The Independent Republican.

"FREEDOM AND RIGHT AGAINST SLAVERY AND WRONG."

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Poet's Corner.

A LITTLE GREEN ISLE.

A little green isle in a lonely lake
There is in the cool northwest;
O, the loveliest isle in the month of May!
There the wild birds sleep and the wild birds wake,
To flutter and sing as the breezes shake
Their young in each moss-built nest:
O, that lone little isle!
How I loved it the while
I was wild and as merry as they!

The flowers are bright in the velvety grass,
And brighter around the springs:
O, sweetest flowers of the month of May!
As over the waters, as clear as glass,
The snowy swan and her younglings pass,
Her bugle-horn tune she sings:
O, that bright little isle!
How I loved it the while
I was tuneful and roving as they!

A rocking canoe, of the white-wood tree,
I had in that pleasant lake;
A leaf-like bark for the month of May!
Where the running pine and the roses be,
My sisters paddled along with me,
Our coronals gay to make;
O, that dear little isle!
How I loved it the while
I was young and light-hearted as they!

O, little lone isle of the silent lake,
Far off in the cool northwest,
My spirit is thine in the month of May!
Thou art beautiful yet, though billows break
O'er my light canoe, and the willows shake
Their locks where the lovely rest:
O, thou sweet, blessed isle!
I will cherish thee while
There are tears for such dear ones as they.

A Life Lesson.

From the New York Ledger.

EVENING DUTIES;

—OR.—

THE TWO CITY CLERKS.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

"Show me how a young man spends his money" said a wise and good merchant, "and I will tell you at once his future prospects."

There is much truth in this; and an incident of real life is now present in my memory which may help "point the moral" therein contained.

Oliver Hudson and Albert Ryder were of the same age; both were reared in the same town; they had equal advantages in all social and moral points; and the most acute observer of human nature could not have told which had the best mind. They were as near alike as two youths could be; and even their parents occupied social and pecuniary positions of the same degree. They were good, honest boys, and generally respected and beloved.

At the age of fifteen, these two boys came to the great city. Their parents had obtained good places for them, and bright hopes lighted up their paths. Oliver Hudson was placed in the store of a merchant named Elisha Rushton, and Albert Ryder took a position exactly corresponding in the store of Hugh Buxton. Both the merchants were wealthy; both honorable men; and both engaged in the same kind of business.

A year passed away, and at the end of that time the two boys had become pretty thoroughly acquainted with city life and city manners; and both had formed a habit of spending their evenings either in the streets, or at some place of amusement. Their companions did so, and they followed the example.

One evening, they were both present at a party given by a friend, and [illegible] partook rather freely of wine. [illegible] ing morning, Oliver Hudson [illegible] vere head ache, and with a wo[illegible] pervading his whole frame. It was his first debauch. He had frequently taken a glass of wine before, and thought it no harm; though he knew his mother would be very unhappy were she to know it.

On the present occasion, Oliver felt badly. The idea that he had committed a heinous crime was not with him; but he knew that he had done wrong. It was the first touch of the barbed point in his soul. Innocent in intent, the result of his sin was heavy upon him. Could he have continued on in the same course, the next morning's sorrow would not have been so deep—the next lighter still—until, by and by, familiarity with the feeling would have blunted it to the soul, and it could be laughed off over a glass of "plain soda."

But this was the first fall, and the youth was startled. The events of the previous night were dim and indistinct in his memory after ten o'clock. He had been intoxicated! He had been in social companionship with those who were not good men. He bowed his head and thought of his mother.

Angelic presence! God surely sent thee in this all-important hour!

There came a tap upon his door, and the servant handed in a letter. It was from his mother! It contained twenty dollars in bank-notes, with her good counsel and love. She wrote him all the news, and finally closed her letter thus:

"And now, my own dear boy, suffer me to speak with you once more as of old. Do not think for one moment that to lead you in the right path, I know your love for your mother would guide you aright.—And yet I cannot help praying for you continually. Every night I am upon my knees asking God to bless and guide you. When you hear the clock strike nine in the evening, you may feel that you can join your prayers with mine, for then am I praying for my first-born—my well beloved son. Remember your mother, and you cannot go astray. Oh! you will not allow another to usurp my place in your confidence. You will not forget the promise you gave me when you were pure and virtuous. That promise, well kept, must ever keep you as you were then.

"I send you a small sum of money, because I know your pay is not sufficient to supply you with many superfluities. This will purchase books, so that your evenings may be profitably spent. I know that my son will make a good use of his mother's token of undying love. Be sure that your books are of a true, manly character; and combine sound intellect with pleasure in your matter for reading. I know that in the daytime your business keeps your mind occupied. It is that your *evenings* may be morally and profitably spent that your mother most earnestly prays."

