
God keepeth that with ever-watchful eyes—
All will be well!
By sorrow proved, made pure by trials here,
The chastened heart looks upward for
relief,
And holds in spirit that communion dear
Which is the well-spring of this sweet
belief—
After the strife
Cometh a rest,
Eternal life—
Forever blest.
The soul He gathers home, a precious sheaf,
All is well.
—Frank N. Scott.

The Yellow Satin Dress.

"A very pretty girl!" said Mr. Alonzo Fitzalpine, languidly biting the carved top of his cane. "Nice complexion. Figure like the Venus di—what's her name? Do make some excuse to send her in again, madame!"
Madame Fontani laughed indulgently.
Miss Fitzalpine was buying a white lace tunic, over canary-colored glove. Mrs. Fitzalpine had just ordered a garnet velvet, with carte-blanche as to point-lace trimming. And if the son and heir of this wealthy family be- thought himself to behave like a Cir- cassian prince surveying eligible young maidens for the market—well, young men would be young men, everybody knew that; and it would not do to oblige the Fitzalpines!
"Flora," she said, hurrying out to the little reception-room, where Flora Nottingham, with blazing cheeks, was hanging costly lace draperies into the deep drawers, "I've forgotten this tape. Take it to Miss Fitzalpine, and tell her I think it matches her dress better than—"
But instead of meekly obeying madame's behests, Flora Nottingham ran out of the room, and never stopped until she had hidden her burning face in the curtains of the back work- room.
"Good gracious me!" said Bella Brown. "What's the matter?"
"Such a horrid young man!" ex- plained Flora. "He stared at me! And madame wanted me to go back again into the room, but I wouldn't."
"Humph!" said Bella Brown. "I'd be glad enough to get into the show- room, no matter if the customers stared their eyes out at me."
But Madame Fontani was cross and curt with poor Flora after this all the afternoon.
"I don't believe in such a parade of feminine modesty," said madame, shak- ing her false curls.
"But," pleaded Flora, piteously, "he looked at me so insolently—just as if I were one of the show-figures!"
"Well, what else are you?" said Madame Fontani, sharply. "I can't have any young women so exceedingly high-toned that they'll have to be put under glass shades. If they can't hold themselves ready to obey orders, they may leave the establishment. Here, Miss Nottingham—this yellow satin dress must be finished for to-morrow morning at 9. Take it home with you to-night. I dare say, if you are steady at it, you can finish it by 12."
"But, madame," cried Flora, "I don't think it's possible to—"
"Hush!" whispered Bella Brown. "I'll help you."
For Flora Nottingham and the dashing Miss Brown boarded together, in a tall, red-brick house, where a spare landlady, with a red nose and faded alpaca raiment, charged them a moderate price in consideration of

having the drosses of herself and her daughters fitted "in real Broadway style."
"It's so good of you, Bella, to assist me with this dress!" said Flora, grate- fully, as the two sat together, stitch- ing away by the light of a shaded lamp. "I should have had to sit up all night to finish it myself."
"Oh, don't mention it!" said Bella, good-humoredly. "I never did believe in deserting a friend at a pinch. See here, Flora—what's the matter? You are as white as a sheet!"
"My head does ache dreadfully to- night," admitted Flora, passing her hand vaguely across her forehead.
"Well, then, go to bed," coaxed Bella. "Have a good night's rest. I'll finish the new satin dress. After all, there isn't so very much to do to it."
"Oh, Bella—dear Bella!" exclaimed grateful Flora. "How shall I ever thank you for this kindness? Because, indeed, I am very, very tired!"
"Oh, you can do as much for me some time!" said Bella Brown, graciously.
And so Flora crept into bed, falling asleep almost as soon as her head touched the pillow.
At ten o'clock Miss Bella Brown rose cheerfully up, "did" her hair after the latest fashion-plate style, and dressed herself in the very yellow satin dress, with its ivory-white "tunic front," which she had just finished, and went to a ball with a tailor's clerk of her acquaintance. This was by no means a novel idea of Miss Brown's. She had often done it before.
"It don't hurt the dresses just to wear them, carefully, once," said Bella. "Rich people haven't any right to expect all the cream of life just because they are rich. We poor, down-trodden sewing-girls must have some little chance. And this yellow dress is such a beauty, exactly the color of a Mar- chal Neil rose!"
Could the belles of Fifth avenue and the languid queens of Japonica square but have known the atmosphere through which their dresses had been trailed before coming home in folds of silver paper and boxes labeled "Modes de Paris!"
When Bella Brown called her in the morning, Flora Nottingham rubbed her heavy eyelids.
"Do you know, Bella," said she, "I had such a strange, strange dream, in the middle of the night? I thought you were standing here, and dressed in the yellow satin robe."
Bella laughed a sharp, affected laugh.
"What nonsense, child!" said she. "Be quick and dress. It's late already. And the robe is all folded up in the box, ready to carry to the store."
Flora Nottingham need not have been in such haste, as it transpired. Mrs. Dr. Truefitt did not call for the dress until nearly noon, and then her husband was with her.
"Make haste, Madame Fontani," she cried. "The doctor declares he hasn't more than five minutes to spare, and I want him to see this lovely dress!"
Mrs. Truefitt was a dark, sparkling little brunette, and yellow was her darling color. The doctor looked down upon her with mild, benignant eyes.
"All her dresses are lovely for the first month," said he, laughing. "And then they become odious."
Madame Fontani, all smiles, like a venerable specimen of the "Cheshire cat" we read of, lost no time in displaying the yellow dress on one of her chintz-draped dummy figures.
"There, Dr. Truefitt!" said she, "I think that is— Dear, dear! what can possibly have happened to it? Miss Nottingham, come here this instant!"
Mrs. Truefitt uttered a little cry of dismay, for there, on the very front breadth, was a dull, dim stain—the glass of wine that the tailor's clerk had spilled there the night before, and whose traces Miss Bella Brown had vainly endeavored to remove.
Flora stood aghast before it.
"Nottingham, it's your fault!" screamed Madame Fontani. "The dress was in perfect order when it was entrusted to your hands last night! You alone are responsible—you alone! What have you to say?"
"I know nothing about it, madame," faintly gasped Flora, turning as pale as ashes, and instinctively glancing toward Bella Brown, who, with un- natural red cheeks, was stooping over some satin trimmings in a corner.
Just then Dr. Truefitt's groom, a nat- ively-attired youth of two or three and twenty, in a velvet-banded hat and livery of sober black, who came up to get the parcel while the coachman sat on the box below, stepped forward and touched his hat.
"Might I speak, sir?" said he. "Be- cause I've seen this 'ere gown afore. It was wore at the Clericon Clerks' Association Ball, where I was last

night, and I had the honor of dancin' with that there young woman in the corner"—nodding his head at Bell Brown—"as had it on. And her young man keeled over a glass of Widow Clickett champagne on it at supper, and there was a first-class row about it."
"Oh, Bella! oh, Bella!" cried Flora Nottingham, reproachfully; "then my dream was true, after all."
And Bella Brown burst into tears, and uttered never a word of self-de- fense.
Madame Fontani discharged her within the next half hour.
"Such assurance I never saw!" said the indignant modiste. "As if my customers' elegant orders were to be ruined at her balls and hops, and low-class things. And she may thank her stars, I don't have her arrested and flung into jail!"
While poor Flora stood by, with such an expression of white, mute dismay on her face, that Mrs. Truefitt turned kindly to her.
"My dear," said she, in a low voice, "you are not happy here?"
"Oh, no, no!" cried Flora, wringing her hands.
"Isn't the woman kind to you?" questioned the doctor's wife.
"No," murmured Flora.
"Don't they pay you well?"
"Not very."
"In that case," said Madame Fon- tani, turning suddenly on her appalled workwoman, "you, too, had better leave my service, Miss Nottingham. I'm sure I beg your pardon, Mrs. Truefitt; but if you could but know the laziness, the treachery and the in- gratitude of the creatures that I have to deal with—"
"Pray don't excite yourself," inter- posed Mrs. Truefitt, coldly. "Here is my address, child," scribbling a few words on a leaf of her note-book and handing it to Flora. "Come to me this afternoon, and we will see what can be done."
And so she went away, leaving the yellow satin dress on Madame Fontani's hands.
"Don't come to me for a recommenda- tion," said the dressmaker, in a blind rage.
And Flora didn't.
But that is how Flora Nottingham came to leave the great, grinding city, where the poor are borne down to the very ground, and go to Mrs. Truefitt's aunt, a smiling, kindly old lady, who kept a fancy store in one of the sev- eral New England villages where double rows of maples shaded the streets, and the scent of the honey- suckle fills the air. To the poor child this atmosphere of peace and quietness was like a foretaste of heaven itself.
And old Miss Hedgeley was equally pleased with her new shop-girl.
"My dear," she said to Flora one evening, after half an hour's medita- tion in the purple July twilight, "do you know what I am thinking of?"
"No, Miss Hedgeley," said the girl, laughing.
"Of adopting you, Flora, as my own child."
"Oh, Miss Hedgeley!" faltered Flora.
"If you don't marry, I mean," the old lady corrected herself.
Flora blushed a bright soft pink.
"I shall never marry," Miss Hedge- ley, said she.
"I am not so sure about that," said Miss Hedgeley, as she thought of the number of visits that Mr. Pattison, the new minister, had considered it necessary to make at her domicile of late. "But anyhow, my dear, I hope you won't go away very far from me."
And out of the fullness of her heart Flora speaks:
"Oh, Miss Hedgeley, I never knew what true happiness was until I knew you."
—Helen Forrest Graves.