The angel came at the right moment. Oliver read these two paragraphs over a second time, and then fell to weeping. He knew that he was to his mother as the apple of her eye—as the very joy-fount of her soul. Had he done as he promised her he would do? Had he done as his own good sense told him he should have done? No. He knew that beyond the bound of right, the single step is wrong. He folded the letter carefully up and put it away, and then pressed his hands upon his brow. He stood so a few moments, and finally he turned his eyes homeward.

"Mother," he said, in a deep, heart-sent tone, "*I will betray thy confidence never again!*"

Albert Ryder awoke on that same morning with a head-ache too. But, alas! he had an evil adviser with him.

"One glass of brandy, Al., and you'll be all right!"

So Albert took the glass of brandy, and under its stimulating influence he felt physically better.

On the next evening Albert came around to Rushton's store and asked Oliver to go to the theatre with him. But Oliver said he had an engagement he could not break.

And so, evening after evening, Albert came after his friend—now for the theatre—now for a stroll up Broadway—now for a whist party—or mayhap, for a game of billiards,—and always it was the same answer. "I am engaged."

"Look ye, Oliver," cried Albert, as he came one evening for his friend to go and see a new circus company, "what do you mean? Aint there a female in the question?"

"Yes, Albert,—I must acknowledge that there is."

"Aha—I've found you, have I? A female eh? Oh, Oliver, I didn't think that of you. But who is she? Come—out with it: Who is she?

"*My Mother*, Albert!"

"Eh? your mother?" repeated the giddy youth, with a sudden softness of tone. "I didn't know she was in the city."

"Nor is she, Al. But her noble, prayerful love is with me; and my sacred promise is with her!"

"But you used to go with us, Ol.; you were not thus a month ago."

"Because I did not realize how surely I was falling away from my promise," replied Oliver, promptly. "You remember the last evening we spent together. On the next morning I had a headache."

"So did I, Ol.; but I soon got over it."

"And so did I get over mine—and over my heart-ache, too. I saw then, Albert, that I was not safe while spending my evenings abroad. I saw how I was departing from the precepts of one who lives only for the good of her children. No, Albert,—I cannot go with you any more. I have looked at the matter in all its bearings, and I know there is no safety for us in spending our evenings abroad. The influences are all bad. In this great city the good and pure influences of life are confined to the home circle, and certain social assemblies of good people. They are not found in the streets, and much less are they found in those saloons which we have sometimes visited. No. Let us break from them. Come to my room. My mother has sent me money, and I have bought some valuable books. Come to my room, and we'll read them to each other. Come!"

"No, no, Oliver—not now. Come you with me. Come this once."

"Ah—'*this once*' is a dangerous step, Al. One step from the edge of a precipice is death! One step from the path of Right is *Wrong!* No,—if you will come with me, we will pass our evenings together. Think, Albert, before you make up your mind. You know your mother loves you as well as my mother loves me; and she would be equally sad to know that you had fallen——"

"Pshaw! Don't be a fool, Oliver! Do you suppose I have no eyes? Don't you suppose I know what is safe, and what isn't? Do you suppose I'm going to be shut up in a store all day, and then shut myself up in a house all night? No! not by a long chalk—now I tell you!"

"You misunderstand me, Albert. I don't shut myself up all night. I frequently go to lectures; and then for exercise I walk down to the Battery every morning before the store is open."

"Pooh! That's the time when I want to sleep. But you wont go with me, then?

"No—I cannot."

"Well, then I must find somebody else. And, mind you—one of these days we'll see if you wont change your mind."

"If I find I am wrong, I most certainly shall," was Oliver's reply, as his companion turned away.

The two youths had supposed that their conversation was heard only by themselves; but they were mistaken in this. They had stood by the door of the counting room, and Mr. Rushton was within, though he had not yet lighted the gas. He had just started for that purpose when the first request of Albert Ryder was made. A natural desire to hear what would be his young clerk's reply induced him to listen. So he had heard the whole; and he was not sorry.

Elisha Rushton was a good and true man, caring nothing for opinions which sound reason would not sustain, and ready to do all the good which lay in his power. Once he had been in the habit of trying to overlook the moral characters of his clerks, and of advising with them, and offering them assistance in the path of Right. But he had only received the title of a meddler for his first efforts, and had been imposed upon in his second. So now he had established this one rule: He would give no advice which was not asked, unless he saw a youth in immediate danger; and all his clerks knew that any extended irregularity would be the sure signal for their discharge.

For three months after the conversation took place between Oliver and Albert the former was watched by his employer very narrowly. There seemed to be a subject of more than ordinary import occupying his thoughts; for sometimes, when he could gaze unnoticed upon the handsome, happy, healthful face of Oliver, he would sit for half an hour without once removing his eyes from the object of interest.

One evening, as Oliver sat alone in his chamber, the servant-girl came and informed him that a gentleman wished to come up and see him. the youth bade her to show him up; and in a few minutes afterwards he was not a little surprised upon seeing his employer—the wealthy merchant himself—enter his room.

The common civilities were passed, and then Mr. Rushton sat down and looked around. He saw a neat, substantial bookcase, well filled with good books; a few choice pictures upon historical subjects; and a table, upon which were books, paper, pens and ink, drawing materials, and a flute.—The merchant glanced at the book which Oliver had just laid down, with his "mark" carefully placed where he had left off reading, and saw that it was "Cooper's Virgin."

"Do you read Latin?" Mr. Rushton asked.

"Not much, sir," replied the youth, modestly, "I studied it some when at school, and I thought I might as well devote a part of my time to that as not. I find that I can get along very well by reading a little every evening."

"*Every* evening? Do you spend every evening here?"

"Almost, sir, I go to a good lecture now and then."

"Then you don't go out much evenings?"

"No, sir."

"Don't you like it?"

"Well—I should like to walk out oftener, perhaps, if there were any pleasant places in which to walk; but this city doesn't afford many such, sir."

"But most young men of your age find plenty of pleasure abroad in the evening."

"I suppose so, sir. And yet it is but a flashing pleasure, after all. I fear many of them are purchasing present pleasure at the cost of future suffering. No, sir—I find pleasure abroad. I will not say that there is none to be found. There may be much. In fact, I know there must be much of real pleasure to be found in our great city by those who are thoroughly acquainted, and know where to look for it. I do not mean that the city is void of good, or of true pleasures.—But, sir, I am——"

"Well—go on. You are what?"

"Why, sir—I do not feel safe to trust myself in the society of those who seek their pleasures away from home every evening.—I may be weak, but if I am, I am willing to acknowledge it. However, I have one consolation: If I don't venture near the fire I shan't be burned."

"You are right, Oliver—very right," returned the merchant, warmly; and then he added, in a sort of business tone—

"But I must broach the subject upon which I called. How do you like your boarding-place?"

"Why, sir—I like it as well as I think I should any boarding-house," answered Oliver in surprise.

"Would you object to changing it?" pursued Rushton.

"Of course not, sir, if you wished it."

"Well, I do wish it; and I'll tell you why: I have a very small family—only my wife and one child—and I would like to have one of my clerks always by me. Very often I want to look over accounts at home; and then I often want to send business errands to the store in the morning before I wish to go down myself. If you'll come and board with me you shall have a better room than this is, and I'll keep you for nothing; so you'll have three dollars and a half per week to buy books with; and, moreover, you shall have the free use of my library."

"I—I——"

"Speak out."

"I will do anything you wish, sir."

The merchant seemed surprised. He had supposed that the youth would have been deeply moved by the proffered attention.

"I only wish you to please yourself, Oliver," he said, a little more coolly than he had before spoken.

"I will speak plainly, sir, for I know you will not be offended," returned the youth, coloring. "My parents are not wealthy, but they are honorable and respected by all who know them. I appreciate your kindness, sir—but—I should not feel happy—I—I—should not feel at home in any house where there was a class privileged above me. You may think me foolish—but—really, sir——"

Poor Oliver broke down. He couldn't come at it as he wished. At first a look of utter astonishment settled upon the merchant's face; but gradually the light broke in upon him, and the old expression of pride came back.

"Aha—I see, I see," he cried. "You think I meant to take you into my house, and place you on a social par with my servants?"

Oliver looked surprised in turn.

"Am I right?"

"Why—yes, sir."

"And would you *thank* me for that?"

"Yes, sir; because I am confident that you would propose nothing to a dependent which was not meant for good."

"Thank you, Oliver—thank you. But I meant no such thing. I have no son—a—I meant for you to come and occupy a place in my family as an honored and respected member of that family. Now will you come?"

Oliver Hudson started up, and caught his employer by the hand. He tried half-a-dozen times to speak, and finally managed to say—

"I should be very happy, sir—very—I——" * * * * * *

The dwelling of Elisha Rushton was one of those quiet, unassuming structures, which would seldom be noticed as the abode of wealth were it not for the extensive conservatory, the open garden, and the carriage-house. Where land is almost worth its own superficial area in silver coin, only great wealth can retain such sources of gratification. Within the merchant's house, all was substantial and of real worth. The furniture was massive; the ornaments pleasing to the eye and to sense; while the whole was made subservient to comfort.