Fantastic Extravagance.

Warsaw society is still excited over an exhibition of fantastic extravagance with which a number of Russian officers have recently entertained them- selves. Adjutant-General Count Pillar and Prince Mijanowicz, of the Hus- sars, conceived the idea of a Roman banquet in the style of Lucullus, and twenty-six other officers united in the novel diversion. The banquet-hall was filled with roses and perfumed with all the odors of Arabia, and the feasters arrayed themselves in Roman togas and wore garlands of roses on their heads. Swallows' nests from India, wild African pigeons and a ragout of nightingales were among the costly viands with which they were served. The banquet lasted eight hours and cost \$21,000, or \$750 apiece. This gas- tronomical extravagance has provoked bitter criticism in Warsaw, where it is denounced as a wicked imitation of the wanton luxury which preceded the fall of the Roman empire, and where it has, at least, done nothing to make more agreeable the relations existing between the Polish population and the Russian garrison.

MORAL AND RELIGIOUS.

Living to Purpose.
"Live for some purpose in the world. Act your part well. Fill up the measure of your duty to others. Conduct yourself so that you shall be missed with sorrow when you are gone. Multitudes of your species are living in such a selfish manner that they are not likely to be remembered after their disappearance. They leave behind them scarcely any trace of their exist- ence, but are forgotten almost as though they had not been. They are, while they live, like one pebble lying unobserved among a million on the shore; and when they die, they are like the same pebble thrown into the sea, which just ruffles the surface, sinks and is forgotten, without being missed from the beach. They are neither regretted by the rich, wanted by the poor nor celebrated by the learned. Who has been the better for their life? Who has been the worse for their death? Whose tears have they dried up? Whose wants sup- plied? Whose miseries have they healed? Who would unbar the gates of life to readmit them to existence? Or what face would greet them back again to our world with a smile? Wretched, unproductive mode of exist- ence! Selfishness is its own curse; it is a starving vice. The man who does no good, gets none. He is like the heath in the desert, neither yielding fruit nor seeing when good cometh; a stunted, dwarfish, miserable shrub."
—J. A. James.

Religious News and Notes.

The Southern Baptist says there are about 125,000 Baptists in Mississippi, of which 100,000 are whites and 25,000 colored.
The woman's foreign missionary so- ciety of the Methodist Episcopal church was organized in March, 1869, in Tremont street church, Boston. Since then its total receipts have been \$698,915, and it has sent out sixty-three missionaries.
There were added to the Southern Presbyterian churches in the year end- ing May last on profession of faith 6,062 persons, an advance of more than 1,200 over the previous year. There are 6,000 elders and 4,000 deacons in the church.
A special convention of the Protest- ant Episcopal diocese of Central Penn- sylvania will meet at Reading in Octo- ber for the purpose of electing an assistant bishop.
The recently organized Church Ex- tension society of the Methodist Epis- copal church, South, has resolved to ask of the annual conferences \$50,000 for the ensuing year.
Crathie Established church, which is attended by the queen when in Scotland, it would seem, is not distin- guished for the liberality of its mem- bers, the whole contributions to the mission and other schemes of the church amounting last year to \$100, and the total income to \$505.
Among the Primitive Methodists of England a barn-service revival is grow- ing apace. In one very small parish, where the Primitives have no chapel, a week's service was held in a large barn, and as a result the whole region has been aroused, and over seventy persons have professed conversion.
A Natural Copper Plating Bath.
Two years ago, at a mine operated by William Utter, at Campo Seco, near Milton, water came in and work stopped. To keep the large iron-bound and iron-baled bucket, used to hoist rock, from drying and falling to pieces, it was let down into the water. Next season when it was drawn up, lo, a miracle! It was copper-bound and so frozen. In places, many together, French and Germans were mingled, not because they had been at close quarters, but because the same ground had first been occupied by one and then by the other, perhaps at an interval of half a day. I think I was more com- fortable with bullets singing in my ears than walking amid the distorted shadows of these dead and stiffened men; and it was quite a relief to see a haystack on fire and a regiment warming themselves at it, and my prudent coachman within comfortable distance of the ruddy blaze. Then comes the hard part of a correspond- ent's life. I had still to dine. I had lived since the morning's coffee on a loaf of bread which I had been picking at all day; then to write my letter—a good two hours task; then to see that it was safely posted, either that night or the next morning early, so as to give me time to get to the field for the third days' battle. And all this after having been on a strain of exertion and excitement since daylight; and then the gentleman at ease in London reads it all in his arm-chair after break- fast for a penny or at the most two- pence half-penny.—Blackwood's Maga- zine.