Mrs. Rushton was a woman of sound, practical sense, having started in life as the wife of a poor clerk; and being able now to look back upon the past, and feel that at every upward step she had been by her husband's side—never lagging behind to be lifted up, nor pulling upon him to drag him back.

They had but one child—a daughter—named Emily. She was now fifteen—just a year younger than Oliver. She was what fashionable people would call "*so-so*." She was not a beauty, because there was no particular "*style*" to her features. In frame she was full and plump; and in feature fair and rosy. Her face was a bed of roses and sweet smiles, and her laughter was inspiring. In short, she was one of those whom Love marks for its own. Her appearance inspired none of that awe and distant admiration which your set beauty commands; but the first feeling upon becoming acquainted with Emily Rushton was confidence and love.

And into that society was Oliver Hudson thrown. For awhile he seemed fearful of approaching too near; but gradually this feeling wore off, and at the end of six months they were free and easy in each others society. And this feeling had not been Oliver's alone. No, no. Emily had for a long time treated him differently from what she treated all other male acquaintances. She had been more distant and reserved, and far more respectful. But, as we just said, this all wore off, and they became happy as could be in each other's society. Oliver was a better looking youth than most of those who visited there, and then he had that in his soul and brain which supplied the material for many a happy and profitable hour.

Three years had passed away from the time of the two boys' entrance into the great city. They were now eighteen years of age.

Albert Ryder was an excellent salesman, and as he managed to stick to his business during business hours, his employers asked no questions. But Oliver Hudson saw what many others did not see, for he looked thro' the eye of love and solicitude. He saw that Albert's face was not so fresh and fair as it used to be; the eye was not so clear and bright; and the step was not so firm and buoyant.

"Albert," he said, as the two met one evening at the store of a mutual friend, who was on the verge of bankruptcy, and with whom the former had associated much of late, "will you let me speak a few plain words to you?"

"Pooh! What's the use? I know all you would say, Ol."

"Never mind, let me speak. Come—let us walk."

There was something so calm and sincere about Oliver's manner, and at the same time so dignified, that Albert could not refuse; so they walked out.

"Albert," commenced the other, in a deep, earnest tone, "you are going down hill!"

"*Me? Down hill?*" repeated Albert in surprise.

"Yes—you are going down hill. You are becoming the slave of appetite!—Stop.—Let me speak. I aim at your good, Albert—at your good alone. God bear me witness when I say—For your good I would suffer much! You are not safe. Ah—you can feel it now. Your eye, Albert, is not the eye you brought from beneath your mother's roof! That red and blurred expression I cannot see but with pain. Albert—my friend—my well beloved—you are standing upon the brink. You can return now in safety—a little while, and it may be too late. *You are becoming an inebriate!*"

"Stop, Oliver!" cried the young prodigal. "You wrong me now. Yet know better than that. Albert Ryder become a drunkard? You know better!"

"Albert—answer me truly: What makes your eye so red, and your face so pale?—What makes your hand tremble, and your lip crisp and crackled? What makes you shun me so often, and refuse to listen? Tell me, for I know that you have ample proof of my love."

Albert was silent for some moments, and when he spoke his voice was low and faltering.

"If I shunned you, Oliver, it was because I didn't want to hear your lectures."

"Well, my old mate—my companion of other days," said Oliver, placing his hand upon the other's shoulder, and speaking with a trembling voice and tearful eye, "this once let me speak, and I will trouble you no more. You may after this seek those who can flatter you more fully, and speak more pleasing language to your ear. Only God grant that they may not turn your mother's chiefest hope from the path of manhood."

Albert bowed his head, and was silent; and Oliver continued, in the same touching devoted tone,

"Albert—*give me your evenings and I will give you peace and joy!* Oh! listen to me now. Lay down a new rule. Make your evenings subservient to your real good. Spend them in your own home, over your books. Cast off the evil companions you have found and find better ones. Seek for good and true men, and cultivate a taste for knowledge. Look at him whose store we have just left. One year ago he started in that store with a clear cash capital of thirty thousand dollars! Now—*now*—he is not worth one penny! Aye—he is worse—he is deeply, deeply in debt! You know what has done it."

"*Me!*"

"Yes, Albert you. First, it was wine; then it was a stronger drink; then it was evenings abroad, searching for pleasure in saloons, and on the street corners. And, finally, *the gaming-table finished the work!* Am I not right?"

"How should I know?"

"Have you not seen him there?"

"*Me!*"

"Aye, Albert—have you not visited those fearful dens with him? Have you not lost *your* substance at the gaming table?"

"Oliver, you've been dogging me!"

"Hush! Speak not in that tone to me, Albert. Speak not so to the only man in all this great wilderness of Humanity who has the honesty to tell you the truth, and the love to care for you for yourself! I have watched you,—aye—with an aching heart! But the secret is locked up in the bosom of your friend. Not even to my own mother would I whisper it. Beware, Albert,—beware of the precipice! You are upon its verge! Turn and be safe! If you want companionship I will introduce you into a society at once genial and pure. What say you?"

"I—I—know you mean well, Oliver; but you are entirely mistaken. I am as safe as you are. I can let drink alone at any moment!"

"Then do it while you have the power; for I do assure you that the power will soon leave you! The very glass that you leave untasted, if you please, is surely one more portion of power, if tasted, towards binding more firmly the chains of your enslavement. He who can let drink alone if he pleases, may not see that he is gradually losing that very power upon which he founds his hope of safety. Come Albert—come with me!"

"Not now. Ah, here come some friends. They are searching for me. Good night, Oliver."

Thus speaking, the reckless youth turned away and joined a party of three like himself, and they went off after such pleasures as they were in the habit of finding—joyless, restless pleasures—withering in a night, and leaving only the dry, hard, sharp thorns, stark and piercing.

Oliver watched his misguided friend until he had passed from sight, and then, with a sad heart, he turned towards his own peaceful home.

Time sped on, and finally Oliver Hudson began to grow unhappy. He had been advanced from post to post, until he was now head book-keeper, with a salary of three thousand dollars per annum. Mr. Rushton noticed the young man's dejected manner, but for a while he said nothing. Emily noticed it, too; and she asked him why he was so sad and thoughtful. He put her off many times but at length she was determined to be put off no more. She found Oliver alone one evening in the parlor, and she went to his side and placed her arm about his neck.

"Oliver," she said, in a low, earnest tone, "tell me what it is that affected you so.—You have lost some near friend—some one whom you loved well. Come—I will sympathize with you. Trust your secret to my keeping."

"*You* sympathize?" cried the youth, starting up from his seat, and gazing almost wildly upon the lovely girl. "*You—you*——Emily Rushton! Oh! you know not my——"

He struggled a moment—the tears burst from his eyes—he caught the hand that glided down his arm, and pressed it to his lips. And then with a deep groan, he hurried from the room! Emily gazed after him in astonishment; but gradually the light broke in upon her, and with a sudden tremor she sank down upon the seat he had left.

The maiden called to mind a hundred little words and actions of the past—she reflected upon the scene which had just transpired—and then she bowed her head, and bright drops trickled down the long silken lashes and fell upon her bosom.

Her father found her thus. He wound his arm about her, and asked her why she wept.

"I have discovered Oliver's secret!" she said. "But he knows it not."

* * * * * *

The wealthy merchant took his young book-keeper by the hand and gazed into his face.

"Oliver," he said, with a look and tone of firm purpose, "I wish to know why you are so changed. Tell me, sir. If you have one feeling of respect for me left, I wish you to tell me."

The youth struggled with his emotions awhile, and finally he answered in a spasmodic, broken tone,—

"I will tell you, sir; but, O, you must not think I have broken faith with you. I could not help it! But henceforth I may redeem all. I can stay beneath your roof no more. I cannot remain where——"

The young man broke down here, and turned away to hide his emotions.

"Oliver Hudson," spoke the merchant, almost sternly, "I thought you knew me better. Your present course indicates but little confidence in one who has thus far been to you a true friend. Do you remember a conversation you held with Albert Ryder some three months before I took you into my family?"

Oliver started, for the memory of that meeting with his quondam companion flashed upon him at once.

"Yes, sir," he replied. "I remember it well."

"And I overheard every word you uttered on that occasion," resumed the merchant, earnestly. "I knew that one who held the principles you then advocated; who held in such deep reverence the memory and lessons of a mother; and who was determined to live up to them, must be a pure-minded, honorable, and virtuous youth. For three months thereafter I watched you narrowly; and I engaged one in whom I could confide to watch you evenings. The result was, that I found you to be all I hoped. And then came a deeper and more important plan. I had a child whose future welfare was my most anxious study. She must have companionship; and early companionship does much toward shaping human destiny. She would soon find associates in the opposite sex. I looked around, and among all her acquaintance I could not find the youth whom I could fully trust. There may have been many; but I did not put confidence in the influences which surrounded them.