When the funds are unsteady—
When money is tight.

Curious Facts About the Mormons.

It will sound strangely in the ears of the people in "the States," and yet it is an actual fact, says a correspond- ent, writing from Salt Lake City, that there is not a common or free school in the Territory. In the city of Salt Lake and at other points there are schools where pupils of all denomina- tions are admitted, but a small tuition fee is charged. The teachers are all Mormon, and the exercises every day begin and end with reading from the Book of Mormons. The Gentiles, I need hardly say, do not care to send their children to these dens of fanati- cism, and latterly they have established a few schools of their own, but they are all sectarian—the Catholics have one, the Episcopalians another, the Methodists another, and so on. If it be true that common schools are essential to a republican form of government, then Utah has not a republican form of government, and it is about the only Territory which has not, and the want of com- mon schools is by no means the only evidence of this fact. What is called the "perpetual emigration fund" is one of the chief agencies in keeping up and increasing the numerical strength of the church. It is estimated that 3,000 people are brought from Europe every year through this instru- mentality. There are agencies of the fund in New York, Liverpool and the principal cities of Denmark, Sweden and other countries likely to furnish recruits for the grand army of fanaticism. Missionaries are sent abroad every year to solicit enlistments. The emi- grant is furnished with transportation across the water and across the plains, and when he arrives here he is settled on a small farm—about ten acres is the average, I believe. He gives his note for the grand total at ten per cent. per annum. This note is hardly ever collected, because it is almost im- possible for the emigrant to pay it off after settling with the tithing master twice a year and complying with the numerous exactions of the church in other respects. It is held simply as a mortgage upon the man and his family, the non-enforcement of which is conditioned upon his "good behavior" to the church. If he chance to fall into disfavor with the hierarchy his lot is a hard one. He finds himself without home or friends. He cannot go back whence he came—there is no fund for that purpose—and to stay where he is is the worst kind of slow torture. The emigrants are carefully instructed upon their arrival here that their first allegiance is due to the church, and their second and only other allegiance to the authorities of the Territory.

A Field of Battle.

I had my letter to write and post, and this invited a five-mile drive by moonlight to the rear across the most ghastly field which can well be im- agined. I had some trouble in finding my carriage. I had left it at a well- defined position on the battle of the day before, but to reach it I had to walk for more than a mile over a plain where the carcasses of men and horses were not merely thickly strewn but frozen into all sorts of fantastic at- titudes. The thermometer had been sixteen degrees below the freezing point on the previous night, and men only slightly wounded, who had not been able to crawl to their comrades, had been frozen to death. One man was stiff in a sitting position, with both arms lifted straight above his head, as though his last moments had been spent in an invocation, and it gave one a shudder in the clear moon- light to approach him. Others were crumpled up in a death agony, and so frozen. In places, many together, French and Germans were mingled, not because they had been at close quarters, but because the same ground had first been occupied by one and then by the other, perhaps at an interval of half a day. I think I was more com- fortable with bullets singing in my ears than walking amid the distorted shadows of these dead and stiffened men; and it was quite a relief to see a haystack on fire and a regiment warming themselves at it, and my prudent coachman within comfortable distance of the ruddy blaze. Then comes the hard part of a correspond- ent's life. I had still to dine. I had lived since the morning's coffee on a loaf of bread which I had been picking at all day; then to write my letter—a good two hours task; then to see that it was safely posted, either that night or the next morning early, so as to give me time to get to the field for the third days' battle. And all this after having been on a strain of exertion and excitement since daylight; and then the gentleman at ease in London reads it all in his arm-chair after break- fast for a penny or at the most two- pence half-penny.—Blackwood's Maga- zine.