"I brought you here, Oliver; and when I found how firm you were in truth; how stern in duty; and how mild and gentle in disposition, I hoped that you might live on to manhood, and that, at the proper time, I might place my child in your keeping—that she might be yours to love and honor—you to guard and protect—yours forever! She loves you, Oliver—she has loved you a long time. She would be very unhappy if you were to go away; and, should you stay away, one of the brightest hopes of my life would be wrested from me! What say you now?"

"God bless you!"

And that was enough.

From that hour the old joy came back to Oliver's face, and he was happy as man can be. He held Emily to his bosom, and told his love; and when she smiled the happy answer, they wept together for pure joy.

And yet time passed on. Oliver Hudson became the partner of Elisha Rushton in business, and when he had seen the full bloom of manhood he led Emily to the altar, and became the husband of one of the fairest and noblest daughters of the city. His aged mother was present at the nuptials; and as she gazed upon her boy she felt that in the pride and joy of the present moment she was more than repaid for all her care and anxiety in the past.

Oliver had looked for his old friend, Albert Ryder, but he could not find him. He had left Mr. Buxton's store, and they knew not where he had gone.

Time rolled on, and Oliver became a father. One day as he was coming up from a ship, the cargo of which belonged to him, he saw a poor, bloated ragged outcast lying under some boards on the pier. He stopped and gazed into that face. Could it be possible! Yes. It was Albert Ryder!

Oliver spoke to him, but he was senseless. Then he went back to the ship, and called up two of the men, and had them carry the senseless form to the nearest place of refuge. Here he engaged a nurse, and provided for all the poor man's wants; and left a note for Albert, in which he stated that if he would try to help himself, he should be saved.

At the end of a month, Albert Ryder took his place in Oliver's store. He was thin, pale, and weak; and his frame trembled; and but for the stern kindness, and mild promptness of his true friend, he would have fallen back. But he conquered the enemy at last. He became a man once more, though not the happy, joyous man he might have been. His youth was gone, and all its memories were sad and bitter. He was a man, indeed, but, alas! there were traces of the wreck which could not be effaced. Away in the quiet churchyard of his native village there was a grave, o'er which the tall grass of a twelvemonth waved. His mother's mouldering form lay there! Her grey hairs had been brought down in sorrow to the narrow house of clay, and the prodigal knew that he was guilty!

Oh! had it not been for that, he might have been happier. But he sought the balm of a contrite heart, and asked God to forgive him. He performed his duties well, and was a faithful clerk and salesman. He regarded his employer—his companion in youth—his savior now—with feelings of deepest reverence and love. He emulated Oliver's virtues, and strove to repay him for all his kindness; but Oliver's happiness he could not reach. That was based upon the sure foundation which he had neglected—the foundation which could not now be erected upon memories such as burdened his soul.

"Alas!" he said, as he sat one evening in Oliver's pleasant parlor, and held Oliver's eldest boy in his lap, "how few of our youths realize that one great truth of city life: As a young man spends his evenings, so shall the influence thereof remain with him through all the after years."

THE STRANGER ALOFT.

Under the head of "The Stranger Aloft," the Chicago 'Journal' has the following glorious and glowing article, radiant with a faith as sublime as its imagery is perfect:

There is a splendid foreigner coming this way, even into our family circle—our nice cozy family of Planets—and is making himself at home, about our hearth-stone, the Sun. The juvenile portion of the household, the little fellows of Asteroids, huddled together to keep warm—we hope he will see them in time, and not tread on the children. Jupiter, may be, will gird his belt a little tighter, and Herschel, we see, wears as much jewelry as ever, while the only fighting member of the family, Mars, with a flush in his face, keeps going about as if nobody was coming.

This foreigner, however, is not altogether a stranger; he has visited us before, but a long time ago, and his sojourn was as brief as a ballad. Very grand he is with his splendid trains a number of miles longer than the army Xerxes led, and in a great hurry he seems to be, like one on business bound, but if he could or would tarry a moment before he goes a visiting, just long enough to comb his hair, we think it might be safely passed to the credit of his personal appearance. But that being none of our business it will not do to be strenuous; and indeed, who knows what sights he may have seen, to cause each particular hair to stand like quills upon the fretful porcupine? Sights in that upper deep stranger that Clarence saw in his dream.

Whoever he is or whatever he has seen, he is just a guest, and we are all hospitable people, we Planets, and wish him, like good Christians, right welcome, for is it not written, "Forget not to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained Angels unawares?"

We have called him a foreigner and a stranger; perhaps we were a little too fast, for it may be he is only a traveled gentleman, and one of "our folks;" in fact, a first cousin, who has been abroad, and returned at last, with the news, to the old homestead.

A plain family, we are: rural people, indeed, as anybody can tell, who on a clear night looks off at the lights of the great Astral City, so far and so many, that they seem woven into a silvery scarf of delicate lace; as if God had flung it down from His great central throne, and it fluttered there in sight, forever for a token.

Now, for anything we know, our illustrious cousin, the Comet, is on his way from the Capital—a king's courier, perhaps—and has threaded the crowded streets, and has passed the suburbs and has crossed the great azure fields of the country of God, and has gone out of his way, for memory's sake, and has come to our little settlement.

But it is strange what queer stories some people tell of him as if he was a lawless fellow, and was out on a "lark" instead of on duty? We think it unkind, this gossip, and we protest. He is a dashing fellow, we know, but then they are no Sabbath-day journeys he takes. The country we live in is one of magnificent distances, and even the thought is breathless that only goes to the neighbors, and flies to the starry cottage whose small lights twinkle in the outskirts of our hamlets. Who knows but he has seen the lost Pleiad in his wanderings; has met Orion in armor on his way; has counted the jewels in the sword hilt of Perseus? Perhaps he has fluttered the hair of Berenice, or paused at the Northern Crown, or heard the Harp of Heaven, as he passed, or bearded the Lion in his starry den. Aldebrand may have glared at the Stranger; the river Po, that flows through the fields of the Blest, perhaps he forded dry-shod. A pilgrim to the Southern Cross, he may have played St. George to the Dragon, distanced Pegasus and paid court to Andromeda. Did Arcturus delay him, or the Bear intimidate, or Sirius turn him aside? Did he dash along among the Nebulae, those morning clouds of creation, those visible breaths of Deity? Did he solve the mystery of Cassiopeia and linger around the ruins of the brilliant world that went out like a taper three hundred years ago?

The laboratory of God is somewhere; did he pass it, when the doors were ajar? There is a sinless world among the stars; did they see the Comet in their offing?

And our guest himself; is he a solid globe, making a mighty wake of light, and glowing like a furnace, or is it a magnificent Will o' the Wisp floating about the Universe? What if it should be an abandoned world, drifted from its moorings, dismantled and lost, and wandering like a ship in a winter sea? Or a wild outlaw madly plunging from system to system, and making terrific descents upon peaceful planets, scattering confusion and death?

And if this last should be, and the Asteroids are indeed the sparkling ruins of some pleasant world destroyed by such a visitant, and the route of the Comet across the path of earth has been truly divined, and our small craft should be just there as it dashes into our unfenced highway—what then? If a huge globe of granite and red sand-stone, why, there might be more Asteroids in our solar circle, and fragments, like the pieces of a mirror shivered by a blow, might each reflect the sun, and move in orbits of its own. If such a thing could be, and human life remain, how wilder than a dream and sadder than a death. The child playing in the garden among the flowers, mother stretching forth her hands in vain—the garden and the homestead in two worlds. The wife just parted from her husband, might be divorced by a broad abyss of empty, unnavigable air. The daughter of some house and heart, who went with blessings from the sheltering roof, would ne'er return. The hunted debtor on one side of the cleft, might see his creditors afar, as on their island world, they drifted out to sea. Maybe, on one small planet of their own would be two that love, for whom alone the rain should fall, a narrow ribbon of green Spring be woven, and the cloudy bow yet keep God's promise good. Somewhere, alas! upon one atom of the world alone, Juan Fernandez in the sailless sea, a soul might dwell whose story no De Foe should ever write.

And such a thing might be, that this bold comet should entice away a simple satellite to wander in its train, should hasten it beyond the lead and line of telescopic ray; beyond the cloudy Magellan of Heaven; away where light has just begun to be; beyond the stars; beyond the reach of summer and of sun.

There are no outlaws 'mid the world of God; true as His Word, the splendid engine moves harmonious; as docile, our far sentry Neptune, on his rounds sublime, as the bright planet dew poised on the aspen's leaf.

The world is going somewhere; our little family of planets are on a journey, and surely it is pleasant thus to travel together. A way towards the dim north west where the constellation of the Eagle spreads his star-lit wings, we are moving—the kingly sun and his splendid company of retainers.

Along the highway of heaven we are going, and to angels' eyes, it must be a pageant worth beholding. Who knows but what we are bound to some far distant court, ruled by an elder sun? Who knows what grander grouping, by and by, may light the hollow of our cloudless nights?