Ashes of Roses.

A fair blue sea, where mirrored lie
The gold-brown rock in sunshine resting,
The changeful glory of the sky,
The white-wing'd gull his swift way breast-
ing—
A world of light and song and bloom,
Where earth is glad and heaven rejoices,
And, floating through my quiet room,
A laughing chime of baby voices.
Half way across the seaward slope
With tall green grasses bending over,
Two sweet eyes bright with love and hope
Laugh up at me among the clover.
With flutter of a little gown
Whose flying fold the wind upraises,
Her pretty head of golden brown
My darling lifts amid the daisies.
Part of the shining day she seems,
But more divine than all its splendor,
Like some fair light that shines in dreams,
So softly bright, so sweetly tender,
The glow upon the rounded cheek,
The lisping voice in broken sweetness,
More life and love and joy bespeak
Than all the summer's rich completeness.
And yet—alas! the woful chance
That comes to dim the moment's pleasure!
The sparkling eye, the speaking glance,
The heaped-up wealth of June's best
treasure,
Do but recall a vanished bliss,
As Memory's hand the curtain raises—
Another soul, as fair as this,
That lies below the nodding daisies!
—Mary E. Hall.

PUNGENT PARAGRAPHS.

A Boston man calls his wife Cris- tal, because she is always on the watch.
A woman has to settle a man's ac- count with the white of an egg, but she can settle his hash with a look.
When a man prefaces his conversa- tion with "Now, I know it isn't any of my business," you may be pretty sure that it isn't.
"Great pains taken" is the heading of an advertisement in one of the dailies. Probably some gentleman has eaten a whole watermelon.
"Mr. D, if you'll get my coat done by Saturday, I shall be forever in- debted to you." "If that's your game it won't be done," said the tailor.
A Missouri girl whose father refus- ed to buy a lemon-colored linen dress poisoned one of his mules to get even. A girl who can't be in style will be in desperate.
A New York physician gives half- dozen reasons why Americans grow bald. It appears that the principal reason is because their hair comes out. We always suspected as much.
An intelligent farmer being asked if his horses were well matched, replied: "Yes, they are matched first rate; one of them is willing to do all the work and the other is willing that he should."
A Brooklyn boy wrote a composition on the subject of the Quakers, whom he described as a sect who never quar- reled, never got into a fight, never clawed each other and never jawed back. The production contained a postscript in these words: "Pa's a Quaker, but ma isn't."
For a little lady of two-and-a-half years old this will do: She had picked up a cane in the corner of the room, and was playing with it—a plain stick bent at the end. Papa asked: "What are you doing with the cane?" "It isn't a cane." "What is it, then?" "It's an umbrella without any clothes on."
The policeman saw the mob was bound to wreck the building, and his own unaided efforts could not beat them off. But he had the presence of mind to run around the corner and yell "dog fight," and in ten seconds there wasn't a man in the crowd who wasn't hustling around to find the dogs.
"But why did you leave her so hastily?" asked a sympathizing friend who was trying to console a lover for his separation from the object of his idolatry. "Oh, it was a sudden im- pulse." "What sort of an impulse?" "I don't know exactly," returned the sufferer, thoughtfully, "but it must have been at least a No. 12."
He sat at her feet in quiet peace. He looked into her face and said, softly: "Ah, dear, I could sit here forever." "Could you, love?" answered she. "Yes, sweet." "You are right sure you could, darling?" "I know it, my own." "Very well, then, you sit there, for I have an engagement to go out with young Mr. Fitzponner, and I won't be back this evening. Turn down the gas and fasten the night- latch when you go away."
Said a singer to a farmer: "I would like to engage board with you for a month." The husbandman looked at him a moment, then asked: "What do you do for a living?" "Oh I sing in a church choir in the city." "You do, eh! Well you can't board with me." "Why not?" gasped the wondering warbler. "Cause," replied the soil-tiller, "the last fellow who boarded with me was a singer, and he had such a thundering bass voice that every time he growled all the milk in the cellar turned sour."