And these Comets may be the couriers of our radiant prince, whose torches flare afar, as hastening to and fro, along the route we go, they ever and anon return with tidings—"the way is clear—move on," and wheel again, and for awhile, are seen no more. A fragment of their route, like an arc of Apollo's broken bow, the Astronomer has grasped in that weak hand of his and has completed the orbit, and calculated the return of these heralds of the king. If no world beguiles them, and makes them loiter by the way, lo! here their blazing torches startle the watching world, true to the prophet word, and again those tidings come to Science' listening ear; "the highway clear, oh, liege, the Sun, pass on!"

No blind and blundering wanderers are they, to plunge among the peaceful fleets and wreck the craft whereon a God descended, and an Eden smiled. On some high commission, the Comet goes and comes; to us who swing upon the pendulum of the earth; whose souls a summer zephyr may waft forever from our parted lips, it is even as some swift cloud that drifts along the sky, in whose pearly and crimson folds there may be death; but what a dower of beauty there is in the rain; what a breath of blessing in the shadow; what a token of hope in the bow. In God's good keeping all, the sparrow's flight is guided, and the route of the falling leaf.

Wandering, they be, these Comets, but not lost, for their route and time—are they not all recorded in the books of the Admiralty of high heaven!

There, indeed, is the stranger, the first in the seas,
Yet she drives boldly on in the teeth of the breeze.
Now her bows to the breakers she steadily turns;
Oh! how brightly the light of the binnacle burns!
Not a signal for Saturn this rover has given,
No salute for our Venus, the flag star of Heaven;
Not a rag or a ribbon adorning her spars.
It has saucily sailed by "the red planet Mars;"
She has doubled triumphant the Cape of the Sun,
And the sentinel stars without firing a gun.
Now, a flag at the fore and the mizzen unfurled,
She is bearing right gallantly down on the world!
"Helm a port!" "Show a light!" "She will run us aground!"
"Fire a gun! Bring her to!" "Sail-a-boy, whither bound?"
Avast there, ye lubbers! Leave the rudder alone?
Tis a craft "in commission"—the Admiral's own;
And she sails with sealed orders, unopened as yet,
Though her anchors she weighed before Lucifer set!
Ah! she sails by a chart no draughtsman could make,
Where each cloud that can trail, and each wave that can break;
Where each Planet is cruising, each star is at rest,
With its anchor "let go" in the blue of the blest;
Where that sparkling Gorilla, the asteroids lie;
Where the scarf of red morning is flung on the sky:
Where the breath of the sparrow is stirring the air—
On the chart that she bears, you will find them all there!
Let her pass on in peace to the port whence she came,
With her tackings of fire and her streamers of flame.

A TALKING BIRD.—We saw the talking bird Mino at his home, in Tremont street, No. 74, a few days since, and were much astonished and pleased. It is difficult to give an adequate description of him. He is about the size of the American crow black-bird, although a little heavier. His length, from the tip of the bill to the end of his tail feathers, is about twelve inches. He has a yellow bill one inch in length. His plumage is remarkably beautiful, when it glistens in the rays of the sun. It is a very rich variegated purple and green. The wings are nearly black, with white bars near the ends. The feathers on the head are very short, fine and thick, and resemble the richest gloss of dark velvet.—He has a long and beautiful lappel of bright yellow extending from the back of his head to the nape of his neck. There is also a small yellow oblong mark on each side of his head. His legs and claws are yellow. His tongue is long, pointed at the end, broad in the throat, and flat, thus differing from the parrot, which is round, short, and somewhat curved.

Mr. James Mann, the well known taxidermist, informs us that the Mino birds, so called, are natives of Java, and that they are rare even in that island; moreover, that they seldom talk. They have a great appetite, and will eat voraciously cooked or raw meat, bread, potatoes and fruit, although they appear to relish simple meal and milk. Mr. Mann possessed a Mino bird some years ago, which could whistle and imitate different sounds, but it could not pronounce words.

The bird Mino, in Tremont street, the property of Mr. J. Chelsey, has a fine tenor voice, and shows what may truly be termed intelligence. We have seen several persons looking admiringly at him, and have heard him say, in the most distinct manner, after he has gazed intently, apparently listening to the conversation, "My name is Mino." After waiting some time, as if expecting a compliment to be bestowed upon him, he has raised his beautiful head and proudly said, "Mino is a pretty bird." If no person offers any words of praise, he jumps about his large cage a few times, turns his back to the astonished spectators, and indignantly and emphatically says, in a sharp tone, "Go away! go away!" He then gives a loud and hearty guffaw, exactly like the "ha-ha-ha!" of a human being.